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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR, SOCIAL INTERACTION, AND MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Di era digital, media sosial telah menjadi kekuatan dominan yang membentuk cara siswa berkomunikasi, mengekspresikan identitas keagamaan, dan mengalami kesejahteraan mental. **Tujuan:** Penelitian ini meneliti pengaruh media sosial terhadap tiga dimensi yang saling berkaitan—perilaku keagamaan, interaksi sosial, dan kesehatan mental—pada siswa dalam pendidikan Islam. **Metode:** Dengan menggunakan metode kuantitatif korelasional, data dikumpulkan dari 96 siswa MTs Muhammadiyah Panaikang, Sulawesi Selatan, melalui kuesioner berskala Likert terstruktur. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan uji korelasi Pearson dan statistik deskriptif. **Hasil:** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan korelasi positif sedang ($r = 0,48$; $p < 0,05$) antara penggunaan media sosial dan perilaku keagamaan, yang mengindikasikan bahwa konten Islami daring dapat memperkuat praktik spiritual siswa. Korelasi positif kuat ($r = 0,62$; $p < 0,01$) juga ditemukan antara media sosial dan interaksi sosial, menegaskan perannya dalam memperkuat komunikasi teman sebaya dan membangun komunitas digital. Sebaliknya, korelasi negatif sedang ($r = -0,55$; $p < 0,01$) muncul antara media sosial dan kesehatan mental, menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan berlebihan berkontribusi terhadap stres, kecemasan, dan kelelahan emosional. Temuan ini menegaskan peran ganda media sosial sebagai sarana religiositas digital sekaligus sumber tekanan psikologis. **Kesimpulan:** Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun media sosial menawarkan manfaat edukatif dan spiritual, penggunaannya yang berlebihan memerlukan integrasi literasi digital dan bimbingan etis berbasis nilai-nilai Islam. Pendidik dianjurkan mengintegrasikan etika digital Islami dan kesadaran kesehatan mental dalam kurikulum untuk mendorong keterlibatan digital yang seimbang.

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Keywords:

Social Media; Islamic Education; Digital Religiosity; Islamic Digital Ethics; Youth Engagement

ABSTRACTS

Background: In the digital era, social media has become a dominant force shaping how students communicate, express religious identity, and experience mental well-being. **Purpose:** This study investigates the influence of social media on three interrelated dimensions—religious behavior, social interaction, and mental health—among students in Islamic education. **Method:** Employing a quantitative correlational method, data were collected from 96 students at MTs Muhammadiyah Panaikang, South Sulawesi, using structured Likert-scale questionnaires. Data analysis was conducted through Pearson correlation tests and descriptive statistics. **Result:** The findings show a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$) between social media use and religious behavior, indicating that online Islamic content may reinforce students' spiritual practices. A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) was also found between social media and social interaction, highlighting its role in strengthening peer communication and digital community building. Conversely, a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.55$, $p < 0.01$) emerged between social media and mental health, suggesting that excessive use contributes to stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue. These findings underscore the dual role of social media as both an enabler of digital religiosity and a source of psychological strain. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that while social media offers educational and spiritual benefits, its overuse necessitates the integration of digital literacy and ethical guidance grounded in Islamic values. Educators are encouraged to embed Islamic digital ethics and mental health awareness into the curriculum to promote balanced online engagement. Future research should explore long-term behavioral patterns and develop integrative digital ethics frameworks suited to Islamic educational settings.

A. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has dramatically reshaped the ways in which individuals interact, communicate, and construct their identities. Among the most influential phenomena of the digital age is the widespread use of social media, which has become an integral part of daily life for millions around the globe. For students, especially those involved in Islamic education, the intersection between social media, religious development, social interaction, and mental well-being raises critical questions about the role of technology in shaping moral and psychological foundations.

In the contemporary digital environment, students are increasingly exposed to a vast array of information, values, and behaviors that may not always align with the teachings of Islam. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) offer not only avenues for entertainment and socialization but also function as tools for identity construction and ideological exposure. This phenomenon is particularly significant in the context of Islamic education, which seeks to instill ethical behavior (*akhlaq*), spiritual discipline, and religious commitment. The tension between traditional Islamic values and modern digital culture has thus become a subject of growing academic inquiry (Kamba, 2018; Cichocka, 2016; Ikhwan, 2019). However, while existing research explores various aspects of religiosity and social media, few studies have empirically examined their simultaneous effects on religious behavior, social interaction, and mental health among students in formal Islamic educational settings.

