

CHAPTER II

2.1 TikTok as a Social Media Platform in Indonesia

In Indonesia, TikTok has emerged as one of the most popular social media platforms, especially among younger users. TikTok's short video format and algorithm-driven content distribution offer users to easily access, create, and share content according on personal preferences and topics. Indonesia consistently ranks as the country with the greatest number of TikTok users in the world, with the majority of users aged between 18 and 34. TikTok not only serves as a social platform, but also as a place where users can easily express their feelings and share their experiences. This group of people has a strong connection to critical aspects of life such as education, work, identity, and daily life. (DataReportal, 2024; Abidin, 2021).

Beyond from content consumption, TikTok provides interactive features such as commenting, sharing, liking, and sharing, which encourage active participation and facilitate discussion among users. The visibility of comments and threads allows for discussion, making TikTok an ideal platform for understanding public opinion and audience reactions to social issues. TikTok's popularity, number of users, and interactive communication structure make it a useful tool among Indonesian youths for analyzing how social discussion emerges and grows online, as well as how campaigns like #kaburajadulu gain visibility, promote debate, and achieve their goals (Highfield & Leaver, 2016; Papacharissi, 2015).

2.2 About #kaburajadulu campaign

Digital platforms increasingly function as spaces where young people articulate social dissatisfaction and negotiate collective meanings through everyday online expressions (Papacharissi, 2015). Within this context, the #kaburajadulu campaign was shaped as a digital discourse on social media that reflects the concerns and frustrations of Indonesian youth towards social, economic, and structural conditions in Indonesia. The term “kabur aja dulu” which can be closely translated as "just an escape for now" created on TikTok as an expressive way of dissatisfaction or to seek better opportunities outside the country, particularly through working or living abroad. This campaign is developed organically through user-generated content and online interaction rather than coming from a formal or organized movement.

The term “kabur aja dulu” was first introduced in 2023 and initially circulated in online discussions. According to Ismail Fahmi, the founder of Drone Emprit, the #kaburajadulu trend began to appear as early as September 2023. However, the term only started to circulate widely on TikTok around February 2025, following increasing online discussions related to migration, employment challenges, and dissatisfaction with domestic socio-economic conditions. Due to TikTok's algorithmic structure and interactive features, which enable content to spread quickly and encourage audience participation through comments, replies, and discussions, the campaign has become extremely popular since it was posted there. The #kaburajadulu campaign developed into a space where individual expressions connected with more general public conversations because of people

interacting with the hashtag, such as by sharing personal experiences, opinions, and critiques related to themes like employment opportunities, nationalism, migration, and quality of life.

In the Indonesian context, the ones who are actively having uncertainties related to education, employment, and socioeconomic mobility find significant resonance in the campaign. TikTok users regularly use the comment section to express their opinions, negotiate meanings, and react to other users' opposing viewpoints. These discussions show how the campaign serves as a discursive space where ideas and narratives are constantly created and disputed, rather than just a slogan.

The #kaburajadulu campaign highlights the function of social media as a forum for public expression and group meaning-making through its dissemination on TikTok. The campaign's appearance in the comment section serves as an example of how digital platforms allow users to express their feelings, opinions, and introspective thoughts, thereby adding to the ongoing conversations about the current social issues that Indonesian youth face.

2.3 The #kaburajadulu Campaign on TikTok

Throughout the years, migration, employment opportunities, and national identity have increasingly appeared in digital spaces. Within this context, the #kaburajadulu campaign emerged on TikTok as a response to growing feelings of uncertainty and dissatisfaction experienced by Indonesian youth. The term “kabur aja dulu” became a relatable expression that captures the desire to temporarily leave

the country in search of better living conditions, career prospects, or personal growth opportunities abroad.

The campaign has spread across many social media platforms, including TikTok. In TikTok, users actively engage with the hashtag to express their perspectives and experiences regarding the #kaburajadulu campaign. Rather than being initiated by a formal organization or institution, #kaburajadulu grew naturally as users responded to existing content, shared opinions, and participated in discussions through comments. This natural structure allows the campaign to function as an open space for dialogue, where various viewpoints both supportive and critical are expressed.

