Factual Conditions Understanding The Ethics of Using Social Media for Secondary School Students in West Java

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kondisi faktual pemahaman etika penggunaan media sosial oleh siswa sekolah menengah di Jawa Barat karena penggunaan media social di kalangan siswa saat ini banyak terjadi pelanggaran terutama *cyberbullying*. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif. Desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah survei. Populasi penelitian meliputi seluruh siswa sekolah menengah di Jawa Barat dengan jumlah populasi sebanyak 1015 siswa. Sampel dalam penelitian ini diambil dengan menggunakan *multistage random sampling*. Berdasar pada teknik sampling tersebut, didapatkan 446 siswa laki-laki dan 575 siswa perempuan yang dapat menjadi sampel penelitian dengan rincian 361 siswa kelas 10, 480 siswa kelas 11, dan 174 siswa kelas 12. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman etika penggunaan media sosial oleh siswa sekolah menengah di Jawa Barat sudah baik. Namun terdapat permasalahan dalam kondisi lain yang menunjukkan siswa masih sering melakukan pelanggaran etika penggunaan media sosial, seperti menyebarkan informasi yang tidak benar, ujaran kebencian, dan *cyberbullying*. Etika digital yang meliputi tujuh elemen dalam penggunaan media sosial menjadi sesuatu yang penting dan diperlukan untuk diintegrasikan ke dalam kurikulum guna menunjang penggunaan teknologi digital khususnya media sosial kepada siswa sehingga pemahaman baik siswa dapat diperkuat dan diimplementasikan dengan baik.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the factual conditions of understanding the ethics of using social media by secondary school students in West Java because the use of social media among students currently causes many violations, especially cyberbullying. This study uses a quantitative approach. The research design used was a survey. The research population includes all secondary school students in West Java, with a population of 1015 students. The sample in this study was taken using multistage random sampling. Based on this sampling technique, 446 male and 575 female students were obtained as research samples, with details of 361 grade 10 students, 480 grade 11 students, and 174 grade 12 students. The study results showed that students understand the ethics of using social media in secondary schools in West Java. However, there are problems in other conditions that show that students often violate the ethics of using social media, such as spreading incorrect information, hate speech, and cyberbullying. Digital ethics, which includes seven elements in the use of social media, is essential and necessary to be integrated into the curriculum to support students use of digital technology, especially social media so that students' good understanding can be strengthened and implemented well.

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, the use of social media has become commonplace among people worldwide, including in Indonesia. That is no exception for students, especially middle school students. According to data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association in 2022, as many as 89.7% of students in Indonesia have used social media (APJII, 2022). Students' use of social media can provide various benefits, such as a means for communicating, learning, and expressing. However, the use of social media can also pose various risks, such as cyberbullying, spreading false information, and addiction (Ardiputra, 2022; Healty, 2018; Koto, 2021; Martin et al., 2020; Moreno et al., 2018; Perren & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2012; Plaisime et al., 2020; Thakkar, Vitsal & Levitt, 2006; Whittaker & Kowalski, 2015).

One of the risks that we need to be aware of is ethical violations in the use of social media. Ethics of using social media are norms that regulate how someone uses social media responsibly and morally (F Magnis Suseno, 2016; Piliang, 2004; Tedre et al., 2006). Ethical violations in using social media can have a negative impact and hurt on ourselve, others and society. Therefore, students need to understand the ethics of using social media (Molosiwa, 2010). The role of education in building an ethical culture using social media plays a vital role among students (Wayong, 2017). Social media ethics education can teach students the importance of using social media responsibly and morally. With good understanding, students can avoid negative social media behavior and contribute positively to creating a safe and healthy social media environment (Lunnay et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2020).

Developing ethical competence among students is essential to foster responsible and ethical behavior in online learning environments. Ethical competence includes recognizing ethical issues, making appropriate decisions, and acting according to ethical principles (Shehata et al., 2023). Another ethical dilemma in teaching involves using social media and digital communication tools. Although these tools can facilitate communication, collaboration, and community building, they also pose risks of cyberbullying, online harassment, and spreading misinformation (Andina, 2011; Kaur et al., 2018; Rogerson, 2022). Educators must be able to establish clear guidelines for digital communications and provide guidance to students on how to navigate these online spaces responsibly.

