DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS NEW SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A Virtual Ethnographic Analysis

PLATFORM DIGITAL SEBAGAI MODAL SOSIAL BARU DALAM PENDIDIKAN KEAGAMAAN ISLAM

Analisis Etnografis Virtua

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh perkembangan teknologi digital yang pesat serta pergeseran paradigma dalam interaksi sosial di era digital, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan agama Islam. Adanya platform digital sebagai media komunikasi dan informasi membuka peluang baru untuk memanfaatkan modal sosial dalam proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis interaksi antara viewer dan content creator pada akun keislaman di platform digital, khususnya TikTok, yang berfokus pada akun @wakkajishodiq, @huseinjafar, dan @kadamsidik00. Menggunakan pendekatan etnografi digital, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana dinamika interaksi sosial dan pembentukan komunitas keagamaan virtual terjadi melalui konten dakwah. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa karakteristik konten membentuk karakteristik komentar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga akun tersebut membangun otoritas keagamaan melalui pendekatan yang berbeda: @wakkajishodiq dengan kedekatan kultural, @huseinjafar dengan pendekatan intelektual, dan @kadamsidik00 dengan pendekatan emosional. Interaksi yang terbentuk menunjukkan bahwa viewer tidak hanya pasif, tetapi juga aktif dalam membentuk makna dakwah melalui komentar, diskusi, dan solidaritas spiritual. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa platform digital seperti TikTok bukan hanya alat penyebaran pesan, tetapi juga menjadi ruang pembelajaran agama non-formal yang bersifat fleksibel, partisipatif, dan kontekstual. Kesimpulan penelitian ini memperlihatkan bahwa platform digital telah menciptakan model baru dalam pendidikan agama Islam, di mana interaksi sosial dan pembentukan modal sosial menjadi elemen penting dalam proses belajar agama.

ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the rapid development of digital technology and the paradigm shift in social interaction in the digital age, particularly in the context of Islamic religious education. The existence of digital platforms as a medium for communication and information opens up new opportunities to utilize social capital in the learning process. This study aims to analyze the interaction between viewers and content creators on Islamic accounts on digital platforms, specifically TikTok. Using a virtual ethnographic approach, this study explores how the dynamics of social interaction and the formation of virtual religious communities occur through da'wah content. This article argues that characteristic of content forms characteristic of participative comments. The results show that the three accounts build religious authority through different approaches: @wakkajishodiq through cultural proximity, @huseinjafar through an intellectual approach, and @kadamsidik00 through an emotional approach. The interactions formed indicate that viewers are not merely passive but also active in shaping the meaning of da'wah through comments, discussions, and spiritual solidarity. This study reveals that digital platforms like TikTok are not merely tools for disseminating messages but also serve as flexible, participatory, and contextual spaces for informal religious education. The study's conclusions highlight that digital platforms have created a new model in Islamic religious education, where social interaction and the formation of social capital are key elements in the learning process.

Keywords: digital platform, Islamic religious education, virtual ethnography, social capital, TikTok

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has changed the way humans interact, learn, and form social relationships (Suwahyu, 2024). In the religious context, this phenomenon has also influenced how people access religious knowledge. Digital media has now become an alternative space for disseminating Islamic values on a wide scale (Zuhri & Alfin, 2022). Not only as a medium, digital platforms even serve as new social spaces. This marks an important shift in the practice of Islamic preaching and religious education. Islamic education, which previously relied on formal institutions such as madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, or studies at mosques, is now undergoing significant transformation in line with advances in digital technology. The digital space has become an alternative medium for disseminating Islamic values. Not only preachers and religious teachers are taking advantage of this opportunity, but also ordinary individuals who actively share Islamic content through various platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram (Zuhri & Alfin, 2022). This is often utilized progressively by preachers who are beginning to digitize their preaching methods. One prominent strategy is the use of visually appealing communication designs, enhanced with artistic elements to make them more engaging and relevant to the tastes of the digital audience. This phenomenon

marks a significant shift in the patterns of conveying and receiving religious teachings in the modern era.

Many preachers now collaborate with graphic designers to create visual preaching content such as posters, infographics, and illustrations that convey moral messages, religious advice, and spiritual values in a varied format that is easily accepted by the public. Da'wah content is no longer limited to static media but has expanded into audio-visual formats such as short videos, vlogs, and professionally produced Islamic documentaries, even by television broadcasting institutions. This change is inseparable from the rapid development of information technology, which is a key feature of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era. Technology has not only accelerated communication but also reshaped social spaces, including in the context of diversity. According to the latest report, around 175.4 million Indonesians, more than 64% of the total population, are active internet users. The majority are in the productive age range of 16 to 64 years old, and 94% access information via smartphones (Ruita et al., n.d.). This fact shows that Indonesians, especially the younger generation, live in an intensely digital environment.

