

Discourse Production of #KaburAjaDulu on TikTok: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Awbimax Content

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Abstract

The #KaburAjaDulu hashtag on TikTok reflects a form of digital social criticism expressed by Indonesian youth toward socio-economic and political conditions in Indonesia. This discourse represents disappointment with economic inequality, public services, and declining trust in state institutions, while positioning migration as a rational response to uncertainty. This study aims to analyze how the #KaburAjaDulu discourse is constructed through Awbimax's TikTok content using Fairclough's CDA approach. This research employs a qualitative method by examining five purposively selected TikTok videos uploaded between October 2023 and February 2025. Data were collected through non-participant observation of video narration, captions, hashtags, visual elements, and audience comments. The analysis was conducted through three dimensions of CDA: textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. The findings show that the discourse is constructed through confrontational yet relatable language, casual visual representation, and repetitive narratives that normalize escapism as a rational individual choice. Socioculturally, the discourse reflects a shift from collective nationalism toward pragmatic individualism and reveals a growing crisis of trust between citizens and the state in the digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indonesian digital space has been increasingly marked by the circulation of the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu (“Just Run Away”), particularly on TikTok. The hashtag reflects a form of digital social criticism expressed by young Indonesians toward socio-economic uncertainty, limited employment opportunities, public service dissatisfaction, and declining trust in state institutions (Soraya & Kartika, 2021). Rather than functioning merely as personal complaints, the repeated circulation of this narrative has transformed #KaburAjaDulu into a broader discourse that represents Indonesia as a space perceived as increasingly difficult for younger generations to imagine their future within (Wati et al., 2025; Tumanggor & Sazali, 2025).

The lexical choice of the word *kabur* (“run away”) carries important discursive implications. Unlike neutral terms such as “migration” or “mobility,” the term implies urgency, emotional exhaustion, and a desire for escape (Fachrie, 2025). Through this linguistic framing, migration is no longer understood solely as geographical movement or career mobility, but also as a symbolic response to structural dissatisfaction and uncertainty (Octaviani et al., 2025). In this context, the discourse constructs leaving the country as a rational strategy for self-preservation amid socio-political and economic pressures.

Among the content creators associated with this phenomenon, Awbimax occupies a central position as a consistent and influential discursive actor. Through TikTok videos characterized by informal language, sarcasm, emotional expression, and repetitive narrative patterns, Awbimax actively constructs Indonesia as a restrictive and unaccommodating environment for young people (Wahyuningtias et al., 2024). The consistency of these narratives enables the normalization of escapism discourse within TikTok’s communicative environment, particularly among younger audiences who experience similar anxieties regarding education, employment, and quality of life (Wahyuningtias et al., 2024; Zahra et al., 2024).

The production and circulation of the #KaburAjaDulu discourse cannot be separated from TikTok’s platform characteristics. TikTok’s algorithmic system allows emotionally engaging content to spread rapidly beyond friendship-based networks, enabling creators to shape public discourse through short-form audiovisual narratives. As a platform dominated by younger users, TikTok has become a significant space for expressing dissatisfaction, negotiating identity, and imagining alternative futures outside the national context (Kirana et al., 2025).

More broadly, social media has increasingly functioned as a site for producing political and cultural discourse. Previous studies on digital nationalism generally focus on how social media reproduces collective identity and national belonging (Koç, 2023). However, recent scholarship indicates a shift from affirmative nationalism toward forms of cynicism, criticism, and symbolic rejection expressed through humor, popular language, and digital culture. In migration

studies, digital media is also understood as a space where imaginaries of life abroad are constructed and circulated selectively (Nahla et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, existing studies on #KaburAjaDulu still predominantly position the phenomenon as a general social symptom by focusing on audience responses or migration aspirations (Daraini, 2013). Limited attention has been given to how social media creators actively construct and normalize the discourse through linguistic, visual, and narrative strategies. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, creators function as discursive actors who shape meaning, ideology, and public understanding of social reality through repeated communicative practices (Epesus & Paramita, 2022).

Based on this gap, this study focuses on Awbimax's TikTok content as a case study to examine how the #KaburAjaDulu discourse is constructed and reproduced in digital media (Szulc, 2017). Using Fairclough's CDA framework, this study analyzes the discourse through textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions to reveal the ideological implications embedded within the narrative (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021). Therefore, the main research question addressed in this study is: How is the #KaburAjaDulu discourse constructed in Awbimax's TikTok content?