Additionally, the use of technology in teaching can exacerbate inequalities and disparities. Access to technology, digital literacy skills, and the ability to navigate online environments vary widely among students, creating barriers to participation and learning. Educators must be aware of these disparities and strive to create inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of all students (Hennell et al., 2019).

Overcoming digital ethical dilemmas requires a multi-faceted approach. Educators need ongoing professional development to increase their understanding of digital ethics, develop effective strategies for managing student data and online behavior, and foster inclusive and equitable learning environments. Additionally, schools and educational institutions must establish clear policies and guidelines for using technology, ensuring that ethical considerations are at the forefront of the decision-making process (Hennell et al., 2019). This research focuses on seeing how students understand the ethics of using social media after there was much news about cases of ethical violations among students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media refers to new media, which offers digitization, convergence, interaction, and development of networks related to creating and delivering messages. Its ability to offer interactivity allows new media users to choose what information they consume, control the resulting information output, and make the choices they want. This ability to offer interactivity is the central concept of understanding new media (Reis et al., 2016; F. Terry, 2022). Van Dijk in (Nasrullah, 2015) states that social media is a media platform that focuses on the existence of users, which facilitates them in activities and collaboration. Therefore, social media is an online medium (facilitator) that strengthens relationships between users and social bonds.

Social media is a transformative digital technology, breaking down the "six degrees of separation" that previously characterized many social networks and breaking down many barriers for individuals to communicate with each other. Some people have commented that social media profoundly affects society, communicating prominent public issues such as climate change (Pearce et al., 2019). A person's ability to use social media will affect two things, namely digital competence and digital literacy. Social media is a medium that can enable the use of information more quickly in supporting an operation (activity). Social media also allows people to unite groups and help them achieve desired goals in a digital (social) environment (Mayfield, 2011).

Based on the many theories that state that social media is a digital transformation, communication experts explain that social media is an interdisciplinary science such as communication science, public relations, information science, and mass media science. Some experts define social media as follows:

Table 1. Definition of Social Media according to Experts

Expert Name	Definition of Social Media
(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; M. Terry, 2009)	Explains that social media is synonymous with content and interactions created by someone on social digital media.
(Kent & Taylor, 2014)	Explain social media as characteristics and identify the direction of messages that use digital technology.
(Howard & Parks, 2012)	Communication and interaction using special tools such as Facebook or Twitter.
(Lewis & Nichols, 2016)	It is a medium that functions as a label for digital technology that can enable people to connect, socialize, and create various content.
(Hall, 2018)	Social media as social interaction is mediated when it is in sync with higher social presence and lower reach, or at least determined.

Source: Processed by the Author, 2023

Even though there are many definitions of social media, several experts have not agreed on how to define it, especially across disciplines (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Lewis & Nichols (2016) explain that social media is a tool that can make it easier for someone to create, socialize, and share content using digital technology. However, this definition is not yet muscular, so Howard & Parks (2012) divide the definition of social media into three parts, namely: (a) information infrastructure and tools used to produce and distribute content; (b) content that takes the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas, and cultural products; and (c) people, organizations, and industries that produce and consume digital content. That is in line with research conducted by Riffe et al. (2008) who stated that the reasons people are interested in using social media are related to the characteristics of social media, including (1) speed in conveying information; (2) interactivity; (3) multimedia or media convergence; and (4) the depth and abundance of information obtained at relatively low cost.

Digital ethics can be defined as integrating digital technology and human values so that digital technology advances human values rather than destroys them. It should include formulating and justifying policies for the ethical use of digital technologies and carefully considered, transparent, and justifiable actions that lead to ethically acceptable digital technology products and services (Rogerson, 2022). Ethics in the digital sphere is known as netiquette or, in other terms, cyber ethics. These views both see that internet technology has technical benefits, such as making it easier to communicate between humans, and has negative consequences or impacts on ethics, especially in information transactions in the digital world (Tavani, 2013). We need to know that ethics is a rule carried out and implemented in a person's life to help them determine what they can and cannot do (F Magnis Suseno, 2016). *Netiquete* is an ethic in the digital world that we, as users, must comply with when connected to the internet (Lutkevich, 2010; Tavani, 2013).

