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## **Minimalist Lifestyle Campaign on Tiktok: An Analysis of Rejection of Postmodernist Society**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses the minimalist lifestyle campaign on TikTok, an effort to reject the lifestyle of postmodernism society. According to Jean Baudrillard, the lifestyle of postmodernist society is considered to have a consumptive tendency where the value of consumption is more massive than the value of production. This lifestyle requires that in consuming, it is seen not only on the day of use value but also in the fulfillment of signs and symbols. The author uses a qualitative research method, Roland Barthes' theory of semiotic analysis. This article shows that the consumerist lifestyle, identical to postmodernist society, has many detrimental effects on humans, especially the environment. So a campaign was launched by a community account on TikTok for minimalist lifestyle @lyfewithless.community #BelajarJadiMinimalis to mobilize and socialize a Minimalist lifestyle that prioritizes the use value and restores the essence of consumption itself, namely using something because it is needed, not the desire to fulfill certain symbols.

**Keywords:** *Minimalist Lifestyle, Postmodernism, Jean Baudrillard*

### **Abstrak**

Artikel ini membahas mengenai kampanye gaya hidup minimalis di Tiktok sebuah gerakan upaya penolakan terhadap pola hidup masyarakat Posmodernisme. Pola hidup masyarakat posmodernisme menurut Jean Baudrillard dinilai memiliki kecenderungan konsumtif dimana nilai konsumsi lebih masif dibandingkan dengan nilai produksi. Gaya hidup ini menghendaki bahwa dalam mengkonsumsi bukan hanya dilihat hari nilai guna saja melainkan pemenuhan tanda dan simbol. Penulis menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan teori analisis semiotika milik Roland Barthes. Artikel ini memiliki hasil bahwa gaya hidup Konsumerisme yang identik dengan masyarakat posmodernisme memiliki banyak dampak yang merugikan bagi manusia terlebih lingkungan. Maka hadirilah kampanye yang dilakukan akun komunitas pegiat gaya hidup minimalis #BelajarJadiMinimalis @lyfewithless.community untuk menggerakkan dan mensosialisasikan gaya hidup Minimalis yang mengedepankan nilai guna dan mengembalikan esensi dari konsumsi itu sendiri yaitu menggunakan sesuatu karena memang dibutuhkan bukan hasrat untuk pemenuhan simbol tertentu.

**Kata Kunci:** *Gaya Hidup Minimalis, Posmodernisme, Jean Baudrillard.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle is an indisputable thing in modern times. In technical terms, lifestyle contains the meaning of a way of life, including habits, patterns of response to life, and life equipment. Lifestyle is not natural but a cultural construction that interprets actions and the world. Taste is constructed through advertising, which has blinded the public to consume various things. Ads play a wide variety of images and signs to appear stunning in front of the public. Advertising games cause people to consume something that does not meet their needs but only consume symbolic meanings. This massive and sporadic advertising has ultimately shifted the culture of simple society into a consumer culture.

The culture of consumerism, where the consumption of goods and services is the main focus of life, has seen a rapid increase in recent decades. Various factors, such as globalization, technological advances, and aggressive marketing strategies from companies, have influenced this. While a consumerist culture can drive economic growth and improve living standards, it also brings with it several issues that need to be considered: negative environmental impact, negative financial impact, and negative social and cultural impact (Octaviana, 2020). According to Haryanto Soedjatmiko (2008) in his book " Saya berbelanja maka saya ada: ketika konsumsi dan desain menjadi gaya hidup konsumerisme" If shopping originally became an "extension" of humans who wanted to consume something in the next development, shopping became a consuming activity itself. Consumerism managed to turn "necessary consumption" into "extravagant consumption" (Soedjatmiko, 2007).

In this sense, one's motivation to shop is no longer to fulfill the basic needs that one needs as a human being but is related to something else, namely identity. People buy winter clothes no longer to keep warm but also to see the brand of the clothes. This also applies to other things such as food, beauty products, and other necessities. Some people finally began to feel tired of the reality, and then came the concept of a minimalist lifestyle as a counterpoint to consumerism (Baudrillard, 1998). Lifestyle, according to Kotler (2016), is a person's pattern of life in the world that is expressed in his activities, interests, and opinions, in the sense that, in general, a person's lifestyle can be seen from the routine activities he does, what they think about everything around him and how far he cares about it and also what he thinks about himself and also the outside world.

