The Influence of TikTok Exposure on Gen Z Fashion Imitation Among University Students in Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

Social media exerts a major influence on Gen Z students in Surabaya, particularly regarding the imitation of fashion styles featured on platforms such as TikTok. One notable influence is the account @cadburylemonade, known as "Mbak Tumbas." This study explores the impact of TikTok media exposure on dress style imitation behavior. The study involved 400 respondents from five public universities in Surabaya with a margin of error of 5%. The results indicate that information exposure has a positive effect on the level of confidence/trust. Based on the t-test, it was found that the calculated t-value is 7.245, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.966 ($7.245 > 1.966$); thus, it can be concluded that H1 is accepted. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial for developing effective strategies to interact with this demographic and to manage both the negative and positive impacts of these behavioral changes.

Keywords: *Media exposure, TikTok, imitation, fashion style, Gen Z, Surabaya students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Mass communication is the process of delivering a message through a source, such as social media, to a large, widely dispersed, and heterogeneous audience simultaneously. In the context of social media, messages can take the form of videos, images, text, or a combination thereof, enabling rapid global dissemination. Rapidly developing information technology has given birth to new generations with diverse characteristics and distinct traits. Generation Z (Gen Z), born into an era of technological advancement, has demonstrated a strong preference for online communication via social media platforms. Social media invites participation from anyone interested, allowing for open and immediate feedback. Furthermore, it provides access to comment and share information quickly and limitlessly (Wilga Secsio et al., 2016). Evolving technology alters ways of thinking and behaving in social situations, allowing various cultures to enter and blend, thereby forming distinct characteristics for each generation—most visibly in daily behavioral styles.

According to World Bank data, Indonesia's population stands at 277.7 million. Of this total, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reports that Gen Z accounts for approximately 74.93 million people, or 27.94% of the population. Gen Z encompasses individuals born between 1997 and 2012 and represents the largest generation globally, covering about 32% of the world's population (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Smartphone usage among Gen Z increases annually, with current data indicating that 98% own a smartphone. The majority (97%) of Gen Z consumers state they currently use social media as their primary source of lifestyle inspiration (Farida & Eka, 2024).

Issues surrounding Gen Z students in Surabaya often relate to their habit of keeping up with prevailing trends. They are frequently exposed to fashion styles via social media. Gen Z is a generation that consistently pays attention to appearance and is concerned with how others perceive them (Bado et al., 2023). They often use social media as a platform for self-expression and to seek inspiration for daily life, particularly regarding fashion. Surabaya, as one of Indonesia's major cities, sees a significant social media influence on student fashion. This is evident in the prevalence of fashion trends currently viral on social media, often referred to as "viral Gen Z kids." The media exposure they receive can lead to "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO), starting from the way they dress to how they communicate, which eventually influences their daily lives as a whole.

This social media influence indirectly causes Gen Z students in Surabaya to imitate fashion styles found on platforms like TikTok. In this study, the researcher conducted a study on the followers of a specific TikTok celebrity, @cadburylemonade, familiarly known by users as "Mbak Tumbas." Currently, TikTok is a widely accessed platform globally, and many users' lifestyles are influenced by influencers on the app.

This study aims to deeply understand the influence of behavioral style changes caused by social media development—specifically focusing on Gen Z students in

Surabaya—and its implications for various aspects of life. The researcher selected a sample from five public universities in Surabaya: Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR), Universitas Pembangunan Negara Veteran Jawa Timur (UPN Veteran Jatim), Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel (UINSA), and Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS). By understanding these changes, effective strategies can be developed to engage with the younger generation, properly handle the negative and positive impacts, and prepare them for future challenges.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a positivism paradigm, aligning with the objective to objectively and measurably determine the influence of social media on the behavioral styles of Surabaya students. It is used to formulate a hypothesis regarding the effect of TikTok exposure on fashion imitation and to test it through data collection and quantitative analysis. The approach used is quantitative with a survey design using Google Forms distributed to Gen Z students in Surabaya. The survey includes questions regarding the frequency of social media use, types of platforms used, and fashion styles inspired by @Cadburylemonade. Quantitative research aims to determine the influence and relationship between variables. This method was chosen to allow for the objective measurement of the following variables: TikTok Exposure (Independent Variable) and Fashion Imitation (Dependent Variable).

