

The Impact of Social Media on Reading Habits of Students in Islamic Schools

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Abstract. The widespread use of social media platforms has brought about a significant shift in the reading habits of students, particularly those in Islamic schools. This study aimed to investigate the impact of social media on the reading habits of students in Islamic schools in Parepare, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The research was conducted among 50 students using a survey questionnaire as the primary data collection method. The findings of the study indicated that social media had both positive and negative impacts on the reading habits of students. While social media could serve as a source of information and increase access to reading materials, it could also be a significant distraction, reducing the time spent on reading. Additionally, social media was seen to have a considerable impact on the students' reading preferences and interests. The study also suggested that teachers and parents play a crucial role in encouraging students to develop healthy reading habits and utilize social media in a responsible manner.

Keywords: Social media, Reading habits, Islamic schools, Students, Parepare

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that is crucial for academic and intellectual development. However, the level of literacy in Indonesia is still relatively low compared to other countries, which highlights the importance of promoting reading habits among students (1,2). Reading also plays a crucial role in the development of critical thinking and the ability to analyze and interpret information, which are essential skills for the success of the generation (3).

Social media refers to online platforms and applications (4) that enable users to share information, communicate, and interact with others. With the rise of digital technology, social media has become an essential part of daily life, particularly for young people. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have been identified as the most popular among Indonesian youth (5).

In recent years, the widespread use of social media has brought about significant changes in the way people interact and communicate with each other. It has become an integral part of modern life (6), particularly among young people. While social media has many advantages, there is growing concern about its impact on the reading habits of students (7,8) particularly those in Islamic schools.

It is worth noting that Islamic schools place a strong emphasis on adab, which includes the cultivation of good habits and manners. As such, students in these schools are more likely to be directed towards reading materials that promote positive values and behaviors. Moreover, in Parepare, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, the number of Islamic schools has been increasing due to the growing interest among parents in enrolling their children in these schools.

Research has shown that the reading habits of students in Islamic schools have been declining in recent years. A study (9) found that many students are not interested in reading and prefer to spend their time on social media instead. This trend has raised concerns among educators and parents (10), who worry that the decline in reading habits could negatively affect students' academic performance and intellectual development.

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of social media on the reading habits of students in Islamic schools in Parepare, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This study is significant because it provides insight into the ways in which social media is affecting the reading habits of students in Islamic schools and how this impact can be mitigated or harnessed to promote healthy reading habits among students.

2. METHODS

This is a quantitative research. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and using statistical methods to analyze and interpret it (11). Descriptive research is a type of quantitative research that is designed to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon (12). In this study, the aim was to describe the impact of social media on the reading habits of students in Islamic schools in Parepare, South Sulawesi.

Data were collected from 50 students using a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on students' social media usage, reading habits, and attitudes towards reading. The questionnaire consisted of 5 close-ended questions with predetermined response options and 2 open-ended question that were analyzed using statistical methods to draw conclusions.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study indicate that social media has both positive and negative impacts on the reading habits of students. While social media can serve as a source of information and increase access to reading materials, it can also be a significant distraction, reducing the time spent on reading. Additionally, social media is seen to have a considerable impact on the students' reading preferences and interests.

3. RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in three parts. The parts examine the positive impact of social media on the reading habits, the negative one, and examines the types of reading material that students prefer.

3.1 Positive Impact of Social Media on Students' Reading Habits

Students in Islamic schools in Parepare, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, had been asked two questions to gauge the impact of social media on their reading habits. The first question was "Do you believe that social media has had a positive impact on your reading habits?" and the second question was "Has social media increased your access to reading materials?" The responses were recorded and analyzed to gain a better understanding of the relationship between social media and reading habits among students in Islamic schools. The results are presented in a chart format to make it easier for readers to visualize and comprehend the findings.

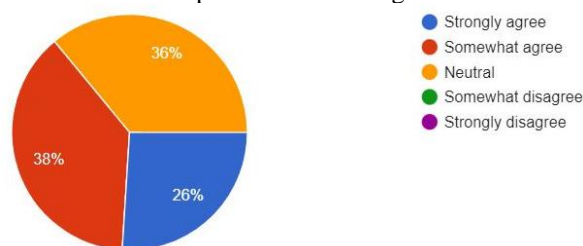


Fig. 1. Perception of Social Media's Positive Impact on Reading Habits

The results of the survey on Figure 1 indicated that a significant proportion of the students held a positive view of social media's impact on their reading habits. Specifically, 63% of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that social media has had a positive impact on their reading habits, while 36% of respondents reported a neutral stance. Notably, none of the respondents indicated a negative view of social media's impact on their reading habits. These findings suggest that students in Islamic schools in Parepare, South Sulawesi, Indonesia generally view social media as having a positive influence on their reading habits.