This study contributes theoretically and empirically to the field of digital communication and media studies by emphasizing the role of social media creators as influential discursive actors in shaping contemporary understandings of migration, nationalism, and youth identity in the digital era (Baker & McGlashan, 2020).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using Norman Fairclough's CDA framework to examine the construction of the #KaburAjaDulu discourse within Awbimax's TikTok content (Dinçer, 2024; Kurniasari et al., 2024). CDA was selected because it enables the analysis of discourse not merely as language, but as a social practice that reflects ideology, power relations, and sociocultural contexts. Through this approach, the study aimed to uncover how narratives surrounding migration, nationalism, and escapism were constructed and normalized through digital media practices on TikTok (Q. Li, 2016; Wodak, 2011).

The object of this research consisted of public TikTok content uploaded by Awbimax that explicitly contained narratives related to #KaburAjaDulu. The primary data analyzed included five TikTok videos uploaded between October 2023 and February 2025, along with captions, hashtags, visual-audiovisual elements, and audience comments associated with the videos (Maeskina & Hidayat, 2022). The selected time frame was intended to capture the continuity and evolution of the #KaburAjaDulu discourse across different periods of public discussion on TikTok. Several of the analyzed contents discussed issues such as migration aspirations, dual citizenship,

educational pathways abroad, dissatisfaction toward public services, and socio-political criticism related to conditions in Indonesia (Salamah et al., 2023).

Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation, where the researcher observed, documented, and analyzed the content without directly engaging with the creator or audience interaction process. Screenshots of videos, captions, hashtags, and audience comments were systematically documented as research material (Ramadhani & Arianto, 2025).

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select relevant content for analysis (Fairclough, 1996). The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) videos explicitly containing the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu or related keywords such as “kabur,” “dwi kewarganegaraan,” and migration narratives; (2) videos discussing social, economic, or political dissatisfaction related to life in Indonesia; and (3) videos generating substantial audience engagement through comments and public discussion. Meanwhile, videos unrelated to migration discourse or lacking significant narrative relevance were excluded from the analysis (Dinçer, 2024; Fairclough, 2003).

The analytical process followed Fairclough’s three-dimensional CDA model: textual analysis, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. At the textual level, the analysis focused on linguistic choices, metaphors, visual representations, gestures, captions, and audiovisual elements used in the videos (Gill et al., 2008). At the discourse practice level, the study examined the production, circulation, and consumption of discourse, including audience interaction patterns reflected in the comment sections. At the sociocultural level, the analysis explored broader ideological contexts, particularly issues related to nationalism, distrust toward institutions, migration aspirations, and digital culture among Indonesian youth (Aryana et al., 2021; Yasa, 2021).

To strengthen analytical rigour, the researcher conducted coding and categorisation procedures throughout the analysis process (Ardianti et al., 2025). The data were categorised into several thematic groups, including narratives of escapism, criticism toward the state, migration aspirations, emotional expressions, and audience negotiation of meaning. Recurring discourse patterns found in captions, verbal narration, and audience comments were interpreted critically to understand how the #KaburAjaDulu discourse was constructed, reproduced, and normalised within TikTok as a digital public sphere (Fanny Amelia Wati et al., 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the research findings and analysis in an integrated manner using Fairclough's CDA framework, which covers three main dimensions, namely textual analysis (text), discursive practice (discourse practice), and sociocultural practice (sociocultural practice). This approach allows researchers to not only identify what is said in Awbimax's TikTok content, but also how the discourse is produced, circulated, and operates in a broader social context. Thus,

this analysis positions the #KaburAjaDulu narrative as a discursive practice laden with ideology and power relations, rather than merely a personal expression on social media.

Textual Analysis: Linguistic Deconstruction in the Narrative #KaburAjaDulu

At the textual level, the analysis focuses on linguistic and semiotic aspects that appear literally in Awbimax's TikTok content (LIMA-NETO & CARVALHO, 2023; Wodak, 2011). Within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, texts are not understood merely as a series of neutral words or visuals, but as representational practices laden with meaning and ideology. Discourse, at this level, is manifested through verbal, visual, and audiovisual language that are interrelated and collectively form a specific orientation of meaning (Nugroho & Fitriawan, 2020). The results of the analysis show that the #KaburAjaDulu narrative in Awbimax content is systematically constructed through casual visual strategies, serious but communicative gestures, and confrontational and populist diction choices. This combination of elements plays an important role in normalizing the idea of “running away” as a reasonable, rational, and socially acceptable response (Kussanti, 2023; Ardianti et al., 2025).

