

Scoping review: The role of social media as a source of knowledge in building adolescents' religious behavior

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of social media in shaping adolescents' religious behavior through a literature review using the *scoping review method*. Data were collected from three relevant Sinta-indexed journal articles that were selected with the focus of the study, namely the influence of social media on religious understanding, religious attitudes, and religious practices of adolescents. The results of the study show that social media, especially YouTube, Instagram, and other digital platforms, has a positive impact in the form of easy access to da'wah content, increasing religious insight, and strengthening the values of monotheism, worship, and morals. However, social media also has negative impacts such as decreased religious responsibility, weak self-control, and even deviant behavior tendencies. Factors of religious education and environmental assistance play an important role in determining the quality of social media use by adolescents. Thus, a strategy that combines comprehensive religious understanding, Islamic digital literacy, and parental and teacher assistance is needed so that social media can be used as a positive means of strengthening adolescent religiosity.

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Introduction

In the current era of globalization, the progress of science and technology is developing so rapidly. This condition, both directly and indirectly, has a significant influence on society, especially teenagers. This is because community activities are closely related to the use of social media. The latest data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) 2024 states that 39.71% of early childhood children in Indonesia have used mobile phones, and 35.57% of them are already connected to the internet. If you look at it in more detail by age group, it is recorded that 5.88% of babies under one year old have used gadgets, while 4.33% of the same age group have accessed the internet by 2024 (Muhammad Adimaja, 2024). According to a UNICEF report, every half second a child in the world accesses the internet for the first time (UNICEF, 2018). In Indonesia alone, internet users have reached around 221 million people or equivalent to 79.5% of the total population (Haryanto, 2024). Of this figure, around 9.17% are children under 12 years old, so this young age group is increasingly vulnerable to cyber threats.

Today's generation of teenagers no longer plays a role only as users, but also contributes as knowledge creators in the digital era. Through social media, they share various ideas and

experiences, including those related to religious issues. This can be seen from the many accounts managed by teenagers as a forum to distribute and produce content (Chakim, 2022). Social media such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp make it easier for teenagers to access interactive and relevant religious content, increase understanding of religious teachings, motivation to worship, and daily behavior in accordance with religious values (Luthfi, M., Kholil, S., Lubis, L., & Sikumbang, 2022). In addition, adolescents are also active in discussing, sharing, and building online communities that support religious practices, strengthen religious identity and commitment.

Digital da'wah content is effective in instilling religious awareness and forming positive behavior, especially if it is delivered by credible and moderate figures (H, M., U, N., Lillah, N., & Fadhil, 2025).

However, digital da'wah content has a negative impact on users, including a lot of religious information on social media that is inaccurate, superficial, or even extreme, so that it can be misleading or trigger intolerance (Purwaningtyas, F., Dalimunte, M., & Dewi, 2024). So that adolescents still need guidance from families, educators, and religious leaders to sort information and build good digital literacy.

In addition, the use of social media can also cause confusion of religious concepts, a decrease in religious commitment if it is not balanced with conventional sources, and the risk of social isolation (Uecker, J., & McClure, 2022).

Research on the influence of social media on adolescents' religious behavior has become a popular topic. Among them is a study conducted by Eddy Saputra which explains that social media has a great influence on the lives and attitudes of religious minorities, where those who have a religious education basis tend to be more awake even though they still have the potential to commit minor offenses, while teenagers without a religious education background are more prone to serious deviations that lead to criminal acts. The massive development of information technology has made many teenagers ignore religious and social values, so that cases of social media-based crime continue to increase and confirm the negative impact on the religious behavior of the younger generation (Saputra, 2016).

Another study conducted by Muhammad Alfito, et al. explains the role of digital da'wah in instilling religious awareness for Generation Z teenagers which shows that digital da'wah is able to expand access to religious materials and encourage positive behavior, although it still faces challenges in the form of content that is not in accordance with religious teachings and the negative influence of social media (Muhammad Alfito Deanoza H et al., 2025).

Likewise, a study that examined the use of da'wah content on social media in shaping the religious behavior of adolescents at the Al Jihad Mosque in Medan was conducted by Muhammad Luthfi, et al. showed that video lectures on YouTube helped strengthen the understanding of Islam and Islamic behavior of adolescents, although there were still obstacles because da'i could not adjust the message to the characteristics of the audience directly (Luthfi et al., 2022).

