

## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON ADOLESCENTS DUE TO BEAUTY STANDARDS ON TIKTOK APPLICATIONS

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**Abstract.** This study aims to explore the psychological impact experienced by adolescents due to exposure to beauty standards displayed on the TikTok application. Using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, this study involved five adolescents aged 16 - 18 years at MAN 4 East Aceh as research subjects. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and content analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive - interpretive which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The findings of the study show three main psychological impacts, namely decreased self-esteem, negative body image, and social anxiety. However, some subjects also reported a motivation to do better despite experiencing psychological impacts. In addition, this study identifies coping strategies used by adolescents to deal with these psychological challenges, including selective content consumption, seeking social support, developing self-acceptance, and utilizing beauty standards as positive motivation. The novelty of this research lies in a phenomenological approach that explores the subjective experiences of adolescent girls in the context of religious Acehness culture. The implications of the study show the need for psychological intervention programs and digital literacy education to help adolescents use social media more healthily.

**Keywords:** psychological impact; teens; beauty standards; TikTok; social media

### I. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has changed the way of life of people around the world, including in Indonesia. Data shows that social media users in Indonesia continue to increase every year (APJII, 2024), with short video applications such as TikTok being one of the most popular among young users (We Are Social, 2024). TikTok allows its users to create and share short video content with various themes, ranging from entertainment, education, to viral challenge trends among teenagers. This study highlights the phenomenon of representation of beauty standards that are displayed massively on the TikTok application that dominates the feeds of adolescent users. TikTok celebrities (TikTokers) with appearances that are considered perfect become idols and are used as a standard by many teenagers. This condition raises its own concerns considering that adolescents are in the period of identity development and are very vulnerable to external influences (Khamim Zarkasih Putro, 2017). Constant exposure to unrealistic beauty standards has the potential to affect adolescents' mental health and self-concept (Mutia Indriyani et al., 2025). However, on the other hand, some studies also show that beauty standards on social media can be a positive motivation for some teenagers

to do better, although there are still psychological impacts to watch out for. (Saputri et al., 2024)

East Aceh Regency, as one of the regions in Aceh Province, is inseparable from this phenomenon of social media use. Although Aceh is known as an area with strong religious values, the influence of globalization and technological developments still has an impact on the behavior of local youth. MAN 4 East Aceh as one of the public high schools in this region has a student population that actively uses social media, including TikTok. This unique condition makes the location of the research interesting to study, how the interaction between local religious values and the global influence of social media shapes adolescents' psychological experiences in facing beauty standards.

Before conducting the main study, the researcher carried out initial observations at MAN 4 East Aceh during the November 2025 period which aimed to obtain an overview of TikTok use behavior among students as well as the phenomenon of evolving beauty standards. The results of preliminary observations showed that (1) most students, especially female students, actively use TikTok in their daily lives with an average duration of use of around 2-9 hours per day and the highest intensity occurs at school and at night, students often compare themselves with the content

seen on TikTok, including following various trends of challenges related to appearance such as face editing, the use of beauty filters, and visual transformation content, and (3) based on the information of the Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher, several students have submitted complaints related to decreased confidence after being exposed to certain content on social media. This initial observation further strengthens the urgency of research to examine more deeply the psychological impact experienced by adolescents due to exposure to beauty standards on TikTok.

Based on the background and the results of the initial observations that have been described, there are several problems that need to be studied in depth. First, what is the psychological impact experienced by teenagers due to exposure to beauty standards on the TikTok application? Second, how do adolescents respond and deal with the psychological pressure that arises from such exposure? Third, what coping strategies do adolescents use to cope with the psychological impact they feel? These questions are the main focus of this study to understand the ongoing phenomenon among East Aceh adolescents.

This study aims to explore in depth the psychological impact experienced by adolescents due to exposure to beauty standards in the TikTok application. In particular, this study aims to identify the forms of psychological impact that arise, understand adolescents' responses and experiences in dealing with the pressures of beauty standards, and analyze the coping strategies used by adolescents to overcome these psychological challenges (Sugiyono, 2013). Through these objectives, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the ongoing phenomenon among Indonesian adolescents.