Casual Visuals as a Strategy for Discourse Normalization

Awbimax consistently presents himself in simple clothing such as black T-shirts or tank tops, with domestic backgrounds such as bedrooms or wardrobes. This visual representation creates a casual, personal, and approachable impression, which semiotically represents the speaker's position as an everyday subject, rather than an elite figure, state official, or formal authority (Almila, 2021). In the context of social media, this type of visual has an important ideological function, namely placing discourse in the realm of everyday discourse (X. M. Li, 2025).

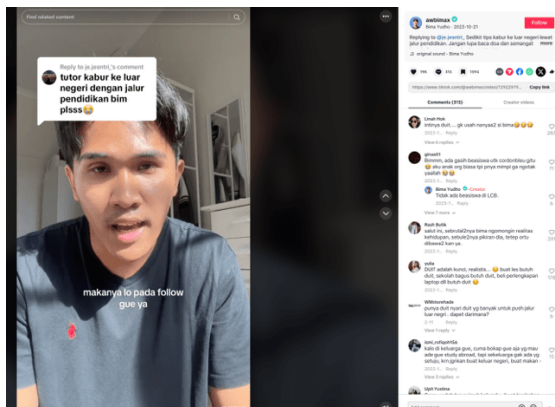


Figure 1 Awbimax's TikTok content about overseas education and audience response to the “Kabur” narrative



Figure 2 Narrative about dual citizenship in posts with the hashtag #kaburajadulu, which sparked audience discussion about dissatisfaction with the domestic government and bureaucracy.

This casual visual strategy functions to reduce the symbolic distance between the creator and the audience, positioning Awbimax as “one of us” an ordinary individual who experiences the same structural pressures as his viewers (Bender, 2023; Afyadi & Sobur, 2024). Through domestic settings, non-formal appearances, and direct communication styles, the discourse of “kabur” is normalized as a collective and relatable experience rather than a radical or unpatriotic idea (Lestari et al., 2024). In the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, these visual elements are not merely aesthetic, but form part of the textual structure that constructs ideological meaning. By presenting criticism of the state within a personal and emotional setting, Awbimax shifts the discourse of nationalism from a formal-institutional framework toward subjective experiences of frustration, disappointment, and exclusion felt by young citizens who perceive themselves as unaccommodated by the system (Taliu & Sukmono, 2025).

Gestures and Expressions as Indicators of Moral Seriousness

Although the visuals are casual, Awbimax’s facial expressions and gestures convey a strong sense of seriousness. In some content, Awbimax looks directly at the camera, uses a firm tone of voice, and uses hand gestures to emphasize certain points. These gestures indicate an effort to convince the audience that the message being conveyed is not just a light complaint or mere entertainment (Croucher, 2025; X. M. Li, 2025). The combination of casual visuals and serious expressions creates what can be called a productive contradiction. On the one hand, the casual style creates closeness and familiarity; on the other hand, serious expressions convey moral weight and existential urgency. In this context, the escapist discourse is not presented as a mere joke, but as a statement of attitude that stems from deep reflection on social conditions (Alek, 2023; Fauzan et al., 2025).

Within the CDA framework, gestures and expressions serve as sources of discursive legitimacy. Awbimax is positioned as a figure who is “honest,” “genuine,” and brave enough to voice truths that are considered taboo by formal actors. This legitimacy is important because it influences how the audience interprets the message: the #KaburAjaDulu narrative is not read as empty provocation, but as a warning, moral criticism, or even a call for reflection on the state of the country (Zahra et al., 2024).

Choice of Diction and Escape Metaphors

One of the most significant findings in textual analysis is the use of metaphorical and emotional diction. The term “kabur” (run away) is consistently used to replace more neutral terms such as “migration,” “global mobility,” or “working abroad.” The choice of the term “run away” carries connotations of compulsion, danger, and self-preservation, which implicitly frames

Indonesia as an unsafe, oppressive, or unpromising place (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021; Rois, 2024).

