

ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON LEARNING DISCIPLINE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the behavior of elementary school students in using social media and its impact on learning discipline. The method used is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews with 20 grade VI students of SDN Jambesari 02, as well as two parents and one teacher. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman models, as well as triangulation of sources for validation. The results show that the majority of students use social media every day, especially TikTok and YouTube, with an average duration of two to three hours. The negative impacts that arise include decreased study focus, procrastination of tasks, and sleep disturbances. Although some students access educational content, the negative impact remains dominant. This study emphasizes the importance of the role of parents and teachers in supervising and providing digital literacy to students so that social media can be used wisely and does not interfere with the learning process.

Keywords: Elementary School Students, Social Media, Learning Discipline, Digital Literacy

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in people's lives, including in the world of education. One form of technology that is widely used today is social media. Social media can be defined as a digital platform that allows its users to interact, share information, and build social networks online (Kurniawati & Nugroho, 2022). Along with the times, the use of social media has reached various circles, including elementary school (SD) age children. In the context of education, social media has the potential to support the learning process, but on the other hand it can also have a negative impact on student learning discipline.

Learning discipline is an important aspect of student educational success. Learning discipline reflects students' ability to manage time, obey rules, and maintain concentration during the learning process (Rahmawati, 2021). However, with the increasing access and use of social media by elementary school students, various challenges arise in maintaining a balance between activities in cyberspace and learning discipline. Students tend to spend more time accessing social media, which can have an impact on their decreased focus and motivation in learning.

This phenomenon raises various problems that need to be studied further. One of the main problems is how students' behavior patterns in using social media and the extent to which it affects their learning habits. In addition, the lack of understanding of how social media affects students' motivation and concentration is a challenge for educators and parents in guiding their children (Sari et al., 2023). Therefore, more in-depth research is needed to understand students' behavior in using social media and its impact on their learning discipline.

Studies on the impact of social media on student learning behavior have come to the fore in recent years. Some studies show that social media can be a useful tool in learning if used wisely, such as to share educational materials or online group discussions (Wijayanti & Hidayat, 2023). However, other studies have also found that excessive use of social media can lead to distractions and reduce student learning effectiveness (Fauziah et al., 2022).

The increasing use of social media among elementary school students raises various questions about how their behavior patterns in accessing and using these digital platforms. Elementary school students tend to use social media for various purposes, from entertainment to communication, but they are not fully aware of its impact. In addition, the use of social media can affect learning discipline, either positively by providing learning resources, and negatively by causing distractions, decreased focus, and the habit of procrastinating academic tasks. Therefore, effective strategies are needed to help students manage the use of social media so as not to interfere with their learning discipline, such as parental supervision, regulation of usage time, and educational approaches that encourage the wise use of social media.

Previous research in this area still has gaps in understanding the impact of social media on the learning discipline of elementary school students. Most of the research focuses on digital technology in general or middle and college students. However, there have not been many studies that have examined that social media also affects elementary school students, both in access to educational materials and learning distractions. This study aims to analyze the behavior of elementary school students in using social media, identify its impact on learning discipline, and provide insight to educators and parents in managing children's use of social media. The results of this study are expected to provide benefits for educators in providing information about the influence of social media on student learning discipline and strategies that can be applied in schools. For parents, this research can provide an understanding of how to supervise and guide children in using social media wisely. In addition, this research is also a reference for other researchers who want to develop further studies related to the use of social media and children's learning behavior.

2. Literature Review

Learning discipline is the ability of students to manage time, obey rules, and maintain concentration in the learning process consistently. Rahmawati (2021) stated that discipline is the key to success in achieving academic goals, especially at the basic education level. At elementary school age, discipline is still greatly influenced by external supervision such as parents and teachers because children's self-control has not developed optimally. Kurnia (2022) added that in online learning systems and with the involvement of digital media, student learning discipline is a challenge in itself that requires a special approach strategy, including character strengthening and continuous habituation.

