

The Use of Social Media and the Contribution of the School Environment to Students' Lifestyles

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Abstract: This study aims to describe and analyze students' use of social media, its influence on their lifestyles, and the school's contribution to guiding that usage. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed at SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. Informants comprising students, teachers, and student affairs staff were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data were collected through observation, indepth interviews, and document analysis, and subsequently analyzed using an interactive analysis model. Data validity was assessed based on Lincoln and Guba's criteria. The results indicate that students use social media intensively for communication, entertainment, and learning. This intensity of use influences students' lifestyles, particularly by shaping their consumption habits and social interaction patterns. In response, the school plays a role through policies restricting device usage, digital literacy education, and the reinforcement of character and religious values. The findings suggest that targeted school interventions can help students manage their social media use more wisely and foster healthier, more productive lifestyles.

Keywords: social media; life style; school contribution; students; habitus.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis pemanfaatan media sosial oleh peserta didik, pengaruhnya terhadap gaya hidup, serta kontribusi sekolah dalam mengarahkan penggunaan media sosial peserta didik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang dilaksanakan di SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. Informan dipilih melalui teknik purposive dan snowball sampling, yang meliputi peserta didik, guru, dan bagian kesiswaan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis interaktif. Keabsahan data diuji berdasarkan kriteria Lincoln dan Guba. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peserta didik memanfaatkan media sosial secara intensif sebagai sarana komunikasi, hiburan, dan pembelajaran. Intensitas penggunaan tersebut turut memengaruhi gaya hidup peserta didik, terutama dalam membentuk pola konsumsi dan pola interaksi sosial. Dalam merespons kondisi tersebut, sekolah berperan melalui kebijakan pembatasan penggunaan gawai, edukasi literasi digital, serta penguatan nilai karakter dan keagamaan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa upaya sekolah yang dilakukan secara terarah dapat membantu peserta didik mengelola penggunaan media sosial secara lebih bijak serta mendorong terbentuknya gaya hidup yang lebih sehat dan produktif.

Kata Kunci: media sosial; gaya hidup; kontribusi sekolah; peserta didik; habitus.

INTRODUCTION

Advances in information and communication technology have brought significant changes to the lives of the younger generation, particularly students, who are now growing up as digital natives with a strong attachment to social media (Prensky, 2001). Platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are no longer merely communication tools; rather, they have become spaces for social interaction, sources of information, and means of self expression that are almost

inseparable from students' daily routines, both at home and at school. Easy access via increasingly affordable smart devices has fueled high levels of social media use, raising important questions about its impact on students' psychological and social development, as well as their lifestyles (Deaton, 2015).

Various previous studies have confirmed the link between social media and the lifestyles of students and college students. Juwita, Budimansyah, and Nurbayani (2014) found that social media plays a significant role in shaping the lifestyles of high school students from their appearance to their social habits as a result of their constant exposure to social media content (Juwita et al., 2014). Similar findings indicate a strong relationship between the intensity of Instagram use and shifts in college students' lifestyles and ethics; Khansa revealed that trending content on TikTok has a strong influence on teenagers' lifestyles, particularly in terms of fashion and consumption patterns (Khansa & Putri, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates that social media not only functions as a communication medium but also serves as a social arena that profoundly shapes students' habits, tastes, and perspectives (Anggraini et al., 2026).

Amid this phenomenon, the school environment holds a strategic position as an institution capable of counterbalancing the influence of social media through guidance, policies, and digital literacy education. A study conducted on students at Pekanbaru State High School 2 showed that digital literacy levels have a significant impact on students' ethical use of social media, indicating that strengthening digital literacy through the school's role can encourage wiser social media behavior (Manuella & Perdani, 2023). In line with this, Meilinda, Malinda, and Aisyah (2020) demonstrated that digital literacy programs organized by schools can change students' mindset regarding media use, thereby fostering a more responsible attitude toward social media (Meilinda et al., 2020).

