



The Impact of Using Social Media as a Learning Tool on the Development of Elementary School Students' Social Skills

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media as a learning tool is increasingly widespread in elementary education. This study aims to evaluate the impact of social media use on the social skills of elementary school students. The use of social media as a learning tool at SD Negeri 2 Wameo offers many benefits, there are significant gaps in its implementation. This study uses Qualitative Research Type. In addition, interviews with teachers and classroom observations were also conducted to obtain additional data. By collecting and analyzing existing theories, this study will build a strong conceptual framework to support the findings and data analysis. The results of the study show that the use of social media in learning at SD Negeri 2 Wameo significantly improves students' social interaction, adaptability, communication skills, and empathy development. Although it offers many benefits, it is important to manage the use of social media wisely to avoid risks and ensure that this platform supports a positive and effective learning environment. Although it offers many benefits in students' social development, the use of social media as a learning tool requires wise management.

Keywords: *Impact of Use, Social Media, Social Skills*

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. Social media, which was originally designed as a means of communication and sharing information, is now starting to be used as a learning tool at various levels of education, including elementary schools. The use of social media in learning offers great potential to create a more interactive, collaborative, and contextual learning environment. In this modern era, elementary school students are a digital native generation who are very familiar with technology and social media. This creates

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opportunities for educators to integrate social media into the learning process with the aim of increasing student engagement, motivating them to learn, and enriching their learning experience. Social media can be an effective platform for developing students' social skills, such as communication skills, collaboration, and critical thinking. However, the use of social media in learning is not without challenges (Yuanta, 2020). There are concerns about the potential for distraction, the spread of invalid information, and other negative impacts that may affect students' social development. Therefore, it is important to understand how the use of social media as a learning tool can have an impact on the development of elementary school students' social skills (Witarsa et al, 2018).

The use of social media as a learning tool in elementary schools has brought about significant changes in the way students interact and develop their social skills. In this digital era, social media is not only a communication platform, but also a means to share knowledge and experiences (Sianturi, 2021) (Roemintoyo et al, 2020) (Asdiniah & Lestari, 2021). In the context of education, social media allows students to collaborate, exchange ideas, and learn from their peers in a more dynamic and interactive way. This has a direct impact on their social skills, such as how they communicate, cooperate, and appreciate the perspectives of others (Tsvetkova et al, 2021). In addition, social media as a learning tool also provides space for students to build important interpersonal skills (Zahro et al, 2023) (Nurhasanah & Lestari, 2022). Through this platform, students can participate in online discussions, virtual presentations, and group projects involving interactions between classmates or even students from other schools (Zheng et al, 2021) (Wulandari et al, 2023) (Amaruddin et al, 2020). These kinds of activities help students develop empathy, public speaking skills, and active listening skills. In the long run, these skills will be valuable assets in their social lives outside the school environment (Gularso et al, 2021).

The use of social media in learning also has challenges that need to be considered. Elementary school students tend to be more vulnerable to negative influences, such as cyberbullying, dependence on technology, and the spread of inaccurate information (Hrynko, 2019) (Badrumilah & Rigianti, 2022) (Purnama & Asdlori, 2023). Therefore, teachers and parents need to play an active role in supervising and guiding students' use of social media. Proper guidance can help students develop good digital literacy, as well as utilize social media positively to develop their social skills (Trad, 2021). The importance of social media as a learning tool is also seen from its ability to bridge the social gap between students (Situmorang, 2023). Social media allows students from various social backgrounds to interact and work together in a more equal environment (Kezia, 2021). Through this interaction, students can learn to appreciate diversity, build tolerance, and broaden their social horizons (Adnyana & Yudaparmita, 2023). The ability to interact with diverse individuals will be very beneficial in shaping students' personalities that are inclusive and open to differences (Rahmawati & Dewi, 2020). Overall, the impact of using social media as a learning tool on the development of elementary school students' social skills is two-way (Antonopoulou et al, 2022). On the one hand, social media offers great opportunities to strengthen students' social skills through broader and more dynamic interactions. However, on the other hand, the risks associated with using social media must also be managed wisely. With the right approach, social media can be an effective tool in supporting students' social development, while preparing them to face social challenges in the future (Marliani, 2021).

