

The Role of Social Media TikTok in the Personality Development of Sixth-Grade Students at MIN 2 Kota Ternate

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of the social media platform TikTok in the personality development of sixth-grade students at MIN 2 Kota Ternate. The research employs a qualitative approach using observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that TikTok does not always produce positive effects; instead, negative impacts currently appear more dominant. One significant influence is on personality development, particularly among children who are still in the process of identity formation. Students tend to create content that attracts attention and seeks virality. At the same time, when used appropriately under teacher guidance, TikTok can support creativity, confidence, and certain learning activities. The study concludes that continuous supervision by teachers and parents is essential to minimize negative effects and maximize constructive uses of the platform.

Keywords: Social Media, TikTok, Personality Development, Students

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology has transformed social interaction patterns worldwide. Social media platforms enable users to obtain real-time information and express themselves across geographical boundaries. In the era of globalization, advancements in economic, social, cultural, and educational sectors have been accompanied by significant progress in communication and information technology. In Indonesia, this development is regulated under Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and

Transactions (UU ITE). The law governs electronic information and transactions both within and outside Indonesian jurisdiction when they affect national interests. The widespread use of multimedia in disseminating information has influenced social and psychological aspects of society, making the internet a primary medium of mass communication.

Among the many social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as a particularly influential medium, especially among children and adolescents. TikTok allows users to create and share short videos accompanied by music, filters, and creative effects. Its accessibility via smartphones has made it popular even among elementary school students. Children at this age are still developing their identity and often cannot fully distinguish between beneficial and harmful content. Students in the sixth grade at MIN 2 Kota Ternate are typically at a transitional age characterized by high curiosity and emotional instability. They tend to be easily attracted to content that gains attention or becomes viral. As long as something captures their interest, they will engage with it without carefully evaluating its appropriateness for their age.

Many parents face difficulties in supervising their children's use of social media. Smartphones can be carried anywhere, so when parents are not present, supervision becomes limited or non-existent. Complete prohibition of social media may isolate children from contemporary social interactions, while unrestricted access may expose them to negative influences that affect their personality development. TikTok has become an inseparable part of children's daily lives. The platform provides space for self-expression, communication with peers, and the development of entertainment-related talents. However, factors such as parental permission, peer influence, and the school environment also contribute to children's easy access to the application.

Previous studies have examined social media's effects on adolescent behavior and lifestyle. Yet specific investigations into TikTok's role in the personality development of elementary school students, particularly in the context of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* in Ternate, remain limited. This gap highlights the need for focused research on how the platform influences young learners at a critical stage of identity formation. Based on this background, the present research aims to explore the role of social media TikTok in the personality development of sixth-grade students at MIN 2 Kota Ternate. The study seeks to identify both positive and negative impacts as well as the mediating role of teachers in guiding students toward constructive use of the platform.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has become one of the most influential forces in contemporary society, reshaping the ways individuals communicate, construct identity, and interact with their environment. Rulli Nasrullah (2015) defines social media as a platform that enables users to publish content, express opinions, and engage in networked

communication. Within this digital ecosystem, platforms such as TikTok offer short-form video content that is highly engaging and easily accessible, particularly for young users. Personality development in children is a complex process influenced by both internal and external factors. According to Feist and Feist (2010), personality theories emphasize the interaction between individual traits and environmental stimuli. Sjarkawi (2006) further explains that the formation of a child's personality involves moral, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions that contribute to the development of a coherent sense of self. Media exposure, especially during elementary school years, can significantly shape these dimensions.

Several studies have examined the relationship between social media and adolescent behavior. Fitriansyah highlighted that social media use contributes to the formation of teenage behavioral patterns, both positive and negative. Elsa Puji Juwita investigated the role of social media in shaping the lifestyle of elementary school students, showing that digital platforms influence daily habits, preferences, and social interactions from an early age. TikTok specifically has attracted scholarly attention due to its unique features of short videos, music, and creative editing tools. Susilawati (2018) noted that TikTok is frequently used for personal branding and self-expression. The platform's algorithm encourages users to produce content that attracts attention and achieves virality, which can reinforce certain personality traits such as confidence and creativity while simultaneously fostering dependency and reduced self-control.

