

Students' Perceptions of 'Brain Decay' Content on the TikTok account @CNNINDONESIA

Fitri Retno Wulansari¹, Nur Maghfirah Aesthetika²

^{1,2}Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61796/icossh.v2i2.429>



Sections Info

Article history:

Submitted: June 14, 2025

Final Revised: July 24, 2025

Accepted: August 10, 2025

Published: September 27, 2025

Keywords:

Brain rot

Student perception

Social media

Tiktok

ABSTRACT

Objective: 'brain rot' presented through the content of @cnnindonesia TikTok account. Using qualitative methods and phenomenological approaches, this study explores students' subjective experiences in consuming digital content and how Joseph A. DeVito's theory of perception can explain the way they shape their understanding of the phenomenon. **Method:** The data was collected through in-depth interviews with five informants who were active students, aged 18-25, had a TikTok account, and had followed @cnnindonesia account. **Results:** Based on the findings, student perceptions. 'Brain decay' is formed through a five-stage process, with the interpretation-evaluation stage being the most important. The informants agreed that this phenomenon is real among students, characterized by a decrease in critical thinking skills and a tendency to avoid in-depth content due to excessive consumption of 'dime' content. Nonetheless, content @cnnindonesia spark strong self-awareness, encourage students to be more selective in choosing content, limit the duration of social media use, and retrain focus. **Novelty:** The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of digital literacy and self-awareness to overcome the negative impact of 'brain decay' content.

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology has developed very rapidly and changed the way humans access, disseminate, and process information. One of the most prominent aspects of this change is the rapid growth of social media, which is now an integral part of the lives of global communities. Social media has become one of the most dominant platforms in everyday life and has become an integral part of daily life, especially among the younger generation. According to [1] Social media is a medium on the internet that allows users to represent themselves and interact, share, collaborate, and communicate with other users. One of the most popular platforms today is Tik Tok.

Tik Tok is a music video and social networking application originating from China that officially enlivens the digital industry in Indonesia. [2] TikTok is a social media platform that allows users to create, edit, and share short videos with various special effects, music, and other interesting features so that this platform gets a lot of attention from the public, especially the younger generation. With the various features that Tik Tok offers, users can express their creativity and interact with others globally. [3] mentioning that the use of TikTok as a social media platform is growing in popularity among college students, and in recent years, many studies have explored the impact of social media on social behavior, self-confidence, and interactions between individuals.

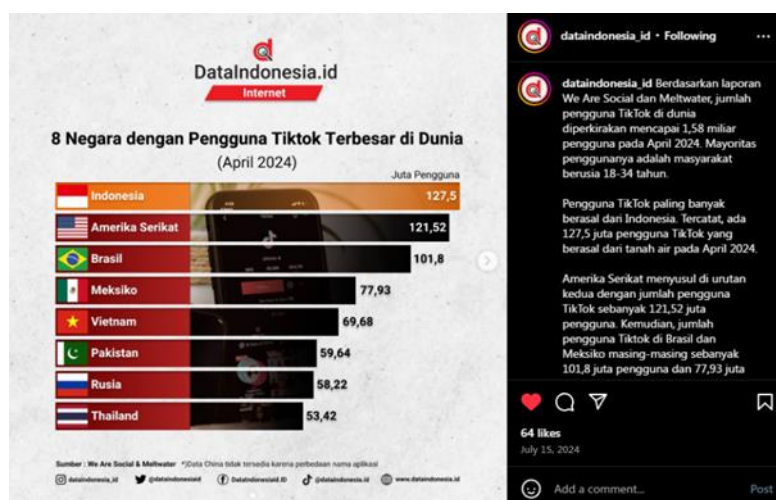


Figure 1. Data on the 8 Largest Tik Tok User Countries in the World (April 2024).

Source: (www.instagram.com/dataindonesia_id)

Based on data from DataIndonesia.id, Indonesia occupies the first position with the largest number of Tik Tok users in the world with 127.5 million users as of April 2024, with the majority of users being vulnerable people aged 18-34 years [4]. The large number of users shows that Tik Tok is one of the most widely used applications as a tool of expression. [5] stating that social media provides an opportunity for its users to build their self-image online, but it also comes with risks in terms of mental health. This is reinforced by research by [6] which suggests that social stress resulting from interactions on social media can lead to stress, anxiety, and feelings of inferiority, especially among college students.

Social media in general, including TikTok, has influenced the way students interact with the outside world, build self-identity, and communicate with others. According to [7] students often use Tik Tok to develop skills, and make it an effective informal learning tool. The number of Tik Tok users, as well as several studies that found the consumptive impact of social media, is in line with The phenomenon of "brain decay" Recently, it has emerged, especially among the younger generation who actively use social media.

Research conducted by [8] Studying the phenomenon Brain Rot as a result of excessive consumption of short and superficial digital content on social media, particularly TikTok, resulting in decreased brain cognitive function, weak focus, and addiction. In conclusion, this study shows that the phenomenon of brain rot is not only a psychological and cognitive problem, but also a problem of adolescent morality.