The gap that emerges in the use of social media as a learning tool in elementary schools lies in the accessibility and digital skills possessed by students. Although the use of social media as a learning tool at SD Negeri 2 Wameo offers many benefits, there is a significant gap in its implementation. One of the gaps that emerges is the difference in the level of access and understanding of technology among students. Not all students have the same access to digital devices or adequate internet connections at home, creating inequalities in learning opportunities. In addition, not all students and parents have sufficient digital literacy to use social media effectively and safely. This can hinder students' participation in social media-based learning activities, which ultimately has the potential to widen the educational gap.

Another problem that arises is the lack of clear guidance and regulations from schools in the use of social media as a learning tool. Without proper guidelines, the use of social media can be counterproductive, where students focus more on the entertainment aspect than on learning. In addition, the risk of misuse of social media, such as cyberbullying or the spread of inaccurate information, is also a problem that needs attention. The unpreparedness of teachers in integrating social media into the learning process is also an obstacle, because not all teachers have sufficient skills or knowledge to utilize this platform effectively. Therefore, efforts are needed to address the gap in access to technology and digital literacy as well as the development of clear policies to ensure that social media is used safely and productively in supporting the development of students' social skills.

The solution that can be proposed in this study is the development of an integrated training program for teachers and parents to improve digital literacy and skills in utilizing social media as an effective and safe learning tool. This program should include guidance on the wise use of social media, an introduction to risks and how to overcome them, and strategies to maximize the benefits of social media in developing students' social skills. In addition, efforts to expand access to technology for all students need to be made, such as through initiatives to provide devices and more equitable internet access, in order to reduce the existing digital divide. With this approach, social media can be optimally utilized to support learning and social development of elementary school students. This study aims to examine the impact of the use of social media in the context of learning on the development of students' social skills. By understanding its influence, it is hoped that the right strategy can be found to maximize the benefits of social media as a learning tool, while minimizing the risks that may arise, so that it can contribute to the development of students' social skills positively and effectively.

2. Methods

This study uses Qualitative Research Type (Willya et al, 2023). In addition, interviews with teachers and classroom observations were also conducted to obtain additional data. By collecting and analyzing existing theories, this study will build a strong conceptual framework to support the findings and data analysis (Purwaningsih et al, 2022). The data sources in this study consist of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained directly from the field through interviews, interviews, or observations involving teachers, students, and parents in elementary schools that are the subjects of the study (Putri, 2021). Meanwhile, secondary data comes from school

documentation, official reports, and literature that has been reviewed in the theoretical library method. Both types of data will be used to understand how social media use affects students' social skills, as well as to identify factors that support or hinder the process.

The instruments used in this study include interviews, interview guides, and observation sheets. Interviews will be given to students and parents to measure the frequency, intensity, and impact of social media use in the context of learning. Interview guides will be used to dig deeper into teachers' views on the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool and its influence on students' social skills. Observation sheets are used to record student interactions during the learning process involving the use of social media, as well as to observe changes in their social skills.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through in-depth interviews and participant observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers to obtain qualitative data about their experiences in using social media as a learning tool. Participatory observation was conducted during the learning process in the classroom, where researchers directly observed student interactions and changes in their social skills when using social media.

The data that has been collected will be analyzed using a qualitative approach. Quantitative data from interviews will be analyzed statistically to identify patterns of social media use and their relationship to the development of students' social skills. Meanwhile, qualitative data from interviews and observations will be analyzed through content analysis techniques to find the main themes that emerge, such as challenges and opportunities in using social media as a learning tool. The results of this analysis will be integrated to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of social media use on the development of elementary school students' social skills.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Findings

By implementing clear strategies and providing adequate technical support and training, schools can leverage social media to enhance students' social interaction, adaptability, communication skills, and empathy. Effective integration of social media into the learning process can enrich the educational experience and prepare students to face the challenges of an increasingly complex digital world. However, for these positive impacts to be achieved, careful supervision and policies that ensure safe and productive use of social media are needed. Implementing appropriate boundaries and providing clear guidelines will help reduce potential risks, such as disruption or misuse. By balancing benefits and risks, social media can be a valuable tool in developing students' social skills, enriching the learning process, and facilitating more meaningful interactions outside the traditional classroom.