This research is based on several complementary psychological theories to explain the phenomenon of psychological impact on exposure to beauty standards in the TikTok application. Social Comparative Theory (Festinger, 1957; Vogel et al., 2014) explain that individuals tend to evaluate themselves through comparisons with others, which is where exposure to unrealistic beauty standards on social media can trigger self-comparing behaviors to others that negatively impact adolescent self-esteem. Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Chen et al., 2023) explain that women tend to internalize their self-view as objects judged based on physical appearance, which is reinforced by apps such as TikTok through content that idealizes certain appearances and encourages the use of filters and photo editing, so that it can cause *body image disorders* in adolescent girls. Stress Theory and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Keles et al., 2020) explain how individuals respond to psychological distress through *problem-focused coping* strategies and *emotion-focused coping* (self-acceptance development), which are used to analyze adolescents' strategies in dealing with pressure-related beauty standards on TikTok.

In this study, the psychological impact was realized into three main variables: (1) Decreased *self-esteem*, which is a negative assessment of oneself which is characterized by a decrease in self-confidence; (2) *Negative body image*, which is negative perception and feelings towards the body

which is characterized by dissatisfaction with the physical appearance of oneself. (3) Social anxiety, which is excessive worry about the negative judgments of others characterized by fear of negative comments.

To provide a clear understanding of the key terms in this study, here are operational definitions of some of the key concepts. In the context of psychology, psychological impact is defined as the effects caused by a particular event, experience, or situation on an individual's mental, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral state. These impacts can be negative such as stress, anxiety, depression, trauma, or psychosomatic disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Adolescents in this study are individuals aged 16-18 years who are in the stage of identity development and are very vulnerable to environmental influences (Kusumaningsih, 2025). Beauty standards are the criteria of ideal appearance that are displayed, including generally unrealistic standards of body, face, and physical appearance (Putri & Astuti, 2025). TikTok is a short video-based social media application that allows users to create and share content with various effects and filters (Mutia Indriyani et al., 2025). Coping strategy is a stress management process that involves cognitive and behavioral efforts to handle stressful situations, which are done consciously and planned to overcome emotions and problems faced. (Riyanti, 2018).

This research has theoretical and practical uses. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of psychological science, especially in understanding the impact of social media use on adolescent mental health. Research findings can enrich the treasures of qualitative research in the fields of developmental psychology and media psychology (Astuti & Firmawan, 2022). Practically, the results of this study can be an input for parents, teachers, and supervisors in understanding adolescents' psychological experiences related to the use of social media. In addition, research findings can be the basis for the development of psychological intervention programs and digital literacy education that are in accordance with the Indonesian cultural context (Wibowo, 2023). This study has limitations that need to be explained to provide clarity on the scope of the study. This study is limited to the phenomenon of psychological impact due to exposure to beauty standards in the TikTok application only, not including other social media platforms. The research subjects were limited to MAN 4 East Aceh students aged 16-18 years, so the findings could not be generalized to the wider population. The approach used is phenomenological qualitative, which focuses on the subjective experience of the research, rather than on hypothesis testing or searching for causal relationships between variables.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological design to explore adolescents' subjective experiences related to the psychological impact of beauty standards on the TikTok application. This approach was chosen because of its focus on a deep understanding of the

meaning of the life experiences of research subjects (Sugiyono, 2013). This research was conducted in MAN 4 East Aceh, Pucok Alue Dua Village, Simpang Ulim District, East Aceh Regency, which was chosen because this location is a school environment with a high level of use of the TikTok Application among adolescents. Data collection took place from January 28, 2026 - February 06, 2026, with field records to ensure data accuracy.

