Journal of Educational Sciences
Journal homepage: https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES

P-ISSN 2581-1657
E-ISSN 2581-2203

Analysis of the Intensity of Instagram Social Media Usage Regarding the Level of Social Ethics (Character) of Students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU Medan

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 18 June 2026
Accepted: 08 July 2026
Available Online: 15 July 2026

Keywords:

Intensity of Instagram Usage,
Level of Social Etiquette (Moral Conduct)

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Article Doi:

https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.7.p.966-976

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A B S T R A C T

In the current digital era, advancements in information and communication technology have transformed the paradigm of human social interaction. Social media stands out as a dominant technological product, with Instagram being one of the most popular platforms among adolescents. This study aims to examine the relationship between the intensity of Instagram usage and the level of social interaction ethics (character/conduct) among students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU. The study employs a quantitative descriptive approach using a correlational method. The total population consisted of 166 students, from which a sample of 49 students was selected using simple random sampling. The instruments used measured Instagram usage intensity and social interaction ethics. The results indicate that Instagram has a significant and strong influence on the students' social conduct and character at MAL UINSU. With a contribution value of 57.7%, it is evident that a substantial portion of the changes in students' ethical behavior is driven by how they use Instagram, while the remainder is influenced by external factors such as the family environment. This relationship is positive, implying that if Instagram usage is directed toward constructive and educational activities, the students' manners and social ethics at school are also likely to improve significantly.

1. Introduction

The evolution of information and communication technology in the digital era has brought about revolutionary changes in every aspect of human life. The transition from Industry 4.0 toward Society 5.0 has established the internet as a primary necessity inseparable from daily activities creating a new virtual public space that nonetheless has a tangible impact. Social media has emerged as the dominant platform within today's digital ecosystem (Syahrir, & Pendit, 2025). Its presence has shifted communication patterns from conventional

face-to-face interactions to mediated communication that transcends the boundaries of space and time, enabling individuals to connect globally right from the palm of their hand. In this digital age, advancements in information and communication technology have transformed the paradigm of human social interaction. Social media stands out as a dominant technological product, with Instagram ranking among the most popular platforms for teenagers. Instagram is no longer merely a medium for sharing photos and videos; it has evolved into a primary social space where teenagers construct their identities, seek validation, and interact with the outside world (Desi &Joko, 2022).

In recent times, the number of social media users in Indonesia has risen sharply. In 2022, the number of social media users in Indonesia reached 132.7 million a 51.8% increase compared to the 88 million users recorded in 2014. According to a report by We Are Social, the number of active social media users in Indonesia stood at 191 million in January 2025, representing a 12.35% increase from the previous year's figure of 170 million (Ratih et al., 2024). The majority of social media users in Indonesia are students (Arsyad, 2023). The most frequently accessed social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Fatihah Saman & Agus Sutiono, 2025). The large number of social media users has given rise to new problems, such as criminal activities including fraud, baby trafficking, online prostitution, and the spread of fake news (Suarmita,& Gusnardi, 2025). This inevitably has a negative impact on social media users, the majority of whom are students; indeed, it is not uncommon for users to be under the age of 12. (Atie, 2023).

Social media platforms sometimes feature adult content unsuitable for students, potentially leading to negative effects as they lack the necessary filters to screen out material inappropriate for them to view. There is concern that this could corrupt the students' moral character (Shafira et al., 2025). As one of the largest visual-based social media platforms, Instagram has become a favorite among people worldwide, including in Indonesia. With standout features such as Reels, Stories, and the Feed, Instagram offers a highly engaging and addictive content-sharing experience for its users (Wayan et al., 2025). For Millennials and Gen Z, social media is not merely a communication tool but a space for shaping personal identity. They spend hours cultivating a personal brand online to gain social validation in the form of "likes" or "followers.

Adolescence is a crucial transitional phase for the formation of character and ethics the high intensity of Instagram usage gauged by duration, frequency, and the attention devoted to the platform often blurs the boundaries between the virtual and real worlds (Sarjono, 2022). Ideally, a madrasa student is expected to possess social etiquette grounded in Islamic values (Noble character), such as speaking politely, showing respect for elders, and observing boundaries when interacting with the opposite sex (Irfan, 2025). However, in reality, content on Instagram often showcases hedonistic lifestyle trends, the use of abusive or "toxic" language, and patterns of unrestrained social behavior. There is concern that this could shift students' moral standards, leading to a decline in their social conduct both at school and in the community (Syafirah, 2024).

