



Digital Distraction in Quranic Education: A Mixed Methods Approach

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of social media has raised concerns about its potential impact on cognitive tasks, including Quran memorization (*hifẓ*). While previous studies have explored the effects of digital distractions on learning and memory retention, limited research has specifically examined the relationship between social media usage and Quran memorization. This study addresses this gap by investigating how daily social media consumption influences memorization progress and perceived effectiveness. A survey was conducted among Quran memorizers to assess their social media usage patterns and their correlation with memorization levels. A Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to determine whether significant differences exist in memorization levels across varying social media usage groups. The statistical results indicated no significant association between time spent on social media and memorization levels. However, qualitative responses suggested that excessive social media use negatively affects focus, discipline, and consistency in memorization. These findings highlight the complications of social media's impact on Quran memorization. While quantitative results did not establish a direct relationship, qualitative insights emphasize the importance of a balanced social media usage for Quran memorization. Future research should build on these findings with larger samples and refined methodologies to bridge the gap between statistical trends and lived experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, have transformed learning morphology; people can interact, learn, and engage with religious content across different linguistic and cultural groups (Javed et al., 2025; Shahbaz et al., 2024). While social media platforms offer opportunities for different types of education, including Quran memorization, they also create challenges such as digital distraction and time mismanagement (Abubakar-Abdullateef et al., 2025; Merchant, 2005). Quran memorization, known in Arabic as *hifẓ*, is a sacred practice in Islam that requires dedication, focus, and consistent effort. This study investigated the effect of social media usage on Quran memorization among Malaysia, Arabic, and English speaking communities in Malaysia. This study aims to answer the research question: What is the relationship between social media use and progress in memorizing the Quran.

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This study is one of the first cross-linguistic investigations into social media's impact on Quran memorization (*hifẓ*) across Arabic, English, and Malaysia speaking communities. Unlike prior research, which often focused on a single cultural or linguistic group, this study adopted a comparative lens to explore universal and culture-specific challenges in balancing digital engagement with religious learning. By integrating quantitative statistical analyses (Kruskal-Wallis) with qualitative insights from diverse participants, this study bridges the gaps between educational psychology, digital behaviour, and Islamic studies. Additionally, it uniquely addresses the tension in social media's role as both a facilitator of religious education and a source of distraction, offering nuanced recommendations tailored to modern learners.

Previous studies have examined social media's role in religious education and have highlighted its potential benefits and drawbacks. For instance, platforms such as YouTube and WhatsApp have been used to disseminate religious content, including Quranic recitation and Tajweed lessons. However, excessive usage has been linked to reduced focus and productivity (Koessmeier & Büttner, 2021), which are very essential in tasks requiring sustained attention, such as the Quran's memorization. This study builds on the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between social media usage and Quran memorization across Arabic, English, and Malaysia speaking communities in Malaysia.

Recently, social media's role in education, particularly religious learning, has been extensively explored. Highlighted the dual nature of social media as both a tool for disseminating Islamic knowledge and a source of distraction (Putra et al., 2024; Rohmiati, 2025; Woodward & Kimmons, 2019). They emphasise how platforms such as YouTube and WhatsApp are used for Quranic recitation and Tajweed lessons but caution against over-reliance on social media because of its potential to reduce focus and productivity. Similarly, discussed the challenges of Quran memorization in the digital age, noting that while social media provides access to learning resources, it also contributes to procrastination and reduces memorization efficiency (Akem et al., 2025; Asyari et al., 2025). The author recommends integrating disciplined social media use into Quran memorization programs to mitigate these challenges.

The cognitive impact of digital distractions, particularly on social media, has also been studied extensively. Conducted a meta-analysis on digital distraction's effects on cognitive tasks and found that excessive use of digital devices negatively affects the attention span and task performance (Parry, 2024). They suggested strategies such as limiting screen time and using focused learning tools to counteract these effects.

The findings of align with those of (Al-Qaysi et al., 2020; Perez et al., 2023), who, in their systematic review, concluded that while social media can enhance collaborative learning and access to resources, its overuse can hinder academic performance owing to distractions and a reduced attention span. Rabiul et al., (2024); Wijaya, (2024) conducted a case study on social media's impact on Quranic memorization among Muslim youth, revealing that while social media provides access to learning resources, it also leads to procrastination and reduced memorization efficiency. They recommended integrating structured social media use into Quran memorization programs.

