



The Influence of Social Media Use on the Formation of Islamic Values in Early Childhood: An Ex Post Facto Study

Jimi Harianto*, Sri Asih, Sri Hartati

STKIP Al Islam Tunas Bangsa Lampung, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: jimiharianto@stkipalib.ac.id

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the influence of social media use on the formation of Islamic values—*aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship), and *akhlaq* (morality)—in early childhood. The research employed a quantitative ex post facto design involving parents/guardians as respondents, with total sampling applied to include the entire population. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire that met validity ($r = 0.396$) and reliability requirements (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression with SPSS 25.0. The results indicate that the intensity of social media use has a significant negative effect on the formation of Islamic values in children ($t = -4.127 > t\text{-table} = 2.069$; $p < 0.05$), with the regression equation $Y = 86.215 - 0.902X$. Higher exposure to unfiltered social media content is associated with lower levels of children's understanding of basic beliefs and daily worship practices. Unsupervised use of social media significantly hinders the internalization of Islamic values in early childhood. The study implies the need for stronger collaboration between parents and educators in supervising children's media use, enhancing digital literacy, and implementing effective content filtering to support the development of Islamic values in early childhood.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital era has reconfigured the global ecosystem of child development. The UNESCO report notes that early childhood (0-8 years old) is now the group with the fastest growth in internet penetration, with 80% of the content consumed sourced from visual social media platforms such as YouTube Kids and TikTok (U.N.E.S.C.O., 2023). This phenomenon reflects not only technological transformation but also a socio-cultural shift in which children's internalized values are no longer predominantly sourced from families and formal educational institutions, but also from curation algorithms for digital content (Livingstone et al., 2015). In a global context, the primary concerns are the participation gap and the literacy gap between the speed of technology adoption and the maturity of the digital literacy framework, as well as the lagging regulation of child protection in cyberspace (Chaudron et al., 2018).

Nationally, Indonesia faces a unique paradox. On the one hand, this country, with the world's largest Muslim population, places character education and religious values at the core of the Independent Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, as set by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). On the other hand, a survey by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics revealed that 65% of children

aged 3-6 years in Indonesia already have regular access to gadgets, with an average daily use of 2-3 hours for social media content (Kemenkominfo, 2023). This data indicates a reality in which the hierarchical, structured, and exemplary process of transmitting Islamic values must compete with the instantaneous, fragmentary, and often unfiltered flow of values from social media (Harianto et al., 2026). This situation is exacerbated by findings from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association, which show that only 28% of parents in Indonesia actively use parental control features, reflecting a low level of critical digital literacy at the family level (A.P.J.I.I., 2023).

At the local level, PAUD KB Al Wildan in Pringsewu Regency, Lampung, represents a peri-urban society with strong religious characteristics, yet it is also experiencing rapid technological penetration. Preliminary studies show that most parents in the environment are workers with secondary education, who view gadgets as a practical tool (a digital babysitter) but are less aware of their curatorial impact on the formation of children's values (Meilani & Harianto, 2025). This local context makes PAUD research a relevant miniature for understanding national and global dynamics, in which Islamic values, the foundation of the community, are tested for resilience amid the flow of digital information.

Criticism of previous research reveals fundamental weaknesses that led to the research gap. First, most studies, such as those conducted by Twenge & Campbell (2019) and Valkenburg, Driel, & Beyens, (2022), focused on the impact of social media on adolescents, with psychological variables such as well-being and anxiety. This approach is less appropriately applied to early childhood, which has fundamentally different mechanisms of cognitive, social, and moral development (Berk, 2018). Second, research in the context of Islam, for example, by Fadilah & Suryana, (2021) and (Iskandar, 2020), tends to be normative-prescriptive and discusses more aspects of parental mediation without presenting strong quantitative empirical evidence about the power of social media influence (effect size) on each domain of Islamic values (faith, worship, morals) separately. Third, there is a dichotomy in the literature: one side mainstreams negative impacts (such as social dissociation and value degradation), while the other, such as Clark, (2017) It offers a perspective on appropriation theory that sees the potential of social media as a source of positive value learning when properly curated. However, research testing this dichotomy in a homogeneous, geographically limited Islamic early childhood education setting, where control over contextual variables is more likely, is still very rare.