Middle school students are an age group experiencing a transition period from childhood to adulthood. Various physical, psychological, and social changes mark this period—characteristics of secondary school students from a cognitive perspective. The cognitive abilities of secondary school students are developing rapidly, especially in abstract and complex areas. From the affective side at this time, middle school students begin to experience various emotions, such as curiosity, a sense of wanting to be independent, a sense of wanting to be accepted by the environment, and a sense of wanting to compete, from the social side high school students begin to establish relationships with the broader social environment, that is, outside the family. They begin to establish relationships with peers, teachers, and the wider community (Arikunto, 2010; Santrock, 2010).

METHOD

This research uses a survey research design with a quantitative approach as a data collection method. In general, survey research is carried out on samples, so it is necessary to determine the subject of the data source (population and sample) as well as the method of sampling (Ali, 2019). The population in survey research can take a local or national scope where the population of this research is secondary school students in West Java province. Next, sample subjects are selected to represent the population by considering the size and representativeness of the sample. The sampling technique used in this research is multistage random sampling based on consideration of research objectives, analyzing the factual condition of knowledge regarding the ethics of using digital social media technology. This research involved one thousand fifteen (1015) secondary schools in West Java.

Characteristics Based on Class

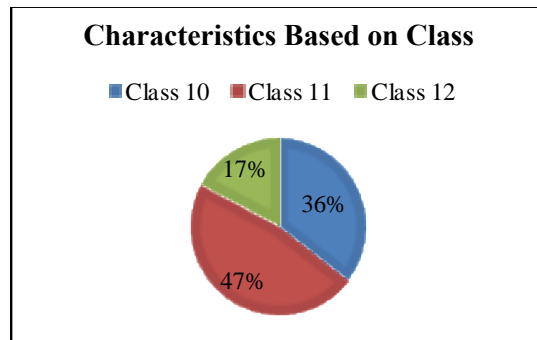■ Class 10   ■ Class 11   ■ Class 12

17%
36%
47%

Figure 1. Sample Characteristics Based on Class

Based on the characteristics of the sample, there were 446 male students, while there were 575 female students. Meanwhile, student characteristics are based on class: 361 class 10 students are respondents, 480 class 11 students are respondents, and 174 class 12 students are respondents. Meanwhile, the characteristics of students based on age can be classified as follows: students aged 14-15 with 279 respondents, students aged 16-17 with 686 respondents, and students aged 18-19 with 50 respondents.

Sample Characteristics Based on Age

■ 14-15   ■ 16-17   ■ 18-19

5%   27%
68%

Sample Characteristics Based on Gender

■ Boy   ■ Girl

56%   44%

Figure 2. Sample Characteristics Based on Age and Gender

RESULT

Based on the amount of social media use among secondary school students, which was carried out by conducting a survey regarding what social media is widely used, it can be depicted in the following diagram:

Owned Social Media

Instagram
Facebook
WhatsApp
Tiktok
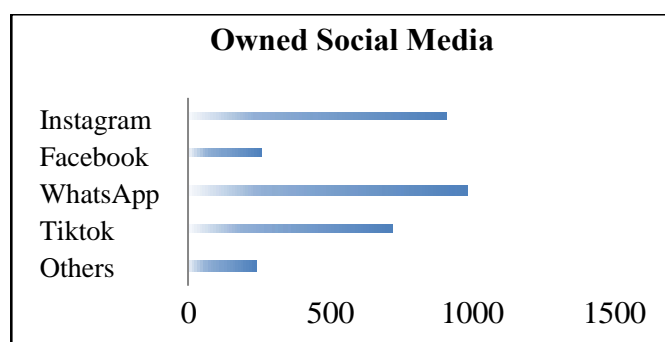Others