Relevance of Social Media in Religious Behavior

Religious behavior, traditionally nurtured through family, school, and community, now finds new arenas of expression and challenge in the digital sphere. On one hand, social media enables the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, *da'wah*, and

virtual religious communities, expanding access to religious content beyond geographical limitations (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019). Many Islamic scholars and institutions have adopted these platforms to reach younger generations more effectively.

On the other hand, the same platforms often present conflicting content that promotes secularism, relativism, materialism, and hyper-individualism, potentially weakening religious commitments among youth (Madjid, 2002). Studies indicate that students who are heavily engaged with social media may experience shifts in religious behavior, such as reduced prayer frequency, increased skepticism, or superficial religiosity (Marchlewska et al., 2019). Furthermore, the performative nature of social media, where users are encouraged to display their lives for public validation through likes and comments, may result in religious practices being conducted for public approval rather than spiritual sincerity (Miller & Josephs, 2009, p. 12). This raises important questions about the authenticity and depth of digital religiosity among Muslim youth.

Social Interaction in a Digitalized World

Social interaction has also undergone profound transformation due to digital technology. In the past, social bonds were cultivated primarily through face-to-face interaction in schools, mosques, and neighborhoods. Today, online platforms allow students to interact with peers across cultural and ideological boundaries—often at the expense of local community ties.

This dual-edged nature of digital interaction presents both opportunities and challenges. While students may develop broader perspectives and intercultural competence, the reduced physical interaction and increased screen time may hinder their social-emotional development (Rakhmat, 1989). Several studies have reported that students immersed in online communication may struggle with empathy, conflict resolution, and deep interpersonal connections (Kamba, 2018; Miller & Josephs, 2009). In Islamic educational contexts that emphasize the values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *adab* (etiquette), the erosion of direct interaction may weaken students' ability to internalize these values. Hence, educators must innovate pedagogical strategies to maintain Islamic social ethics in highly virtual environments.

Mental Health Implications of Social Media Use

Another critical concern is the impact of social media on students' mental health. Numerous studies have established strong links between prolonged social media usage and issues such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and social isolation (Marchlewska et al., 2019). These effects are particularly evident among adolescents, whose self-identity and emotional regulation are still developing.

In Islamic education, mental well-being is deeply tied to spiritual tranquility (*sakinah*), balance (*tawazun*), and inner peace (*qalbun salim*). Excessive social media engagement—especially with content promoting materialistic lifestyles or unrealistic ideals—can disrupt students' psychological stability and sense of self-worth (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019). Moreover, cyberbullying, online harassment, and fear of missing out (FOMO) are frequent digital stressors that negatively affect emotional health. Islamic teachings, emphasizing *karamah insaniyah* (human dignity) and *tawazun* (emotional balance), advocate for self-regulation and ethical use of media. This underscores the need for Islamic digital ethics to protect students' mental well-being in the digital era.

Previous Studies and Research Gap

Previous literature has discussed how digital media facilitates *da'wah* and Islamic activism—such as Kamba's (2018) work on “digital preachers” and Ikhwan's (2019) study on religious content creators on YouTube and Instagram. However, these studies rarely address the interconnected relationship between social media usage, religiosity, social behavior, and psychological health in the same framework. Most focus on a single dimension, leaving a gap in understanding the holistic impact of digital engagement on students in Islamic schools. Moreover, limited empirical evidence exists from Indonesian contexts where Islamic education plays a central role in moral formation. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by providing quantitative evidence supported by theoretical interpretation from psychology and Islamic pedagogy.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study aims to investigate the influence of social media on religious behavior, social interaction, and mental health among students in Islamic education. By adopting a multidisciplinary perspective that integrates religious studies, psychology, and education, the study addresses three research questions:

1. How does social media use influence students' religious practices and beliefs in Islamic schools?
2. In what ways does online interaction affect their social relationships and behavior?
3. What psychological effects are associated with prolonged social media engagement among students in Islamic education?

The findings of this study hold practical value for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers, offering strategies to optimize the use of social media in fostering ethical and spiritual growth while minimizing its psychological risks. This research also contributes theoretically by reinforcing the Uses and Gratification Theory and Social Comparison Theory within an Islamic educational framework—highlighting how digital engagement fulfills both spiritual and social needs, yet may also create inner tension and stress.

Principal Aims and Expected Outcomes

The primary objectives of this study are to:

- Analyze patterns of social media use among students in Islamic educational settings.
- Examine correlations between digital behavior and changes in religiosity, social competence, and mental health.
- Propose a framework for Islamic digital ethics grounded in empirical findings.