In the educational context, the dual nature of TikTok's influence becomes particularly evident. On one hand, the platform can serve as a source of creative inspiration and an alternative learning medium. On the other hand, excessive use may reduce study time, weaken concentration, and diminish interest in traditional academic activities such as reading and writing. Teachers play a crucial mediating role in determining whether the platform becomes a constructive or destructive force in students' lives. Character education remains a central concern in Indonesian elementary education, especially within *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. Values such as discipline, honesty, politeness, responsibility, and creativity are continuously emphasized by teachers. When social media use is not properly supervised, these values may be undermined by the attention-seeking culture promoted by platforms like TikTok.

Previous research has largely focused on secondary school students or general adolescent populations. Studies specifically addressing the impact of TikTok on the personality development of sixth-grade students in the eastern Indonesian context, particularly in Ternate, remain limited. This gap underscores the need for localized qualitative investigations that capture the lived experiences of young learners and the perspectives of educators. Drawing on these theoretical and empirical foundations, the present study positions TikTok as a significant environmental factor in the personality development of elementary school students. By examining both positive and negative impacts, as well as the role of teachers and school

culture, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how digital media intersects with character formation at a critical stage of childhood development.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the role of social media TikTok in the personality development of sixth-grade students at MIN 2 Kota Ternate. The qualitative method was selected because the study focuses on understanding and interpreting meanings, experiences, and social phenomena rather than measuring numerical data. Through this approach, the researcher aims to describe how TikTok influences students' attitudes, behavior, and character formation in both school and daily life contexts. The research was conducted at MIN 2 Kota Ternate and involved 25 sixth-grade students, consisting of 10 male and 15 female students, as well as the classroom teacher and the school principal. The participants were selected purposively because they were directly engaged in the learning environment where the influence of TikTok could be observed. The study took place over a period of approximately one month, from March to June 2026, allowing sufficient time for observation and data collection.

Instrument and Procedure

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out before and during learning activities, starting from 07:30 to 11:30 WIT, to examine students' behavior, classroom interactions, and the school's rules regarding mobile phone use. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the classroom teacher, selected students, and the principal to obtain deeper insights into their perceptions of TikTok's role in personality development. Documentation was used to support the observational and interview data through field notes and relevant school records.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process followed three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw information obtained from observations and interviews. Relevant data related to positive and negative impacts of TikTok, as well as the role of teachers, were prioritized for further analysis.

After the data were reduced, the next stage was data display. In this qualitative study, data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions, categorized themes, and relationships among findings. Organizing the data in this way enabled the researcher to identify patterns concerning how TikTok affects students' confidence, discipline, creativity, and overall personality development. The final stage of

analysis was conclusion drawing and verification. The researcher identified recurring patterns and themes, grouped similar findings, and examined any cases that appeared to deviate from the general pattern. Through this process, conclusions were formulated regarding the dual role of TikTok and the importance of teacher and parental supervision in guiding students' personality development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that TikTok plays a dual role in the personality development of sixth-grade students at MIN 2 Kota Ternate. Observation conducted from March to June 2026 revealed that students are generally prohibited from bringing mobile phones to school except for specific learning purposes. Despite this regulation, many students still access TikTok outside school hours, indicating that the platform remains a significant part of their daily lives. Interviews with the classroom teacher indicated that TikTok can both support and hinder the learning process. When used constructively, short video content related to physical movements or creative activities can enhance student engagement. Teachers sometimes adapt TikTok-style music and movements into morning yells or energizing exercises to increase student enthusiasm before lessons begin.

Students themselves reported mixed experiences regarding TikTok use. Some students stated that the platform helps them relieve boredom, reduce stress, and learn new creative movements. Others admitted that prolonged viewing of short videos makes them feel lazy, reduces their willingness to complete assignments, and decreases their concentration during classroom learning. The classroom teacher emphasized the importance of maintaining discipline and concentration during lessons. He consistently prohibits the use of TikTok during learning activities and applies varied teaching methods to stimulate student creativity. According to the teacher, only a small number of students occasionally bring mobile phones to school, and strict rules are enforced to minimize distraction.

