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The Hyperreality of Female TikTok Users in Determining Criteria for Life Partners in Pamekasan

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Article Info	Abstract
	The phenomenon of hyperreality occurs among young women in Pamekasan, particularly in determining the criteria for life partners. This study aims to delve deeper into the phenomenon currently unfolding and describe it in narrative form. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, dan documentation, while analysis conducted using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity is ensured through source triangulation techniques. Result reveal that Tiktok's simulated representations of romantic relationship frequently adopt the five languages of love, thereby creating new expectations and standards regarding romantic relationships. These simulations significantly influence how young women in Pamekasan perspective on the reality of partnered life in the real world. Rather than relying solely on lived experiences, they compare their relationship with idealized potrayals om Tiktok, leading to shifts understanding of partner roles dan strategies for conflict resolution. Consequently, a boundary between real and simulated experiences becomes blurred, reinforcing hipereality as a lens through which they evaluate relationship. This research highlights profound impact of digital content in shaping perseptions of romance, suggesting that social media not only reflect but also reconstruct cultural values surrounding intimacy and partnership.

Introduction

Social interaction in the midst of technological development does not only occur in the real world. In the modern world, social media has become the dominant means of interaction in everyday life. Social media can influence social interaction, identity formation, and the dissemination of positive and negative information, especially in the context of mental health and social behaviour (Betul, 2020). Social media has experienced rapid growth alongside the increasing number of users. One social media platform that has seen rapid growth is TikTok (Khotimah, 2024). This platform is highly popular globally, with over 100 million users and one billion daily views within just one year (Ramadhani & Hariko, 2020). According to a Statista survey, Indonesia ranks first in the world for the number of TikTok users, reaching 157.6 million as of July 2024. TikTok features a variety of engaging short video content. The content can include education, entertainment, marketing, and simulations of daily life, including relationships and family life. However, the content on TikTok often presents images that appear overly realistic. As a result, users consuming TikTok content may experience hyperreality (Cahyaningrum & Purnamasari, 2024).

Hyperreality is a theory proposed by French sociologist Jean Baudrillard. This theory of hyperreality is closely linked to Baudrillard's theories of simulation and simulacra. According to Baudrillard, in his theory of simulation, everything in the real world is simulated by digital technology. Therefore, everything that appears on social media is referred to as simulation. The simulations displayed appear to be real due to the sophistication of the technology used to present them. This condition is referred to as simulacra by Jean Baudrillard. The simulacra consumed by netizens create a new construct of thought that makes simulation and simulacra a new reality in life. This condition is referred to as hyperreality by Jean Baudrillard. In other words, hyperreality is a phenomenon where one cannot distinguish between fact and reality due to the sophistication of social media (Fitrianti, 2021). The hyperreality caused by the development of the social media platform TikTok has led to an increase in the living standards of its users. The images in simulations displayed on TikTok serve as stimuli that evoke responses from within TikTok users. The response in question is

the desire to be like what is displayed on TikTok. This hyperreality phenomenon is gradually standardising life through the simulated content consumed (Putri, 2024).

Young women in Pamekasan, as part of the global community that consumes TikTok social media content, also experience this hyperreality phenomenon. The hyperreality phenomenon occurring among young women in Pamekasan is hyperreality in determining standards or criteria for a life partner. Expectations regarding criteria for a life partner are beginning to be standardised by TikTok social media, which simulates married life. The results of preliminary observations conducted by researchers directly in the field show that the people of Pamekasan, as a religious community, have standards based on religious values and norms. Islam, as the religion practised by the people of Pamekasan, establishes four main standards for selecting a life partner. These four standards include standards of beauty, standards of lineage, standards of wealth, and standards of religious devotion. However, these standards are beginning to be displaced by new standards created by young women in Pamekasan based on the TikTok standards they consume.

This phenomenon is highly intriguing for further research to uncover the meaning behind the subjective experiences of young women in Pamekasan. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study on the phenomenon of hyperreality titled 'Hyperreality of TikTok Users in Determining Criteria for Life Partners in Pamekasan.' This research aims to describe the results of an exploration of TikTok content that creates hyperreality among women in Pamekasan, uncover the social constructions formed as a result of young women in Pamekasan interacting with TikTok social media, and analyse the implications of the hyperreality phenomenon on the attitudes and behaviour of young women in Pamekasan in the context of determining standards for life partners.