Term "Brain Rot" refers to a decline in cognitive abilities due to superficial and unchallenging consumption of digital content. According to [4] (Oxford University Press 2024) "Brain Rot" defined as mental or intellectual damage allegedly caused by excessive consumption of content that is taken for granted. This condition is often associated with the habit of aimless scrolling on social media. This is influenced by the pattern of content consumption on platforms such as Tik Tok, which is dominated by short-form videos with fast narratives, thus making users accustomed to getting information in a concise form without conducting more in-depth analysis.

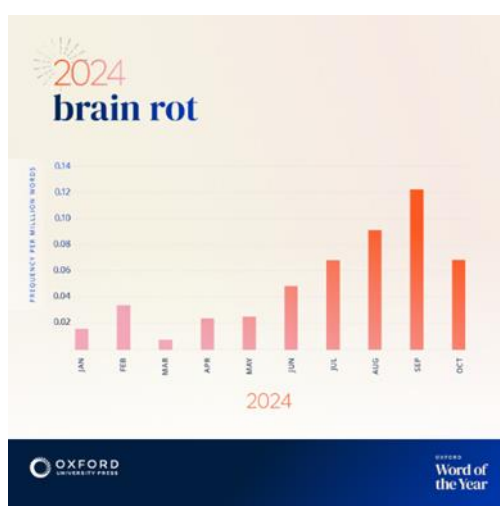


Figure 2. The Oxford University Press graph shows the trend of using the phrase "brain decay" throughout 2024.

Source : <https://corp.oup.com/news/brain-rot-named-oxford-word-of-the-year-2024/>

In Indonesia, the phenomenon "Brain Rot" This has become even more significant given the high level of social media use among students. Research by [9] discussing "brain decay" as a form of cognitive decline due to excessive use of technology, especially digital devices and social media. The results show that dependence on technology triggers symptoms such as memory impairment, decreased concentration, mental fog, mood swings, and reduced attention span that impacts productivity, social interaction, and mental health.

Study by [10] discuss brain decay as cognitive decline due to excessive use of technology, especially digital devices and social media. This suggests that excessive reliance on technology leads to symptoms such as memory distortions, poor concentration, mental fog, mood swings, and reduced attention span, which negatively impacts productivity, social interaction, and overall mental health.

Based on the We Are Social report in 2024, the average internet user in Indonesia spends more than 8 hours per day online, with more than 3 hours spent accessing social media. This phenomenon raises concerns about how the younger generation, especially college students, understand and filter the information they receive from social media. TikTok's educational content related to 'brain rot' on social media is generally in the form of short uploads such as short videos, infographics, and news summaries in one or two sentences. According to many sources, short video content, particularly on Tik Tok, is entertainment and It is very popular among today's young generation. According to [11] in his book Proust and the Squid, human focus ability declines due to rapid digital consumption habits. According to [12] Almost the average Tik Tok application user is under 18 years old. In fact, the majority are children between 5-10 years old or elementary school age. Of course, this is dangerous for the mental development of the nation's next generation. Their thinking and stance tend to be unstable. According to [13] Short videos on TikTok capitalize on this trend by providing instant entertainment in a few seconds, making them more digestible for younger generations who have shorter attention spans.

According to Dr. Jean Twenge, author [11], young people are deeply connected to social trends and prefer content that is easy to understand, funny, and reflects their daily

lives. "Dime" content often features simple humor that can be perceived by many people, making it even more viral. Deeper, Dr. Anna Lembke, a psychiatrist from Stanford University. Explains that short, entertaining entertainment content triggers the release of dopamine in the brain, which provides an instant sensation of pleasure. TikTok is designed with an algorithm that continuously offers engaging content, creating an addictive cycle. The increasing consumption of short-term, light-hearted content has given rise to the term "Brain Rot" which describes a condition affected by this where a person then feels less productive or loses the ability to think deeply due to consuming too much weighty content. According to [14] that 'Brain rot' very influential in the real world. This phenomenon is a weakening of the brain and thinking power that makes social media users lazy to think hard.

As one of the Tik Tok accounts that has various sources of information, @cnnindonesia account uploads content that discusses the phenomenon of "Brain Rot". Based on the information uploaded by the content, it is explained that *protracted scrolling* to find entertainment on social media has a bad impact, especially on mental health, one of which is the occurrence of "Brain Rot". It is explained in the information on the content that "Brain Rot" is a decrease in mental condition due to excessive consumption of dime content on social media. In the long run, this condition leads to the risk of anxiety and depression. The term "Brain Rot" is not a medical term, but rather a contemporary term coined by modern society to describe their mental state after consuming excessive content.

