



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

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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 rapid expansion of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the social environment in which children grow and learn. Social media platforms are increasingly becoming part of children's daily experiences, exposing them to various forms of information, values, and behavioral models at an early age. Recent studies indicate that digital media has become a significant factor influencing children's religious understanding and character development, particularly through continuous exposure to online content (Wijaya et al., 2025; Nurrita et al., 2026). From the perspective of Social Learning Theory, children acquire knowledge and values through observation, imitation, and interaction with their surrounding environment. As a result, social media functions not only as a communication medium but also as a socialization agent capable of shaping attitudes and behaviors. The increasing integration of digital media into children's lives highlights the importance of understanding its influence on the development of Islamic values during early childhood.

Islamic values constitute an essential foundation for character formation in early childhood education. These values generally encompass three interconnected domains: faith (*aqidah*), worship (*ibadah*), and morality (*akhlaq*), which collectively guide children's

behavior and identity development. Research has emphasized that religious character formation in children is strongly influenced by educational experiences and value transmission processes occurring within family and school environments (Aziz et al., 2025; Bustamam, 2024). According to Islamic educational theory, these values should be introduced continuously through modeling, habituation, and meaningful learning experiences. However, digital environments increasingly participate in this process by presenting various forms of religious and non-religious content. Studies have shown that social media has emerged as a new space for Islamic learning and moral education among younger generations (Nasution et al., 2025; Hidayah, 2025).

Despite its educational potential, social media also presents challenges for the formation of children's Islamic values. Many digital platforms provide content that is not always aligned with religious teachings and may influence children's perceptions of appropriate behavior. Research has reported that excessive or uncontrolled social media exposure may contribute to moral shifts and weaken the internalization of religious values among young users (Dauwi et al., 2026; Ugli, 2025). This issue becomes more concerning when parental supervision and digital literacy remain limited. Furthermore, the increasing reliance on digital devices as entertainment and learning tools has reduced opportunities for direct social interaction and value transmission within families. Consequently, educators and parents face growing difficulties in maintaining consistency between religious education and children's digital experiences.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between social media and moral development from various perspectives. Several researchers have found that social media can serve as a platform for disseminating religious knowledge and strengthening character education when appropriate content is provided (Mutrofin et al., 2025; Nasution et al., 2025). Other studies have highlighted the role of digital platforms in facilitating access to Islamic educational resources and promoting religious identity formation among young users (Sutrisno et al., 2024; Hidayah, 2025). Although these findings demonstrate the educational potential of social media, most investigations have focused on adolescents and older students. As a result, evidence regarding the influence of social media on early childhood remains relatively limited, despite the unique developmental characteristics of this age group.

Another limitation of existing research concerns the measurement of Islamic values and the context in which studies are conducted. Most studies assess religious character or moral behavior as a single construct without distinguishing among the dimensions of faith, worship, and morality. Research conducted in Islamic educational settings has primarily focused on teachers' strategies for character education and parental contributions to moral development (Nuraini et al., 2025; Hauliza & Satria, 2025). In addition, studies examining social media use often emphasize either its positive educational benefits or its negative moral consequences, resulting in fragmented findings (Ichsan et al., 2024; Ghozali, 2025). Consequently, there remains a lack of quantitative evidence explaining how social media specifically influences each domain of Islamic values among early childhood learners in homogeneous Islamic educational communities.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of social media influence across the three core dimensions of Islamic values—faith, worship, and morality—within an Islamic early childhood education setting. Unlike previous studies that focused on broader age groups or treated religious character as a single construct,

this research investigates specific dimensions of Islamic values among early childhood learners through a quantitative approach. Furthermore, the study is conducted within a relatively homogeneous community environment, allowing for a clearer understanding of social media influence while minimizing variations caused by cultural and socioeconomic differences. This approach contributes a more detailed perspective on how digital exposure interacts with religious value formation during a critical developmental stage.

Based on the identified gaps, this study seeks to answer the following research problem: To what extent does social media use influence the formation of Islamic values among early childhood learners at PAUD KB Al Wildan, Pringsewu, Lampung? The study argues that social media functions as a significant socialization agent capable of influencing children's understanding and practice of faith, worship, and morality. Given the intensity of digital media exposure experienced by contemporary children, it is hypothesized that social media use significantly affects the development of Islamic values. The findings are expected to contribute empirical evidence for educators, parents, and policymakers in designing effective digital literacy and religious education strategies that support the healthy development of children in the digital era.

## RESEARCH METHODS

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 was ensured through expert judgment by two experts, with Aiken's  $V > 0.80$  used as the criterion. Construct validity was empirically tested using Pearson's correlation analysis, where an item was considered valid if the calculated correlation coefficient ( $r$ -count) exceeded the critical  $r$ -table value of 0.396. The instrument's reliability, measured using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$  as the acceptable standard), was 0.85 for the social media scale and 0.88 for the Islamic values scale. Data were collected using an offline survey method in the PAUD environment after coordination with the school, and informed consent was obtained from participants prior to data collection. 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 prerequisite tests, including a residual normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test (criterion:  $p > 0.05$ ), a linearity test using the ANOVA-based Test for Linearity (criterion:  $p < 0.05$ ), and a heteroscedasticity test using the Scatterplot method. After all assumptions were satisfied, the hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  to determine the significance of the influence between variables. 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

### Results

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
	<b>High School/Equivalent</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>60</b>
	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.

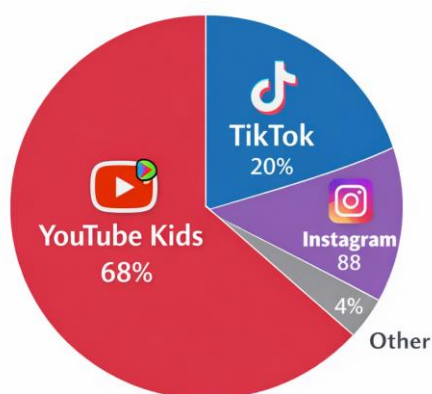


Chart 1. Percentage of Social Media Platforms Accessed by Children (Based on Parental Reports)

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	Maximum Score	Average (Mean)	Standard Deviation (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**

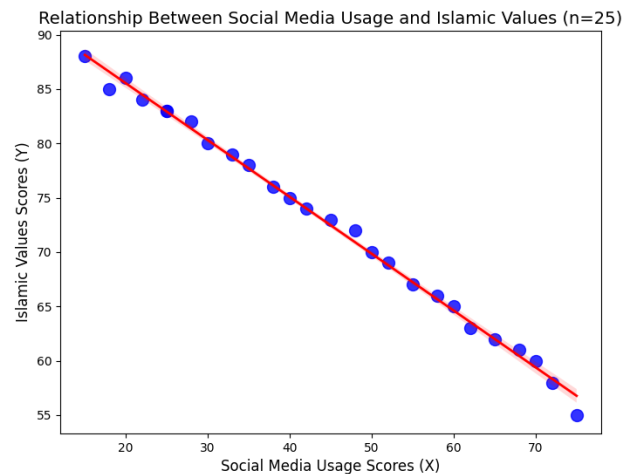
Mod	R	R Square	Regression Coefficient (B)	Constant (a)	t hitung	Sig. (p)
Influence of X on Y	0.652	0.425	-0.902	86.215	-4.127	0.000

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 (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 (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 (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; UNESCO, 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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