

# The Role of Social Media in Enhancing Students' Extrinsic Social and Instrumental Motivation in German Learning

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## Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of social media in increasing students' extrinsic motivation, both in the social and instrumental categories, in learning German. Through a descriptive quantitative approach, data were collected from 51 student respondents who are active users of social media who have attended German language courses for at least one semester. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to measure three main variables, namely intensity of social media use, instrumental extrinsic motivation, and social extrinsic motivation. The results show that platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are significantly utilized by students as a means of self-learning, expanding vocabulary, and strengthening social connections with online learning communities. Social media is also proven to support learning that is more flexible, interesting and relevant to the digital needs of today's students. This finding confirms that social media has great potential as an additional learning medium that can externally motivate students, both for social (community acceptance) and instrumental (career and academic development) purposes.

**Keywords:** social media, extrinsic, instrumental, social motivation, German language learning

## Introduction

In the context of the current digital age, the use of social media as a tool to help students learn foreign languages is starting to get attention (Rachman et al., 2022). Various studies in education that have been in-depth show that social media has a great capacity and speed to improve student learning motivation, both in foreign language learning (Ramdani et al., 2021). Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are interactive learning support platforms that are fun and support competitive among students so that they can create a more friendly learning atmosphere, not only helping student learning interactions but also playing an important role in enriching student learning experiences (Muskita & Muskita, 2022; Pranyoto & Geli, 2020).

With this development, social media now allows students to access interactive learning resources through various platforms such as Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, and others (Layyinatus Sariroh & Jannah, 2024). Thus, learning German through social media becomes more integrated and interesting (Shaquille & Parga Zen, 2023). The various features of social media platforms allow interaction between teachers and learners, resulting in independent

and responsive learning that suits the needs of learners (Pujiono, 2021). This is particularly important in language learning, as it is needed to improve communication skills.

During the learning process as part of its interactivity as a learning medium, social media can also increase external motivation, both social and instrumental (Nurwahidah et al., 2021). Instrumental motivation arises when learning is considered useful for a specific purpose, for example motivation for a future career which can be interpreted as a desire within a person to improve their abilities and achieve what they want, according to the needs of students who can be trained through education (Suniah & Mulyanti, 2025). Meanwhile, this statement also has a connection with social extrinsic motivation by Rahayu et al., (2021) which states that social motivation is also important to have because it can encourage each individual to be better in order to get recognition from their social environment. Both opinions must be owned by every foreign language learner, especially German in using social media (Rahayu et al., 2021).

Lantz-Andersson (2018) emphasizes that social media creates a context in which students can practice language in more real and functional situations, supporting the broader curriculum goal of developing communication skills (Lantz-Andersson, 2018). Thus, creating a more interactive, informative learning atmosphere so that communication is less rigid, students can maximize learning methods that focus on direct language use before more specific learning such as learning grammar and structure through social media, which is an important part of instrumental motivation (Nuraeni & Irawati, 2022).

The impact on each individual who uses social media can also be seen from the influence of social media on the ability of 4 language elements, including receptive and productive abilities that can create an atmosphere that supports learning (Aulia et al., 2021). Puspita and Laily (2023) emphasized that social media shapes students' positive perceptions of language learning, offering a platform for them to share knowledge and motivate each other (Puspita & Laily, 2023). Therefore, communication in groups using social media can strengthen mutual support, which can increase external motivation, and can encourage students to be more active in learning (Wibawa et al., 2022).

However, the role of social media in increasing students' social and instrumental extrinsic motivation in learning German is still a question that requires scientific study. Therefore, this study aims to describe the use of social media in the context of German language learning and analyze its role in shaping and increasing students' social extrinsic motivation. In addition, this study also aims to describe which factors are influential in the extrinsic social and instrumental motivation.