Globalization itself is a term introduced in the 1980s and is principally used to describe the economic expansion in the world at the end of the 20th century (Hikmah, 2022). Then,

there were significant changes based on these developments. The world is constantly moving and interconnected, with interaction and cultural exchange. Cultural boundaries fade and facilitate the mobility and interaction of people from various parts of the world, followed by the flow of culture, capital, people, images, and ideologies (Octaviana, 2020). From this globalization, there are massive and significant developments in various sectors. As social beings, we are the first group to feel it, starting to present trends, styles, and patterns of life that occur at the times. The ease of access makes everything we want to achieve feel like being left behind if we do not follow the trend. According to KBBI, trend, the latest style is the modern style (Chaney, 2011).

In postmodern society, Baudrillard believes that value signs and values use of material goods have been divorced. The disconnection between the symbolic and the real has resulted in a simulational culture where commodities are purchased primarily for their symbolic value (Rohman, 2016). According to Boden (Boden, 2003), meaning in commodities promotes a type of dialogue through material objects, allowing commodities to exist as creative tools that aid the performance of an expressive self-identity. In this sense, consumption becomes a place of play, performance, spectacle, and symbolic creativity. Consumers become composers of their world. The implication is that consumption becomes an active symbolic form of identity construction. of identity (Putri, 2021).

According to Baudrillard, consumers do not buy things to express an existing sense of who they are. Instead, consumers create a sense of who they are through what they buy (Heldi, 2009). Baudrillard's view that consumers consume goods according to their needs is a myth. Consumption is done to follow trends to find, express identity, and show the existence of consumers (Baudrillard, 1983). In Baudrillard's perspective, consumer society is increasingly subject to many images in the postmodern era. The fashion-making industry successfully attracts consumers who never stop desiring that the commodities consumed by society are not about their essence or usefulness. So, the goods consumed by society are not necessarily related to actual needs but are embodiments and proof that they exist (Graeber, 2011).

Capitalists or capital owners ultimately use this trend to produce goods, services, and things that are not needed. Then, people value an item not only on its useful value but also its symbolic value and sign value (Bakti et al., 2019). For example, a branded bag signifies a high social class. The development of the times brings humans to easy things, such as consuming many goods. The presence of online shopping platforms, electronic money (e-money), cashless to pay later offered by several online payment service applications makes shopping an easy, fast and efficient routine (Subagyo, 2020).

In Indonesia, the minimalist lifestyle began to emerge in early 2016. Especially at this time, many influencers are intensively discussing this lifestyle. One of them is Raditya Dika, whose YouTube account has the video titled "Why I Sell All My Watches," which has been watched by 1.5 million viewers. It has become viral in Indonesia because he sold all his watches after watching a documentary by Netflix in 2015. Titled "Minimalism: A Documentary About the Important Things" by Matt D 'Avella shows how the minimalism phenomenon is also spreading in America. The movie captures how living with enough, not too much, without having many things has made people in America live a better life.

Given that this lifestyle comes from the outside, much effort is needed to accept this minimalist lifestyle in Indonesia. Values such as *mubazir*, it is not nice to throw away other people's gifts. It will be difficult for someone who wants to adapt to this lifestyle; full awareness is needed if this minimalist lifestyle is to be done, and different challenges will also be felt. This is why it is important to know whether the minimalist lifestyle that entered Indonesia underwent a process of locality or not. Seeing how people respond to the minimalist lifestyle makes the author interested in discussing this deeper, to find out how the minimalist lifestyle campaign can finally be echoed, what the background for this lifestyle change to occur, and what changes are felt during being a minimalist (Putri, 2021).