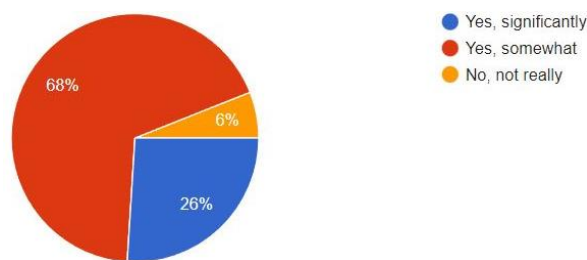


Fig. 2. Perception of Social Media's Access to Reading Material

The data presented in Figure 2 depicts the respondents' perception of the impact of social media on their access to reading materials. The majority of the respondents, 68%, answered "Yes, somewhat" to the question "Has social media increased your access to reading materials?". Meanwhile, 26% of the respondents answered "Yes, significantly" to the same question. Only a small proportion of the respondents, 6%, responded "No, not really". These findings suggest that social media has a positive impact on the respondents' access to reading materials. However, it should be noted that the extent of the impact varies among individuals, as indicated by the difference between the "Yes, somewhat" and "Yes, significantly" responses.

3.2 Negative Impact of Social Media on Students' Reading Habits

In addition to investigating the positive impact of social media on the reading habits of students, this study also examined the negative impact of social media on reading habits. One of the questions asked in the survey was, "Have you ever felt distracted from reading due to social media use?" The data from this question provides insight into the extent to which social media is impacting the ability of students to focus on reading.

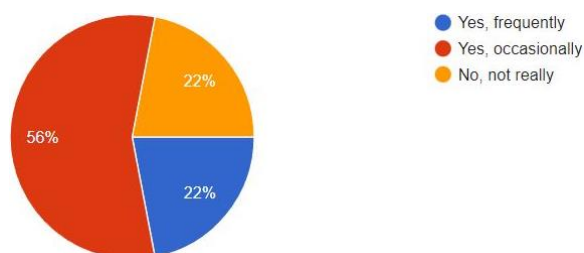


Fig. 3. Effect of Social Media on Reading Distractions: Students' Responses

According to the data, a significant proportion of the respondents reported feeling distracted from reading due to social media use. Specifically, 22% of the respondents reported feeling frequently distracted from reading, while 56% reported occasional distractions. Only 22% of the respondents did not report feeling distracted from reading due to social media use. These findings suggest that social media may be having a negative impact on the reading habits of students in Islamic schools and may warrant further investigation into strategies to minimize the distractions posed by social media.

3.3 Types of Reading Material that the Students Prefer

This section presents the results of three questions related to Reading Material that Students Prefer. To begin with, the first question is "Do you use social media platforms frequently?"

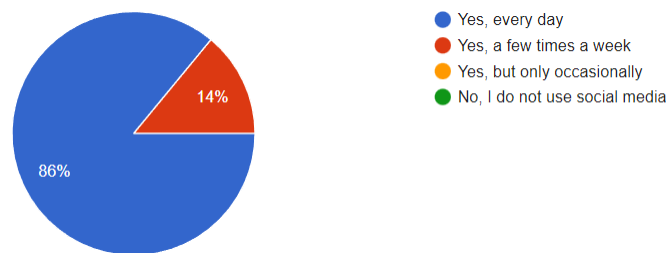


Fig. 4. Students' Frequency of Using Social Media

The Figure 4 revealed that a large majority of the respondents, 86%, reported using social media every day. Only 16% reported using social media a few times a week, while none reported using it only occasionally or not at all. These findings indicate that social media is a pervasive and regular part of the daily lives of the students in this study, and suggest the need for interventions that leverage the popularity of social media to promote positive reading habits.

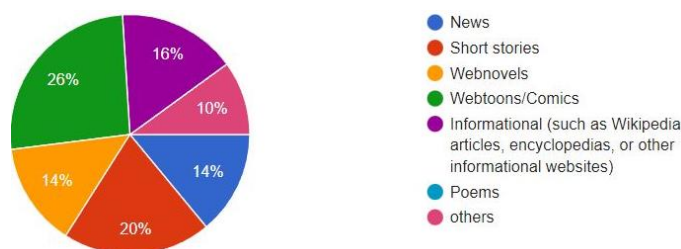


Fig. 5. Reading Material that the Students' Read Most Often

According to the Figure 5, the participants were asked about their preferred type of reading material. The results showed that 14% of the participants read news articles the most, while 20% of them read short stories. A similar percentage of 14% of participants read webnovels, whereas the highest percentage of 26% read webtoons and comics. Around 16% of the participants preferred informational materials such as Wikipedia articles, encyclopedias, or other informational websites. Only a small percentage of 10% indicated "other" as their preferred type of reading material, while none of the participants selected poems as their most-read material.

