

Teachers' Role in Guiding Students' Digital Literacy on Social Media Use

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Abstract: The use of social media among elementary school students is no longer limited to communication, but has also become part of their daily entertainment and interaction. This study discusses how teachers at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo guide students in understanding digital literacy, especially in relation to TikTok, WhatsApp, and Roblox as a digital gaming platform with social interaction features. The research used a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, teacher interviews, brief student interviews, and documentation. The participants were 60 students from grade II and grade VI, along with four teachers who were actively involved in classroom learning and school digital activities. Field data showed that all students were familiar with the three platforms. In grade II, 17 students already used their own mobile phones, while in grade VI the number reached 23 students. Most students accessed digital media after school, during free time, or on holidays. Teacher guidance was carried out through classroom reminders, discussion of digital ethics, Islamic values, technology-based projects, and communication with parents. Several problems also appeared, such as reduced concentration, imitation of TikTok expressions, frequent talks about online games, and limited social interaction among some students. These findings show that digital literacy in elementary school needs continuous guidance from both teachers and parents.

Keyword : Teacher Role, Digital Literacy, Social Media, Islamic Elementary Students.

Abstrak: *Penggunaan media sosial pada siswa sekolah dasar tidak lagi hanya berkaitan dengan komunikasi, tetapi juga menjadi bagian dari hiburan dan interaksi sehari-hari. Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana guru di SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo membimbing literasi digital siswa, terutama dalam penggunaan TikTok, WhatsApp, dan Roblox sebagai platform game digital yang memiliki fitur interaksi sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui observasi, wawancara dengan guru, wawancara singkat dengan siswa, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian meliputi 60 siswa kelas II dan kelas VI serta empat guru yang terlibat langsung dalam pembelajaran dan kegiatan digital sekolah. Data lapangan menunjukkan bahwa seluruh siswa telah mengenal ketiga platform tersebut. Pada kelas II, 17 siswa sudah menggunakan handphone pribadi, sedangkan di kelas VI jumlahnya mencapai 23 siswa. Media digital umumnya digunakan setelah pulang sekolah, saat waktu luang, atau pada hari libur. Bimbingan guru dilakukan melalui nasihat di sela pembelajaran, pembiasaan etika bermedia sosial, pengaitan dengan nilai Islam, proyek teknologi digital, serta komunikasi dengan orang tua. Beberapa dampak yang muncul ialah konsentrasi belajar menurun, peniruan ungkapan dari TikTok, pembicaraan berulang tentang game daring, dan kecenderungan menyendiri pada*

beberapa siswa. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa literasi digital di sekolah dasar perlu dibimbing secara berkelanjutan oleh guru dan orang tua.

Kata kunci : Teacher Role, Digital Literacy, Social Media, Islamic Elementary Students.

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Introduction

Children's daily lives are increasingly shaped by their contact with digital media (Hasan, 2024). What was once considered an additional tool for learning or communication has now become part of children's routines, including how they spend their free time, interact with others, and respond to trends around them (Larson & Verma, 1999; Livingstone & Bober, 2004). This situation creates new challenges for elementary education because children are still in the process of developing self-control, social awareness, and the ability to judge which digital content is appropriate for them.

The development of digital technology has brought elementary school students closer to social media and various online platforms (Greenhow & Chapman, 2020; Katz, 2020; Nochumson, 2020). Mobile devices are no longer used only for learning or communicating with family, but also for entertainment, playing games, watching short videos, and following internet trends. Digital spaces have gradually become part of children's daily lives as spaces for learning, entertainment, and social interaction (UNICEF, 2017). Children also begin to interact through social media and digital platforms that provide communication features, comments, or chat rooms, such as TikTok, WhatsApp, and Roblox. (Nasrullah, 2017) explains that social media provides users with a space to participate, share, and build interactions. At the elementary school level, this close engagement with digital spaces still requires guidance because children are still learning to filter information, understand risks, protect their privacy, and control their use of digital devices.

This situation is also found at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo. Initial research data show that all observed second- and sixth-grade students were familiar with TikTok, WhatsApp, and Roblox. In the second grade, 17 out of 30 students used their own cell phones, while the remaining 13 used their parents' phones. In the sixth grade, 23 out of 30 students used their own cell phones, while the remaining 7 used their parents' phones. Digital media was generally used after school, during free time, and on holidays. Initial observations also showed several visible effects, such as students being less focused during lessons, imitating phrases from TikTok, frequently discussing online games, and some students tending to isolate themselves. Children who use digital devices without adequate supervision are more vulnerable to excessive digital media use, especially when screen time begins

to replace play, rest, and direct social interaction (Hill et al., 2016; World Health Organization, 2019).

