Analysis of Exposure to Digital Short Songs (TikTok) on Early Childhood Interest in Traditional Children's Songs

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How to cite: Zendrato, S. (2025). Analysis of Exposure to Digital Short Songs (TikTok) on Early Childhood Interest in Traditional Children's Songs. International Journal of Educational Practice and Policy, #(2): 99-105.

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital media, particularly short-video platforms such as TikTok, has significantly influenced early childhood music consumption patterns and has the potential to shape children's musical interests and preferences. This study aims to examine the effect of exposure to digital short songs on TikTok on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs. A quantitative approach with an explanatory research design was employed. The study involved 25 children aged 4-6 years who were enrolled in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) institutions and selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires completed by parents and teachers, measuring the level of exposure to digital short songs and children's interest in traditional children's songs. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression analysis. The findings reveal that exposure to digital short songs via TikTok has a statistically significant effect on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs, as indicated by a significance value of 0.046 ($p < 0.05$). These results suggest that digital media functions as an informal learning environment that can influence children's musical preferences. However, the impact of digital media exposure largely depends on the quality of content and the presence of appropriate guidance from adults. Therefore, the purposeful and educational use of TikTok may serve as an adaptive strategy to revitalize traditional children's songs, ensuring their relevance for young learners in the digital era while preserving local cultural values.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology over the past two decades has fundamentally transformed the way young children interact with media, particularly in accessing musical content. Short video-based social media platforms such as TikTok have become increasingly dominant, not only among adolescents and adults but also among early childhood users. TikTok's algorithmic system plays a crucial role in determining the type of content repeatedly exposed to users, making certain audio clips, including short songs, highly repetitive and viral (Chandra, 2023). This algorithm-driven exposure, combined with attractive visuals and ease of access, positions TikTok as a powerful medium capable of shaping children's preferences and attention patterns. Several studies have highlighted that TikTok is no longer merely an entertainment platform but has evolved into an informal learning space that influences children's cognition, behavior, and interests (Munasti et al., 2022; Hasanah & Pujiastuti, 2022). In the context of child development, media exposure cannot be considered a neutral factor, as both the type and intensity of content consumed by children have been shown to affect their social behavior, self-regulation, and preferences, including musical preferences (Ostrov et al., 2006; Munzer et al., 2018).

On the other hand, traditional children's songs play a strategic and meaningful role in early childhood education. These songs function not merely as entertainment but also as an effective medium for transmitting cultural heritage, moral values, and social norms across generations. Previous studies emphasize that traditional songs and tembang dolanan contribute significantly to character formation, ethical development, and cultural identity in early childhood (Hartiningsih, 2015; Rahmawati, 2025). The simplicity of lyrics, repetitive melodies, and contextual themes closely related to children's daily experiences make traditional songs highly suitable as pedagogical tools. Research has shown that song-based learning supports language acquisition, emotional expression, and social interaction among young children (Fitri & Nurhafizah, 2023; Cilvia & Astuti, 2023). Additionally, children's musical activities are closely linked to the development of musical intelligence, which plays an important role in broader cognitive and emotional growth (Kristiana et al., 2021). The integration of locally themed songs in early childhood learning has also been found to enhance children's engagement and cultural awareness (Destiana, 2025).

However, the increasing dominance of popular and modern music content on digital platforms has raised concerns regarding the marginalization of traditional children's songs. TikTok's content ecosystem tends to promote modern, short, and commercially appealing songs, which may gradually displace traditional musical forms in children's everyday listening experiences. Studies indicate that repeated exposure to modern music content significantly influences children's preferences, often leading to a declining interest in traditional music (Florentinus et al., 2019). Parents and educators have also expressed concerns about the behavioral and cultural implications of excessive TikTok exposure, particularly its impact on children's habits and value orientation (Dikdayanto & Hariyanto, 2024).

Furthermore, excessive digital media exposure has been associated with several developmental risks, including reduced self-regulation and changes in social behavior (Munzer et al., 2018). While TikTok has demonstrated potential as an educational medium when used intentionally (Chofifah & Sulaikho, 2024; Sari & Kurnia, 2022), uncontrolled exposure may shape children's interests in ways that are less supportive of cultural preservation. In this context, TikTok functions not only as a technological platform but also as a powerful cultural agent influencing children's musical preferences from an early age. Therefore, understanding the effect of exposure to digital short songs on early childhood interest in traditional children's

songs becomes essential, particularly in efforts to balance technological advancement with the preservation of cultural values in early childhood education.

In line with this perspective, İnanici and Sağer (2023) emphasize the urgency of integrating traditional music into early childhood education as a means of strengthening children's musical skills while fostering cultural connections. This integration becomes increasingly relevant amid globalization and digitalization, which may erode local cultural identities. Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the effect of exposure to digital short songs on TikTok on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs. This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and empirically to the development of early childhood music education strategies that are adaptive to the digital era while remaining firmly rooted in traditional cultural values.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was designed using a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the effect of exposure to digital short songs on the TikTok platform on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs. The research subjects consisted of 25 children aged 4–6 years who were enrolled in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) institutions. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, with the consideration that the children had regular access to TikTok content under parental supervision and had been introduced to traditional children's songs through school learning activities. The research procedure began with obtaining permission and conducting socialization with the school authorities and parents, followed by data collection within a controlled time period to ensure consistency in media exposure and children's developmental conditions.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire completed by parents and teachers as informants. The instrument measured two main variables: the level of exposure to TikTok songs (including frequency, duration, and song characteristics) and children's interest in traditional children's songs (including level of interest, frequency of song selection, and affective responses). The questionnaire was developed based on a theoretical framework and underwent content validity testing by experts in early childhood education and music. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to describe respondent characteristics and research variables, as well as simple linear regression analysis to determine the magnitude and direction of the effect of digital short song exposure on children's interest in traditional songs. All statistical analyses were performed using statistical software, with the level of significance set at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the effect of exposure to digital short songs on TikTok on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs. The statistical results presented in the ANOVA table demonstrate that the regression model meets the criteria for significance (Table 1). The obtained significance value of 0.046 indicates that the effect of digital short song exposure on children's interest in traditional songs is statistically meaningful. This finding confirms that variations in early childhood interest in traditional children's songs are not occurring randomly, but are influenced by differences in the level of exposure to short digital songs accessed through TikTok. The F value of 4.444 further supports the adequacy of the regression model in explaining the relationship between the

