

ETHICS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA BASED ON RELIGIOUS VALUES FOR STUDENTS AS AN EFFORT TO GIVE BIRTH TO DIGITAL PIETY

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Abstract

The use of social media has become an unavoidable phenomenon in everyday life, especially among students. However, along with technological advances, various ethical challenges arise that need to be addressed, especially from the perspective of religious values. This study aims to examine the importance of ethical use of social media based on religious values for students to foster digital piety. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires and observations to students at Jambi University. The results of this study show that the majority of Jambi University students use social media throughout the day, with many of them considering religious values important in their interactions. A total of 81.8% stated that they consider religious values when choosing content to share on social media, and around 57.6% feel that social media can be a means to strengthen religious values in daily life. Expectations for achieving digital piety in this digital era include expanding da'wah networks through social media, providing training programs on the use of technology, and raising awareness of the impact of online actions.

Keywords: Social media, Students, Moral values, Role of social media, Use of social media

Abstrak

Penggunaan media sosial telah menjadi fenomena yang tidak dapat dihindari dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, terutama di kalangan pelajar. Namun, seiring dengan kemajuan teknologi, muncul berbagai tantangan



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etika yang perlu disikapi, terutama dari perspektif nilai-nilai agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pentingnya etika penggunaan media sosial berdasarkan nilai-nilai agama bagi mahasiswa untuk menumbuhkan kesalehan digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menyebarkan kuesioner dan observasi kepada mahasiswa di Universitas Jambi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas mahasiswa Universitas Jambi menggunakan media sosial sepanjang hari, dengan banyak dari mereka yang menganggap nilai-nilai agama penting dalam interaksi mereka. Sebanyak 81,8% menyatakan bahwa mereka mempertimbangkan nilai-nilai agama ketika memilih konten yang akan dibagikan di media sosial, dan sekitar 57,6% merasa bahwa media sosial dapat menjadi sarana untuk memperkuat nilai-nilai agama dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Harapan untuk mencapai kesalehan digital di era digital ini antara lain dengan memperluas jaringan dakwah melalui media sosial, menyediakan program pelatihan penggunaan teknologi, dan meningkatkan kesadaran akan dampak dari tindakan online.

Kata kunci: Media sosial, Mahasiswa, Nilai-nilai moral, Peran media sosial, Penggunaan media sosial.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, social media is an inseparable part of our daily lives, especially for the younger generation, such as students. Social media offers many conveniences for communicating, exchanging information and exciting content, and expressing yourself. The use of social media also has a negative side if we do not balance it with good ethics and awareness. In recent years, the use of social media among university students in Indonesia has experienced a rapid increase, including at Jambi University. According to data from the ICT Center of Jambi University (2023), over 89% of students actively access social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok for communication, entertainment, and educational purposes. This trend reflects a broader national pattern, where digital platforms increasingly shape how young people interact, learn, and engage with societal issues. The rise of social media usage coincides with growing concerns about ethical behavior in digital spaces. For university students, who are often at the forefront of technological adoption, navigating the ethical implications of online engagement becomes crucial. In this context, religious values have emerged as a key influence in shaping social media ethics among young people, offering moral guidance in a digital world often dominated by relativism and unfiltered content.

One of the most important actors in embedding these religious and ethical values online is the preacher (*da'i*). Preachers today are no longer limited to traditional pulpits; they must also master the digital landscape to reach audiences effectively. Social media, while powerful and far-reaching, requires content creators—particularly religious figures—to deliver messages that are not only theologically sound but also digitally engaging. As Aris (2020) notes, maximizing the potential of social media for da'wah necessitates both religious insight and digital literacy.

This research is conducted within the higher education environment of Jambi University, where students are active users of social media with widespread access to various digital platforms. The campus context offers a fertile ground to understand how religious values shape online behavior, as students engage daily in a wide spectrum of online activities—from academic interaction to social communication. Ethical conduct on social media is most effective when users adhere to guidelines informed by Islamic teachings, such as avoiding fake news, verifying information before sharing (*tabayyun*), and communicating respectfully (Ma'ajidah et al., 2023). Similarly, Islamic ethical education in digital media use can help prevent the spread of ongoing sin (*dosa jariyah*) and instead encourage continuous good deeds (*pahala jariyah*) through positive content creation (Maslan et al., 2023). These perspectives highlight that ethical awareness grounded in religion not only enhances responsible digital behavior but also fosters a culture of digital piety. Strengthening students' understanding through training and digital literacy initiatives rooted in Islamic values can help promote mindful, respectful, and beneficial use of social media. In this regard, religion and ethics provide essential frameworks to shape attitudes toward technology, enabling students to navigate digital spaces with integrity and concern for public good.

