



The Effect of Social Media on Student Learning: Chances and Challenges

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Abstract

Social media plays an important role in student learning, offering a range of opportunities to access information in a fast and engaging way. However, uncontrolled use also presents challenges that can affect learning. This research aims to analyze the influence of social media on current students' learning styles, highlighting the opportunities that can be leveraged to support the learning process as well as the challenges that need to be overcome to minimize its negative impact. The research was conducted at Nahdlatul Ulama Sudirman Vocational High School. This research used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, and involved students, teachers, and the principal as the main participants. The results show that social media provides significant benefits in supporting independent learning, expanding access to information, and facilitating collaboration between students. However, distraction from irrelevant content is the main obstacle that affects learning focus. The implication of this study emphasizes the importance of digital literacy, time management, and guidance from teachers to optimize the use of social media as a learning tool. This research provides insights for educators in designing learning strategies that are relevant to students' needs in the digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of the lives of the younger generation, including today's students. Social facts show that more than 90% of teens use social media on a daily basis, making it one of the primary communication and entertainment tools. However, social media is not only used to socialize, but it is also starting to influence students' learning styles. Students are now more likely to seek information through platforms like YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram rather than relying on books or traditional methods. The main reason for this change is the easy access to information that social media offers. For example, research shows that short-form learning videos are more engaging for students because they are more in line with their attention span (Chen et al., 2023; Stepanova, 2024; Zhengyang Liu & Albert Young Choi, 2024). This leads to the conclusion that social media has a huge impact on how students understand and absorb learning materials.

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In the literature, many studies reveal the role of social media in learning (Indriyati, 2023; Ramdani et al., 2021). A study from the University of California shows that digital platforms can improve collaboration between students through features such as discussion groups or learning forums (Hollister et al., 2022; Johar et al., 2023; Lepe et al., 2021). Social media also offers interactive visual content, which can improve understanding of abstract concepts. For this reason, visual formats such as animated videos or infographics allow students to understand complex topics more easily (Sabry et al., 2021). For example, Khan Academy and CrashCourse on YouTube have become popular learning resources that combine animation and narrative. This fact strengthens the evidence that social media can be an effective support tool in education.

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of social media on the learning styles of today's students. The findings seek to answer the question of whether social media provides more benefits or barriers to learning. A deeper understanding of the impact of social media can help educators to design relevant teaching strategies. For example, teachers can use social media as a learning tool if it proves effective (Biletska et al., 2021; Cavus et al., 2021). As evidence, some schools have started integrating social media in their curriculum to increase student engagement. Therefore, these findings seek to provide practical recommendations to maximize the benefits of social media in education while minimizing the risks.

The research on the effect of social media on learning was chosen because the problem is complex after the massive use of social media among students (Cahyono, 2018; Sitorus & Irwansyah, 2017). On the one hand, social media opens up interactive opportunities towards learning, equal access to information, while on the other hand, it poses challenges, such as distraction, cyberbullying, positive/negative exposure to learning, and the threat of motivation and focus on learning. The objectives of the study are i) to find effective implementation strategies of social media, ii) to identify its influence on specific aspects of learning, such as motivation or critical thinking, and iii) solutions to counter its negative impacts. This is the main study, because the presentation of the effects of social media on student learning: opportunities and challenges is its predecessor in terms of a deeper focus on implementation strategies and concrete solutions, as well as the analysis of social media on more specific aspects of learning.

METHODS

The research design used was qualitative with a case study approach. This approach was chosen to explore a deep understanding of how social media affects students' learning styles (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Asril et al., 2023; Pratiwi & Zaini, 2023; Sya et al., 2022). The reason is that this design allows researchers to explore individual experiences in utilizing social media for learning purposes. As evidence, data will be collected through in-depth interviews and direct observation, resulting in rich and contextualized findings. This study is designed to provide a complete picture of the phenomenon under study and identify patterns and trends in students' use of social media.

This study was conducted with students who actively use social media in their daily lives, so the impact of social media on their learning styles is more significant. In addition, students often utilize social media as a learning support tool. Thus, focusing on this group provides a relevant and in-depth picture of the relationship between social media use and learning styles (Engkizar et al., 2021; Moslehpour et al., 2022; Ramzan et al., 2023; Zaini & Hamidah, 2023).

