Intensity of Short Video Platform Usage on Pre-Adolescent Children's Behavior: A Study in Medan

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Abstract
This study aims to analyze the impact of the intensity of use of short video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts on the behavior of pre-adolescent children in Medan City. The research method used was a survey of 150 pre-adolescent children aged 10-12 years, supplemented by interviews with parents and teachers to gain a deeper perspective. The results showed that intensive use of short video platforms has a dual impact. Positive impacts include increased creativity, communication skills, and children's confidence in expressing themselves digitally. In addition, some children also develop collaborative skills and feel more connected to their peers through challenges and interactions on social media. However, there are also negative impacts that need to be considered, such as reduced direct interaction with family and friends, the tendency to imitate negative behavior, and the emergence of social pressure in the form of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Excessive use also has an impact on sleep patterns and reduces focus on learning at school. This study recommends the need for stricter supervision from parents and teachers in limiting the time spent on social media and providing digital literacy education. Thus, children can use short video platforms in a balanced way to support their personal and social development optimally.

Keywords: Intensity of Use, Short Video Platform, Social Behavior, Pre-Teenagers, Medan.

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Introduction

The use of short video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts has increased significantly in recent years, especially among children and adolescents. These platforms provide short and engaging content that makes it easy for users to share creativity, entertainment, and information instantly. This phenomenon is in line with the global trend in the use of social media as a space for digital expression and socialization for the younger generation (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). However, the intensity of use of these platforms has various impacts on social and emotional development, especially for pre-adolescent children who are at a critical phase in the formation of self-identity and behavior.

In the pre-adolescent stage, children are in the process of adapting to complex psychological and social changes. Social media can act as a tool to develop communication skills and increase self-confidence. Several studies indicate that children who are active in digital media show better creativity development because they are used to creating original content (Chambers et al., 2019). In addition, interactions on social media help children build social networks and adapt to the dynamics of the digital environment, where collaboration skills are important.

However, there are also negative impacts that need to be watched out for. The intensity of using short video platforms often causes psychological dependence and the tendency for children to spend a lot of time in the virtual world. This can reduce the quality of direct interactions with their family and friends in real life. Twenge & Campbell's (2018) study shows that excessive use of social media can reduce the intensity of face-to-face interactions and has the potential to cause emotional problems, such as anxiety and feelings of isolation.

In addition, unfiltered content on short video platforms can influence children's behavior. Viral challenges that contain violent or risky elements are often followed without considering the consequences, especially by children who do not yet have full critical thinking skills (Mendoza, 2020). This negative influence is exacerbated by the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) phenomenon, where children feel pressured to always be involved in trends so as not to be left behind by their peers (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). The balance between the benefits and risks of social media use is an important challenge for parents, teachers, and policy makers. Digital literacy education is a crucial step to equip children with the knowledge and skills to use social media wisely. Parents also need to be actively involved in supervising children's activities on social media to prevent possible negative impacts (Livingstone, 2019).

In addition to social and psychological aspects, intensive use of short video platforms can affect children's daily lives, such as sleep patterns and academic performance. Many children sacrifice their sleep time to stay active on social media, which results in decreased performance at school (Scott & Woods, 2018). Therefore, the need for a balance between online and physical activities is important to note.

This study attempts to examine in depth how the intensity of short video platform usage affects the social and emotional behavior of pre-adolescent children in Medan City. With a better understanding of the positive and negative impacts of this phenomenon, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide recommendations for parents, teachers, and policy makers to create a safe and productive digital environment for children.

Literature Review

Research on the influence of social media on child and adolescent development has been a major focus in various academic studies. Anderson and Jiang (2018) suggest that digital platforms, especially those based on short videos such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and

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YouTube Shorts, provide opportunities for children to express their creativity. These media facilitate cross-border communication and collaboration, helping children feel more connected to their peers. Another positive impact is increased self-confidence and social skills because children can interact with a wider audience through these platforms.