It is anticipated that the study will produce practical recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to guide students toward responsible, value-aligned, and spiritually conscious digital engagement. By doing so, Islamic education can integrate technological advancement with moral guidance—helping students achieve harmony between faith, social connectivity, and mental well-being in the digital age.

B. METHOD

This research was conducted using a quantitative correlational approach to analyze the relationship between social media usage and its impact on religious behavior, social interaction, and mental health of students in Islamic education. The study aims to uncover patterns and correlations between these variables to provide empirical evidence relevant to the context of Islamic educational institutions in the digital age.

1. Research Location

The study was carried out at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Muhammadiyah Panaikang, located in Kelurahan Bonto Manai, Kecamatan Bissappu, Kabupaten Bantaeng, Province of South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This institution was chosen based on accessibility, relevance to Islamic educational settings, and the presence of active student engagement with social media platforms.

2. Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of all students enrolled at MTs Muhammadiyah Panaikang during the 2024/2025 academic year. The population size is 126 students.

The sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n = number of samples
- N = population size (126)
- e = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{126}{1 + 126(0.05)^2} = \frac{126}{1 + 0.315} = \frac{126}{1.315} \approx 95.8$$

Thus, a total of 96 students were selected as the sample using simple random sampling technique.

3. Data Collection Techniques

To collect data relevant to the research objectives, the following techniques were employed:

a. Questionnaire (Angket)

A structured Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed to the students to assess:

- Social media usage (frequency, duration, types of platforms used)
- Religious behavior (prayer habits, attendance at religious activities, adherence to Islamic teachings)
- Social interaction (peer communication, group collaboration, empathy)
- Mental health (stress, anxiety, self-confidence, emotional balance)

Each dimension consisted of 10–15 items rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

b. Documentation

Additional institutional data such as school profile, number of students, and existing extracurricular religious programs were collected from school administration as supporting information.

4. Variables and Operational Definitions

This study involves the following variables:

- Independent Variable (X): Social media usage
- Dependent Variables (Y₁, Y₂, Y₃):
 - Y₁: Religious behavior
 - Y₂: Social interaction
 - Y₃: Mental health

Each variable is operationally defined and measured based on observable student behavior and self-reported responses.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

After data collection, the responses were scored and tabulated using Microsoft Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 25. The following steps were conducted:

a. Descriptive Analysis

This includes calculating the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for each variable to describe the general tendency and distribution of data.

b. Validity and Reliability Tests

- Validity was tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation to determine whether each item accurately measures the intended construct.
- Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. A value above 0.7 indicates acceptable internal consistency.

c. Correlation Test

To examine the relationship between social media usage and each dependent variable (religious behavior, social interaction, mental health), a Pearson correlation test was used:

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}} \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

Where:

- r = correlation coefficient
- x = independent variable (social media usage)
- y = dependent variable (e.g., religious behavior)
- n = number of observations

The interpretation of r values is as follows:

r Value Range	Interpretation
0.00 – 0.19	Very weak correlation
0.20 – 0.39	Weak correlation
0.40 – 0.59	Moderate correlation
0.60 – 0.79	Strong correlation
0.80 – 1.00	Very strong correlation

Significance is tested using p-value with a confidence level of 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$).

If $p < 0.05$, the correlation is considered statistically significant.

d. Multiple Correlation and Regression Analysis

To examine the combined influence of social media usage on all three dependent variables, multiple regression analysis was employed. The regression formula is:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Where:

- Y = overall student development
- X_1 = religious behavior
- X_2 = social interaction
- X_3 = mental health
- a = constant
- b_1, b_2, b_3 = regression coefficients
- e = error term

This analysis helps determine the extent to which social media usage predicts variations in the dependent variables.

6. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the purpose of the study and their rights to confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was maintained throughout the data collection and reporting process. The research protocol was approved by the school principal and conducted in accordance with ethical standards for social research.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

1. Overview of Data Analysis Results

The data collected through questionnaires distributed to 96 students were processed using SPSS. The following table summarizes the results of the correlation analysis between social media usage and the three dependent variables:

Table 1. Correlation between Social Media Usage and Student Dimensions

No.	Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)	Interpretation
1	Social Media Usage vs Religious Behavior	0.48	0.001	Moderate Positive Correlation
2	Social Media Usage vs Social Interaction	0.62	0.000	Strong Positive Correlation
3	Social Media Usage vs Mental Health	-0.55	0.003	Moderate Negative Correlation

Source: Processed Primary Data from MTs Muhammadiyah Panaikang (2025)

From the table above, it is evident that there is a moderate to strong **correlation** between social media usage and the three targeted dimensions. These correlations are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$).