The Gapresearch identified are: (1) There has been no study that measures explicitly the quantitative influence of social media use on the three pillars of Islamic values (faith, worship, morals) separately and comprehensively in early childhood in the setting of Islamic PAUD; (2) The lack of studies investigating this phenomenon in the context of a homogeneous and limited PAUD community, where confounding variables such as cultural and economic differences can be better controlled to isolate the influence of social media; (3) There is no analytical model that integrates quantitative data on social media consumption patterns with a qualitative understanding of the mechanism of value transmission at the family level in specific religious communities such as in Pringsewu, Lampung.

Based on the context and criticism of the literature above, the purpose of this study is to quantitatively analyze the influence of social media use on the formation of Islamic values (faith, worship, morals) in early childhood at PAUD KB Al Wildan,

Pringsewu, Lampung, with a limited population of 25 parents/guardians in the 2024/2025 school year. The contribution of this study is expected to: (1) Provide rigorous empirical evidence on the effect of social media on each domain of Islamic values in early childhood in a homogeneous community setting; (2) Present a diagnostic map of early childhood social media consumption patterns in religious peri-urban areas, which can be the basis for micro-policies at the PAUD level and community-based digital literacy programs; (3) Develop a conceptual framework for mitigating the negative impacts of social media that is contextual, based on the strength of community and parent-teacher collaboration, which can be tested in subsequent action research to be replicated in similar settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative, *ex post facto* design (Ramadhani & Sukartono, 2026; Ramanda et al., 2025). The quantitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for testing relationships among variables using numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to test or reject the hypothesis (Almusaed et al., 2025; Rana et al., 2023). The *ex post facto* design is used because the researcher does not manipulate the independent variable; instead, the researcher observes the effects of naturally occurring conditions. This design is appropriate for exploring the possible causal relationship between the use of social media (as an existing independent variable) and the formation of Islamic values. The population in this study comprises all parents or primary caregivers of PAUD KB Al Wildan students in Pringsewu Regency, Lampung, in the 2024/2025 school year, totaling 25 people. The selection of analytical units at the parental level was based on the assumption that they were the most knowledgeable about the child's media consumption patterns and the development of children's values at home. Given the limited and relatively homogeneous population (within the scope of a single educational unit), this study used a census technique, in which all members of the population were sampled ($N = 25$). Such total sampling allows stronger generalizations in specific population contexts and minimizes sampling error. The main characteristics of the sample are identified from the collected demographic data.

This study examines the relationship between social media use by children and the formation of Islamic values in early childhood. Social media use is defined by the intensity, duration, and pattern of children's engagement with platforms like YouTube and TikTok, outside of formal learning contexts. It is measured using a composite Likert scale score that includes frequency, duration, platform diversity, content type, and whether the child is accompanied while using these platforms. The formation of Islamic values refers to the internalization and introduction of core Islamic principles across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Nurjamilah, 2024; Nurpita et al., 2025). This is measured through a Likert scale, assessing faith (understanding of Allah SWT, His creation, and the Prophet PBUH), worship (practice of basic rituals such as prayers and ablution), and morals (display of positive behaviors like honesty, respect, and patience in daily interactions).

The main instrument of this study is a closed questionnaire based on the Likert scale, consisting of three parts: demographic data, a scale of social media use, and a scale of the formation of Islamic values, compiled based on operational definitions and literature reviews. Content validity is ensured through expert judgment from two experts, with Aiken's $V > 0.80$ as the criterion. (Aiken, 1985), while construct validity is empirically tested using Pearson's analysis, where the item is declared valid if r counts $> r$ table 0.396

(Sugiyono, 2019). The instrument's reliability, measured by Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$ is considered a good standard; Nunnally & Bernstein, (1994), was 0.85 for the social media scale and 0.88 for the Islamic value scale. Data collection was carried out using the survey method(offline) in the PAUD environment after coordination with the school, with informed consent obtained first. The research procedures were carried out sequentially, including preparation, expert validation, instrument trials, survey administration to all samples (25 parents/guardians), data processing, and reporting.