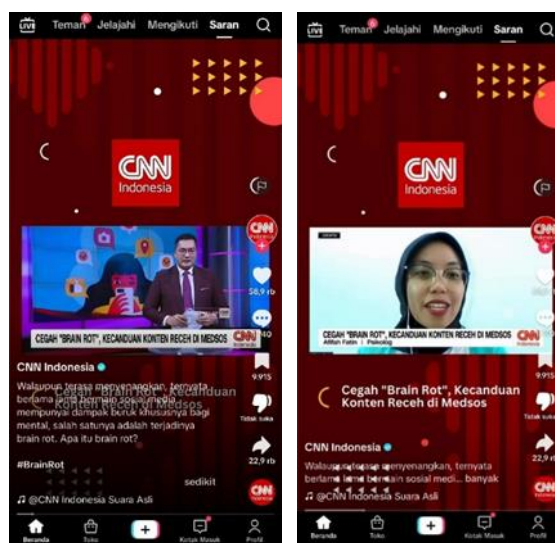


Figure 3. Brain Rot Content on TikTok @cnnindonesia

Source : <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZS6TMsXh1/>

Information about "Brain Rot" in content uploaded by @cnnindonesia accounts and the emergence of this phenomenon due to the excessive use of social media, especially Tik Tok, can be explained through the perception theory put forward by Joseph A. DeVito. The theory of perception put forward by Joseph A. DeVito explains that perception is an active process in which individuals select, organize, and interpret the information they receive through their senses. Perception is not just the passive reception

of stimuli from the environment, but involves cognitive processing that is influenced by individual experiences, knowledge, culture, and psychological factors.

According to [15] There are five stages in perception, namely Stimulation – i.e. the process of the individual receiving stimuli through the five senses, Organization – the process of organizing information, Interpretation-Evaluation – the process of giving meaning to the information received by the individual, Memory – the process of storing information in the individual's memory, and Recalling (Call back) – Withdrawal process.

In this study, the researchers observed that the phenomenon of Brain Rot content uploaded by @cnnindonesia accounts on TikTok is not just entertainment, but also a phenomenon that relies heavily on how students as the audience receive, organize, and interpret the information presented. This process is very important because each individual has unique perceptual mechanisms, as described in Joseph A. DeVito's theory of perception. This theory asserts that a person's understanding of information is not universal, but is influenced by various factors, such as personal experience, educational background, social environment, and psychological aspects that shape their mindset in response to a stimulus.

Based on this explanation, students who actively consume content on TikTok can have different perspectives on the phenomenon of Brain Rot, depending on how they choose and interpret the messages received. Some students may see this phenomenon as something entertaining or just part of digital culture, while others may see it as an indication of a change in the mindset of younger generations that needs further attention. These differences in perception suggest that there is a strong subjectivity factor in the way individuals process information, which can ultimately influence their mindset and behavior in consuming content on social media.

From the above phenomenon, the formulation of the problem in this study is how do students view the content of 'brain decay' on @cnnindonesia TikTok account? This research is important to be carried out with the aim of analyzing the phenomenon of 'brain rot' in TikTok users. The urgency of this research also lies in the effort to understand in depth how students receive, organize, and interpret the *phenomenon of "Brain Rot"* presented in the content uploaded by @cnnindonesia accounts. By exploring the perception of students from communication science and psychology study programs towards this phenomenon, this study aims not only to understand how digital content is processed by young audiences, but also to identify its potential impact on their mindset as well as the way they interact with social media. Thus, this research is expected to provide broader insights into the dynamics of perception in the digital era, as well as provide academic contributions in the field of communication and social media studies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method to find out how students' perception of the phenomenon of 'Brain Rot' is discussed in one of the content of @cnnindonesia TikTok account. The focus of this research is to explore how students interpret the information they see, especially when the content discusses something close to their social media habits. In this case, students not only watch, but also form personal understandings based on their own experiences, values, and views.

In this study, the analysis of perception theory from Joseph A. Devito was used so that researchers could find out more deeply how students perceive the 'Brain Rot' content they watched. This research was conducted at the University of Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA) with participants consisting of 3 Communication Science students and 2 Psychology students who actively consume information media from the TikTok application, with an age range of 20-25 years because at this age it is an active group of social media users. The selection of participants was carried out by *purposive sampling technique*, where students who became Informants in this study had experience in accessing or knowing content related to Brain Rot on TikTok social media. A total of five students were used as informants in this study, considering that this number is enough to get a variety of experiences and deep perceptions. The identity of the research subject can be seen at:

Table 1. The identity of the research subject.

No	Initial Name	Age	TikTok Active Duration	Gender
1.	MN	20 Years	5-6 jams	Man
2.	FALSE	20 Years	1-7 Jam	Woman
3.	SS	21 Years	4-5 jams	Man
4.	VAL	21 Years	5-6 jams	Woman
5.	BYA	24 Years	4-5 jams	Man

From the table, it can be seen that the study informants were in the age range of 20-24 years, with the duration of TikTok use varying between 1 to 7 hours per day. The gender composition consists of three males and two females. The variety of use, durability of use, and background of the study program are expected to provide a deeper picture of students' perception of the phenomenon of 'Brain Rot' educational content on TikTok.