independent and dependent variables. This value suggests that the variance explained by the regression model is sufficiently greater than the unexplained variance, indicating that exposure to digital short songs contributes measurably to changes in children's interest in traditional children's songs. The results imply that digital short song exposure plays a role in shaping children's musical preferences during early childhood, a developmental stage characterized by high sensitivity to auditory and visual stimuli. Overall, the findings reveal that exposure to digital short songs has a significant influence on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs. The statistical evidence shows that digital media content encountered by children can affect their engagement with traditional cultural materials. These results highlight the importance of understanding how contemporary digital platforms shape children's musical interests and experiences, particularly in relation to the preservation and transmission of traditional children's songs.

Table 1. ANOVA Results on the Effect of Digital Short Song Exposure (TikTok) on Early Childhood Interest in Traditional Children's Songs

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	384.063	1	384.063	4.444	.046[b]
	Residual	1987.937	23	86.432		
	Total	2372.000	24			

a. Dependent Variable: Early Childhood Interest in Traditional Children's Songs

b. Predictors: (Constant), Digital Short Song Exposure (TikTok)

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that exposure to digital short songs through the TikTok platform has a significant effect on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.046 ($p < 0.05$) and an F value of 4.444. These results confirm that digital media exposure is not merely a form of entertainment but has meaningful implications for the formation of musical interests and preferences in early childhood. Statistically, the adequacy of the regression model suggests that variations in children's interest in traditional children's songs can be partially explained by their level of exposure to digital short songs on TikTok.

The significance of these findings can be interpreted through the lens of multimedia learning theory. Early childhood represents a developmental stage characterized by high sensitivity to engaging visual and auditory stimuli that are brief, repetitive, and dynamic. Digital short songs on TikTok are typically presented in audiovisual formats that are rhythmic, visually stimulating, and easy to remember, making them highly compatible with young children's learning characteristics. In line with the findings of Budiarti and Kurniati (2024), social media platforms such as TikTok can stimulate children's creativity and broaden their perspectives through visually and auditorily appealing content. In the context of this study, such exposure has the potential to shape children's musical preferences, including how they perceive and respond to traditional children's songs.

Furthermore, these results are consistent with the findings of Hudain et al. (2023), who reported that video-based learning media can enhance children's learning motivation. Increased motivation does not only influence formal learning processes but also affects children's interest in cultural content presented through digital media. Accordingly, the

significant influence of digital short song exposure on children's interest in traditional songs can be understood as a result of heightened engagement with familiar and appealing media. In this sense, digital media can function as a bridge that brings children closer to specific content, including traditional cultural materials, when appropriately designed and delivered.

Nevertheless, these findings must be interpreted critically. Statistical significance does not necessarily imply that the influence is absolute or universally positive. Aditya et al. (2022) caution that uncontrolled digital media exposure may negatively affect children's behavior, including diminishing interest in traditional activities. In this regard, the key issue lies in the quality, context, and guidance accompanying media exposure. Passive, excessive, and unguided exposure may displace children's interest in local cultural values, whereas structured and guided exposure can strengthen children's understanding and appreciation of traditional children's songs.

Thus, the importance of this study lies in its implications for cultural preservation strategies. The significant influence of digital short song exposure demonstrates that modern media is inseparable from the lives of young children. Rather than rejecting digital media, a more relevant approach is to integrate traditional cultural elements into digital formats that align with children's developmental characteristics. This perspective is consistent with Azizah and Eliza (2023), who argue that the inclusion of cultural elements in digital learning materials can enhance children's literacy interest. In the context of traditional children's songs, repackaging them through platforms such as TikTok may serve as an adaptive strategy to revive children's interest in cultural heritage.

Overall, the results of this study emphasize the strategic role of digital short song exposure in shaping early childhood interest in traditional children's songs. This influence reflects the dynamic interaction between technological development, children's learning characteristics, and efforts to preserve cultural heritage. Therefore, these findings provide an empirical foundation for educators, parents, and policymakers to utilize digital media thoughtfully and creatively as a means of revitalizing traditional children's songs, ensuring their continued relevance and meaning for young children in the digital era.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that exposure to digital short songs through the TikTok platform has a significant effect on early childhood interest in traditional children's songs. This finding indicates that children's musical preferences are not formed solely through natural development but are strongly influenced by the media environment they frequently consume. TikTok's characteristics presenting songs in short, repetitive formats with engaging audiovisual elements serve as powerful stimuli in shaping children's interests, including how they perceive and respond to traditional children's songs. However, the influence of digital media exposure is highly dependent on how it is utilized. Uncontrolled exposure may weaken children's interest in traditional children's songs that carry important cultural values, whereas structured, guided, and purposeful use of digital media can function as an innovative strategy for introducing and revitalizing traditional songs in forms that are relevant to children's everyday experiences. Therefore, this study highlights the crucial role of parents and educators in managing digital media use wisely as part of broader efforts to preserve early childhood musical culture amid ongoing digitalization.

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