

Youtube Kids and Children's Digital Literacy: A Qualitative Study on the Utilization of "Omar and Hana" Animated Content

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Abstract. The purpose of this research is to investigate the ways in which the animated material created by Omar and Hana and available on the YouTube Kids platform may be used to foster the development of digital literacy in young children, making use of a case study technique in conjunction with a descriptive qualitative approach. According to the results, the content of Omar and Hana makes a beneficial contribution to the development of children's literacy skills. This contribution is not only in cognitive dimensions, such as the learning of vocabulary and the comprehension of fundamental ideas, but also in social-emotional, behavioral, and motor domains. Providing children with educational knowledge that is presented in the form of straightforward tales, songs, and repetition enables them to absorb and replicate messages in a contextual manner. Furthermore, the active role that parents play in accompanying, screening, and regulating their children's intake of material is an essential factor in determining the efficacy of digital media as a tool for knowledge acquisition. These results highlight the fact that digital media may serve as an effective educational tool to enhance the development of comprehensive digital literacy in early childhood when it is utilized judiciously and with a purpose.

Keywords: digital literacy, early childhood, YouTube Kids, Omar and Hana, educational media, digital parenting

1 Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology over the past decade has significantly influenced various aspects of modern life, particularly in the domains of parenting and early childhood education. Children today are immersed in environments saturated with digital devices such as tablets, smartphones, and smart televisions, granting them immediate access to a vast range of content. Consequently, digitalization has become an integral part of early childhood development [1]. This phenomenon necessitates the adoption of strategic approaches to technology use, positioning it not merely as a source of entertainment but as an effective tool for learning.

In the context of early childhood, literacy encompasses more than the ability to read and write. It involves recognizing, interpreting, and responding to information presented through various media, including digital formats. Digital literacy in young children refers to their capacity to meaningfully engage with digital content, which includes interpreting visual, auditory, and textual elements in electronic media [2]. This expanded understanding

underscores the importance of cultivating digital literacy from an early age as a core component of 21st-century education.

YouTube Kids is one of the most widely utilized platforms among children for accessing digital content. Designed with child safety in mind, the application features parental controls and algorithms that prioritize educational programming. These features have made it a favored option for parents seeking structured and safe digital experiences for their children [3]. Nevertheless, the platform's educational value remains contingent upon the quality of content consumed and the degree of parental engagement during screen time.

A noteworthy example of educational content on YouTube Kids is the animated series *Omar and Hana*, which aims to instill Islamic values in children through accessible storytelling, music, and engaging visuals. Its straightforward and repetitive format serves both entertainment and instructional purposes, making it a potentially valuable resource for cognitive and moral development. The series exemplifies how digital media can be effectively leveraged to deliver value-based education.

Existing research has demonstrated that well-designed digital media—when interactive and educational—can significantly enhance children's literacy skills, particularly in areas such as language acquisition, communication, and symbolic recognition [4]. Given that young children often learn by observing and mimicking behaviors, positive and contextually appropriate content such as *Omar and Hana* may act as a catalyst for developing responsible and constructive digital literacy. In this regard, digital media can function as a bridge between educational objectives and entertainment.

However, digital content consumption also poses risks, particularly when not accompanied by adequate supervision. Young children, being in the early stages of cognitive development, may struggle to critically interpret the messages conveyed in digital formats. Parental involvement is therefore essential—not only in filtering content but also in guiding children's understanding and managing screen time appropriately [5]. With the right guidance, media consumption can become a reflective, dialogic, and developmentally supportive activity.

In light of this, it becomes critical to investigate how educational animations—specifically *Omar and Hana*—can support the development of digital literacy among young learners. This study centers on intentional child-media interactions, aiming to explore the advantages and implications of engaging with educational digital content for children's language, social, and moral development.

Adopting a qualitative case study methodology, this research examines the experiences of young children using the *Omar and Hana* series via the YouTube Kids platform. The outcomes are intended to inform the development of effective digital literacy strategies and provide practical insights for educators and parents in utilizing digital media as a secure and impactful learning tool in the contemporary era.

2 Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate the utilization of the animated series *Omar and Hana* on the YouTube Kids platform in fostering digital literacy among early childhood learners. The case study method was selected for its capacity to provide a comprehensive and contextualized understanding of real-life phenomena. This approach enables researchers to explore the unique characteristics of a specific case in an intensive and holistic manner [6].

