



CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TIKTOK IN SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION ON THE CASE OF A STUDENT BEING SLAPPED AT SMA NEGERI 1 CIMARGA

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ABSTRACT

The virality of school violence cases on social media not only accelerates the spread of information but also creates a new arena for the production, circulation, and legitimacy of public opinion. However, studies on how TikTok frames cases of school violence and how netizen interactions reproduce moral judgments about disciplinary actions are still relatively limited, particularly in cases involving educational authority figures. This study aims to analyze the form of TikTok content discussing the case of a student being slapped at SMA Negeri 1 Cimarga and identify trends in public opinion emerging through the comments section. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with a content analysis method on 30 TikTok posts and 250 comments purposively selected based on issue relevance and level of interaction. The results show that the content and comments are dominated by narratives supporting the principal's actions by emphasizing the value of discipline, while others interpret them as a form of violence against students. These findings suggest that TikTok functions not only as a medium for information distribution but also as an arena for framing and amplifying opinions that can normalize problematic disciplinary actions through algorithmic logic and comment resonance. Academically, this research contributes to the development of digital communication studies, public opinion, and social media analysis by emphasizing that public opinion on TikTok is formed through the relationship between content narratives, user interactions, and social values that exist in society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has transformed the way people access information, interpret events, and form opinions on emerging issues in the public sphere. In the context of digital communication, social media no longer functions solely as a channel for information distribution but also as an arena where social meaning is collectively produced, debated, and legitimized. This shift demonstrates that public opinion in the digital era is formed through a more fluid, rapid, and participatory process than in the era of conventional media. The public is no longer merely a recipient of messages but also an active producer of opinion through posts, comments, responses, and re-dissemination of content. Thus, social media has expanded the digital public sphere as a place for the exchange of ideas and the contestation of meaning over events (Syarief et al., 2017; Mona, 2022).

One platform that has had a significant influence on this dynamic is TikTok. As an audio-visual-based medium with an algorithm-driven distribution logic, TikTok allows an event to spread widely in a short time and reach a highly diverse audience. The characteristics of its content, which is short, visual, repetitive, and easily reproduced, make TikTok not just an entertainment medium but also a powerful social communication medium that shapes public perception. Through features like the "For You" page, comment sections, and the ease of remixing and duplicating content, TikTok creates the conditions that allow an issue to develop into a high-intensity public discourse. In such conditions, public opinion is formed not only by the facts of an event, but also by how those events are selected, cut, narrated, and circulated to other users (Aji et al., 2020; Ramdani et al., 2021; Khotimah et al., 2024).

In communication studies, this situation is crucial to understand through the perspectives of framing and public opinion. Framing explains that the media never presents reality in its entirety, but rather selects certain aspects to highlight, thus influencing how audiences perceive an event. In the context of social media, framing is carried out not only by formal media institutions but also by individual content creators who choose specific perspectives, video clips, subtitles, and narratives to present an issue. Simultaneously, public opinion is formed through interactions between users who respond to each other, agreeing with, rejecting, and reinforcing meaning in the comments section. This process becomes increasingly complex when platform algorithms tend to match users with content that aligns with their preferences and beliefs, thus reinforcing echo chamber tendencies in digital spaces (Terren & Borge, 2021; Cinelli et al., n.d.; Ariyanto, 2024).

This phenomenon is evident in the viral TikTok case of a student being slapped by the principal at SMA Negeri 1 Cimarga. This case not only garnered public attention because it involved physical action in an educational setting, but also because it sparked a moral debate about the boundary between discipline and violence. On the one hand, some netizens interpreted the principal's actions as a form of firmness in enforcing school rules. On the other hand, others viewed it as an unjustifiable form of violence in educational practice. These differing views demonstrate that the issue of school violence on social media does not present itself as a neutral fact, but rather as an object of interpretation influenced by social values, disciplinary culture, user experience, and how the event is framed in digital content. Therefore, this case is important to study not only as a viral event, but as a symptom of digital communication that shows how social legitimacy can be formed and negotiated on social media platforms.