Several previous studies indicate that digital media use among elementary school students requires serious attention. (Naimah et al., 2024) found that elementary school students tend to use digital media more for entertainment than for learning activities, while (Pratiwi & Pritanova, 2017) explain that uncontrolled social media use can affect students' behavior and learning habits. Digital literacy is therefore not only related to the ability to operate digital devices, but also to the ability to understand information, maintain ethics, think critically, and act responsibly in digital spaces (Amelia et al., 2021; Setyaningsih et al., 2019; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018).

However, existing studies still tend to discuss digital literacy in general terms, especially by emphasizing the impact of social media use or the importance of improving students' digital literacy. Less attention has been given to how teachers guide students' digital literacy in everyday school life through repeated practices such as giving reminders, modeling positive technology use, observing student behavior, building digital ethics, and communicating with parents. This gap is important because elementary school students do not only access digital media as viewers; they also imitate expressions, follow trends, communicate through digital platforms, and form habits that may affect their concentration, language, and social interaction.

This study addresses that gap by examining the role of teachers in guiding students' digital literacy regarding social media use at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo. The contribution of this study lies in mapping teacher guidance as a practical form of digital literacy education in an Islamic elementary school context, particularly through classroom advice, social media etiquette, behavioral observation, parental collaboration, and the reinforcement of Islamic values. By focusing on students' use of TikTok, WhatsApp, and Roblox, this study offers an empirical picture of how digital literacy guidance is practiced in daily school life, not only as a technical skill, but also as part of ethical awareness and character formation. Therefore, this study aims to describe the role of teachers in guiding students' digital literacy regarding social media use at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo.

Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to describe the role of teachers in guiding students' digital literacy regarding social media use at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo (Yin, 2018). This approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on daily guidance practices, student behavior, and the school's response to students' use of digital media, rather than measuring statistical relationships.

The study was conducted in grade II and grade VI, involving 60 students in total. These two grades were selected purposively to represent different stages of

elementary school students. Grade II was chosen as a lower-grade group because students at this level are still developing learning habits, self-control, and basic digital habits, and their use of cell phones is usually still strongly influenced by adult supervision. Grade VI was chosen as an upper-grade group because students tend to be more independent in using digital devices, interact more widely with peers, and are closer to the transition to secondary school. Through these two levels, the study sought to see how digital media access and the need for teacher guidance appear among lower and upper elementary students.

The informants consisted of four teachers, namely the homeroom teachers and assistant teachers from grade II and grade VI. In addition, six students, three from grade II and three from grade VI, were involved in brief supporting interviews. The student interviews were used to gain a simple picture of how students use cell phones, what platforms they access, whether they receive guidance from teachers, and how parents remind them about cell phone use at home. These interviews were not treated as the main data source, but they helped enrich the data from teacher interviews and classroom observations. To protect students' identities, the six interviewed students were given codes. Grade II students were coded as S2-A, S2-B, and S2-C, while grade VI students were coded as S6-A, S6-B, and S6-C.

Data were collected through observation, teacher interviews, brief student interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2017). Observations were carried out to see students' behavior during learning and social interaction at school. Teacher interviews explored forms of digital literacy guidance, rules related to cell phone use, teacher responses to students' digital habits, and communication with parents. Documentation included learning activities, the use of laptops, PCs, and projectors, educational pamphlets about digital technology and IMTAQ, as well as the school's Instagram and website.

The data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2019). Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing information from teachers, students, classroom observations, and school documentation. Since this study was conducted in one school and involved only two grade levels, the findings are not intended to be generalized to all elementary schools. Rather, they provide a contextual picture of how digital literacy guidance is practiced at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo.

Result and Discussion

Result

The findings show that students' familiarity with digital media was not limited to knowing TikTok, WhatsApp, and Roblox. These platforms had already become part of their daily habits, especially outside school hours. Field data showed that students in both grade II and grade VI were familiar with these platforms, while personal cell phone access appeared more common among upper-grade students. However, this information is used only as an entry point to understand how students use digital media and how teachers respond to it in daily school life.