0   500   1000   1500

Figure 3. Social Media Owned by Students

With the large number of social media used by students, the intensity of use of social media varies and with various needs, one of which is the need for communication, work, education, or just for entertainment. The following illustrates how long high school students in West Java use social media at different times of the day.
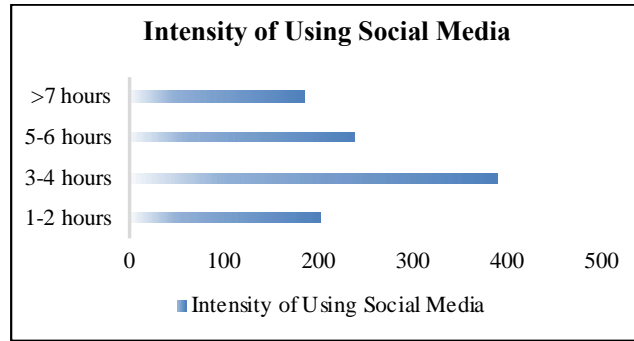
Figure 4. Intensity of Using Social Media

The length of time we use social media will provide opportunities and risks in its use. We must know that social media is a neutral platform and still a powerful tool for communication, education, and health. However, beyond that, social media can present significant risks if it is not used ethically and responsibly. Below is a table of understanding the ethics of using social media for secondary school students in West Java:

Table 2. Understanding of the Ethics of Using Social Media for Middle School Students in West Java

No	Element	Items	Percentage			Total	Mean	SD	Mean E	SD E
			1	2	3					
1	Respect Human Rights	1	12.99	10.03	76.90	2677	2.64	0.700	2.73	0.50
		6	2.26	0.59	97.15	2990	2.948	0.306		
		13	1.67	14.56	84.57	2651	2.614	0.520		
2	Transparency and Accountability of social media	9	0.89	1.97	97.14	3004	2.962	0.231	2.90	0.31
		12	0.88	14.56	84.55	2876	2.836	0.393		
3	Inclusivity and Diversity	10	1.87	3.05	95.08	2973	2.931	0.317	2.86	0.36
		11	0	20.66	79.34	2832	2.792	0.405		
4	Justice and equality in social media	4	3.34	8.76	86.90	2885	2.845	0.444	2.85	0.42
		5	1.97	10.92	87.11	2891	2.851	0.407		
5	Maintaining safety and welfare on social media	2	4.13	18.89	76.90	2766	2.727	0.530	2.75	0.50
		3	2.65	17.12	80.21	2815	2.776	0.477		
6	Sustainability in using social media	14	0.39	2.06	97.53	3013	2.971	0.188	2.97	0.19
7	Ethical data practices in social media use	7	1.97	1.77	96.26	2984	2.942	0.305	2.90	0.36
		8	2.26	4.92	92.81	2946	2.905	0.362		
		15	3.05	6.50	90.45	2914	2.873	0.414		
	Average		2.7	9.1	88.3					

Overall, students' understanding of the ethics of using social media is excellent in each aspect, with an average understanding of 88.20% and an average score range for each aspect of 76.90%-97.53%. That shows that students know and understand how to use social media. Ideally, they are ethical in using digital social media technology.

The highest score for students' understanding of the ethics of using social media digital technology is the element of sustainability in using social media digital technology. Students understand this aspect, especially in communicating with others, and relate to good ways of communicating continuously with fellow users of digital social media technology, with a mean of 2.97 and a percentage of 97.53%. Meanwhile, the students' lowest understanding score was in element one, aspect one, which indicates

that students do not understand more comprehensively what they understand about digital ethics, with a percentage of 76.90% with a mean of 2.64. This score is still considered high but lower compared to other aspects.

In addition, the Standard Deviation for each component of ethical skills in using social media digital technology shows a change in its distribution. The following elements are ordered from the most significant value to the smallest: 1) inclusivity and diversity; 2) transparency and accountability; 3) social media ethical data practices; 4) continued use of social media; 5) social media safety and welfare; 6) respect human rights; 7) justice and equality in social media. The Standard Deviation in the table shows the distribution of the data. Because the Mean Value is more outstanding than the Standard Deviation, it shows that the data is less varied.

