



Jurnal of Sport Recreation and Leisure Management

Journal homepage: <https://journal.uny.ac.id/publications/jsrlm/index>

e-ISSN: 3109-6921



JSRLM

Jurnal of Sport Recreation and Leisure Management

THE INFLUENCE OF TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA AS A REFERENCE SOURCE FOR ADVENTURE TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN THE SPECIAL REGION OF YOGYAKARTA PROVINCE AMONG GENERATION Z

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Received: 18 Mei 2026 ; Revised: 1 Juli 2026 ; Accepted: 1 Agustus 2026

Abstract: *This study aims to: (1) determine the influence of using the social media platform TikTok as a source of adventure tourism information in the Special Region of Yogyakarta on Generation Z; (2) understand how the TikTok platform can affect Generation Z's perception of adventure tourism destinations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta; (3) explore Generation Z's perception of the authenticity of adventure tourism content presented on the TikTok platform. The method used is quantitative with an associative approach, where TikTok is the independent variable and the source of adventure tourism destinations is the dependent variable. The study involved 100 respondents using purposive sampling. Data were collected through an online questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability, resulting in 29 valid statements with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.929 for variable X and 0.934 for variable Y. data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression and T-test. The result showed a positive and significant effect with a significance value of 0.001 and regression coefficient of 0.680. The R Square (R^2) value of 0.463 indicates that 46.3% of the variation is influenced by TikTok usage, while the remainder is influenced by other factors. These findings affirm that TikTok not only serves as an entertainment medium but also becomes a source of reference before deciding on adventure tourism destinations for Generation Z.*

Keywords: *TikTok Social Media, Generation Z, Travel Reference, Adventure Tourism.*

How to Quote: Tiyas, D. S & Pamungkas, G. (2026) Influence of Tiktok Social Media as Reference Source For Adventure Tourism Destinations In Yogyakarta Among Generation Z. Jurnal of Sport Recreation and Leisure Management. 2(1), p.26-36

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology in the Industry 4.0 era has transformed everything in life, including the tourism sector. Social media is now used as a primary means of communication and dissemination of digital information (Rahardaya & Irwansyah, 2021). Social media is no longer simply a means of communication; it has also become a source of information and tourism references, particularly for adventure tourism. Social media facilitates users' independent content production and distribution (Aviarni et al., 2020). Among various platforms, TikTok has emerged as the dominant platform accessed by Generation Z, with a usage rate reaching 42.27%, surpassing Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook (Leap, 2025).

TikTok offers an interactive short video format, supported by an algorithm that adapts content to user preferences, creating a more personalized and engaging experience (Widiawanti et al., 2023). TikTok's success is also supported by its user-friendly approach and ease of use, enabling it to reach people of all ages, backgrounds, and diverse interests. These characteristics make TikTok highly relevant as a primary reference source for young travelers seeking travel inspiration, particularly for adventure tourism, which emphasizes exploratory activities, challenges, and hands-on experiences in the outdoors.

The Special Region of Yogyakarta Province has significant potential for developing adventure tourism, which offers exploratory, challenging, and educational experiences through activities such as cave tubing, body rafting, and lava tours (Siregar, 2025). Adventure tourism can provide psychological benefits and raise awareness of environmental conservation (Aisyah et al., 2025). These characteristics align with tourist preferences, particularly among Generation Z, who tend to favor authentic, challenging, and nature-based experiences (Akbar, 2025).

The presence of TikTok in the context of tourism digitalization has had a significant impact on the promotion and dissemination of information about adventure tourism destinations in Yogyakarta. Tourist behavior in planning trips has also shifted. According to Kompas.com, a study in the 2022 YouGov Report on travel and tourism found that approximately 39% of Gen Z rely on social media as a primary source for planning their travels (Kompas, 2022). This shift is dominated by Generation Z, which has a higher tendency to rely on visual-based content and user experience. Generation Z itself is a cohort born between 1995 and 2010 and grew up amidst the development of digital technology, thus possessing characteristics that are adaptive to technology ((Made Nugraha Regita et al., 2024); (Nurlaila et al., 2024)).