Several previous studies have discussed TikTok as a learning medium, information medium, and a medium for shaping public opinion in the digital space (Ayuningtyas et al., 2022; Khotimah et al., 2024; Rasiani et al., 2022). Other studies have also highlighted the role of social media in influencing communication behavior and user perceptions (Hidayat et al., 2021; Rezeki Hasibuan et al., 2023). However, these studies generally focus on the general functions of social media, platform effectiveness, or the impact of app use. They have not specifically examined how TikTok has become a platform for framing cases of school violence and a space for reproducing the legitimacy of problematic disciplinary actions. Furthermore, there is limited research examining the relationship between content narratives, netizen interactions, and the tendency to normalize symbolic and physical violence in the name of discipline in educational settings. This is where this research gap lies: understanding TikTok not merely as a medium for disseminating cases, but as a platform for constructing social meaning and strengthening public opinion on ethically sensitive issues.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the form of TikTok content discussing the case of a student being slapped at SMA Negeri 1 Cimarga and identify public opinion trends that emerge through netizen interactions in the comments section. This research is important because it provides academic contributions to the study of digital communication, public opinion, and social media analysis, particularly in explaining how digital platforms can function as an arena for framing, strengthening opinion resonance, and reproducing certain social values. More broadly, this research is also relevant as a critical reflection on how social media can shape public legitimacy for acts of violence wrapped in a discourse of discipline, so that the issue of digital communication cannot be separated from the ethical and social dimensions that surround it (Syarif et al., 2017; Terren & Borge, 2021; Khotimah et al., 2024).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis methods to understand how TikTok has become a platform for framing school violence cases and how public opinion is shaped through digital interactions. This approach was chosen because the research is not aimed at measuring statistical influence, but rather at interpreting the meaning, narrative tendencies, and opinion patterns emerging in the content and netizen comments. The research focuses on the viral TikTok case of a student being slapped by the principal at SMA Negeri 1 Cimarga. The primary data were drawn from content published

between October and December 2025, during the period when the issue was widely discussed in the digital space. Data collection and analysis were conducted from February to March 2026. With this design, the study attempts to understand the relationship between the representation of the case in the content, user response tendencies, and the formation of public opinion on social media.

The unit of analysis in this study consists of two forms. First, the content analysis unit, consisting of 30 TikTok videos selected purposively based on three criteria: relevance to the case under study, relatively high interaction rates, and uploads during a period when the issue was emerging. Second, the unit of interaction analysis was 250 netizen comments taken from selected content to identify public opinion trends. This amount of data was deemed sufficient for this study because the primary objective of the study was not statistical generalization, but rather to obtain in-depth narrative patterns and recurring opinion trends in a sample of content most representative of the case discussion. To maintain consistency in the analysis, the researcher used coding categories developed from the research focus: pro-teacher content, pro-student content, and neutral/informative content for videos; and pro-teacher opinion, pro-student opinion, and neutral opinion for comments. The pro-teacher category was characterized by narratives justifying the principal's actions on the basis of discipline, order, or educational authority; the pro-student category was characterized by narratives that assessed the actions as violence, ethical violations, or abuse of authority; while the neutral category contained comments or content that were more informative, questioning, or did not explicitly support any position.

Data collection techniques were carried out through digital documentation, non-participant observation, and literature review. Digital documentation was carried out by saving relevant links, screenshots, video content, captions, and comments. Non-participant observation was conducted by observing the content and dynamics of conversations without directly engaging in interactions on the platform. Meanwhile, a literature review was used to strengthen the conceptual framework regarding framing, public opinion, and echo chambers in social media. During the analysis process, comments containing spam, emojis alone, repetition, or responses unrelated to the substance of the case were eliminated to ensure the analyzed data truly represented relevant public opinion. To increase data reliability, researchers implemented a gradual re-categorization process, comparing video content trends with comment patterns, and conducting conceptual triangulation with the theory used in the study. Through this step, the analysis results went beyond describing the frequency of content and comments, but were directed toward explaining how digital narratives on TikTok contribute to the formation and strengthening of public opinion on socially and ethically sensitive cases.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The content analysis data on the TikTok platform related to the case of a student being slapped at SMA Negeri 1 Cimarga consists of 30 pieces of TikTok content. The TikTok content was selected based on its relevance to the research topic, its level of interaction, and its origins from various types of creators, such as social media accounts and personal accounts, who shared their views or responses to the case. The analyzed content was published between October and December 2026, when the issue was still actively discussed by social media users.

This case relates to the concept of the Echo Chamber, which explains that social media users interact with opinions that align with their beliefs. This interaction strengthens an opinion because it receives support from other users with similar views (Cinelli et al., n.d.; Rusmiati et al., 2025; Terren & Borge, 2021).

Based on the results of the content analysis, several types of content emerged in the case analysis, such as content supporting teachers, content supporting students, and neutral or informative content. The results of this content analysis can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Classification of TikTok Content

No	Content Form	Amount of Content	Percentage
1	Pro-Teacher Content	20	66,67%
2	Pro-Student Content	1	3,33%
3	Neutral/Informative Content	9	30%
	Total	30	100%

The table shows that out of 30 TikTok content pieces, 20 supported teachers, 1 supported students, and 9 were neutral or informative. This indicates that content supporting teachers tends to be more

dominant than other content. In addition to analyzing the content, this study also analyzed 250 comments on these content pieces to determine emerging opinion trends. These 250 comments were selected for analysis because they were sufficient to demonstrate public opinion on each piece of content and allowed researchers to identify the opinions expressed in the comments section.