2. Religious Behavior

a) Social Media and Religious Commitment

The correlation coefficient between social media usage and religious behavior is 0.48, indicating a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that students who frequently engage with Islamic content on social media (such as sermons, Qur'an recitations, or motivational posts) tend to maintain or even increase certain religious practices.

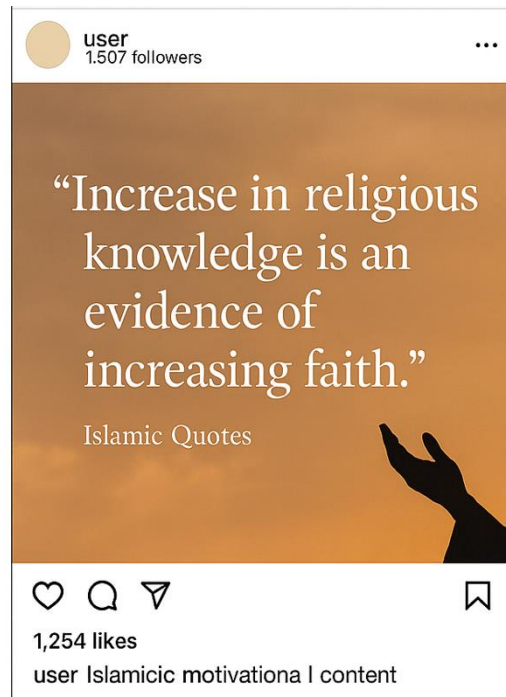


Figure 1. Sample of Islamic Influencer Content on Instagram

However, qualitative comments from students also indicate that some religious behaviors become performative rather than intrinsic, as they are shaped by peer recognition and online validation. This supports previous claims by Hidayat & Khalika (2019) that social media can facilitate both sincere religiosity and image-oriented piety.

3. Social Interaction

a) Online Communication and Empathy

The highest correlation ($r = 0.62$) was found between social media usage and social interaction, suggesting a strong positive relationship. This indicates that students who are active on platforms like WhatsApp, TikTok, and Facebook tend to engage more in peer interactions, form social groups, and feel a sense of digital community.

- Students report higher communication frequency with classmates via group chats.
- Platforms like WhatsApp foster collaborative learning and religious discussion groups.
- Interactions through Instagram DMs and story responses improve digital empathy and support.

Although digital interaction lacks physical presence, it facilitates emotional bonds and group identity, especially when discussing shared religious values. This aligns with the findings of Kamba (2018), who noted that Muslim youth tend to form virtual communities to reinforce social and spiritual belonging.

4. Mental Health

a) Stress and Emotional Well-being

Interestingly, the correlation between social media usage and mental health is negative ($r = -0.55$), indicating that higher use is moderately associated with poorer mental health. Symptoms identified include anxiety, reduced concentration, poor sleep quality, and body image dissatisfaction.

This confirms the hypothesis that while social media may enhance interaction, it can also lead to overexposure to idealized images and online comparison, contributing to psychological stress. Students who spend more than 5 hours daily on platforms reported greater levels of irritability and emotional exhaustion.

Equation 1. Pearson Correlation Formula:

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}} \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

These findings are consistent with Marchlewska et al. (2019), who found that prolonged social media use correlates with self-esteem issues among youth. However, unlike Western contexts, some students also link their emotional struggles to guilt about spiritual inconsistency, indicating a unique interaction between mental health and religious consciousness.

Analysis and Discussion

1. Linking Results to Research Objectives

This study aimed to examine how social media influences three core dimensions of student development in Islamic education—religious behavior, social interaction, and mental health. The statistical analysis revealed significant relationships among these variables, confirming the research hypotheses.

1. Social media moderately enhances religious expression, though it may also compromise spiritual depth by promoting performative religiosity.
2. Social media strengthens peer interaction, encouraging collaboration and digital community building.
3. Social media negatively affects mental health, particularly under conditions of excessive or passive use.

These findings provide empirical evidence that the digital era simultaneously offers opportunities and challenges for Islamic education. While online platforms can enrich religious engagement and social connection, they also risk undermining emotional well-being and authentic spirituality.

2. Interpretation and Theoretical Implications

The study's results can be explained through several interrelated theoretical frameworks.