Several students explained that TikTok can support practical subjects such as physical education. By watching movement-related videos, they are able to observe and imitate practical activities that are relevant to the lesson. However, they also acknowledged that without proper control, the platform easily becomes a source of entertainment that interferes with academic focus.

Interviews with students further revealed that excessive TikTok use often leads to reduced interest in reading and writing. Once students become comfortable watching continuous short videos, time passes quickly, and academic motivation declines. Teachers are therefore considered essential in guiding students to use the platform responsibly and in reinforcing positive character values.

The school principal estimated that approximately 80 percent of TikTok's influence on students tends to be negative when not properly supervised. He noted that the platform frequently disturbs students' concentration and reduces their interest in

reading. At MIN 2 Kota Ternate, only a portion of students use TikTok, mainly as a means of relieving boredom rather than as a regular learning tool. Overall, the findings indicate that TikTok significantly affects students' attitudes, behavior, and personality development. While the platform has the potential to support creativity and confidence, its negative impacts on discipline, academic motivation, and character formation appear more dominant without continuous supervision from teachers and parents.

The findings of this study demonstrate that TikTok functions as a powerful environmental factor in the personality development of elementary school students. At the age of sixth grade, children are still in the process of forming their identity and are highly influenced by external stimuli. The attention-seeking and viral culture promoted by TikTok can shape certain personality traits, both constructive and destructive. Positive impacts of TikTok include the development of digital and social skills relevant to the modern era. Students learn to adapt, interact, and manage social networks through creative content. The platform can also serve as a source of entertainment that reduces boredom and provides inspiration for creative movements, which teachers sometimes integrate into classroom activities.

Another constructive aspect is the potential use of TikTok as a supplementary learning medium. When related to practical subjects such as physical education, short videos can help students visualize movements and increase their enthusiasm for learning. In this controlled context, the platform supports creativity, confidence, and active participation. However, the negative impacts of TikTok appear more prominent in the research findings. Excessive use reduces study time, weakens concentration, and diminishes interest in traditional academic activities such as reading and writing. Students who become dependent on continuous short-form content often struggle to maintain focus during lessons and complete assigned tasks.

TikTok also influences character formation at a critical developmental stage. Values such as discipline, honesty, politeness, responsibility, and respect for others may be undermined when students prioritize becoming the center of attention or achieving virality. The desire to create content that attracts viewers can shift students' focus away from moral and academic development. Teachers play a crucial mediating role in determining the overall impact of the platform. At MIN 2 Kota Ternate, teachers actively prohibit TikTok use during lessons, emphasize character education, and apply varied teaching strategies to maintain student engagement. Their consistent guidance helps counteract the negative tendencies associated with unrestricted social media use.

The collaboration between teachers and parents is equally important. Since smartphones can be used outside school hours, parental supervision at home is necessary to balance the influence of TikTok. Without joint efforts, the platform's negative effects on personality development are likely to become more dominant. The dual nature of TikTok requires careful management. When used under proper guidance, the platform can support creativity and digital literacy. Without

supervision, however, it risks weakening academic motivation and character values. Therefore, continuous involvement of teachers and parents remains essential for fostering balanced personality development among elementary school students.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the social media platform TikTok exerts a significant influence on the personality development of sixth-grade students at MIN 2 Kota Ternate. The findings reveal that TikTok produces both positive and negative effects. While the platform can support creativity, confidence, and certain learning activities when used appropriately, its negative impacts on concentration, discipline, academic motivation, and character formation currently appear more dominant among students who are still in the process of identity formation. Teachers play a crucial role in mediating these effects. By establishing clear rules regarding mobile phone use, integrating constructive digital content into learning, and continuously reinforcing character values such as discipline, politeness, responsibility, and creativity, teachers help minimize the risks associated with TikTok. The collaboration between teachers and parents is equally essential, as supervision outside school hours is necessary to guide students toward balanced and responsible media use. With proper guidance and continuous supervision from both school and family, the potential risks of TikTok can be reduced. Students can then develop balanced personalities that integrate digital literacy with strong moral, social, and academic foundations, enabling them to grow into individuals who are beneficial to society.

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