Brief interviews with six students provided a clearer picture of students' digital media use. Grade II students generally used cell phones for online games, YouTube, TikTok, and contacting parents. One grade II student said, "I usually use my phone for online games and YouTube" (S2-A). Another student mentioned that the phone was used "to watch TikTok and play online games" (S2-C). In contrast, grade VI students mentioned wider uses, such as Instagram, TikTok, Roblox, class WhatsApp groups, taking photos, communicating with friends or parents, searching for school-related information, and playing online games. One grade VI student explained, "I use it for Instagram, TikTok, Roblox, and communicating with friends or parents" (S6-A). This difference suggests that upper-grade students had started to use digital media not only for entertainment, but also for communication, peer interaction, and limited learning purposes.

Table 1
 Summary of Students' Brief Interview Responses

Aspect	Grade II Students	Grade VI Students
Cell phone Use	Online games, YouTube, TikTok, and contacting parents	Instagram, TikTok, Roblox, class WhatsApp groups, taking photos, communicating with friends or parents, searching for school-related information, and online games
Parental reminders at home	Reminded for using cell phones too long, forgetting to pray, not studying, or using cell phones before the allowed time	Reminded for being too focused on cell phones, not responding when called, declining academic scores, or delaying tasks at home
Students' view of teacher guidance	Mostly felt that teachers helped guide them, although one student saw it more as prohibition	Generally felt that teachers helped by reminding them and communicating with parents

Source: Brief interviews with students

Teacher guidance on digital media use did not always appear as a formal lesson. Students stated that guidance about TikTok or WhatsApp was more often given by homeroom teachers because they met students more frequently and had closer daily interaction with them. Teachers who only taught once a week were less often mentioned in relation to social media guidance. One grade VI student said that teachers "help by reminding us what should be done" (S6-B), while another student

said that teachers also helped by communicating with parents when needed (S6-A). This finding indicates that digital literacy guidance was shaped not only by school rules, but also by the intensity of teacher-student interaction.

In the classroom, students were not reprimanded for using cell phones because they were not allowed to bring cell phones into class. Even so, social media was still discussed in relation to school activities. When students joined events, received achievements, or were asked to document school activities, teachers used these moments to explain that social media could be used positively. Students were reminded that knowing social media was not wrong, but its use needed boundaries, parental supervision, and responsibility in communicating or sharing information. One teacher explained, "Children tend to pay attention to and imitate what adults do, so as teachers and parents, we must really pay attention to the example we give in using digital media" (Teacher Interview, Grade VI).



Figure 1. Student learning activities during classroom observation

Source: Researcher's Documentation

The use of technology in learning also became one way for teachers to model positive digital media use. Teachers used laptops, PCs, and projectors to support classroom activities. Through these practices, students were introduced to technology as a learning tool, not only as a medium for games, videos, or social media trends. This is important because some students were more familiar with technology as entertainment than as part of the learning process.

Digital literacy guidance in this school was also connected to manners and religious values. School documentation showed educational pamphlets about the digital revolution and IMTAQ in the school environment. These materials indicate that the school did not treat digital development only as a technical matter, but also connected it with faith, character, and readiness to face change. Teachers also reminded students to be careful with their language, comments, and the content they followed, because behavior in digital spaces was still seen as part of students' manners.



Figure 2. Educational pamphlets on the digital revolution and IMTAQ in the school environment

Source: Researcher's Documentation

The student interviews also showed that reminders about cell phone use mostly occurred at home. Grade II students said that they were usually reminded because they spent too much time using cell phones, forgot to pray, did not study, or used cell phones before the allowed time. Grade VI students gave slightly different answers, such as being too focused on their phones, not hearing when called, experiencing lower academic scores, or delaying tasks when asked by parents. These responses show that students' digital media use was connected not only to school behavior, but also to home routines, worship habits, study discipline, and parent-child communication.

For this reason, communication between teachers and parents became an important part of digital literacy guidance. Teachers usually contacted parents through WhatsApp when they noticed changes in students' focus or behavior. This communication was not only used to report problems, but also to discuss how children could be guided at home. Teachers suggested limiting screen time, accompanying children when using cell phones, and replacing excessive screen time with more useful activities. A grade II teacher stated, "Cooperation and communication between parents and teachers are very important in guiding children's social media use and monitoring their development with digital technology" (Teacher Interview, Grade II). This finding shows that teacher guidance did not stop in the classroom, since most digital media use happened outside school hours.

Regarding student behavior, teachers reported that three students showed lower involvement in peer interaction. They were described as being quieter, spending more time alone during breaks, or being less active in interacting with

classmates. However, this finding needs to be interpreted carefully because it was based on teacher observation and had not been further verified through deeper interviews with the students or their parents. Therefore, it is not presented as a direct effect of digital media use, but as an early indication that teachers need to pay attention to changes in students' social interaction.