Similarly, Hitami et al., (2019); Lundeto et al., (2021); Maputra et al., (2020) focused on Malaysian youth and found that social media facilitates access to learning materials but also contributes to time mismanagement and reduced focus. Their study suggested incorporating time management strategies into Quran memorization

programs to address these issues.

Evaluated the use of digital tools, including social media, for Quranic learning (Azzahra & Lubis, 2024; Rabiū et al., 2024). The study identified opportunities, such as increased resource access, and challenges, such as distractions and a lack of authenticity, in online content. This study called for the development of verified and high-quality digital platforms for Quranic education.

The key findings of revealed that while social media facilitates global connectivity and flexible learning methods, it simultaneously detracts from the focus required for effective Quranic education (Cheston et al., 2013). They emphasised the importance of structured guidance and regulation to balance the opportunities and challenges presented by social media; this aligns with the findings of this study.

Showed that the digital era provides a number of significant opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning methods that might strengthen the understanding and practice of Islamic teachings among the younger generation. Sanusi also identified the challenges currently faced in the implementation of Islamic education in the digital era and discussed the potential opportunities that could be utilised to improve the overall quality of Islamic education (Sanusi, 2024).

The findings of reveal that while social media facilitates global connectivity and flexible learning methods, it simultaneously detracts from the focus required for effective Quranic education. This study emphasised the importance of structured guidance and regulation in balancing the opportunities and challenges that social media presents. The recommendations include integrating tailored digital tools, enhancing parental and institutional oversight, and promoting mentorship to optimise using social media in Quranic studies (Murniyetti et al., 2016; Oktavia et al., 2023, 2024; Rabiū et al., 2024).

In summary, previous studies collectively highlighted the need for a balanced approach to social media use in Quran memorization, emphasising its potential benefits while addressing challenges. They provide a strong foundation for understanding social media's impact on religious learning, and highlight the importance of developing structured and reliable digital platforms for Quranic education.

METHODS

A comprehensive structured survey was designed to gather detailed data on multiple relevant aspects (Dhahir, 2020; Hazwan et al., 2025; Huda, 2018; Jusoh et al., 2019; Mat et al., 2019; Rahawarin et al., 2024; Rahmiati et al., 2023; Suherman et al., 2021; Yusnita et al., 2018; Yusuf & Nugroho, 2024). The survey consisted of several sections aimed at capturing participants' demographics, patterns of social media usage, progress in Quran memorization (*hifz*), and perceptions of social media's impact on their memorization efforts.

The questionnaire incorporated a mix of closed- and open-ended questions to ensure both quantitative and qualitative insights. Participants were asked to provide details such as age, sex, educational background, and the duration of their engagement with Quran memorization. To assess social media usage, the survey enquired about the platforms frequently used, the average daily time spent on social media, and whether they utilised digital resources for Quranic learning. Furthermore, respondents were prompted to evaluate how social media influenced their ability to concentrate, retain verses, and maintain consistency in memorization routines.

The survey was distributed online through various digital channels including social media groups, educational forums, and community networks, ensuring a

diverse sample of respondents. A total of 123 participants from Arabic, English, and Malaysia speaking communities completed the survey, providing a broad perspective on the relationship between social media engagement and Quran memorization. The collected data formed the foundation for subsequent statistical analyses aimed at identifying patterns and significant correlations between social media use and memorization proficiency.

The survey included questions on: Daily social media usage (1-3 hours, 4-6 hours, and > 6 h). Quran memorization progress (1-5 Juz', 5-15 Juz', 15-25 Juz', complete Quran). Perceived impact of social media on memorization (positive, limited, negative).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographics information

Based on the data obtained from respondents regarding participant demographics, the following figures are presented. The following figure shows that of the 123 participants, 63.41% were female and 36.59% were male.

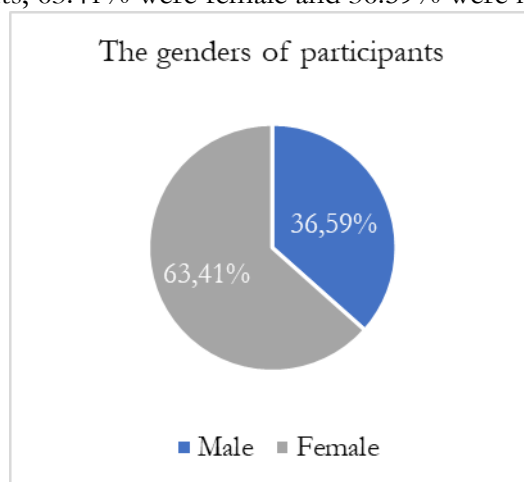


Fig 1. The genders of participants

The distribution of participant ages is shown in figure 2. Most participant were more than 35 years old, at 44%, followed by those aged from 25 to 35 years, with 30%. Participants aged from 18-25 years represented 22% of the participants, while 4% were aged less than 18 years.