This group was selected to understand the influence of social media on learning styles.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Informant	Gender		Sum
		Man	Woman	
1	Principal	2	1	3
2	Vice principal	3	2	5
3	Teacher	3	6	9
4	Student	4	2	6
Total				23

To ensure data validity, several techniques were used Triangulation: using multiple data sources to verify information member checks confirming findings and interpretations with informants to ensure accuracy and validity audit trail documenting in detail all steps and decisions taken during the research to enable replication and verification. The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, which includes the following steps data collection, namely collecting data from interviews, observations, and documentation, coding identifying and coding important themes from the data that has been collected (Agusti et al., 2018; Damri et al., 2023; Engkizar et al., 2023; Iskandar et al., 2023). Categorization groups the codes into broader categories Themes identify the main themes that emerge from the categories Data interpretation interprets the meaning of the identified themes to answer research questions; Planning implementation plan by compiling a research plan, including informant identification, interview scheduling, and preparation of observation instruments, data collection by conducting interviews, observations, and document collection, data analysis by conducting thematic analysis of the data collected and reporting compiles a research report that includes findings, interpretations, and recommendations.

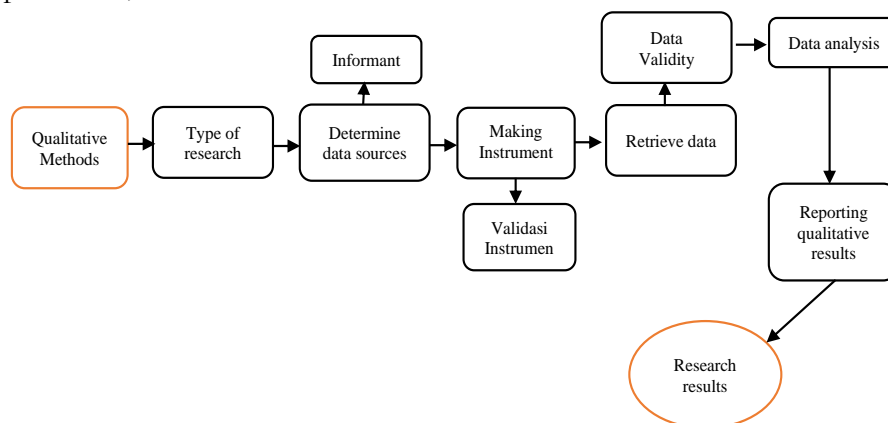


Fig 1. steps research qualitative

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Challenges of Social Media-Based Learning

Social media plays an important role in supporting student learning. Based on the research results, platforms such as YouTube and TikTok are often used by students to learn practical materials relevant to their skill competencies. For example, students majoring in Computer and Network Engineering use video tutorials on YouTube to understand network configuration or software installation. Meanwhile, students majoring in Catering follow culinary accounts on Instagram to learn new cooking techniques. With engaging visual content, social media helps students understand the material faster than traditional methods. In addition, the

flexibility of social media allows students to access information at any time, which greatly supports independent learning outside of school hours.

Apart from being a learning resource, social media also facilitates collaboration between students. WhatsApp or Telegram groups are often used for group discussions, sharing assignments, or conveying important information related to school activities. With social media, students are more easily connected with their peers, even outside the classroom environment. These platforms also increase students' motivation to learn, especially through interactive educational content such as quizzes or inspirational videos. However, research results also note the need for good management to keep students focused on learning objectives, given the potential for distraction from non-educational content (Design & Possibility, 2024; Hossain, 2020; Paschal & Gougou, 2022). Overall, social media makes a positive contribution in supporting learning, especially with its ability to enrich traditional learning methods. this was conveyed by informants as follows

I see social media as a tool that can enrich learning, as long as it is used correctly. We at school try to use social media to support digital learning. However, we also provide directions so that students are not distracted by irrelevant content (informant 1)

This interview explains the principal's views on the role of social media in supporting learning. Principals realize that social media has great potential to enrich students' learning experience, especially in today's digital era. Social media can provide easy access to various learning resources that are interactive, creative and relevant to students' needs. However, principals also emphasize the importance of wise and purposeful use.

To maximize its benefits, schools have made efforts to integrate social media into digital learning strategies, such as through managing discussion groups or sharing course materials online. On the other hand, school principals are aware of the risk of distraction posed by irrelevant content. Therefore, the school provides guidance to students on how to use social media productively, including digital literacy, so that students can focus on learning goals without being affected by things that do not support the academic process.

