



The Impact of TikTok Social Media Use on Changes in Students' Social Behavior at SMPN 2 Rawamerta

Muhammad Rizal Ramadhan^{1)*}, Lusiana Rahmatiani²⁾, Yudi Firmansyah³⁾, Anggy Giri Prawiyogi⁴⁾

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang

Corresponding E-mail: pk19.muhammadramadhan@mhs.ubpkarawang.ac.id

ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p><i>This study aims to analyze the impact of TikTok social media use on changes in students' social behavior at SMPN 2 Rawamerta and to describe the school's efforts to address these changes. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. The research subjects consisted of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs, a Civics Education teacher, and an eighth-grade student, selected purposively based on their relevance to the research focus. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that TikTok influences students' social behavior, particularly in the use of viral language, communication ethics, learning focus, cooperation, empathy, and peer interaction. Some students tend to imitate expressions, jokes, or trends from TikTok, which may affect their manners and discipline at school. The school responds to these issues through restrictions on mobile phone use, student guidance, digital literacy, character education, educational sanctions, and cooperation with parents. This study concludes that TikTok has both positive and negative impacts, but its negative influence can be minimized through consistent guidance and character-based digital literacy.</i></p> <p>© 2026 Kantor Jurnal dan Publikasi UPI</p>	<p>Article History: Submitted/Received 20 Apr 2026 First Revised 28 May 2026 Accepted 20 Jun 2026 First Available online 30 Jun 2026 Publication Date 30 Jun 2026</p> <hr/> <p>Keyword: TikTok; Social Media; Social Behavior; Student; Digital Literacy.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has transformed the way students communicate, acquire information, and build social relationships both within and outside the school environment. One of the social media platforms that is very close to students' lives today is TikTok. TikTok is an audio-visual-based platform that allows users to create, watch, share, and mimic various forms of short-form video content rapidly. In the context of students, TikTok is used not only as a medium for entertainment but also as a space for self-expression, a source of information, a medium for self-actualization, and a place to follow developing trends. Social media is essentially an internet-based application that allows its users to participate, share, and create content through digital spaces (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, the use of TikTok among students cannot be viewed merely as a recreational activity, but rather as a part of digital culture that can influence students' mindsets, communication styles, and social behaviors in daily life.

The use of TikTok among students has both positive and negative impacts that need to be considered in a balanced manner. On the positive side, TikTok can serve as a medium to obtain information, access educational content, develop creativity, broaden horizons, and train students' abilities in utilizing digital technology. Learning, motivational, religious, skill-based, and social information content available on TikTok can provide a good influence if used wisely. Khairuni (2016) explains that social media can have a positive impact on education if utilized to obtain information and expand knowledge. However, uncontrolled use of TikTok can also lead to negative impacts, such as a tendency to lose track of time, decreased study focus, the use of inappropriate language, the habit of mimicking trends without considering decency, and reduced concern for the social environment. This condition aligns with the focus of this study, which asserts that the negative impacts of TikTok can be seen in individualistic tendencies, lack of empathy for others, and the use of inappropriate language in students' daily lives.

Recent studies show that the influence of digital media on students does not only relate to entertainment aspects but also touches upon character development and social skills. Anggraeni et al. (2025) explain that digital media exposure in students can affect responsibility, empathy, and discipline, necessitating a social-emotional learning approach to minimize its negative impacts. In addition, Sari (2025) found that TikTok plays a role in shaping adolescents' social behavior and self-perception through digital interactions, trends, and the process of mimicking the consumed content. These findings reinforce that the use of TikTok by students needs to be understood as a social phenomenon related to behavioral formation, rather than just a digital entertainment activity.

Social behavior is a crucial aspect of student development because it relates to a person's ability to interact, cooperate, respect others, obey rules, and show concern for their social environment. Tu'u (2004) explains that social behavior is an atmosphere of mutual interdependence among individuals, which is a necessity in human life. Meanwhile, Gerungan (2010) views social attitudes as the way individuals repeatedly respond to social objects in collective life. In the school environment, students' social behavior is reflected through polite attitudes toward teachers, the ability to cooperate in groups, concern for peers, discipline in obeying school regulations, and the ability to adapt to prevailing norms. Therefore, changes in students' social behavior due to the influence of social media need to become a concern for schools, especially since students are in a developmental phase that is easily influenced by peers, the digital environment, and the trends they continuously consume.