Social ethics, or character (moral character), constitute a fundamental pillar of life within a community (Zahro, & Oktaviani, 2024). In the context of Islamic education, character is not merely a matter of etiquette rather, it is a reflection of an individual's faith, manifested in their conduct toward Allah, fellow human beings, and the natural environment. (Desi Rahmatiwi, Joko Sarjono, 2022). Current realities indicate signs of moral degradation among adolescents (Nasyiroh et al., 2025). Deviant behaviors such as a lack of respect for teachers, the use of abusive language, and a loss of a sense of propriety in interactions are increasingly being observed in educational settings (Irfan Nofa Sagita, 2025). Social conduct, which ought to be grounded in noble values, is now frequently eroded by pragmatic and hedonistic lifestyles. Many students prioritize social media popularity over maintaining courtesy in their speech and behavior in the real world (Manuella & Perdani, 2023).

Excessive use of social media can consume students' time, often causing them to lose track of their studies or even miss their scheduled prayer times a common issue in school environments, including at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL). Furthermore, the improper use of social media is evident in the slang frequently adopted by students; they sometimes use this informal language when communicating with parents and teachers, despite it being considered inappropriate according to standards of polite speech. Such language is often picked up from social media platforms, particularly within features like "Stories" or comment sections. Additionally, there are students who fail to comply with school rules and regulations, behavior that does not reflect good character. (Nasyiroh et al., 2025).

At its core, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) aims to shape individuals who possess faith, piety, and noble character in their daily lives. At the Senior High School (SMA) level, the success of PAI instruction is measured not only by the mastery of classroom material but also by how students manifest their character through their interactions with the surrounding environment (Selfiana & Berangka, 2026). However, in today's digital era, the challenge of character building has become increasingly complex due to the massive use of information technology particularly social media, which has become an integral part of the teenage lifestyle (Caniago et al., 2026).

Based on preliminary observations conducted by the researcher at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL), a phenomenon was identified revealing a disparity between students' understanding of religious subject matter and their actual behavior. Academically, the majority of students demonstrated highly satisfactory performance in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), achieving average scores that exceeded the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) (Habibie, 2025). However, this high level of cognitive achievement stood in stark contrast to the behavior exhibited on social media particularly Instagram. The researcher found that many students used impolite language, engaged in mutual taunting (cyberbullying), and posted content inconsistent with Islamic values of courtesy and propriety.

2. Methodology

Respondents The population of this study consisted of all Grade X students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU Medan who were actively enrolled during the current academic year, totaling 166 students. The study sample comprised 49 Grade X students who were willing to complete the research instrument. Research Design This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach using a correlational method. It aims to determine whether there is a relationship between Instagram usage and the level of social interaction ethics (moral conduct) among students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU Medan. The population consists of 166 students, with a sample of 49 students selected via simple random sampling. The instruments used are an Instagram usage scale and a scale measuring students' social interaction ethics (moral conduct) (Yusuf, 2014). The scales used in this study used a Likert scale. All scales were validated through professional assessment. (Sugiyono, 2017). Data Analysis Data analysis in this study was conducted using IBM SPSS version 26. The analysis method employed was simple regression, accompanied by prerequisite tests including the Normality Test, Partial Test (t-test), validity test, and reliability test. Table 1 below presents the reliability test results:

$$n=\frac{N}{1+N\,(e)\,2}$$

Note:
n = Required sample size
N = Population size
e = Margin of error

Table. 1 Instrument

Indicator	Item No	
Usage Intensity	1,2	3,4
Information	5,6	7,8
Sosial Media Benefits	9,10	11,12
Sosial Media Impact	13,14	15,
Discipline	16,17	18,19
Helping Others	20,21	22,23
Compliance	24,25	26,27
Respect	28,	29,30

Measurement Tools The scales used in this study were the Instagram Social Media Usage Scale and the Student Social Ethics (Morals) Scale. The Instagram Social Media Usage Scale consists of 15 items, and the Student Social Ethics (Morals) Scale consists of 15 items, Table 2 below presents the reliability test results.

Table 2. Scoring Guidelines

Response Alternative	Score
Strongly Agree(SS)	5
Agree (S)	4
Somewhat Disagree (KS)	3
Disagree (S)	2
Strongly Disagree (STS)	1

The scales used in this study used a Likert scale. All scales were validated through professional assessment, Table 3 below presents the reliability test results.

