

Perceptions of Algorithmic Gatekeeping, Visibility Uncertainty, and Algorithmic Resistance Practices Among TikTok Content Creators in Indonesia

Apriyanto¹, KMT Lasmiatun²

¹Politeknik Tunas Pemuda Tangerang irapriyanto0604@gmail.com

²Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang lasmiatunmsi@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: irapriyanto0604@gmail.com

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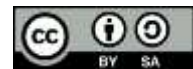
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ABSTRACT

The emergence of algorithm-driven social media platforms has transformed the way digital content is produced, distributed, and consumed. This study examines the relationship between perceptions of algorithmic gatekeeping, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices among TikTok content creators in Indonesia. The research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method involving 150 TikTok content creators. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire measured using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using SPSS version 25. The data analysis included descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, classical assumption testing, and multiple regression analysis to examine the proposed relationships among variables. The findings indicate that content creators perceive TikTok's algorithm as a significant gatekeeping mechanism that influences content distribution and audience exposure. The regression results demonstrate that algorithmic gatekeeping perception has a positive and significant effect on visibility uncertainty. Furthermore, algorithmic gatekeeping perception and visibility uncertainty significantly influence algorithmic resistance practices. These findings indicate that uncertainty regarding algorithmic visibility encourages creators to develop adaptive strategies, including content optimization, trend adaptation, and engagement management. This study contributes to understanding how digital creators negotiate algorithmic control within platform-based environments, particularly in the Indonesian TikTok ecosystem.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Apriyanto

Institution: Politeknik Tunas Pemuda Tangerang

Email: irapriyanto0604@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has transformed digital content creation, distribution, and consumption, with TikTok emerging as one of the most influential short-form video platforms within the creator economy. Unlike traditional media systems, TikTok relies on algorithmic recommendation mechanisms that classify, rank, and distribute content based on user behavior, engagement patterns, and content characteristics. Through the For You Page (FYP), the

platform determines content exposure opportunities, influencing creators' visibility, engagement, and participation within the platform economy (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022; Gerbaudo, 2024). These algorithm-driven processes have positioned recommendation systems as central mechanisms regulating visibility within contemporary digital communication environments.

TikTok's algorithmic recommendation system analyzes user preferences and interaction patterns to personalize content distribution and sustain engagement. The platform's interface strongly centers the For You Page and encourages reliance on algorithmic recommendations, while providing limited transparency about how user interactions shape subsequent recommendations (Entrena-Serrano, 2025). Algorithmic curation also creates new dynamics in digital participation, where content visibility is shaped by statistically constructed interest clusters rather than only by explicit social connections (Gerbaudo, 2024). For creators, this dependence on opaque computational processes can intensify concerns about how visibility is produced, interpreted, and maintained (Duffy & Meisner, 2023).

The increasing influence of algorithmic systems has contributed to the emergence of algorithmic gatekeeping, representing a shift from traditional media gatekeeping toward automated content selection mechanisms. While conventional gatekeeping involved journalists and media institutions controlling information flows, digital platforms increasingly delegate this function to algorithms that filter, prioritize, and recommend content. These systems structure the conditions under which users and creators become visible, creating new forms of platform power because their operational logic is only partially accessible to those affected by it (Bucher, 2012; Cotter, 2019). For social media creators in particular, algorithmic opacity can make visibility difficult to anticipate and can reinforce dependence on platform governance mechanisms (Duffy & Meisner, 2023).

For TikTok creators, algorithmic gatekeeping creates visibility uncertainty because success depends heavily on algorithmic distribution outcomes. Content quality and creative effort do not always result in consistent exposure, as platform features, audience dynamics, and algorithmic systems can produce volatile visibility conditions. Research on social media creative labor shows that creators experience visibility as both an opportunity and a source of precarity, particularly when algorithmic changes are difficult to anticipate. Similar studies of creator work describe visibility-based uncertainties that prompt creators to monitor metrics, adjust practices, and develop coping strategies (Fu & Fung, 2024). Creators may therefore respond by experimenting with content formats, engagement practices, and cross-platform strategies to reduce dependence on unstable algorithmic exposure (Meng, 2024).

Although algorithms function as mechanisms of control, creators are not passive recipients of algorithmic decisions. Instead, they negotiate and adapt to platform requirements through practices such as modifying content structures, monitoring engagement patterns, following trends, and adjusting production strategies to improve visibility. Such behaviors demonstrate the interaction between algorithmic systems and human agency, where creators attempt to interpret and strategically respond to platform logics (Cotter, 2019). Algorithmic knowledge and adaptability can become practical resources for creators operating in volatile platform environments, including through cross-platform learning and continuous adjustment to perceived algorithmic preferences (Meng, 2024). These practices are also consistent with research showing that users may respond to algorithmic systems through different forms of resistance, avoidance, and strategic adaptation (Xie et al., 2022).

