

## Analysis of the Impact of Social Media on Elementary School Students' Social Interaction

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the impact of social media on elementary school students' social interactions, focusing on both its benefits and challenges. Social media has become a significant tool for communication among students, enabling them to expand their social networks and enhance essential social skills like collaboration and empathy. However, excessive reliance on social media has led to reduced face-to-face interactions, weakening interpersonal communication abilities and fostering shallow virtual connections. This qualitative research, conducted at Baros Mandiri 5 Elementary School, employs interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection methods. The results highlight that while social media can positively influence students' ability to connect, it also presents risks such as decreased social engagement and potential exposure to negative online behaviors like cyberbullying. Based on the findings, strategic recommendations are proposed for educators and parents to balance online and offline interactions, ensuring the development of healthy social relationships.*

**Keywords** – Social media, social interaction, elementary school students, digital literacy, education.



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## **1. Introduction**

Social media has evolved into one of the most essential tools for facilitating social interaction among children and adolescents (Syahraini et al., 2024). Ideally, healthy social interactions at the elementary school level should include meaningful direct communication, the development of strong interpersonal relationships, and the cultivation of social skills such as empathy and collaboration (Margaret Aurelia et al., 2024). Through social media platforms, students can now communicate, collaborate, and share various experiences with their peers more easily and quickly (Armaya et al., 2023). These interactions not only strengthen social relationships but also play a vital role in building self-confidence and fostering healthy social skills among children (Azzahra et al., 2024)

The use of social media among elementary school students presents a complex dynamic. Social media acts as a bridge that expands students' social networks (Siregar, 2022). By utilizing social media, students can engage in broader interactions, thereby enhancing the social skills necessary to function effectively in their social environments (Harahap et al., 2024). Early exposure to digital technology helps students understand the importance of communication and collaboration in the information age, equipping them with relevant skills to face future challenges (Yusuf, 2020)

Alongside the benefits offered, there are significant challenges associated with the influence of social media on students' social interactions (Setiadi et al., 2024). One of the most noticeable impacts is the decline in face-to-face interaction frequency (Sachiyati et al., 2023). Students often prefer to communicate through text messages or social media platforms rather than meeting in person, resulting in reduced opportunities for direct peer interaction (Zis et al., 2021).

Interactions that should take place in the real world are often replaced by less meaningful virtual conversations (Rechika Amelia Eka Putri1, 2024). This can potentially affect students' ability to develop essential interpersonal

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communication skills, such as empathy, understanding, and the ability to read facial expressions and body language (Haqiqi et al., 2024). Without direct practice, students may struggle to grasp the nuances and depth of social interactions, which can only be gained through physical meetings. Social interactions on social media platforms tend to be shallow, which can reduce the quality of relationships between students (Kurnia, 2020). Although students may have many virtual friends, the interactions they experience online are often not as strong or meaningful as face-to-face interactions. Many students become trapped in unsatisfying relationships, leading to feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction (Rakhmaniar, 2024).

Moreover, social media can also become a platform for the emergence of negative behaviors, such as cyberbullying, which further disrupt positive social interactions (Anisah et al., 2024). This can have detrimental effects on students' mental health and worsen the quality of existing social relationships (Arianto, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial for all parties, including educators and parents, to be aware of these potential risks and to seek strategies to minimize the negative impacts of social media use.

During this critical developmental phase, parents play a highly significant role in guiding their children to navigate social media wisely (Tri Setyo Rochman et al., 2024). By setting time limits, selecting appropriate content, and encouraging face-to-face interactions, parents can help their children learn to balance time between online and offline interactions more effectively (Rodli & Wulandari, 2022). This is a crucial step in ensuring that children are not only exposed to the digital world but also remain connected with their peers in meaningful ways, enriching their social experiences and supporting the development of their interpersonal skills (Rawanita & Mardhiah, 2024).

The purpose of this article is to analyze the impact of social media on elementary school students' social interactions, both in terms of the benefits and the challenges it poses. Additionally, this article aims to provide strategic recommendations for parents and educators to support students' social

development in the digital era. While social media offers various benefits, its uncontrolled use can bring significant negative impacts on students' social interactions. With the right approach, the benefits of social media can be maximized without overlooking the importance of face-to-face interactions. Striking this balance is crucial for fostering the development of essential social skills in students' lives.

## **2. Method**

The research approach used in this study is descriptive qualitative, which focuses on understanding social phenomena through descriptive data obtained directly from research subjects. This research aims to describe phenomena based on existing facts and conditions. Descriptive research provides a detailed depiction of a specific situation, social setting, or relationship. It is used to gain comprehensive knowledge about the research object at a particular time (Zellatifanny & Mudjiyanto, 2018). The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of social media on students' social interactions by illustrating how social media usage influences their social relationships both inside and outside the classroom.