However, some studies also highlight the negative side of intensive social media use. Kuss and Griffiths (2017) identified that excessive use can lead to addiction, especially when children feel pressured to keep up with online trends or challenges so as not to feel left behind (FOMO). This can have an impact on mental health, such as the emergence of anxiety and social stress. In addition, unfiltered and potentially negative content, such as risky imitation behavior, can also affect the behavior of children who are not yet fully mature in critical thinking (Mendoza, 2020).

Furthermore, the aspect of children's life balance is also a concern in several studies. Scott and Woods (2018) found that children's involvement in social media often disrupts sleep patterns and reduces concentration in school. This decline in sleep quality and academic performance is further exacerbated if parents are not actively involved in supervising children's use of social media. Thus, several researchers, such as Livingstone (2019), recommend digital literacy education and time limits as effective strategies to reduce negative impacts and ensure that children can use digital platforms wisely and productively.

Methods

This study uses a quantitative and qualitative approach (mixed methods) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the intensity of use of short video platforms on the social and emotional behavior of pre-adolescent children in Medan City. (Sugiyono, 2017). The survey method was used to collect quantitative data from respondents, while in-depth interviews involved parents and teachers to gain a deeper and contextual perspective on changes in children's behavior. This approach is considered effective because it can combine the power of numerical data analysis and narrative experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The population in this study were pre-adolescent children aged 10-12 years in Medan City who actively use TikTok, Instagram Reels, or YouTube Shorts. The research sample was taken by purposive sampling, namely selecting 150 respondents who met the criteria for active use of the platform for at least 1 hour per day. In addition, several parents and teachers who were directly involved in the lives of these children were interviewed to explore their perspectives on the social and emotional impacts of social media use (Etikan et al., 2016).

The research instrument in the form of a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the intensity of use of short video platforms and children's social and emotional behavior. This questionnaire contains questions related to the frequency of use, content consumed, and social impacts felt by children, such as the level of involvement with friends or social pressure experienced. In-depth interviews were used as complementary data to understand patterns of behavioral change and challenges faced by children in adapting to digital media (Febrina, 2019).

The quantitative data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation to see the relationship between the intensity of social media use and behavioral changes. Meanwhile, qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using coding techniques to identify key themes that emerged in the narratives of parents and teachers. Data triangulation was conducted to validate the findings, by combining the results of the survey and interviews to produce more accurate and objective conclusions (Creswell, 2014).

Results and Discussion

The survey results show that the majority of respondents use platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts for 1-3 hours per day. Around 30% of respondents admitted to using these platforms for more than 3 hours a day, especially in their free time after school and before bed. This intensive use shows that short video platforms are part of children's daily routines, reflecting the findings of Anderson and Jiang (2018) that social media has become the center of digital activity for the younger generation (Fikri, 2023).

Positive Impact on Creativity and Self-Confidence, most respondents felt that the use of short videos increased their creativity. They often participated in content creation such as dance challenges and short tutorials. Teachers interviewed also noted that children appeared more confident in class activities after being active on social media. This supports the study by Chambers et al. (2019) which found that active engagement on social media facilitates creativity and self-expression.

Interview results with parents showed that some children use this platform to communicate and collaborate with peers. Participation in online trends and challenges helps them build social networks and strengthen friendships. This is in line with the findings of Livingstone (2019) who emphasized that social media can be an important tool in developing communication and collaboration skills in children (Daulay, 2019)

The emergence of imitative behavior and social pressure, but this study also found some negative impacts. Around 45% of children admitted to imitating behavior from videos without understanding the risks, such as doing dangerous challenges. The pressure to always follow viral trends and maintain popularity on social media also triggers the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) phenomenon, as explained by Kuss and Griffiths (2017).

Impact on sleep patterns and academic concentration, as many as 40% of respondents stated that they often stay up late to watch or create video content, which causes sleep deprivation and fatigue. Teachers also reported decreased concentration and learning motivation among students who are active on social media. This is consistent with the study by Scott and Woods (2018) which showed that excessive use of social media can disrupt sleep patterns and reduce academic achievement.

