THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE USE OF ISLAMIC YOUTUBE CHANNELS AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS MATERIAL AMONG ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (PAI) STUDENTS AT ZAINUL HASAN ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN GENGGONG, PROBOLINGGO

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube media and the understanding of religious material among Islamic Education (PAI) students at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo. The study used a quantitative correlational approach with a cross-sectional design. The study population consisted of 141 PAI students, with a sample of 65 students selected using simple random sampling based on the Slovin formula. Data were collected through a questionnaire measuring the intensity, consistency, content quality, and selectivity of Islamic YouTube usage, as well as a religious comprehension test covering the aspects of aqidah, fiqh, and akhlak. The validity of the instruments was confirmed through expert validation and factor analysis in SPSS (factor loadings > 0.5), while reliability yielded Cronbach s Alpha values of 0.80 (variable X) and 0.86 (variable Y). Descriptive statistics indicate that 75.4% of respondents fall into the moderate category regarding Islamic YouTube usage, with a mean usage score of 74.4 (SD = 9.66) and a mean religious understanding score of 76.0 (SD = 10.64). Pearson s correlation analysis yielded r = 0.804 (p < 0.01), indicating a very strong positive relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube and students understanding of religious material. These findings highlight the need for the systematic integration of digital media into the Islamic Education curriculum to enhance students religious literacy and understanding.

Keywords: *Islamic YouTube; religious understanding; PAI students; digital media; correlational research*

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has brought significant changes to the world of education, including Islamic religious education. Online video-sharing platforms such as YouTube have now transformed into one of the primary learning resources utilized by various groups, including students at Islamic universities. Ease of access, flexibility of time, and a wealth of diverse content make YouTube a relevant and adaptive alternative learning medium for the needs of the digital generation.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), Islamic YouTube content includes religious lectures, Quranic exegesis studies, fiqh discussions, and even moral education materials presented by ustadz or trusted Islamic institutions such as NU Online and Muhammadiyah. The availability of such extensive content opens opportunities for PAI students to deepen their religious understanding independently, interactively, and beyond the confines of conventional classrooms. Cahyono and Hassani (2019) state that

YouTube can enhance religious understanding through the presentation of audiovisual content that is easier to comprehend than text alone.

However, conditions on the ground reveal a reality that differs from this ideal scenario. Based on initial observations at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo, the use of Islamic YouTube by PAI students remains individual and unstructured. There are no official guidelines from the institution regarding appropriate content to consume, leaving students at risk of accessing content that is not academically or theologically verified. This has the potential to create gaps in understanding or even lead to misconceptions regarding Islamic teachings.

This situation is reinforced by findings from various previous studies. Firmansyah and Amelia (2023) found that digital literacy levels significantly influence students ability to select credible content. Ramadhan and Hidayah (2023) demonstrated that purposeful use of YouTube can significantly enhance understanding of religious concepts. Meanwhile, Hasanah and Huda (2025) found that the use of YouTube impacts not only cognitive dimensions but also students religious attitudes.

Although these studies provide important contributions, most employ qualitative or experimental approaches and have not specifically examined the correlational relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube based on measurable indicators (intensity, consistency, content quality, selectivity) and PAI students understanding of religious material. This gap serves as the primary motivation for this study.

Based on the above discussion, this study formulates three main research questions: (1) What is the level of Islamic YouTube media usage among PAI students at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo? (2) What is the level of religious material comprehension among PAI students at that university? (3) Is there a significant relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube and the religious material comprehension of PAI students? This study is expected to provide practical recommendations for institutions on systematically integrating digital media into the Islamic Education curriculum.

YouTube is a video-sharing platform launched in 2005 and has since grown into one of the world s largest sources of multimedia content. In the context of Islamic religious education, YouTube offers various formats of religious material that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. The Multimedia Learning Theory proposed by Mayer (2021) states that information presented through a combination of audio and visual elements is easier for individuals to understand and remember compared to text-only presentations.

This platform also offers an interactive dimension through features such as comment sections, live chat, and video sharing, which enable active and collaborative learning. Bandura s Social Learning Theory is relevant in this context, as students can emulate religious models presented by ustadz or trusted religious figures. Through these features, the learning process is no longer one-sided but involves the direct exchange of ideas and clarification of material.

However, the effectiveness of YouTube as a learning medium heavily depends on users digital literacy. Fauzan (2021) emphasizes that students must be discerning in selecting credible video sources, given that YouTube, as an open platform, provides content from various sources that are not always academically standardized. Therefore, digital literacy is a crucial prerequisite for ensuring that the use of YouTube can positively impact religious understanding.