## **Method**

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a Likert scale questionnaire instrument to analyze the role of social media in increasing the social and instrumental extrinsic motivation of German language learning students. The research design focused on measuring three main variables: (1) social media usage patterns (frequency, platform, and learning activities), (2) social extrinsic motivation (community interaction and social recognition), and (3) extrinsic instrumental motivation (practical goals such as career and further studies). The research population includes active students who use social media and take German courses for at least one semester, with sampling techniques that ensure representativeness and generalizability of the results. The research instrument was a digital questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) divided into

three sections according to the research variables. Data collection was conducted through the Google Form platform with response monitoring and reminders to ensure data completeness, while data analysis used descriptive (mean, median, frequency distribution) and inferential (correlation between variables) statistics presented in tables and graphs to identify patterns of influence of motivational factors.

## Results

We include several social media applications that are often used by respondents to learn German through social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok. Most of our 51 respondents, 18 students use Instagram and 18 others use Tiktok to learn German through social media. Instagram and Tiktok can accompany them to study independently and indirectly can also increase their external motivation, especially in the category of instrumental external motivation and social external motivation. Below we will describe 3 tables that represent each variable that supports the results of the data obtained through questionnaire instruments using a Likert scale containing, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

Below is a table of social media roles, including:

| No. | Item (Role of Social Media)   | Respondents |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 1   | Intensity of daily social media use   | 62,75%      |
| 2   | Number of social media usage in a day   | 67,06%      |
| 3   | Use of social media only for scrolling  | 66,27%      |
| 4   | The importance of using social media as a routine                                   | 66,67%      |
| 5   | Social media use just to pass the time  | 47,84%      |
| 6   | Challenges of social media addiction  | 63,53%      |
| 7   | Social media makes it easier to access information than other media                 | 66,67%      |
| 8   | Following multiple accounts to support personal interests                           | 73,3%       |
| 9   | Always looking at notifications without any consideration to the importance of them | 62,35%      |
| 10  | The influence of social media on individual behavior and thinking                   | 64,71%      |

From the data we obtained through a questionnaire using a Likert scale containing, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. In connection with the table above, it is known that, the intensity of using social media every day is 62.75% by respondents who have answered most of them answer 3 = Neutral from a total of 51 respondents. Most of our respondents use social media only for scrolling by answering 4 = agree with a total of 66.27%. Even so, social media can also facilitate access to information as much as 66.67% of which most of our respondents answered 3 = Neutral. Social media can also more or less influence the way of thinking and behaving towards the environment as many as 51 of our respondents answered 3 = neutral with a total of 64.71%. The description above shows that social media also has an important role to access information easily which can influence the way 51 respondents think and behave.

Next is a table of extrinsic motivation in the Instrumental motivation category, including the following:

| No. | Item (Instrumental Motivation)  | Respondents |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 1   | Social media for additional German language learning independently                    | 65,10%      |
| 2   | Social media by subscribing to accounts that support German language learning         | 72,55%      |
| 3   | Social media to expand German knowledge and vocabulary                                | 54,12%      |
| 4   | Social media can help understanding through educational content about German language | 55,69%      |
| 5   | Use of social media features such as captions or subtitles as a learning tool         | 59,22%      |
| 6   | Short videos through German content to learn Ausprache through content or videos      | 70,98%      |
| 7   | Social media as the main learning source rather than other sources                    | 71,76%      |
| 8   | Social media as a supplement to lecture material                                      | 60,39%      |
| 9   | Saving educational contents related to German language learning through social media  | 69,80%      |
| 10  | Downloading content related to social media to study offline                          | 60,39%      |

The table above is a further elaboration of the instrument items that we have created by representing the instrumental category of extrinsic motivation variables. The table shows that our 51 respondents often subscribe to accounts that support educational content in German through social media as much as 72.55% by answering 4 = Agree which is supported by statement number 7, namely, social media as the main learning source with 71.76% answers by answering 4 = Agree from 51 respondents they feel it is in accordance with what they experience in the digital era like today. Not only that, they save and download educational content about German language learning with a total of 69.80% and 60.39% with the answer 4 = neutral which can support their self-learning motivation through social media, especially the instrumental motivation category.