The research population is active students of MAN 4 East Aceh who use TikTok. The *purposive sampling technique* was used to select research subjects with the following criteria: (1) women aged 16-18 years, (2) active TikTok users for at least 2 hours/day, (3) willing to participate. The research involved five research subjects. The selection of *purposive sampling* was carried out to select research subjects who have experience relevant to the research topic (Agus Gia Kumara, 2018). The research procedure is carried out through several stages, namely (1) preparation which includes the management of research permits, as well as the preparation of research instruments, (2) initial observation to identify TikTok use behavior and beauty standard phenomena in the school environment; (3) the selection of research subjects based on the criteria that have been determined with the help of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, (4) data collection through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and content analysis, and (5) data analysis carried out through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn.

Data were collected through three techniques: (1) Observation, which included initial observation: it was conducted to obtain an overview of TikTok use behavior among students, beauty standard phenomena, and identify potential research subjects, then non-participant observations were conducted in the school environment to observe TikTok use behavior, emotional responses to content, and social interaction of study subjects. (2) Semi-structured interviews were conducted for 30-45 minutes/session using open-ended question guides to explore subjective experiences of psychological impacts, triggers, and coping strategies. (3) Content analysis was carried out on TikTok research videos consumed by the research subjects to identify promoted beauty standards. Secondary data are obtained from relevant literature.

Data analysis uses a descriptive-interpretive approach, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2013). At the reduction stage, non-participant observation notes, interview transcripts and direct quotes to illustrate the experience. Conclusions were re-verified to the study subjects to ensure reliability, with triangulation of data from interviews, non-participant observations, and content analysis to avoid bias. This analysis is supported by social psychology theories for a deeper interpretation.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers involved five individuals as the main subjects in the study. The five individuals were

selected through purposive sampling with the main criteria of age 16 to 18 years old and the use of the TikTok application. To maintain anonymity, each subject is coded S1 to S5 (S = Research Subject). This code is used to facilitate reference in the document. In addition, each subject is also given an initials (RN, ZH, MV, HM, UA) which is the initial letter of the research subject's name to maintain identity privacy.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Research Subjects**

Research Subject	Name/Initials	Age	Duration of Social Media Use
S1	RN	17	8 Hours
S2	ZH	18	2 Hours
S3	MV	16	5 Hours
S4	HM	17	9 Hours
S5	MUSCLE	18	6 Hours

This table presents the demographic characteristics of the study subjects, including initials, age, and duration of daily social media use, which are used as the basis for psychological impact analysis.

**Table 2 : Psychological Impact and Triggering Factors**

Research Subject	Major Psychological Impact	Key Triggering Factors
S1 (RN)	Stress, decreased confidence, avoiding the camera	negative comments, TikTokers content is perfect
S2 (ZH)	No negative impact and more confident	Limit the duration, focus on educational content, ignore negative comments
S3 (MV)	Anxiety, overthinking, Avoid unfiltered selfies,	Contents Face flawless, negative comments.
S4 (HM)	Stress, self-hatred, irregular diet	High Duration of Use, Ideal body videos, negative comments about weight
S5 (UA)	Anxiety about audience response, insecurity	Feelings no Able to meet beauty standards

This table illustrates the main psychological impacts and triggering factors reported by each of the study subjects, based on thematic analysis from interviews and observations, to show individual variations in responses to beauty standards on the TikTok App.

**Table 3 : Coping strategy**

Research subjects	Key coping strategies	Effectiveness (Based on Research Subject Reports)
S1 (RN)	Exercise, take photos from a certain angle, discuss with friends	Some effective, but still aware of shortcomings
S2 (ZH)	Limit screen time, focus on educational content, ignore negative comments, discuss with friends	Highly effective and confidence-boosting
S3 (MV)	Reduce Scroll Contents trigger overthinking, focus on motivational videos	Effective for reducing exposure
S4 (HM)	Healthy diet, exercise	Difficult overcoming overthinking completely

S5 (UA)	Accept yourself as you are, reduce the time you spend using the TikTok App, read books/study	Effective CAUTION for Redirect
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This table illustrates the coping strategies applied by the study subjects to manage psychological impacts, along with the assessment of effectiveness based on their subjective reports, emphasizing the importance of personalized interventions in the context of adolescent mental health.

