WHEN FANS AND HATERS ARE ON THE SAME BOAT: 
A DECONSTRUCTIVE READING 
OF BOWO AND TIK TOK 
(The Reflections for Active Netizens in Social Media from the Deconstruction of Paradox and Parallel)

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Abstract:

This study analyses the viral impact of Bowo, a teenage celebrity from TikTok (a social media site) as well as comments from netizens who happened to be Bowo’s fans or haters. In addition, the study used theories of cultural studies from Derrida, Adorno and Horkheimer to analyze the entertainment industry as well as netizens, both fans and haters of Bowo. The role and judgments of fans and haters of Bowo will be shown to see the paradoxes and parallel of this phenomenon. Thus, the study applied a descriptive qualitative method to analyze data. The results indicate that although netizens know that what they see in TikTok may be fabricated, some netizens still felt deceived by Bowo’s appearances in TikTok. Those feelings were shown in their comments in social media. In addition to feeling deceived, the results show how female teenagers who engaged in online discussions regarding Bowo seemed torn into adoring and abhorring Bowo.

Keywords: Deception, Deconstruction, Netizens, TikTok, Viral Impact.

A. Introduction

Social media is an influential tool to deliver information or data. The information and data are ways to see world wider but nearer at the same time. The information and data are involved the data in producing text, picture and audio. Social media, in this modern era, takes advantages of their users. Social media is used to
earn income by selling applications and putting advertisements. Besides that, social media has a role in making something famous or also known as viral (common term which is used by society to consider instantly famous artist). The person who is getting viral will be influential in social media and real life. Furthermore, viral is circulated rapidly and widely from one internet user to others (Hornby, 2012). Therefore something in internet which is circulated rapidly and widely can be categorized as viral. In this case is Bowo and TikTok, they are being viral and attracting people with their interesting attraction.

Thus, people use various ways to be viral. There are numerous applications which can make people viral. Mostly used application in Indonesia and probably also in the whole world is TikTok. TikTok is regarded as one of the most popular application in Google Play Store. TikTok also seems to be popular in 17 countries. TikTok allows its users to creatively mimic music video with various editing style before sharing it within the application or Instagram, YouTube, or any other social media (Putri, 2018).

In this case, Tik Tok as a social media can be considered as the device of industry to get income by making people viral. One of people who uses TikTok to get viral is Bowo, an Indonesian teenager. In this case, Bowo can be considered as a device or a tool of industry to get income and profit due to his popularity. TikTok is an application which provides a platform to make mini music video which attracts the teenagers to express their talent (to dance, to sing, to imitate singers, actresses or actors and any other imitating action), and then they share the video with others, then people can watch them (Lutfie, 2018). The users of TikTok come from various backgrounds of social, age, gender and environment. However, most users are female teenagers. Following the age of TikTok users are should be reached 12-16 years old (Bohang, 2018) the researchers did several surveys in the Bowo’s Instagram account and investigate the commenters and the followers.
Despite numerous fans, Bowo also has haters. The fans and haters of Bowo are those who make Bowo becoming viral. In the present study, the comments from both fans and haters of Bowo in Bowo’s Instagram account (@bowoo_alpenliebe) will be analyzed. The analysis of the comments will include the discussions toward the impacts of Bowo becoming viral because of TikTok.

These phenomena will be analyzed with paradox and parallel theories which suggested by Derrida (Al-Fayyadl, 2011, p. 8). The beginning of deconstruction is a text which continuity “playing” in the parodies. In facile definition, deconstruction is a playing thought towards the text. The thought of judgment of the text itself is free. Thus, paradox can be identified by the side of existence of fans and haters who have different way to judge Bowo. Then, parallel is signified by how they see and attend Bowo. Hence this paper will discuss the differences on how people act in social media regarding a viral sensation.

Media can deliver message of the community’s character, culture and education that depending on the condition of said society (Aksa, 2018). In contrast, social media is one of milestones of dramatic changing in contemporary society. In social media still has their paradoxical side: creating and destruction (Yusup, 2017). Both creation and destruction can be made by netizens that are fans and haters. Both of them can be deconstruction coined by Derrida. Deconstruction is a philosophical method of reading the text and attempt to find out what is absent in a present text (Beoang, 2007). In addition, the aim of deconstruction is to decouple each component to allow inspection in its own right. In other disciplines, this process is used as a device for critical thinking, by passing the potentially misleading image conveyed by the whole. The deconstruction allows subsequent analysis work. It was a minor, but significant, step in the overall process (Felogau, 2017). The
deconstruction has implication toward the social-cultural life in their surrounded people: toward the social structure people, toward the social institution people, toward the kinship system and value formation process, and toward the space formation to various changes due to global modernism (Pitana, Astra, Suastika, & Triguna, 2010). Thus, the present study aims to discuss how fans and haters of Bowo appraise him. In addition, the present study will investigate how industry deceives people to be a part of it.

B. Method

The research uses a descriptive qualitative method to obtain data. Fans and haters of Bowo are the objects of the analysis. The perspectives of the objects in the seeing Bowo will be deconstructed by Deconstruction theory of Derrida. On the other hand, the discussion toward the industry as a platform which deceives people will be analyzed using Adorno’s theory toward cultural studies (1991).

C. Findings and Discussions

This sub-section will be used to discuss the findings of present study. The phenomena of Bowo and TikTok can be considered as the way of industry to get income and deceive people with the phenomena. Such phenomenon allows industry to get abundant income by selling the TikTok application. Relating with the abundant of the selling TikTok application, the theory of the deception of industry by Adorno and Horkheimer remarked that Industry which is converting the utilization of something to be a tool to increase their income (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1993), this statement is proved by the social phenomenon in this era—the era of social media and the rise of capitalism. Therefore nowadays netizens are being involved to be a tool of industry to increase their income. This case is something people do not realize that they are obviously deceived.