Despite increasing research on algorithmic governance, platform power, and digital labor, important gaps remain in understanding how creators in different national and economic contexts

experience and respond to algorithmic control. Existing studies show that social media creators face unstable visibility, platform dependence, and changing algorithmic conditions that shape their labor and strategic decisions (Duffy & Meisner, 2023). A recent systematic review likewise identifies persistent asymmetries between platform algorithms and content creators, particularly around visibility, control, and creators' attempts to develop counter-strategies (Liang et al., 2025). Research focused specifically on Indonesian TikTok creators remains comparatively limited. Therefore, examining Indonesian creators provides important insights into how algorithmic power is interpreted and negotiated beyond the dominant contexts in existing platform labor research.

This study addresses this research gap by examining the relationship between algorithmic gatekeeping perceptions, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices among TikTok content creators in Indonesia. Specifically, this research investigates whether perceptions of algorithmic gatekeeping influence creators' experiences of visibility uncertainty and whether such uncertainty encourages the development of algorithmic resistance practices. The study contributes theoretically by extending algorithmic gatekeeping literature through an examination of creators' perceptions and behavioral responses toward automated visibility mechanisms, integrating perspectives of platform power and user agency. Practically, the findings provide insights into how digital creators navigate algorithm-driven environments and develop strategies to sustain visibility within platform economies. Through this analysis, the study advances understanding of how individuals negotiate algorithmic control and maintain participation within contemporary digital communication ecosystems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Algorithmic Gatekeeping in Digital Platforms

The concept of gatekeeping has evolved from traditional media processes, where editors and institutions controlled information selection and distribution, toward algorithm-driven mechanisms in digital platforms. Algorithmic gatekeeping refers to automated systems that classify, rank, and recommend content based on computational models and user behavior patterns. Unlike conventional gatekeeping, these systems operate through mechanisms that are often only partially visible to users, influencing what content is encountered and which creators receive attention. Research on TikTok demonstrates that algorithmic curation plays a central role in organizing content exposure through interest-based recommendation structures (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022; Gerbaudo, 2024). The For You Page further illustrates how interface design and recommendation processes encourage users to rely on opaque algorithmic curation (Entrena-Serrano, 2025). From the creator perspective, such opacity creates a power relationship in which visibility depends substantially on platform-defined mechanisms and metrics (Bucher, 2012; Cotter, 2019). These conditions can produce unequal and unpredictable exposure, requiring creators to continuously interpret and adapt to platform systems (Duffy & Meisner, 2023). Therefore, algorithmic gatekeeping represents both a content distribution mechanism and a form of platform control that shapes creator behavior and digital visibility.

2.2 Visibility Uncertainty Among Social Media Content Creators

Visibility represents a critical resource on social media platforms, particularly for creators whose audience reach, reputation, and economic opportunities depend on being discoverable. However, algorithm-driven content distribution creates visibility uncertainty because creators cannot fully predict or control how platform systems will distribute their content. Research on creative labor describes this condition as a form of visibility precarity produced by changes in

markets, platforms, features, and algorithms. Algorithmic opacity can further intensify uncertainty when creators have limited knowledge of why specific content is amplified or suppressed (Duffy & Meisner, 2023; Verwiebe et al., 2024). Visibility-based uncertainties may consequently prompt creators to monitor metrics, reinterpret platform signals, and modify production strategies (Fu & Fung, 2024). Cross-platform learning and algorithmic adaptability can also help creators manage the risks of dependence on a single platform or recommendation system (Meng, 2024). Therefore, visibility uncertainty represents a key challenge in understanding creator adaptation within algorithm-mediated platforms.

2.3 Algorithmic Resistance Practices

Algorithmic resistance refers to practices through which users negotiate, contest, avoid, or strategically adapt to algorithmic systems that shape digital activities. Rather than always involving direct opposition, resistance may appear as everyday tactics designed to regain agency within systems governed by computational rules (Mendonça et al., 2023). In short-video environments, users have been shown to employ avoidance and obfuscation as forms of algorithmic resistance (Xie et al., 2022). Among content creators, related practices include adjusting content formats, monitoring performance metrics, interpreting platform signals, and developing cross-platform strategies to manage algorithmic volatility (Cotter, 2019; Meng, 2024). These practices demonstrate that creators are active participants who simultaneously accommodate and negotiate algorithmic power in order to sustain visibility. Therefore, algorithmic resistance reflects a dynamic interaction between platform governance and creator agency in managing algorithm-mediated visibility.