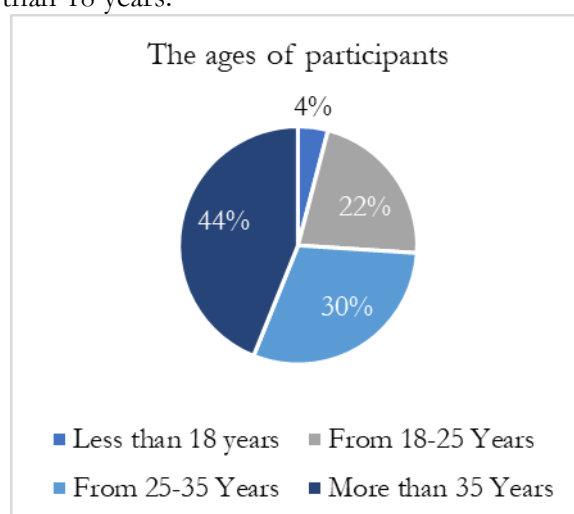


Fig 2. Participants' ages

Figure 3 shows the educational level of the participants. The largest group of participants are in the 'Bachelor' group with 45%, followed by these in the 'post-graduate' group, with 25%. The participants from the 'Secondary School' group represents 28%, while 2% of the participants had an educational levels below secondary school.

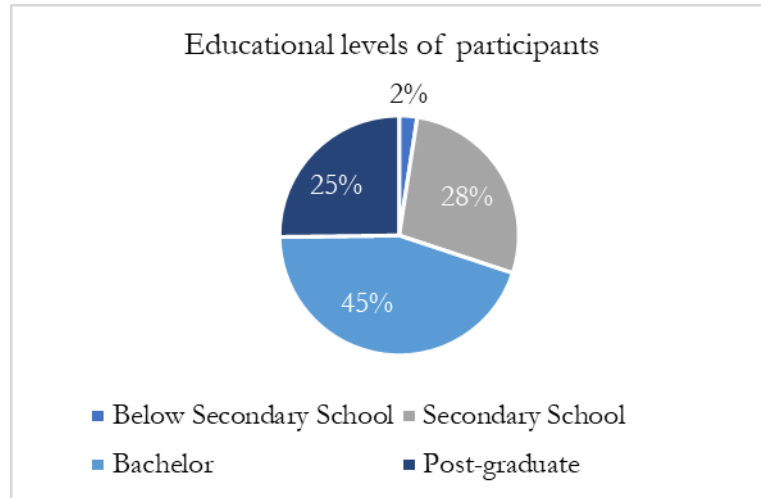


Fig 3. Educational levels of participants

Quran memorization

The levels of Quran memorization among participants varied regarding the number of Juz' memorized, as shown in figure 4. The participants in the category of less than 5 Juz' showed the highest percentage at 35%. A significant number of participants represented by 26% were in the category of memorizing the entire Quran. This was followed by participants with from 5-15 Juz' at 22%. The remaining 9% of the participants fell in the category of less than 5 Juz'.

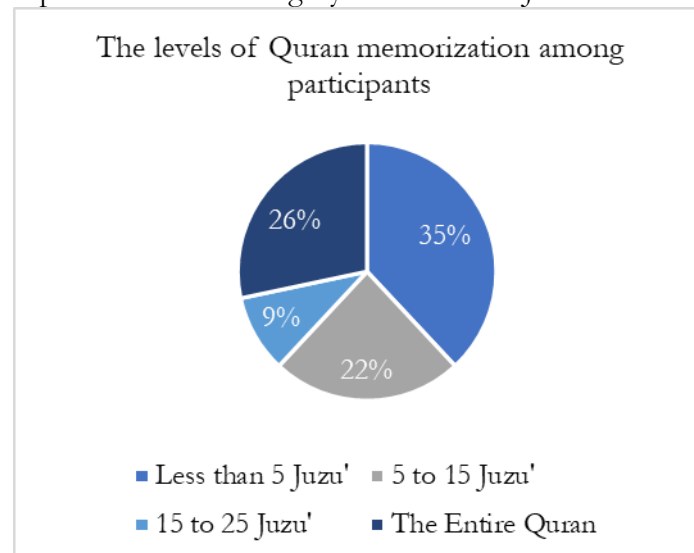


Fig 4. The levels of Quran memorization among participants

Social media usage

Figure 5 shows that the majority of participants (76 %) used social media platforms to aid in Quran memorization compared to 24% who did not.