Elementary school children are now growing up in a very active and dynamic digital ecosystem. Fajar (2021) stated that the pattern of social media use in elementary school children generally aims for entertainment and communication, such as watching short videos, playing games, or chatting with friends, but it has not been accompanied by an understanding of digital risks and responsibilities. This risks affecting children's learning behavior and learning time. Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (1970) explains that children aged 11–12 years are in the early formal operational stage, where the ability to think logically and abstractly begins to develop, but they still have difficulty in making long-term decisions and controlling impulses. Therefore, children's digital behavior tends to be impulsive and is heavily influenced by external stimuli, including exposure to social media content that is not always educational.

Several studies have shown that social media can play a positive role in education if used wisely and in a targeted manner. Greenhow & Robelia (2009) show that social media can support informal learning, such as sharing materials, group discussions, or building positive academic networks. However, research by Ramadhani & Suyoto (2024) found that excessive use of social media actually leads to a decrease in students' motivation to learn and discipline, especially if there is no supervision from adults. In addition, the Theory of Limited Capacity (Lang, 2000) states that human attention is limited; If attention is divided between social media and learning, then the effectiveness of learning will decrease significantly. This explains why students who use social media too often become more easily distracted, have difficulty concentrating, and show a decrease in the quality and learning outcomes in school.

3. Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to explore students' experiences in using social media and its impact on learning disciplines. The research is also equipped with the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to strengthen the results of interviews through the review of relevant scientific journals. The location of the research was at SDN Jambesari 02, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency, involving 20 grade VI students who actively use social media, as well as two parents and one teacher as informants. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature studies. Observations were carried out in the school and home environment, while interviews aimed to explore the views of students, parents, and teachers. Documentation in the form of photographs, field notes, and school documents was used to support the findings. Data analysis was carried out using the model of Miles and Huberman (2014), namely data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data is strengthened through source triangulation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Based on the results of interviews with several parents of grade VI students of SDN Jambesari 02 as well as the data of the statement questionnaire distributed to students, it was found that the majority of students have known and actively used social media, especially platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The use of social media by students is generally carried out in the afternoon until evening, after school.

Table 1. Frequency of Social Media Use by Grade VI Students of SDN Jambesari 02

Number	Daily Usage Frequency	Number of Students	Present %
1	Daily 2-3 hours	16	80%
2	More than 3 hours	2	10%
3	Only after the task is completed	2	10%
Total		20	100%

Source: Questionnaire data for grade VI students of SDN Jambesari 2, 2025

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to 20 grade VI students of SDN Jambesari 2, it is known that the majority of students have actively used social media, especially TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp. As seen in Table 1, as many as 80% of students admitted to using social media every day with an average duration of 2-3 hours. In fact, another 10% use social media for more than 3 hours a day. Only a small percentage of students (10%) stated that they only opened social media after all schoolwork was completed. The use of social media is generally done in free time after school, namely in the afternoon to the evening. This shows that social media has become a part of students' daily routines, especially in filling their free time.

Table 2. Interview Findings Related to the Influence of Social Media on Learning Discipline

Number	Sources	Key Findings	Interview Quotes
1	IZ Students	A Routine of Going to School	"I usually open TikTok or YouTube during the day after school. Sometimes while eating and until I forget the time."
2	DA Students	Distractions when going to do homework	"Sometimes I've opened my cellphone, just look at TikTok for a while, I'm lazy to do homework."
3	AR Students	Social media use after studying	"I usually turn on YouTube after studying at night. If I didn't do my homework, I wouldn't open it."
4	Parent A	Children often delay learning because of TikTok	"My son often postpones studying because he is engrossed in playing TikTok... So if they say they don't obey, I just take the cellphone from him."
5	Parent I	The time limit is not yet effective	"I have given a maximum limit of 1 hour, but sometimes it is still difficult to stop. It is often worn at night."
6	Classroom Teacher	Decreased focus and task delays	"Some students now are often late for collecting assignments, even when they are daydreaming and sleepy. If asked, he replied that last night I watched the video until night."