The data in this study was collected through two main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, and documentation. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with guidelines compiled based on Joseph A. DeVito's theory of perception [9]. In this interview, students were asked to share their experiences of consuming TikTok content that discusses the phenomenon of Brain Rot, reveal their interpretation of the messages in the content, and explain the impact they feel on their digital mindset and behavior. In addition, documentation is carried out by collecting various digital archives, such as screenshots of TikTok uploads of @cnnindonesia accounts that discuss Brain Rot, as well as field notes from interviews and observations that have been carried out.

Table 2. Perception Analysis Table

Research Focus	Element	Proof
Student Perception	Stimulation (<i>Stimulation</i>)	Exposure to content about Brain Rot from @cnnindonesia account on TikTok,

Organisasi (<i>Organisasi</i>)	Processing of information about Brain Decay
Interpretation - Evaluation (<i>Interpretation – Evaluation</i>)	Interpretation of information, interpretation and evaluation of Brain Rot
Memory (<i>Memory</i>)	Storage of information about Brain Decay
Remember (<i>Remember</i>)	Remember about Brain Decay

In analyzing the data, the researcher applied an interactive analysis technique developed by Miles and Huberman. The researcher begins the analysis process with data reduction, which is by selecting and categorizing findings based on relevance to the research objectives. After the data was subtracted, the researcher compiled it in the form of a descriptive narrative that systematically described the findings. In addition, the researcher also presented data using a table and included interview excerpts that supported the findings of the researcher who analyzed the results of interviews and documentation with reference to Joseph A. Devito's perception theory which became the basis for the analysis of how students interpreted the phenomena studied. To ensure the accuracy and validity of the data, the researcher also carried out a triangulation process, namely by comparing and confirming the results of in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation that had been collected during the research process. At a later stage, the researcher draws conclusions from the analyzed data and verifies to ensure the validity of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The focus of the problem in this study is students' perception of the phenomenon of 'brain rot' on @cnnindonesia accounts, especially about how they receive, organize, and interpret the content presented. This research was conducted at the University of Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo with informants from students of the Communication Science Study Program and the Psychology Study Program who were selected based on research criteria. To answer this researcher's question, the researcher uses a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach to further explore students' subjective experiences in consuming digital content. The research was carried out in several stages, namely interviews based on research that focused on the process of perception according to Joseph A. Devito which consisted of **Stimulation**, receiving stimuli through the five senses, **Regulating** information selection, **Interpretation and Evaluation** of experiences of desires, desires, values and beliefs, **Memory**, **Remembering** and reassessing the information that has been consumed.

The phenomenon of 'brain decay' is a condition of cognitive decline due to superficial and repetitive consumption of excessive digital content. The phenomenon of 'brain decay' is increasingly talked about in the digital era, especially among students who actively consume social media. This term can refer to a condition of reduced critical

thinking and concentration skills due to massive exposure to bright, entertaining, and instant digital content. This phenomenon can be explained through the perpendicular theory put forward by [9], which states that individuals receive, organize, and interpret information based on their experiences, social background, and environment. In Joseph A. Devito's perception there are five stages and describe the process of forming perception in the scheme below:



Chart 1. Perception Formation

Source: Joseph A. Devito

In the 5 stages discussed above, namely in the first stage of questions, namely Stimulation, with the question, What factors make you interested or not interested in seeing @cnnindonesia content related to 'Brain Rot' education. The informant with the initials SS and NEP said

"Actually, I am interested because this brain rot has spread to all users, especially TikTok users and there have been many victims of brain rot. Especially in the comments of tiktok comments, usually if you are not interested, it is because my tiktok fyp is mostly about funny memes, so if you are serious, sometimes choose to choose" (SS, March 14, 2025)

"I wasn't interested because I didn't see it until the end, because I thought what I got from this video was already listed at the beginning of the video so I didn't see it until the end. When I knew what the point was, I immediately scrolled to another tiktok" (NEP, March 14, 2025)

In the second stage, namely Organizing (Information Picking), with questions. Once you have a focus on the content, you do further research through other mediums. The informant with the initials NEP and SS said.

"No, because the reflex that I think is clearly not strange and is already evident in the CNN content earlier, so I am not looking for the search and scroll reflex anymore" (SS, March 14, 2025)

"Of course, I am trying to find out the facts of the phenomenon of "brain decay" that occurs in society due to the habit of consuming trivial and practical content excessively on other platforms and other accounts." (NEP, March 14, 2025)

According to the informant at the stimulation stage, the two informants explained that the interest in the 'brain rot' educational content uploaded by @cnnindonesia account was influenced by the relevance of the brain decay phenomenon which is considered to be spreading among TikTok users. However, content becomes less engaging if it doesn't match entertainment preferences or when the core information is already conveyed at the beginning so that it doesn't encourage watching until the end.