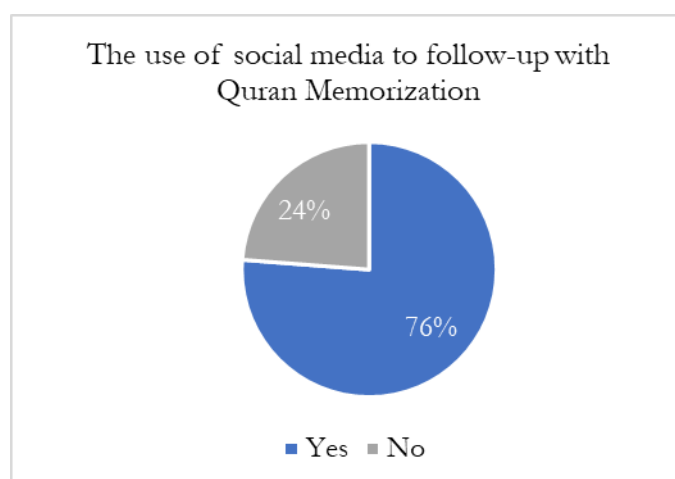


Fig. 5 The levels of Quran memorization among participants

The activities performed by participants to follow up on their Quran memorization showed an almost even distribution, as shown in Figure 6: 38% of the participants used social media to learn about tajweed; 34% used social media to join Quran memorization groups. Those who used social media to follow Quran memorization lessons accounted for 31% of the sample. The remaining 43% indicated other activities.

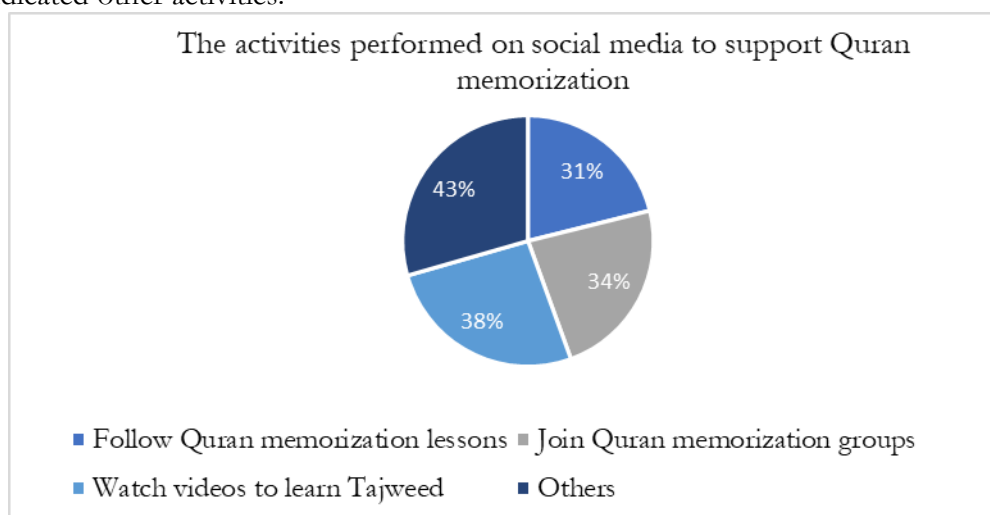


Fig 6. Social media activities supporting Quran memorization

Figure 7 presents data on the hours per day that participants spent on social media to support their Quran memorization. Most participants (60%) spent 1–3 hours daily on social media; 21% spend 4–6 hours; 12% spent more than 6 hours. Only 7% used social media for less than an hour per day. The majority (81%) spent between one and six hours daily on social media, with 1–3 hours being the most common duration. A smaller proportion (12%) exceeded 6 hours, while very few (7%) used it for less than an hour.