This phenomenon of hyperreality has been studied by previous researchers. A previous study was conducted by Michael R. Langlais, dkk titled "Tiktok and Romantic Relationship: A Qualitative Descriptive Analysis." This study used qualitative methode with 64 research subject. The result explain how adults used Tiktok in relationship were realtionship initation, viewing relationship content, sharing content in relationship, and posting relationship content. Partisipants also explain their use of Tiktok in relationship as a potential source of conflict (Langlais et al., 2024). Research

on the same theme was also conducted by Retno Cahyaningrum and Devi Purnamasari 2024 with the title, "Hyperreality: Analysis of Viral Content Among TikTok Content Creators," (Cahyaningrum & Purnamasari, 2024). In the same year Xin Wang and Qian Shang also conducted research on this topic of hyperreality. The study was titled, "How do social and parasocial relationship on Tiktok impact well-being of university student? The roles of algorith and awareness and compulsive use." This study used quantitative method and SPSS aplication. Result of this research showed that exist significants relationship between these variables. Likewise, they rein force the understanding of the diversity of the mechanisms of social and parasocial motivations on compulsive use and well-being. The results highlight the need to strengthen the training and education of young people in the appropriate and regulated use of TikTok in the university setting (Wang & Shang, 2024).

Previous studies have reached the same conclusion, namely that TikTok is one of the social media platforms that most contributes to hyperreality among its users. Previous researchers have studied the phenomenon of hyperreality and its respective impacts in greater depth within the context of their research environments. However, no researcher has yet studied the impact of this phenomenon on relationship standards. This will be a novelty in this study.

Method

The research method used in this study is qualitative phenomenology. Phenomenological research will help researchers understand the phenomenon of hyperreality scientifically by emphasising the process of deep interaction between researchers and the phenomena being studied. Qualitative phenomenology is needed in this study because phenomenology is an approach that can be used to understand the meaning of the subjective experiences of individuals or groups experiencing social problems (Amir, 2019). There are two types of data in this study, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation that the researcher obtained in the field during the research process. There were eleven research drawn from UIN Madura, Madura Islamic University, and Madura University. The researcher uses data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data obtained is analysed through data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. Data validity is checked

through triangulation of sources and methods. That means researcher wants to ensure credibility and validity of the data obtained.

Result and Discussion

The social media platform TikTok features short videos lasting 15-30 seconds. These videos can be easily consumed for various purposes, whether it be for learning, exploring new cultures, or filling free time by using TikTok's social media content for entertainment. There are various types of social media content, one of which is simulations of married life created by content creators. This type of content is highly popular among netizens, including young women in Pamekasan. Consuming content simulating married life or domestic life from TikTok content creators can bring about social change among the people of Pamekasan. Consuming such content regularly every day can create new standards and perspectives in the context of married life. This is because content simulating married life can stimulate young women in Pamekasan to desire to find a partner as depicted in TikTok social media content.

The Creation of New Standards Among Young Women in Pamekasan

The type of TikTok social media content that is popular among young women in Pamekasan is content that simulates married life. This content is consumed regularly every day by young women in Pamekasan. There are several content creators who often simulate married life on TikTok, including Rey Mbayang, Dinda Hauw, Savira Malik, and Juan&Eve. Young women in Pamekasan regularly consume TikTok social media content every day. The average intensity of TikTok social media use among young women in Pamekasan ranges from 1 to 7 hours per day. The intensity of TikTok social media use by young women in Pamekasan can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Table of intensity of social media use of TikTok by women in Pamekasan

No	Name	Origin of Institution	Age	Duration of using Tiktok in a day
1	Anisa Wildani	UIN Madura	23	4-5 hours per day
2	Noer Lailatul Badriya	UIN Madura	23	1-2 hours per day
3	Delilia Azizah	UIN Madura	23	1-2 hours per day
4	Ssyafrika Elly Wardani	UIN Madura	21	5-7 hours per day
5	Nurul Aini	Madura University	22	2-4 hours per day
6	Klara Nathania Farrosi	Madura University	21	4-5 hours per day
7	Rani Febrianti	Madura University	22	2-4 hours per day
8	Suci Fitri Romadhoni	Madura University	21	2-4 hours per day

| 9 | Imroatus Sholehah | Madura Islamic University | 22 | 2-3 hours per day |
| 10 | Dea Ramadhani | Madura Islamic University | 22 | 5-6 hours per day |
| 11 | Ulfatun Nisa' | Madura Islamic University | 22 | 2-4 hours per day |