**Perception of Beauty Standards on TikTok:**

The five research subjects described beauty standards on TikTok as unrealistic ideal images, such as oval faces, smooth skin, straight hair, and ideal bodies, which are widely promoted through digitally edited influencer content. The RN research subject (17 years, 8 hours of use) highlighted height and a white face as aspects that made him feel less than ideal: "I often see people on TikTok who seem to be perfect, their faces are white, their bodies are tall, it makes me feel that I am lacking, especially since my height is only 155 cm (S1). The study subject ZH (18 years, 2 hours) was also aware of the beauty standard, but did not feel a negative impact on him: "The beauty standards there are like smooth white skin, and a tall and slim body. But I'm not insecure because I feel like I already love myself so much, and if you look at the standards there, sometimes it's also a motivation for me to improve my beauty like them. I am even more insecure about the achievements of the people I see on social media" (S2).

Research subject MV (16 years, 5 hours) revealed the incompatibility of her skin color with the dominant beauty standards on TikTok: "The beauty standard is smooth white skin and her skin is not striped like mine, because beauty has an even skin tone, like most people who go viral. I really want to be like them, I'm insecure when I see their flawless faces" (S3).

The study subject HM (17 years, 9 hours) emphasized a slim body as a representation of beauty that he often sees on TikTok: "Beautiful is like a slim, slim and tall body. I feel less because I'm overweight" (S4).

The UA study subjects (18 years, 6 hours) added that beauty standards also included facial symmetry and certain features: "The beauty standards in it were symmetrical faces, flat eyebrows, voluminous lips, pointed noses, and straight hair. Beauty is like the one that is often shown on TikTok. I wasn't confident with my thick, big nose and curly hair" (S5).

**Psychological Impact:**

Most of the study subjects reported negative psychological impacts due to social comparisons to beauty content on TikTok.

The research subject RN (S1) experienced stress and decreased confidence to avoid the camera: "Yes, I am often stressed and lack confidence. I compared myself to them, and in the end I rarely appeared in front of the camera without editing so that I looked tall and had a smooth, white face. Sometimes I avoid the camera, especially when I take

pictures together at school events because I am afraid that my face will look ugly in the photo" (S1).

Research subjects ZH (S2) did not feel negative psychological impacts and instead showed a more confident attitude: "There was no negative impact on me. I'm even more confident. In my opinion, I don't need to spend energy thinking about things like that, so my focus is more on academics than appearances. TikTok is only for entertainment, I don't really care about that standard" (S2).

The research subject MV (S3) experienced anxiety due to negative comments related to his appearance: "I often experience anxiety, especially if there are comments that are like maghrib faces because my skin is dull. It makes me less confident and sometimes overthinks too much. So far, I have avoided selfies without filters, even I used to use mercury-infused skincare so that I could whiten quickly, but my skin became more damaged." (S3).

The HM research subject (S4) reported excessive stress that had an impact on diet, but still felt motivated to improve: "Yes, I am often stressed, sometimes I even hate to look at myself in the mirror. In fact, sometimes I eat irregularly because I want to have an ideal body like them. But on the other hand, I am also motivated to do better, for example by exercising regularly or improving my diet" (S4). The UA research subject (S5) felt anxious about the audience's response on social media: "I often panic if I like my videos a little. I often feel inadequate and insecure, before posting something on social media I think for a long time because I am afraid of getting comments that are not according to my expectations" (S5).

**Triggering Factors for Psychological Impact:**

Some of the main factors that trigger psychological impact include the high duration of TikTok use, exposure to influencer content that is considered perfect, and negative comments.

Research subject RN (S1) revealed that the habit of scrolling for hours reinforces social comparisons: "I often scroll TikTok for hours, especially videos of people who I think are perfect, it makes me constantly compare and stress. If there are negative comments like "Yakult bottle" because I'm short, it immediately makes me more insecure" (S1, 4).