The TikTok phenomenon in the school environment can influence students' social behavior in various forms. Some students may bring language, expressions, jokes, or communication styles that are currently viral on TikTok into their daily interactions at school. Language originally used in an entertainment context can carry over when students speak with peers, and in some situations, it may even appear when interacting with teachers. Furthermore, TikTok trends also have the potential to affect students' focus during learning activities, group work, and the implementation of shared responsibilities, such as classroom cleaning duties. The aspects explored in this study include the use of viral TikTok language, the habit of interrupting when the teacher is explaining, the condition of student cooperation, empathy toward peers, mockery for not following trends, and compliance with mobile phone usage rules at school. This indicates that the impact of TikTok is not only related to application usage but also touches upon aspects of communication ethics, social responsibility, and student character.

As educational institutions, schools play an important role in guiding students to navigate technological developments without abandoning moral, social, and character values. Education aims not only to develop intellectual intelligence but also to shape students who possess emotional, spiritual, and social intelligence. In the context of Pancasila and Citizenship Education, students are directed to become school citizens who can respect others, be responsible, be disciplined, and have concern for collective life. These values align with the fourth pillar of Pancasila, which places deliberation, respect for opinions, and acceptance of collective decisions as vital components of a democratic life (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Accordingly, the use of social media like TikTok needs to be directed through character building, digital literacy, and the reinforcement of Pancasila values so that students can differentiate between behavior appropriate to emulate and behavior that should be avoided.

In the context of civic education, digital literacy needs to be directed toward the formation of students' character and social responsibility. Nanda and Budimansyah (2020) emphasize the importance of strengthening character education based on digital media literacy in citizenship learning so that students can use freedom of expression on social media responsibly. This aligns with the school's need not only to restrict social media use but also to guide students to understand digital ethics, select appropriate content, and maintain social behavior in both real life and digital spaces.

Various previous studies indicate that social media, particularly TikTok, can influence students' behavior, communication, social interaction, and character. A'yun and Kusmajid (2024) show that TikTok usage impacts elementary school students' behavior, both in terms of positive impacts as a medium for entertainment and learning, and negative impacts on learning concentration. Hafifah et al. (2024) found that TikTok use is related to changes in the social behavior of junior high school students, particularly in interaction patterns, the habit of mimicking content, and attitudinal shifts within the school environment. Octaviana et al. (2023) also assert that TikTok has an influence on adolescent social behavior in the digital era, encompassing aspects of creativity, communication, as well as the risk of addiction and social pressure. Meanwhile, Muslimin (2025) explains that social media can influence adolescents' social behavior in daily life when its use becomes a dominant part of their activities.

In addition to influencing social behavior, social media is also linked to the digital literacy skills of the younger generation. Nugraha et al. (2022) show that social media use in adolescents needs to be viewed from the aspects of behavior, habits, and its impact on daily

interaction patterns. Maisuroh et al. (2024) also affirm that social media plays a role in strengthening the digital literacy of Generation Z, particularly in critical thinking skills, evaluating information, and developing social skills. However, studies specifically discussing the impact of TikTok on changes in the social behavior of junior high school students, particularly those linking communication ethics, cooperation, empathy, discipline, and school efforts in guiding students, still require deeper examination.

Based on this background, this study has the urgency to look more closely at how TikTok usage impacts students' social behavior within the school environment. The focus of the research is directed not only toward the forms of negative impacts that arise but also toward how the school conducts guidance so that students can still navigate digital developments wisely. This research was conducted at SMPN 2 Rawamerta, involving the Vice Principal of Student Affairs, the PPKn (Pancasila and Citizenship Education) teacher, and students as research informants. The problem formulation in this study is directed at two things: how social media TikTok impacts changes in students' social behavior and what efforts the school makes to address these changes in social behavior due to the impact of TikTok. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the impact of using TikTok social media on changes in students' social behavior at SMPN 2 Rawamerta and to describe the school's efforts to address changes in students' social behavior resulting from TikTok use.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. The research was conducted at SMPN 2 Rawamerta, with subjects including the Vice Principal of Student Affairs (initials UJ), a Civic Education (PPKn) teacher (initials N), and an eighth-grade student (initials NT), who were selected purposively in accordance with the research focus. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain a comprehensive picture of the impact of TikTok use on students' social behavior and the school's efforts to address it. Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was strengthened through source and technique triangulation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the use of TikTok social media impacts changes in students' social behavior at SMPN 2 Rawamerta. These changes are observed in several aspects: the way students communicate, ethics toward teachers, focus in learning, cooperation with peers, social empathy, and the emergence of jokes or mockery influenced by social media trends. This phenomenon demonstrates that TikTok functions not only as an entertainment medium but also as a digital space that influences students' habits, language, and interaction patterns in school life. This aligns with the focus of the research instrument, which explores the use of viral language, the habit of interrupting teachers, group work, empathy, and mocking behavior toward peers due to the influence of TikTok trends.