Understanding religious material in the context of Islamic education goes beyond merely memorizing definitions or concepts textually. More than that, true understanding encompasses the ability to interpret, analyze, and apply religious teachings in real life. Selvia, Rahmat, and Anwar (2022) define religious understanding among PAI students as the cognitive and affective ability to comprehend Islamic teachings holistically, encompassing creed (akidah), jurisprudence (fiqh), and ethics (akhlak).

Referring to Bloom s revised taxonomy, there are six levels of understanding: recall (C1), understand (C2), apply (C3), analyze (C4), evaluate (C5), and create (C6). In this study, PAI students understanding of religious material was measured at levels C2 through C4, namely the ability to understand concepts, apply religious principles, and analyze the relevance of religious values in contemporary life.

The three aspects measured in this study are: (1) Aqidah, which is an understanding of the fundamentals of Islamic belief; (2) Fiqh, which is an understanding of Islamic law in the context of worship and social interactions; and (3) Akhlak, which is an understanding of Islamic ethics and morality in daily life. Nurfadhilah and Machali (2023) found that high-quality Islamic YouTube content can simultaneously strengthen understanding of all three aspects.

Based on the theoretical review above, this study develops a conceptual framework that positions the use of Islamic YouTube (X) as the independent variable and understanding of religious material (Y) as the dependent variable. Variable X is measured through four indicators: frequency of access, consistency of viewing, content quality and relevance, and selectivity in choosing religious studies. Variable Y is measured through three dimensions: understanding of Aqidah, Fiqh, and Akhlak.

The hypotheses of this study are: H_0: There is no significant relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube media and the understanding of religious material among PAI students; H_1: There is a significant relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube media and the understanding of religious material among PAI students at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a correlational design. This design was chosen because it aims to analyze the presence or absence of a relationship, as well as the strength of the relationship between two variables, without manipulating variables or applying experimental treatments. The quantitative approach offers advantages in

measurement objectivity and the ability to generalize results to a broader population (Sugiyono, 2022).

The population of this study consists of all students in the Islamic Education (PAI) Study Program at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo who are active in the 2025/2026 academic year, totaling 141 students distributed across four classes (PAI Classes A, B, C, and D).

Table 1
Distribution of the Study Population and Sample

No	Class	Number of Students (Population)	Sample Size	Proportion (%)
1	PAI Class A	37	17	26.2%
2	PAI Class B	31	14	22.0%
3	PAI Class C	37	17	26.2%
4	PAI Class D	36	17	25.5%
Total		**141**	**65**	**100%**

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

The sampling technique used simple random sampling, in which every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in n = 65 students. The sample was distributed proportionally to ensure the representation of each class.

Data were collected through two main instruments. First, a questionnaire on the use of Islamic YouTube content that measured four indicators: (a) access intensity, i.e., the frequency of watching Islamic YouTube content per week; (b) viewing consistency, i.e., the regularity of viewing time and duration; (c) content quality and relevance, i.e., the degree to which the viewed content aligns with Islamic Education (PAI) material; and (d) selectivity, i.e., the ability to choose content from reliable sources. The questionnaire used a 1 5 Likert scale with 20 items.

Second, a test of religious material comprehension in the form of multiple-choice questions (30 items) and short-answer questions (5 items) covering the aspects of creed, jurisprudence, and ethics. The test was designed based on PAI curriculum indicators and validated by two religious studies experts and one measurement expert. The measurement was conducted cross-sectionally (at a single point in time) because this study is correlational, not experimental.

The validity of the instruments was tested in two stages. First, expert validation (content validity) to ensure the relevance of each item to the measurement objectives. Second, empirical t validity using factor analysis in SPSS with the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method. An item was deemed valid if the factor loading value was > 0.5. The test results showed that all items on the questionnaire and test had factor loadings above that value.

Table 2
Instrument Reliability Test Results

No	Variable	Cronbach s Alpha	Description
1	Use of Islamic YouTube (X)	0.804	Reliable
2	Understanding of Religious Material (Y)	0.864	Reliable
3	Combined (X and Y)	0.834	Reliable

Source: SPSS test results, 2026

Data analysis was conducted in stages. First, descriptive statistical analysis was performed to describe the characteristics of the respondents and the data distribution of each variable, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and frequency distribution. Second, a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted to ensure the data was normally distributed as a prerequisite for parametric analysis. Third, Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was used to measure the direction and strength of the relationship between variables X and Y. All data processing was performed using SPSS version 26.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The study sample consisted of 65 Islamic Education (PAI) students at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo. By gender, 67.7% of the respondents were female and 32.3% were male. By cohort, the majority of respondents were students from the 2022 cohort (38.5%) and the 2023 cohort (33.8%). All respondents had access to smartphones and internet data plans, which are prerequisites for using Islamic YouTube as a learning medium.