Research subject ZH (S2) rarely experiences triggers because they limit the duration of use and choose educational content: "For me, the trigger factor is rarely experienced because I limit my time on TikTok, only 2 hours a day, and focus more on educational content. I don't really care about negative comments" (S2).

The research subject MV (S3) felt that his anxiety increased when he saw content with a very perfect facial expression: "What makes my anxiety worse is that when I see videos of people on TikTok whose faces are flawless, it makes me insecure and I don't feel confident in meeting people" (S3).

The subject of the HM study (S4) mentioned ideal body videos and negative comments as the main triggers: "The triggering factor in my opinion is videos of people who make me compare my weight, and negative comments like "your body is fat, you don't care" make my stress worse" (S4).

The UA research subject (S5) revealed the feeling of not being able to meet beauty standards as a source of anxiety: "What strengthened my anxiety was that when I felt that I couldn't be rich like the beautiful people on TikTok, I felt like why I couldn't be that rich" (S5).

#### **Psychological Impact Management Strategies:**

The research subjects applied various coping strategies to manage the psychological impact experienced.

The research subject RN (S1) tried to improve physical fitness and seek social support: "I try to take photos from an angle that makes me look taller, but now I am diligent in exercising so that my body is fitter, and I talk to friends about how I feel. But still, TikTok makes me more aware that I'm lacking" (S1).

Research subjects ZH (S2) consistently limited the time of use and ignored negative comments: "I limited the time to watch beauty content, upload more educational videos or school challenges. If there are bad comments, I just ignore them because I know I'm beautiful and smart. I invite friends to discuss the importance of focusing on the inside, not just the outer skin" (S2).

The MV research subject (S3) reduced exposure to content that triggered overthinking: "I try to scroll less content that makes me overthinking and insecure, and focus more on motivational videos" (S3).

The subject of HM's research (S4) began to implement a healthy lifestyle despite still facing emotional difficulties: "I started a healthy diet and exercise, although sometimes it was very difficult to overcome my overthinking" (S4).

The UA research subject (S5) tried to accept himself and divert his attention to other activities: "I used to edit all my posts to make them look better, but now I try to accept myself as they are. Also spend less time on TikTok, read more books or study" (S5).

#### **Individual Variation Analysis:**

The results showed that the research subjects S1, S3, S4, and S5 tended to experience negative psychological impacts due to exposure to beauty standards on TikTok, while S2 showed strong psychological *resilience*. This indicates that self-acceptance and focus on non-physical achievements can play a protective role against the negative impact of social media. This variation is reinforced by social psychology theory (Sarilito Wirawan Sarwono, 2014), where the internalization of group norms is influenced by individual factors such as *self-acceptance*, which makes some adolescents more resistant to social comparisons. Nonetheless, positive aspects of TikTok such as creative support communities are also seen in study subject participants who limit usage, demonstrating the app's potential for positive development if used wisely.

This study succeeded in exploring the psychological impact experienced by adolescents due to exposure to beauty standards on the TikTok application. Overall, the findings of this study show that the beauty standards displayed on TikTok include oval faces, smooth skin, straight hair, and slim bodies, which have a significant influence on the psychological condition of adolescent girls in MAN 4 East Aceh. Based on the data analysis that has

been carried out, there are three main psychological impacts identified, namely decreased *self-esteem*, *negative body image*, and social anxiety. These findings are in line with the previously set research objectives, namely identifying forms of psychological impact, understanding adolescents' responses in the face of pressure of beauty standards, and analyzing coping strategies used to overcome these psychological challenges.

The study's key findings showed that four out of five study subjects (S1, S3, S4, and S5) reported negative psychological experiences related to exposure to beauty standards on TikTok. They experience decreased *self-esteem*, *negative body image*, and social anxiety. This condition is reinforced by the high duration of use of TikTok with an average of 2 - 9 hours per day which increases the intensity of social comparisons with content that displays beauty standards. On the other hand, one research subject (S2) showed strong psychological resilience, where he did not experience negative impacts and instead felt more confident by focusing on academic achievements. In addition, some subjects also reported a motivation to do better despite experiencing psychological impacts, suggesting that beauty standards do not always have a negative impact. These findings reveal that the impact of exposure to beauty standards on TikTok can be different for each teen. These differences are influenced by the presence of protective factors, such as psychological resilience and a focus on achievement beyond physical appearance, which can help adolescents reduce the negative impact of social comparisons on social media (Greece et al., 2025).