The study was conducted at Baros Mandiri 5 Elementary School. The research was carried out on Friday, November 22, 2024. This location was chosen for its accessibility to 5th-grade students and their homeroom teacher, who served as the research subjects. The subjects consisted of 10 fifth-grade elementary school students and 1 homeroom teacher. The students were divided into two groups: those who use social media and those who do not. The selection of subjects was based on their social interactions during classroom learning. The chosen students had different characteristics in their use of social media, allowing for a comparative analysis of its impact on their social interactions.

The object of this research is the impact of social media on the social interactions of students at Baros Mandiri 5 Elementary School. The study focuses on how social media affects students' ways of interacting with their peers at

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school and its influence on their communication skills and social relationships. Data for this research was collected through three main techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation. The method used should be accompanied by references; the relevant modification should be explained. The procedure and data analysis technique should be emphasized in a literature review article. The stages and analysis of the research must be explained in detail.

Interviews were conducted with 10 students and the 5th-grade homeroom teacher. The type of interview used was semi-structured interviews, where the researcher followed a prepared question guide while allowing flexibility to explore deeper responses. With semi-structured interviews, the researcher could delve further into the information provided by the respondents.

Observations were carried out to monitor students' interaction patterns at school, both during recess and classroom activities. Non-participant observation was used, where the researcher observed and recorded students' behaviors without directly engaging in their activities. The focus of the observation was on students' social interactions, determining whether they preferred communicating through social media or interacting directly.

Documentation was conducted to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations. The types of documents collected included photographs of student activities in class, interview recordings, and screenshots of students' social media activities, if relevant and permitted. This documentation provided visual evidence to support the findings from interviews and observations.

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and organizing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation by categorizing, detailing into units, synthesizing, identifying patterns, selecting significant information, and drawing conclusions to make the data easy to understand (Nurholiq et al., 2019). The collected data will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method. The analysis is carried out interactively and continuously through three main stages:

- a. Data Reduction : This stage involves summarizing and selecting relevant data while eliminating irrelevant information. The researcher will focus on data that highlights the impact of social media on students' social interactions.
- b. Data Presentation : After the data is reduced, it will be presented in the form of a narrative that descriptively illustrates the research findings. This presentation helps to better understand patterns and findings derived from the interviews and observations.
- c. Drawing Conclusions and Verification : Conclusions are drawn by analyzing the patterns that emerge from the presented data. These conclusions will be verified with additional data to ensure the consistency and validity of the research findings.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

#### **Results**

The researcher conducted field observations to analyze the impact of social media on the social interactions of 5th-grade students at Baros Mandiri 5 Elementary School. Observations were conducted in one meeting, along with in-depth interviews with 10 students and the 5th-grade homeroom teacher. The findings reveal that social media, particularly platforms like TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube, plays a significant role in the students' daily lives. Students' activities on social media include watching viral videos, commenting on content, and sharing information with friends.

Observations showed that even though students were not allowed to bring mobile phones to school, the influence of social media was evident in their classroom behavior. Some students frequently discussed trends and content they encountered on social media, which became topics of conversation during interactions with their peers. Social media plays a crucial role in expanding conversation topics and creating social connections beyond the school context (Irwandi et al., 2024).

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In the educational context, social media has a dual impact. On the positive side, it can support the learning process by providing access to various educational resources (Zahra & Arifin, 2024). Students can use social media to seek additional information, share knowledge with friends, and discuss lesson materials (Azzahra et al., 2024). Teachers noted that some students use these platforms to complete school assignments, ultimately improving their independent learning skills and broadening their perspectives.

However, social media also has negative consequences for students' social interactions and learning processes (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). Excessive use of social media can hinder students' ability to concentrate (Riduan et al., 2023). Some students admitted to being tempted to interact online more frequently than focusing on class activities or homework. This reduces effective learning time and can negatively impact their academic performance. Additionally, exposure to harmful content, such as inappropriate language or behavior, may influence students' social attitudes and behavior at school (Nahla et al., 2024)

The influence of social media on education is also reflected in students' behavior and attitudes in the classroom (Wiramaya, 2024). Teachers observed that students who use social media tend to be more active and vocal during interactions but often exhibit less appropriate behavior. Conversely, students who do not use social media show calmer, more controlled interactions. They are less influenced by trends or negative content and better able to maintain focus during learning activities.

The use of social media in education also has important implications for teachers and educational institutions (Indriyati, 2023). Teachers need to understand how to effectively integrate social media into the learning process (Indriyati, 2023). Digital literacy has become an essential skill to teach students, enabling them to use social media wisely and productively (Hidayat et al., 2024). Teachers also play a role in helping students filter information and avoid inappropriate content (Safitri et al., 2024)

Overall, this study highlights the importance of a balanced approach to social media use. On the one hand, social media can be a valuable tool for enhancing learning and social interaction. On the other hand, uncontrolled use can have significant negative impacts on students' social behavior and academic performance. Therefore, collaboration between teachers, parents, and schools is necessary to create a supportive learning environment where students can use social media positively and responsibly.