Increasing Social Interaction

The use of social media as a learning tool at SD Negeri 2 Wameo has had a significant impact on increasing social interaction between students. In a digital environment, students not only learn individually, but also interact with each other through the social platforms used for learning. This creates a collaborative space where students can exchange ideas, discuss, and work together on group assignments more efficiently and effectively. In addition, social media allows

students to access a variety of diverse learning resources, which they can share with their friends. Thus, there is an increase in communication skills and social interaction because students communicate with each other more often to discuss learning materials. The social media platforms used also facilitate students to ask questions and get answers more quickly, which ultimately strengthens relationships between students. The results of interviews with grade IV teachers at SD Negeri 2 Wameo stated that:

"The use of social media as a learning tool is very positive in increasing students' social interaction. Through this platform, students can communicate more easily and share information related to lessons. In addition, social media also allows collaboration between students outside of school hours, which indirectly strengthens their social relationships."

Based on an interview with a fourth-grade teacher at SD Negeri 2 Wameo, the use of social media as a learning tool was considered very positive in improving students' social interactions. The teacher stated that through social media platforms, students can communicate more easily and share information related to lessons. This convenience allows students to participate more actively in discussions and learning activities, both inside and outside the classroom, thus enriching their learning experience. In addition, social media also opens up opportunities for students to collaborate outside of school hours, which ultimately strengthens social relationships between them. The teacher revealed that interactions that occur on social media not only deepen students' academic understanding, but also build stronger bonds between classmates. Thus, social media plays an important role in developing students' social skills, which are an integral part of learning at SD Negeri 2 Wameo. This is in accordance with an interview with a fifth-grade teacher at SD Negeri 2 Wameo who stated that:

"Yes, I see quite significant changes. Before using social media, students' social interactions were more limited to when they were at school. However, after the use of social media was integrated into learning, students became more active in interacting, whether in group discussions, sharing materials, or helping friends who were having difficulties."

After social media began to be used as part of learning, students became more active in interacting outside of school hours. They were not only involved in online group discussions, but also shared learning materials more often and helped friends who were having difficulties. Social media has become a bridge that expands the scope of their social interactions, allowing students to continue learning and collaborating anytime and anywhere, which ultimately improves social relationships and cooperation between them.

The use of social media as a learning tool also poses its own challenges. There is a risk that the social interactions that occur can become less in-depth, because communication carried out through screens is often less able to replace face-to-face interactions. Therefore, it is important for teachers at SD Negeri 2 Wameo to guide students to maintain a balance between the use of social media and direct social interactions, so that the two can complement each other. Overall, the integration of social media in the learning process at SD Negeri 2 Wameo has made a positive contribution to improving students' social interactions. With proper guidance, social media can be an effective tool to enrich students' learning experiences and encourage them to be more active participants in the school community. This is expected to create a more inclusive

and collaborative learning environment, where students feel more connected to each other.

Adaptability

The use of social media as a learning tool at SD Negeri 2 Wameo has played an important role in improving students' adaptability to changes in the learning environment. In the digital era, students are required to be able to adapt to various technological tools and platforms used in learning. Social media, as one of these tools, allows students to develop the adaptive skills needed to succeed in an ever-evolving learning environment. In addition, social media also helps students adapt to different learning styles and learning methods. With access to a variety of learning resources and materials, students can choose the way of learning that best suits their needs. This not only increases their flexibility in learning, but also builds adaptive skills that will be useful in the future, both in educational contexts and in everyday life. The results of the interview with a grade IV teacher at SD Negeri 2 Wameo stated that:

"The use of social media has helped students become more flexible in adapting to various learning methods. Students are now quicker to adapt to online assignments, collaborate in virtual groups, and receive learning materials delivered through digital platforms. Social media accelerates this adaptation process, because students are already familiar with the technology in their daily lives."

The use of social media has had a significant impact on increasing students' flexibility in adapting to various learning methods. With social media, students are quicker to adapt to online assignments and collaborate in virtual groups. The presence of digital platforms allows them to receive learning materials more easily and efficiently, so that the teaching and learning process becomes more dynamic and responsive to students' needs. This flexibility is very important in dealing with frequent changes in modern learning methods, which increasingly integrate technology. This is in accordance with the interview of a fifth grade teacher at SD Negeri 2 Wameo who stated that:

"I see students becoming more confident in facing learning challenges. They are more proactive in finding solutions and more open to collaborating with their friends online. Social media gives them tools to communicate and share ideas, which helps them adapt more quickly when faced with learning problems."

