

Front and Back Stage of Sriwijaya Indralaya University Students Who Overshared on Tiktok

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ABSTRACT:

Keywords:

Front stage;
Back stage;
Oversharing.

This study aims to discover the phenomenon of oversharing conducted by Sriwijaya Indralaya University students and to understand the reality of the front and back stages of Sriwijaya Indralaya University students. This study used descriptive qualitative research methods and data collection techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation, and employed phenomenological research strategies. This informant was determined purposively, namely, UNSRI Indralaya students who actively use TikTok. This study uses Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy theory to analyze the results obtained. The results of this study explain that female students share excessively on TikTok, including seeking the attention of TikTok users, and TikTok as a stage for self-image performance. As for the backstage, the female college student who did Oversharing, Including Lifestyle, Daily life, and family background of female college students.

Introduction

Rapidly developing technology has changed many things, including the way people communicate. While humans used to communicate using pigeons to send messages to others, today exchanging messages via the post office is much faster (Bungin, 2017). Newspapers, television, and others are some types of communication media that have emerged due to technological advances. Now, humans can communicate using sophisticated technological devices such as mobile phones, which have later developed into smartphones, used by almost everyone worldwide (Sambas, 2015).

Advanced technology has brought the internet to advanced information, visible through various communication styles. The internet has also given rise to various new communication

models within society, which emerged from technological advancements, namely social media within the community, which has transformed public views. In today's modern era, social media has almost completely influenced people's lives, meaning people are highly dependent on social media daily. The rapid development of information and technology within the framework of accelerated globalization has also driven the increasing use of social media in society (Anjarwani et al., 2022). The development of social media, namely Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok, has led to a growing way of communicating in today's society. Many people use social media to express feelings, happiness, and other desired actions (Mutiah et al., 2019). This makes social media the most convenient platform (place) to share everything about users' daily lives. TikTok is an application that spread in early 2020 during the pandemic. This application has become an alternative entertainment for some. TikTok is appealing because the content generates feedback from fellow users through likes and comments. The most significant number of users today is Generation Z, which existed between 1995 and 2010, when technology in the information age was advanced. A table shows TikTok users in Indonesia in 2022.



Source: Statista, 2022

In this case, Gen Z is characterized by a love of technology and tends to be more dynamic and critical of opinions. They also interact rapidly globally when surfing the virtual world. Despite this, Generation Z is very close to technology (Kertati, 2018). Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is called digital natives because they grew up with digital technology. The primary focus of this study was female students at Sriwijaya University, Indralaya Campus, who overshare on TikTok and are viewed from both the front and backstage. Based on the latest data from January 2025, most TikTok users are in the 18-24 age range, with 16.6% male and 14.1% female (Duarte, 2025). Meskipun pengguna TikTok yang terbesar adalah laki-laki, namun

tujuannya untuk oversharing mayoritas adalah perempuan (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Although most TikTok users are male, the oversharing intention is predominantly female (Rahmawati et al., 2023). This is why the researchers chose female students as the subjects of this study.

Female students belonging to Gen Z are uploading their daily lives on TikTok because posting something to social media can foster different perceptions in the eyes of individuals who see it. Self-disclosure is often found on social media and is commonplace (Dewi & Delliana, 2020). Female overshare students display excessive content and are often edited to appear attractive. This relates to the social reality of female students, where social reality is the reality of a quality found in social phenomena that humans believe exists and is independent of the individual (Suryadi, 2011).

The reality of female students on TikTok has created a new phenomenon: oversharing. Oversharing is the excessive sharing of an individual's activities, which is then shared with other individuals and audiences on social media. There are criteria for oversharing: when an individual excessively shares daily content, packaged in a short video about their activities, then shares it on their TikTok account, it falls into the category of oversharing. On the front stage of social media, students only present the best version of themselves, meaning they play roles on the front stage, such as uploading photos with engaging captions (Susilo et al., 2025).

If we look at the reality backstage, it differs from the front stage, which they often use for oversharing on social media. This phenomenon can be viewed from the dramaturgical perspective proposed by Erving Goffman. Dramaturgy is a theory explaining the stage play, where actors assume two distinct characters when presented on the front and back stages (Girnanfa & Susilo, 2022).