In the third stage, namely Interpretation & Evaluation (Experience, Needs, Desires, Values and Beliefs), with the question Whether, according to the informant, the phenomenon of 'brain decay' reported by CNN Indonesia does occur among students, why is that? The informant with the initials SS and VAL said.

"In my opinion, the phenomenon of 'brain rot' really exists among students. If you pay attention, there are several student groups who are reluctant to be invited to think critically and structurally. This is partly due to the excessive consumption of practical and penny content on their social media. The most common thing we can come across is the use of AI as a substitute for their brain in performing tasks, rather than as an additional tool in completing tasks". (NEP, March 14, 2025)

"It does happen among students. Many students are addicted Scrolling, difficulty focusing, and experiencing decreased analytical skills due to consuming too much digital content. This phenomenon is related to the way the brain works, where

The gift of dopamine is constantly stimulated by engaging short content. As a result, students tend to be easily distracted and find it difficult to maintain concentration on tasks that require deep thinking." (VAL, July 26, 2025)

According to the informant at the Interpretation and Evaluation stage, the two informants emphasized that the phenomenon of brain decay does occur among students. The SS informant assessed that this can be seen from the tendency of some students who are reluctant to think critically because they consume too much content and practice, even relying on AI not as an aid, but as a substitute for the thought process. Meanwhile, the VAL informant highlighted the impact of scrolling addiction that triggers distractions, decreased focus, and reduced analytical ability due to exposure to short digital content that stimulates the dopamine reward system. Thus, this stage shows that students experience changes in cognitive behavior that are influenced by the habit of consuming digital content excessively.

In the fourth stage i.e. Memory, with the question Are you making changes in the habits of your social media users? If so, what kind of change! The informant had the initials BYA and said.

"Although it wasn't entirely significant, I started trying to make small changes. Especially on TikTok, I try to be more selective in choosing content and sometimes turn my attention to other activities such as reading novels. I realized that this behavior was a difficult habit to change, but awareness of the potential negative effects of 'brain rot' prompted me to practice self-control." (BYA, July 12, 2025)

"Other than TikTok, I'm not, because I'm not active on TikTok by making changes like redirects by reading novels and others." (NEP, March 14, 2025)

According to the informant at the memory stage, the two informants showed awareness of the impact of the brain rot phenomenon which then encouraged behavior change efforts. BYA informants began to try to be more selective in choosing content on TikTok and diverting attention to other activities such as reading novels as a form of self-control exercise. Meanwhile, NEP informants also switched activities, although not too significant because they were not very active in using TikTok. Thus, this stage explains that memory over knowledge about brain rot plays a role in shaping awareness and experiments to change social media use habits.

The fifth final stage is Recall, with the question If you compare your understanding before and after watching Cnn Indonesia's content on 'brain decay', is there a change in perspective? If anything, what changed? Initials with informants BYA and SS.

"Yes, there is a change in perspective, especially towards the use of TikTok itself. Before looking at CNN Indonesia's content, I might have seen TikTok only as an entertainment platform. However, after that, I began to realize that there are features and algorithms on TikTok that can indirectly trigger the phenomenon of 'brain decay'" (BYA, July 12, 2025)

"I've heard information about the "brain rot" phenomenon before @cnnindonesia account posted its content. But it was only limited to a descriptive understanding, then my understanding of the dangers and risks that occur in the phenomenon of "brain rot" after seeing the contents of @cnnindonesia." (SS, March 14, 2025)

According to the informant at the recall stage, both informants showed a change in understanding after seeing @cnnindonesia content. BYA informants realized that TikTok is not only entertainment, but also has algorithms that can trigger brain decay. Meanwhile, the SS informant confirmed that his understanding of the dangers and risks of this phenomenon was increasing.

Based on the results of the interviews, it can be seen that students' perception of the phenomenon of 'brain decay' is formed through a series of processes that start from the initial stimulus reception, or **stimulation stage**. At this stage, the informant is first exposed and receives information about 'brain decay' through concise and easy-to-understand content presented by @cnnindonesia account on TikTok. Although the presentation is concise, the content manages to spark their interest, both because of the term 'brain rot' which is relevant to psychological studies and because this phenomenon is often observed in the surrounding environment. Students are able to distinguish informative content from clickbait by checking the integrity of the account, the completeness of the information, and comparing it with other sources, which indicates that they do not necessarily accept the information presented. However, the effectiveness of such concise and to the point content remains a major entry point for them to begin to understand and organize the initial information about 'brain decay' before they finally undertake further exploration.

Informants when discussing brain decay, the stages that are more likely to be discussed are **the interpretation and evaluation stages**. This is because at this stage, the individual not only receives the stimulus, but has already begun to meaning, interpret, and judge the information they receive. In the context of interviews, the stages of interpretation and evaluation can be seen from how informants relate the phenomenon of 'brain decay' to their personal experiences or values. They began to ask if the phenomenon really occurred among college students and evaluated their feelings after consuming the content. This stage indicates the presence of deeper understanding and personal reflection, which is at the core of perception formation.