The use of this escape metaphor has strong ideological implications. By framing migration as “escaping,” the discourse constructed not only highlights economic or professional aspects, but also emotional and psychological dimensions (Andriani & Bunga, 2017). The country is represented as a source of exhaustion and pressure, while leaving the country is positioned as an act of self-rescue. In this context, migration is no longer understood merely as a career choice, but as a response to uncertainty and existential insecurity (Chen, 2023; García et al., 2016).

In addition, phrases such as “I’m so done,” “tutor kabur,” and “dual citizenship” further reinforce the narrative of escapism. In one analyzed video, Awbimax explicitly used the caption “I’m so done 🤔 #Kaburajadulu,” which reflects emotional exhaustion and disappointment toward socio-political conditions in Indonesia. The phrase functions as an emotional marker that frames migration and leaving Indonesia as a rational response to structural dissatisfaction (Frasetya, 2024; Gozayah et al., 2025).

This discourse is also strengthened through audience interaction within the comment sections. Comments such as “Bim, mulu lo pedes tp lo bikin konten ttg edukasi, setuju bahwa pemerintah kita emang busuk, ngajak orang utk buka mata,” which demonstrates how audiences interpret the content as a form of social criticism rather than merely entertainment. Other comments such as “Tombol setuju sama trend #KaburAjaDulu 👍”. These responses demonstrate how the discourse of migration and escapism is collectively normalized and reproduced within TikTok’s communicative environment (Soraya & Kartika, 2021).

Interaction with Formal Media as a Legitimacy Strategy

In some content, Awbimax responds to reports from mainstream media such as Kompas.com. This practice shows the intertextuality between Awbimax’s personal discourse and formal journalistic discourse. By linking personal narratives with mainstream media reports, Awbimax seeks to reinforce the claim that the criticism presented is based on facts and not merely emotional expressions (Wahyuningtias et al., 2024).

This interaction also shows the symbolic power relations between formal media and social media creators. Mainstream media is represented as a conveyor of facts that is normative, rigid, and often does not directly touch on the life experiences of citizens (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). In contrast, Awbimax positions itself as a more “honest” interpreter of social reality that is closer to the daily lives of its audience. In this context, formal media becomes a source of legitimacy, while social media creators become mediators of meaning (Place & Ciszek, 2021).

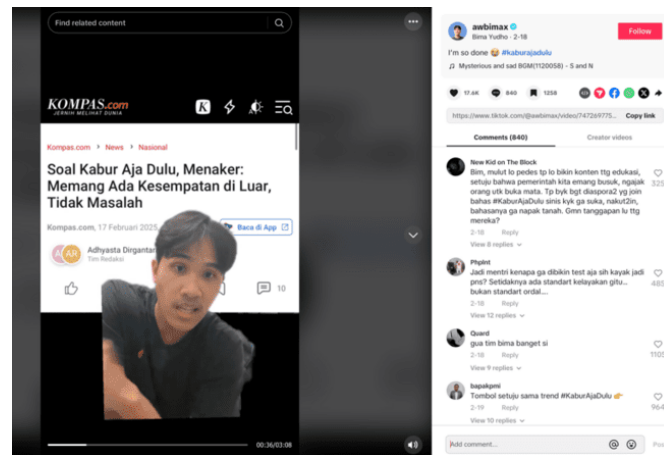


Figure 3 The contestation of discourse between official government statements and the personal narratives of content creators regarding the phenomenon of labor migration abroad.

This strategy further legitimizes the discourse surrounding #KabarAjaDulu. Criticism of the state is no longer perceived as a subjective complaint, but rather as a rational response to an objective reality that is also recognized by formal media. Thus, at the textual level, the #KabarAjaDulu discourse gains greater discursive power because it is supported by intertextuality between personal experiences and institutional narratives (Almakaty, 2024).

Discourse Practice: Discourse Production and Consumption on TikTok

At the level of discursive practice, the analysis focuses on how the #KabarAjaDulu discourse is produced, distributed, and consumed within the TikTok ecosystem. Fairclough views discourse practice as a space of mediation between text and social context, where the processes of discourse production and consumption play an important role in the formation of meaning. In this context, Awbimax's content is not only understood as an individual communication product, but also as part of the circulation of discourse shaped by platform logic, algorithms, and audience interactions.