Data analysis was carried out in stages, starting with descriptive statistics to describe the sample and provide a general picture of the variables. The inferential analysis began with a prerequisite test, which included: residual normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test(criterion $p > 0.05$; Ghasemi & Zahediasl, (2012), linearity test with an ANOVA-based Test for Linearity (criterion $p < 0.05$; Field, 2018), and heteroscedasticity test using the Scatterplot method. After all assumptions were met, the hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ to determine the significant influence (Ivy et al., 2018). The entire research process adheres to ethical principles, including obtaining written informed consent, ensuring the confidentiality of respondents' identities, applying the principle of non-maleficence, and obtaining written permission to access the institution's leadership.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings based on the data from 25 respondents. The results are organized to provide an overview of the sample, descriptive statistics of the research variables, fulfillment of analytical assumptions, and hypothesis testing. The entire population of 25 parents or guardians of PAUD KB Al Wildan students participated as respondents. The profile of the respondents is dominated by mothers (84%), with the majority falling in the age range of 25-40 years (88%). In terms of educational background, most respondents (60%) had completed high school. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the respondents in detail.

Table 1. Characteristic Respondents (N=25)

Characteristics	Categories	Frekuensi (n)	Persentase (%)
Relationship with Children	Mother	21	84
	Dad	3	12
	Wali Lain	1	4
Age Range	25 - 30 Tahun	11	44
	31 - 35 Tahun	8	32
	36 - 40 Tahun	5	20
	> 40 Tahun	1	4
	> 40 years old		
Final Education	Junior High School/Equivalent	5	20
	High School/Equivalent	15	60
	Diploma/Sarjana	5	20
	Diploma/Series		

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including their relationship with children, age distribution, and educational background.

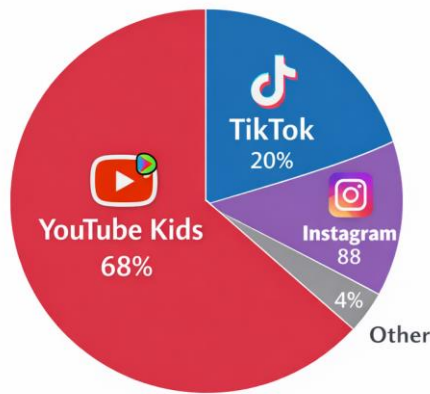


Chart 1. Percentage of Social Media Platforms Accessed by Children
(Based on Parental Reports)

Figure 1. Distribution of Social Media Platforms Used by Children

Figure 1 shows the percentage of children who use social media, as reported by parents. The data indicate that YouTube Kids is the most accessed platform (68%), followed by TikTok (20%), Instagram (8%), and other platforms (4%).

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the distributions for the independent and dependent variables before inferential analysis. The independent variable (X), social media usage, has scores ranging from 14 to 23 on a maximum scale of 25. The mean social media usage score is 18.12, with a standard deviation of 2.45. The data further indicate that children spend an average of 1.5 to 2 hours per day on social media. YouTube Kids is the most frequently used platform (68%), followed by TikTok (20%).

Bound Variable (Y): Islamic Values. The score for the Y variable ranges from 62 to 78, out of a maximum of 95. The average achievement of Islamic values is 70.08 with a standard deviation of 4.67. These descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables (N=25)

Variable	Theoretical Score	Minimum Score	Crazy Maximum	Average (Mean)	Junction (SD)
X: Use Media Sosial	5 - 25	14	23	18.12	2.45
Y: Islamic Value	19 - 95	62	78	70.08	4.67

Before conducting a simple linear regression hypothesis test, a preliminary analysis was performed to assess the data's feasibility. Normality Test: The normality of the regression model residuals was evaluated using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The test results showed a significance value (p) of 0.200. Since the p-value was 0.05, the residual is likely normally distributed. Linearity Test: The linearity test of the relationship between variables X and Y was carried out with the ANOVA-based Test for Linearity. The test results produced a significance value for deviation from linearity of 0.125 ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that the relationship between social media use and Islamic values is linear. Heteroscedasticity Test: The heteroscedasticity test is performed by examining the scatterplot of the standardized predicted values (Standardized Predicted

Value) versus the standardized residuals (Standardized Residual). The points on the plot are scattered randomly and do not form a specific pattern, either accumulating or spreading. Thus, the assumption of homoscedasticity is fulfilled.

The results of the simple linear regression analysis are summarized in Table 3. The model shows an R of 0.652, R Square of 0.425, a regression coefficient (B) of -0.902, a constant (a) of 86.215, t-value of -4.127, and significance (p) of 0.000.