Source: Interview results of students, parents, and teachers at SDN Jambesari 2, 2025

In addition to the questionnaire, data was also obtained through interviews with several students and parents. The findings of this interview are summarized in Table 2, which shows the diverse impacts of social media use on student learning discipline. Some students said that they are often distracted by social media when they want to do their homework. One of the students, IZ, mentioned that he used to open TikTok or YouTube after school, even to the point of forgetting time. Another student, DA, admitted that just opening TikTok for a while was enough to make him lose motivation to do homework.

From the parents' side, most expressed concern about the impact of social media on children's learning habits. One parent said that his child often postpones studying because he is too engrossed in playing TikTok. In fact, some are forced to forcibly take cellphones from their children because it is difficult to compromise when it comes to study. Some parents also expressed limitations in supervising their children's social media use due to busy work and limited technological knowledge. However, not all students are negatively affected. Some students may limit the time they spend using social media and only use it after schoolwork is done. Some parents also recognize the benefits of social media, such as helping children obtain additional information that is educational, although it is not yet able to compensate for the distractions caused.

Furthermore, from the results of the questionnaire distributed to the students, it can be seen that most of them admit to using social media every day. Many students revealed that the use of social media often makes them forget time, sometimes even distracting while they are doing schoolwork. Some students also said that they find it difficult to focus on studying because they are distracted by social media, such as wanting to open notifications or simply watch short videos. Even so, some students also mentioned that social media does not always have a negative impact. They admit that they sometimes learn new things from the content they encounter, such as general knowledge, how to

make crafts, or information about lessons. However, this benefit is still not able to balance the tendency of students who feel that their learning time is disrupted.

In addition, from the results of interviews and questionnaires, it appears that the role of parents and teachers is quite important in reminding students when they have been playing social media for too long. Although some students feel that they are not able to divide their time well between learning and digital entertainment, awareness of the importance of discipline is starting to be seen from some of their responses. This shows that the use of social media among elementary school students has become part of daily life, but there is still a need for better mentoring and time management habits. From the results of the interviews, most parents stated that they knew that their children were active in using social media, but supervision was still limited due to time constraints or lack of understanding of technology. Some parents admitted that they were worried about the impact on their children's learning habits. One parent said that his child often postpones doing homework because he is engrossed in watching videos on TikTok or playing online games. This has an impact on discipline, such as being late for assignments, not focusing when studying, and often ignoring study schedules that have been made beforehand.

However, there are also students who are able to limit the time they use social media. Based on the results of the questionnaire, around less than 5 students admitted that they only opened social media after all school assignments were completed. This shows that there is a difference in time management and self-discipline between one student and another. Parental supervision factors, students' personal awareness, and the role of teachers in schools are important aspects that affect students' behavior in using social media. Most parents also limit the time their children use social media. They set a time limit of about 1 to 2 hours per day to play social media, and avoid using social media at night as much as possible so as not to interfere with children's sleep time. However, despite these limitations, parents admit that even though they have managed the use of social media, children still find it difficult to manage the time between play and study.

Although there is a negative impact on learning discipline, some parents also recognize that social media has benefits, especially in helping children access useful information and knowledge. Social media, in this case, serves as a source of information that enriches children's knowledge, although on the other hand it brings negative impacts such as disrupting learning time and causing a tendency to postpone tasks. On the other hand, parents also have hopes that children can be wiser in using social media, they have never discussed directly with teachers about the use of social media by children. Parents' biggest hope is that children can use social media wisely, just as entertainment or to look for information when needed, without interrupting their learning time. Overall, the data shows that social media use has two opposite sides. On the one hand, social media can be a means of entertainment and communication, but on the other hand, if its use is not properly supervised and controlled, social media has the potential to reduce students' learning discipline. This is in line with the opinion of experts that the use of digital media by children must be accompanied by digital literacy education and consistent mentoring from adults. Therefore, the involvement of parents and teachers is very important in forming disciplined learning habits in this digital era.