Content Production as a Form of Discursive Agency

Awbimax shows a relatively consistent pattern of production in raising the themes of “escaping,” migration, and dual citizenship discourse within a certain period of time. This consistency confirms that the #KabarAjaDulu narrative did not emerge as an impulsive reaction to a momentary viral issue, but rather as a planned and repeatedly reproduced discourse construction (Faturohmi et al., 2022; Nathanael et al., 2023). From Fairclough's CDA perspective, this pattern reflects discursive agency, namely the capacity of subjects to consciously choose topics, language styles, and communication media to form specific social meanings (Dinçer, 2024).

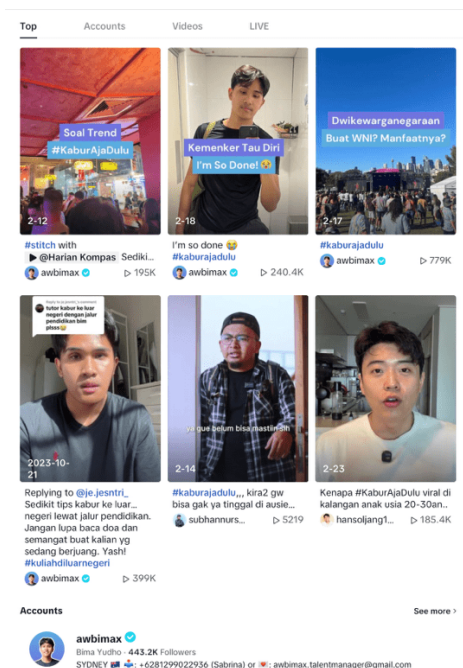


Figure 4 The TikTok profile interface of @awbimax shows consistency in producing content themed around digital escapism and distributing the discourse #kaburajadulu.

Awbimax's choice to use TikTok as its main medium cannot be separated from the characteristics of the platform. TikTok provides a short video format that combines verbal, visual, and audiovisual language simultaneously, allowing messages to be conveyed concisely yet emotionally (Deryansyah et al., 2023). In addition, TikTok's algorithmic system encourages the visibility of content that triggers affective responses and audience engagement, such as comments and reposts. By utilizing this logic, Awbimax places the “escapist” narrative as a recurring theme that continues to appear on the audience's timeline, thereby strengthening the memory and resonance of the discourse (Chandra, 2023; Pardianti & S, 2022).

Content production also reveals a discourse personalization strategy. Awbimax often positions itself as an individual who has experienced or is experiencing dilemmas similar to those of the audience, creating a sense of closeness and authenticity (Ramadhani & Arianto, 2025; Zehrung & Chen, 2023). This position is important because it makes the #KaburAjaDulu discourse appear not as an abstract opinion, but as a shared life experience. Thus, content production functions not only as a means of conveying messages, but also as a practice of forming a credible discursive identity in the eyes of young audiences (Penefaho et al., 2023).

Intertextuality and Narrative Repetition

Discursive practices in Awbimax content are also characterized by a high level of intertextuality. The #KaburAjaDulu narrative does not stand alone, but is continuously linked to other socially relevant issues, such as criticism of certain regions, public service issues (e.g., BPJS

and taxes), and mental health and quality of life issues. These connections form a network of mutually reinforcing meanings, in which various structural problems are woven into the same interpretive framework (Kurniawan, 2018).

The repetition of the “escape” narrative across various social issues functions to normalize migration as a rational response to systemic failure. Economic uncertainty, bureaucratic inefficiency, and psychological exhaustion are collectively constructed as cumulative evidence that individuals possess the moral legitimacy to seek a more decent life abroad (Siga et al., 2022). In line with Fairclough’s concept of intertextuality, the discourse continuously draws connections between different social problems and a singular conclusion namely the need to “escape” so that meaning is reinforced through accumulation and repetition (Fairclough, 1996).

However, this intertextuality is not neutral, as the persistent framing of diverse structural issues within a single escapist narrative tends to simplify social complexity and redirect audience orientation away from collective systemic improvement toward individualized solutions (Salsabila & Sukmono, 2025). Thus, intertextuality operates not only as a narrative strategy but also as an ideological mechanism that shapes how audiences interpret social reality and position migration as a legitimate form of resistance (Eriksen, 2007; Kurniasari et al., 2024).