On TikTok, the #kaburajadulu campaign goes beyond simple content sharing and becomes a platform for public conversation. The comment section becomes a space for people to discuss issues such as job availability, economic pressure, national loyalty, and personal aspirations. These discussions often reflect contrasting positions, including encouragement to seek opportunities abroad as well as arguments emphasizing staying and contributing to Indonesia. Through this interaction, the campaign facilitates ongoing debates that reflect broader social concerns among Indonesian youth.

The #kaburajadulu digital campaign on TikTok can generate collective awareness and engagement. The accumulation of user responses, emotional expressions, and narratives within the comment section highlights the role of social media in shaping contemporary public discourse. As such, the #kaburajadulu

campaign serves as a relevant case for examining how audience engagement and meaning-making processes unfold within digitally mediated environments.

2.4 Forms of Audience Engagement in the #kaburajadulu Campaign on TikTok

Audience engagement in digital media extends beyond passive consumption and includes practices such as commenting, debating, and contributing personal narratives, which collectively shape the meaning of online content (Jenkins,2009).

This subchapter explores how the #kaburajadulu campaign is enacted on TikTok through various forms of audience engagement. By examining TikTok videos, user interactions in the comment section, and the use of the #kaburajadulu hashtag, this section illustrates how audience participation and discussion are generated on the platform.

a. TikTok as the Main Platform

On TikTok, the campaign is not delivered through official promotional content, but rather through user-generated videos that trigger public responses. When a video related to #kaburajadulu is uploaded, viewers respond mainly through the comment section, where they share agreement, disagreement, support, criticism, and personal stories. Instead of making it into a one-way directional message, the interaction allows the hashtag to function as an open discussion.



Figure 2. 1 Screenshot of the selected TikTok video using the #kaburajadulu hashtag, displaying the account name, caption, and audience engagement indicators.

As shown in the selected TikTok video, users actively participate by reacting to the video's message and to other users' comments. This interaction creates visible discussion threads, where discussions are held, which includes debates and opinions. Through this process, TikTok becomes both a social media platform where it allows content distribution and collective conversation both at the same time.



Figure 2. 2 Screenshot of audience comments and discussion threads on the selected #kaburajadulu TikTok video

b. Comment Section as a Space of Public Discussion

The comment section plays a central role in the #kaburajadulu campaign, where the comments allow users to articulate their thoughts in a more detailed way. Within the comment section of the selected TikTok video, TikTok users' express emotions such as frustration, hope, anger, and sadness, as well as social judgments about whether leaving Indonesia is justified or problematic.

The comment area allows users to engage with one another in addition to reacting individually. When TikTok users respond to each other's comments, chains of engagement emerge that resemble ongoing discussions. These interactions allow users to challenge, support, or even misinterpret each other's points of view. This discussion shows how the #kaburajadulu campaign works as a continuous dialogue rather than a collection of individual responses.

As a result, the comment area has grown into a digital forum for shaping public opinion through conversation. Users not only react to the movie, but they also negotiate meanings with one another, allowing multiple viewpoints on migration, nationalism, and opportunity to emerge within the same conversational context.

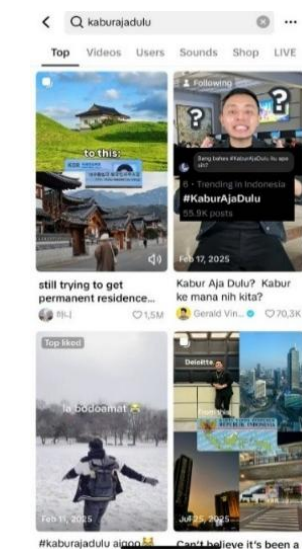


Figure 2. 3 Screenshot of the TikTok hashtag page for #kaburajadulu

c. Hashtag #kaburajadulu as a Digital Gathering Point

The hashtag #kaburajadulu become the role as a digital gathering point that connects separate videos and conversations into one shared discourse. By using the same hashtag, different TikTok users contribute to a wider conversation about similar social concerns. This allows content from different creators to be linked through a common theme, even when the videos are not produced by the same account. By using the same hashtag, it allows the users to find related videos and discussions, which connects one another and strengthen the sense of collective participation. The hashtag also assists in the visibility of TikTok, where it enables the content to circulate through the platform's recommendation system.

As a result, #kaburajadulu becomes a space where TikTok users have the freedom to express their experiences, emotions, and viewpoints regarding their future, their country, and their opportunities abroad.