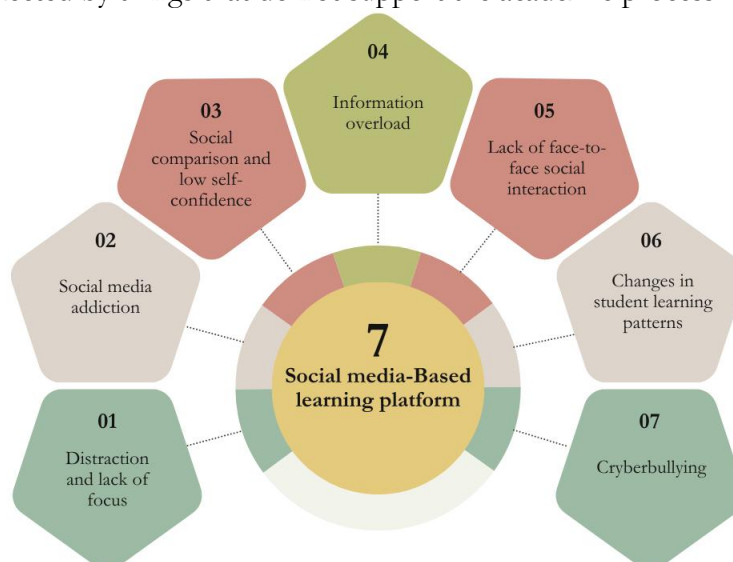


Fig 2. Challenges of social media-based learning

The image above explains that social media has an important role in supporting student learning today. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok provide alternative learning resources that are engaging and easily accessible, allowing students to study independently with great flexibility. Additionally, social media encourages collaboration and discussion through

online groups, increasing student engagement in the learning process.

However, behind the benefits, social media also has the risk of distractions that can interfere with students' focus. Therefore, wise use and time management are important factors for social media to truly support learning. With guidance from teachers and integration into digital learning strategies, social media can be an effective tool to broaden insights, facilitate discussions, and enrich students' learning experiences.

Social Media-Based Learning Opportunities

Social media offers great benefits to student learning, but also presents the challenge of distraction. On the one hand, social media such as YouTube and WhatsApp provide easy access to additional learning materials and allow students to discuss online. These platforms are important tools in supporting independent learning, especially for students with visual and audio learning styles. However, on the other hand, students often get caught up in non-educational content, such as entertainment videos or online games, which distracts them from their academic goals. These distractions can negatively affect time management and decrease students' learning productivity (Adrianus Nabung, 2024; Pérez-Juárez et al., 2023; Tamilarasi, 2023).

Teachers and school officials recognize the gap between the benefits and disruptions caused by social media. To address this, the school strives to provide digital literacy to students, including education on the ethical use of social media and time management. While these challenges are significant, proper management can help students make optimal use of social media for learning, while minimizing the harmful effects of distraction. This was conveyed by the informant as follows

Yes, social media is very helpful, especially YouTube. I often watch tutorial videos for practical tasks. But sometimes I get annoyed because after completing one learning video, an entertainment video recommendation appears that makes me lose track of time (informant 2)

The results of this interview illustrate how social media, especially YouTube, provides significant benefits for students in supporting learning, especially in practical assignments. Students feel that video tutorials on YouTube make it easy to understand the concepts and techniques taught in class, because of their interactive and visual presentations. However, on the other hand, students also face challenges in the form of disruptions that arise from the platform's algorithms. After watching educational videos, entertainment content recommendations often attract their attention, so that the study time is less effective. This shows that while social media has great potential as a learning tool, its use requires good time management and a conscious effort to stay focused to optimize its benefits.

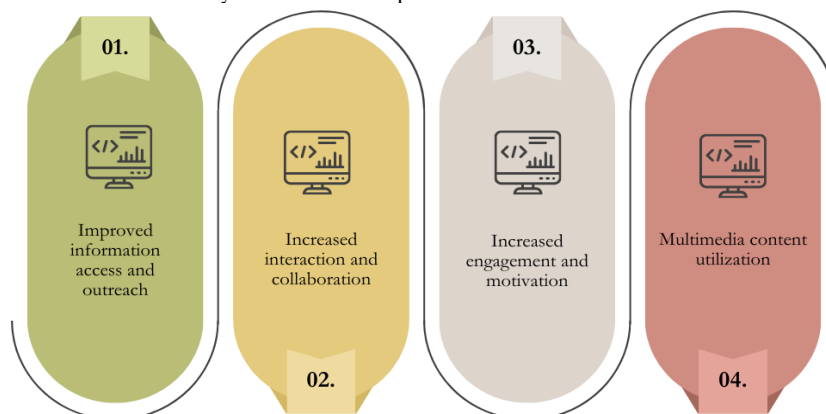


Fig 3. Social media-based learning opportunities

Social media plays an important role in supporting student learning, but its use also poses challenges for distraction. On the one hand, platforms like YouTube provide great benefits by providing easy access to educational materials and supporting self-directed learning. However, entertainment content recommendation algorithms often distract students, reducing their productivity. Students' difficulties in managing their time while using social media emphasize the need for guidance from teachers and schools. Teachers play an important role in directing students to use social media productively, for example through educational content-based assignments. Schools also contribute through digital literacy programs that teach time management and ethical use of social media. With this approach, the potential of social media as a learning tool can be optimized while minimizing the impact of distraction.