Social media also accelerates the adaptation process of students because they are already familiar with the use of technology in everyday life. The experience of using social media in non-academic contexts makes it easier for students to understand and apply the technology in the learning environment. As a result, students not only adapt faster to digital tools, but also become more independent and proactive in facing academic challenges that use technology. This shows that social media not only plays a role as a communication tool, but also as an important means of developing students' adaptability to change and innovation in education. The use of social media as a learning tool also requires students to adapt to new challenges, such as time management and concentration. Students need to learn to navigate information wisely and manage distractions that may arise from the use of social media. The ability to overcome these challenges is an important part of the adaptation process, which will ultimately strengthen students' ability to adapt to new and complex

situations. Overall, the impact of the use of social media in learning at SD Negeri 2 Wameo on students' adaptability is very positive. With the right support and guidance from teachers, social media can be an effective tool to help students develop the adaptive skills needed to succeed in a changing world. It also strengthens their readiness to face future challenges, both in academics and personal life.

Communication Skills

The use of social media as a learning tool at SD Negeri 2 Wameo has had a significant impact on the development of students' communication skills. In the context of learning integrated with social media, students are more often involved in online discussions, share information, and participate in digital collaborations. These activities encourage students to hone their communication skills, both in writing and orally, so that they are able to convey their ideas and opinions more clearly and in a structured manner. In addition, social media provides a platform that allows students to interact not only with fellow classmates but also with teachers and other learning resources. This provides an opportunity for students to learn how to communicate with a wider and more diverse audience. Through these interactions, students learn to adjust their communication style according to the context and audience, which is an important part of developing effective communication skills. The results of an interview with a grade IV teacher at SD Negeri 2 Wameo stated that:

"I see that the use of social media as a learning tool is very helpful in improving students' communication skills. Students become more open in expressing opinions, discussing, and interacting with classmates and teachers. They are also more trained to express their ideas in writing and orally through the social media platforms used in learning."

The use of social media as a learning tool has proven to be very effective in improving students' communication skills. Social media platforms provide a space for students to be more open in expressing opinions, discussing, and interacting with classmates and teachers. Through this interaction, students can more actively participate in constructive conversations and get useful feedback for the development of their communication skills. In addition, social media also helps students practice how to express ideas both in writing and orally. By using social media platforms, students learn how to structure messages clearly, share information effectively, and communicate with a wider audience. This experience enriches their ability to convey ideas in a structured and easy-to-understand way, which is an important skill in both academic and professional life. This is in accordance with the interview with a fifth-grade teacher at SD Negeri 2 Wameo who stated that:

"Yes, I see quite significant changes. Students who were previously shy or lacked confidence in communicating in class are now more courageous and able to express their opinions. In addition, they are also more skilled in composing words and conveying ideas in a more structured and clear way."

The use of social media in learning also presents its own challenges. For example, students may use informal language or abbreviations more often in online communication, which can hinder their ability to express themselves formally and professionally. Therefore, it is important for teachers at SD Negeri 2 Wameo to provide clear guidance on etiquette and how to communicate well

on social media, so that students can develop communication skills that balance formality and effectiveness. Overall, the integration of social media into learning has had a positive impact on students' communication skills at SD Negeri 2 Wameo. With the right guidance, social media can be a very effective tool in developing students' ability to communicate well in various situations, which is not only beneficial in academic settings but also in their daily lives.

Empathy Development

The use of social media as a learning tool at SD Negeri 2 Wameo has had a significant impact on the development of empathy among students. With the existence of digital platforms, students are more often exposed to the various perspectives and experiences of their friends, both in local and global contexts. This broadens their horizons and encourages them to better understand the feelings and views of others, which is the core of empathy development. In addition, through interactions on social media, students learn to provide support and respect the opinions of others, even if they differ from their own. For example, in online group discussions, students are encouraged to be more open to new ideas and express their appreciation for the contributions of their classmates. Activities like this help students develop the ability to feel and appreciate the feelings of others, which is important in building healthy social relationships. The results of interviews with grade IV teachers at SD Negeri 2 Wameo stated that:

"The use of social media in learning can broaden students' horizons about the various perspectives and experiences of others. Through platforms such as discussion forums or study groups, students can interact with friends from different backgrounds, learn about problems faced by others, and discuss various social topics. This encourages students to understand and appreciate the feelings and views of others, which is an important aspect in developing empathy."