4.2 Discussion

a. Behavior Patterns of Elementary School Students in Using Social Media

The results showed that the majority of grade VI students of SDN Jambesari 2 had known and used social media actively, with an average daily duration of 1-2 hours. This pattern shows that social media has become part of the daily routine of elementary school students. The dominant access time in the afternoon to evening shows that social media is the main escape after school activities.

These findings are in line with a study conducted by Fajar (2021) which states that students use social media for self-actualization and visualization, as well as the frequency of accessing social media depending on the ownership of gadgets and available facilities. From the point of view of developmental psychology, this tendency can be explained through Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (1970), in which children aged 11–12 years are in the early formal operational stage, but are not yet fully capable of abstract thinking and making long-term decisions. Therefore, self-control in the use of social media is still very weak and vulnerable to external influences.

b. The Impact of Social Media Use on Learning Discipline

Questionnaire and interview data show that the use of social media has a direct impact on students' learning discipline. Students often forget time, procrastinate on assignments, and lose focus due to being distracted by digital content. This is reinforced by research by Ramadhani & Suyoto (2024) who found that intensive social media use causes students to become indifferent to the surrounding environment and experience a decline in learning discipline. This phenomenon can also be analyzed using the Theory of Limited Capacity (Lang, 2000), which explains that human cognitive capacity is limited, and when attention is divided between learning and digital activities, learning effectiveness decreases significantly. However, some students also reported positive benefits of social media, such as gaining new knowledge or skills through educational content.

These findings are in line with a study by Greenhow & Robelia (2009) which shows that social media can be an effective informal learning tool, as long as it is used in the right context and with the right mentoring. However, not all impacts are negative; some students gain educational benefits from social media content, consistent with a study by Greenhow & Robelia (2009) that confirms the potential of social media as an informal learning tool if used well. This reflection shows that social media is ambivalent, and its influence is highly dependent on the context of use and supervision.

c. Strategies to Minimize the Negative Impact of Social Media on Learning Discipline

One of the important findings of this study is that parental and teacher supervision and involvement play a central role in shaping children's digital habits. Some parents have implemented time limits, but limited understanding of technology and free time are major obstacles to effective supervision. The lack of communication between parents and schools regarding children's digital habits also shows the weak synergy in assisting students to face the digital era.

Strategies that can be applied refer to the recommendations of Livingstone and Haddon (2009), namely the importance of digital parenting and family digital literacy. Parents need to be equipped with knowledge about the digital platforms used by their children and understand how to manage their use in a healthy way. In addition, teachers can play a role in inserting digital literacy into learning activities.

This approach is also in line with the Social Cognitive Theory of Albert Bandura (1986), which states that children learn from their social environment, including through modeling from parents and teachers. Exemplary use of media, as well as good time management habits from the surrounding environment, can form more disciplined learning behaviors. Theoretically, these findings support assumptions in previous theories about the influence of media on children's behavior and cognition. However, in the context of elementary school students, it is necessary to make adjustments to the supervision approach. It is not enough to limit the duration of social media use, but it is also important to understand the quality of children's interactions with these media.

This implication leads to the need to develop a new framework in children's digital education, which focuses not only on protection, but also empowerment. This approach aims to gradually form children's awareness and self-control, as stated in the empowerment pedagogy approach, which places children as active subjects in the learning process, including in terms of digital media management.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the results show that the use of social media has become part of the daily routine of elementary school students, with the dominance of platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. Despite its educational benefits, social media tends to have a negative impact on students' learning discipline, such as decreased focus and delays in completing assignments. This is influenced by the lack of parental supervision, lack of digital literacy, and the lack of optimal role of teachers. Therefore, cooperation between parents and teachers is needed in guiding children to manage time and use social media wisely. Advice for parents is to set limits on social media use and actively dialogue with children. Teachers are also expected to integrate digital literacy into learning. Students need to be encouraged to be more aware and responsible in using digital media.

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