The Role of Social Media in the Formation of Religious Character in Children

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Abstract

 Nowadays, teachers and books are no longer the only sources of knowledge available to students. Many other sources of knowledge can be accessed from the surrounding environment, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, the positive impact of social media provides wide access and easy access to educational and inspirational religious content such as lectures, articles, religion, and stories of the lives of pious people and become a platform for spreading positive messages and moral values that are in accordance with religious teachings, while the negative impact is that children are vulnerable exposed to content that is inconsistent with their religious teachings. For example, unethical content, violence and social media often promote materialistic and hedonistic lifestyles, which are contrary to religious spiritual values. This research method uses a literature review type of research with a qualitative approach. The aim of the research is to understand how media social influences the learning process and practice of religious values among children. This research aims to explore the extent to which social media can be an effective means of disseminating educational and inspirational religious content

Keyword: *Role of Social Media, Religious Character. Children*

Introduction

Education continues to develop rapidly along with technological advances and the need for various forms of educational media. Technological developments have brought significant changes to the role of teachers, who were previously the only media for delivering educational messages (Muna et al., 2022). Today, teachers and books are no longer the only sources of knowledge available to students. Many other sources of knowledge can be accessed from the surrounding environment, including printed sources such as books, magazines, and newspapers, as well as audio-visual media such as television shows and videos on the YouTube platform. These changes have created a more dynamic and diverse learning environment, allowing students to access information from a variety of different sources (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

In today's digital era, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, including for children. Easy and widespread access to various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, provides great opportunities for children to connect with the outside world, obtain information, and interact with their peers. However, with all the convenience and benefits offered, social media also brings its own challenges in the formation of children's character, especially in terms of religious values. (Arifin, 2021) Religious character in children is an important aspect in their development, which includes moral, ethical, and spiritual values. The formation of this religious character is usually influenced by the family environment, formal education, and religious communities. (Samsul, 2021). However, with the increasing dominance of social media in children's lives, an important question arises: How does social media affect the formation of religious character in children? This study aims to explore the impact of social media on the formation of religious character in children.

This study will examine the extent to which content on social media can influence children's religious views, attitudes, and behavior (Muna et al., 2022). In addition, this study will also look at how children interpret the religious values they encounter on social media and how this impacts their daily lives.

By understanding the influence of social media on the formation of religious character in children, it is hoped that this study can provide deeper insights for parents, educators, and policy makers in directing the use of positive and constructive social media for children's religious development (Wijaya et al., 2023). Based on previous research by (naili wirdatul munasugeng, solehudin2022) two essential factors can be identified as to why students experience a character crisis. First, the unfiltered flow of globalization does not cause cultural degradation. Second, character values have not been integrated into all dimensions of students' lives. Research by Genisa, Safaria, and Aulia (2021) informs that religiosity is one of the variables that has a significant influence on their prosocial behavior.

The results of these studies show that, in addition to faith and obedience in carrying out worship, religious character contributes to psychological maturity and does not fall into prosocial behavior. villena-martínez's (2020) study of 720 respondents in Granada, Spain, showed a significant relationship between belief, obedience, and the sustainability of their behavioral character in social life, including pro-environmental attitudes. This study recommends that teachers emphasize to students the importance of the sustainability of the implementation of religious values in their religious character (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Therefore, religious character is very important for children because it helps develop moral, ethical, and spiritual values that form the basis of their actions and decisions. This character forms self-identity, provides life guidance, and strengthens social relationships, so that children are able to distinguish between right and wrong, build healthy relationships, and face life's challenges better. In addition, children with religious character tend to care more

about the environment and society, contribute positively to the community, and have stronger emotional resilience. Thus, instilling religious values from an early age is the key to forming individuals who are moral and have integrity.

Methods

This study uses a literature review research type with a qualitative approach. The focus is to investigate and explore an in-depth understanding of religious character in the context of Islamic education in the school environment. This method utilizes primary data sources in the form of relevant documents or books to explain the purpose of the study, such as theories, concepts, and views related to religious character and Islamic religious education. In analyzing the data, this study uses a semiotic mode analysis approach. This approach helps identify the meanings contained in the texts studied, both verbally and non-verbally, thus allowing researchers to explore the implications and applications of religious character values in the context of Islamic education. Thus, this study not only aims to understand theoretically, but also to describe how these values are implemented and understood.

Result

1. How Social Media Use Affects the Formation of Religious Character in Children!
(Hidar Amaruddin 2020) The Role of Family and Social Media in the Formation of Religious Character in Elementary School Students. using social media in a balanced way and not leaning too much towards one platform, several factors are needed to manage its use. Scheduled 2. social media account assessment. The ownership of social media accounts by students must first be assessed for their level of usefulness.

Scheduled Use: It is important to set a clear and regular social media usage schedule. By providing a specific time each day or week to access social media, students can avoid excessive use and ensure that their time is not spent on just one platform. This scheduling also helps students manage time for other activities such as studying, exercising, and interacting directly with family and friends.