Considering the challenges and opportunities, schools should develop clear policies regarding social media use in educational settings. Digital literacy programs and training for teachers and students need to be implemented to ensure social media is utilized most effectively. Understanding the impact of social media on students' social interactions and learning is essential for developing more adaptive educational strategies in the digital era. With the right approach, social media can be transformed from a threat into an opportunity to support students' success in various aspects of life.

### **Discussion**

In the advancing digital era, social media usage has become an inseparable part of daily life, including students' social interactions at school (Harahap et al., 2023). The findings of this study show that social media has a significant impact on the social behavior of 5th-grade students at Baros Mandiri 5 Elementary School. Based on interviews with teachers, social media has caused changes in students' language and behavior, with some students showing attitudes influenced by the content they consume. For instance, there is an increase in the use of harsh language and excessive mischief, adopted from adult content on social media. This phenomenon highlights that students often lack the ability to filter information effectively, leading to behaviors that do not align with social norms during their interactions in class.

Nevertheless, social media also has the potential to strengthen students' social relationships (Purwanti et al., 2024). Some students stated that social media helps them discover interesting conversation topics, which then become



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discussion material when meeting in person at school. This demonstrates that social media can serve as a tool to expand social networks and facilitate communication when used wisely (Indriyati, 2023). However, the findings also reveal that students who rarely or do not use social media tend to exhibit more stable social behavior. They are calmer, better able to control their emotions, and use language that aligns with social norms. This difference suggests that reduced exposure to social media can support healthier social development.

Teachers also noted that the positive impacts of social media have yet to be significantly observed. Students tend to use social media for entertainment, while its potential as a learning tool remains underutilized. Some students mentioned that social media helps them find information for school assignments, but the frequency of such use is low compared to its use for entertainment purposes. On the contrary, the negative impacts of social media are more dominant, including reduced concentration, inappropriate language use, and even the emergence of bullying behavior. Students are more often tempted to discuss trends or viral content in class, disrupting their focus on lessons.

Observations and interviews also indicate that social media influences the dynamics of social interactions in the classroom. Students who actively use social media tend to be more vocal and initiate conversations more often, but their behavior is frequently influenced by irrelevant or inappropriate content. Conversely, non-social media users are more focused on face-to-face interactions and rarely exhibit behavior influenced by social media. Teachers stated that while social media significantly shapes students' behavior, its influence is not always positive. Therefore, collaborative efforts between teachers and parents are necessary to guide students toward using social media wisely and responsibly.

The importance of teachers in providing students with an understanding of the impacts of social media is emphasized in this study. Teachers not only reprimand students who display negative behavior but also strive to communicate with parents to monitor social media use at home. This collaboration aims to create a supportive learning environment where students

can utilize social media to enhance their education without compromising the quality of real-world social interactions.

The findings of this study also underscore the need for clear policies and guidelines on social media use in schools. Digital literacy must be instilled early to help students understand the risks and benefits of social media. Schools should develop programs that support students in using social media for learning while making them aware of the potential risks if used unwisely. With this approach, social media can become a tool that enriches students' learning experiences rather than detracting from them.

This study provides valuable insights, but there is room for further exploration. For example, future research could delve deeper into the types and frequency of social media use and their impact on students' academic performance. Additionally, studies could explore how peer support can help students manage their social media use more effectively. Broader research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social media shapes students' educational experiences, including its effects on motivation, social interactions, and the development of essential skills.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms that social media has a complex impact on students' social interactions. With proper guidance from teachers and parents, along with school policies supporting digital literacy, social media can be leveraged to enrich students' learning experiences. Collaboration among educators, parents, and other stakeholders is key to creating an inclusive and adaptive educational environment in this digital age.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study reveals that social media usage has a significant impact on the social interactions and behavior of fifth-grade students at SDN Baros Mandiri 5. Social media, particularly platforms such as TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube, not only influences students' social lives outside of school but also affects the dynamics of their interactions within the classroom. On the positive side, social

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media provides students with broader access to information, enriches their learning experiences, and encourages collaboration in completing school tasks. When used wisely, social media can enhance students' independent learning skills and expand their knowledge.

However, on the negative side, excessive use of social media can disrupt students' concentration during lessons and reduce the effectiveness of study time. Exposure to inappropriate content and the adoption of negative behaviors from social media also have the potential to harm students' conduct, such as the use of offensive language or disrespectful behavior that disrupts the learning environment. Furthermore, social media influences social dynamics in the classroom, where students who are more active on social media tend to have broader but shallower social connections, while those who refrain from using social media are more likely to engage in deeper face-to-face interactions.

The impact of this study underscores the importance of teachers and schools in guiding students to use social media responsibly. Digital literacy is essential to ensure that students can utilize social media positively, and clear policies regarding its use in school should be implemented. Proper management of social media usage outside of study hours is also recommended so that students can focus better on learning and maintain healthy social relationships with their peers. With the right approach, social media has the potential to become a valuable tool in supporting education and strengthening students' social interactions.

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