[7] emphasizes that a case study is particularly appropriate when the boundary between a phenomenon and its real-life context is indistinct and when an in-depth understanding of “how” and “why” events occur is required. The qualitative paradigm, in this context, facilitates the

exploration of meanings, interpretations, and subjective experiences shaped by the participants' social and cultural contexts [8]

This study is descriptive in nature, aiming to accurately represent the phenomenon without manipulating variables or establishing causal relationships. The descriptive orientation seeks to produce a rich, detailed, and context-sensitive narrative [1]

2.1 Participants and Sample

Participants included six parents (four mothers and two fathers) of children aged 4–6 years who regularly watched *Omar and Hana* on YouTube Kids. They were selected using purposive sampling based on three inclusion criteria: (1) the child actively engages with *Omar and Hana* content, (2) parents are involved in supervising digital media use, and (3) participants provided voluntary consent. The relatively small sample size aligns with qualitative research conventions that prioritize depth and contextual richness over generalizability [9]

2.2 Procedures

Data were collected over a four-week period using participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

- **Participant Observation:** The researcher observed children's interactions with *Omar and Hana* videos in their home environments. Field notes captured behavioral and verbal responses to the content, focusing on signs of engagement, imitation, and comprehension. Observational procedures followed [10] ethnographic principles of minimal researcher interference, ensuring naturalistic behavior.

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with parents—key informants who mediate their children's media experiences [11]. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was held either in person or via online video calls. The open-ended questions explored parental perceptions of *Omar and Hana*'s educational messages, strategies used to guide or restrict viewing, and observed effects on children's digital literacy practices. These procedures align with established frameworks for understanding family-based media mediation and early literacy development [12]

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, method triangulation was employed by comparing data from observations and interviews. The analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model [2], consisting of three iterative phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical standards for research involving human participants. All participants were informed about the study's objectives, procedures, and confidentiality assurances prior to giving informed consent. Participants were assured of anonymity through pseudonyms and informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without repercussions. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Universitas Faletahan, ensuring compliance with institutional and international research ethics for studies involving parents and young children.

3 Results

3.1 The Use of *Omar and Hana* Content to Enhance Early Childhood Literacy through YouTube Kids

The findings of this study emphasize the educational potential of the *Omar and Hana* animated series in supporting early childhood literacy development through the YouTube Kids

platform. Children exhibited observable growth across multiple literacy domains—linguistic, cognitive, social-emotional, and moral—through repeated and guided exposure to the content. These outcomes confirm the role of age-appropriate and culturally grounded digital media in literacy development [2][13].

Structured exposure to *Omar and Hana* content, particularly episodes with repetitive language and music, promoted vocabulary acquisition and moral understanding. As one parent stated:

“My daughter began to use new English and Arabic words like *thank you*, *please*, and *bismillah* in her daily speech.” (Parent 2, Interview, 2025)

The repetitive musical format enhanced children’s memory and reinforced positive behaviors. Another parent noted:

“He memorized short phrases and even sang along during prayer time. The songs make it easier for him to remember good habits.” (Parent 4)

Parental mediation emerged as the key moderating factor. Parents selected appropriate content, monitored viewing time, and contextualized learning through discussion and real-life application. This is consistent with earlier studies emphasizing the significance of co-viewing and guided interaction in preventing passive media use [4][12].

“After watching, I always ask her what Omar and Hana did. It helps her reflect on the lesson.” (Parent 6)

The integration of moral narratives, music, and cultural values aligns with the holistic literacy approach [14]. Children demonstrated the ability to link lessons from the series with everyday experiences, illustrating a balanced development of digital, moral, and social literacy skills.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Child’s Age	Viewing Frequency	Parental Mediation Style	Observation Setting
P1	Female	4	3–4 times/week	Active co-viewing	Home
P2	Female	5	Daily	Restrictive + discussion	Home
P3	Male	6	2–3 times/week	Guided explanation	Online observation
P4	Female	5	Daily	Active + encouragement	Home
P5	Male	4	3 times/week	Restrictive mediation	Home
P6	Female	6	Daily	Co-viewing + reinforcement	Home

Table 1 presents demographic data of six participating parents and their children. Most participants were mothers, reflecting traditional caregiving patterns. The children ranged from four to six years old, representing early childhood developmental stages. Parents generally adopted active or restrictive mediation strategies while viewing *Omar and Hana* content at home.