The element with the most minor standard deviation is sustainability in using social media, with a standard deviation of 0.19. That shows that the respondents' values for this element are very focused around the average, namely 2.97. That shows that students have a very homogeneous level of understanding of the elements of sustainability in using social media. Meanwhile, the element with the most significant standard deviation respects human rights with a standard deviation 0.50. That shows that the respondents' values for this element are spread more widely around the mean, namely, 2.73. That means that students have a more heterogeneous understanding of respecting human rights in social media.

More specifically, the aspect of each element with the minor standard deviation is instrument item 14, with a standard deviation of 0.19. That shows that the respondents' values for this element are very focused around the average, namely 2.97. That shows that students have a very homogeneous level of understanding of the elements of sustainability in using social media. Meanwhile, the element aspect with the most significant standard deviation is item 1, which has a standard deviation of 0.70. That shows that the respondents' values for this element aspect are spread more widely around the average, namely, 2.64. That means that students have a more heterogeneous understanding of respecting human rights when using social media, especially when understanding digital ethics more comprehensively.

In particular, the relevance between students' understanding of the ethics of using digital technology on social media and students' actions in the digital world can be seen in the diagram below:
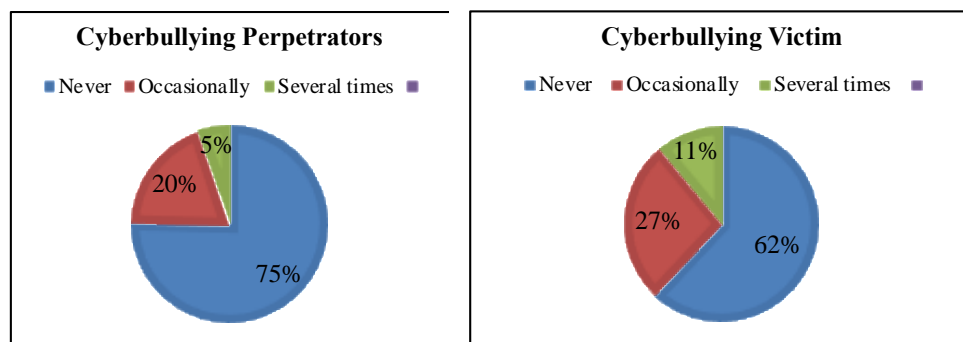

Figure 5. Cyberbullying Perpetrators and Cyberbullying Victims

The results of a survey conducted on 1015 West Java secondary school students contradicted the student understanding analysis. Where in the survey, it was said that 5% of students stated that they had been bullied several times, and 20% of students said that they had occasionally been bullied on social media. It was further stated that 11% of secondary school students in West Java had been victims of bullying several times, and 27% of students had occasionally been victims of cyberbullying on social media. This figure is not a small number, where 256 out of 1015 students admitted to having been perpetrators of cyberbullying with varying intensity. Meanwhile, 393 out of 1015 students admitted that they had been victims of cyberbullying, and this should be an essential concern because their actions and understanding were very contradictory. Then, from the survey, it was found that the perpetrators of bullying who were most often encountered were other people from other schools, 52% of whom they found from television, social media, and stories between friends (see chart).

Cyberbullying Perpetrators You've Ever Encountered

- Classmate
- Ex best friend
- School friends
- Other people from other schools
- The students themselves
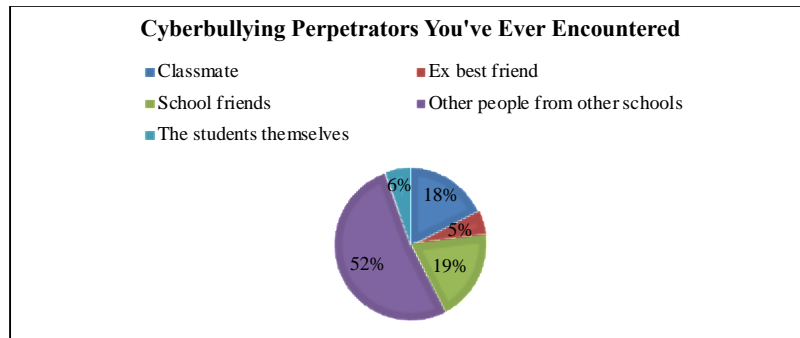
6% 18% 5% 19% 52%