Furthermore something viral is not an original way to be interested
due to the cases above, reminding the capitalism does everything to get income and the acquisitiveness despite the value of the product. as Yusriana argues in (Syamsiyah, 2018) in the middle of identity crisis of young generations, the facilities used in social media (e.g. TikTok) are destructing and far from educating features are relating with the system of Secular-Capitalism, they just make particular thing to increase their income (Syamsiyah, 2018). Therefore TikTok platform is the device of industry to deceive people (particularly netizens), to increase their income but they destruct people’s mind. As the researcher finds in several articles (which are provided in the discussion below) that TikTok was banned by Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemkominfo Indonesia) due to several contents that are allegedly damaging underage users.

In addition, something viral is not only a famous thing but can also be deceptive. TikTok was once banned due to damaging content. Nevertheless, TikTok is still used by several people (mostly adolescence and children in Indonesia) (Bohang, 2018). There are several platforms which are similar with TikTok are still exist and unbanned such as Kwai Go, Vigo Video, Musically, Smule, and Dubsmash (Alfarizi, 2018). In this case the functions and the users of the platforms are similar with TikTok but in different cases those platforms still exist, clear from the issues of banning and also still used by people.

Next, Bowo is the user and creator in TikTok app who being viral with his controversial issues in several media. The case of TikTok banning and Bowo being viral are the strategies of the industry to get the attention of the citizen. As in the theory of economy, rare object has a higher demand in public because people will be curious and want to know more about it (Saragih, 2011). In this case, banning TikTok increases the popularity of TikTok, resulting in its higher demand among people. In 2018, there are more than 10 million TikTok users in Indonesia, and it has been downloaded 45.8 million times in
Google Play Store, (Bohang, 2018). This might give profit to TikTok.

The popularity of TikTok helps Bowo to be more popular. Bowo gained an instant popularity and boasts 790 thousand fans and more than 6, 8 million likes in his account. Bowo and his management even held a fan meeting which cost Rp. 80,000, per ticket. Bowo is a representation of Indonesian adolescents phenomenon who seeking entertainments, and becomes overdose of the application and stuck to get instant popularity (Kustiani, 2018). Thus, Bowo has chance to get popularity from TikTok and become viral. In this case Bowo attracts some people in Indonesia to be his fans or his haters, making him popular.

People who are attracted to Bowo and make him a popular TikTok artist have different way in commenting about Bowo. In this case, Bowo is the object to judge through his famous. The popularity of Bowo can good or bad because netizens can judge or even worse bully. Bowo got many bad comments from the netizens due to the difference in his real life and social media appearances (Tarigan, 2018).

Further discussion toward the meaning of viral can be indicated by the deconstructed meaning of viral based on several interpretations from industry, Netizens, Bowo. The table below indicates the deconstruction meaning of viral.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Meaning</th>
<th>Interpretations (Marginal Meaning / au-delà)</th>
<th>Deconstructed Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulated rapidly and widely from one internet user to others (Hornby, 2012)</td>
<td>Particular objects (TikTok and Bowo) which increasing profit or income (Syamsiyah, 2018)</td>
<td>A chance to be famous and attract people to know about him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry (Capitalism)</td>
<td>Netizens</td>
<td>Bowo</td>
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Based on the above table, the industry uses the objects (Bowo and TikTok) as the devices of propaganda to increase their profits due to their worth among people. People can enjoy the objects freely but unconsciously they are deceived by the industry because of their viral situation.

A research of Dewi (2018) describes the seven characteristics of millennial. One of them are the characteristic of millennial who free-minded and independent thinkers. The role of Netizens towards the phenomenon of TikTok is related to their life style. The lifestyle of Netizens involves their daily habits and attitudes. Following are the comments of Bowo’s followers.
These comments judge Bowo’s appearances. The first comment praised Bowo’s subjectively. The word “ganteng” means handsome. The handsome as the response’s claimed is mostly dominating. Ganteng will be shown from especially the view of human’s eyes. The opinions include subjective form. Then, what ganteng looks like? What ganteng refers to? Ganteng or handsome implies the statement or question. This statement puts Bowo as the object of the post and the question followed it doubt the prior statement. Ganteng may be telling of the Korean drama’s artist rate, it may refer to editing’s result, or gantengform a husband, or a boyfriend. It happened because the meaning has actually unlimited possibilities (Al-Fayyadl, 2011).

Next is the statement Akujyjyk, from the third commenter. This comment is derogative. Then, the existence of fans as praising figure and haters as insulting figure walks as a paradox.

Following comment also shows the paradox:

The comments in the figure above stated their praises to Bowo. They told their opinion with various statements. The first commenter claimed that Bowo as a handsome boy by stressing statements such as for sure. They subjectively state that Bowo is the handsome boy.
The comment above shows how Bowo’s fans adore him. In addition, they blame the haters for disliking Bowo.

**Conclusion**

The study analyzed the comments from both haters and fans of Bowo who is famous for his TikTok videos. However, it should be noted that Bowo’s fame is a part of industrial deception to obtain profit. In the perspective of the fans and hater’s comments, meaning has unlimited access to produce the most possibilities. Paradox point was explicated in the position of *netizens*. In this case, the same situation is posited into two different ways, fans and haters of Bowo.

**References**


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