Table 3. Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results

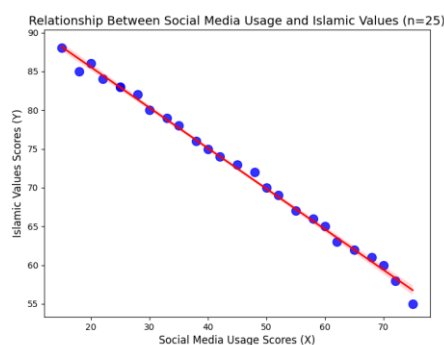
Mod	R	R Square	Regression Coefficient (B)	Constant (a)	t hitung	Sig. (p)
Influence of X on Y	0.652	0.425	-0.902	86.215	-4.127	0.000

Description: Variable X = Social Media Use; Y = Islamic Values.

Hypothesis Testing Result

The research hypothesis that social media use influences the formation of Islamic values in early childhood was tested using a simple linear regression analysis. The analysis produced the following regression equation: $\hat{Y} = 86.215 - 0.902X$. This equation can be interpreted as follows: for every 1-unit increase in the social media use score (X), the score of Islamic values (Y) is predicted to decrease by 0.902 units, holding 86.215 constant. The determination coefficient (R-squared) obtained is 0.425. This value indicates that social media use explains 42.5% of the variation in Islamic values. The remaining 57.5% is explained by other factors not included in this research model.

Furthermore, a significance test was carried out for the regression coefficient. The results of the t-test showed a tcal value of -4.127 with a degree of freedom (df) = 23 and a significance value (p) = 0.000. At the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ with df = 23, the value of the t-table was 2.069. Because the absolute values of tcal (4.127) > ttable (2.069) and $p < 0.05$, the Null Hypothesis (H0) was rejected. It can be concluded that social media use significantly influences the formation of Islamic values in early childhood at PAUD KB Al Wildan. The direction of the negative regression coefficient indicates a negative influence.



Graph 2. Scatter Plot the Relationship Between Social Media Use and Islamic Values

Graph 2 shows the scatter plot illustrating the relationship between social media use and Islamic values (n=25). The plot includes a linear regression line with the equation: Trend Linear Regression: $Y = 86.215 - 0.902X$. The x-axis represents the social media usage scores (ranging from 10 to 80), and the y-axis represents the Islamic values scores (ranging from 20 to 95).

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a statistically significant negative association between social media use and the formation of early childhood Islamic values in PAUD KB Al Wildan. The regression equation ($\hat{Y} = 86.215 - 0.902X$) confirms not only the negative direction of the relationship but also its magnitude, indicating that every one-unit increase in the intensity of social media use is associated with a 0.902-unit decrease in children's Islamic values scores. In addition, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.425$) demonstrates that 42.5% of the variation in children's Islamic value achievement can be explained by differences in their social media consumption patterns. This relatively substantial contribution, particularly within socio-psychological studies involving small and homogeneous samples, indicates that social media functions not merely as a peripheral distraction but as a significant ecological force capable of influencing and potentially inhibiting the transmission of religious values in early childhood development (UNESCO, 2023; Valkenburg et al., 2022). These findings also highlight the novelty of the present study by specifically examining the relationship between digital media exposure and the tripartite dimensions of Islamic values, namely faith, worship, and morals, within the context of Islamic early childhood education (Nurjamilah, 2024; Nurpita et al., 2025).

The mechanism underlying this influence can be understood through two interconnected pathways. First is the displacement mechanism, in which time that should ideally be allocated to religious interaction within the family environment, such as memorizing daily prayers, listening to prophetic stories, or practicing worship together, is increasingly replaced by screen exposure and digital entertainment. Second is the cognitive-normative dissonance mechanism, where children are continuously exposed to social media content characterized by speed, instant gratification, materialistic tendencies, and at times impolite behavior, all of which conflict with the values of patience, modesty, obedience, and morality emphasized within Islamic education. In early childhood, executive functions such as inhibitory control, emotional regulation, and selective attention are still in the developmental stage, making children particularly vulnerable to contradictory value systems (Chaudron et al., 2018; Meilani & Harianto, 2025). Consequently, repeated exposure to uncontrolled digital content may disrupt the gradual internalization and stabilization of Islamic values that typically require repetition, modeling, and direct interaction within the family and school environment (Iskandar, 2020; Kemenkominfo, 2023).