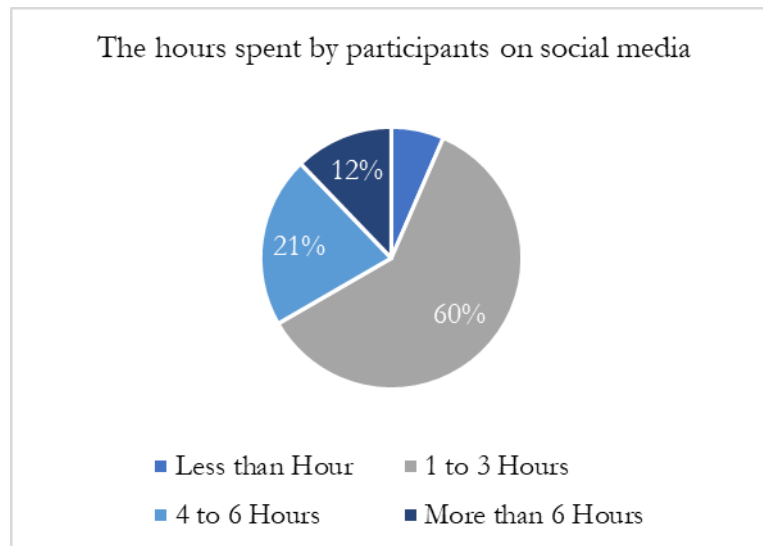


Fig 7. The hours spent by participants on social media to support Quran memorization

Helpfulness of social media in Quran memorization

Figure 8 presents data on the perceived helpfulness of social media in Quran memorization, categorised into three impact levels. The majority, 53% of the participants, found that social media helped them in memorizing the Quran, but only to a certain degree. Twenty-four percent indicated moderate support, who stated that social media was very helpful in memorizing the Quran; 21% indicated no help from social media, indicating that social media did not benefit in their Quran memorization efforts. In conclusion, while the majority of the participants (77%) acknowledged some level of help from social media in memorizing the Quran, only 24% found it significantly helpful and 21% saw no benefit.

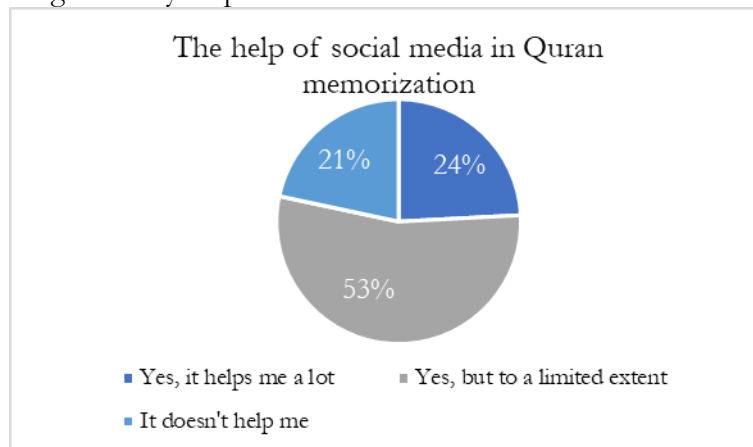


Fig 8. Helpfulness of social media in Quran memorization

Figure 9 presents data on social media's perceived negative impact on Quran memorization, categorised as 'Yes' (participants who believe that social media has a negative impact) and 'No' (participants who do not). The majority of 69% believed that social media negatively affects Quran memorization. A minority of 28% stated that social media had no negative effect. Overall, a significant majority (more than two-thirds) perceived social media as a distraction or hindrance to memorising the Quran.

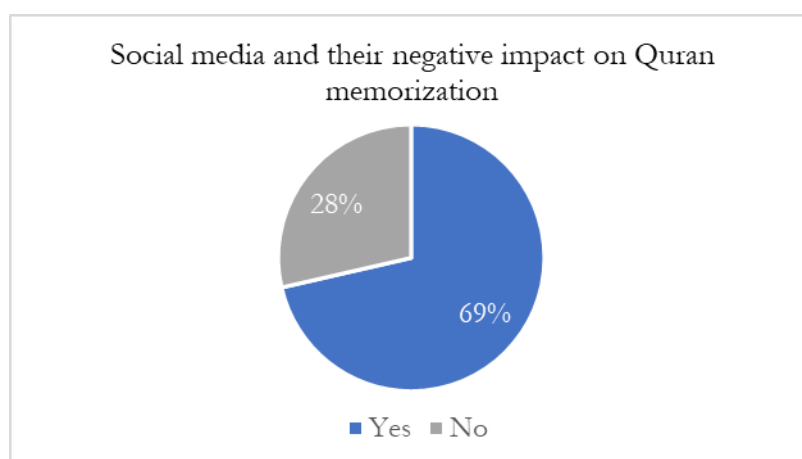


Fig 9. Social media's negative impact on Quran memorization

Figure 10 highlights the primary challenges faced by participants when using social media to assist with Quran memorization. 'Distraction by other content' was the most significant barrier, cited by 63% of the respondents. Lack of time (20%) and quality content (11%) were secondary concerns. Another small group (8%) identified unspecified challenges. In summary, distractions dominated as key obstacles, overshadowing time constraints and content availability.