Discourse Consumption: Audience Response and Meaning Negotiation

Analysis of audience comments shows that the #KaburAjaDulu discourse was not accepted homogeneously, but rather negotiated through various interpretive positions. Based on the available data, audience responses can be classified into three main patterns, namely agree/relatable, critical/considering, and confiding/hopeful. This classification shows that the audience is not passive, but active in interpreting and reproducing discourse (Baker & McGlashan, 2020; Q. Li, 2016).

Comments that are agreeable and relatable show a high level of internalization of the discourse of escapism. The audience not only expresses agreement with Awbimax’s narrative, but also uses the same language and terminology to frame their personal experiences. For example, comments such as “*gue udah kabur ke Malaysia,*” and “*aq kabur berkedok kerja di luar negeri #visakerja*” demonstrate how audiences actively reproduce migration discourse as a realistic aspiration for achieving better opportunities and quality of life (RB & Fauzan, 2024; Wahyuningtias et al., 2024).

These interaction patterns indicate that audience participation not only consumes discourse, but also actively contributes to its circulation and normalization within TikTok’s digital environment. Critical or thoughtful comments reflect limited resistance to the dominant discourse. Audiences in this category tend to raise questions about the risks of migration,

difficulties in adaptation, or the long-term consequences of migration and transnational mobility. However, the criticism that arises is generally pragmatic and individual, not ideological (Wahyuningtias et al., 2024; Nahla et al., 2024). This means that the audience does not fundamentally reject the idea that migration is a valid solution, but rather considers technical and personal aspects. Several comments also reflected economic and structural concerns underlying migration aspirations. Statements such as “*cung yg kerja udah 17 tahun belum punya rumah*” and “*mau berobat pake BPJS aja penyakit gaaaa di cover semua*” reveal how audiences associate migration discourse with frustrations regarding welfare, healthcare access, and economic insecurity in Indonesia.

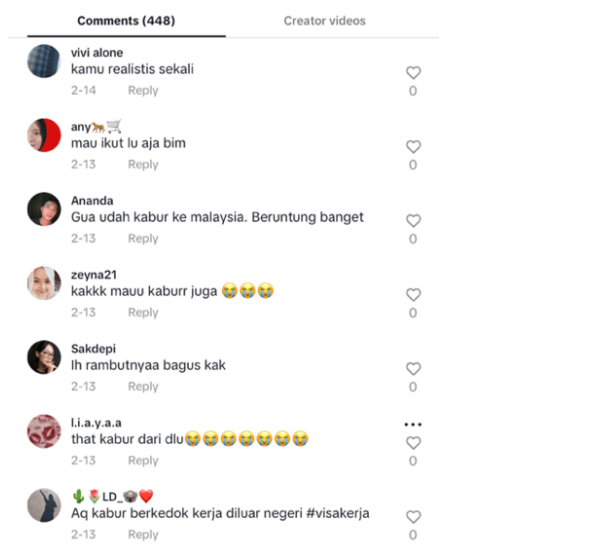


Figure 5 Audience responses regarding citizenship and domestic asset ownership.



Figure 6 Audience normalization of the term “kabur”

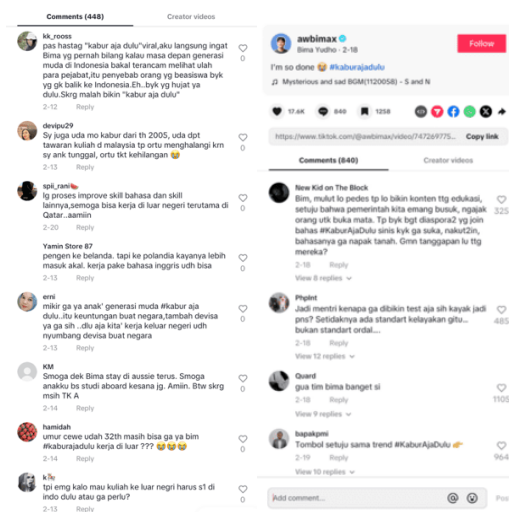


Figure 7 Various comments from the audience regarding the narrative #KaburAjaDulu

Meanwhile, confessional and hopeful comments reveal the affective dimension of discourse consumption. The audience uses the comments section as a semi-public space to express existential dilemmas, such as questions about age, parental permission, or mental readiness to leave. In this practice, TikTok functions as a discursive arena that provides social legitimacy for individual anxieties. The #KaburAjaDulu discourse is not only consumed as opinion but also as a source of emotional validation and moral reference (Kussanti, 2023; Zehrun & Chen, 2023).