These findings strengthen and refine the propositions of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory by demonstrating how social media operates simultaneously within the microsystem and exosystem of children's lives. Within the microsystem, social media directly affects interactions inside the family and educational environment, while at the exosystem level, children are indirectly influenced by platform algorithms and digital structures that remain beyond their control and understanding. The findings are also consistent with previous global studies regarding the negative consequences of excessive screen exposure on children's socio-emotional development, while offering a more specific contribution to the relatively underexplored domain of spiritual and religious development (UNESCO, 2023; Valkenburg et al., 2022). In this context, the present study contributes theoretically by positioning digital media as an active socialization agent that competes with traditional agents such as parents and schools in shaping children's moral and spiritual orientations (Harianto et al., 2026; Ramanda et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the results support previous findings indicating that gadget and social media use negatively affect children's concentration during religious activities. However, this study extends prior research by not only identifying correlational patterns but also statistically demonstrating the magnitude of influence within an Islamic educational framework. While some international studies have suggested that digital media can produce positive developmental outcomes when accompanied by active parental mediation, the findings at PAUD KB Al Wildan indicate that such mediation is often limited or ineffective in daily practice. Most children reportedly access platforms such as YouTube Kids and TikTok, which, despite being promoted as child-friendly, continue to expose children to commercialized popular culture content that is not always aligned with Islamic educational values (Fadilah & Suryana, 2021; Kemenkominfo, 2023). This condition reinforces the argument that unrestricted digital access in early childhood may weaken the consistency of value transmission processes occurring within religious educational settings (Nurpita et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2023).

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of a Digital Value Transmission Model in the modern educational era by emphasizing that digital media should no longer be viewed as a neutral technological tool, but rather as a dominant socialization environment with its own logic, norms, and behavioral influences. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of digital media analysis with the framework of Islamic value internalization in early childhood education, an area that remains limited in current educational discourse. Practically, the findings imply the urgent need for Islamic early childhood institutions to integrate digital literacy programs into parenting education initiatives. Parents and guardians should be encouraged to adopt more structured and time-limited media usage patterns, implement parental control and co-viewing strategies, and establish gadget-free situations during family worship and religious interactions (Iskandar, 2020; Kemenkominfo, 2023). At the policy level, these findings suggest the importance of incorporating digital well-being indicators into early childhood education quality standards while promoting collaboration among schools, families, and communities to create safer and more contextually appropriate digital ecosystems for children (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

Despite its contributions, this study also has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The *ex post facto* and cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish definitive unidirectional causality, as other variables, such as overall parenting quality, may simultaneously influence both social media use and children's Islamic values. In addition, the relatively small sample size limits the broader generalizability of the findings across diverse educational and socio-demographic contexts. Another limitation concerns the reliance on parental self-reported data, which may contain social desirability bias, particularly regarding children's screen time and religious behavior (Almusaed et al., 2025; Rana et al., 2023). Therefore, future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal designs to strengthen causal interpretation, expand samples using multistage sampling techniques across various Islamic early childhood institutions, apply data triangulation methods through direct observation and teacher interviews, and examine mediating or moderating variables such as parental mediation styles and the specific types of digital content consumed by children. Such developments are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which digital media shapes religious and moral development in early childhood (Ramadhani & Sukartono, 2026; Ramanda et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

The key finding of this study is that uncontrolled social media use significantly hinders the transmission of Islamic values in early childhood at PAUD KB Al Wildan, with higher intensity of exposure negatively correlating with children's understanding of basic beliefs and consistency in daily worship practices. The study contributes to the field by providing a comprehensive diagnostic map of social media consumption patterns and their impacts on faith, worship, and morals within a homogeneous Islamic PAUD setting, offering valuable empirical evidence for future digital literacy interventions. However, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design, and further longitudinal research is needed to establish causal relationships and explore the role of moderator variables, such as the effectiveness of digital parenting and specific types of content. Future studies should also test the "Mitigating Digital Impact through School Cultural Approaches" model through action research to develop replicable protocols for other Islamic PAUD institutions.

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