Regular daily consumption of TikTok social media can cause young women in Pamekasan to experience the phenomenon of hyperreality. This is because the simulation of couple life in TikTok social media content contains images that appear to be real. The images displayed contain elements of the five love languages, causing young women in Pamekasan to consume this type of social media content intensely. The five love languages are a theory first proposed by Gary Chapman in Gana (Gana, 2021). This theory explains that each individual has a different way of expressing love, known as the language of love. Chapman identified five love languages: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. These five love languages are simulated in the form of TikTok social media content by several content creators, including Syafira Malik and Juan & Eve. Both content creators simulate cooking together, which contains elements of the love languages acts of service and quality time. This type of content is illustrated in the documentation below:
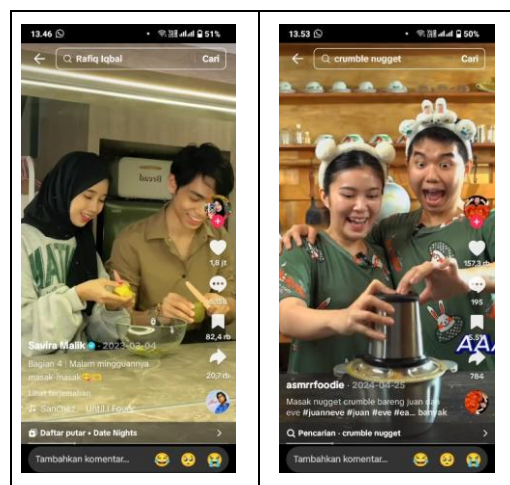
Picture 1. Simulation content of married life on Savira Malik's account, as well as Juan & Eve's.

Drama or simulated scenes of life that contain images of the five love languages are also simulated by Rey Mbayang and his wife Dinda Hauw, who documented their journey over the course of a year. The content contains elements of

the love languages of receiving gifts and physical touch. This can be seen in the documentation of the content below:
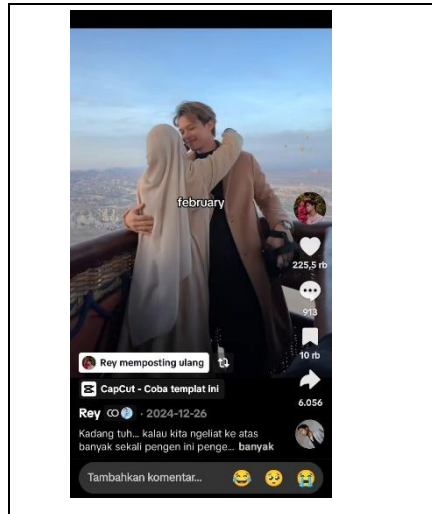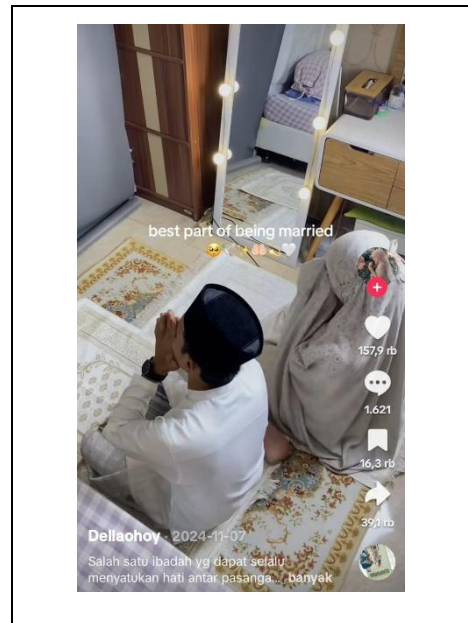

Picture 2. Simulated content of married life on Rey Mbayang's account with his partner Dinda Hauw

Jean Baudrillard refers to such content as simulation, meaning that it is not a reflection of the creator's real life, but merely an image. The concept of simulation in the context of TikTok is also supported by Erving Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, in which Goffman states that human life can be likened to a stage play. According to Goffman, human life is inseparable from two stages: the front stage and the back stage. The front stage is the stage of human life filled with image-building to meet social expectations. Meanwhile, the back stage is the stage where human life is truly pure without any image (Suciptaningsih, 2017). In the context of the hyperreality phenomenon, TikTok becomes the front stage where content creators build images to meet social expectations. In other words, the simulated content of couple life on TikTok is not real life but merely a stage of drama filled with images. However, due to technological advancements, these images appear to be real, and this condition is referred to as simulacra according to Jean.

In social media, people usually get overshare about their life. Make a big different between real life and virtual space (Ningrum et al., 2025). They use music, clothes, word, even they explore into many place just for find out right vibes to fullfill public desires. A few of them even wear shimmery clothes or anything clothes that trend at the time as a strategies to looks like "modernity icon," (Teuku Ryan

Firmansyah et al., 2024). Make people get a hinger expectation in their relationship. Lady Yessica and Menayang in their research also give a statement that people who always watch live streaming on social media make them more difficult to decide that's real situation or not (Yesisca & Alfred Pieter Menayang, 2023). This fact make a problem when the expectation can't be fullfill by life partner, causing a strained relationship. In the worse case, people get more afraid to build a relations, and the last, number of marriage decrease significantly.