Digital platforms not only function as communication tools but also as social arenas where individuals build social capital (Hariyadi, 2023). In the context of religious education, this means that a person's influence and authority can be determined by the number of followers, content interactions, and virtual community engagement. This creates a new social structure that differs from the conventional religious education system. This digital social capital is key in determining how widely religious messages are disseminated. This represents a significant shift in the landscape of religious authority. Islamic religious education in the digital age is undergoing a complex transformation that includes changes in teaching methods, curriculum, learning tools, as well as pedagogical and ethical approaches (Suwahyu, 2024). In the digital age, Islamic education faces the challenge of adapting to technology and globalization while maintaining the core values of religion in an increasingly secular environment (Johan et al., 2024).

The presence of creative and innovative dakwah content provides a new experience for audiences, especially younger generations who are more interested in visual approaches and entertaining yet educational narratives. Digital dakwah is not merely a shift from offline to online media but also reflects a paradigm shift in conveying Islamic teachings that are more dialogical, inclusive, and contextual in line with the digital culture of modern society (Trisakti, 2022). Digital preachers are now able to reach thousands to millions of audiences with just one content upload. They do not always have a formal academic background in religion, but they are still respected and followed because of their popularity and attractive delivery style (Zaid et al., 2022). These findings indicate that digital habitus plays a role in shaping how someone conveys Islamic teachings. The interactions that

occur are not merely teacher-student relationships but also social relationships based on emotional and visual closeness (Iryani et al., 2021). This is certainly different from educational relationships in classical Islamic tradition. Digital da'wah opens new opportunities to effectively spread Islamic messages in the modern era, with Muslim scholars and influencers able to reach a wider audience and provide guidance in daily life (Kasir & Awali, 2024). The combination of digital and conventional da'wah can create a more holistic and comprehensive approach to spreading Islamic messages.

The digital community has formed religious learning communities that no longer rely on hierarchical structures (Lestari, 2020). Interactions occur horizontally, in real time, and are heavily influenced by algorithms and platform culture. Religious values are learned through comments, likes, viral content, and live streaming. This creates a highly fluid and often uncontrolled form of non-formal education (Minarti et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to map how Islamic religious education is constructed within these communities. Unfortunately, academic studies on digital platforms as spaces for Islamic education are still limited. Various studies have attempted to explore the relationship between social media and the religious practices of Muslims. Many studies have only examined the textual content of religious preaching, without considering the social interactions, symbolic networks, and power dynamics that take place within them. Yet, it is these social dimensions that determine how religious values are disseminated and accepted. Therefore, a more contextual and in-depth approach is needed to study this phenomenon.

Most studies still position social media solely as a tool for disseminating informational and one-way religious teachings. For example, Maharani et al. (2025) show that TikTok is effective in reaching young people because of its ease of access and attractive appearance (Surahman, 2025). However, this study does not explore further how two-way interaction patterns between da'i and audiences are formed, nor how users' spiritual experiences are influenced by interactive features such as comments. Meanwhile, a normative approach to the role of Islamic religious education in social media emphasizes moral control and digital ethics, as outlined by Kusumastuti et al. (2024). They view social media as a challenge to religious ethics and emphasize the importance of character building to protect the younger generation from media abuse (Kusumastuti et al., 2024). However, such narratives have not yet adequately explained how the experience of digital da'wah itself can shape a non-formal and participatory space for religious learning.

In addition, some studies have attempted to highlight creative da'wah strategies on TikTok, such as that conducted by Aldi (2025). In his study, Aldi emphasizes the importance of creative content that is adaptive to TikTok trends and packaged in emotional and relatable storytelling (Aldi, 2025). However, this

research remains more focused on content production strategies and has not critically examined how new religious authorities emerge from user interactions and perceptions of digital da'i figures, where social media can create a dynamic religious public sphere but also pose challenges to traditional authority. They observed that the emergence of "religious influencers" on platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and others is driving changes in the patterns of spreading Islamic teachings, making them more personal and decentralized. However, their approach remains macro-level and has not delved deeply into local dynamics or micro-level contexts, such as in Indonesia.

