

# Virtual Congregation: Intensity of Watching YouTube on Religious Understanding during Covid-19

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**Abstract.** Social media is not only a means of entertainment but also an increase in religious knowledge. The phenomenon of staying at home, working from home, and lockdown as a direct impact of Covid-19 has given a lot of free time to surf in cyberspace. This paper hypothesized that the intensity of watching YouTube during the Covid-19 period affected students' religious understanding with an Islamic education background. The test was conducted on 42 students living in the State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu dormitory. There is a positive influence between the variable intensity of YouTube users on religious understanding with a significance of 0.001. The value of R Square (R) of the two research variables that have been tested is 0.232. Thus, the variable intensity of YouTube users affects the variable of religious understanding by 23.2%, while other variables outside this study influence the remaining 76.8%. In the future, it is necessary to test the influence of similar platforms that are more attractive to millennials in the future.

**Keywords:** Religious understanding; YouTube; Social media; Covid-19

## 1 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed various regular human habits in almost all countries in the world. The practice of the gathering must wear a mask [1], online learning [2], go outside the area preceded by a clinical test [3] until the ban on open worship [4] has become evident. From now onwards, the atmosphere of quarantine, lockdown, and stay at home has become a new habit of controlling disease [5]. People spend 24 hours at home, then only travel outside for something urgent. This locking option is a first for many. So there are psychological effects such as depression and acute boredom caused by anxiety and fear [1], [6]. Yan et al. found boredom susceptibility significantly and positively mediate the relationship between perceived stress and emotional distress. Various attempts have been made to kill boredom: spending time on social networks [7], [8].

The acceleration of internet use with religion, in general, has been of interest to academics for a long time. Previous studies seem to focus on three areas. First, early studies predict the influence of the internet on religion [9], [10]. Turkle said that the internet would influence a person's spirituality, and there are many changes in it. More specifically, Kinney predicts the end of an era of religious leaders when the internet is inseparable from the congregation. Second, Islamic movements and religious leaders use the internet as a medium of da'wah [11], [12]. Third, there is a quantitative test of the impact of the internet on a person's religiosity [13], [14],

[15]. The three focus studies have examined the relationship between the internet and religious understanding but did not specifically examine the relationship between the YouTube platform as the most popular media during the Covid-19 pandemic and religious understanding. This research is intended to cover the shortcomings of previous studies through a quantitative test of the effect of the intensity of watching YouTube on religious understanding on students with an Islamic education background during the Covid-19 period.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Intensity of Watching YouTube**

Intensity is a person's actions in doing an activity repeatedly [16]. Intensity is generally carried out over a certain period and has a volume of effort. Santrock explains that intensity can also be in the form of attention and interest based on quality and quantity [17]. Youtube is one type of social media that contains explicitly moving content or videos. YouTube carries the concept of the audience for an audience, meaning that every person or company has the opportunity to spread amateur and high-quality videos [18]. Sartika and Sugiharsono argue that the intensity of the use of social media can be seen from four aspects [19]. *First*, attention or concentration in watching. Attention in watching shows is in the form of implied attention and the time and energy of individuals to watch the shows that have been presented. *Second*, appreciation or understanding of the impressions given. Information is understood, enjoyed, and stored as new knowledge for the individual concerned. Then it can be applied in their daily activities. *Third*, time duration or viewing depth. Time to access the media has an essential role in influencing one's attitude. When someone uses his time to do activities, it can be seen that there is motivation in him. *Fourth*, the frequency or level of frequency of watching the program. Watching frequency is vital to add understanding to the show.

### **2.2 Religious Understanding**

'Understanding' in Oxford is explained in four senses, one of which is something related to one's knowledge of a particular subject or situation [20]. Cox said that religious understanding is a deep religious experience requiring experience of faith beliefs and practices, emotional response to worship rituals and ceremonies, and understanding and responding by agreeing on its main function [21]. Various things along with the times have influenced understanding of religion, one of which is making changes very quickly is digitalization. Campbell uses the term 'digital religion' to explain the technological and cultural space phenomenon caused when talking about how the online and offline religious realms have been unified and integrated [22].

### **2.3 Hypotesis**

YouTube has become one of the most widely accessed social media by the world community. Many life events have been presented either intentionally or naturally. The intensity of watching YouTube is likely to affect a person's mindset and life. We propose a hypothesis: The intensity of watching YouTube during the Covid-19 period positively affects students' religious understanding with a religious education background.