The above studies explain that social media has a significant impact on religious understanding and religious attitudes. However, there are negative impacts caused by the use of social media without proper supervision. Therefore, this research lies in the contextual urgency and depth of its analysis of the dynamics of adolescent religion in the midst of the rapid development of technology and digital access from an early age. Although previous research has confirmed the major influence of social media on religious behavior and the positive and negative role of digital da'wah, this study specifically focused on adolescents who are not only users, but also contributors and producers of religious content. Thus, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring in depth the most effective guidance strategies, digital literacy, and interventions for adolescents, to ensure that the use of social media supports the strengthening of moderate religious commitment and avoids behavioral deviations that have been highlighted by previous studies.

Research Methods

The type of research used is a literature review or literature review using the Scoping review method. The focus of the research is the role of social media as a source of knowledge in building adolescents' religious behavior. The sample used in this study amounted to three research articles from Sinta-indexed journals related to research titles that matched the criteria.

Data search through database sources, namely *Publish or Perish*, *Google Scholar* and *Open Knowledge Map* which is adjusted to the research title, abstract and keywords used to search for articles, namely "social media", and "youth religion". In this study, the literature used was selected based on a number of criteria, namely research articles published in the period 2018–2025, using *Randomized Control Trial* and *Clinical Trial* designs, and written in English. The article selection refers to the PICOS criteria, namely: *Population* in the form of adolescent religious behavior, *Intervention/Exposure* in the form of the role of social media as a source of knowledge, *Comparison* in the form of knowledge sources from books and teachers, *Outcome* in the form of changes in adolescent religious behavior, and *Study design* in the form of *Randomized Control Trial* and *Clinical Trial*. Quality assessment is carried out through inclusion and exclusion criteria, then all eligible articles are analyzed qualitatively. From this process, three research articles were obtained that are worthy of review.

Results and Discussion

The results of the data from the study on the role of social media on adolescent religious behavior in accordance with the predetermined criteria there were three articles after going through screening in journals according to the criteria and then followed by the results of a feasibility test based on PICOS: *Population* in the form of adolescents, *Intervention/Exposure* of the role of social media, *Comparison* of social media has no effect on religious behavior, *The outcome* of adolescent religious behavior, and *the study design* was in the form of a *Randomized Control Trial* and a *Clinical Trial*.

Table 1. The Role of Social Media in Adolescent Religious Behavior

Yes	Author and Year	Research Title	Research Methods	Sample	Research Results
1	Luthfi M, et al (2022)	The Utilization of Religious Content in Social Media for the Alteration Adolescent's Islamic Behaviour	Descriptiv e Qualitativ e	Teenager s who are members of the Al Jihad Mosque in Medan City	The use of religious content on social media through video lectures on YouTube makes it easier for teenage worshippers to understand Islam at the Al Jihad Mosque in Medan. Meanwhile, the obstacle to the use of religious content on social media in changing adolescents' Islamic behavior is that da'i cannot know the characteristics of mad'u. The result achieved is an increase in behavioral values such as monotheism, worship and morals of a person in carrying out his daily life.

2	Nurul Laily. (2018)	Social Media and Religious Behavior of Teenage Students at the Nurul Huda Kajen Islamic Boarding School	Field research of qualitative approach		It shows two models of student behavior after getting to know positive and negative social media. The positive is looking for information that helps the learning process, while the negative is the loss of responsibility for the behavior that has been done. The solution is that students need to be equipped with a comprehensive understanding of religion in order to maintain religious values when using social media and stay away from criminal behavior.
3	Ellyda Retptasari and Nila Audini (2020)	Social Media Use Preferences for Adolescent Religion	Quantitative approach of analytical descriptive methods	40 private high school students in the Sidoarjo area	The use of social media is related to the religious maturity and religious commitment of adolescents. Social media that are often used as religious references by teenagers include, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Variations in social media use among adolescents affect adolescents' variation in the level of religious maturity and religiosity commitment. The condition is in accordance with the theory of Uses and Gratification, which makes users an active agent in determining the use of social media as a reference. Thus, the difference in the level of religious maturity and religious commitment depends on the expectations and satisfaction of each user in assessing the social media accounts that are

used as a reference for
da'wah.