The comments analyzed in this study underwent a filtering process, removing emoji spam and responses unrelated to the case discussion or the formation of public opinion. Therefore, these comments were purely opinion-related to the case and were grouped into several categories, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Classification of Opinions and Comments

No	Types of Opinion Comments	Amount of Content	Percentage
1	Pro-Teacher Opinion	150	60%
2	Pro-Student Opinion	80	32%
3	Neutral Opinion	20	8%
	Total	250	100%

Table 2 shows that out of 250 comments, 150 were pro-teacher, 80 were pro-student, and 20 were neutral. Neutral comments generally questioned the role of parents when 630 students went on strike and highlighted the actions of the Banten governor. This indicates that opinions in the comments tended to be more supportive of teachers than others.

The results of the content and comment classification indicate that the use of narrative plays a significant role in shaping opinion regarding the current case. Some content used narratives emphasizing discipline within the school environment, thus perceiving the principal's actions as an effort to enforce rules against students who violated school rules. The selection of video clips that depict specific moments from the case can influence how viewers perceive the incident.

The narratives in this content elicited a variety of responses from netizens in the comments section. Comments tended to reinforce the creator's views by supporting the narrative that the principal's actions were a form of discipline enforcement within the school environment. The comments section can become a forum for discussion, sparking differing opinions among netizens. For example, a comment on an account named Andiko stated, *"A teacher's slap is a slap of love for the sake of the children's future."* This comment demonstrates netizen support for the principal's actions.

Several comments expressed disagreement with the content and considered the action a form of violence against students. For example, a comment on an account named Okta Wira stated, *"But don't hit them; they're human beings with self-respect. How can a teacher not be able to handle something like that? The teacher's qualifications, sir, are questionable."* This comment demonstrates opinions that consider the action a form of violence against students and sparks debate due to differing perspectives on the case. The results of the study indicate that the opinions expressed in the content and comments section are part of the process of forming public opinion in the digital space. This influences the formation of public opinion due to TikTok's algorithmic system, which allows content to appear quickly and widely on netizens' homepages through the For You Page (FYP) feature. The dissemination of this content leads to a growing number of netizens viewing and responding to the case under discussion.

This has given rise to differing views among netizens, with those supporting the teacher, those supporting the student, and those remaining neutral, demonstrating the dynamics of public discussion regarding this case. The comments section serves as a digital discussion space for netizens to share opinions, provide feedback, and influence each other's views on an issue. This relates to the concept of public opinion (Setiawan Amiruddin, 2025), which states that opinions are formed through the exchange of opinions and discussions that occur in public spaces.

Content circulating on social media demonstrates the use of specific narratives to convey the incident. In this case, some content creators emphasize the narrative of discipline in the school environment, viewing the principal's actions as enforcement of rules against students who violated the rules, while other content highlights aspects of violence against students, thus perceiving these actions as inappropriate behavior for educators. The differences in narrative delivery indicate that content on TikTok can shape how netizens understand a case.

The differences in narratives used by creators relate to how the case is presented in the content. Creators play a role in determining which parts of a case are featured in the video. The choice of video clips, the use of on-screen text, and the explanations provided in the content can influence how netizens perceive a case. In communication studies, this relates to the concept of framing theory introduced by Robert N. Entman. Robert N. Entman explains that media can shape audience perspectives by emphasizing certain aspects of an event (Ariyanto, 2024).

The presentation of a case through narrative video clips in the content then elicits various responses from netizens in the comments section. Comments appearing in the content demonstrate netizens' tendency to support views that align with their own. Support for the principal's actions in several comments demonstrates a shared perspective among netizens who share the same values regarding school discipline. Discussions emerging in the comments section demonstrate that social media can provide a space for the public to express their views on developing cases. Social media users can provide responses, express criticism, and express support for an opinion through the available comment feature. Public spaces are places where people can exchange opinions regarding cases of concern (Triana Mona, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study confirms that TikTok functions not only as a space for information distribution but also as an arena for the formation and reproduction of social meanings that actively influence public opinion regarding cases of violence in educational settings. The dominance of narratives supporting the principal's actions suggests that the values of discipline inherent in society can be reinforced through content framing and the resonance of interactions in the comments section, potentially normalizing problematic disciplinary actions. Theoretically, this study contributes to broadening the study of digital communication by highlighting the relationship between framing, platform algorithms, and the dynamics of public opinion on social media. Practically, these findings provide important reflections for educators, policymakers, and the public to be more critical in understanding the construction of information on social media, particularly regarding sensitive issues such as school violence. However, this study is limited by the number of contextual content and comment samples and its focus on a single case, making the results difficult to generalize broadly. Therefore, further research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across cases or across platforms to deepen understanding of how social media shapes public legitimacy regarding complex social issues.

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