Decrease in Face-to-Face Interaction with Family and Friends, survey and interview results show that the intensity of social media use has led to a decrease in face-to-face interaction with family. Some parents admitted to having difficulty communicating with their children who are more often involved in the digital world. This reinforces the findings of Twenge and Campbell (2018) about the decline in the quality of social interaction due to dependence on digital media.

Influence on Children's Emotional Regulation, some parents and teachers report that children who are active on this platform show emotional changes, such as anxiety when their posts do not get enough "likes" or comments. This reliance on social validation strengthens the risk of emotional disorders in children, such as anxiety and depression, as identified by Twenge and Campbell (2018).

Digital Literacy and Lack of Parental Supervision, this study found that low levels of digital literacy and minimal parental supervision exacerbate the negative impacts of using short video platforms. Most parents do not fully understand their children's activities on social media, making it difficult to provide effective direction and control. This is in line with Livingstone's (2019) recommendation regarding the importance of digital literacy education for parents and children.

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Social Media Utilization Gap, children with better digital literacy tend to use these platforms for productive purposes, such as learning new skills or following educational content. Conversely, children with low literacy are more often exposed to less useful or even harmful content. This shows the need for the right educational strategy so that social media can be utilized optimally (Yanti, 2019).

Recommendations for Balanced Use, based on research results, it is recommended that there be restrictions on the time of social media use for children, such as a maximum of 2 hours per day. In addition, parents are advised to be more involved in their children's digital activities and accompany them in choosing appropriate content. Digital literacy education is also important to increase children's understanding of the risks and benefits of social media (Sanny, 2023).

The results of this study indicate that short video platforms have positive and negative impacts on the social and emotional development of pre-adolescent children. The benefits of increased creativity and social skills can be optimized with good supervision, while negative impacts such as emotional disorders and addiction need to be minimized through usage regulation. The use of surveys and in-depth interviews allowed researchers to validate the results of the study. The results of interviews with teachers and parents strengthened the survey data regarding behavioral changes and challenges faced by children in using social media. This triangulation method supports the accuracy and objectivity of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Teachers need to play an active role in providing education about digital ethics and safety to students. In addition, schools can work together with parents in monitoring children's social media use, so that potential negative impacts can be minimized and benefits can be maximized (Livingstone, 2019). The social and cultural context in Medan City also influences how children use social media. Family support and a conducive environment will greatly help children in maintaining a balance between the digital world and real life. This study has limitations, such as the limited number of samples and the geographical focus in Medan City. Further research is needed to examine the impact of social media use in other areas and with a larger population. Future research can explore effective strategies in improving digital literacy in children and parents, as well as developing more specific interventions to reduce social media addiction at an early age (Febrina, 2022).

Conclusion

This study explores the positive and negative impacts of using short video platforms on the personality development and social interactions of pre-adolescent children in Medan City. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the intensity of social media using, especially short video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, has various significant consequences for children in this critical developmental phase. On the one hand, the use of short video platforms can increase children's creativity and self-confidence. Respondents indicated that participation in content creation not only encouraged them to express themselves but also strengthened social skills through interactions with peers. These findings are in line with the literature showing that social media can serve as a positive means for self-development and interpersonal skills.

However, the negative impacts of social media use cannot be ignored. The study found that many children experience risky imitative behavior and social pressure to meet online expectations, which can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety and stress. These negative impacts are compounded by a lack of parental supervision and low digital literacy, which makes

children more vulnerable to inappropriate content. Given the findings of this study, it is important for parents, educators, and policymakers to take proactive steps in managing children's social media use. A more engaged approach, including active supervision and education on digital literacy, is needed to minimize the negative impacts while maximizing the benefits offered by short-form video platforms.

Overall, this study provides important insights into the relationship between social media use and child development. With concerted efforts to support healthy and positive media use, we can ensure that young people can maximize their potential in the evolving digital age.

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