In the urgency of this research problem is how we provide guidelines and directions for Jambi University students in using social media wisely and responsibly, the increase in the use of social media is significantly encouraged by students. Students are currently active social media users and have broad access to various digital platforms. In addition, the negative potential of unwise use of social media without clear ethics and guidelines can cause various problems. In line with the increasing use of social media among university students and its influence on communication patterns, the broader context of digital transformation also needs to be considered. Digital transformation is characterized by the development of

extensive networks, shifts in communication methods, and lifestyle changes within society (Febrianty, 2020).

The use of various digital platforms in the student learning process is a representation of technological determinism, a theory that asserts that changes that have occurred in technological developments since ancient times until now have a significant influence on society (Desnelita et al. 1, 2023). The learning process in practice encourages Islamic digital communication based on ethics. Islamic communication science has a formal object of the message conveyed by the sender (communicant) based on the Qur'an and As-Sunnah so that the message does not violate Islamic ethics and values. In discussing communication in the digital era, it is essential to distinguish between general communication ethics and those grounded in religious teachings. At the same time, sanctions for ethical violators apply both in the world and in the hereafter. Communication also has ethics, but these ethics are based on philosophy, which is the result of human thought, and its sanctions only apply in the world (Muis, 2021).

Based on many studies, social media ethics, which are based on religious values, have an essential role in shaping the behavior of social media users, especially for students. Religion often emphasizes values such as politeness, honesty, empathy, compassion and respect for others, all of which can be applied in social media. Social media ethics based on religious values can provide users with clear guidelines on behaving ethically and responsibly in cyberspace. This can involve learning how to use social media to spread positive messages, avoid spreading false or misleading information, respect the privacy of others, and respond to content politely and tactfully.

This study aims to provide guidelines and directions for Jambi University students in using social media wisely and responsibly, based on religious values adhered to. There are 2 reasons for this research to be carried out: first, the potential negative impact of social media users and the role of ethics based on religious values. Thus, this study aims to provide practical guidance and a deep understanding to students about using social media positively and responsibly based on their own and deeply held religious values.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research methodology uses a quantitative approach, with questionnaires as a means of dissemination through Google Forms. In the questionnaire, the respondents themselves came from Jambi University students. Data collection itself is carried out online through Google Forms. In developing the questionnaire, I as a researcher wanted to find how long students use social media, whether social media can provide value-based content religious and what hopes students can do in achieving digital piety. The questionnaire will be distributed on March 11, 2024, and the collection time on March 13, 2024. The collected data was analyzed descriptively to identify patterns and trends related to social media use, religious values-based content, and expectations related to digital piety. Descriptive research is also

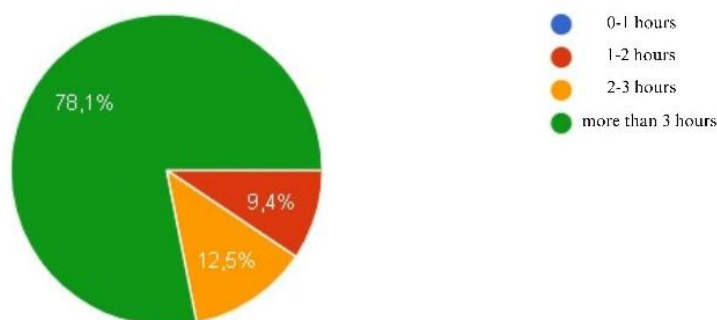
used because it relates to the frequency, number, and characteristics of the symptoms studied. Therefore, descriptive studies have various objectives, including making systematic, factual, and accurate descriptions of the facts and characteristics of specific populations or objects (Djaali, 2020). The report itself is summarized in a research report that includes recommendations for increasing awareness of social media ethics based on religious values among Jambi University students.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results

Based on the survey through questionnaires, the results can be shown that:

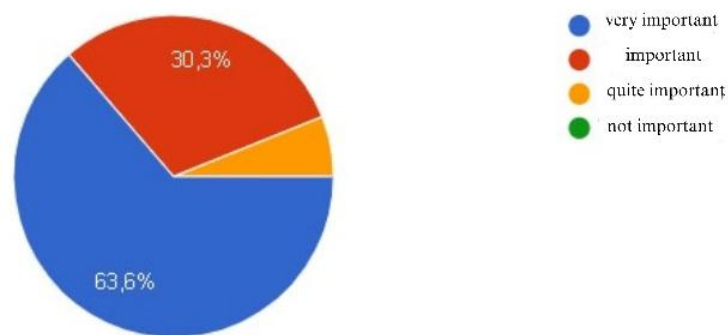
Figure 1. Question about how often do you use social media in a day?