Simulated content of couple life becomes a simulacrum that creates new expectations and standards for young women in Pamekasan. These new expectations or standards regarding life partners are referred to as hyperreality. Thus, young people in Pamekasan experience hyperreality in determining criteria for life partners. The new standards based on TikTok content demand that potential life partners of young people in Pamekasan be more perfect. Young women in Pamekasan do not only consider religious aspects when determining standards for a partner, but also economic capability, as well as being gentle and skilled in communication. This is referred to as 'softspoken' in TikTok standards. Religious standards in choosing a partner for young women in Pamekasan are not only driven by the religious values and norms of Pamekasan society. However, this is also influenced by the imagery in simulated couple life content on the TikTok social media platform. An example of such simulation is the account dellaohoy, which simulates praying in congregation with a partner. This simulation conveys the concept of 'quality time' in accordance with Islamic principles. This creates expectations and religious standards for young women in Pamekasan when selecting a life partner.

Picture 3. Simulated content depicting married life containing religious imagery on the dillaohoy account.

Economic stability standards are also stimulated by the image portrayed in TikTok social media content. In TikTok social media content, content creators often show off their wealth, which is used to surprise and give gifts to their partners. This simulation contains the image of love language receiving gifts and stimulates women in Pamekasan to have partners as portrayed in TikTok social media content.
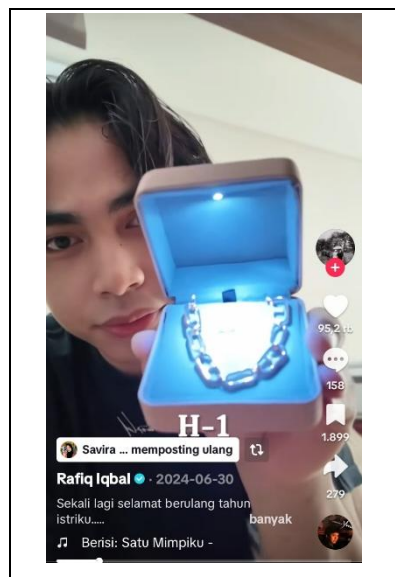
Picture 4. Simulated content of married life containing images of receiving gifts on Rafiq Ibal's account with his partner Savira Malik.

The standard of a soft-spoken partner is also influenced by social media platforms such as TikTok. Content creators often portray the language of affirmation in their content. This has created a new standard among young women in Pamekasan, who expect to find partners similar to those they see on TikTok.
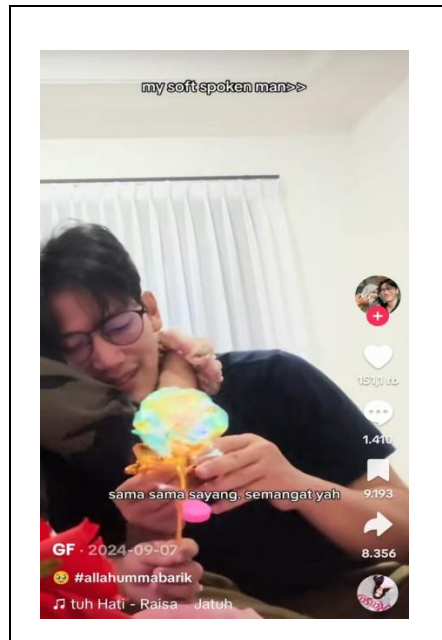
Picture 5. Simulated content of married life containing elements of affirmation on GF accounts

The existence of Tiktok standar of partner life can make a person feel depressed either man and woman if they couldn't fullfill those standar (Mufidah et al., 2025). Usually, to fullfill thoses standar, people must spend a lot of money. For example to buy skincare, clothes, jewellery, or other branded goods. The problem occur when people didn't have enough money to buy those things either for themselves or their partner. Make economy collapse and in the worse case, they had to borrow some money. People also make an easy judgement to person's etnhnicity according what they saw in Tiktok. So, for example, person from ethnicity A more romantic, more strong based on economy, more softspoken, more royal to his life partner, and other than person from enthnicity B. Sound simple, but this treatment can lead into discrimination (Darmawan et al., 2024).