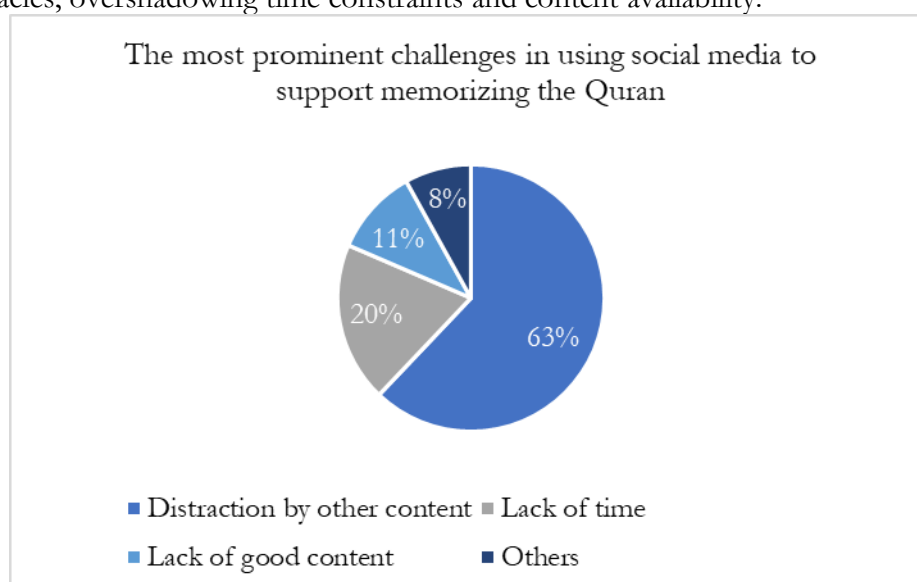


Fig 10. The most prominent challenges in using social media to support memorizing the Quran

Figure 11 presents the number of occurrences based on two factors: the range of Juz' memorised (1-5, 5-15, 15-25, or all Juz') versus the time (< 1 hour, 1-3 hours, 4-6 hours, or > 6 hours) spent by participants on social media in supporting their Quran memorization. The data showed that the most common duration was 1-3 hours across all Juz' ranges, with the largest number (15) for those who memorize 1-5 Juz'. The moderate duration of 4-6 hours showed even occurrence, with the highest count (9) for those who memorised 5-15 Juz'. The longest duration (>6 h) was the least common, with occurrences dropping to zero for those who memorize 15-25 Juz'. Overall, as the number of memorized Juz' ranges increased, the number of long-duration occurrences (>6 h) decreased, while shorter durations (1-3 hours) remained dominant.

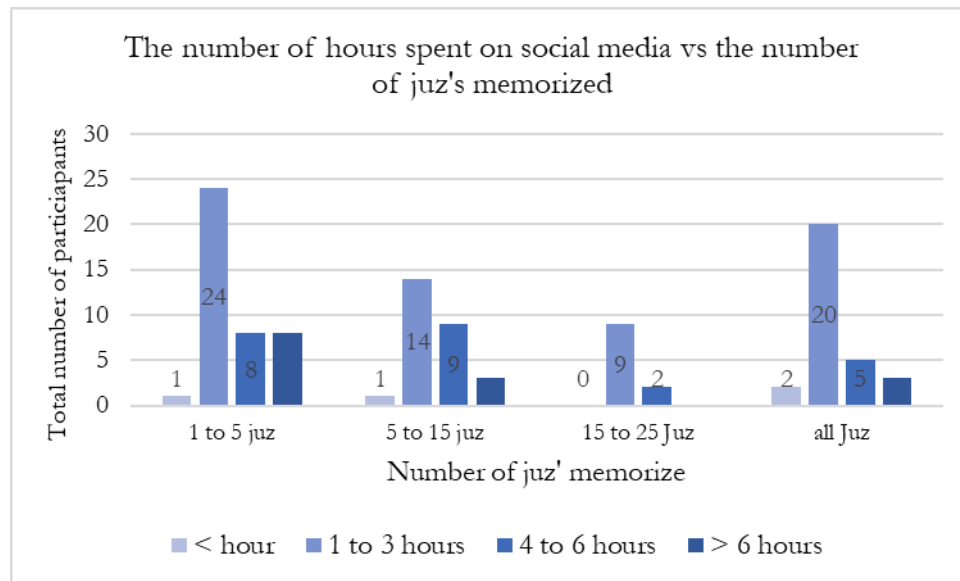


Fig 11. The number of hours spent on social media vs the number of juz's memorized

Quantitative analysis

The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to analyse the survey data. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric (no normality assumption) test used to compare ranked data across groups, preserving the ordinal nature of memorization levels. It detects differences in median ranks between time groups.