Discussion

Based on the results of interviews with five informants from the Communication Science Study Program about Students' Perception of the 'Brain Rot' Phenomenon @cnnindonesia accounts, namely:

1. Stimulation

In the results of interviews with several informants, the initial stage is stimulation where students receive information about the 'brain bus' phenomenon through content presented by the TikTok account @cnnindonesia. All informants stated that they had seen or read content that discussed 'brain decay'. The main factor that affects their interest in this content is the relevance of the issue to daily life. Students feel that this phenomenon is close to their habits in consuming social media, especially TikTok. Interested in watching because of the presentation of information that is short, clear, and uses an attractive format. However, there are also those who are not interested because they have already got the core information at the beginning of the video so they don't feel the need to watch until the end. This shows that the delivery of news in a short and dense format is more attractive to the younger generation who are used to the consumption of fast information.

After receiving the initial stimulus, students begin to process the information they receive and relate it to personal experiences as well as social phenomena around them. Most informants feel that the content is @cnnindonesia relevant to the reality they are experiencing. They realize that the habit of watching short and trivial content can affect their way of thinking and information consumption patterns. Of the 5 informants, they also assessed the presentation of news as @cnnindonesia easy to understand. This is due to the effective use of delivery styles, including catchy hooks at the beginning of the video. The short and concise format allows students to understand the gist of the information without the need to watch the full video. Thus, they can instantly capture the main message without feeling bored or losing interest.

At this stage, it is important to ensure that the informant has real experience consuming content from @cnnindonesia so that the interview can take place in more depth. If the informant only knows about this phenomenon from other sources or only hears without actually watching the content, then the data collected can become less relevant. This question also reveals the reasons why students are interested or not interested in the topic of 'brain decay'. Their answers will help understand how audiences process information presented by the media as well as the factors that affect their interest in the issue.

2. Organizing

After receiving the information, the next stage of perception is organizing, where students begin to sort and select the information that is considered important. Their main focus in understanding the phenomenon of 'brain decay' is its impact on information consumption mindsets and habits. The researchers concluded that they realized content consumption patterns dominated by short videos could lead to changes in ways of thinking, including decreased focus ability and a tendency to avoid more complex content. At this stage, the informant seeks to seek further information through other media to gain a deeper understanding of 'brain rot'. However, also those who feel that the information provided by @cnnindonesia is sufficient so there is no need to look for

additional sources. This shows that trust in news sources plays an important role in shaping students' perceptions of a phenomenon.

Based on interviews with 5 informants, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of 'brain decay' is indeed real and has a significant impact on the way of thinking, focusing, and emotions of individuals, especially students. Many college students feel that the consumption of short, trivial content on social media, such as TikTok, makes it harder for them to concentrate, get bored faster, and have less patience in receiving complex information. It's also important for governments and content creators to start considering regulations and creating healthier content standards. This effort aims to make social media not only a means of entertainment, but also can provide useful education for users. In addition, individual awareness in sorting and limiting content consumption is also an important step in preventing the negative impact of 'brain rot'.

The informant also found that the habit of aimlessly scrolling was common among students. Initially, many do it just for entertainment or when they feel bored, but over time it can become a habit that is difficult to break. The informant also admitted that they were not aware that they often scrolled aimlessly until the time spent became excessive. The researchers also concluded that this phenomenon could have a negative impact if left unchecked. Aimlessly scrolling too often can make a person lose focus, waste time, and reduce productivity. Therefore, self-awareness to control the time of social media use is very important so that this habit does not develop into a detrimental addiction.

In the results of interviews about the duration of scrolling, the researcher concluded that informants realized that if left unchecked, this habit can make a person ignore reality and spend too much time. Although the informant stated that scrolling had little effect because it was already a common habit, others emphasized that the longer a person spends on social media, the greater the risk of brain decay. This happens because diverse and interesting content keeps users scrolling unconsciously. Therefore, it is important for individuals to be aware of the limitations of social media use so as not to get caught up in habits that can negatively impact their daily mindset and productivity. After understanding the duration of scrolling, including questions about the consumption patterns of short and dime-up content, the researcher was able to conclude that the informant answered that the consumption of pednek and dime-up content on social media had two sides. On the one hand, this content is considered a funny and fun entertainment, so many people enjoy it. Additionally, its short and visually appealing format makes it preferable to long-form content.

However, excessive consumption of short content can have a negative impact. Informants mentioned that watching this kind of content too often can reduce the ability to understand more complex information. In addition, this habit is reinforced by social media algorithms that continue to recommend similar types of content, making it increasingly difficult for users to escape these consumption patterns. Including the ability to focus which is important and must be maintained. The researchers concluded that all informants were aware that consuming too much dime content could reduce focus, even to the point of affecting other activities such as studying or worshipping. 1 in 5 informants emphasized that focus is not something acquired from birth, but must be trained to remain optimal. In addition, in the context of social media, user attention usually only

lasts in the first 30 seconds of a piece of content, so that the information conveyed in a short period of time is easier to attract attention.