This research aims to interpret the content of the [@lyfewithlesscommunity](https://www.instagram.com/lyfewithlesscommunity) account using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis theory. Semiotics is a science that studies signs, sign functions, and sign production. Semiotics comes from the Greek *semeion*, which means a sign. A sign has another meaning for someone. Everything that is observed or made observed is called a sign. Whether or not there is an event, a habit, or a structure found in something, all of this can be called a sign. Therefore, the sign is not limited. (Dewanta, 2020)

According to Roland Barthes, semiotics is a science used to interpret a sign, whereas language is also a combination of signs that contain certain messages from society. The signs here can be songs, dialogues, music notes, logos, pictures, facial expressions, or gestures (Retnasary & Fitriawaty, 2022). Roland Barthes' semiotic model discusses the meaning of signs by using two-stage signification, namely looking for meanings that are denotation and connotations, namely the true and figurative meanings. Barthes' idea is known as "two orders of significations" (two-stage significations or signification order) (Ilham, 2017). The idea includes denotations and connotations. Denotation is the level of sign that explains the relationship between signs and references to reality, which results in explicit, direct, and definite meanings. The connotative level of signs explains the difference between markers and signs, in which the meaning operates as implicit and hidden. The first order is the denotation,

which has signs and signs that form a sign of the meaning of the denotation. Second, the order of connotations is the relationship between signs and signs that are hidden (Rosida et al., 2021).

Seeing how people's response to a minimalist lifestyle makes the author interested in discussing this more deeply, to know how the minimalist lifestyle campaign can finally be echoed, what is behind this lifestyle change happening, what meaning appears in the crowded content, and what are the changes that are felt while becoming a minimalist.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative model. The scope of this research will describe the minimalist lifestyle campaign as one of the steps to reduce consumptive behavior that is synonymous with reducing consumptive behavior that is identical to the lifestyle of postmodern society. The method used in this research is the Roland Barthes semiotic analysis method. Semiotic analysis is also known as the meaning of signs. Semiotics interprets the meaning of a written or unwritten communication message from the messenger to the audience. The subject of this research is an account of the minimalist lifestyle activist community on TikTok. TikTok @lyfewithless.community #BelajarJadiMinimalis which currently has 37,800 followers. The object of this research is the video uploaded by the @lyfewithless.community account. This approach aims to document, characterize, evaluate, and interpret current affairs to uncover the related minimalist lifestyle campaign on the TikTok platform (Kurniawan & Fadilah, 2024). The existence of this research is expected to help readers draw conclusions based on the exposure of this study.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Roland Barthes' semiotic model discusses the meaning of signs using two-stage signification, namely looking for denotational and connotational meanings, the real and the figurative meanings (Tohar et al., 2007). Barthes' idea is the "two orders of significations" (two stages or orders of signification). The idea includes denotation and connotation. Denotation is the level of meaning that explains the relationship between the sign and referent with reality, thus resulting in explicit meaning, direct, and definite. Connotative is the level of signification that explains the difference between signifier and sign, which operates implicit and hidden meanings (Khoirunnisaa & Hidayat, 2023). At the beginning of the research, an observation of the video uploaded by the account @Lyfewithless.community will be conducted, and a selection of data or videos will be conducted that discuss education related

to the minimalist lifestyle. After selection, an analysis will be carried out according to Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The results of observations are described in the following table:

| No | Signifer  | Signified  |  |
|----|---|--|--|
|    |   | Denotatif  | Connotative  |
| 1. |    | <p>The video shows skincare lined up, illustrating the 10 skincare steps currently popular on TikTok.</p>                  | <p>It is a symbol that depicts reducing skincare steps for a simpler and more practical lifestyle. Reducing steps means producing less waste and reducing environmental impact.</p>  |
| 2. |    | <p>In the video showing alternatives to washing your face, special tools can be replaced by hand, which is sufficient.</p> | <p>The video shows the actor using his hands to wash his face without using any special tools, and this is considered sufficient because not buying special tools to help clean your face can reduce waste and lead us not to be impulsive towards less important items.</p>   |
| 3. |  | <p>This video invites viewers to buy clothes more wisely by mixing and matching one shirt with various models.</p>         | <p>This video shows several outfit choices when wearing the same shirt. This implies that wearing the same outfit in different ways can show creativity and the ability to express oneself. It shows that one is not stuck to fashion rules and dares to experiment with one's style. It shows that one should be aware of the fashion industry's environmental impact and reduce consumption.</p> |
| 4. |  | <p>The video invites viewers to buy higher-quality goods because they can be more economical due to longer usage.</p>      | <p>This video shows that buying quality goods more economically can be seen as a sign of intelligence and foresight in shopping. It shows that one can weigh the value and quality of products carefully before buying them. It shows that everyone should be aware of the environmental impact of overconsumption and strive to reduce wastage.</p>   |