The data figure 1 that a significant majority of students at Jambi University are highly engaged with social media, with 78.1% of them reporting that they use social media for more than three hours per day. This finding indicates not only the widespread penetration of digital platforms in students' daily lives but also suggests

that social media has become an integral part of their routines—whether for communication, information seeking, entertainment, or academic purposes. The prolonged exposure and interaction with various types of content on these platforms raise concerns about the influence of social media on students' attitudes, values, and behavior. This condition also emphasizes the importance of guiding students to develop ethical awareness and critical thinking in navigating the digital space. As social media becomes increasingly dominant in shaping public opinion and personal identity, the role of ethical and religious values becomes more crucial in ensuring that students are not merely passive users but responsible and reflective digital citizens.

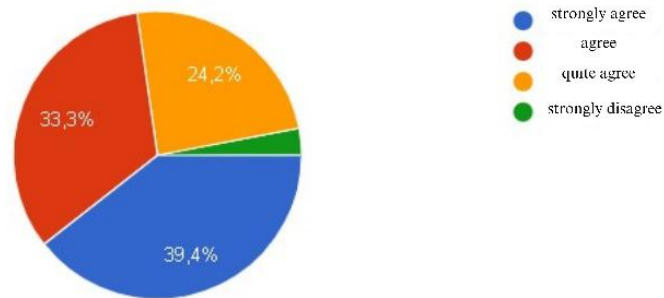
Figure 2. Question about how important are religious values in shaping social media ethics for you?



The results of figure 2 show that 63.6% of respondents believe that religious values play an important role in shaping ethics in social media use. This percentage reflects a majority view among students at Jambi University that religion continues to serve as a moral compass, even in the context of rapidly evolving digital communication platforms. In an era where information flows freely and boundaries between public and private are increasingly blurred, students perceive religious principles as a source of ethical guidance to navigate potential risks, such as hate speech, hoaxes, cyberbullying, or content that may violate social norms. This finding also suggests that for many students, religious teachings are not confined to ritual practices but are internalized and applied in everyday digital interactions. The awareness of the ethical dimension of social media use that stems from religious values may contribute to more responsible online behavior, where users are encouraged to communicate with empathy, integrity, and respect for others. Thus, the influence of religion in shaping digital ethics remains significant and should be

considered in designing digital literacy programs, especially in academic and youth settings.

Figure 3. Question about do you feel that social media can be a means to strengthen religious values in everyday life?



The results of figure 3 that a significant portion of students believes social media can reinforce religious values in everyday life. Specifically, 33.3% of respondents agreed, 24.2% entirely agreed, and 39.4% strongly agreed that social media serves as an effective means to strengthen religious values within social interactions. This cumulative majority demonstrates a positive perception of social media as a potential platform for spreading and internalizing religious teachings, moral principles, and spiritual reminders. In a digital era where youth are highly engaged in online spaces, social media is not merely viewed as a tool for entertainment or communication, but also as a medium for religious expression and education. Students are increasingly exposed to religious content such as inspirational quotes, video sermons, Quranic verses, and discussions on ethics, which they believe can influence their behavior and reinforce moral values. The data suggests that, when used responsibly and thoughtfully, social media has the power to contribute to the moral and spiritual development of its users, particularly among young people navigating complex social environments.

Figure 4. Question about have you ever considered religious values in choosing you share on social media?

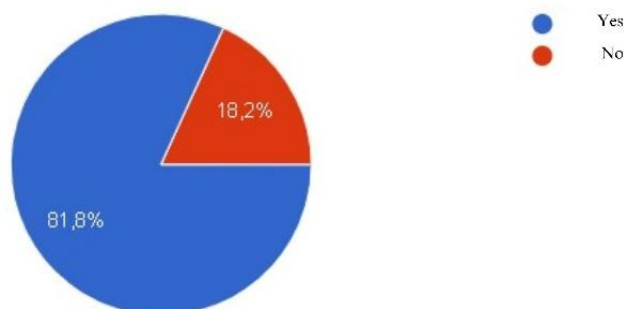


Figure 4 also reveals that the majority of students take religious values into account when selecting content to share on social media. As much as 81.8% of respondents answered "yes" when asked whether they consider religious values in choosing appropriate content. This high percentage suggests a strong awareness among students of the ethical and moral responsibilities they carry as social media users. It reflects their understanding that the digital space is not value-neutral and that every piece of content shared can have an impact—either positively or negatively—on others. In this context, religious teachings function as an internal compass guiding students in content selection, encouraging them to prioritize messages that promote kindness, honesty, and respect while avoiding content that may harm, deceive, or mislead. This ethical filtering is crucial in an era where misinformation, hate speech, and unethical behavior are prevalent in online environments. Therefore, the high level of consideration given to religious values by students demonstrates not only personal responsibility but also a commitment to maintaining a digital culture that upholds integrity and spiritual awareness.