Table 2. Key Themes and Illustrative Quotes

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quote
Vocabulary and Language Awareness	Children learned and practiced new English and Arabic words heard in the videos.	“He says <i>Assalamu ‘alaikum</i> every time someone comes home now.” (P3)

Moral and Religious Values	Videos helped children internalize moral lessons such as prayer, sharing, and respect.	“She reminds us to pray after watching <i>Omar and Hana Pray at Home</i> .” (P1)
Parental Co-viewing and Guidance	Parents facilitated discussion and related media messages to daily life.	“I always sit with her and explain the meaning of the story.” (P2)
Emotional and Social Development	Children showed empathy and emotional understanding toward the characters.	“He said he felt sad when Hana lost her toy—it reminded him of his own experience.” (P6)
Behavioral Application	Children applied learned behaviours (politeness, gratitude) in real contexts.	“She now says <i>thank you</i> to her friends and teachers at school.” (P5)

Table 2 summarizes five emergent themes from observation and interviews. The dominant theme—*Parental Co-viewing and Guidance*—illustrates how mediation enhances comprehension and moral learning. Direct participant quotes demonstrate how children’s digital engagement translated into observable behavior change.

3.2 Strategic Benefits of YouTube Kids for Children’s Literacy Development

The YouTube Kids platform emerged as both an educational and entertainment tool, offering a safe and child-friendly digital space. When used intentionally, it enhances language acquisition, cognitive engagement, and moral reasoning. Children demonstrated curiosity and contextual understanding by asking questions about actions portrayed in *Omar and Hana*, indicating growth in functional literacy.

“After watching the episode about sharing, he offered snacks to his friends without me telling him to.” (Parent 5)

However, consistent with [15], the platform’s effectiveness is contingent upon active parental supervision. Parents who contextualized lessons and balanced screen exposure with real-world interaction reported better outcomes. A balance between digital learning and offline play remains vital for holistic child development.

3.3 Digital Literacy

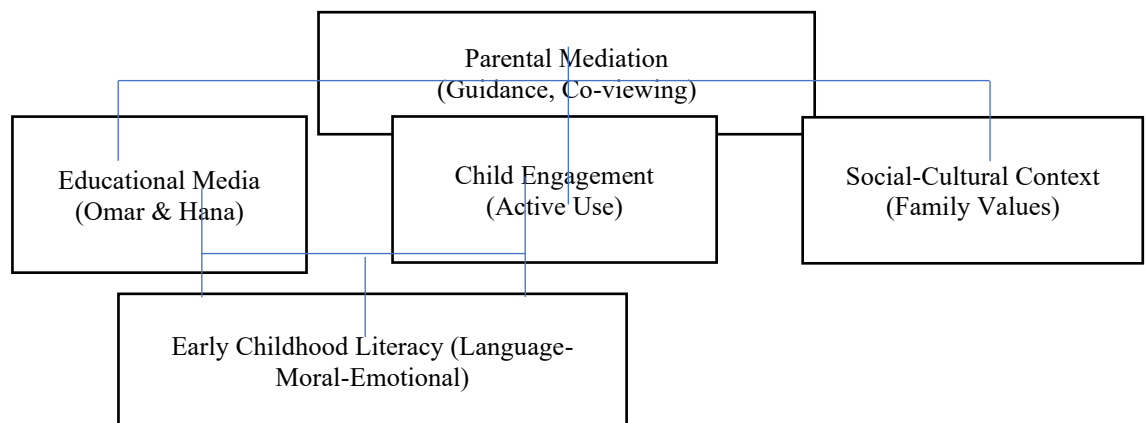


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model: The Role of *Omar and Hana* in Early Childhood

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction among Parental Mediation, Educational Media Content, and Child Engagement, leading to multidimensional literacy outcomes—language, cognitive, moral, and emotional development. The model highlights that literacy growth occurs most effectively when parental involvement mediates content exposure. The core mechanism identified in the study: parental mediation directly influences how children engage with *Omar and Hana* content, which in turn enhances their early literacy. The integration of family values, guided discussion, and consistent viewing promotes balanced development across multiple literacy dimensions.

4 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the animated content *Omar and Hana* on the YouTube Kids platform significantly contributes to the enhancement of early childhood literacy. This improvement is evident not only in cognitive domains such as vocabulary acquisition and understanding of basic concepts, but also in social-emotional development, behavior, and motor skills.

The content delivery strategies employing simple narratives, interactive songs, and repetition—facilitate children's comprehension and imitation of the messages conveyed. With proper parental supervision and guidance, the viewing experience becomes an effective and enjoyable learning opportunity.

Overall, these findings support the argument that digital media platforms like YouTube Kids, when used selectively and responsibly, can serve as an integral part of early childhood education. Children's interaction with *Omar and Hana* content demonstrates the potential of digital media to foster healthy digital literacy while instilling positive values in a meaningful and contextual manner. Therefore, the use of such media should be strategically integrated into a sustainable literacy development framework, rather than being treated merely as a form of passive entertainment.

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