This research on the phenomenon of oversharing on both front and backstage social media is interesting because students have their own motives for oversharing on TikTok. Students have different ways of presenting themselves on social media, reflecting the image they want to project on the front stage. This, of course, differs from the individual's actual life. This research is important because it examines the results of research conducted by Mawarniningsih et al. (2022), which found that oversharing is done to relieve stress from daily life appropriately. Researchers frequently observe this phenomenon among Sriwijaya University students through their TikTok posts.

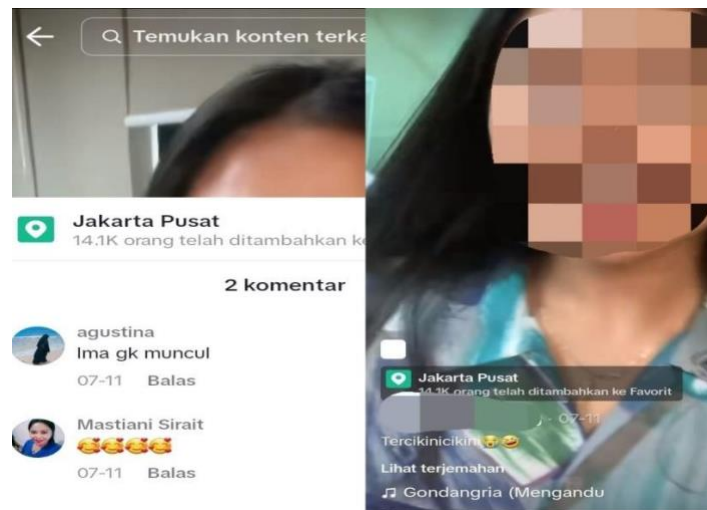
Previous studies published in research journals contain relevant references and explain the researcher's reasoning for choosing this research topic. The first study, conducted by Afnan (2019), aimed to examine the dramaturgy created by Facebook social media. This research was conducted textually using a dramaturgical approach and qualitative methods. The results concluded that the three informants were not sensitive to recognizing the front and backstage perceptions of the perpetrators, as the perpetrators of crimes on Facebook are very clever at presenting themselves through profile photos.

From the results of the researcher's observations to obtain informants by tracing TikTok accounts through contacts connected to their TikTok accounts and choosing students from Sriwijaya University Indralaya because after being traced there was oversharing behavior displayed on the students' TikTok, such as building a self-image on the front stage and this seemed to be inversely proportional to what they do every day with the content they display on TikTok social media. The reality of female students on TikTok has created a new phenomenon known as oversharing. Oversharing is when someone excessively shares their daily activities in short videos and shares them on their TikTok account. Oversharing will affect the self-image of TikTok users who follow the account. Generation Z will display a social reality that is different from real life, and Generation Z tends not to want to miss a moment, or the term is afraid of missing out. This is shown by initial data from interviews with several informants, one of whom is CAB, stating that TikTok is the most comfortable place to share stories in everyday life:

“.....Setiap hari aku ngepost video konten Tiktok karena nyaman dan orang-orang jarang yang kenal aku, terlepas dia tau aku di real life tapi aku tetap post sih, Tiktok tempat hitz dan tren semuanya ada di Tiktok, makanya aku nyaman sering unggah video disana. Karena aku juga konten kreator jadi kayak udah kewajiban aja unggah konten dan followers aku tuh suka nyariin, apalagi konten yang terupdate di hari itu....(12 Maret 2023)”

“.....Every day I post TikTok content videos because it's comfortable and people rarely know me, even though they know me in real life, I still post. TikTok is where the hits and trends are all there, that's why I feel comfortable uploading videos there often. Because I'm also a content creator, it feels like it's my obligation to upload content and my followers like to look for it, especially the content that's updated that day....(March 12, 2023)”

Figure 1. Screenshot of CAB posts and comments



The researcher then revealed that TikTok is part of an individual's front stage. In this study, the researcher will discuss the oversharing phenomenon by female students on TikTok from Erving Goffman's dramaturgical perspective. This is then broken down into several research questions regarding the reality of the front and back stage displayed by Sriwijaya University students who overshare on TikTok.

In selecting informants, the researcher used a purposive technique by applying specific criteria. The primary informant was a 2019 student from Sriwijaya University, Indralaya Campus, who was active and had been actively using social media for the past year (actively using TikTok and uploading at least one video containing daily activities). Meanwhile, the supporting informants were close friends of the Sriwijaya University student, Indralaya Campus, who met the criteria for being the primary informant.

