

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON MANNERS AND ETHICS AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Received : 01 September 2025

Revised : 16 September 2025

Accepted : 29 October 2025

Published : 02 December 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.59733/jishup.v3i3.157>

Publish Link : <https://jishup.org/index.php/ojs>

Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly influenced social life, including among elementary school students. One of the most prominent phenomena is the increasing use of social media among children. This study aims to examine the influence of social media usage on the manners and ethics of elementary school students, both positively and negatively. The research method used is a literature review, conducted by analyzing relevant studies, articles, and books. The findings reveal that social media can serve as a learning tool, broaden knowledge, and enhance students' creativity when accompanied by proper guidance from parents and teachers. However, excessive and uncontrolled use may lead to negative impacts, such as reduced empathy, the use of inappropriate language, and weakened face-to-face interactions. Therefore, the active roles of families, schools, and communities are essential in providing supervision and digital literacy education from an early age, so that social media can be utilized positively in shaping well-mannered and ethical behavior in students.

Keywords: *Social media, Manners; Ethics, Elementary school students, Digital literacy*

Introduction

In the modern era, digitalization has rapidly expanded across various sectors of life. Human activities that were once considered difficult have undergone significant changes due to advancements in technology, particularly in the fields of communication and information. Today, technology can be accessed by nearly all groups of people, ranging from toddlers to the elderly. One of the most prominent developments in recent years is the growing use of social media. Elementary school education plays an essential role in shaping the moral values and ethical behavior of children as they begin to engage with the social environment. At this developmental stage, children are highly sensitive to external influences. They tend to imitate what they see and hear from their surroundings, rather than solely relying on what is formally taught to them. Consequently, the digital environment they encounter through social media has a substantial impact on the formation of their attitudes and behaviors.

The use of social media among elementary school students presents both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, social media can serve as a medium for learning, broadening knowledge, and fostering creativity. However, uncontrolled and excessive use can lead to adverse impacts, such as exposure to inappropriate content, reduced empathy, the use of impolite language, and weakened face-to-face social interactions. Therefore, the roles of parents, teachers, and the surrounding environment are crucial in supervising and guiding children's use of social media. Encouraging positive behavior, assisting in content selection, and limiting screen time are necessary steps in developing digital literacy from an early age. With proper direction and supervision, social media can become a beneficial tool for shaping a generation that is intelligent, well-mannered, and ethical amid the rapid growth of modern technology.

Method

This study employs a literature review method, which involves examining various research findings, articles, and scientific journals related to the influence of social media on the manners and ethics of elementary school students.

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The stages of the research procedure are as follows:

1. Data Collection – Identifying and gathering journals and articles that discuss the impact of social media on the behavior of elementary school students.
2. Literature Selection – Selecting literature that aligns with the research focus, including studies that highlight both positive and negative impacts.
3. Content Analysis – Reviewing and analyzing the findings of each selected source to identify patterns regarding the influence of social media on students' manners and ethical behavior.
4. Synthesis of Findings – Integrating insights from various sources to produce a comprehensive and objective understanding of the topic.

Discussion

Social media is an internet-based communication platform that allows users to share information, interact, and build social networks without being limited by time or geographical boundaries. According to Nasrullah (2017), social media facilitates rapid and interactive message exchanges through various platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. In the field of education, social media has the potential to become a beneficial learning tool. Riyanto (2020) explains that social media platforms can be used to access learning materials, watch educational videos, and collaborate in online group discussions. This is supported by Buckingham (2003), who emphasizes that media literacy should be embedded in character education to help students critically and ethically engage with digital content. Similarly, Subrahmanyam and Šmahel (2011) argue that digital environments play a significant role in shaping children's social identity, making guided use essential.

However, without proper supervision, the use of social media may lead to addiction, reduced learning motivation, and increased exposure to content that is not appropriate for the child's age. Greenfield (2014) warns that intense media exposure can affect emotional regulation and diminish children's sensitivity to social norms. Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2023) found that the use of social media among elementary school students can negatively affect their social and emotional development. Children who spend excessive time on social media often experience difficulties in managing emotions and engaging in direct interpersonal communication. As a result, their manners and daily ethical behavior may decline. They may imitate negative behaviors encountered online, including impolite language use and a lack of empathy toward others. Livingstone and Helsper (2007) highlight that digital inclusion is not uniform among children, which influences how they interpret and respond to online interactions.