Then in content selection, researchers can also conclude that content selection on social media has a great influence on users' mindsets. Informants can emphasize the importance of filtering so that social media doesn't have a negative impact, and prefer educational and informative content to a dime. The informant also stated that the selection of content largely depends on the preferences and comfort zone of each individual. Nowadays, many people are more interested in content that has interesting visualizations than in-depth content. Therefore, the need for awareness in choosing quality and useful content is important. By sorting out the content consumed, users can use social media more positively and avoid negative impacts on their daily mindset. Furthermore, on the question of opinions about brain decay, the results of informant interviews stated that this condition can affect critical thinking and emotion management, especially if consuming too much low-quality digital content. However, the informant argues that brain rot is not always detrimental because humans still need entertainment. Even so, the long-term effects of this habit are still not widely understood. Some informants even consider brain rot to be a "disease" without chemicals that can only be overcome with self-awareness.

3. Interpretation and Evaluation

At the interpretation and evaluation stage, students begin to give meaning to the information they receive. At this stage, the researcher concluded that 5 informants agreed that the phenomenon of 'brain decay' did occur among students. They observed changes in their environment's thinking habits, such as a decline in critical thinking skills and a tendency to prefer instant content. Emotional responses to this phenomenon vary. Informants are also worried about the impact on the younger generation, especially in terms of critical thinking skills and learning habits. However, 1 in 5 informants consider that this phenomenon is not a serious problem and instead see the consumption of even dime content as a form of entertainment that is not entirely negative.

At this stage, the informant also gave advice on how to manage social media consumption so as not to experience the negative impact of 'brain decay'. The suggestions given include filtering content, reducing the consumption of dimes, and balancing time spent on social media with more productive activities. This shows that awareness of the negative impact of aimless scrolling habits is starting to emerge among students. The reason for this question is to see how students give meaning to the information they receive. Some people may feel that this content helps raise their awareness of the negative impacts of excessive consumption of digital content. Others may feel skeptical or even unaffected because they feel that this phenomenon is not very relevant to their lives.

4. Memory

The memory stage in perception shows the extent to which students can remember and internalize the information they receive. The researchers concluded that the results of the interviews of the 5 informants admitted that they began to be more aware of the phenomenon of 'brain decay' after seeing the contents of the @cnnindonesia. They have become more selective in choosing the content they consume and pay more attention to their social media usage patterns. Some students have also started to implement time limits in using social media to reduce the negative impact of excessive scrolling habits.

This shows that information conveyed through social media can have an impact on information consumption behavior, especially if it is presented in an attractive and easy-to-understand way. However, on the change in perspective after seeing @cnnindonesia content about 'brain rot', the informant stated that there was not much change in perspective about brain rot.

This section seeks to understand the extent to which exposure to this content affects students' mindset and awareness of media consumption issues. Communication Science students are expected to be able to provide a critical analysis of how the media plays a role in shaping information consumption patterns, as well as how they themselves manage social media exposure to stay healthy.

5. Remember

The final stage in perception is recall, where students reassess the information they have consumed and see if there is a change in perspective after acquiring new information or comparing the informant's understanding before and after viewing Cnn Indonesia's content on 'brain decay', and a change in perspective. 3 out of 5 informants experienced a change in perspective after watching @cnnindonesia content on 'brain decay'. The researchers were able to conclude that they became more aware of the dangers of excessive content consumption and were more cautious in using social media. 4 out of 5 informants also admitted that they still remember this phenomenon for a long time, especially when they feel that their habits are starting to be affected by the consumption of digital content. They begin to be more reflective in assessing their own habits and strive to reduce the consumption of unhelpful content. The informant emphasized that he would still be able to remember this phenomenon if it was discussed on social media continuously.

Based on these five stages of perception, it can be concluded that students experience a layered process in understanding the phenomenon of brain decay. At the stimulation stage, interest is influenced by the relevance of the content to personal experiences; At the organizing stage, there is a difference between passive and active informants seeking additional information; At the interpretation and evaluation stage, this phenomenon is recognized to significantly affect students' cognitive behavior; In the memory stage, there is awareness to start changing media habits; And at the withdrawal stage, there is an expansion of understanding of the risk of brain rot.