Figure 6. Cyberbullying Perpetrators Who Have Been Encountered

Other data shows that the perpetrators of cyberbullying that are most often encountered are school friends (19%), classmates (18%), former friends (5%), and students themselves (6%). That indicates that there is still much bullying. Online, which occurs within the scope of one school and one class, should be of particular concern because, in the survey, data was found that the perpetrators of cyberbullying among secondary school students were the students themselves, namely 68 out of 1015 students or (6%).

Hoax

- Never
- Occasionally
- Several times

14% 30% 56%

Copyright

- Never
- Occasionally
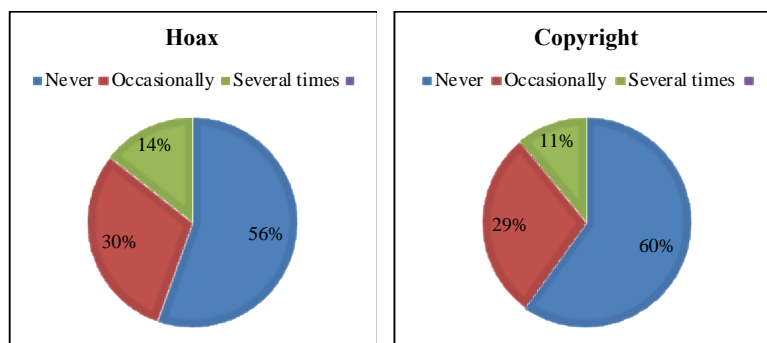- Several times

11% 29% 60%

Figure 7. Hoax and Copyright Data

Still, students who occasionally received and spread information whose truth was unclear, namely 313 out of 1015 students or 30%. Moreover, with higher intensity, namely 148 out of 1015 or 14% of students, many students still receive and spread information whose truth is unclear. Data theft in the form of taking photos or videos without the owner's permission and not using the appropriate license or watermark is still a bad habit for some students where 29% of students, or 301 out of 1015 students, stated that they had taken photos or videos without the owner's permission and did not use the correct license. That is an essential concern because it is related to data theft and copyright violations and falls into the realm of violations of the ITE Law.

Based on the data obtained, understanding and action are very contradictory because almost 88% of students already understand how to use social media digital technology ethically. However, in reality, many students still have not implemented the ethical use of social media digital technology in online life, which impacts harm to others. That must be the focus that digital ethics must be focused on cultivating attitudes, not just on understanding, which only focuses on cognitive or knowledge aspects.

DISCUSSION

Social media is a neutral platform and still an assertive communication, education, and health tool. However, beyond that, social media can present significant risks if not used ethically and responsibly (Rivera-Romero et al., 2022). Ethics and integrity in the use of social media is a shared responsibility. All parties, including users, social media platforms, and governments, must work together to create an ethical and responsible social media environment (Mohamad Ariff et al., 2021). Middle school students in West Java's understanding of the ethics of using social media technology is already in the excellent category in all existing elements. They can understand and appreciate the differences in the digital world because social media is a digital technology that can be used to promote understanding and tolerance between cultures. Social media can connect people from different cultures and share information about their cultures. Social media can also address global problems such as racism and discrimination (Aggarwal, 2020), where forms of discrimination and intervention in online aggression are related to cyberbullying, harassment,

hate speech, and online abuse (Tetreault, 2020). Interventions usually include education about cyberbullying, developing social-emotional skills, increasing awareness of the consequences, and social support (Polanin et al., 2022). Apart from that, other interventions that can be carried out targeting cyberbullying perpetrators can be carried out by developing empathy skills and development of problem-solving skills (Arpaci et al., 2020; Polanin et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the way to overcome cyberbullying is by increasing awareness of cyberbullying, reducing the stigma towards cyberbullying victims, and providing support for cyberbullying victims (Khine et al., 2020).