Table 3
Respondent Characteristics

Category	Description	n	%
Gender	Female	44	67.7%
	Male	21	32.3%
Class	Class A	25	38.5%
	Class B	22	33.8%
	Class C	12	18.5%
	Class D	6	9.2%

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Description of the Variable "Use of Islamic YouTube" (X)

The results of the descriptive analysis of the variable regarding the use of Islamic YouTube indicate that the majority of Islamic Education students have a fairly high frequency of access. A total of 75.4% of respondents fell into the moderate category for Islamic YouTube use (score 60 80), while 21.5% fell into the high category (>80) and 1.5% into the low category (<60). The mean score for Islamic YouTube usage was 74.38 with a standard deviation of 9.66, placing it in the moderate category based on the established norm range (range 60 80 = moderate category, >80 = very high).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of the Islamic YouTube Usage Variable (X)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Access Intensity	4.00	0.64	2	5
Viewing Consistency	3.79	0.62	2	5
Content Quality & Relevance	3.62	0.87	1	5
Content Selectivity	3.64	0.74	1	5
Total Score (Scale 0 100)	**74.38**	**9.66**	**60**	**93**

Source: SPSS analysis results, 2026

For the access intensity indicator, students obtained the highest average score (4.00), indicating that they are very active in accessing Islamic YouTube content. Meanwhile, the content quality and relevance indicators received the lowest scores (3.62), indicating that students ability to assess content quality still needs improvement. The frequency distribution of Islamic YouTube usage by category is presented as follows.

Table 5
Frequency Distribution of Islamic YouTube Usage per Week

No	Access Frequency	n	Percentage (%)
1	Low (<60)	1	1.5%
2	Moderate (60 80)	49	75.4%
3	High (>80)	14	21.5%
Total		**65**	**100%**

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Variable Description: Understanding of Religious Material (Y)

The results of the religious material comprehension test showed an overall average score of 76.1 (SD = 10.7), which falls into the good category. In the aspect of creed, students achieved the highest average (78.4), followed by fiqh (74.7) and akhlak (73.8). The relatively lower akhlak score ( ) indicates that the application of Islamic ethics and morals in daily life still requires further attention in PAI learning.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of the Religious Material Comprehension Variable (Y)

Aspect of Understanding	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Belief	78.40	11.60	58	100
Fiqh	74.70	13.00	50	100
Ethics	73.80	14.20	30	100
Total Score (Scale 0 100)	**76.10**	**10.70**	**60**	**98**

Source: SPSS analysis results, 2026

Table 7
Distribution of Students Religious Material Comprehension Categories

No	Score Range	Category	n	%
1	< 60	Less	0	0.0%
2	60 74	Fair	27	41.5%
3	75 89	Good	33	35.4%
4	≥ 90	Very Good	9	21.5%
Total			**65**	**100%**

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

D. Prerequisite Tests for Analysis

Before conducting the Pearson correlation test, a normality test was first performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The test results show that the variable for the use of Islamic YouTube obtained a calculated D value of 0.131 (table D = 0.116, p > 0.05) and the variable for understanding religious material was 0.115 (table D = 0.166, p > 0.05). Thus, both variables are normally distributed and meet the parametric assumptions for Pearson correlation analysis.

Table 8
Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

Variable	K-S Statistic	Sig.	Notes
Use of Islamic YouTube (X)	0.131	0.116	Normal
Understanding of Religious Material (Y)	0.115	0.166	Normal

Source: SPSS test results, 2026

Pearson Correlation Test Results

A Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was conducted to test the research hypothesis. The analysis results are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9
Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variable Pairs	Calculated r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Notes
Use of Islamic YouTube (X) ↔ Religious Understanding (Y)	**0.804**	0.000	Significant
X1 (Intensity) ↔ Y	0.699	0.000	Significant
X2 (Consistency) ↔ Y	0.606	0.000	Significant
X3 (Content Quality) ↔ Y	0.539	0.000	Significant
X4 (Selectivity) ↔ Y	0.733	0.000	Significant

*Note: n = 65; *p < 0.01 (two-tailed)*

Source: SPSS analysis results, 2026

The analysis results show that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the use of Islamic YouTube (X) and understanding of religious material (Y) is r = 0.804 with a significance value of p = 0.000 (p < 0.01). Based on the interpretation of correlation coefficients according to Sugiyono (2022), the value of r = 0.804 falls into the very strong category (0.80 1.00). Thus, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted: there is a significant and very strong positive relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube media and the understanding of religious material among PAI students at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo.