Table 3 . Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	**N of Items**
0,924	**30**

3. Results and Discussion

Results

This study aims to examine how students' Instagram usage habits influence their daily manners or character at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU. Currently, many adolescents spend a significant amount of time on social media, raising concerns that this could alter the way they interact with teachers and peers. A normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data followed a normal distribution. This assessment was performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test on the research variables, utilizing SPSS Version 26 software The results of the normality test can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Normality Test Results

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogoro Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Unstandardized Residual	.100	49	.200*	.850	49	.422

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the normality test calculations performed above, the research data shows a significance value of 0.200 in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov table. Since this significance value (0.200) is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data in this study is normally distributed. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk result with a significance value of 0.422, which also exceeds 0.05 reinforces the conclusion that the data is normal. In addition to the tabular results, the normal distribution of data in this regression model can also be demonstrated via a Normal Probability Plot. In this plot, a normal distribution forms a straight diagonal line. If the data points are distributed along or close to this diagonal line, it indicates that the regression model satisfies the normality assumption.

The fulfillment of the normality assumption in this study indicates that the data regarding the variables of Instagram usage intensity and student conduct (character/morality) at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU exhibit a balanced distribution. This is crucial because normally distributed data allows for more accurate subsequent statistical testing such as simple linear regression. Consequently, the study's findings can be considered representative of the actual

conditions among the student population at the school, ensuring that conclusions regarding the impact of social media on student character rest on a robust data foundation and are scientifically Furthermore, the results of the partial test (t-test) are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Partial Test Results (t-test)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.067	2.678		1.892	.065
	The Use of Instagram Social Media	.809	.101	.760	8.006	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Levels of Social Etiquette (Moral Conduct)

Based on the data from the Coefficients table with analysis results formatted according to your specifications the Instagram social media usage variable (X) has a positive and significant effect on the level of social interaction ethics/conduct (Y). This is evidenced by a calculated t-value exceeding the critical t-value (8.006 > 2.009) and a significance value well below 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05) at the 5% significance level; this positive effect implies that any increase in the intensity of Instagram usage (assumed to be positive/constructive within the context of your research scores) is accompanied by an improvement in students' social interaction ethics. Thus, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis is accepted. The regression coefficient of 0.809 indicates that for every one-unit increase in the Instagram usage score, the score for students' social interaction ethics increases by 0.809 and the subsequent F-test (simultaneous test) can be seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6. F-Test (Simultaneous Test)

Anova[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	205.304	1	205.304	64.101	.000[b]
	Residual	150.532	47	3.203		
	Total	355.837	48			

a. Dependent Variable: Levels of Social Etiquette (Moral Conduct)
b. Predictors: (Constant), The Use of Instagram Social Media

Based on the table above, the calculated F-value (F-count) is 64.101 at a 5% significance level (α=0.05). The F-table value, determined using the formulas df1=k−1 (2−1=1) and df2=n−k (49−2=47), is 4.04. Thus, the calculated F-value exceeds the F-table value (64.101 > 4.04), with a significance value of less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05). This indicates that the variable "Use of Instagram Social Media" has a significant effect on the variable "Level of Social Interaction Ethics (Character/Akhlak)" among students at SMA Laboratorium UINSU Medan. Since the significance value is well below 0.05, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis is accepted. The coefficient of determination test is presented in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.760[a]	.577	.568	1.7896

a. Predictors: (Constant), The Use of Instagram Social Media

Based on the table above, the coefficient of determination indicated by the R-square value of 0.577 reveals that the Instagram social media usage variable influences the related variable (social interaction ethics/character) by 57.7%, while the remaining 42.3% is influenced by variables outside the scope of this study. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.760 indicates that the relationship between Instagram social media usage and social interaction ethics falls into the "strong" category.

Furthermore, the analysis results in the Model Summary table indicate an R-Square value of 0.577. This figure represents the predictive power of your research model. In simpler terms, the variable "Instagram Social Media Usage" contributes to or influences 57.7% of the changes observed in students' social interaction ethics. Meanwhile, the remaining 42.3% is explained by other factors or variables not examined in this study (such as family environment, religious education at home, or offline social interactions).

Additionally, the obtained R value (Correlation Coefficient) is 0.760. This value indicates the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Since 0.760 falls within the 0.60 to 0.799 range, it can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between the "Instagram Social Media Usage" variable and the "Social Interaction Ethics" variable. Overall, these results demonstrate that the model you developed is effective in explaining the phenomenon under study. With an influence level of 57.7%, the "Instagram Social Media Usage" variable proves to be a significant factor determining the level of social interaction ethics (moral conduct) among students at SMA Laboratorium UINSU Medan.