The most visible change is how students use language in daily interactions. The Vice Principal of Student Affairs (initials UJ) stated that some students have begun bringing slang and viral terms from TikTok into the school environment. This language is typically used when joking with friends, but in several situations, it carries over when students speak with teachers. A similar point was made by the Civic Education (PPKn) teacher (initials N), who noted that the most striking change is evident in how students communicate and mimic

expressions they see on TikTok. Meanwhile, a student (initials NT) admitted to occasionally using language or expressions from the FYP (For You Page) when speaking with friends, although attempting to maintain politeness when communicating with teachers.

These findings indicate that TikTok plays a role in shaping a new language culture among students. Viral language that initially emerges as entertainment on social media can transfer into school spaces and influence how students interact. To a certain extent, the use of slang can serve as a form of expression and closeness among peers. However, if left unchecked, this habit can blur the boundary between casual communication with peers and respectful communication toward teachers. This condition warrants serious attention because students' social behavior is evaluated not only by their actions but also by how they utilize language in social relationships.

These findings align with Hafifah et al. (2024), who showed that TikTok usage is related to changes in the social behavior of junior high school students, particularly in interaction patterns and the habit of mimicking frequently viewed content. Similarly, Octaviana et al. (2023) explained that TikTok can influence adolescents' social behavior through the process of mimicking trends, communication styles, and expressions developing in the digital space. Thus, the transfer of viral language and TikTok expressions into the school environment can be understood as an internalization of digital culture into students' social behavior.

In addition to language changes, TikTok usage also impacts students' communication ethics toward teachers. Informant UJ explained that some students interrupt teachers' explanations in a joking manner or use viral terms that are inappropriate for a learning situation. Informant N also mentioned that several students occasionally respond to teachers' reprimands in an overly casual tone, even bringing TikTok jokes into the classroom. From the student's perspective, NT admitted that while the teacher is explaining, classmates sometimes make remarks using TikTok jokes, rendering the classroom atmosphere less conducive. This indicates a shift in communication ethics among some students, particularly in their ability to differentiate the context of speaking with peers from speaking with teachers.

In the educational context, communication ethics is a vital component of students' social behavior. Students are required not only to be capable of speaking but also to understand when, to whom, and in what manner communication should be conducted. When viral TikTok language enters the classroom without filtering, students risk losing sensitivity toward norms of politeness. This change is related to the characteristics of digital-era students who easily absorb stimuli from social media and peers. Therefore, schools need to guide students to use social media wisely, including selecting language, expressions, and communication styles appropriate for the school environment.

Another identified impact is the decline in some students' focus during learning activities and group work. Informant UJ stated that excessive TikTok use can cause students to lose track of time, to the extent that some students appear drowsy and unfocused at school. Informant N also explained that in discussion or group work activities, some students can still cooperate well, but others are easily distracted because they discuss TikTok trends or viral jokes. NT's admission reinforces these findings, noting that during group work, some friends focus on discussing TikTok or opening their phones, causing group assignments to take longer to complete.

This condition indicates that TikTok can affect students' concentration and responsibility in learning activities. Social media consumed excessively has the potential to disrupt students' time management between entertainment and learning obligations. This

condition aligns with A'yun and Kusmajid (2024), who found that TikTok use can negatively impact students' learning concentration if left uncontrolled. Furthermore, Muslimin (2025) explained that social media can influence adolescents' social behavior in daily life, especially when social media usage becomes a dominant part of their activities.

The aspects of cooperation and mutual assistance (*gotong royong*) have also undergone changes among some students. According to informant UJ, the spirit of mutual assistance still exists but must continuously be directed by teachers or homeroom teachers. In cleaning duties (*piket*) or group work, some students lack concern for shared responsibilities and tend to wait for other peers to complete the tasks. Informant N stated that student cooperation can still be fostered if teachers provide clear directions and engaging tasks. This shows that the influence of TikTok does not entirely eliminate cooperative attitudes, but it can reduce students' focus and concern if social media use is not regulated.

This finding relates to social behavior as an individual's ability to live together, help one another, and demonstrate responsibility toward the social environment. In school life, group work, classroom cleaning duties, and discussions are simple forms of habituating mutual assistance. If students are more interested in digital content or trends than social responsibilities in the classroom, schools need to reinforce character habituation so that students retain concern for shared tasks. In other words, TikTok usage must be balanced with the cultivation of values such as mutual assistance, responsibility, and social discipline.