Literature Review

Sosial Media dan Oversharing Pada Generasi Z

Social media is a reality of cyberspace and a media institution that controls news reporting. The emergence of the internet and social media has given users the freedom to compete in spreading information or events around them (Nasrullah, 2017). The definition of oversharing is excessive sharing or sharing too often about everyday life. Oversharing can be verbal through face-to-face conversations between individuals or through social media through written posts sent via

status, photos, and videos. This oversharing is generally done on social media because, with social media, the spread will be received more quickly by fellow social media users. However, if oversharing is done continuously, it will negatively impact others who see the post and find it uncomfortable. Oversharing also affects how others judge an individual. Quantitatively, oversharing can be seen from a person's daily posts, such as sharing posts more than five times a day or uploading videos of themselves.

Dramaturgical Theory

Dramaturgical theory is a work that breaks away from the concept of self. Erving Goffman's concept of theater creation begins with the concept of self, which has a broader meaning than Mead's concept of self. It is the role played by individuals. Goffman stated that human social life is like a theatrical performance on a stage, where individuals act as actors, playing roles according to the characters they portray (Suneki & Haryono, 2020). As Erving Goffman put it, human social life resembles a drama performance on a stage, where individuals act as actors, playing roles on stage, so that the audience can understand the actor's life (Suciptaningsih, 2017).

If the individual acting can portray the role according to the character presented, the self-presentation successfully achieves its goals. Therefore, dramaturgical theory is that the actor immerses himself in his role and can provide feedback based on what the audience sees. Goffman also saw a difference in acting from actors in playing their roles backstage and in front of the stage. Goffman's dramaturgical theory explains that human identity is dynamic; the actor's identity can change depending on who they interact with. So, in dramaturgical theory, social reality is the role played and is very dependent on various theater components. The core of Goffman's thinking is the "Self" or self (Mulyana, 2016).

Method

This study was designed as a descriptive qualitative study using a phenomenological research strategy. A purposive technique was used to select informants; data collection techniques included documentation, interviews, and participant observation. Creswell (2018) used data analysis techniques, including data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, to verify data validity. These techniques included source triangulation, method triangulation, and time triangulation.

The informants in this study were divided into two categories: primary informants and supporting informants. The primary informants were active students at Sriwijaya University, Indralaya Campus, class of 2019, who used the TikTok app. This study was conducted by contacting informants via WhatsApp video calls and partially through face-to-face interviews regarding issues related to oversharing on TikTok among students at Sriwijaya University, Indralaya. There were 12 informants in this study: 9 primary informants and three supporting informants. These primary informants were identified based on their number of followers and the frequency of their TikTok content uploads over a week. Supporting informants were identified based on their willingness to be contacted or interviewed. Primary informants came from various faculties, including the Faculty of Medicine (FK), Faculty of Agriculture (FP), Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Faculty of Computer Science (FASILKOM), and Faculty of Economics (FE). Supporting informants came from FKIP, FP, and FISIP.

Result and Discussion

Types of Uploaded Content

Content is information-rich content. In this case, students who engage in oversharing create content about their daily activities by uploading it to TikTok, which is naturally edited. TikTok content has its characteristics and types. This study identified two types of content in the primary informants' uploads:

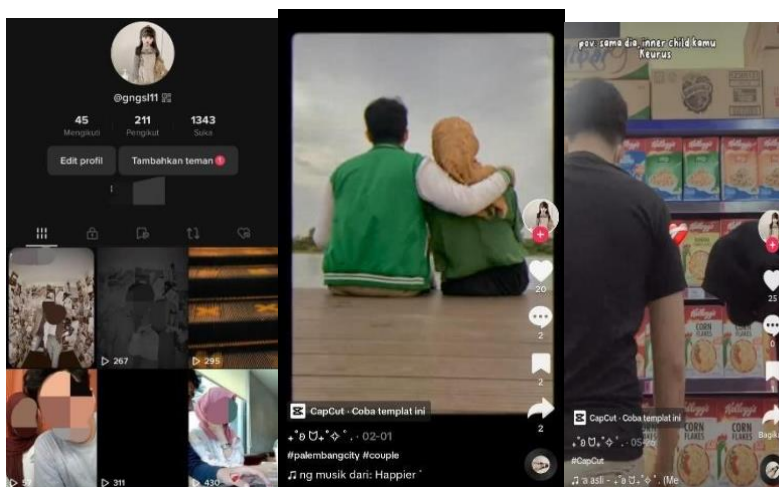
Romance Content

This sub-theme will describe the informants' content, specifically about their love lives. Five of the eight informants shared content about their love lives. However, this content was still positive, documenting their travels and activities in videos. As stated by KR:

"Konten yang aku unggah jarang yang sedang dirumah saja, seringnya lagi berpergian sama pacar aku atau ke tempat makan dan ke mall. Selepas buat konten itu aku edit-edit supaya rapih dan durasinya juga disesuaikan" (2 April 2023)

"I rarely upload content at home; I often post it with my boyfriend or at restaurants or the mall. After creating the content, I edit it to make it neat and adjust the duration." (April 2, 2023)

Figure 2. Profile and content posts belonging to the main informant PM



NM, a similar informant, echoed this sentiment when creating content with her boyfriend. NM often visits the cinema and calls it a "cinema date," a term often used by today's Generation Z in their dating style. NM, a member of the informant group, said:

"..... Biasanya kalau weekend tiba aku sama pacarku sering keluar rumah untuk janji ngedate, ngedate kami paling jauh ke bioskop aja sih, dan dia juga terkadang sering bantu aku buat konten ketika aku lagi ada job endorsement" (Wawancara pada 30 juli 2023)

"... Usually, when the weekend comes, my boyfriend and I often go out of the house to go on dates. The furthest we go is to the cinema, and he also sometimes helps me create content when I have endorsement jobs." (Interview on July 30, 2023)

Figure 3. Screenshot of NM Informant's TikTok content



Lifestyle in Everyday Life

The lifestyle portrayed in the real life of a Sriwijaya University student who engages in oversharing contrasts sharply with what the informants post on their TikTok accounts. Often, on

social media, most individuals only display the good things. This was also the case for several informants in this study.

Their backstage appearance is about being authentic, without any editing or makeup. They are their true selves backstage, not playing the roles they portray on TikTok. This simple lifestyle was displayed by all eight informants in this study, as stated by N:

"Lebih ke hidup yang apa adanya kalau di kehidupan asli, di Tiktok aku sering memakai fashion style seperti itu tetapi orang lain tidak tahu kalau aku ini berjualan makanan untuk bisa membeli pakaian yang kuninginkan tadi. Kalau tidak seperti itu tidak bisa saya membeli dan memakai baju bagus, Zaman sekarang ini mandiri lebih baik" (Wawancara pada 10 April 2023).

"It's more about living life as it is in real life. On TikTok, I often wear that kind of fashion, but people don't know that I sell food to afford the clothes I'm wearing. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to afford and wear nice clothes. It's better to be independent these days." (Interview, April 10, 2023).

This is reinforced by the response from RA's supporting informant, who stated that because he is a close friend of N, he knows N both on social media and in real life. RA's statement is as follows:

"Iya, N memang bekerja jualan makanan dan dia itu pekerja keras aslinya dan pantang menyerah walau kadang suka teringat bapaknya itu karena baru-baru ini dia berduka. Tapi N pacak bangkit lagi dan ekspresi ceria di sosial media dan style dia seperti itu adalah hasil keringat dia selama bekerja" (Wawancara pada 7 April 2023)

"Yes, N does sell food, and he's a true hard worker and never gives up, even though he sometimes thinks about his father because he recently went through a period of grief. But N is able to bounce back, and his cheerful expression on social media and his style are the result of his hard work." (Interview on April 7, 2023)

Based on the findings from the interview process above, it can be concluded that the situation on TikTok does not align with real life. Their goal in oversharing is to build a self-image that suits their desires and present their best side to gain a positive impression in the eyes of their audience or followers on TikTok. They also present themselves according to the assessment they want to receive from society. When on TikTok, it differs from everyday reality, which tends to be more straightforward. Researchers have also observed and directly observed the key informants, DA and N, in real life. When they upload videos on TikTok, an aspect that they must pay attention

to is the confidence to upload appropriate and engaging videos.

The Front Stage of a Female Student Who Overshares on TikTok

Dramaturgical theory states that each person's appearance has a distinct front and back stage when communicating with other individuals (Amelia & Amin, 2022). This subtheme will discuss the front stage. The front stage is divided into two parts: the personal front and the foreground. The front stage consists of various props prepared to support the role, including verbal and body language. The setting is the place or situation that must be present during the performance (Febriyanti Alya Janah et al., 2023).