Discussion

The Influence of Instagram Social Media Usage (X) on Students' Social Etiquette (Y)

The hypothesis of this study posits that the variable of Instagram social media usage significantly influences the level of social etiquette (moral conduct) among students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL). This implies that digital interaction patterns occurring via Instagram are closely linked to how students behave and maintain courtesy in their daily lives. The Coefficients table indicates that the calculated t-value exceeds the t-table value ($8.006 > 2.009$), with a significance level of less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). This means that the higher the intensity of positive and purposeful Instagram usage, the more the students' level of social etiquette (moral conduct) improves (Desi, 2022). Thus, it can be stated that the research hypothesis is accepted. These results indicate that Instagram does not always have a negative impact. If students use the platform to engage with

educational content, religious outreach, or positive communities, it reinforces their understanding of ethics and moral character. A regression coefficient of 0.809 indicates a positive relationship; any improvement in the quality of Instagram usage is accompanied by an improvement in students' ethical behavior at school (Putri, & Anggraini, 2025).

Analysis of Model Suitability and Variable Contribution (F-test and Coefficient of Determination)

Based on the simultaneous testing results in the ANOVA table, the calculated F-value exceeds the critical F-value (64.101 > 4.04), with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). This demonstrates that the constructed regression model is highly suitable for explaining the influence of variable X on variable Y. The role of Instagram as a popular social media platform among students is proven to be a significant factor in shaping their character and social interaction patterns within the environment of MA Laboratorium UINSU Medan. Furthermore, the analysis results in the Model Summary table indicate an R-square value of 0.577. This figure signifies that the variable of Instagram social media usage contributes to, or influences, 57.7% of the changes in the students' level of social interaction ethics (moral conduct).

Meanwhile, the remaining 42.3% is explained by factors outside the scope of this study, such as parenting styles, religious education within the family, and students' offline (face-to-face) social circles. An R-value (correlation coefficient) of 0.760 falling within the 0.60-0.799 range indicates a strong relationship between Instagram usage and students' social ethics. Overall, these results demonstrate that in the current digital era, social media particularly Instagram plays a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' communication ethics. School supervision and strong digital literacy are key to ensuring that Instagram usage remains aligned with the cultivation of good moral character.

Based on the results of normality tests using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk techniques, it was found that the research data followed a normal distribution (Sig. 0.200 and 0.422 > 0.05). This indicates that the sample of students at SMA Laboratorium UINSU Medan exhibited a balanced distribution regarding the variables of Instagram usage and social interaction ethics. Theoretically, normally distributed data ensures that the resulting regression model is unbiased. This finding aligns with research Simanjuntak, (2024) which states that a normal data distribution in research on adolescent behavior on social media enables more accurate generalization of findings to a broader population, thereby ensuring that the conclusions drawn rest on a solid scientific foundation.

The t-test results show a calculated t-value (8.006) greater than the t-table value (2.009), with a significance level of 0.000, demonstrating that Instagram usage has a positive effect on students' social interaction ethics. This finding is noteworthy as it challenges the common assumption that social media always has a negative impact. A regression coefficient of 0.809 indicates that the more intensively Instagram is used for positive content, the better the students' social interaction ethics become. This phenomenon is supported by research Ahmad, (2026) which

reveals that visual platforms like Instagram when populated with content focused on character education and positive role models can serve as an effective medium for Generation Z to internalize moral values.

The F-test yielded an F-calculated value (64.101) greater than the F-table value (4.04), confirming that the regression model is highly suitable for explaining the influence of social media on moral character. Instagram is not merely a tool for entertainment but a social instrument that shapes how students interact at school. The R-squared value of 0.577 indicates that Instagram contributes 57.7% to the formation of students' social conduct; this figure represents a significant level of influence within the social sciences. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.760 indicates a "strong" relationship between the two variables. (Miftahir Rizqa, 2025).

These findings reinforce research Setyawan, (2025) indicating that social media accounts for more than half of the factors shaping digital communication ethics among today's adolescents. This confirms Instagram's position as a dominant "electronic teacher" for students. Despite Instagram's dominant influence, a significant 42.3% of the influence stems from other variables, such as parenting styles and the school environment. This demonstrates that character is not formed solely within a digital vacuum (Septiani, & Yusmaita, 2025).

4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and discussion, there is a positive and significant influence of the intensity of Instagram usage on the level of students' social ethics (character/akhlaq) at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU Medan. This is evidenced by a calculated t-value greater than the t-table and a significance value, which is below the significance level. The relationship between these two variables falls into the "strong" category, with a correlation coefficient. Furthermore, Instagram usage contributes determining the quality of students' social ethics, while the remaining is influenced by factors outside the scope of this study. Thus, it can be concluded that the more wisely and positively students use Instagram, the better their level of social ethics (character) within the school environment will be.

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How to cite this article:

Sembiring, A. K. B., & Arsyad, J. (2026). Analysis of the Intensity of Instagram Social Media Usage Regarding the Level of Social Ethics (Character) of Students at Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU Medan. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *10(7)*, 966-976.