Test Hypotheses:

(H₀): No difference exists in median memorization levels across time spent groups.

(H₁): At least one group has a different median memorization level.

The steps in applying the Kruskal-Wallis test were the following

Step 1: Assign midpoint values to juz' categories

To convert the ordinal memorization categories into numerical values, we assigned midpoints based on each category's range.

Table 1. Assigning midpoint values to juzu' categories

Juz' Category	Midpoint Value	Rationale
1–5 Juz'	3	Middle of 1–5 (average of 1 and 5)
5–15 Juz'	10	Middle of 5–15 (average of 5 and 15)
15–25 Juz'	20	Middle of 15–25 (average of 15 and 25)
All 30 Juz'	30	Full Quran (30 Juz')

Step 2: Expand data into individual observations

Table 2. Expanding data into individual observations

Time Spent	Midpoint Values (Scores)
<1 hour	3, 10, 30, 30
1–3 hours	24×3, 14×10, 9×20, 20×30 → [3,3,...,10,10,...,20,20,...,30,30]
4–6 hours	8×3, 9×10, 2×20, 5×30 → [3,3,...,10,10,...,20,20,30,30,30,30,30]
>6 hours	8×3, 3×10, 0×20, 3×30 → [3,3,...,10,10,10,30,30,30]

Total observations: $N = 4 + 67 + 24 + 14 = 109$

Step 3: Assign ranks to midpoint values

Combine all 109 observations and assign ranks (handling ties with average ranks):

Table 3. Assigning ranks to midpoint values

Midpoint Value	Frequency	Rank Range	Average Rank
3	41	1–41	21
10	27	42–68	55
20	11	69–79	74
30	30	80–109	94.5

Step 4: Compute rank sums for each group:

Table 4. Computing rank sums for each group

Time Spent	Midpoint 3 (Rank=21)	Midpoint 10 (Rank=55)	Midpoint 20 (Rank=74)	Midpoint 30 (Rank=94.5)	Rank Sum (Ri)
< 1 hour	$1 \times 21 = 21$	$1 \times 55 = 55$	$0 \times 74 = 74$	$2 \times 94.5 = 189$	265
1-3 hours	$24 \times 21 = 504$	$14 \times 55 = 770$	$9 \times 74 = 666$	$20 \times 94.5 = 1,890$	3,830
4-6 hours	$8 \times 21 = 168$	$9 \times 55 = 495$	$2 \times 74 = 148$	$5 \times 94.5 = 472.5$	1,283.5
> 6 hours	$8 \times 21 = 168$	$3 \times 55 = 165$	$0 \times 74 = 0$	$3 \times 94.5 = 283.5$	616.5

Step 5: Apply Kruskal-Wallis Formula (McKight and Najab 2010):

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \left(\sum \frac{R_i^2}{n_i} \right) - 3(N+1)$$

Where $N = 109$, $k = 4$

$$\sum \frac{R_i^2}{n_i} = \frac{265^2}{4} + \frac{3,830^2}{67} + \frac{1,283.5^2}{24} + \frac{616.5^2}{14}$$

$$1. \frac{265^2}{4} = \frac{70,225}{4} \approx 17,556.25$$

$$2. \frac{3,830^2}{67} = \frac{14,668,900}{67} \approx 218,788.06$$

$$3. \frac{1,283.5^2}{24} = \frac{1,647,122.25}{24} \approx 68,630.09$$

$$4. \frac{616.5^2}{14} = \frac{380,072.25}{14} \approx 27,148.02$$

$$\sum \frac{R_i^2}{n_i} = 17556.25 + 218,788.06 + 68,630.09 + 27,148.02 = 332,122.42$$

$$H = \frac{12}{109 \times 110} \times 332,122.42 - 3 \times 110$$

$$H = \frac{12}{11,990} \times 332,122.42 - 330 \approx 0.0010008 \times 332,122.42 - 330 \\ \approx 332.3 - 330 = 2.3$$

Step 6: Compare to Critical Value

Degrees of Freedom: $df=k-1=4-1=3$

Critical χ^2 Value ($\alpha=0.05$): 7.815

Result $H=2.3 < 7.815$

Ultimately, H_0 was not rejected. No significant difference existed in memorization levels across time groups; that is, there was no statistically significant difference in median memorization levels across the time spent groups.