To deepen their understanding of the beauty standards promoted on the TikTok application, researchers conducted content analysis of the videos consumed by the study subjects. The results of the content analysis show that the standards promoted on TikTok include unrealistic beauty criteria. This is reinforced by research by Vuong et al. (2021) who found that similar beauty standards are positively correlated with body dissatisfaction in adolescents. Similar content recommendation algorithms that reinforce ideal norms are unrealistic and trigger deeper internalization in users. The results of this content analysis reinforce the findings that have been presented previously, the consistency between the results of the content analysis and the perception of the research subjects shows that adolescents in MAN 4 East Aceh are aware that the content on TikTok is often digitally edited, but still experiences psychological pressure from repeated exposure to these unrealistic beauty standards.

This research is also very much in line with the Social Comparative Theory developed by Festinger (1957) and strengthened by Vogel et al. (2014). This theory explains that individuals tend to judge themselves by comparing themselves to others. In the context of TikTok, teenagers compare themselves to figures who are considered superior (*upward social comparison*) with influencers and content creators who are considered to have perfect appearances. This comparison triggers feelings of inadequacy, decreased *self-esteem*, and prolonged social anxiety. This was experienced by the RN research subject (17 years old) who spent 8 hours per day using TikTok. She

often compares her skin tone and height to people who look perfect on TikTok, and ends up making her feel inadequate, then avoiding the camera on various social occasions. She revealed: "Yes, I am often stressed and lack confidence. I compared myself to them, and in the end I rarely appeared in front of the camera without editing so that I was tall and had a smooth, white face. Sometimes I avoid the camera, especially when I take pictures together at school events because I am afraid that I look ugly" (S1, 2).

In addition, labeling such as "yakult bottles" in the comment column is also often thrown at someone who has a relatively short posture. This kind of labeling is often demeaning and creates additional pressure for teens who are undergoing body identity formation, making them less likely to feel uncomfortable with their own body shape and more motivated to achieve unrealistic body standards. The findings of this study are also supported by the Objectification Theory developed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) and reinforced by Chen et al. (2023). This theory explains that women tend to internalize their self-view as objects based on physical appearance. Apps like TikTok reinforce this phenomenon through content that idealizes certain appearances and encourages the use of filters and photo editing, which can cause negative body image disorders in adolescent girls.

A similar condition was experienced by research subject MV (16 years old) who felt insecure with his face that was not flawless as shown in popular TikTok content. She revealed: "I often experience such anxiety, especially if there are comments that are as bad as maghrib because my skin is dull. It makes me less confident and sometimes overthinks too much. So far, I have avoided selfies without filters, even I used to use skincare that contained mercury so that I could whiten quickly, but my skin became more damaged" (S3, 2). This shows that the duration of exposure correlates with the intensity of psychological impact, where repeated exposure to unrealistic beauty standards on the TikTok application creates high psychological distress, especially related to negative labeling of dark skin tones (maghrib face) and the use of harmful substances such as mercury to meet these standards.

According to Objectification Theory, women who internalize beauty standards from society and the media tend to view themselves as objects to be judged, so they experience feelings of *shame (body shame)* and *negative body image*. This experience confirms that the theory is very relevant in explaining the psychological impact of exposure to beauty standards on social media on adolescent girls. Khamim Zarkasih Putro (2017) explained that adolescents in the period of identity search need validation from the social environment to form self-identity, so that the pressure from social media can have a significant impact on the process.