B. Discussion

This discussion is grounded in the results of a survey conducted among students at Jambi University, aimed at understanding how religious values influence social media ethics in the digital age. The results offer a valuable snapshot of students' behaviors, attitudes, and ethical considerations in their online engagements.

Figure 1 presents the percentage of time students spend using social media. The findings show that 78.1% of students use social media for more than three hours per day. This high level of engagement reflects not only the dominant presence of digital platforms in students' daily routines but also signals the potential social influence and behavioral patterns shaped through prolonged exposure to online content. This aligns with national trends in Indonesia, where young adults are among the most active social media users, with average daily use exceeding three hours (We Are Social, 2023). Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are among the most frequently accessed platforms. These findings indicate that students at Jambi University are highly connected and influenced by online discourse, which reinforces the need for ethical frameworks—especially religious ones—in guiding their digital behavior.

Figure 2 illustrates the perceived importance of religious values in shaping students' social media ethics. A significant portion of the respondents (63.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that religious principles are crucial in shaping their decisions and behavior online. This finding suggests that many students internalize religious teachings not only in their personal or spiritual lives but also in digital interactions. Religion, particularly Islam as the dominant faith among Jambi University students, provides foundational moral principles that help guide ethical behavior in an unregulated digital space. Wahyuni (2022) emphasizes the rising relevance of internet-based da'wah in fostering digital piety and promoting responsible content consumption among young Muslims. Given the ease with which misinformation and unethical behavior can spread online, religious values serve as a necessary moral anchor.

Figure 3 explores students' perceptions of whether social media can serve as a tool to reinforce religious values in everyday life. A combined total of 96.9% (33.3% agree, 24.2% entirely agree, and 39.4% strongly agree) of respondents affirmed this possibility. These results indicate strong optimism among students regarding the positive potential of social media as a platform for strengthening spiritual awareness and spreading religious values. This is consistent with research by Fajrussalam et al. (2023), which shows that digital platforms can be instrumental in contemporary Islamic da'wah, providing a space for religious expression that resonates with youth culture. However, this optimism is tempered by the challenges of digital misinformation and polarizing content, which call for greater critical engagement and religious literacy in digital spaces.

Figure 4 reveals that 81.8% of students consider religious values when choosing the content they share on social media. This finding shows a high level of ethical awareness and personal responsibility among students, where religious principles act as a filter for appropriate digital expression. Students understand that their digital actions—such as liking, sharing, or posting content—carry ethical implications, and they demonstrate a tendency to self-regulate based on their internalized religious beliefs. While the modern digital environment allows for free expression, it also necessitates ethical judgment, and these students appear to be navigating it with conscious reference to their faith. This highlights the intersection between religious commitment and digital citizenship, reinforcing the idea that

students do not simply consume content passively but engage with it critically through the lens of Islamic ethics (Rusli, 2021).

This discussion reflects the importance of awareness of social media ethics based on religious values among students. As part of an academic community, students have an important role to play in shaping a more positive and ethical online environment. Therefore, educators and awareness of religious values need to be increased through training and counseling programs that integrate within the campus itself. Then if this religious value is associated with the teachings of Islam, its existence is very important and primary. Religious value becomes an attitude and behavior that obeys the teachings of Islam to always worship, because the duty of man as a servant of Allāh is to serve Him, as Allāh says in Q.S. Adz-Dzariyat verse 56.

It means: "And I did not create jinns and men but that they might serve me." (QS, Adz-Dzâriyat 51:56)

Religious value is an abstract concept internalized by individuals as a spiritual compass rooted in the belief in the existence of God as the ultimate reality, to whom devotion and worship are directed. These values shape not only the vertical relationship between humans and the Divine but also influence horizontal interactions within society. According to Glock and Stark (1965), religious values encompass ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential dimensions, all of which manifest in an individual's behavior, communication, and ethical decisions. This means that a person's speech, daily activities, moral considerations, and social conduct are often driven by internalized beliefs that align with divine teachings. In a more contemporary framework, Asma Afsaruddin (2015) emphasizes that religious values, especially in Islam, are not merely personal spiritual orientations but ethical imperatives that inform public behavior, including digital interactions. Therefore, the embodiment of religious values is visible in worship rituals, spoken language, digital conduct, and moral dispositions, reinforcing the idea that religion functions as a behavioral regulator across all aspects of life, both offline and online.