2.4 Research Framework

Based on previous literature, this study proposes a framework explaining how TikTok creators respond to algorithmically mediated visibility environments. Algorithmic gatekeeping perception represents creators' understanding of algorithmic influence on content distribution, while visibility uncertainty refers to difficulties in predicting content exposure outcomes. Algorithmic resistance describes creators' behavioral responses through adaptation, negotiation, and efforts to improve algorithmic compatibility. The framework suggests that stronger perceptions of algorithmic gatekeeping may increase visibility uncertainty because limited transparency in algorithmic decision-making reduces creators' ability to predict and control audience reach. Research shows that people develop an 'algorithmic imaginary' to make sense of systems whose operations are not fully visible (Bucher, 2017), while content creators may perceive algorithms as non-transparent, unpredictable, and highly consequential for their work (Verwiebe et al., 2024). Such conditions can produce insecurity and unequal experiences of visibility, especially among creators who are more dependent on platform systems (Duffy & Meisner, 2023).

Furthermore, visibility uncertainty may encourage creators to develop adaptive or resistant strategies to maintain exposure through content modification, performance monitoring, and experimentation with perceived algorithmic preferences. Research on digital influencers shows that creators strategically interpret algorithmic rules as part of a continuous 'visibility game' (Cotter, 2019). Cross-platform sensitivity and algorithmic adaptability similarly enable creators to learn from differences across platforms and adjust their practices in response to algorithmic volatility (Meng, 2024). These practices illustrate the interaction between platform control and creator agency, where creators actively negotiate with algorithmic systems rather than merely accepting algorithmic outcomes. Therefore, this study examines the relationships between algorithmic gatekeeping perception, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices among Indonesian TikTok creators.

H1: Perceived algorithmic gatekeeping positively influences visibility uncertainty among TikTok content creators in Indonesia.

H2: Perceived algorithmic gatekeeping positively influences algorithmic resistance practices among TikTok content creators in Indonesia.

H3: Visibility uncertainty positively influences algorithmic resistance practices among TikTok content creators in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the relationships between algorithmic gatekeeping perception, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices among TikTok content creators in Indonesia. A quantitative approach was selected to measure construct relationships and test the proposed hypotheses using empirical data. Data were collected through a cross-sectional survey using a structured online questionnaire distributed to active TikTok creators. The research model positioned algorithmic gatekeeping perception as the independent variable, visibility uncertainty as the mediating variable, and algorithmic resistance practices as the dependent variable.

The population consisted of TikTok content creators in Indonesia who actively produce and distribute digital content. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: actively creating TikTok content, regularly uploading content within the last six months, monitoring performance indicators such as views and engagement, and having experience with TikTok's recommendation system. A total of 150 creators participated in this study. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to measure three constructs: algorithmic gatekeeping perception, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices. The measurement indicators captured perceptions of algorithmic influence on visibility, uncertainty regarding content exposure, and creators' adaptive strategies toward algorithmic systems.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. The analysis involved descriptive statistics, validity testing, reliability testing, classical assumption tests, and regression analysis for hypothesis testing. Validity was assessed through Pearson correlation analysis, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha with a threshold of 0.70. Regression analysis was performed to examine the effects of algorithmic gatekeeping perception on visibility uncertainty and the influence of both variables on algorithmic resistance practices. The significance of relationships was determined based on p-values below 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 150 TikTok content creators in Indonesia. The demographic characteristics of respondents were analyzed based on gender, age, creator experience, and average content upload frequency. The distribution of respondents provides an overview of the background diversity of TikTok creators participating in this research.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	82	54.7
	Female	68	45.3

Age	18–24 years	71	47.3
	25–34 years	59	39.3
	35 years and above	20	13.4
Creator Experience	Less than 1 year	38	25.3
	1–3 years	76	50.7
	More than 3 years	36	24.0
Upload Frequency	Daily	42	28.0
	Several times per week	79	52.7
	Weekly or less	29	19.3

The respondent characteristics indicate that the study involved 150 TikTok content creators with relatively balanced gender representation, consisting of 82 male respondents (54.7%) and 68 female respondents (45.3%). Most participants were young creators, with 71 respondents (47.3%) aged 18–24 years, followed by 59 respondents (39.3%) aged 25–34 years and 20 respondents (13.4%) aged 35 years or above. Regarding creator experience, the majority had been active for 1–3 years (50.7%), while 25.3% had less than one year of experience and 24.0% had more than three years of experience. In terms of upload frequency, most respondents uploaded content several times per week (52.7%), followed by daily uploads (28.0%) and weekly or less frequent uploads (19.3%). These characteristics indicate that the respondents represent active TikTok creators with diverse levels of experience and content production intensity.