### 3 Method

A simple regression method has been used. The dependent variable in this study is the religious understanding, and the independent variable is the intensity of watching YouTube. We tested it on dormitory students at the State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu (UIN Bengkulu) Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. They are divided into male and female dormitories totaling 140 people, the ideal sample size where 30% is 42 people. We built a questionnaire statement based on indicators provided by Sartika and Sugiharsono for the intensity of watching YouTube: attention, appreciation, duration of time, and frequency or level of frequency [19]. Then, indicators of religious understanding are taken from Islam's basic sources: *aqidah*, *sharia*, and morals. The intensity of watching YouTube is measured by providing 11 statements, and eight statements measure religious understanding. In further, we have tested the validity and reliability of the questionnaire on 30 respondents. Test the validity in this study using the Person Product Moment. The technique used is to compare the r-count with the r-table at a significance level of 0.05 (5%), then the r-table value = 0.257.

### 4 Result and Discussion

#### 4.1 Normality Test

The normality test aims to determine whether the residual value is normally distributed or not. A good regression model is to have a residual value that is normally distributed. Normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov obtained Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)  $0.200 > 0.05$  means normal distribution.

**Table 1.** Normality test  
**One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

		Unstandardized Residual
N		42
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.14484712
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.107
	Positive	.074
	Negative	-.107
Test Statistic		.017
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

#### 4.2 Simple Linear Regression Test

The linear regression test is presented in table 2. From the output, and the probability value is  $0.001 < 0.05$ . Then the regression model can be used to predict the participating variables. There is an effect of the YouTube user intensity variable on the religious understanding variable.

**Table 2.** Simple linear regression test

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	57.290	1	57.290	12.150	.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	188.615	40	4.715		
Total	245.905	41			

a. Dependent Variable: Religious understanding  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intensity of Watching YouTube

### 4.3 F and T Test

Table 3 displays the simultaneous F test resulting in a calculated F value of 12,150 with a significance level of confidence F table  $0.05 = 4.08$ . Thus  $12.150 > 4.08$ , it can be concluded that there is an influence between the intensity of watching YouTube simultaneously on religious understanding.

**Table 3.** F test

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	57.290	1	57.290	12.1	.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	188.615	40	4.715	50	
Total	245.905	41			

a. Dependent Variable: Religious understanding  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intensity of Watching YouTube

The calculated T value obtained is 3.486 with a significance level of 5% (0.05), and the T table value = 1.681. It was concluded that  $3,486 > 1,681$ , which means that there is an influence of YouTube intensity on religious understanding.

**Table 4.** T test

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	17.297	3.551		4.871	.000
Intensity of Watching YouTube	.344	.009	.483	3.486	.001

a. Dependent variable: Religious understanding

### 4.4 Discussion

The results of the hypothesis obtained are based on the data: the influence of the intensity of YouTube users during the new normal period of Covid-19 on students' religious understanding with an Islamic education background in UIN Bengkulu. Previous researchers

supported this research explained that during the Covid-19 pandemic, innovation was required in education through technology so that the learning process was not rigid [23]. The digitalization of Islamic da'wah through social media, namely YouTube, makes the preacher even more active in reforming [24]. There are previous studies in international journals explaining that Islamic preachers (*da'i*) use the advancement of the internet to spread messages and knowledge of da'wah (Islam) [25].

Based on the study results, which found that indicators of religious understanding influenced the intensity indicator of YouTube users, this research is connected with previous research on the Uses and Effect theory. This study proves that the more often students watch lectures on YouTube, the more religious understanding they will get. Religious understanding through YouTube has an impact on the audience [12], and has the opportunity to shape the social system in educational organizations. This system affects how communication occurs and determines the direction from and to whom contact occurs

## 5 Conclusion

This study has examined the effect of the intensity of YouTube users in the new normal era of Covid-19 on the religious understanding of Mahasantri Ma'had Al-Jami'ah UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, concluding that there is an effect. Indicators of faith, sharia, and morals on the variable of religious understanding. It is based on evidence that the stronger the user's (Mahasantri) attention to the lecture material on YouTube, the more YouTube users will understand and understand the religious knowledge conveyed by the preacher. This study provides applications for the development of digital da'wah that rhetoric, gestures, and understanding of religious knowledge must be complemented by cinematic video processing.

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