Although TikTok usage in the tourism sector continues to increase, supported by Generation Z's tendency to rely more on social media as a source of information, TikTok's role as a reference source for choosing adventure tourism destinations has not been fully empirically tested, particularly in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. This situation indicates a gap between the high level of TikTok usage intensity and its influence on the search for references for adventure tourism destinations. Therefore, this research is important to conduct to determine the influence of TikTok social media as a reference source for adventure tourism destinations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, especially among Generation Z.

METHODS

Research Type

This study employed a quantitative approach using an associative approach, using a questionnaire as the primary instrument.

Time and Place

This study was conducted online using Google Forms as the medium for questionnaire distribution. Although data was collected online, the study was limited to Generation Z respondents. The research object was limited to the role of the TikTok platform as a reference source for tourist destinations, and the research location was limited to adventure tourism destinations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, in accordance with the focus and limitations of the study. This study took place from December 2025 to February 2026.

Population and Sample

The population in this study was all individuals belonging to the Generation Z category who use TikTok as a reference for finding adventure tourism destinations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. The sample size for this study was 100 respondents selected using a purposive sampling technique.

Instrument and Data Collection Technique

The researcher collected data by distributing an online questionnaire to Generation Z in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. The questionnaire was scored using a Likert scale of 1–4.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis conducted in this study involved several stages, including prerequisite analysis tests, which included normality and linearity tests. Once the assumptions were met, the hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analysis followed by a T-test.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Results

Description of Research Results

This study consisted of two variables are the use of social media TikTok as the independent variable (X) and the source of reference for adventure tourism destinations as the dependent variable (Y). Questionnaires were distributed to 100 respondents belonging to Generation Z in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, grouped by age and gender.

Usia
100 jawaban

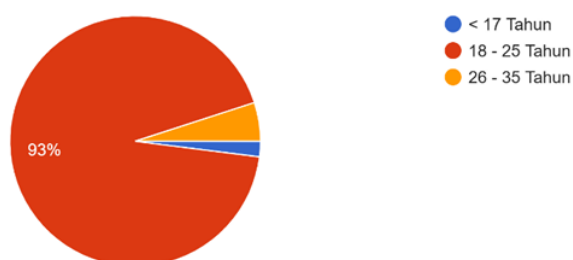


Figure 1. Respondents' Age Percentage Diagram

The distribution of respondents by age shows that the majority of respondents are between 18 and 25 years old (93%), while those under 17 and 26 and 35 years old represent relatively small numbers. This indicates that the use of TikTok as a reference source for adventure tourism destinations is dominated by Generation Z, aged 18 and 25.

Jenis Kelamin
100 jawaban

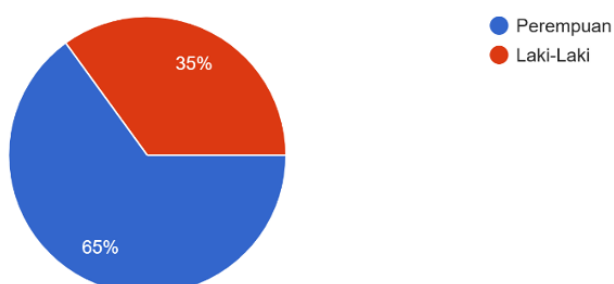


Figure 2. Percentage Diagram of Respondent Gender

Respondent distribution by gender shows that the majority of respondents were women (65%), while only 35% were men. This suggests that women predominantly use TikTok as a source of information for adventure tourism destinations.

Description of Variable Analysis

This study consists of two variables are TikTok social media usage as variable X and adventure tourism destination reference sources as variable Y. Before conducting the analysis prerequisites and hypothesis testing, their validity and reliability were first tested.

1. Validity Test

This test is used to measure the appropriateness or validity of the questionnaire used for research or data collection.