4.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to identify respondents' perceptions regarding algorithmic gatekeeping, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices. The results are presented based on mean values and standard deviations.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Algorithmic Gatekeeping Perception (AGP)	4.12	0.61	High
Visibility Uncertainty (VU)	3.87	0.72	High
Algorithmic Resistance Practices (ARP)	4.05	0.65	High

The descriptive analysis indicates that TikTok creators perceive algorithmic systems as important determinants of content visibility. The algorithmic gatekeeping perception variable achieved the highest mean score of 4.12, demonstrating strong recognition of algorithmic influence on audience exposure. Visibility uncertainty obtained a mean score of 3.87, indicating that creators experience difficulties predicting content performance despite understanding the role of algorithms. Meanwhile, algorithmic resistance practices recorded a mean score of 4.05, showing that creators actively apply adaptive strategies, such as modifying content formats, optimizing hashtags, following trends, and adjusting publishing patterns. These findings suggest that creators do not passively accept algorithmic outcomes but actively negotiate with platform systems to maintain visibility within algorithm-driven environments.

4.3 Validity and Reliability Testing

The validity test was conducted using Pearson correlation analysis, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results are presented below.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Items	Item Correlation Range	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Algorithmic Gatekeeping Perception	5	0.612–0.824	0.861	Valid and Reliable
Visibility Uncertainty	5	0.587–0.791	0.835	Valid and Reliable
Algorithmic Resistance Practices	5	0.633–0.847	0.884	Valid and Reliable

The validity test results indicate that all measurement items achieved correlation coefficients exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.30, confirming that each item adequately represents its respective construct. The reliability analysis further demonstrates strong internal consistency, with all variables obtaining Cronbach's Alpha values above the recommended level of 0.70. Algorithmic resistance practices showed the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.884$), followed by algorithmic gatekeeping perception ($\alpha = 0.861$) and visibility uncertainty ($\alpha = 0.835$). These findings confirm that the measurement instruments are valid and reliable for further statistical analysis.

4.4 Classical Assumption Testing

Before regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model met statistical requirements.

Table 4. Classical Assumption Test Results

Test	Indicator	Value	Result
Normality Test	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Sig.	0.087	Normal
Multicollinearity	Tolerance	0.742	No Multicollinearity
Multicollinearity	VIF	1.347	No Multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity	Sig. Value	0.216	No Heteroscedasticity

The classical assumption test results confirm that the regression model meets the required statistical criteria. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov significance value of 0.087 (>0.05) indicates that the residuals are normally distributed. The multicollinearity assessment shows a VIF value of 1.347 and a tolerance value of 0.742, indicating no multicollinearity issues among the independent variables. Furthermore, the heteroscedasticity test produced a significance value of 0.216 (>0.05), confirming that the residual variance remains stable across observations. Therefore, the regression model is considered appropriate for hypothesis testing.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among algorithmic gatekeeping perception, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices.

Model 1: Effect of Algorithmic Gatekeeping Perception on Visibility Uncertainty

Table 5. Regression Results for AGP $\rightarrow$ VU

Relationship	β Coefficient	t-value	Sig.	Result
AGP $\rightarrow$ VU	0.624	9.876	0.000	Supported

The regression analysis shows that algorithmic gatekeeping perception has a positive and significant effect on visibility uncertainty ($\beta = 0.624$, $t = 9.876$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This finding

indicates that creators who perceive stronger algorithmic control are more likely to experience uncertainty regarding content visibility. The result suggests that limited transparency in algorithmic decision-making increases creators' difficulties in predicting changes in content reach, engagement, and audience exposure. Therefore, stronger perceptions of algorithmic gatekeeping contribute to greater visibility uncertainty among TikTok creators.

Model 2: Effect of Algorithmic Gatekeeping and Visibility Uncertainty on Algorithmic Resistance Practices

Table 6. Regression Results for AGP and VU → ARP

Relationship	β Coefficient	t-value	Sig.	Result
AGP → ARP	0.318	4.521	0.000	Supported
VU → ARP	0.491	6.934	0.000	Supported

The regression analysis indicates that both algorithmic gatekeeping perception and visibility uncertainty have significant positive effects on algorithmic resistance practices. Algorithmic gatekeeping perception positively influences resistance practices ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 4.521$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2, while visibility uncertainty demonstrates a stronger positive effect ($\beta = 0.491$, $t = 6.934$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. These findings suggest that creators who perceive stronger algorithmic control and experience greater uncertainty regarding content visibility are more likely to develop adaptive strategies, including experimenting with content formats, optimizing performance strategies, and adjusting production behaviors to improve algorithmic compatibility.