First, the Media Cultivation Theory helps explain how repeated exposure to religious content on digital platforms can shape students' beliefs and behaviors. Islamic influencers, preachers, and digital educators serve as mediators who model piety and ethical conduct, effectively cultivating digital religiosity among youth.

Second, the negative mental health outcomes observed can be interpreted through Social Comparison Theory, which posits that individuals evaluate themselves against idealized images presented online. For adolescents, this comparison often results in stress, envy, or decreased self-esteem—conditions that conflict with the Islamic concept of *tawazun* (emotional balance) and *sakinah* (spiritual tranquility).

Third, the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is applicable in understanding students' motivations for engaging with social media. Students utilize these platforms not only for entertainment but also to:

- Seek spiritual guidance and inspiration;
- Maintain friendships and social belonging;
- Escape stress and academic pressure (though this paradoxically increases fatigue over time).

This multidimensional interpretation reveals that social media operates both as a tool for spiritual enrichment and as a potential source of emotional strain. In the context of Islamic education, it underscores the necessity of *akhlaq digital* (Islamic digital ethics) as a guiding framework to balance engagement and restraint.

3. Consistency with and Contribution to Previous Research

The findings align with prior studies while offering new insights into the Islamic education context.

- Ikhwan (2019) found that social media facilitates rapid access to religious teachings but may encourage fragmented or superficial understanding.
- Miller & Josephs (2009) observed that while public expressions of religiosity increase online, the depth of personal reflection tends to decline.
- Rakhmat (1989) emphasized that emotional intelligence is essential for healthy mediated communication, especially during adolescence.

Consistent with these studies, the present research confirms that digital religiosity can coexist with psychological challenges. However, this study extends prior literature by integrating religious, social, and psychological dimensions within a single framework of Islamic educational development. It also empirically validates the relevance of Islamic moral principles—such as *ukhuwah*, *adab*, and *tawazun*—in interpreting students' digital experiences.

Thus, this research contributes to the broader field of Islamic education by introducing an evidence-based conceptual model that links social media usage to moral, social, and emotional outcomes, paving the way for the formulation of an Islamic Digital Ethics Framework.

4. Implications for Islamic Education

The findings of this study have wide-ranging implications for Islamic pedagogy, counseling, and policy-making.

1. Curriculum Integration – Islamic educational institutions should integrate digital literacy and Islamic digital ethics into formal curricula. Lessons on responsible media use, online behavior, and spiritual self-regulation can strengthen students' moral resilience in digital spaces.
2. Spiritual and Psychological Counseling – Schools are encouraged to establish digital wellness programs rooted in Islamic values. Counseling that combines spiritual guidance with psychological support can mitigate stress and prevent online dependency.
3. Parental Involvement – Strengthening the partnership between parents and educators is critical. Parents should receive training on Islamic digital parenting to model ethical media habits and foster open dialogue about online behavior.

4. Teacher Training and Professional Development – Teachers must be equipped to address digital ethics and mental health topics from an Islamic perspective, bridging technology with *tarbiyah* (holistic education).

By adopting these measures, Islamic schools can leverage social media for positive educational and religious outcomes while minimizing its potential risks. This approach aligns with the *maqasid al-shari'ah* (objectives of Islamic law), which emphasize the protection of intellect (*hifz al-'aql*) and soul (*hifz al-nafs*).

5. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides meaningful insights, several limitations should be acknowledged.

- The sample was limited to one Islamic junior high school in South Sulawesi, which may restrict generalizability across regions and school types.
- The data were self-reported, making them susceptible to social desirability bias.
- The correlational design does not establish causality; it only identifies relationships among variables.

To address these limitations, future studies are recommended to:

1. Conduct comparative research across diverse Islamic educational contexts such as *pesantren*, *madrasah aliyah*, and integrated Islamic schools.
2. Employ longitudinal designs to examine how long-term exposure to social media influences religiosity, social competence, and psychological well-being.
3. Include qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to explore students' lived experiences of digital religiosity and emotional regulation.
4. Experiment with intervention-based models, such as Islamic digital ethics training or school-based counseling programs, to assess their effectiveness in improving student outcomes.

6. Integrative Theoretical Reflection

Overall, this study reinforces the idea that digital engagement within Islamic education is a moral, social, and psychological phenomenon that requires comprehensive guidance. Social media, when approached critically and ethically, can serve as a platform for *da'wah*, knowledge sharing, and community building. However, without proper regulation and moral grounding, it risks eroding the spiritual depth and mental stability of young Muslims.