Based on the Stress Theory and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and applied in the context of social media by Keles et al. (2020), individuals respond to psychological distress through a variety of mechanisms. In this context, the social anxiety experienced by teens can be triggered by the pressure to meet unrealistic beauty standards on TikTok. The UA research subject (18 years

old), for example, felt incapable of meeting the beauty standards she saw on TikTok, which triggered anxiety over the audience's response when she posted content on social media. He revealed that: "I often panic if I like my videos a little. I often feel inadequate and insecure, before posting something on social media I think for a long time because I am afraid that I will get comments that are not as I expected" (S5, 2). This phenomenon is also reinforced by the one-way relationship between teens and influencers, which makes teens feel emotionally close and ultimately influences their self-evaluation standards.

TikTok's media effects and algorithms also create "filters" that constantly expose users to uniform and unrealistic beauty standard content. This repeated exposure erodes adolescents' awareness that content has been edited, so they view such standards as "normal" or "ideal" to be achieved (Indasari et al., 2025). The subject of the study HM (17 years old) also experienced a similar impact, where he revealed: "Yes, I am often stressed, sometimes I even hate to look at myself in the mirror. In fact, sometimes I eat irregularly because I want to have an ideal body like them" (S4). This suggests that the pressure to meet ideal body standards on TikTok not only impacts mental health, but can also affect unhealthy eating behaviors in teens.

This study reveals various coping strategies used by adolescents to manage the psychological impact of exposure to beauty standards on TikTok. Based on Stress Theory and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), coping strategies can be categorized into two main types, namely *problem-focused coping* and *emotion-focused coping* (emotion management) (Keles et al., 2020). *Problem-Focused Coping strategies* include immediate action to address stressors. Selective content consumption strategies include limiting the duration of TikTok use, choosing content that is educational or motivational, and avoiding content that triggers anxiety. Study subjects ZH, who showed the highest psychological resilience, reported that he limited his TikTok usage time to just 2 hours per day and focused more on educational content. This strategy has proven to be very effective in preventing negative psychological impacts, in accordance with the recommendations from Indasari et al. (2025) on the importance of digital literacy and selective content consumption to maintain adolescent mental health. The MV research subjects also reported that they were able to reduce anxiety by reducing scrolling towards content that triggered overthinking and focusing more on motivational videos. The UA research subject revealed that he began to reduce the time spent on TikTok and divert it to other activities such as reading books and studying.

In addition, some subjects also reported that beauty standards can be a positive motivation to do better, although there is still a perceived psychological impact. The research subjects ZH (S2) and HM (S4) are examples of these findings. ZH stated that beauty standards on TikTok can be a motivation to improve beauty. HM also stated that despite stress, he is still motivated to get better with regular exercise or improving his diet. These findings suggest that motivation can be a protective factor that helps teens manage the negative impact of social media.

However, motivation alone is not enough to overcome all the pressures that arise. Therefore, adolescents also apply coping strategies, specifically *Emotion-Focused Coping*, which focuses on managing emotional responses to stress. In this context, strategies for seeking social support play an important role in helping adolescents manage psychological impacts. RN study subjects reported that they shared their feelings with their friends as a way to cope with stress and decreased self-confidence. Although she stated that this strategy was only partially effective because she remained aware of her physical shortcomings, social interactions with peers provided space for teens to validate their experiences and feel that they were not alone in facing the challenge. This is in line with the theory of social support in psychology, which explains that positive social relationships can be protective against stress and improve the psychological well-being of individuals (Hidayah & Research Team, 2025).

In addition, the self-acceptance development strategy is a more internal approach, in which adolescents seek to accept themselves as they are and shift the focus from physical appearance to other aspects of life. UA research subjects reported that they tried to accept themselves for who they are and diverted attention to positive activities such as reading books and studying. Although this strategy requires a difficult process, the development of self-acceptance is an important foundation for long-term psychological well-being. This is supported by Rahma and Setiasih (2021) who found that adolescents with a high level of self-acceptance tend to be more resistant to social pressure related to physical appearance. Furthermore, Indasari et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of self-acceptance education as a strategy to help adolescents develop positive attitudes towards themselves and reduce the negative impact of exposure to unrealistic beauty standards on social media.