Collaboration and Social Interaction

Social media has become an important tool in supporting collaboration and social interaction. Through platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Google Classroom, students can work together to complete group assignments, share information and discuss subject matter. Features such as group chat and file sharing make it easy to communicate between students, even outside of school hours. This collaboration increases student engagement in learning, especially in tasks that require teamwork and problem solving (Amerstorfer & Freiin von Münster-Kistner, 2021; Martín-Hernández et al., 2021; Zainuri & Huda, 2023). With social media, students can also help each other explain difficult material, creating a supportive learning environment.

In addition to increasing cooperation between peers, social media also allows students to interact with teachers and the wider community. Teachers can provide direction or feedback through online groups, making communication more effective and efficient. On the other hand, students have the opportunity to join communities or forums relevant to their area of expertise, such as technology or catering, thereby broadening their horizons. This social interaction facilitated by social media not only enriches the learning experience, but also prepares students for the world of work that demands good communication and collaboration skills. this was conveyed by the informant as follows

Social media makes it easier for students to communicate and work together, especially for group assignments. I also often monitor their discussions in groups and provide guidance if needed (informant 3)

The results of this interview show that social media has an important role in supporting student collaboration, especially in completing group assignments. Teachers highlight that platforms like WhatsApp or Telegram allow students to communicate and share information easily, even outside of the school environment. Features such as discussion groups facilitate effective interaction, allowing students to discuss, share assignments, and help each other understand the subject matter.

In addition, teachers also play an active role in monitoring student discussions in these groups. By providing guidance or direct feedback, teachers ensure that student interactions remain focused on learning objectives. This approach helps to create a productive learning environment and supports students' collaboration skills, which are an essential part of modern learning.

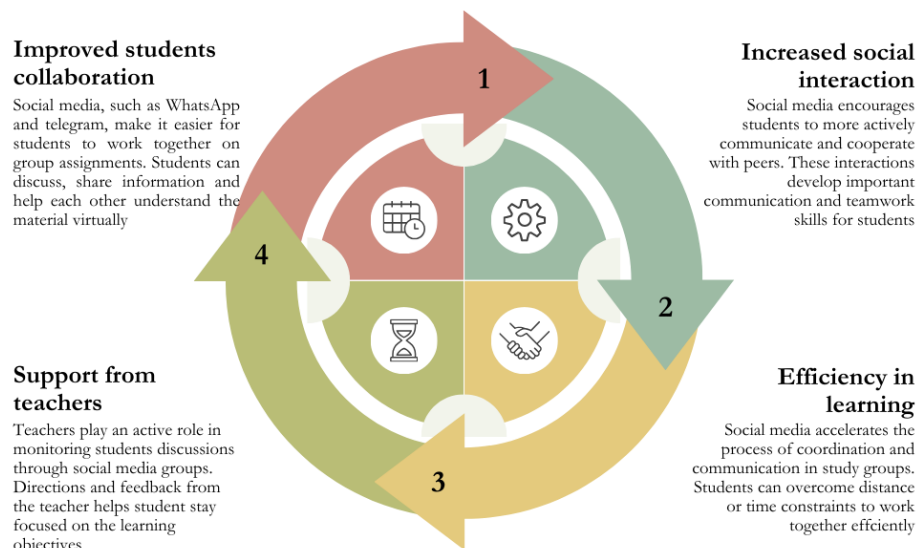


Fig 4. Collaboration and social interaction

This figure shows that social media at Nahdlatul Ulama Sudirman Vocational High School plays an important role in increasing student collaboration and social interaction. Platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram make it easy for students to discuss, share information, and complete group assignments efficiently. Online discussion groups allow students to communicate at any time, while teachers provide direction and feedback to keep students focused on learning goals. In addition to increasing cooperation, social interaction through social media also develops communication skills and student teamwork.

However, distraction from irrelevant content is a big challenge. To overcome this, digital literacy and good time management are needed. With the right approach, social media can be used productively to support learning and strengthen students' collaboration skills.

CONCLUSION

Social media has a significant influence on the learning style of today's students. The use of platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube and Telegram allows students to learn independently and collaboratively. With easy access to digital learning resources, students can broaden their horizons and develop understanding through interactive content. Social media also supports group collaboration, facilitates communication, and accelerates task completion. This creates a more flexible, dynamic, and relevant learning style for the digital age. However, the challenge of distraction from entertainment content is a major concern. Students often struggle to divide their time effectively between studying and other activities on social media. Therefore, digital literacy, time management and supervision from teachers are needed to optimize the benefits of social media in learning. With the right guidance, social media can be a productive learning tool, enriching the learning experience and preparing students for future challenges.

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