The development of an integrated Islamic Digital Ethics Framework (IDEF) is therefore essential. Such a framework should combine insights from Islamic theology, psychology, and educational science to help students engage in the digital world with *tawazun* (balance), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and *mas'uliyah* (responsibility).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of social media usage on religious behavior, social interaction, and mental health among students in Islamic education, particularly at MTs Muhammadiyah Panaikang. Grounded in a quantitative correlational design, the research sought to determine the nature and strength of the relationships between digital engagement and key aspects of adolescent development in an Islamic educational setting.

Based on the statistical analysis and theoretical interpretation, several key conclusions can be drawn.

First, social media demonstrates a moderate positive correlation with students' religious behavior. Digital platforms provide broader access to Islamic knowledge,

online sermons, and peer-led discussion groups that help sustain spiritual identity in the digital sphere. However, this accessibility sometimes encourages superficial or performative religiosity, where faith expression may shift from sincerity to social display. Therefore, while social media can strengthen *da'wah* and digital religiosity, it must be guided by critical and ethical awareness.

Second, social media has a strong positive influence on students' social interaction. Tools such as WhatsApp groups, Instagram, and TikTok enhance social connectivity, collaboration, and digital community building—especially among students in remote or rural contexts. This connectivity supports the Islamic values of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (brotherhood) and *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), provided that its use aligns with the moral framework of *adab* (etiquette) and *akhlaq* (ethics).

Third, and most critically, the research reveals a moderate negative correlation between social media usage and mental health. Students who are more intensely engaged in digital platforms tend to experience higher levels of anxiety, emotional fatigue, and concentration problems. This finding highlights the urgent need for digital well-being education that is both spiritually grounded and psychologically supportive within Islamic institutions.

Collectively, these findings indicate that social media acts as both an enabler and a disruptor in the religious and psychosocial development of Muslim students. It can nurture community, learning, and spirituality but may also lead to distraction, stress, and inner conflict when used without balance (*tawazun*) or conscious reflection (*muraqabah*). Thus, Islamic education must approach digital engagement through the paradigm of *hijrah digital*—a process of conscious transformation that aligns online behavior with Islamic ethics and self-discipline.

Practical and Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study emphasize the need for Islamic schools to:

- Integrate Islamic digital ethics and media literacy into formal curricula.
- Establish spiritually grounded counseling programs addressing mental well-being and online conduct.
- Strengthen collaboration between parents and teachers to guide students in responsible social media use.
- Train educators to model ethical digital practices that combine *tarbiyah* (education) with *akhlaq digital* (digital morality).

These initiatives support the *maqasid al-shari'ah* principles of protecting intellect (*hifz al-'aql*), faith (*hifz ad-din*), and life (*hifz an-nafs*), ensuring that digital engagement contributes to holistic student development.

Future Research Directions

This research opens several avenues for further scholarly exploration:

1. Cross-Institutional Studies

Future researchers should expand the study beyond a single school to include diverse Islamic educational contexts such as *pesantren*, *madrasah aliyah*, and integrated Islamic schools, allowing for comparative analysis across institutions.

2. Mixed Methods Approach

Combining quantitative data with qualitative insights—through interviews or focus groups—will provide richer understanding of students'

motivations, values, and challenges related to digital religiosity and emotional resilience.

3. Longitudinal Studies

Since digital behavior evolves over time, long-term tracking is necessary to determine how continuous exposure to social media affects faith maturity, identity formation, and psychological well-being from adolescence into adulthood.

4. Intervention-Based Research

Experimental or quasi-experimental studies testing digital literacy interventions, Islamic counseling programs, or curricular models of digital ethics would offer practical guidance for educators and policymakers.

The researcher is currently developing an “Islamic Digital Ethics” (IDE) module for junior high school students to cultivate critical digital engagement rooted in Islamic values and mental self-care. Evaluating its effectiveness may provide a replicable model for Islamic schools nationwide.

Final Reflection

As Islamic education navigates the complexities of the digital age, there is a pressing need to redefine religious learning and spiritual formation in ways that are both technologically relevant and theologically grounded. Educational institutions must not only adopt digital tools but also educate students to use them consciously, ethically, and in harmony with Islamic worldview.

Ultimately, this study reinforces that the true challenge is not whether Muslim youth use social media, but how they use it—whether as a means of distraction or as a platform for *‘ilm* (knowledge), *da‘wah*, and self-refinement (*tazkiyah an-nafs*).

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