The main novelty in this study lies in the exploration of adolescents' subjective experiences in the midst of Acehese culture that has high religiosity. Aceh is an area with a strong implementation of Islamic sharia in daily life, including in the education environment of state high schools (MAN) (Psikoislamedia, 2026). This unique context enriches understanding of the interaction between local-religious values and the global influence of social media in shaping adolescents' psychological experiences. Although the findings suggest a potential conflict between local norms and global beauty standards (Putri & Sari, 2025), the perspective of Islamic psychology views this phenomenon as a process of cognitive adaptation (Rahmatullah, 2024). Islamic values have the potential to function as a *protective factor* that helps adolescents filter negative information from the media (Malahayati, 2023). For example, the concept of true beauty that lies in inner qualities (QS al-Hujurat 49:13) offers an alternative framework of meaning for the subject. It is important to note that this does not mean that all subjects consciously adopt these values, but rather the context of religious culture in MAN 4 East Aceh creates an environment where these values are available as a source of psychological resilience.

Empirical evidence of this potential for psychological resilience was seen in research subject ZH (18 years old) who showed strong resilience, where he focused more on academic achievement than physical appearance. This condition shows the potential for the integration of Islamic values in psychological intervention programs for adolescents. The study's findings generally have similarities with previous studies on the impact of social media on adolescent mental health. Mutia Indriyani et al. (2025) found that the intensity of TikTok social media use has a significant influence on the ideal *body image* in adolescents. Similarly, Rahma and Setiasih (2021) reported that TikTok use correlated with a decrease and increase in *body image concerns* in adolescent girls. The findings of this study support these studies by providing empirical evidence from the religious cultural context of Acehese culture.

In addition, the study also revealed an important nuance, which was rarely discussed in previous quantitative studies, that the duration of use was not the only factor that determined the psychological impact. Individual factors such as *self-acceptance* and a focus on non-physical achievements also play an important role. This individual variation is a unique contribution of the phenomenological approach in this study. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of psychological science, especially in understanding the dynamics between social media use and adolescent mental health. The integration of social comparative theory with the local cultural context of Indonesia shows the importance of considering cultural factors in understanding psychological phenomena. This research also broadens understanding of the mechanisms of adolescent identity formation in the digital era, where social media plays an increasingly important role in shaping social norms and self-evaluation standards (Heru Purnomo, 2024). Furthermore, these results show the potential for the integration of local and religious values in psychological theory, which can be the basis for future studies exploring the interaction between cultural/religious values and psychological phenomena in the digital age.

Practically, the findings of this study can be an input for various parties involved in adolescent mental well-being. For schools, these findings indicate the importance of integrating digital literacy programs into curricula that include education on how social media content is often unrealistic and digitally edited. Self-development and *self-acceptance* programs also need to be integrated to help adolescents build a strong psychological foundation in dealing with social pressure. Indasari et al. (2025) recommended a workshop on self-acceptance and criticism of the media as an important component of intervention programs for adolescents. For parents, these findings demonstrate the importance of supervision and open communication with their children about their experiences of using social media. For policymakers, these findings could serve as a basis for developing stricter regulations regarding social media content that promotes unrealistic beauty standards, taking into account adolescent mental health in the creation of such policies

## CONCLUSION

This study concluded that exposure to beauty standards in the TikTok application had a significant psychological impact on adolescent girls in MAN 4 East Aceh, including decreased *self-esteem*, negative *body image*, and social anxiety. The duration of TikTok use correlates with the intensity of psychological impacts, but individual factors such as self-acceptance and psychological resilience also play an important role in moderating these effects. Some adolescents show strong psychological resilience and do not experience negative impacts, while others experience emotional distress that affects daily behavior. The coping strategies used include selective content consumption, seeking social support, and developing self-acceptance. Aceh's religious cultural context has the potential to be a protective factor, although there remains tension between local values and global beauty standards. It is suggested that there is a need for digital literacy programs in schools that include education about unrealistic social media content, as well as open communication with parents to help adolescents use social media more healthily.

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