The school's Instagram and website also served as examples of positive social media use. These platforms were used to publish student achievements, school activities, religious programs, competitions, parent seminars, and educational information. Teachers referred to these practices to show that social media could be used not only for entertainment, but also for appreciation, communication, and school publication. In this sense, the school did not simply prohibit social media use, but also provided examples of more responsible use.

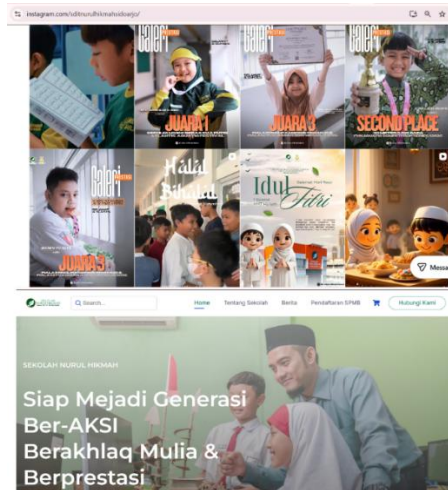


Figure 3. Utilization of the school's Instagram and website as platforms for showcasing student achievements and activities

Source: Social Media Documentation of SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo

Overall, the findings show that teachers guided students' digital literacy through daily and practical forms of guidance. They gave reminders, modeled positive technology use, connected digital behavior with manners and Islamic values, observed changes in student behavior, and communicated with parents. These findings indicate that digital literacy guidance in elementary school is not only about introducing technology, but also about helping students build habits, boundaries, and responsibility in digital spaces.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that elementary school students' engagement with digital media has moved beyond simple exposure to technology. Students were not only familiar with TikTok, WhatsApp, and Roblox, but also used digital media as part of entertainment, communication, peer interaction, and limited learning activities. This condition supports (Nasrullah, 2017) view that social media provides

space for participation, sharing, and interaction. However, at the elementary school level, this participation is still unstable because students are still developing the ability to filter content, manage time, understand privacy, and control their responses in digital spaces. (Wang et al., 2019) also show that children may recognize some online risks but do not yet fully understand more complex risks such as tracking, in-game persuasion, and content recommendation systems. Therefore, students' familiarity with digital platforms cannot be understood only as a sign of technological adaptation, but also as a reason why guidance from adults remains necessary.

The pattern of students' digital media use in this study also confirms that entertainment remains a dominant motive, especially among younger students. This is in line with (Naimah et al., 2024), who found that elementary school students tend to use digital media more for entertainment than for learning. (Rideout & Robb, 2019) also reported that children and adolescents commonly use digital devices for videos, games, and communication. However, the findings of this study add a more specific picture by showing differences between lower- and upper-grade students. Grade II students mostly used cell phones for games, YouTube, TikTok, and contacting parents, while grade VI students used digital media more widely for Instagram, TikTok, Roblox, class WhatsApp groups, taking photos, communicating with peers and parents, and searching for school-related information. This suggests that digital literacy guidance cannot be given in the same way for all elementary students. Lower-grade students need more basic guidance on time limits and supervision, while upper-grade students need broader guidance related to communication, privacy, peer influence, and responsible use of social media.

The role of teachers in this study also shows that digital literacy is not only a matter of technical skill. Digital literacy involves the ability to understand information, evaluate content, maintain ethics, and act responsibly in digital spaces (Ameliah et al., 2021; Setyaningsih et al., 2019; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018). In practice, teachers at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo guided students through daily reminders, examples, classroom discussions, and communication with parents. These practices may seem simple, but they are important because students' digital habits are often formed through repeated everyday experiences rather than through formal instruction alone. This finding extends previous studies that mainly emphasize the impact of social media use on students' behavior and learning habits ((Pratiwi & Pritanova, 2017), by showing how teachers respond to those impacts in daily school life.

The Islamic school context helps explain why teacher guidance in this study took the form of advice, habituation, moral reminders, and parent-school communication. In this setting, digital literacy was not framed only as the ability to use media safely or productively, but was also connected to adab, self-control,

responsibility, and the habit of using language carefully. The presence of IMTAQ-related materials in the school environment and teachers' reminders about speech, comments, and content selection show that digital behavior was understood as part of students' character. This does not mean that such guidance cannot exist in public or non-Islamic schools. Rather, this study shows that in the SDIT context, the language of digital literacy was closely linked to Islamic manners and moral responsibility. Thus, the distinctiveness of this setting lies not in a complete difference from other schools, but in the way digital literacy guidance was framed through religious values and daily character formation.