Next, we will describe the respondents' results on the Extrinsic Motivation variable in the social motivation category:

| No. | Item (Social Motivation)  | Respondents |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 1   | Motivate students to learn German to be accepted by the online community of learners  | 70,98%      |
| 2   | Motivate students to be able to communicate with new friends or Nativespeakers        | 68,24%      |
| 3   | Positive response if sharing content related to German language                       | 64,31%      |
| 4   | Following the trend of learning foreign languages, German through social media        | 71,37%      |
| 5   | Discuss through online communities of German learners from various countries          | 65,10%      |
| 6   | Confident to show German language progress through social media                       | 61,10%      |
| 7   | Encouragement to imitate, because I see my friends using social media to learn German | 60,78%      |
| 8   | Learning German through social media to build international network                   | 60,00%      |
| 9   | Satisfaction level when interacting using German through social media                 | 50,98%      |
| 10  | Creating German content to be responded by others through social media                | 60,39%      |

Social media can also motivate students to learn German with the aim of being accepted by foreign communities or online learner communities with a total of 70.98% of 51 respondents answering 4 = agree. Respondents also follow trends in learning foreign languages, especially learning German through social media by 51 respondents consisting of students of the German language education program at Malang State University as a sample with most answers 71.37% answered 4 = Agree. Supported by statement number 6, 61.10% of the total number of respondents feel confident to show their German language progress through social media by creating content related to learning German so that it is responded by others through social media with an answer of 60.39% by 51 respondents.

## **Discussion**

The results show that Instagram and TikTok are influential platforms in learning German, each of which is used by 18 out of 51 respondents. The use of these two platforms not only reflects the digital generation's interest in visual and interactive content, but also shows the role of social media in the formation of instrumental extrinsic motivation. 72.55% of respondents actively follow educational accounts in German, indicating an awareness of optimizing social media as a structured learning resource. The behavior of saving (69.80%) and downloading content (60.39%) also reinforces the idea that students develop independent strategies to cope with the temporary nature of digital content, while maintaining long-term access to learning materials. Although 62.75% of respondents were neutral towards the intensity of daily use, the high percentage of agreement (66.27%) on scrolling activities suggests that passive exposure to German content acts as a form of incidental learning through repeated exposure.

On the other hand, social extrinsic motivation is seen from 70.98% of respondents who use social media to be accepted in a foreign community, reflecting the need for social recognition and cultural integration. This phenomenon is reinforced by 71.37% participation in online language learning trends, which creates positive pressure to consistently learn. However, neutral responses to the ease of access to information (66.67%) and the influence of social media on behavior (64.71%) indicate students' critical attitude in filtering content, while still acknowledging its role in shaping digital identity. This finding shows the duality of social media as a hybrid learning space that blurs the boundaries between academic formality and digital informality, while demanding the integration of digital literacy in the language education curriculum. The limitations of the study, such as neutral response bias and cross-sectional design, open up opportunities for further research to explore the long-term impact of social media-based learning strategies on linguistic competence.

## **Conclusion**

Most of the 51 respondents often use social media to learn German. A total of 36 respondents use Instagram and TikTok to learn German through certain content. The remaining 14 respondents use social media to fill spare time and scrolling social media only. The results of this study include 3 variables, the role of social media use, instrumental category extrinsic motivation, and social category extrinsic motivation which are interrelated. The first variable can increase students' extrinsic motivation (instrumental and social) as much as 64.12% social media plays a very important role. The second variable containing instrumental category extrinsic motivation has a total of 64.00% and social category extrinsic motivation of 63.33% has its own role to motivate respondents in the independent learning process and in the classroom. So, in today's digital era, social media has an important role to increase extrinsic motivation in instrumental and social categories with certain goals such as independent learning resources and to be accepted in the international community which certainly contains German language learners.

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