Based on the research findings, the researcher identified the front stage performed by informants, students at Sriwijaya University, Indralaya, on TikTok. This included their TikTok profiles, the type of content uploaded, the frequency of TikTok uploads, and TikTok as a front stage for self-image performances. Dramaturgical theory asserts that each person presents a distinct front stage and a back stage in their lives when interacting with others. In this discussion, we will first discuss the front stage. The front stage is divided into two parts: the personal front and the foreground. The personal front consists of various equipment prepared to support the role, including verbal and body language. At the same time, the background is the place or situation that must be present during the performance.

Key informant IO explained that TikTok serves as a platform for socializing between users and provides inspiration from other users' activities, as well as information about tourist destinations and must-try culinary delights when traveling.

Figure 4. Screenshot of Informant IO's Profile, Content, and Comments



This is as expressed by IO's main informant:

"Liat konten orang lain yang menginspirasi dan yang positif aja sih, kalo ada yang negatif biasanya aku swipe up, dan juga dikonten orang lain tu kadang ada yang lagi liburan, nah disitu aku liat info mereka tuh kulinerannya apa aja sih atau wisata yang bagus apa aja, terus ke destinasi mana, pernah aku ke Pagaralam itu karena rekomendasi dari konten orang lain di Tiktok, gak lupa juga nyicipin makanan khas sana, dan gak lupa juga aku ngonten dong buat di post di Tiktok" (Wawancara pada tanggal 9 April 2023)

"I only look at other people's content that is inspiring and positive. If there is something negative, I usually swipe up. And also in other people's content, sometimes there are people who are on vacation. Well, there I see their information about what culinary delights or good tourist attractions, and also where to go. I once went to Pagaralam because of recommendations from other people's content on TikTok. I also didn't forget to try the local food, and I also didn't forget to post content on TikTok." (Interview on April 9, 2023)

TikTok initially focused on long-distance communication and featured photos or videos uploaded by users to their accounts, much like other social media platforms. TikTok has become increasingly popular over time and is used as a platform for users to compete and gain sympathy from others. This sympathy refers to the number of views of content and comments from other TikTok users on what someone posts on TikTok.

Researchers found that displaying or creating engaging content and frequently uploading videos are two ways to gain sympathy from other TikTok users. Each informant believed that uploading engaging content significantly impacted the number of views, likes, and comments. This data shows that students at Sriwijaya University in Indralaya frequently upload videos of their activities to their TikTok feeds. As a key informant, PM put it:

"Iya sering, kalau dulu selalu, pernah untuk sehari sekali atau seminggu sekali, Tapi kalau sekarang-sekarang ini tergantung mood. Kalau lagi mau buat konten tapi kalau gak mood ya tidak upload, Tergantung juga dengan stok video di hp, kira-kira tidak ada yang bagus dan belum diedit, aku milih tidak posting sih, Intinya itu tergantung mood aja waktu untuk mengunggah video itu aku seringnya malam dan jangan lupa pakai tagar fyp supaya konten kita insightful nya tinggi." (Wawancara pada 22 April 2023).

"Yes, often, in the past it was always, once a day or once a week, But now it depends on my mood. If I want to create content but I'm not in the mood, I don't upload it. It also depends on the stock of videos on my phone, if there aren't any good ones that haven't been edited, I choose not to post them. Basically, it just depends on my mood. I often upload videos at night and don't

forget to use the FYP hashtag so that our content is highly insightful."
 (Interview on April 22, 2023).

A person's self-image is about creating one that aligns with how we want others to see us, so that their views or judgments align with ours. TikTok is beneficial in creating a self-image that aligns with how they want to be seen. With the ever-changing world, competition is increasing, requiring individuals to continually develop themselves by improving their skills, personality, and other elements that can stand out, creating a sense of identity and making them noticeable and memorable. To gain the sympathy and attention of other TikTok users through likes and comments, the key informants and students posted engaging content after editing their videos to make them more appealing.

TikTok has an ongoing creator tool that helps users connect with others. This feature helps users develop strategies and ideas for becoming creators and how to engage their entire audience to increase engagement on their videos. This is a reason why students overshare. For this advanced feature, a content creator's primary task is to create engaging and educational content that benefits viewers. Three content creators in this study posted content daily, with at least 21 videos uploaded to their TikTok accounts weekly.