Although numerous studies have been conducted on social media, lifestyle, and digital literacy, these studies generally examine the three variables separately, and few have integrated them into a single, comprehensive analytical framework, especially by employing Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory to examine how social media habits are internalized into students' lifestyles, as well as how schools function as a "counter-field" that reshapes that habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Furthermore, studies comparing different institutional contexts such as regular schools and boarding schools in responding to this phenomenon remain very limited, even though the characteristics of supervision and guidance structures in these two systems have the potential to produce significantly different patterns of influence. (Asrun & Gunawan, 2024).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, with the aim of gaining an in depth understanding of the phenomenon of social media use, students' lifestyles, and the school's contribution in a real life context. The case study design was chosen because the phenomenon under investigation is contextual in nature and heavily influenced by the institutional characteristics of the setting where it occurs, in line with Yin's (2018) perspective, which emphasizes the case study as an empirical inquiry into contemporary phenomena in real life contexts, as



well as Creswell (2016), who views case studies as an exploration of a bounded system through in depth data sources (Creswell, 2016).

Based on this gap, this study is expected to generate insights that can support more effective approaches to guiding students' social media use (Yates & Lockley, 2018). The findings are expected to contribute to strengthening digital literacy, reducing excessive and consumptive tendencies associated with social media exposure, and encouraging more balanced and productive lifestyles among students. In addition, the study is expected to strengthen the role of schools as a counter space that guides students toward responsible social media use through educational policies, literacy programs, and productive extracurricular activities at State Senior High School 12 in Semarang. This study was conducted at State Senior High School 12 Semarang to obtain a richer picture of the variety of ways schools contribute to addressing the phenomenon of students' social media use. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, supplemented by snowball sampling to reach additional relevant informants, including students as key informants, guidance counselors/homeroom teachers, the principal, or the vice principal for student affairs. The number of informants was not strictly defined but was adjusted according to the principle of data saturation.

Data collection was conducted using three complementary techniques: passive participatory observation of students' behavior and interactions regarding social media use; semi-structured in-depth interviews with all categories of informants; and a documentary study of policies, programs, and school records relevant to the research focus. The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification, carried out continuously from the beginning to the end of the data collection process (Miles et al., 2014).

Table 1. Interview Instrument

Number	Indicator	Question item
1	Types of social media platforms used	1) what social media do you currently use? 2) which platform do you open most frequently during the day, and why? 3) when did you start actively using that platform?
2	Intensity and duration of use	1) approximately how many hours a day do you spend on social media? 2) when do you most frequently check social media? 3) when did you start actively using the platform?
3	The purpose of using social media	1) what is your primary purpose for using social media? 2) have you ever used social media to help with assignments or studying? Please share an example. 3) besides entertainment, are there any other benefits you derive from using social media?
4	Types of content accessed/shared	1) what kind of content do you most frequently watch or read on social media? 2) how do you choose which content is worth following or emulating?
5	Understanding social media ethics	1) in your opinion, what constitutes impolite behavior or a breach of ethics on social media? 2) have you ever received information on how to use social media wisely? From whom?



		3) how do you react when you come across news or information whose accuracy is unverified?
6	Appearance and clothing style	1) is your clothing style inspired by what you see on social media? 2) how do your friends react when someone at school follows a particular trend?
7	School policy regarding devices and social media	1) what policy does the school implement regarding the use of devices and social media during class hours? 2) how was the policy formulated and communicated to students? 3) to what extent is the policy effectively implemented in practice?

The validity of the data in this study was tested using criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba, including credibility through triangulation of sources, techniques, and locations, as well as member checking; transferability through the presentation of detailed data descriptions (thick description) dependability through an audit trail conducted with the supervising instructor; and confirmability through the verification of data interpretations against the raw data that had been collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of this combination of research techniques and locations is intended to produce credible data capable of comprehensively describing the relationship between social media use, lifestyle, and the school's contribution in these two distinct institutional contexts (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide an overview of how students at State Senior High School 12 in Semarang use social media in their daily lives, how such use is reflected in their lifestyles, and how the school responds to and guides students' social media use. The findings were obtained through observations, in depth interviews, and documentation involving students, teachers, and the student affairs division. The analysis indicates that social media has become an integral part of students' daily activities, serving not only as a means of communication and entertainment but also as a source of information and learning. At the same time, intensive social media use has implications for students' lifestyle patterns, particularly their consumption preferences and social interactions.