The changing perspective of women in Pamekasan towards the reality of married life

The phenomenon of hyperreality experienced by young women in Pamekasan not only sets new standards for choosing a life partner (Kustiawan et al., 2025). Beyond that, this hyperreality phenomenon also alters how Pamekasan women perceive the reality of partnered life in the real world. Their perspective on partnered life tends to be shaped by the expectation that such a life is always romantic and easy to navigate, as portrayed on TikTok. The idealised imagery in TikTok content prompts young women in Pamekasan to compare their own lives with their partners or the lives of couples around them with the simulated content on TikTok. Young women in Pamekasan consider a relationship to be ideal if it aligns with TikTok standards. Therefore, women in Pamekasan tend to feel dissatisfied with their partners if their partners do not meet the idealised standards portrayed in the content. This differs from the ideal partner standards according to the values and norms of Pamekasan society, which views a relationship as ideal if it is based on religious and cultural values and norms.

In addition, a relationship is considered ideal if gender equality is achieved in the couple's life together. The gender equality referred to here is the division of roles in the relationship that does not burden one party. This is different from the reality of Pamekasan society, which is known for its patriarchal culture. The patriarchal culture of Pamekasan society creates a construct that places men in a more dominant position than women (Riskianti & Fajariah, 2024). With the existence of TikTok simulation content that contains the portrayal of acts of service, where men are more likely to be sensitive and pamper women in a relationship, a new awareness has emerged among women in Pamekasan that an ideal partner is one who is not patriarchal.

Hiperreality phenomenom that showed on Tiktok in the end was able to support shift in value orientation ini Pamekasan's society. Young people, especially woman, starting to experience tension between traditional norms of a patriarchal nature and modern value who was consumed through digital media (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2021). This shift has given rise to a state of ambivalence, where they continue to respect local religious and cultural values, while simultaneously

internalizing new, more egalitarian standards in gender relations. This situation aligns with Antonius Mbukut (2024) findings, which explain that digital media plays a crucial role in shaping the younger generation's perspective on social relations, thus encouraging identity negotiations between local and global values (Mbukut, 2024).

Furthermore, the presence of content depicting equality in romantic relationships can trigger social resistance from conservative groups, particularly those who still adhere to patriarchal systems. However, this resistance actually demonstrates a social dynamic leading to a process of value transformation. If this trend continues, it is possible that a new social reality will emerge in Pamekasan: one that defines the ideal partner not only by religion and culture, but also by digital representations that shape the collective consciousness of the younger generation. Thus, TikTok is not simply an entertainment medium, but an agent of social change that has a significant influence on shaping the construction of the ideal partner in local society.
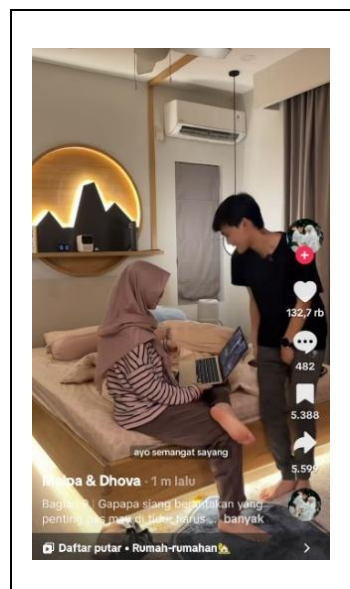
Picture 6. Simulated content about life as a couple containing elements of acts of service demonstrates gender equality on Maipa Dhova's account.

The perspective of women in Pamekasan in addressing conflicts in relationships tends to be simplistic because they mimic the content of simulations on TikTok. In resolving conflicts on social media platforms like TikTok, there is an element of physical touch, making communication more comfortable and enabling easy resolution of issues. However, conflict resolution in the real world is not

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necessarily as ideal as it is on TikTok. This is because conflict resolution on TikTok is only an image. Meanwhile, conflict resolution in the real world can be more complicated depending on the type of conflict that occurs in a couple's life together.

Conclusion

The social media platform TikTok displays simulations of couple life with positive imagery. This imagery contains elements of the five love languages, creating new expectations and standards that differ from the standards of the community in choosing a life partner. The new standards based on TikTok social media content include a life partner who is very religious, economically stable, and has softspoken skills.

The images in TikTok social media content also change the way women in Pamekasan view the reality of life as a couple in real life. Women in Pamekasan tend to compare social media content with real life with their partners. In addition, women in Pamekasan are more open to changing the patriarchal lifestyle of Pamekasan society and have a new awareness of resolving conflicts with their partners, which is considered easier if they imitate TikTok social media content.

Suggestion

Researchers advise readers to be more prudent in their consumption of social media. It is advisable to consume social media, particularly TikTok, in moderation and to use it as a tool for analysing phenomena based on scientific knowledge. In this way, we can grow into wise individuals and become highly skilled human resources.

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