4.6 Coefficient of Determination

Table 7. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Interpretation
AGP → VU	0.624	0.389	0.385	Moderate Explanation
AGP + VU → ARP	0.693	0.480	0.473	Moderate Explanation

The coefficient of determination results indicate that algorithmic gatekeeping perception explains 38.9% of the variance in visibility uncertainty, demonstrating that perceived algorithmic control represents an important factor influencing creators' uncertainty regarding content exposure. Furthermore, the second regression model shows that algorithmic gatekeeping perception and visibility uncertainty jointly explain 48.0% of the variance in algorithmic resistance practices. The remaining variance may be influenced by other factors beyond the research model, including creator motivation, digital literacy, audience characteristics, and prior platform experience.

4.7 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that TikTok creators in Indonesia perceive algorithmic systems as significant mechanisms shaping digital visibility. The high level of algorithmic gatekeeping perception indicates that creators recognize the algorithm as an important determinant of content distribution and audience exposure. This finding is consistent with scholarship showing that algorithmic systems structure visibility by determining which content becomes prominent or remains difficult to discover (Bucher, 2012), while TikTok intensifies this logic through interest-based recommendation and algorithmic content curation (Gerbaudo, 2024). More broadly, research on content creation within algorithmic environments identifies visibility and platform control as central dimensions of the power relationship between creators and algorithms (Liang et al., 2025).

The significant relationship between algorithmic gatekeeping perception and visibility uncertainty indicates that algorithmic opacity contributes to creators' difficulties in predicting content performance. Although TikTok provides opportunities for broader content discovery, creators have limited access to the operational logic through which algorithmic evaluations shape distribution outcomes. This pattern is consistent with evidence that creators experience platform algorithms as inscrutable mechanisms that can enable or constrain visibility (Duffy & Meisner, 2023) and as systems that are often perceived as non-transparent and unpredictable (Verwiebe et al., 2024). Visibility-based uncertainty can therefore encourage continuous observation and adaptation as creators attempt to infer platform patterns and respond to changing exposure conditions (Fu & Fung, 2024).

Furthermore, the positive influence of visibility uncertainty on algorithmic resistance practices demonstrates that uncertainty encourages strategic adaptation among creators. Rather than simply rejecting algorithmic systems, creators may respond by modifying content formats, optimizing publishing approaches, interpreting metrics, and experimenting with platform-specific practices. Similar negotiation strategies have been documented among digital influencers seeking to improve algorithmic visibility (Cotter, 2019), while cross-platform creators develop algorithmic adaptability to cope with volatile recommendation environments (Meng, 2024). Research on algorithmic resistance further shows that users can employ everyday tactics to negotiate or partially regain agency in algorithmically mediated environments (Mendonça et al., 2023; Xie et al., 2022).

Overall, the findings illustrate that TikTok creators operate within a dynamic relationship between algorithmic dependency and human agency. Algorithms establish structural conditions that regulate visibility, while creators maintain agency through adaptive and strategic practices. This interpretation aligns with broader research showing that content creators continuously negotiate asymmetric platform power through sensemaking, experimentation, and adaptive strategies rather than through complete control over algorithmic systems (Liang et al., 2025; Meng, 2024). This study contributes to understanding digital labor by showing that algorithmic resistance emerges as a continuous negotiation process through which creators transform uncertainty into strategies for sustaining participation and visibility within platform ecosystems.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships between algorithmic gatekeeping perception, visibility uncertainty, and algorithmic resistance practices among TikTok content creators in Indonesia. The findings indicate that creators perceive TikTok's algorithm as a significant mechanism influencing content visibility and audience exposure, where stronger perceptions of algorithmic control increase uncertainty regarding content performance due to limited transparency in algorithmic processes. Furthermore, algorithmic gatekeeping perception and visibility uncertainty significantly influence resistance practices, demonstrating that creators respond to algorithmic challenges through adaptive strategies, including modifying content formats, optimizing hashtags, following trends, and adjusting publishing patterns. Theoretically, this study extends the discussion of algorithmic governance by illustrating that algorithms function as both controlling structures and spaces for negotiation, where creators maintain agency through strategic adaptation. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of algorithmic literacy for creators in developing sustainable content strategies, while future research may employ longitudinal approaches, qualitative methods, or cross-platform comparisons to explore evolving creator experiences within algorithm-driven environments.

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