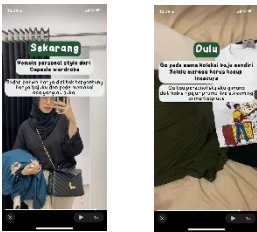

|           |   |   |  |
|-----------|---|---|--|
| <p>5.</p> |    | <p>This video shows that it is nice to have less stuff; only the essentials are necessary.</p>      | <p>The meaning that emerges is that the objects that should be around us are only the essential ones. Unnecessary things that only have aesthetics do not need to be in our rooms—inviting the audience to buy and keep objects with a clear function.</p>   |
| <p>6.</p> |    | <p>This video shows someone cleaning up their clothes.</p>  | <p>The meaning that emerges is an invitation to start decluttering. Sorting and getting rid of unused or unnecessary items is one of the free therapies for minimalist lifestyle activists.</p>  |
| <p>7.</p> |   | <p>This video illustrates a before-and-after comparison in terms of recognizing personal style.</p> | <p>This video conveys that getting to know an important person is very important for living a minimalist life. Doing so allows you to determine a suitable fashion style and avoid being easily influenced by promo live streaming in the marketplace. This action helps you save money in terms of fashion.</p>   |
| <p>8.</p> |  | <p>This video depicts a before-and-after comparison when it comes to buying food.</p>               | <p>This video means inviting audiences to buy some food according to their needs and desires, not because of trends. Because when it meets the trend, it often does not match the audience's expectations. It starts with the price, taste, and service that do not match the reviews on social media. So, the minimalist lifestyle driver invites the audience to bring food according to their preferences, which is more practical and can save time and money.</p> |

Table 1. Analysis Roland Barthes

### Minimalist Lifestyle Campaign on TikTok

Social media has become an axis that influences all aspects of human life, including lifestyle, mindset, trends, and behavior. Modern people's daily lives are becoming more and

more dominated by the social phenomenon of social media use. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have revolutionized how we engage, communicate, and exchange information (Munir et al., 2024). The use of social media has an impact on the lives of its users. It is very easy for social media users to spread their ideologies and thoughts to the general public. In studying speed in conveying information or communication messages, one must pay attention and understand why it should be slow and when the speed increases. The experience of rhetoric contributes to the skill of using speed in delivering (Fianto et al., 2024). This happens because social media users tend to easily accept and swallow rawly all the information reported by social media.

One of the ideologies that several content creators are voicing is a campaign to invite social media users to abandon the consumerist lifestyle and switch to a minimalist lifestyle that prioritizes needs over other aspects. The minimalist lifestyle, which emphasizes simplicity and restrictions on possessions, has become a growing trend on social media platforms, including TikTok. The platform has become a platform for many creators to share tips, experiences, and inspiration around the minimalist lifestyle, attracting the attention of many users, especially the younger generation. The adherents of this style mostly have a background in environmental activism. They are concerned about the impact of consumptive behavior, namely excess waste that tends to be difficult to process.

According to the author's observations, there are several styles that social media users often voice regarding the minimalist lifestyle. The first is Skin Minimalism, a trend or lifestyle prioritizing minimalist skincare products. The application of Skin Minimalism only uses the products needed to maintain healthy skin; this differs from skincare use, such as layered toners and serums. So, Skin Minimalism is the use of minimal skincare products according to the skin's needs. This lifestyle has several advantages, namely saving money and time because there is no need to buy currently popular products, and users only purchase products according to what is needed and already works optimally on the skin. With this application, it will automatically reduce the waste that accumulates due to excessive product usage. This is because the skincare products purchased are tailored to the needs, so the number of products purchased is also getting smaller.

The second is Fashion Minimalism. The use of Fast Fashion is a lifestyle where fashion changes very quickly. This gives consumers quick and easy access, often triggering an increase in buying new clothes. Every season, even less than that, the collections in fashion stores change regularly, and consumers are automatically required to replace the wardrobe collection with new fashions, even though they are well aware that the old collection is still



worth using. Otherwise, it could be considered outdated. Although it always looks up-to-date and follows the latest fashion, this lifestyle unconsciously impacts the environment and mental health. Fast fashion contributes to the accumulation of textile waste, estimated to reach around 92 tons annually. This textile waste is usually incinerated or dumped into landfills, and less than 1% of it is recycled (*Fast Fashion*, n.d.).