From the first journal entitled *The Utilization of Religious Content in Social Media for the Alteration Adolescent's Islamic Behaviour* which focuses on analyzing how religious content on social media, especially lecture videos on YouTube, is used in shaping and changing adolescents' religious behavior, with a case study of adolescent worshippers of the Al Jihad Mosque in Medan. From the research, it was found that social media, especially YouTube, plays a significant role in facilitating adolescents' understanding of Islamic teachings. In addition, the use of religious content is able to increase the values of monotheism, worship, and morals in daily life. However, there are main obstacles faced, namely the limitations of da'i who cannot understand the characteristics of the audience (mad'u) directly and the absence of two-way interaction as in face-to-face da'wah. So it can be concluded that social media, especially YouTube, has proven to play an important role in shaping the understanding and behavior of religious youth even with all its limitations (Luthfi, M., Kholil, S., Lubis, L., & Sikumbang, 2022).

The second article with the title *Social Media and Religious Behavior of Adolescent Students at the Nurul Huda Kajen Islamic Boarding School* was produced that after getting to know social media, the students showed two different behavioral tendencies. On the one hand, there is a positive impact when social media is used as a means to enrich knowledge, find information that supports the learning process, and increase religious insights. Access to various educational content and digital da'wah materials can help students in deepening their religious knowledge and adapting to the times. However, on the other hand, there is also a negative side of the use of social media, namely the reduction of students' responsibility for their behavior. This tendency can be seen when some students spend more time with online activities that are less useful so that they can affect discipline, personal responsibility, and even weaken self-control over religious values.

To overcome this, serious efforts are needed in equipping students with a complete and comprehensive understanding of religion. This comprehensive understanding will be a moral fortress for students to remain able to maintain the values of Islamic teachings even when faced with the rapid flow of information on social media. In addition, strengthening digital literacy is also important so that students are not easily influenced by negative content or behavior that leads to violation of norms. With a combination of mastery of religious knowledge and social media skills in a healthy manner, students are expected to be able to utilize technology as a means of good, while staying away from deviant behavior that has the potential to lead to criminal acts.

It can be concluded that although the use of social media can have a positive impact on students in the form of ease of obtaining information that supports the learning process, on the other hand it also has the potential to have a negative impact in the form of decreased responsibility for the behavior carried out, so that it is necessary to provide comprehensive religious understanding and adequate digital literacy so that students are able to maintain Islamic values while avoiding the influence of deviant behavior (Nurul Laily, 2018).

The results of the third article entitled *Social Media Use Preferences for Youth Religion* explain that social media has a positive impact by providing broad access to da'wah content, expanding religious insights, and motivating adolescents to improve worship practices. On the other hand, social media also has negative impacts, such as decreased religious responsibility, deviant behavior, and potential involvement in criminal acts. The religious behavior of adolescents is greatly influenced by the religious education background; Adolescents with religious education are more able to control themselves in using social media than those who do not have this foundation. The solution offered is the importance of providing comprehensive religious understanding and assistance for parents and teachers so that adolescents can use social media in a healthy manner without abandoning Islamic values.

In this case, social media has a dual influence on adolescents' religious behavior (Retpitarsari & Oktavia, 2020). Strengthening holistic religious education, which is integrated with social assistance from the surrounding environment, is essential to ensure that social media can be used positively by adolescents in supporting their religious development. Social media, while offering a

great opportunity to share religious knowledge, also holds potential risks that can affect adolescents' religious behavior and identity. Therefore, the role of parents, teachers, and religious leaders is indispensable to guide adolescents in selecting and filtering content that is relevant to religious values. With strong religious education and ongoing social support, adolescents can use social media as a platform to deepen religious understanding, strengthen religious identity, and spread positive messages to others.

The following are holistic strategies for strengthening adolescent religion in the digital space:

1. **Mentorship Strategy: from authority to digital partnership**
Effective guidance strategies for adolescents in the digital era must transform from an authoritarian model to a model of digital partnership and mentoring (Yusuf, 2021).
 - **Moderate Digital Parenting Patterns:** Parents and educators need to implement digital parenting that is not only restrictive, but also educational. This involves open discussions about the religious content they consume and produce, encourage a balanced attitude (*tawazun*) in dealing with various views on social media, and avoid overlinking to one point of view (Rohman, 2023).
 - **The Role of Moderate Public Figures:** Digital *da'wah* content has proven to be effective in shaping positive behavior, especially if it is delivered by credible figures who have a moderate message (Al Jauzi, Senenng & Hamidah, 2023). Therefore, guidance can be realized through the recommendation of religious leaders or influencers who consistently promote the values of *Wasathiyyah* (middle way) and tolerance.
 - **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Mentoring is not only a family or school task, but it also requires collaboration with communities and religious institutions. Adolescents' involvement in interfaith and community dialogues in the real world and online can strengthen their understanding of the importance of peaceful and harmonious coexistence.
2. **Strengthening digital literacy of religion**
Digital literacy is not only about technical skills, but also critical skills in filtering and evaluating religious information in circulation (Pratiwi et al, 2024).
 - **Content Source Verification:** Adolescents should be trained to develop critical thinking skills to verify the accuracy of religious information. This includes checking the background of *the da'i* (speaker), the institution that supports the content, and the references used in digital *da'wah* content.
 - **Multiperspective Education:** Literacy programs should foster multicultural awareness and encourage adolescents to understand religious, social, and cultural issues from a variety of perspectives (Astuti et al., 2021). The goal is to melt *Truth Claim* fanatics and prejudices, thus resulting in a balanced life order.
 - **Moderate Creative Content Production:** The highest digital literacy is when teenagers go from consumers to positive content producers. This strategy includes creating creative content competitions (posters, videos, *Podcast*) themed on religious moderation, which allows adolescents to internalize moderate values as they actively create and spread messages of peace (Rohman, 2023).
3. **Effective Interventions for the Prevention of Deviations**
The intervention is aimed at countering exposure to narratives of intolerance and radicalism, which often target young age groups in a negative way. *massive* on social media (Hidayatulloh, 2024).
 - **Narrative Spread *Wasathiyyah* By *Massive*:** Governments and civil society organizations must plan and *massive* Spreading the content of religious moderation narratives in various *platform* social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube (Hidayatulloh, 2024). This content should be presented in a format that is relevant and appealing to Gen Z.
 - **Supervision and Policy:** There is a need for an active role from the government and related parties to monitor and crack down on extremist content spread on social media, in line with

the policy of protecting the rights of all religious groups. This is an important preventive and curative measure to maintain a healthy digital space.

- Activity *Offline Strengthening Online*: The most effective intervention is to connect what is learned in a practical way. *Online* With practice *offline*. This can be realized through joint projects (gotong royong), humanitarian activities, or service programs that involve youth from various religious backgrounds to interact directly, thereby internalizing the value of moderation in the real environment (Yusuf, 2021).

Thus, the implementation of strategies that unite transformational learning with critical digital literacy skills synergistically will allow social media to be used optimally. Social media, which was initially only a channel for information consumption, can transform into an inclusive spiritual strengthening platform. In this context, adolescents not only gain religious knowledge that is more interactive and in accordance with their needs, but also able to internalize the values of Wasathiyah (moderation), which is very important in a multicultural society. Furthermore, this strategy will serve as a formidable protection against deviant behavior and the threat of extremism in cyberspace, given that adolescents are equipped with the ability to think critically that allows them to filter out provocative information, distinguish between deep and superficial content, and understand the importance of tolerance and diversity of perspectives in religious life. The ultimate goal of this approach, then, is to create a young generation that not only has a strong religious commitment, but is also open, balanced, and can interact peacefully in the digital space as well as in the wider society.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the role of social media in adolescents' religious behavior is quite significant, even though there are several challenges and obstacles. The three articles analyzed show that social media, especially religious content on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp, can have a positive impact on strengthening religious understanding and developing adolescents' religious behavior. However, there are also negative impacts such as loss of responsibility for behavior carried out in cyberspace and the potential influence of deviant behavior due to exposure to poorly filtered content. Therefore, a holistic approach is needed that combines comprehensive religious education and social mentoring from families, schools, and communities to ensure that social media can be used in a healthy and beneficial manner.

Based on these findings, several strategic steps can be taken to optimize the use of social media for adolescent religious development. First, it is important to strengthen religious digital literacy, so that adolescents can filter content more critically and avoid negative influences. Second, holistic religious education needs to be integrated with guidance based on digital partnerships, where parents and educators play an active role in accompanying adolescents when accessing social media. Third, efforts to promote the values of moderation (Wasathiyah) through positive and tolerance-based da'wah content must be carried out massively on social media. Finally, there needs to be cross-sectoral collaboration between governments, community organizations, and educational institutions to create a safe and healthy digital space for adolescents, as well as facilitate offline interactions that can strengthen religious values in real life.

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