Overall, this consumption practice confirms that the meaning of discourse is not entirely controlled by content producers. However, the platform structure and the dominance of repetitive narratives make the audience's interpretive position tend to move within the same spectrum. In other words, even though there is a negotiation of meaning, the boundaries of discourse remain framed by the main narrative that is consistently produced and reproduced. These findings indicate that discursive practices on TikTok contribute to the stabilization and expansion of the #KaburAjaDulu discourse in the digital public sphere (Bender, 2023; Vidyana & Atnan, 2024).

Sociocultural Practice: Power Relations and Popular Culture

At the sociocultural level, CDA is directed at understanding how the #KaburAjaDulu discourse produced and consumed on TikTok is intertwined with social structures, power relations, and the ideological conditions of contemporary Indonesian society. Fairclough emphasizes that discourse always operates within a broader social context, where language not only represents reality but also contributes to shaping and negotiating power relations (Baker & McGlashan, 2020; Fairclough, 1996). In this context, the #KaburAjaDulu discourse can be read as both a reflection and an articulation of the social anxieties of the younger generation towards the state, the system, and the future.

The State as a Problem Space

Audience comments referring to issues such as BPJS, taxes, public services, and state bureaucracy show that the state is represented as a problematic space that is unresponsive to the needs of its citizens. The state is no longer positioned as a protector or facilitator of welfare, but rather as a source of frustration and injustice. This representation is reflected in audience narratives that describe the state as an entity that is "sick," "complicated," and "unfair" (Tarigan et al., 2022; Krasikov, 2024).

Within the CDA framework, this construction of the state is not neutral, but rather the result of a repetitive discursive process. Awbimax content acts as a trigger that provides language and an interpretive framework for the audience to express their disappointment. Through the

#KaburAjaDulu discourse, individual experiences of public services that are considered failures are attached to broader structural criticism of the state (Siga et al., 2022). As a result, personal dissatisfaction is transformed into collective distrust.



Figure 8 Various comments from the audience regarding the narrative #KaburAjaDulu

Framing the state as a problematic space also has implications for the delegitimization of traditional nationalism. Nationalist narratives that emphasize loyalty, sacrifice, and resilience in the face of adversity are implicitly questioned (Abelia et al., 2025). In this context, “escaping” is no longer seen as an unpatriotic act, but rather as a rational and even ethical choice. Thus, the #KaburAjaDulu discourse functions as a form of symbolic resistance to a state ideology that demands loyalty without guaranteeing welfare (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021).

Individual Power Relations vs. the System

The power relations between individuals and the state system become increasingly clear in Awbimax's statements, which emphasize distrust of formal political change. Expressions such as “it's not about who the president is” indicate a skeptical attitude toward electoral democracy as a means of substantive change. The state is increasingly perceived as a stagnant system and incapable of significant internal reform (Tarigan et al., 2022).

From a CDA perspective, this discourse reflects an ideological shift from collectivism to pragmatic individualism (Rose & Cachelin, 2018). Whereas in classical nationalist discourse individuals are positioned as part of a collective national project, in the #KaburAjaDulu discourse individuals are positioned as autonomous actors who are fully responsible for their own safety,

welfare, and future. The state, in this case, loses its role as a moral subject that is obliged to guarantee a decent life for its citizens (Daraini, 2013).

Comment data expressing the desire to “save oneself” or “seek a more humane life” reinforces this finding. The discourse also reflects broader economic anxieties experienced by Indonesian youth. Several audience comments explicitly connect migration with employment opportunities, wage inequality, housing access, and economic mobility. Comments such as “*cung yg kerja udah 17 tahun belum punya rumah,*” “*kalau banyak pemasukan, kenapa tidak?*” and “*lebih masuk akal kerja pakai bahasa Inggris udah bisa*” demonstrate how economic considerations strongly shape perceptions toward migration and transnational mobility (Sudirman, 2024; Afyadi & Sobur, 2024).