Table 1. Validity Test of TikTok Social Media Usage

No. item	R count	R table	Description
X – 1	0.629	0.361	Valid
X – 2	0.715	0.361	Valid
X – 3	0.677	0.361	Valid
X – 4	0.782	0.361	Valid
X – 5	0.649	0.361	Valid
X – 6	0.778	0.361	Valid
X – 7	0.652	0.361	Valid
X – 8	0.724	0.361	Valid
X – 9	0.721	0.361	Valid
X – 10	0.717	0.361	Valid
X – 11	0.694	0.361	Valid
X – 12	0.764	0.361	Valid

In this study, the resulting data was tested using the Product Moment method as a validity test, with the predetermined stipulation that if the correlation coefficient (r count) $>$ r table, the statement is declared valid. The Pearson correlation (r count) for all items is greater than 0.361, thus concluding that all items in the TikTok social media usage variable are valid.

Table 2. Validity Test of Reference Sources for Adventure Tourism Destinations

No. Butir	R hitung	R tabel	Keterangan
Y – 1	0.558	0.361	Valid
Y – 2	0.649	0.361	Valid
Y – 3	0.765	0.361	Valid
Y – 4	0.482	0.361	Valid
Y – 5	0.668	0.361	Valid
Y – 6	0.787	0.361	Valid
Y – 7	0.667	0.361	Valid
Y – 8	0.496	0.361	Valid
Y – 9	0.751	0.361	Valid
Y – 10	0.803	0.361	Valid
Y – 11	0.802	0.361	Valid
Y – 12	0.417	0.361	Valid
Y – 13	0.559	0.361	Valid
Y – 14	0.779	0.361	Valid
Y – 15	0.611	0.361	Valid
Y – 16	0.785	0.361	Valid

In this study, the resulting data was tested using the Product Moment method as a validity test, with the established provisions that if the correlation coefficient value (r_{count}) $> r_{table}$, then the statement is declared valid. Which can be seen that the Pearson correlation value (r_{count}) on all items is greater than 0.361, so it can be concluded that all items of the statement of the reference source variable for adventure tourism destinations are declared valid.

2. Reliability Test

This test is used to determine whether the data used is reliable or not, meaning that if used under the same conditions and at different times, the results will remain the same. A variable is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is > 0.60 .

Table 3. Reliability Test for TikTok Social Media Use

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.929	12

Based on the reliability test results table, it was obtained that the Cronbach's Alpha value was > 0.60 , namely $0.929 > 0.60$. This indicates that the TikTok Social Media Usage variable is reliable.

Table 4. Reliability Test of Adventure Tourism Destination Reference Sources

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.934	16

Based on the reliability test results table, the Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be > 0.60 , namely $0.934 > 0.60$. This indicates that the adventure tourism destination reference source variable is reliable.

Analysis Prerequisite Tests

There are two analysis prerequisite tests conducted in this study are the normality test and the linearity test.

1. Normality Test

In the normality test, if the significance value is > 0.05 , the data can be considered normally distributed. The test used is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 5. Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
		Unstandardized Residual	
N		100	
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000	
	Std. Deviation	3.6729644	
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.047	
	Positive	.047	
	Negative	-.047	
Test Statistic		.047	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.200	
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig.	.867	
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.858
		Upper Bound	.875
a. Test distribution is Normal.			
b. Calculated from data.			
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.			
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.			
e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000			

Based on the results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance value is 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data used are normally distributed, thus meeting the assumptions for further statistical analysis.

2. Linearity Test

In the linearity test, if the Sig. Deviation from linearity value is > 0.05 , there is a linear relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y).

Table 6. Linearity Test

ANOVA Table						
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Sumber Referensi * Tiktok	Between Groups	(Combined)	1330.240	16	83.140	5.972
		Linearity	1150.184	1	1150.184	82.617
		Deviation from Linearity	180.056	15	12.004	.862
	Within Groups		1155.520	83	13.922	
	Total		2485.760	99		

Based on the linearity test results table, the Sig. Deviation from Linearity value was 0.607, which is greater than 0.05, indicating a linear relationship between the TikTok usage variable (X) and the adventure tourism destination reference source variable (Y).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was used to analyze and empirically prove whether there is a significant influence between the TikTok social media usage variable (X) and the adventure tourism destination reference source variable (Y).

1. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

This analysis aims to determine the direction of the relationship and the magnitude of the influence between Variable X and Variable Y.

Table 7. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients Beta	t
	B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	15.456	4.138		3.735
	Tiktok	.932	.101	.680	9.187

a. Dependent Variable: Sumber Referensi

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis, the following equation is obtained: $Y = 15.456(\alpha) + 0.680(b)X$

Based on the equation above, the constant value (α) is 15.456. When the TikTok social media usage variable is set to 0, the value of the reference source variable for adventure tourism destinations remains constant at 15.456. The regression coefficient (b) of 0.680 indicates that each increase in TikTok usage will positively increase the perceived value of TikTok as a reference source for adventure tourism destinations. Furthermore, a significance value of 0.001, which is less than 0.05, indicates that TikTok social media usage has a significant influence on reference sources for adventure tourism destinations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province.

2. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test

The coefficient of determination (R^2) test in this study aims to assess the contribution or influence of variable X on variable Y.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.680 ^a	.463	.457	3.692

a. Predictors: (Constant), TIKTOK

b. Dependent Variable: REFERENSI

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test, the R^2 value is 0.463, indicating that 46.3% of the variation in reference sources for adventure tourism destinations is influenced by the use of TikTok, while the remaining 53.7% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

3. T-Test

This test is used to measure the significance of the independent variable in partially explaining changes (variations) in the dependent variable.

Table 9. T-Test

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
	(Constant)	15.456	4.138	3.735	<.001
	Tiktok	.932	.101	.680	9.187
					<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Sumber Referensi

Based on the T-test results table, the significance value is 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Furthermore, the calculated t-value is greater than the t-table, namely $9.187 > 1.66055$. From these two results, it can be concluded that the use of TikTok social media has a significant influence as a reference source for adventure tourism destinations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province.

Discussion

This study was conducted by distributing questionnaires to Generation Z who actively use TikTok social media, which were then analyzed using SPSS version 27.0. The results of the analysis prerequisite test showed that the data were normally distributed, thus meeting the assumptions for regression analysis. A simple linear regression analysis produced a positive regression coefficient of 0.680, indicating that higher TikTok usage also increases the perception of TikTok's function as a reference source for adventure tourism destinations, with a contribution of 46.3% as evidenced by a coefficient of determination of 0.463, while the remaining 53.7% is influenced by other factors outside the study. The T-test results showed a calculated t-value greater than the t-table, namely $9.187 > 1.66055$, with a significance value of 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that TikTok usage has a positive and significant effect. Overall, TikTok functions not only as an entertainment medium, but also as a source of information and reference for adventure tourism destinations for Generation Z in particular, especially through content perceived as authentic and based on real experiences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous discussion, we conclude that TikTok is an influential social media platform as a reference source for adventure tourism destinations. This is evidenced by the coefficient of determination of 0.463, with TikTok contributing 46.3% of the variation. This demonstrates that TikTok plays a role in shaping how individuals obtain information and references related to tourism destinations, particularly adventure tourism

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Allah SWT, the Almighty God, for His grace and blessings enabled me to successfully complete this final assignment. Throughout the research and writing process, this thesis has been inseparable from the prayers, support, and contributions of various parties, both directly and indirectly. Therefore, with humility, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have supported and assisted me in completing this research from beginning to end.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor for their time, guidance, and valuable suggestions throughout the process. I also express my gratitude to all parties and locations where I conducted my research for their permission and support during the data collection process. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to all respondents who voluntarily completed the

questionnaire honestly and carefully. I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents, family, and friends for their prayers, support, and motivation.

I recognize that this thesis still has limitations, both in its writing and content, and therefore, I am open to suggestions and criticism for improvement. I also hope that this research can contribute to and serve as a reference for further research.

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