These findings are further discussed from the perspective of the school's role in responding to the influence of social media on students. The school implements several strategies, including restrictions on gadget use, digital literacy education, and the strengthening of character and religious values. These efforts demonstrate that the school does not merely regulate students' access to social media but also seeks to guide them toward more responsible, balanced, and productive patterns of digital behavior. The following discussion is organized into three main aspects students' utilization of social media, its influence on students' lifestyles, and the school's contribution to guiding students' social media use.

A. Students' Use of Social Media

Based on the results of interviews and observations at the research site, it was found that students at Semarang State High School No. 12 exhibited a high level of social media usage. This is evident from the variety of platforms used according to



their respective functions and needs: WhatsApp is predominantly used to interact and communicate with friends and teachers; TikTok and Instagram are more often used for entertainment as well as to find the latest information related to school assignments; while YouTube is used to access educational videos that support the learning process. This variation in platform usage indicates that students do not use social media uniformly but have established their own functional categorizations for each platform, with WhatsApp positioned as a space for personal and academic communication, TikTok and Instagram as spaces for entertainment and information exploration, and YouTube as a space for visual learning (Otchie & Pedaste, 2020).

In terms of intensity, most informants reported spending about five to seven hours each day on social media, with the most intensive usage occurring during school breaks and in the evening. This duration is relatively high, considering that students' effective learning time at school averages between six and eight hours per day; thus, the intensity of social media use which nearly matches that duration indicates that social media has become a dominant activity in students' daily lives, no longer merely a pastime. The concentration of usage during breaks suggests that social media has become the primary choice for filling the time between classes, while the concentration of usage in the evening indicates that social media has also become part of the pre-sleep routine, which has the potential to impact students' sleep patterns if not managed properly (Carter et al., 2016).

This pattern of use was further confirmed by a statement from one of the student informants, who said, "I use WhatsApp more often to ask friends about school assignments, and TikTok is usually for entertainment in the evenings" (Informant 1, interview, September 23, 2026). This statement reinforces the observational findings regarding the fairly clear division of platform functions in students' daily lives, while also illustrating how social media has become integrated into two distinct spheres: the academic sphere (through WhatsApp as a means of discussing assignments) and the recreational sphere (through TikTok as a source of entertainment before bedtime).

These findings are consistent with the results of Rasmita Kalasi's (2014) study, which showed that students use social media not only for communication and entertainment but also to support the learning process; thus, social media serves dual, intertwined functions in students' lives. From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, the high intensity and diversity of social media usage indicate that the digital realm has become one of the primary "fields" where students spend much of their time and energy on a daily basis, thereby making the process of internalizing values, habits, and patterns of interaction that occur in this field highly likely to shape a digital habitus that will later manifest in students' broader lifestyles whether in their consumption patterns, social interactions, or time management within the school environment.

In addition to being used to view entertainment content and educational tutorial videos, social media is also utilized by students as a means of sharing useful information with their friends, particularly content related to completing school assignments. This finding indicates that students' role on social media is not merely passive as content consumers but also active, as they serve as content distributors within their social circles, even though they have not yet reached the stage of independently producing content. This was revealed by one of the informants, who



stated that they had never created personal content to upload to social media but often shared content such as videos that could help their friends complete assignments with their friends (Informant 2, interview, September 23, 2026). This statement illustrates the existence of varying levels of digital participation among students, where not all students are at the level of content creators as is often portrayed in general social media studies but rather, the majority are at the level of content curators and distributors, that is, selecting content deemed useful from other sources and then disseminating it to their immediate social networks.

This behavior of sharing educational content highlights the positive aspects of students' use of social media, as it reflects a collective awareness of the need to help one another in an academic context, while also affirming that social media can serve as an informal learning space that complements the formal learning process in the classroom. The phenomenon of students sharing tutorial videos or educational content with one another also indicates the emergence of a culture of digital cooperation, in which knowledge and learning resources are no longer concentrated solely with teachers but flow horizontally among students through their social media networks.

From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, this practice of sharing useful content can be interpreted as a form of accumulation and exchange of cultural capital and social capital among students, whereby students who actively share learning content gain social recognition from their peers as helpful and valuable individuals within their social circles. Although it does not yet indicate engagement at the level of personal content production, this sharing pattern still reflects a form of active participation with positive value, and serves as an indication that not all of students' use of social media leads to negative impacts; rather, it also fosters constructive habits that can serve as a foundation for schools to further guide and strengthen this culture of knowledge-sharing through that have already been implemented.