This point is important because the present study does not conduct a systematic comparison with public or non-Islamic elementary schools. Therefore, the findings should not be read as proof that teacher guidance in SDIT is entirely different from guidance in other school contexts. Instead, the contribution of this study lies in showing how digital literacy guidance is practiced within one Islamic elementary school setting, where teachers combine advice, modeling, behavioral observation, parental collaboration, and Islamic value reinforcement. Compared with studies that discuss digital literacy in more general terms (Naimah et al., 2024; Pratiwi & Pritanova, 2017; Setyaningsih et al., 2019), this study provides a more contextual picture of how teachers translate digital literacy into everyday guidance.

The findings also show that teacher guidance did not stop in the classroom. Since students mostly used cell phones at home, parental involvement became an important part of digital literacy guidance. Students' answers showed that reminders about cell phone use often came from parents, especially when children used phones too long, forgot to pray, did not study, ignored calls from parents, or experienced declining academic performance (Ali et al., 2026; Arif et al., 2025). This supports (Hill et al., 2016), who emphasize the importance of adult mediation in children's media use. In this study, teachers acted as a bridge between school and family by contacting parents through WhatsApp and discussing ways to guide children at home. This indicates that digital literacy guidance for elementary students requires continuity between school rules, teacher reminders, and family supervision.

The use of technology in classroom learning and the school's Instagram and website also provides another important point. The school did not simply prohibit social media use, but also modeled positive use of digital media. Teachers used laptops, PCs, and projectors in learning, while school social media was used to publish achievements, learning activities, religious programs, competitions, parent seminars, and educational information. This supports the idea that technology-based learning becomes more meaningful when teachers manage it for educational purposes rather than merely using it as an attractive medium (Munir, 2017; Resti et al., 2024; Suryani et al., 2022). In this case, students were not only told to avoid

negative digital behavior, but also shown that digital media can be used for appreciation, communication, and learning.

At the same time, several findings need to be interpreted carefully. Teachers reported that three students showed lower involvement in peer interaction, such as being quieter, spending more time alone, or being less active during breaks (Asy'arie & Mulyadi, 2023; Azizah & Usman, 2023). However, this observation cannot be directly concluded as an effect of digital media use because it was based on teacher observation and was not verified through deeper interviews with the students or parents. This limitation is important to acknowledge so that the finding is not overstated. What can be stated more carefully is that teachers need to be attentive to small changes in students' learning focus, language, and social interaction, especially when these changes appear alongside intensive digital media use.

Overall, this study shows that the role of teachers in guiding digital literacy at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo is practical, relational, and value-based. Teachers guide students not only by explaining rules, but also by giving repeated reminders, modeling positive technology use, connecting digital behavior with manners and Islamic values, observing student behavior, and working with parents. The contribution of this study is not to claim that SDIT is completely different from other elementary school contexts, but to show how digital literacy guidance can be embedded in daily school practices and character formation within an Islamic elementary school environment.

Conclusion

This study shows that teachers play an important role in guiding students' digital literacy at SDIT Nurul Hikmah Sidoarjo. The guidance does not appear only in formal lessons, but also through daily reminders, examples of positive technology use, discussions about social media, observation of student behavior, and communication with parents. Students in grade II and grade VI were already familiar with TikTok, WhatsApp, and Roblox, but their patterns of use were different. Lower-grade students tended to use cell phones for games, YouTube, TikTok, and contacting parents, while upper-grade students used digital media more widely for social media, class communication, peer interaction, documentation, and limited learning needs.

The contribution of this study lies in showing how digital literacy guidance is practiced in the daily life of an Islamic elementary school. In this context, digital literacy was not treated only as the ability to use digital devices, but was also connected to manners, responsibility, self-control, and character formation. This can be seen from teachers' reminders about language and comments in digital spaces, the use of IMTAQ-related materials in the school environment, the modeling of technology as a learning tool, and the use of the school's Instagram and website as examples of positive social media use. Thus, the Islamic values discussed in this

study are not only presented as a general claim, but are reflected in the way teachers guide students to use digital media more carefully and responsibly.

The study also shows that digital literacy guidance cannot be carried out by teachers alone. Since students' use of cell phones mostly occurs at home, communication between teachers and parents becomes an important part of the guidance process. Teachers contacted parents when they noticed changes in students' focus, habits, or social interaction, and this communication helped connect school guidance with home supervision. However, this study was conducted in one school and involved only two grade levels, so the findings should be understood as contextual rather than general. Future studies may involve more schools, more grade levels, and deeper interviews with students and parents to provide a broader understanding of digital literacy guidance in elementary education.

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