

**EXPLORING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING ENGLISH  
THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY AT THE 8TH GRADE  
STUDENTS OF SMPN 4 KOTABUMI ACADEMIC YEAR  
2025/2026**

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to explore the experiences of eighth grade students learning English through social media at SMP Negeri 4 Kotabumi for the 2025/2026 academic year. The researchers used Kolb's Experiential Learning theoretical framework, which encompasses four main aspects: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 27 respondents and explained thematically based on Kolb's learning stages. The results indicate that in the concrete experience aspect, students gained enjoyable learning experiences through platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, particularly in the form of songs, videos, and interactive quizzes. In the reflective observation aspect, students felt motivated and more confident, despite challenges such as explanations being too fast or lack of translation. Furthermore, in the abstract conceptualization aspect, students were able to conceptualize learning experiences by taking notes, translating, summarizing, and memorizing new vocabulary to support learning at school. Lastly, in the active experimentation aspect, some students dare to apply English in real life, such as talking with friends or answering teacher questions, although others are still hesitant due to limited abilities. Overall, the researcher concluded that eighth grade students' experiences in learning English through social media demonstrate that these platforms serve not only as a means of entertainment but also as a real learning resource. This study confirms that social media provides a positive and meaningful learning experience for students, with TikTok being a popular platform due to its engaging and accessible format. However, it's important to remember that the effectiveness of learning through social media depends heavily on appropriate learning strategies, relevant content selection, and students' ability to reflect on their learning experiences.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, English Language Learning, Learning Experience, Kolb Experiential Learning, Middle School Students*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman siswa kelas delapan belajar bahasa Inggris melalui media sosial di SMP Negeri 4 Kotabumi untuk tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Para peneliti menggunakan kerangka teori Pembelajaran Eksperiensial Kolb, yang mencakup empat aspek utama: Pengalaman Konkret, Observasi Reflektif, Konseptualisasi Abstrak, dan Eksperimentasi Aktif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan

metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan 27 responden dan dijelaskan secara tematis berdasarkan tahapan pembelajaran Kolb. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam aspek pengalaman konkret, siswa memperoleh pengalaman belajar yang menyenangkan melalui platform seperti YouTube, TikTok, dan Instagram, khususnya dalam bentuk lagu, video, dan kuis interaktif. Dalam aspek observasi reflektif, siswa merasa termotivasi dan lebih percaya diri, meskipun menghadapi tantangan seperti penjelasan yang terlalu cepat atau kurangnya terjemahan. Lebih lanjut, dalam aspek konseptualisasi abstrak, siswa mampu mengonseptualisasikan pengalaman belajar dengan mencatat, menerjemahkan, meringkas, dan menghafal kosakata baru untuk mendukung pembelajaran di sekolah. Terakhir, pada aspek eksperimen aktif, sebagian siswa berani mengaplikasikan Bahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan nyata, seperti berbicara dengan teman atau menjawab pertanyaan guru, meskipun sebagian lainnya masih ragu-ragu karena keterbatasan kemampuan. Secara keseluruhan, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa pengalaman siswa kelas delapan dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris melalui media sosial menunjukkan bahwa platform ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sarana hiburan tetapi juga sebagai sumber belajar yang nyata. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa media sosial memberikan pengalaman belajar yang positif dan bermakna bagi siswa, dengan TikTok menjadi platform yang populer karena formatnya yang menarik dan mudah diakses. Namun, penting untuk diingat bahwa efektivitas pembelajaran melalui media sosial sangat bergantung pada strategi pembelajaran yang tepat, pemilihan konten yang relevan, dan kemampuan siswa untuk merefleksikan pengalaman belajar mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** Media Sosial, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Pengalaman Belajar, Pembelajaran Eksperiensial Kolb, Siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Learning English is a crucial aspect of education, especially in the era of globalization. Furthermore, English is an international language used as a language of communication between all nations and countries around the world. Therefore, English should not be ignored. In learning English, four main skills are taught. According to (Mueller, 2019, p. 9) it is important to evaluate students' communication skills in these four English skills, namely listening, speaking, reading,

and writing. This has been emphasized to improve English language education in order to keep up with rapid global developments. Therefore, it is important for teachers to evaluate students so that they can confirmed the extent of student development in learning English. However, challenges in learning English remain. Many students find it difficult to understand new vocabulary, apply correct grammar, or speak confidently. Therefore, learning English requires rapid technological developments that must bring significant changes in the world of

education, including the way students access and learn English

Based on an interview with eight grade students of SMPN 04 Kotabumi on February 23, 2025. There are several problems and experiences of students learning English through social media. First, most students are unaware that social media can serve as an educational resource. Many students state that they use use platforms like TikTok for entertainment purposes, without realizing that these applications can also improve their English skills. Second, the lack of interest and motivation among students hinders the effective use of social media for learning. Usually, students show enthusiasm to use social media only when given an assignment by the teacher, but they refrain from using it independently, finding English to be difficult and uninteresting. Lastly, limited internet access and data quota. Many students feel annoyed because their data quota runs out quickly when watching educational videos on platforms such as YouTube or Instagram, which hinders their learning process. Nonetheless, despite these hurdles, a number of students remain eager to learn English through social media, provided they receive better guidance and more focused educational resources. As a result, more effective strategies are needed to increase awareness, motivation, and access

to high-quality learning materials, which ensures that social media can be used more effectively for English language learning. The aim of this study is to explore students' experiences in using social media as a tool to learn English and to identify the challenges they face in the process.