The researcher utilized a Likert Scale as a guideline for answering the questionnaire. The alternative answers provided are as follows: Extremely Agree (Sangat Setuju Sekali). Strongly Agree (Sangat Setuju). Agree (Setuju). Disagree (Tidak Setuju). Strongly Disagree (Sangat Tidak Setuju).

Table 1. The alternative answers provided.

No.	Alternative Answer	Score
1.	Extremely Agree (Sangat Setuju Sekali)	5
2.	Strongly Agree (Sangat Setuju)	4
3.	Agree (Setuju)	3
4.	Disagree (Tidak Setuju)	2
5.	Strongly Disagree (Sangat Tidak Setuju)	1

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

General Data

Distribution Based on University Origin of Students Following @cadburylemonadeFrom 400 respondents, the distribution is as follows: 37% (148 students) from Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). 20% (80 students) from Universitas

Airlangga (UNAIR). 16% (64 students) from UPN Veteran Jawa Timur. 15% (60 students) from Politeknik Elektronika Negeri Surabaya (PENS) / ITS context. 12% (48 students) from UIN Sunan Ampel.

Specific Data

2.1. Description of Variable: Effect of TikTok Media Exposure (X)The assessment of TikTok media exposure consists of three indicators: frequency, duration, and intensity. These factors were developed into four questions:

a) Frequency of Following Fashion Content of @cadburylemonade on TikTok21.3% (85) Extremely Agree. 46% (184) Strongly Agree. 25% (100) Agree. 5.5% (22) Disagree. 2.3% (9) Strongly Disagree.

b) b) Duration: Using TikTok to Watch @cadburylemonade Content for Approximately 15 Minutes 40.3% (161) Extremely Agree. 23.8% (95) Strongly Agree. 25% (100) Agree. 8.8% (35) Disagree. 2.3% (9) Strongly Disagree.

c) Intensity: @cadburylemonade Fashion Content Influences Personal Clothing Decisions 24.8% (99) Extremely Agree. 38.8% (155) Strongly Agree. 27.8% (111) Agree. 8.5% (34) Disagree. 3% (1) Strongly Disagree.

d) Intensity: Paying Great Attention to the Fashion Style of Influencer @cadburylemonade 32.3% (129) Extremely Agree. 33.8% (135) Strongly Agree. 22.8% (91) Agree. 9.3% (37) Disagree. 2% (8) Strongly Disagree.

2.2 Description of Variable: Gen Z Fashion Imitation (Y) The assessment regarding imitation consists of four indicators: Attention, Retention, Behavior, and Motivation.

a) Attention: Inspired by and Following @cadburylemonade's Fashion Style36.3% (145) Extremely Agree. 29.8% (119) Strongly Agree. 31.5% (126) Agree.2.3% (9) Disagree.3% (1) Strongly Disagree.

b) Retention: Able to Try @cadburylemonade's Fashion Style32.3% (129) Extremely Agree. 32.5% (130) Strongly Agree. 26.3% (105) Agree. 5.5% (22) Disagree. 3.5% (14) Strongly Disagree.

c) Retention: Trying to Imitate TikTok Influencer Fashion Styles30% (120) Extremely Agree. 31.8% (127) Strongly Agree.26.3% (105) Agree. 8.5% (34) Disagree.3.5% (14) Strongly Disagree.

d) Behavior: Feeling More Confident Wearing Clothes Matching @cadburylemonade Content30.8% (123) Extremely Agree. 26.3% (105) Strongly Agree. 27% (108) Agree. 12.5% (50) Disagree. 3.5% (14) Strongly Disagree.

e) Motivation: Owning Many Clothes Like Those in @cadburylemonade Content28.2% (113) Extremely Agree. 32.5% (130) Strongly Agree. 26.8% (107) Agree.8.5% (34) Disagree. 4% (16) Strongly Disagree.