Social Media Account Assessment: Before creating or using a social media account, it is important to assess the benefits and purposes of the account. Students need to consider whether using the platform supports their goals, such as studying, communicating with friends and family, or developing hobbies. If an account does not provide clear benefits or even disrupts their life balance, its use should be limited or even stopped. Students' ownership of social media accounts should be evaluated based on their level of usefulness (Rushendi & Suryantini, 2019). Teachers and parents can help students assess these accounts by providing guidance on how to use social media productively and safely. For example, students can be encouraged to follow educational and positive accounts that support their personal and academic development, and avoid accounts that have the potential to have negative impacts. By implementing these factors, students can use social media in a more balanced, productive, and safe way, avoiding the risk of excessive use and the negative impacts that may arise. Meanwhile, Widiasworo (2019:100) identified various negative impacts of excessive use of gadgets and social media (internet) by children, including: 1) risk of radiation exposure; 2) causing addiction; 3) decreased academic achievement; 4) mental damage; 5) triggering promiscuity; 6) indifference to the surrounding environment; 7) excessive spending of money; and 8) the occurrence of cybercrime and cyberbullying.

These negative impacts need to be conveyed by teachers to students. Teachers need to convey the various negative impacts of excessive use of gadgets and social media (internet) to students. These impacts include the risk of radiation exposure, which can have an impact on children's physical health; addiction, which can disrupt the balance of daily life; and decreased academic achievement due to reduced focus on lessons. In addition, excessive use can cause mental damage such as anxiety disorders and depression, as well as trigger uncontrolled promiscuity. (Amaruddin et al., 2020). Children can also become less concerned

about their surroundings, spend excessive money on online needs, and are vulnerable to cybercrime and cyberbullying. By understanding these impacts, students are expected to be able to use technology more wisely

1. Risk of Radiation Exposure: Continuous use of gadgets can increase the risk of exposure to electromagnetic radiation, which, although at low levels, in the long term can affect physical health, such as causing sleep disorders and neurological problems.

2. Causes Addiction: Excessive use of social media and gadgets can cause addiction, where children feel the need to be online or play games continuously, thus disrupting daily activities and direct social interactions.

3. Decreased Academic Achievement: Too much time spent on social media and gadgets can distract children from studying and schoolwork, resulting in decreased academic achievement.

4. Mental Damage: Excessive use of social media can cause mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and stress. Children may feel pressure to appear perfect on social media or experience dissatisfaction with themselves.

5. Triggering Free Association: Children who are too involved in social media can be exposed to content that is not appropriate for their age, which can trigger free association and irresponsible behavior.

6. Indifference to the Environment: Children who are addicted to gadgets and social media tend to be less concerned about their surroundings, interact less with family and friends, and do not participate in physical or social activities in the real world.

7. Excessive Spending: Excessive use of applications, games, and online shopping can cause children to spend money uncontrollably, either through direct purchases or through in-app purchases.

8. Occurrence of Cybercrime and Cyberbullying: Children who are active on social media are at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of cybercrime and cyberbullying, which can have serious impacts on their emotional and psychological well-being.

The use of social media has a fairly complex influence on the formation of children's religious character. On the one hand, social media allows children to connect with information, discussions, and communities that can enrich their understanding of religion. They can access various sources of religious learning, follow educational content, and interact with others who have strong religious values. However, on the other hand, social media also carries the risk of exposing children to content that is inappropriate or even contradicts the religious teachings of their family (Cahyono, 2016). Content such as the use of inappropriate language, wrong understanding of religion, or exposure to secular values that conflict with religious beliefs can confuse and damage their understanding of religion. In addition, social media is also a place where children can be influenced by the behavior and views of other users, both positive and negative towards religion (Fronika, 2019). Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to provide active supervision of children's social media use, facilitate open discussions about religious values, and provide a strong understanding of how these values are applied in everyday life. With the right approach, social media can be a useful tool in strengthening children's religious character, as long as it is used wisely and guided by direction.

Discussion

Positive and negative impacts of social media use on the formation of religious character in children Based on the research of Neng Rina Rahmawati, Vena Dwi Oktaviani, and Desi Erna Wati, in their work in 2021 entitled "Religious Character in Various Perspectives and Its Implications for the Islamic Religious Education Learning Model" this is very important to produce recommendations that can help teachers optimize the internalization model of

religious character in Islamic Religious Education learning in schools. Religious learning in schools focuses more on the spiritual aspect, resulting in students with a strong sense of religion but lacking in reason and application of religion in social life. Religious character is defined through spiritual, moral, and social aspects, all of which are important for creating individuals with a comprehensive understanding of religion.