The coefficient of determination (r) of 0.646 indicates that the variable of Islamic YouTube usage contributes 64.6% to the variance in students understanding of religious material. Meanwhile, 35.4% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as the quality of face-to-face learning, pesantren background, intrinsic learning motivation, and the intensity of reading printed religious literature.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube and PAI students understanding of religious material. These results align with various previous studies. In their experimental study, Ramadhan and Hidayah (2023) found that targeted use of YouTube significantly improved students understanding of religious concepts. Pratiwi and Husni (2024) also demonstrated that integrating YouTube into a blended learning model enhances PAI students understanding and engagement. Furthermore, Ilahi et al. (2025) demonstrated that digital platform-based PAI learning assessments at Madrasah Zainul Hasan Genggong can be effectively implemented through planned strategies, indicating the readiness of pesantren-based institutions to adopt digital technology for Islamic education.

Theoretically, these findings support Mayer s Multimedia Learning Theory (2021), which states that the combination of audio and visual elements in presenting material optimizes information processing in human working memory. Islamic YouTube content that simultaneously presents lectures, animations, and visualizations of religious concepts allows students to process and retain information more effectively than through text alone.

Additionally, Bandura s Social Learning Theory is relevant in explaining these findings. Students who regularly watch trusted religious scholars or figures on YouTube not only acquire cognitive information but also internalize religious values and behaviors through observation and modeling. This phenomenon reinforces the affective dimension of religious understanding, which goes beyond mere conceptual mastery.

Among the four indicators of Islamic YouTube usage, content selectivity (r = 0.733) and access intensity (r = 0.699) showed the highest correlations with religious understanding. This indicates that students ability to select appropriate content and high access frequency are stronger determining factors than consistency or content quality. This finding aligns with Fauzan s (2021) assertion that digital literacy skills for selecting credible content are key to the effectiveness of YouTube as a medium for religious learning.

On the other hand, the content selectivity indicator received the lowest average score among the four indicators. This suggests that although students access Islamic YouTube channels quite frequently, their ability to distinguish reliable sources from unverified content still needs improvement. This finding supports the recommendation by Firmansyah and Amelia (2023) regarding the importance of enhancing religious digital literacy as a complement to the use of digital media in Islamic Education (PAI) learning. In line with this, Sofa, Mundir, and Ubaidillah (2024) emphasize that PAI learning that digitally integrates spiritual and emotional intelligence has proven effective in shaping students character within Islamic higher education settings, including at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University.

In terms of understanding, the highest score in the creed dimension (78.4) indicates that students have a stronger grasp of the belief dimension compared to the character dimension (73.8) and the jurisprudence dimension (74.7). This is likely related to the abundance of akidah lecture content on YouTube compared to akhlak and fiqh content, which is more technical and requires contextual explanations from instructors directly. These findings have implications for developers of Islamic YouTube content to enrich akhlak and fiqh materials with more structured and easily understandable content.

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow for causal conclusions. Second, the data was collected from a single university, so generalizations must be made with caution. Third, the variable of Islamic YouTube usage only measures self-report perceptions, which may contain social desirability bias. Further research with a longitudinal or controlled experimental design, a broader population scope, and objective measurements of media usage is

needed to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between these two variables.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, this study yields three main conclusions. First, the level of Islamic YouTube usage among PAI students at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University in Probolinggo falls into the moderate category, with 75.4% of respondents in the moderate category and an average score of 74.38. The access intensity indicator received the highest score, while content quality and relevance still need improvement.

Second, the level of religious material comprehension among PAI students falls into the good category, with an average score of 76.1. Understanding of creed (akidah) is relatively higher compared to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and ethics (akhlak), indicating room for development in the more practical aspects of Islamic moral and legal teachings.

Third, there is a significant and very strong positive relationship between the use of Islamic YouTube media and PAI students understanding of religious material ($r = 0.804$, $p < 0.01$), with a contribution of 64.6% ($r = 0.646$). Thus, the higher the quality and intensity of Islamic YouTube use, the better the students understanding of religious material.

This study recommends that Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University develop official guidelines for the use of Islamic YouTube as a supplementary learning resource, systematically integrate it into the PAI curriculum through a blended learning model, and conduct religious digital literacy training for students. For future researchers, it is recommended to develop studies with an experimental design, a broader population, and to include mediating variables such as learning motivation and religious attitudes.

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