2.3. Validity Test

Based on the validity test with 30 respondents at a significance level of 0.05, the correlation between each indicator and the total construct of every variable shows that $r_{count} > r_{table}$. Therefore, it can be concluded that all statement items are valid.

2.4. Reliability Test

Based on the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha, Variables X and Y yielded a value of 0.953. Since 0.953 > 0.6, the variables are declared reliable.

2.5. Normality Test

The normality test is a prerequisite for parametric statistical analysis to ensure data is symmetrically distributed without significant outliers. Using formal tests (e.g., Kolmogorov-Smirnov), the results showed a significance value of 0.063. Since 0.063 > 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed.

2.6. Pearson Correlation Test

This test measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables.

The result shows a correlation value (Pearson Correlation) of 0.673. This indicates a strong positive correlation, meaning that higher media exposure (Independent Variable) leads to higher fashion imitation (Dependent Variable). The significance value is 0.000, which is less than the alpha level ($p < 0.05$), confirming a significant correlation.

2.7. Linear Regression Test

Regression analysis measures the strength and direction of the relationship. The correlation value (R) is 0.673. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.453. This means the influence of the independent variable (Media Exposure) on the dependent variable (Fashion Imitation) is 45.3%. The remaining 54.7% is influenced by other variables outside this study. The standard error of the estimate is minimal, indicating valid prediction capabilities.

2.8. Hypothesis Testing

The total X variable is 6.081, indicating that a unit increase in variable X increases the dependent variable by 6.081 units. The standardized coefficient (beta) is 0.673 (67.3% contribution). The t-test results show a calculated t-value of 7.245. Since 7.245 > 1.966 (t-table) and the significance is 0.000, there is a significant relationship.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the testing of the TikTok Exposure (X) and Fashion Imitation (Y) variables, it was found that TikTok Media Exposure has a significant influence on Fashion Imitation. Exposure from the account @cadburylemonade significantly impacts the fashion imitation behavior of students in Surabaya. The Pearson correlation test indicated a strong relationship (0.673). This finding aligns with the study by Esti Astuti and Susi Andrini (2021), which demonstrated the influence of TikTok usage on adolescent imitation behavior.

The number of followers and questionnaire responses indicate a high interest among Gen Z students in the content shared. Research by Enggar Setyowati and Thriwaty Arsal (2023) suggests that interest in TikTok content can be triggered by the drive to be recognized as "up to date." The account owner's characteristics, such as the nickname "Mbak Tumbas" and iconic slogans, serve as entertaining factors that attract followers to imitate.

The relevant communication theory is Media Exposure Theory. According to Sari (1993) in Septian Mulyadi and Hana Silvana (2023), social media exposure involves individual interaction with content related to fashion interests and self-confidence. The explanation of media exposure theory by Pasca Widya Narendra and Ulfah Hidayati (2023) includes three main dimensions: frequency, duration, and intensity/attention. Furthermore, the analysis includes Imitation Theory. According to Jessica Claudia Kristinova (2022), imitation by influencers originates from social media and is more likely performed by millennial women. The researcher used a female TikTok influencer, @cadburylemonade, consistent with this statement. Imitation is a social process where individuals copy the behavior, attitude, appearance, or lifestyle of others. This study proves that Gen Z students in Surabaya are influenced by TikTok content, particularly from @cadburylemonade.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the Influence of TikTok Exposure on Gen Z Fashion Imitation Among University Students in Surabaya. The variable of TikTok Exposure (X) has a highly significant effect on the variable of Fashion Imitation (Y). The exposure generated by TikTok media, particularly the account @cadburylemonade, has a significant impact on the fashion imitation behavior of Surabaya students. Furthermore, the Media Exposure Theory and Imitation Theory align with the findings of this study, confirming that the fashion imitation process of Gen Z students in Surabaya is influenced by exposure to TikTok media.

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