For the question "What is your preferred platform for reading?", the answers were highly varied due to the open-ended nature of the question. The most commonly mentioned platforms were Webtoon, Wattpad, Comic, Facebook, Instagram, Google Chrome, Wikipedia, Google Scholar, and Tiktok. Only two respondents provided answers that were not social media or web-based platforms. One respondent recommended Idiom or iTalking apps for reading, while another mentioned Google Books and Z-Library (although the latter has been banned). The wide range of responses indicates that students have diverse preferences when it comes to choosing a platform for their reading materials.

Despite being an open-ended question, the majority of responses to "How do you think social media can be utilized to encourage healthy reading habits among students?" were similar in nature, with many expressing the belief that social media can indeed be used to promote healthy reading habits among students. Several respondents suggested that audio and visual aids, such as music or images resembling short stories, could be utilized to make reading material more engaging and prevent students from becoming bored. Others noted that social media platforms can serve as valuable sources of information, allowing students to access articles, journals, and other materials that can expand their knowledge base. Additionally, some respondents shared their personal experiences using social media for reading, such as utilizing Instagram to read short stories with simple grammar and Webtoon to practice vocabulary and grammar. Overall, many felt that social media has the potential to encourage students to read more frequently, as it is a medium that is already widely used by students and can provide a vast array of reading materials. Some respondents also highlighted the importance of being discerning in the choice of reading materials, ensuring that what is read serves to increase knowledge and understanding.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Social Media Serves as A Source of Information and Increase access to Reading Materials

Social media has become an important source of information and a means to access reading materials for students in Islamic schools. The survey conducted among Islamic school students showed that a majority of students use social media platforms frequently, which can be utilized to encourage healthy reading habits. As stated by one participant, "with social media we can read articles, journals, and other materials as a way to access information." Moreover, social media platforms such as Webtoon and Wattpad are popular among students as a way to read short stories and webnovels. As noted by another participant, "I use Webtoon because I like reading stories in Webtoon while we read, it also makes us find new vocabulary and practice our grammar."

This finding is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the role of social media in increasing access to reading materials. Social media provides an opportunity for individuals to access diverse sources of information, including reading materials (13). Similarly, it is found that social media platforms are used by students to access reading materials and communicate with others about what they have read (14,15).

In conclusion, the findings of the survey conducted among Islamic school students suggest that social media serves as an important source of information and a means to access reading materials. This highlights the potential of social media in encouraging healthy reading habits among students. However, it is important to note that not all information on social media is accurate or reliable. Therefore, it is important for students to be critical and discerning in their use of social media as a source of information and reading materials.

4.2 Social Media is a Significant Distraction, Reducing the Time Spent on Reading

Recent research has shown that social media has a significant negative impact on students' reading habits, reducing the amount of time spent on reading. According to a study conducted by Junco and Cotten (16), college students who spent more time on social media had lower reading comprehension scores. This can be attributed to the fact that social media serves as a significant distraction, pulling students away from their reading materials and decreasing their ability to concentrate on longer texts.

The Students have their own strategies for making time for reading (17,18). A study by Rosen et al. (19) found that students who spent more time on social media reported higher levels of stress and anxiety, which could further hinder their ability to focus on reading. This is concerning, as reading is an essential skill that contributes to academic success and overall cognitive development.

Despite the negative impact of social media on reading habits, it is important to acknowledge that social media can also serve as a source of information and reading materials for students. As discussed earlier, Islamic school students in Indonesia use social media to access Islamic reading materials and engage with religious communities online. However, it is important for students to balance their time on social media with other activities, including reading, to ensure their academic success.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the unique characteristics of Islamic schools and the distinct reading habits of their students. Despite the fact that the majority of students access social media on a daily basis and are influenced by its impact, they still have a strong interest in reading through digital channels. It is encouraging to note that many students are primarily reading positive content such as news, information, short stories, and web novels, which can contribute to increasing their literacy skills. Furthermore, some students are also utilizing educational apps to read and learn. Overall, this research suggests that Islamic school students have adapted to the digital era while maintaining a focus on reading, particularly of positive content. Future research could explore strategies to help students navigate social media and digital reading materials, while promoting healthy reading habits and digital literacy skills.

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