The use of social media in learning has the potential to broaden students' horizons by introducing them to the different perspectives and experiences of others. Through platforms such as discussion forums or study groups, students can connect with peers from different backgrounds, allowing them to learn about the challenges faced by others. These interactions provide opportunities for students to explore various social topics and understand the dynamics that affect the lives of others, which they may not encounter in their daily lives. This is in accordance with an interview with a fifth-grade teacher at SD Negeri 2 Wameo who stated that:

"I measure the effectiveness of using social media by conducting observations and interviews with students to evaluate changes in their attitudes and behaviors. In addition, I also use questionnaires to collect feedback from students about their experiences in using social media for learning."

The use of social media also presents challenges in developing empathy. Interactions conducted through a screen are often less personal than face-to-face interactions, which can make students feel less of the emotional impact of their words. There is a risk that less empathetic communication can occur, especially if students are not given guidance on how to communicate with respect and understanding. Therefore, it is important for teachers to guide students in using social media in a way that supports the development of

empathy. Overall, the impact of the use of social media in learning at SD Negeri 2 Wameo on the development of student empathy is quite positive, as long as its use is accompanied by proper guidance. Social media can be an effective tool in enriching students' social experiences and teaching them to better understand and appreciate the feelings of others. Thus, social media not only functions as a learning tool, but also as a means to shape the character of students who are more empathetic and care about others.

3.2 Discussion

The Impact of Using Social Media as a Learning Tool on (1) Increasing Social Interaction (2) Adaptability (3) Communication Skills (4) Developing Empathy in the Development of Social Skills of Students at SD Negeri 2 Wameo, namely:

Increasing Social Interaction

The use of social media as a learning tool can significantly increase students' social interactions. Platforms such as online discussion groups and educational forums allow students to communicate and collaborate outside of formal class hours. By sharing ideas, working on projects together, and providing feedback to classmates online, students can expand their social networks and build stronger relationships with classmates. This not only increases student engagement in the learning process but also enriches their social experiences with a variety of new perspectives and experiences.

Adaptability

Social media as a learning tool requires students to adapt to a variety of different technologies and platforms. The ability to use learning applications, participate in virtual classes, and communicate via instant messaging or video calls develops students' adaptability skills. This experience helps students become more flexible and open to change, both in educational contexts and in everyday life. By frequently adapting to various digital tools and learning methods, students can develop invaluable skills for their future.

Communication Skills

The use of social media in learning also contributes to improving students' communication skills. Through social media platforms, students learn to convey ideas and information in a clear and effective manner, both in writing and verbally. Online discussions, digital presentations, and project collaborations require the use of appropriate language and the ability to listen and respond to input from others. These skills are important not only for academics but also for successful social interactions in the future.

Empathy Development

Social media can help in the development of students' empathy by allowing them to connect with people from different backgrounds and understand different perspectives. Social media-based discussions and activities involving social and cultural topics can introduce students to different issues, promoting understanding and appreciation of diversity. By interacting online and discussing various experiences and challenges, students can better understand the feelings and views of others, which in turn supports the development of greater empathy. By utilizing social media in the context of learning, SD Negeri 2 Wameo can optimize various aspects of students' social development, preparing them to function well in an increasingly connected and digital world.

4. Conclusion

The use of social media as a learning tool at SD Negeri 2 Wameo has a significant positive impact on the development of students' social skills. Social media increases social interaction by expanding communication and collaboration networks, honing students' adaptability to new technologies and methods, and strengthening communication skills through digital platforms. In addition, social media also supports the development of empathy by allowing students to understand and appreciate the perspectives and experiences of others. With effective integration, social media can be a powerful tool in facilitating students' social and emotional development, preparing them for success in an increasingly connected environment. It is important to remember that the use of social media in learning also requires careful management to minimize potential risks, such as exposure to negative content or platform abuse. To ensure that social media provides maximum benefits, schools must provide clear guidelines and adequate training for students and educators. With a balanced approach and effective supervision, social media can be a very useful tool for improving students' social skills, while promoting a positive and productive learning environment.

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