B. The Influence of Social Media on Students' Lifestyles

Data from observations and interviews indicate that the intensity of social media use influences students' lifestyles in several ways. Regarding consumption patterns, it was found that students tend to buy items or follow certain trends after seeing viral content. One informant said, "Yes, I often buy things because I see them on social media. Last week I bought a tumbler that I saw on a TikTok live stream it looked cute, so I bought it" (Informant 1, interview on September 23, 2026). Similarly, another informant said, "I'm often tempted by items promoted on social media, and I end up buying them" (Informant 4, interview on September 23, 2026). These statements reinforce the findings from other informants, indicating that this phenomenon is not merely an isolated case but has become a fairly common behavioral pattern among students.





Figure 1. Students' Consumption Behavior

These findings indicate that social media no longer serves merely as a space for communication and entertainment but has transformed into a digital showcase that actively shapes the consumptive desires and needs of its users particularly students who are in a developmental stage and tend to be easily influenced by visual and social stimuli in their surroundings (Rewindinar, 2026). The “tempted and then buy” pattern described by the informants illustrates how promotional mechanisms on social media whether through paid advertisements, endorsement content, or other users’ posts that showcase a product in an appealing way can stimulate impulsive purchasing decisions, without the careful consideration of needs that typically characterizes rational consumer behavior (Larasati et al., 2020).

In terms of appearance, field observations show that students’ clothing styles vary; this can be seen in the accessories they wear, such as bracelets, watches, bags, and shoes. One guidance counselor stated, “... that’s absolutely right; social media greatly influences students’ lifestyles. I’ve noticed that many students are wearing trendy accessories like bracelets and bag charms.” (Informant 6, interview on September 23, 2026), which illustrates how these lifestyle changes have also been observed by school officials.

In terms of time management and concentration while studying, the findings indicate that students experience a decline in concentration or delays in submitting assignments as a result of excessive social media use. “Yes, I’ve been late submitting school assignments because I was too engrossed in scrolling through TikTok, so I forgot to do my homework.” (Informant 5. Interview on September 23, 2026). These findings reinforce the results of studies by Juwita, Budimansyah, and Nurbayani (2014) as well as Agianto, Setiawati, and Firmansyah (2020), which confirm a significant relationship between the intensity of social media use and changes in students’ lifestyles. From the perspective of Bourdieu’s habitus theory, these changes can be interpreted as a process of internalizing values and tastes that occurs through students’ repeated interactions with the social media sphere, which then manifests as daily habits and behaviors whether consciously or unconsciously on the part of the students themselves (Ciek Julyati Hisyam et al., 2024).

C. The Role of Schools in Guiding Social Media Use

The research findings indicate that Semarang State High School No. 12 has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing the phenomenon of smartphone and social media use among students, including by adopting a policy aligned with regulations from the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. This policy aligns

with the Circular Letter of the Minister of Basic and Secondary Education No. 18 of 2026 on Restrictions on the Use of Mobile Devices in Educational Institutions, which was issued as an effort to encourage students to use digital technology wisely, safely, and responsibly, while also supporting the creation of a more focused learning culture and healthier social interactions among students. This policy is also in line with Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education Regulation No. 6 of 2026 on the Development of a Safe and Comfortable School Culture, which is a follow-up to Government Regulation No. 17 of 2025 on the Governance of Electronic Systems in Child Protection (PP TUNAS). The adoption of this national regulation demonstrates that schools' contributions are not sporadic or based solely on internal initiatives, but are integrated with the direction of national education policy in addressing the challenges of digitalization among children and adolescents. "Yes, our school's policy on device use follows the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education's regulations. These rules have already been implemented at our school and are effective in limiting device use." (Informant 7, interview on September 23, 2026).