The development of technology can indeed provide great benefits in various aspects of human life, ranging from communication, education, economy, to religious practices. However, this advancement is accompanied by significant moral and ethical challenges, especially for the younger generation. As noted by

Rusli (2021, p. 65), the erosion of manners, etiquette, and moral integrity among children is one of the adverse effects of unchecked technological progress. In this digital era, access to information is almost limitless, but without ethical filters or religious guidance, this openness can lead to moral decline.

This concern has been anticipated in Islamic teachings. A hadith from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ narrated by Bukhari states, *“Behold, after you there will be those who witness but refuse to bear witness, betray and are not trusted, vow and do not fulfill it, and obesity (or excess) flourishes among them.”* (HR. Bukhari). This hadith portrays a condition of moral deterioration that can emerge in future generations—marked by dishonesty, betrayal, and the fulfillment of desires without accountability—which are relevant warnings in today’s digital culture.

Thus, in selecting ethical content on social media, especially for students, there is a need for religiously informed considerations. The content shared should reflect not only general norms of decency but also uphold religious values such as honesty, trustworthiness, humility, and respect. Religion provides a moral compass to distinguish between content that merely entertains and content that educates or uplifts. In this context, integrating religious values into digital literacy becomes essential to ensure that technological progress does not come at the cost of moral collapse. The use of social media in daily life has become an integral part of people's activities, including among students. In the midst of the swift digital flow, it is important for each individual to uphold religious values in interacting in the digital space. One way to maintain the ethics of social media based on religious values is to make it a means of spreading goodness.

The information shared reflects the clarity of the author's morals; those who make social media a field of da'wah will be more selective and wise in posting content that contains Islamic values and benefits for others. This is in line with the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW that good deeds, no matter how small, will get a good reward from Allah SWT (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). In addition, the awareness of the existence of hisab or calculation of every deed is also the main controller in behavior, including in online activities. As emphasized in Islamic teachings, life in this world is a place to plant charity, and the afterlife is a place to reap the results-between heaven or hell. Research at IAIN Syakh Abdurrahman Siddik Bangka Belitung shows a significant positive correlation between students' digital literacy and their ethical behavior in digital environments (Sari & Nopita,

2023). Similarly, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is documented to play a crucial role in shaping digital ethics, emphasizing values like responsibility, politeness, and trustworthiness when interacting online (Setiawan et al., 2025). Therefore, incorporating religious principles into digital literacy training can guide students to use social media wisely—transforming it into a tool for spreading goodness instead of division. Awareness of the *hisab* (accountability for every deed), as taught in Islam, further reinforces this ethical mindfulness in online activity

Then, the principle of *tabayun* or clarification becomes very important when we receive information. In Q.S Al-Isra verse 53, Allah says, "And say to My servants: Let them speak better words. Verily, the devil stirs up strife among them. Verily, the devil is a real enemy to man." This verse emphasizes the importance of filtering and checking the truth of information so as not to be trapped in the spread of hoaxes, slander and divide and conquer. In the context of social media, *tabayun* means not rushing to spread information before confirming its truth. In addition, the watchful eye of the angels on both shoulders is also a reminder that all our activities, including those in the digital world, are recorded and will one day be accounted for. This should encourage us to be more careful in commenting, liking or sharing content. Finally, it is also important to instill sincerity in social media activities without getting caught up in the motivation of popularity or *riya*. This sincerity is the main foundation in building the usefulness of content in cyberspace as a form of worship to Allah SWT.

By paying attention to these five important considerations-making social media a means of goodness, remembering *hisab*, doing *tabayun*, feeling watched by angels, and maintaining sincerity-social media users can be more selective in choosing and disseminating content. This attitude not only reflects good digital ethics, but also strengthens religious values in everyday life. This effort also supports the formation of digital piety, which is the ability to use technology with dignity and morality based on religious values, which in turn makes a positive contribution to the digital ecosystem, the wider community, and the character education process among students.

IV. CONCLUSION

The discussion highlights that the use of social media guided by religious values significantly shapes students' online behavior. In the midst of the rapid flow of information and technological advancement, religious teachings provide a moral compass that encourages ethical, responsible, and positive digital engagement. Values such as honesty, integrity, humility, and respect, when internalized and practiced in online interactions, help prevent harmful behaviors such as spreading misinformation, cyberbullying, or excessive self-promotion. Therefore, it is essential to enhance digital literacy programs that incorporate religious and moral education, particularly for students as active users of social media. By strengthening their understanding of the ethical implications of their online presence, students can become key agents in cultivating a more respectful, constructive, and value-driven digital culture.

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