The aspect of understanding transparency and accountability in the use of social media is a shared responsibility, and this is, in Van Leeuwen's opinion, which identifies three principles of social media ethics, including 1) Respect: social media users must be able to respect and appreciate each other regardless of differences of opinion or background. Behind; 2) Responsibility: Social media users must be responsible for the actions they take on social media; 3) Truthfulness: Social media users must be honest and accurate in the information they share (Lipschultz, 2018; Moroz et al., 2021) and this is also in line with the paragraph above where ethics in using social media is essential to ensure that social media is used responsibly and ethically (Gisondi et al., 2022) as well as media use social media must be careful with the information they provide and consume by emphasizing transparency, accountability and privacy protection (Véliz, 2021).

Social media must be able to implement diversity and inclusiveness in its use, where social media must emphasize the importance of involving various stakeholders, including individuals, communities, and organizations from various cultures. These stakeholders should be encouraged to dialogue and understand each other's values and cultural perspectives (Ess, 2020). Apart from that, understanding fairness and equality in social media is very important because it concerns the privacy and ethical challenges of social media, which can increase the risk of privacy violations and misuse of personal data (Véliz, 2021). Social media also has a very significant influence and social impact on society (Tetreault, 2020), so it is necessary to promote goodness through social media (Luke et al., 2017).

Safe practices in using social media are something that needs to be understood significantly because doing so can avoid the impact of online aggression, namely experiencing sadness, anxiety and depression, violence, and even further, can have an impact on a person's mental health (Tetreault, 2020). Having safe data practices can also have an impact on mental health as it can help protect individuals from digital dangers that can negatively impact their mental health. Digital ethics can help protect individuals from these digital dangers by promoting responsible behavior and respect for others in digital spaces (Wei et al., 2022). Simple things we need to do as online citizens are to think before we post, be careful with the personal information we provide, report inappropriate or dangerous content, avoid spreading misleading information, and be careful in sharing personal information about ourselves, ourselves, or others (Lipschultz, 2018; Moroz et al., 2021; O'Reilly et al., 2021).

The primary and sustainable strategy for using social media is Education, Policy, and Technology (Tetreault, 2020), here digital ethics and curriculum are inseparable parts. Because digital technology is not neutral and is embedded in social, where digital ethics and curriculum are inseparable. Digital technology is not neutral and is embedded in social, economic, and political power relations. Therefore, it is essential to teach students how to critically analyze and evaluate how digital technologies are used in society (Luke et al., 2017). Educational curricula must be reoriented around fundamental questions about ethics in digital culture. That means that education must teach students about: 1) digital ethics principles, such as respecting the dignity of others, taking responsibility for their actions, and being honest in their communications; 2) the way digital technology is used in society, including how digital technology can used to promote or undermine democratic values; 3) the political economy of digital technology, including how it is produced, distributed, and consumed (Luke et al., 2017). Teaching students about digital ethics can help them become better citizens, more informed, engaged, and responsible in the digital era. A good understanding will be even better if it is strengthened and taught in an educational curriculum that focuses on cultivating attitudes through digital ethics education, which has the aim of regulating human behavior in digital spaces (Wei et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

In this research, it was found that middle school student's understanding of the ethics of using digital social media technology was good in all aspects of knowledge. However, instilling attitudes and actions still needed to be strengthened because it was seen that students were still often involved in violations of social media ethics such as cyberbullying, hoaxes, and data theft. The ethics of using social media is related to digital ethics, where there are seven essential elements, including respect for human rights, transparency and accountability of social media, inclusivity and diversity, justice and equality in using social media, maintaining safety and welfare in using social media, sustainability in using social media, and ethical data practices in social media use. These seven elements are essential in supporting the ethical use of digital technology, especially social media, which needs to be integrated into the curriculum so that students' good understanding can be strengthened and implemented well.

ACKNOWLEDGE

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