However, it is important to note that this pragmatic individualism is not entirely devoid of value. In fact, the discourse of “running away” is often framed as an effort to maintain mental health, dignity, and quality of life. In this context, migration is positioned as a form of self-care and agency, not merely an escape (Goziyah et al., 2025). This shows that the #KaburAjaDulu discourse contains an emancipatory dimension, albeit an individual one.

Social Media as an Ambiguous Space for Democracy

TikTok, as the main medium for spreading the #KaburAjaDulu discourse, plays a central role in shaping this sociocultural practice. On the one hand, TikTok functions as a new democratic space that allows individuals who previously did not have access to formal public spaces to openly voice their criticism of the state. Awbimax's content and audience responses show that social media provides a channel of expression that is relatively free from institutional censorship (Koc, 2023; Nathanael et al., 2023).

TikTok presents an ambiguous form of democracy. The platform's algorithm promotes content that is emotional, personal, and easy to consume, rather than complex and deliberative discourse. As a result, criticism of the state tends to be expressed in the form of personal narratives and escapism, rather than in the form of organized political demands. The #KaburAjaDulu discourse opens up space for criticism, but at the same time limits the imagination of structural change from within the system (Octaviani et al., 2025; Tumanggor & Sazali, 2025).

In the context of popular culture, the narrative of “running away” has also been normalized through casual aesthetics, humor, and everyday language. This makes criticism of the state feel light and easy to accept, but at the same time has the potential to reduce the complexity of social issues to lifestyle choices (Abelia et al., 2025). Migration, in this case, is no longer understood as a complex political-economic phenomenon, but rather as a personal aspiration in line with the logic of global mobility.



Figure 9 Interaction between @awbimax and audiences on political issues.

In this context, migration is constructed not merely as emotional escapism, but also as a pragmatic economic strategy for achieving financial stability, career development, and better welfare. The findings indicate that younger audiences increasingly perceive opportunities for social and economic mobility as more accessible outside Indonesia (Susanty, 2023; Triandafyllidou & Monteiro, 2022).

Overall, the sociocultural practice of the #KaburAjaDulu discourse shows strong ambivalence. On the one hand, this discourse reflects the state's failure to build trust and provide welfare that is perceived as fair by the younger generation (Ardianti et al., 2025). On the other hand, this discourse also has the potential to divert critical energy from the collective realm towards individual solutions. Thus, #KaburAjaDulu can be understood as a symptom of the crisis in the relationship between citizens and the state in the digital age, as well as a product of popular culture that shapes new ways of interpreting nationalism, citizenship, and the future (Wati et al., 2025; Ramadhani & Arianto, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The discourse #KaburAjaDulu in Awbimax's TikTok content does not merely represent personal expression or a passing trend on social media, but is the result of a structured discourse production process laden with ideological content. Through critical discourse analysis, it can be understood that the narrative of "running away" is constructed as a metaphor for individual

escapism, positioned as a rational response to the state's structural failure to provide welfare, justice, and a future for the younger generation.

At the textual level, the discourse is constructed through confrontational yet populist diction, informal language, and casual visuals that create an authentic and relatable impression, thereby normalizing migration as a legitimate individual solution. At the discursive practice level, the consistency of Awbimax's content production and active audience participation indicate that the #KaburAjaDulu discourse is collectively reproduced and negotiated within digital space.

Meanwhile, at the sociocultural level, the #KaburAjaDulu discourse reflects a crisis of trust in the state and formal institutions, marked by criticism of the health, economic, and political governance systems. The state is positioned as an unresponsive entity, while collective solutions are almost absent and replaced by the logic of individual escapism. In this context, nationalism is not entirely rejected, but its meaning has shifted from normative loyalty to a pragmatic and transnational attitude.

Thus, this study confirms that social media creators such as Awbimax have a significant role as discursive actors in shaping how the younger generation perceives the state, migration, and their future. The main contribution of this study lies in the understanding that the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon is not merely a symptom of digital culture, but a discourse practice that has the potential to influence the ideological orientation and social imagination of the audience. Further research is recommended to develop a comparative analysis across platforms or to examine institutional responses to the discourse of digital escapism in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the dynamics of nationalism in the era of social media.

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