According to Akram & Kumar (2017), there are several efforts to prevent the negative impacts of the role of social media (education, entertainment, communication) on students. Some of these methods include: 1) observing music, movies, TV shows, games, and celebrities that children like. By knowing what interests students, teachers can see the images and messages that influence them; 2) It is very easy for teenagers to watch YouTube videos on their phones so parents may not know who they are watching

Some efforts can be made to reduce the negative impact of the role of social media, including education, entertainment, and communication, on students. One effective way is to observe students' interests in music, movies, TV shows, games, and certain celebrities. By understanding what interests students, teachers can better combine images and messages that influence them. In addition, given the ease of teenagers watching YouTube videos through their personal phones, it is important for parents to pay attention to the content their children consume in order to better witness the influence received (Rahmawati et al., 2021). rom a psychological perspective, religious character influences an individual's psychological development. Sociologically, religious character is influenced by the social and cultural environment, while from an educational perspective, school institutions play an important role in shaping this character.

Implications for the Islamic Religious Education learning model include a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, moral, and social aspects in teaching, the use of practical teaching methods, the preparation of an integrated curriculum, character-based evaluation, and the active involvement of families and the community. Challenges in this implementation include time constraints, differences in student backgrounds, and lack of teacher training, with recommendations in the form of increasing professional training for teachers, integrating character education into various subjects, and strong collaboration between schools, families, and communities. The use of social media has a significant impact on the formation of religious character in children. Through these platforms, children are exposed to various content that includes religious values and spirituality (Ramly & Ayu, 2022).

This can affect their understanding and practice of religion in everyday life. For example, children can find information about their religious teachings or even explore other religious beliefs through various content available on social media. In addition, social media is also a means for children to imitate the behavior they see from the figures or influencers they follow. If they are exposed to role models who display strong and positive religious values, such as honesty, compassion, or friendliness, this can shape their religious character in the context of everyday life. However, on the other hand, social media can also spread content that degrades or damages religious values (Robe'ah, 2021). Children may be vulnerable to this negative content, which can affect their perception of religion and interfere with the formation of positive religious character. In addition, interactions with peers on social media can also affect children's understanding of religion and religious practices. They can be influenced by their friends' views and behaviors in terms of religion, which can affect their thoughts and attitudes towards religion (Palupi, 2020). Therefore, it is important for parents and caregivers to play an active role in managing children's social media use. They need to provide proper guidance, monitor children's online activities, and ensure that children have access to content that supports positive religious values. Thus, the influence of social media can be utilized positively to strengthen the formation of religious character in children. The use of social media has a complex impact on the formation of religious character

in children. Positively, social media can provide wider access to information about religious values and spirituality, allow children to engage in supportive online communities, and strengthen their religious practices through interactions with individuals who share similar beliefs. However, on the other hand, social media can also be a source of negative, damaging content, such as harassment or intolerance towards religion, which can affect children's perceptions of religion and even interfere with the formation of positive religious character (Cahyono, 2018).

Therefore, it is important for parents and caregivers to closely monitor children's online activities and ensure that they have access to content that supports positive religious values. Based on the research of Rifa Luthfiyah, Ashif Az Zafi, "Instilling Religious Character Values in the Perspective of Islamic Education in the RA Hidayatus Shibyan Temulus School Environment" several moral degradations indicate adolescents or the millennial generation. Both from cases of juvenile delinquency, videos of students committing arbitrary actions against educators, sexual harassment, and so on (Luthfiyah & Zafi, 2021). Therefore, the educational environment must be able to respond to these cases, to prepare a generation of reformers in the future. With the existence of religious character education applied from an early age, students can support future problems early on. The instillation of religious character values in the perspective of Islamic education in the RA Hidayatus Shibyan Temulus school environment is carried out through a holistic approach that combines spiritual, moral, and social aspects. Teachers use interactive and contextual teaching methods, such as stories, dramas, and group discussions that teach religious values. In addition, the school environment is designed to support religious practices with routine activities such as group prayers and providing facilities such as prayer rooms (Luthfiyah & Zafi, 2021). The curriculum is designed in an integrated manner, integrating Islamic values into all subjects, so that students can see the relationship between knowledge and religious teachings.

Evaluation of students also includes the development of their religious character, with observations of daily behavior and participation in religious activities. The school involves parents and the community in the educational process through parenting activities and joint religious events, and teachers and staff act as role models in demonstrating behavior in accordance with Islamic values. With this approach, RA Hidayatus Shibyan Temulus has succeeded in creating a conducive educational environment to form students who are academically intelligent and have noble morals according to Islamic teachings. Social media plays an important role in the formation of children's religious character by providing easy access to educational and inspiring religious content such as lectures, religious articles, and online communities. This helps deepen children's understanding of spiritual values and strengthen their religious identity through interaction with the wider religious community. (Handayani et al., 2022). However, to maximize its positive impact, supervision and guidance from parents as well as digital literacy education are needed so that children can choose content that is in accordance with the religious values they adhere to and avoid negative influences.

Conclusion

Social media has a significant impact on the formation of religious character in children. Although it can be a source of knowledge and community support, social media also has negative influences that can affect children's religious perceptions and behavior. Therefore, it is important to manage children's use of social media properly to ensure its positive influence in the formation of their religious character. Social media provides wide access to educational religious content and supports spiritual values, but also poses the risk of exposure to inappropriate information. Parental supervision and digital literacy education are essential

so that children can use social media wisely, filter information appropriately, and maximize its positive benefits in the development of religious values.

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