Therefore, parental supervision and digital literacy education are essential to help children use social media wisely and responsibly. Wartella *et al.* (2013) further emphasize that parental involvement is a key determinant in shaping children's digital habits and moral reasoning. On the other hand, social media may also produce negative effects. Elementary school students are still in the process of forming their social identity, making them highly susceptible to inappropriate content. Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2023) highlight that excessive use of social media can reduce emotional control, weaken face-to-face social interactions, and decrease sensitivity to social norms. This suggests that social media has the potential to undermine manners and ethical behavior if not accompanied by proper guidance. The findings of this study indicate that social media has a dual influence on the development of manners and ethics among elementary school students. On one hand, social media can serve as a learning medium that provides students with access to new knowledge. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok Edu, or online discussion forums can provide supplementary learning materials that may not be available in the classroom (Riyanto, 2020). This demonstrates that social media can support the learning process when used appropriately.

On the other hand, social media may also produce negative effects. Elementary school students are still in the process of forming their social identity, making them highly susceptible to inappropriate content. Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2023) highlight that excessive use of social media can reduce emotional control, weaken face-to-face social interactions, and decrease sensitivity to social norms. This suggests that social media has the potential to undermine manners and ethical behavior if not accompanied by proper guidance. Furthermore, the role of parents and teachers is crucial. Students who receive guidance on how to use social media are more likely to choose appropriate content, maintain polite communication, and demonstrate respectful behavior. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2021) has responded to this need by issuing digital literacy guidelines that promote responsible and ethical media use from an early age. Thus, digital literacy education from an early age is fundamental in fostering positive habits. Consistent supervision not only prevents exposure to harmful content but also allows social media to function as a learning tool that supports moral and character development. The literature review further demonstrates that social media exerts both positive and negative influences on elementary school students.

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1. Positive Impacts
 - Learning resource: Platforms such as YouTube Kids, TikTok Edu, or WhatsApp Groups can help students access additional learning materials and enhance their creativity (Riyanto, 2020).
 - Digital social interaction: Social media facilitates the exchange of information and communication among peers, which can help develop self-confidence (Nasrullah, 2017).
 - Skill development: Students have the potential to develop communication, creativity, and collaboration skills through positive online activities.
2. Negative Impact
 - Decline in communication ethics: Students tend to imitate inappropriate or impolite language and behavior encountered on social media (Rahmawati & Kurniawan, 2023).
 - Addiction and decreased learning motivation: Excessive use of social media can make it difficult for students to focus on schoolwork, leading to reduced academic interest.
 - Weakened face-to-face interaction: Dependence on online interaction can reduce students' sensitivity to norms of politeness and proper behavior in direct social interactions.
3. The Important Role of Parents and Teachers

The findings indicate that early supervision and digital literacy education are key factors in minimizing negative impacts. Children who are guided while using social media are more capable of selecting appropriate content, maintaining polite language, and demonstrating respectful behavior in both online and offline interactions. Thus, social media cannot be viewed solely as a threat. It is a neutral tool whose benefits or drawbacks depend on usage patterns, frequency of use, and the level of supervision provided by the surrounding environment.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study and supporting literature, it can be concluded that the use of social media has a significant influence on the manners and ethics of elementary school students. When used appropriately, social media can serve as an additional learning tool that encourages creativity, broadens knowledge, and improves communication skills (Riyanto, 2020; Nasrullah, 2017). It also offers opportunities for digital interaction and skill development when guided by educators and parents (Buckingham, 2003; Subrahmanyam & Šmahel, 2011). However, excessive and unsupervised use may lead to negative effects, such as weakened face-to-face interaction, reduced empathy, and the emergence of impolite language habits (Rahmawati & Kurniawan, 2023; Greenfield, 2014). These risks are heightened by unequal digital access and varying levels of emotional maturity among children (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Thus, social media is neutral in nature, and its impact depends on the intensity of use, the type of content accessed, and the supervision provided by parents and teachers (Wartella et al., 2013; Kemendikbud, 2021).

Suggestions

The use of social media among elementary school students will be more optimal if all relevant parties play an active role. Parents are expected to consistently supervise the content and duration of their children's social media use, as well as guide them toward educational material. Teachers need to integrate social media into learning activities creatively so that students become accustomed to using technology for positive and constructive purposes. Students themselves are expected to develop awareness in using social media wisely, demonstrating politeness, and avoiding behaviors that conflict with moral and social norms. Furthermore, the government and schools need to develop early digital literacy programs to equip the younger generation with healthy, responsible, and ethical media practices. With synergy among families, schools, and the wider community, social media can serve as a platform that supports the development of well-mannered character and strengthens students' moral values in the digital era.

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