The researcher also concluded, in the academic context, students of the Communication Science and Psychology study program understand that the media has a big role in shaping information consumption patterns in the digital era. They realize that social media can be a very persuasive tool in directing the audience's attention, so it is important for individuals to have a critical awareness in consuming information. This stage is important to measure the effectiveness of the content presented by @cnnindonesia. If most students feel more aware of this phenomenon and start changing their habits in consuming social media, then it can be concluded that this brain-rotten content has a pretty good educational impact. However, if many students feel that the content has no impact or even irrelevant, then it is possible that the presentation of information needs to be improved to make it more interesting and easy to understand by the target audience.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This research shows that students' perception of the phenomenon of 'brain decay' through the content of CNN Indonesia's account on Social Media TikTok is not only a popular term, but also a real condition that affects the way students consume and understand information on social media. Students who are accustomed to short, fast-paced content tend to experience decreased critical thinking and difficulty absorbing more in-depth information. However, awareness of this phenomenon has also encouraged some students to be more selective in choosing the content they consume. **Implication :** The results of this study provide important insights for students, the media, educational institutions, and policymakers. Students need to be wiser in managing social media consumption so as not to get caught up in superficial content consumption patterns. The media and journalists are expected to present more educational information and not just focus on viral trends. Meanwhile, educational institutions and the government can play a role in improving digital literacy so that the younger generation is more critical in dealing with the flow of information in the digital era. **Limitation :** With a better understanding of this phenomenon, all parties are expected to contribute to creating a healthier digital ecosystem. **Future Research :** Small steps, such as managing social media usage time and choosing more quality content, can help students stay productive and keep their minds sharp in the face of an ever-evolving digital world.

REFERENCES

- [1] N. M. Aesthetics, 1 | K o m u n i k a s i Interpersonal. 2018.
- [2] T. Buana and D. Maharani, "The Use of the Tik Tok Application (Latest Version) and Children's Creativity," J. Inov., vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 1–10, 2020, doi: 10.33557/ji.v14i1.1390.
- [3] M. Kis, W. Fitriani, and M. Irawati, "Analysis of the Impact of Tiktok Application Use on Adolescents: A Systematic Literature Review," Couns. J. Guidance. Educator Counseling. Islam, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 227–238, 2024, doi: 10.31943/counselia.v5i1.90.
- [4] Y. N. Bulele and T. Wibowo, "Analysis of Social Media Phenomena and Millennials: A Case Study of Tiktok," Business Conference, Soc. Sci. Innovation. Technology., vol. 1, pp. 565–572, 2020, [Online]. Available: <http://journal.uib.ac.id/index.php/cbssit>
- [5] J. Communication, F. Salsabila, P. Agustina, F. I. Administration, and U. B. Malang, "Verbal and Nonverbal Students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Brawijaya," vol. 2, no. 7, pp. 526–530, 2024.
- [6] A. Anderson, D. Huttenlocher, dan J. Kleinberg, "Kesamaan-Wsdm12.Pdf".
- [7] Wisnu Nugroho Aji and D. B. P. Setiyadi, "TIK TOK APPLICATION AS A MEDIUM FOR LEARNING WISNU LITERARY SKILLS," Metaphor, vol. VI, no. 2, pp. 147–157, 2020.
- [8] H. Urwatulwutsqo, M. Ghifari, and A. Ash, "The Phenomenon of Brain Rot in the Perspective of Hadith: An Analysis of Its Impact on Adolescent Morality," Al-Bayan J. The Knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 1–18, 2025, doi: 10.35132/albayan.v8i2.1305.
- [9] J. A. Devito, "The Fifth Edition of the Book of Interpersonal Communication," Pearsonhighered, pp. 1–20, 2019, [Online]. Available: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017037905>
- [10] W. Fahdika Ahmad, "Revitalization of Islamic Boarding Schools as an Effort to Prevent Brain Rot in the Younger Generation: A Neurological Approach," J. Islam. Stud. Civilization., vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 181–214, 2024, doi: 10.61680/jisc.v2i2.31.
- [11] T. R. Humaidi and A. D. Nugrahaini, "The Power of Social Media Marketing in the Intention of Purchasing Packaged Chili Sauce," Airlangga J. Innov. Great., vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 53–70, 2025, doi: 10.20473/ajim.v6i1.70856.

- [12] M. U. Batoebara, "Tik-Tok Applications Fun or Stupidity," *Jaring. Media*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 59–65, 2020, doi: 10.46576/jnm.v3i2.849.
- [13] A. Ramadhan, D. A. Urbasari, N. Sabirah, S. Rahma, and S. S. Nasution, "Analysis of the Influence of Digital Entertainment Content on Student Lifestyles," *J. Multidisciplinary Academic Science.*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 437–445, 2025.
- [14] Fira Aesthetika, "Brainrot, Brain Decay Due to Divergent Content on Social Media, Umsida Expert Gives an Explanation," <https://umsida.ac.id/brainrot-pembusukan-otak-akibat-konten-receh-medsos/>.
- [15] D. Dianti and W. Cahyati, "Public Perception in the Communication Studies Study Program," *Common Ground. (Journal of Research. and Stud. Communication Sciences)*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 116, 2022, doi: 10.32897/buanacomunicsi.2021.2.2.1134.

Fitri Retno Wulansari

Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Email: fitriretnowulansari24@gmail.com

***Nur Maghfirah Aesthetika (Corresponding Author)**

Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Email: fira@umsida.ac.id