The minimalist lifestyle trend on TikTok is on the rise, with many creators emerging and producing interesting content. This has led to an increase in the number of users seeking information and inspiration about the minimalist lifestyle. This study found that there are several main themes in TikTok videos about the minimalist lifestyle, namely: 1. Decluttering and reorganization: These videos show tips and tricks to get rid of items that are no longer used and reorganize items at home to make them more neat and organized; 2. Buying things wisely: These videos provide tips to avoid impulse purchases and only buy truly needed items; 3. The positive impact of a minimalist lifestyle: These videos show how a minimalist lifestyle can help reduce stress, increase happiness, and save money; 4. Building a minimalist habit: Tips for implementing minimalist principles in everyday life, such as reducing plastic consumption, saving energy, and avoiding impulse purchases; 5. Minimalist challenges and experiences: Creators share their experiences in adopting a minimalist lifestyle, including challenges and how to overcome them.

### **Minimalism Rejects Consumerism**

The life transformation that minimalism promotes starts with understanding what is unnecessary in life and getting rid of, owning less of, or being less dependent on it. The next step is identifying what is important (this will be very different for each person). The most important factor is finding what is excessive in material terms (an excess of goods, objects, things) instead of what is lacking in psycho-spiritual aspects. There is no exact volume of how much stuff to get rid of; the size is relative based on each individual, and it is their decision. The same goes for what, for them, is excess and thus should be eliminated.

Excessive consumption, based on Jean Baudrillard's concept of consumer society (Baudrillard, 1998), has connotations of waste or owning, consuming, and buying goods over daily needs. From that, the core of minimalism is the negation of extravagance, compulsive shopping without thinking, and critical analysis of the number of objects owned, along with the social meaning surrounding it (Featherstone, 2007).

Consumptive lifestyles that harm certain communities have led to a new alternative way out. Many campaigns have begun to emerge for a lifestyle that is a counterpoint to the consumerist lifestyle, namely the minimalist lifestyle. Consumerism has made people

habitually consume everything excessively and started to get resistance from people who adhere to a minimalist lifestyle. The minimalist lifestyle wants to restore the essence of consumption, namely, using something based on its use value, not the value of the sign that Jean Baudrillard has constructed. The emergence of this campaign movement is a form of awareness to the public that the cultural industry, through advertising media with various signs, has trapped people in pseudo needs.

The minimalist lifestyle helps a person get out of the habit of consumptive living and switch to a simpler habit because it only tends to consume something that is needed. By following a minimalist lifestyle, a person can avoid the accumulation of symbols as a representation of useless goods.

Leaving a consumptive lifestyle and switching to applying the concept of a minimalist lifestyle has the impact of a person becoming more productive. Some benefits that can be felt when applying minimalist living are (1) Maintain Financial Condition: Simpler life choices help reduce the desire to buy things that are not needed so that the financial burden is reduced and can be allocated for more positive things. (2) Increase Creativity and Imagination: The concept of minimalist living helps one to be able to utilize what is available. Mix and match everything that is already owned to provide more benefits. (3) Learn to Understand Your Needs: This concept helps to better understand oneself before buying a product. Consumers can double-check whether they need the item or not. (4) Reduce Waste: The more limited the items used, the less waste will be generated. By reducing waste, consumers participate in caring for and maintaining the balance of the environment.

## CONCLUSION

The habit of consumptive behavior in this era is considered to be abandoned. Some people have started to promote a simpler lifestyle on social media platforms. A minimalist lifestyle that restores the essence of consumption, which is to use something based on its use value rather than its sign value. According to Jean Baudrillard, this minimalist lifestyle is a counterpoint to the consumerist lifestyle that is identical to the lifestyle of the Postmodernist society. The increasingly rampant consumptive culture has a negative impact on consumers and the surrounding environment. Therefore, a new alternative should be a solution to reduce problems arising from consumptive lifestyles. Minimalist content on TikTok brings various positive benefits, such as raising awareness of consumerism, encouraging frugal and sustainable lifestyles, and improving mental well-being. However, users must be critical of the information they receive, strengthen their values and principles, and avoid hidden

materialism. The platform is a valuable source of information and inspiration for many who want to start or deepen a minimalist lifestyle. With proper understanding and wise application, the minimalist lifestyle can positively impact the lives of individuals and society.

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