Qualitative Analysis

The survey highlighted recurring themes from the respondents' open-ended answers regarding challenges and suggestions related to social media use for Quran memorization. The following points highlight the key challenges and suggestions of the respondents.

Key Challenges: Distraction by Non-Quran Content: 68% of respondents cited distractions from other content (e.g. entertainment and news) as the top obstacle. Poor Time Management: Many reported spending excessive time on social media, leaving little time for focused memorization. Example: 'I feel hours are wasted unproductively. Lack of Quality Content: Complaints about superficial or repetitive Quranic content on platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook. Example: 'Religious content is disorganized and lacks focus on retention

Key Suggestions: Structured Apps and Tools that can: Block distractions, include offline access to Quran lessons and tajweed tutorials, track memorization progress with reminders. Community and accountability: Demand for virtual Quran groups for mutual revision and accountability. Example: Encourage daily peer recitation. Content improvement: Suggestions for: short, engaging videos explaining tajweed rules, podcasts or reels with verse-by-verse recitation and repetition, interactive challenges (e.g., memorization competitions with prizes). Personal Discipline: Many emphasized self-regulation: Minimize social media use, set a strict memorization schedule.

The quantitative analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis test found no statistically significant relationship between the amount of time spent on social media and memorization levels. This suggests that time spent on social media alone may not directly affect Quran memorization progress. However, the qualitative responses offered a contrasting perspective, where participants reported few challenges of social media usage that disrupts their ability to maintain focus, discipline, and consistent memorization routines. These findings highlight the limitations of relying solely on quantitative measures to capture the subjective experiences and cognitive challenges faced by participants.

The findings for the study's research questions are summarized in the following points: What is the relationship between social media usage and Quran memorization progress?

The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated no significant association between social media usage and Quran memorization levels across the groups. However, qualitative feedback revealed that participants who spent more time on social media experienced

disruptions in focus and reduced time allocated to *hifẓ*. This highlights a disconnect between obtained statistical measures and the lived experiences reported by participants.

Does excessive social media usage negatively affect Quran memorization across these groups?

While statistical evidence did not establish a clear negative correlation, qualitative responses revealed that 68% of the participants reported distraction by other contents, time management and content quality which affect their overall Quran memorization process. This suggests that while moderate social media usage may not impede progress, excessive use may have negative impact of Quran memorization.

How can social media be leveraged to support Quran memorization in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts?

Participants highlighted dedicated digital platforms as valuable tools to support Quran memorization. Suggestions included content quality improvements, virtual study groups, and time-management tools to foster a supportive learning environment. Tailored social media content that encourages time management and spiritual focus can enhance engagement while minimizing distractions. This aligns with prior research advocating for purpose-driven technology to facilitate learning in religious and cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study conducted empirical research on the use of social media in Quran memorization. Data were collected from three linguistic-speaking communities: Arabic, English, and Malay. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between social media usage and Quran memorization progress, addressing a critical gap in the literature on digital consumption and Quran-based learning. While quantitative analysis found no significant statistical relationship between time spent on social media and memorization levels, qualitative insights revealed that excessive use disrupts focus, consistency, and time management which are considered key factors for successful Quran memorization. The findings suggest moderate social media usage does not directly impede memorization, However, excessive engagement may negatively impact the memorization process. Participants identified few options that can be used to enhance Quran memorization while mitigating digital distraction such as dedicated media platforms, virtual memorization groups, and time-management tools. Practical implications include developing specialized tools for Quran learning and promoting balanced technology use. Educators and institutions should leverage online platforms to create focused learning environments, while fostering digital literacy to navigate distractions. Further research is needed to discover the different factors that impact Quran memorization, such as motivation, different types of teaching approaches, and community support. This study lays the groundwork for sustainable memorization practices in the digital age

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DECLARATIONS

Author Contribution

Samy Abdelazeez: Writing-Preparation of original manuscript, **Abdul Rahman Obeid:** Conceptualization, **Muhammad Lukman:** Methodology, **Hitham Alhussian** Visualization, Investigation, **Norshakirah Aziz:** Improve Content, Data accuracy, **Ahmed Patel:** Improve Language.

AI Statement

The data and language usage in this article have been validated and verified by English language experts and no AI-generated sentences are included in this article.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that this research was conducted without any conflict of interest in the research.

Ethical Clearance

The place or location studied has agreed to conduct research and is willing if the results of this study are published.

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