The implementation of this policy at Semarang State High School No. 12 does not stop at the level of written regulations but is also carried out through outreach efforts involving both parents and students. Outreach to parents aims to build awareness and foster collaborative supervision between the school and families, given that students in regular schools spend most of their time outside the school environment; thus, the role of parents is crucial in ensuring consistent enforcement of rules regarding the use of electronic devices and social media at home. Meanwhile, outreach to students is conducted to ensure that rules regarding restrictions and guidelines for device use are not merely perceived as prohibitions, but rather as part of an effort to foster independent digital awareness and responsibility. This two-way outreach approach reflects the school's strategy to build a shared understanding, rather than merely enforcing rules unilaterally; consequently, research informants assessed this policy as highly effective in guiding students' social media usage patterns while shaping their social media ethics within the school environment.

In addition to its policy restricting the use of electronic devices, Semarang State High School No. 12 has also made a tangible contribution by implementing literacy and numeracy programs, both in digital and non-digital formats. "We also implement both digital and non-digital literacy and numeracy programs; this is intended to help students process information wisely and equip them with a broader understanding." (Informant 7, interview on September 23, 2026). Digital literacy programs play a crucial role in equipping students with the ability to filter information, understand the ethics of communication in digital spaces, and recognize the positive and negative impacts of social media use, while non-digital literacy and numeracy programs serve to maintain a balance between students' digital skills and their basic academic abilities so they do not become solely fixated on screen-based activities. The combination of these two types of programs demonstrates that schools do not view digital literacy as a standalone program but rather as an integrated part of efforts to improve the overall quality of students' literacy, in line with the concept of digital literacy proposed by Meilinda, Malinda, and Aisyah (2020), who emphasize that strengthening digital literacy through school programs can transform students' mindset toward using media more wisely.





Figure 2. Interview with Informant 7

Another equally significant effort is providing opportunities for students to develop their interests and talents through the twenty-three types of extracurricular activities available at Semarang State High School No. 12. The availability of this diverse range of extracurricular options serves as a diversion strategy that channels students' energy and free time toward more productive and meaningful activities, thereby indirectly reducing their reliance on electronic devices and social media while on school grounds. From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, the existence of these varied extracurricular activities can be interpreted as the school's effort to build an "alternative field" that provides students with opportunities to acquire social capital and symbolic capital through non-digital channels such as through achievements in sports, the arts, or student organizations so that students' need for social recognition no longer depends entirely on their presence in the digital realm. The effectiveness of this strategy is reflected in the finding that the existence of these twenty-three extracurricular activities is considered capable of tangibly limiting the intensity of students' smartphone use while on school grounds.

Overall, the findings regarding the contribution of Semarang State High School 12 indicate that the effectiveness of guiding students' social media use does not stem from a single policy (Goodyear et al., 2025), but rather from a combination of three mutually reinforcing pillars: compliance with national regulations and participatory outreach; the balanced strengthening of digital and non-digital literacy; and the provision of alternative spaces through diverse extracurricular activities. These three pillars work together to form what, within Bourdieu's habitus theory framework, is referred to as a "counter-field," which gradually seeks to reshape students' digital habitus toward a more purposeful, ethical, and balanced use of social media alongside other productive activities, even though this school operates on a regular (non-boarding) system, which structurally has more limited control compared to a boarding system.

CONCLUSION

Students demonstrate a high level of intensity in their daily use of social media. It serves as a medium for communication, entertainment, information gathering, and keeping up with emerging trends. This intensive usage transforms social media from a mere communication tool into a social space that shapes how students interact and form preferences in their everyday lives. Social media usage influences student

lifestyles, particularly regarding consumption patterns. Repeated exposure to promotional content, advertisements, trends, and products fosters a desire among students to purchase or adopt popular items, indicating a tendency toward a consumerist lifestyle. This phenomenon aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, which posits that an individual's habits, tastes, and consumption patterns are shaped through a process of repeated internalization within a social environment including the realm of social media. The school contributes to guiding students' social media usage through various preventive and educational initiatives. SMA Negeri 12 Semarang plays an active role by implementing policies aligned with Ministry of Education and Culture regulations, communicating these policies to students and parents, and strengthening both digital and non digital literacy activities. Furthermore, the school offers 23 extracurricular activities that allow students to develop their interests and talents while reducing their reliance on digital devices during school hours. In this way, the school acts as a counter space, helping to guide students toward wiser, more balanced, and responsible social media use while encouraging active participation in other productive activities.

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