Based on these reasons, the researcher is interested in exploring students' experiences in using social media as a tool for learning English because social media itself is a very popular digital platform and is often used by everyone. Thus, the results of this research can be the basis for educators and schools in designing more innovative learning strategies that are in accordance with current technological developments. Therefore, the researcher chose the topic in this study with the title "Exploring Students' Experiences of Learning English Through Social Media: A Case Study of English Learning by 8th Grade Students of SMPN 4 Kotabumi Academic Year 2025/2026."

The novelty of this research is that although the use of social media in English language learning has been widely researched, most studies are still limited to the context of upper secondary education or higher education and have not described the in-depth experiences of junior high school students. For this reason, this study is interest in filling this gap by specifically exploring the experiences of grade 8

students in utilizing social media for learning English media. This approach not only offers a new perspective, but also provides a practical basis for teachers and schools in designing more relevant and innovative learning.

## **II. METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in-depth the experiences of eighth-grade students in learning English through social media. This approach was chosen because it provides the researcher with the opportunity to understand phenomena holistically based on the students' real-life context. According to Yin (2014, p. 12) a case study is an appropriate method when researchers want to explore a phenomenon in depth, especially when the boundaries between the research object and the real-life context are not clearly visible. This approach ensures that students' experiences can be analyzed in detail and accurately.

The research subjects consisted of 27 eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Kotabumi in the 2025/2026 academic year. This number was obtained through a selection process from 50 initial respondents who completed an initial questionnaire regarding the use of social media in English learning. A validation

process was carried out to ensure that only students who actually used platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram to learn English were selected as the primary respondents. This aligns with Arikunto's (2010, p. 172) opinion, which states that research subjects should be selected based on their relevance and contribution to the research data needs.

Research data were collected through semi-structured interviews based on four main aspects of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning theory: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allowed researchers to explore in-depth information while still providing respondents with the flexibility to freely explain their experiences. Esterberg, in Sugiyono (2012, p. 231), stated that this type of interview is effective for establishing open conversations and producing richer data. The interview instrument was validated by two experts from the English Language Education Study Program.

The data collection process was conducted over four days, from July 29 to August 1, 2025. Each interview was conducted individually and recorded with the respondents' consent to ensure data accuracy. After the interviews, the data were transcribed and analyzed. The data

analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman model in Sugiyono (2019, p. 42), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The reduction stage was carried out to filter important data according to the research focus, the presentation stage was carried out by organizing the data in narrative form, and the conclusion drawing stage was carried out continuously until a consistent pattern and meaning were found.

### **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Results**

Based on interviews with 27 eighth-grade students, it was found that all students had experience learning English through social media. They utilized educational content such as vocabulary, short dialogues, grammar explanations, and conversation examples that appeared spontaneously on their homepages or were intentionally searched for. This finding aligns with Murni's (2022, p. 32) opinion, which states that social media can be an alternative learning resource that provides a more engaging and accessible learning experience for students due to its visual and interactive nature.

Of the three main platforms studied YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram the results showed that TikTok was the most

dominant platform used by students to learn English. Almost all students reported that they often accidentally acquired material through the For You Page (FYP) feature, such as teacher explanation videos, vocabulary challenges, mini lessons, and simple listening exercises. This aligns with Pokhrel's (2024, p. 14) findings, which state that the short video format on TikTok helps students grasp the material more quickly due to its concise presentation and focus on a single learning point.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that social media plays a significant role in supporting students' English learning experiences. TikTok is the most dominant platform because it aligns with the learning characteristics of today's adolescents, who prefer fast, visual, and practical learning. Consistent with Nissa (2022, p. 65) opinion, social media can increase student motivation and engagement if the content is relevant and presented in an engaging format. These findings confirm that social media is not only a means of entertainment but also has strong potential as an effective learning medium for junior high school students.

#### **Discussion**

Based on explanation of the study show that students' experiences in learning English through social media are highly diverse, but there is a consistent pattern:

they are more attracted to content that is concise, visual, and easy to understand. The finding that all students have experience learning through social media supports Pratiwi et al (2022) assertion that social media has now become an integral part of the learning activities of the younger generation. Social media provides a space for students to access material spontaneously and without the constraints of time and place, making learning more flexible than traditional models.

Furthermore, the research findings align closely with Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, which explains that effective learning occurs through four stages: concrete experience, reflection, concept formation, and active experimentation. Students experience these four stages when watching educational videos on TikTok or YouTube, reflecting on the content, understanding the concepts learned, and then applying them to daily activities such as talking with friends or completing schoolwork. This learning process occurs naturally without coercion, in line with the learning style of the digital generation.

Overall, this research confirms that social media, particularly TikTok, serves not only as a means of entertainment but can also be an effective and relevant learning resource tailored to students' needs.

This opens up opportunities for teachers to utilize social media in their learning and adapt teaching strategies to the preferences and learning styles of today's generation, which are predominantly visual and fast-paced. With the right guidance, social media can be a crucial bridge in significantly improving students' English skills.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on these findings, the researchers aimed to explore the experiences of eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Kotabumi in learning English through social media. Social media provides positive and meaningful learning experiences for students. They utilize platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram to access learning materials that are easier to understand and more engaging than traditional classroom methods.

The most dominant social media platform used by eighth-grade students to learn English is TikTok, followed by YouTube and Instagram. TikTok is the top choice because of its entertaining short-form video format, a wealth of materials tailored to students' needs, and easy to understand learning materials, as the explanations are more engaging, engaging, and engaging.

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