Beyond cooperation, changes are also observed in the aspect of student empathy. Informant N mentioned that some students exhibit a tendency to be more indifferent or less sensitive toward their peers. For instance, when a friend experiences difficulties, some students do not immediately help, and some even laugh. This was also admitted by NT, who noted that upon seeing a friend fall or struggle, students should ideally help, but sometimes classmates laugh first because they find the incident amusing. This finding indicates that while not all students have lost empathy, signs of diminishing social sensitivity are apparent in some.

Changes in empathy, discipline, and social responsibility are also linked to increased exposure to digital media in students' lives. Anggraeni et al. (2025) explained that digital media can influence the development of students' character and social skills, particularly within the dimensions of responsibility, empathy, and discipline. In this study, symptoms such as students being insensitive to peers, laughing at friends in distress, or lacking responsibility during group work indicate that social media use—unbalanced by character education—can disrupt the habituation of positive social behavior at school.

This phenomenon can be understood as an impact of the viewing culture on social media, which frequently turns funny, embarrassing, or unexpected incidents into entertainment. When such viewing patterns carry over into real life, students can lose sensitivity toward others' feelings. In the context of social behavior, empathy is an essential element because it helps students understand their peers' conditions, refrain from mocking, and take action to help. Therefore, teachers must continuously guide students to distinguish between entertainment on social media and appropriate behavior in real life.

The influence of TikTok is also apparent in the emergence of jokes or mockery related to social media trends. Informant UJ explained that some students mimic TikTok trends at school, such as making jokes, mimicking sounds, or following specific styles in class. Informant N stated that there are several forms of mockery related to TikTok trends, such as mocking friends who are deemed not to follow trends or who do not know viral terms. Meanwhile, NT

admitted to having joked with friends who were unaware of TikTok trends, but maintained that such joking is improper if it causes a friend embarrassment or hurt feelings.

This finding demonstrates that TikTok can establish new social standards among students. Students who follow trends are considered more updated, whereas those who do not can become targets of jokes. Although some students view this merely as joking, the impact can differ for the peers targeted. If left unaddressed, trend-based joking can develop into demeaning behavior or minor bullying. This aligns with Sari (2025), who showed that TikTok can influence adolescents' self-perception through digital trends and the social interactions occurring within them. Therefore, the boundary between joking and hurting others must be continuously emphasized in student guidance.

Overall, the research results indicate that the impact of TikTok on changes in students' social behavior is complex. On one hand, TikTok can provide entertainment, information, inspiration, and spaces for student creativity. On the other hand, uncontrolled use can affect language, communication ethics, learning focus, cooperation, empathy, and social interaction patterns. This impact does not occur uniformly across all students but emerges among those who use TikTok intensively or easily mimic digital trends. Thus, TikTok cannot be viewed merely as an entertainment application, but rather as part of a digital social environment that actively shapes student behavior at school. School Efforts to Address Changes in Students' Social Behavior Resulting from the Impact of TikTok

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the use of TikTok social media impacts changes in students' social behavior at SMPN 2 Rawamerta, particularly in the aspects of language, communication ethics, learning focus, cooperation, empathy, and peer interaction. This impact is evident in the tendencies of students to bring viral TikTok language or expressions into the school environment, interrupt teachers' explanations with inappropriate jokes, lose focus during learning or group work, and engage in jokes or mockery related to social media trends. Nevertheless, TikTok also possesses positive sides if utilized wisely, such as serving as a medium for entertainment, a source of information, and a means for developing student creativity. Consequently, changes in students' social behavior are not entirely caused by TikTok as a medium, but rather by uncontrolled usage patterns and a lack of student awareness in filtering content that aligns with the values of politeness, discipline, and social concern.

The school's efforts to address changes in students' social behavior resulting from TikTok usage are implemented through restricting mobile phone usage; guidance by teachers, homeroom teachers, guidance counselors (BK), and student affairs staff; strengthening digital literacy; imposing educational sanctions; and collaborating with parents. These efforts demonstrate that the school does not merely enforce prohibitions, but also strives to guide students to utilize social media wisely and responsibly. The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis that the impact of TikTok on students must be understood as a social behavior issue intertwined with communication ethics, empathy, cooperation, and character building at school. Therefore, schools need to develop character-based digital literacy guidance more consistently so that students remain capable of keeping pace with digital trends without abandoning politeness, discipline, responsibility, and social values in school life.

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