Table 1. Front Stage Reality of Students Who Overshare on TikTok

No	Category	Description
1	Reasons to use Tiktok for oversharing	The reasons why informants use TikTok for excessive sharing include the quota used up and the frequency of TikTok uploads.
2.	Seeking Attention from TikTok Followers	Informants have a way to find out the tension of people who watch TikTok, namely by uploading 3-5 videos a day so that they will visit other people's homepages more often. If the video is interesting, it is likely to get new followers, and the number of followers also determines the likes and comments received.
3.	Tiktok is used as a place to show off one's self-image	Informants use TikTok as a place to build a self-image that suits their desires, such as a simple person who is good at cooking or a person who is <i>ambyar</i> (confused) and excessive.

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The Backstage of Oversharing Students

The backstage is when students act out their true selves; they behave as themselves without makeup or other preparations to enhance their social media appearance. Because many people do

not easily see the behavior conveyed backstage, this backstage area allows for a comparison between authentic and fake appearances. Two components comprise the students' backstage in this study: family background and daily lifestyle.

Contrary to what informants posted on their TikTok accounts, the lifestyles of Sriwijaya University students who overshare are very different. Most people only show their best selves on social media. This is also the case for several informants in this study.

Student Family Background

This subtheme will discuss the interview results regarding the informants' family backgrounds. In this section, researchers will explain the informants' diverse family backgrounds, categorized by occupation and family size. Furthermore, they will explore why the informants' families overshare on TikTok, based on their family backgrounds.

Researchers will determine the informants' parents' occupations based on findings and observations obtained during the interviews. N is the youngest of three children, and his father has passed away. His mother is a housewife, and his older sister helps him with his daily needs. Fortunately, N also works part-time around campus to support himself while away from home. Furthermore, he is fortunate to be a member of the university's BIDIKMISI program. As N explained:

“.....Memang aku ni sebagai anak rantauan harus nian mandiri dan galak nak ngerepoti wong tuo sebab wong tuo aku ni siso mamak aku tula, dan bersyukur nian dapet bidikmisi tapi aku idak ngandalke dari situ be aku nyari tambahan duit melalui affliate Tiktok, sering post konten dan begawe full time di kedai roti” (Wawancara pada 23 April 2023)

“.....It's true that as a migrant child, I have to be very independent and not bother old people because old people are my siblings and my mothers, and I'm grateful to have received the Bidikmisi scholarship, but I don't rely on it. I earn extra money through TikTok affiliates, often posting content and working full time at a bakery.” (Interview on April 23, 2023)

Another informant, CAB, shared a similar experience. CAB, a content creator, stated that being a content creator is a difficult task and that there are many new things to learn from viewing the posts of other successful content creators. Based on the above description of the informant's family background, researchers can conclude that the informant seeks solace during times of loneliness and sadness and earns money through the content they upload.

Table 2: Informants' Parents' Occupations

No	Key informant	Father's occupation	Mother's job
1	YTP	Civil Servant	Housewife
2	CAB	Civil Servant	Civil Servant
3	KR	Civil Servant	-
4	DA	Daily Laborer	Housewife
5	SF	Entrepreneur	Housewife
6	N	-	Doesn't work
7	IO	Private Employees	Private Employees
8	PM	Civil Servant	Civil Servant
9	NM	Farmer	IRT

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Based on the informants' family backgrounds, it can be concluded that what is apparent in everyday life is not displayed on social media, especially TikTok. The informants' family circumstances range from those who feel empty to those who have made peace with their fate. The roles played in the content and TikTok live streams largely conceal the students' circumstances.

Cocclusion

The following drives the reality of oversharing on TikTok among Sriwijaya University Indralaya students. First, oversharing is beneficial because it offers various features and provides diverse information. Second, TikTok is a platform to seek sympathy from viewers who view their posts by accessing their profiles and observing the type of TikTok content uploaded. The frequency of TikTok video uploads for nine informants is 3-5 videos per day, while 15-35 videos per week falls into the oversharing category. This is also evident in the type of content uploaded, which includes content about a day in my life and my love life. The number of likes and comments also influences the informant. Third, TikTok is used by female students as a platform for them to build an appropriate self-image, reflecting the ideal figure they want to portray to their audience or followers.

This is the behind-the-scenes reality of a female student at Sriwijaya University in Indralaya who engages in oversharing. This behind-the-scenes reality is divided into two parts: first, they want to see their daily lifestyle, which differs from the way they post on their TikTok accounts; their behind-the-scenes reality is presented as genuine and simple; and second, they

examine their family background, which reveals that the informant appears lonely as the youngest child and seeks entertainment through oversharing on TikTok.

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