From these various debates, it can be concluded that there is an important gap in the literature, namely the lack of in-depth ethnographic studies on how viewers interact with content creators in the context of Islamic accounts on digital platforms, especially TikTok, and how these interactions impact the informal process of religious learning. This method enables researchers to observe and analyze religious practices occurring in digital spaces in depth. As such, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of how technology has shaped the landscape of contemporary Islamic religious education.

METHOD

This study uses virtual ethnography as its main method. Virtual ethnography is an adaptation of the ethnographic approach in qualitative research used to deeply understand social practices, culture, and symbolic interactions in virtual spaces. Virtual ethnography itself is a method used to understand both visible and hidden realities in communication mediated by computer technology, particularly within online communities (Nasrullah, 2022). In this context, the researcher seeks to describe and interpret patterns of communication, values, customs, and religious dynamics that develop within digital communities of social media platform users, particularly in the context of Islamic religious education. Ethnography generally aims to understand the internal perspectives of members of a cultural group through direct observation of their activities, language, symbols, and social interactions (Nasrullah, 2022). In its digital form, this method is applied to virtual communities where social relations, symbolic structures, and cultural practices unfold actively and dynamically. This makes digital ethnography relevant for examining the rapidly evolving phenomena of Islamic preaching and education within the digital media landscape.

Through virtual ethnography, researchers explore how platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Telegram have become new arenas for the dissemination of Islamic values and the formation of users' religious habits. Active virtual communities that produce and distribute Islamic preaching or educational content are positioned as cultural subjects for study. The focus of observation is

directed at how social capital, whether in the form of networks, trust, or symbolic values, is built and capitalized upon by digital actors for the sake of religious education. Data collection techniques include virtual participatory observation, content analysis of posts and digital interactions, and tracking communication patterns within online religious communities. The researcher followed one popular Islamic preaching or educational account, recorded the visual narratives and texts shared, and mapped the relational structures formed through interaction features such as comments, likes, and reposts. Thus, this study not only analyzes the content of the messages conveyed but also the digital social context in which these messages are produced, disseminated, and received by the audience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Characteristics of Religious Digital Accounts

In the era of digital disruption, Islamic preaching has undergone a transformation from physical spaces such as mosques and *majelis taklim* to virtual spaces such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Social media not only serves as a platform for disseminating religious information but also shapes new ways of interacting, building authority, and conveying spiritual messages (Meilia et al., 2024). Da'wah content is now packaged in visually appealing formats, short narratives, and relatable language (Faladhin et al., 2025). These characteristics reflect the efforts of da'is to respond to changes in digital culture and utilize social media algorithms as symbolic mediation in conveying Islamic values. This study specifically highlights three TikTok da'wah accounts @wakkajishodiq, @huseinjafar, and @kadamsidik00 as representations of three distinct models of digital da'wah approaches in terms of communication style, audience relations, and the forms of religious social interaction established. Through a digital ethnographic approach, these three accounts are analyzed as spaces of symbolic production and exchange that reflect the dynamics of contemporary Islamic religious education in the digital landscape.

1. @wakkajishodiq: Local Da'wah and Cultural Relations

The TikTok account @wakkajishodiq is an example of a digital da'wah account that emphasizes cultural closeness as its main strength. With his distinctive East Javanese style of speech, simple attire, and straightforward yet friendly tone, Wak Kaji Sodiq positions himself as a religious figure who is down-to-earth and close to the general public. His content format is short-form (30–60 seconds), featuring moral teachings or advice drawn from everyday experiences and directly linked to Islamic values in a simple and practical manner. The visual simplicity and use of local language reinforce the account's positioning as a representation of "people's scholars" in the digital realm. This is in line with

Campbell and Tsuria's (2021) view that personalization and authenticity are important elements in building religious credibility on social media (Campbell, 2017).

The interaction patterns that emerge in the comment section tend to be emotional and reflective. The audience expresses gratitude, personal experiences, and requests for prayers. There are also interactions between users who respond to each other's comments. This shows that this account has functioned as an interactive religious space that fosters social capital bonding in the digital community. These interactions show a transformation from one-way communication to two-way communication between da'i and the digital community.

2. @huseinjafar: Moderate Da'wah and Popular Intellectual Discourse

The @huseinjafar account is managed by Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, a young Muslim intellectual known for his moderate, inclusive, and tolerance-based preaching. His content delivery style tends to be reflective, argumentative, and often touches on current issues such as pluralism, morality, and humanistic diversity. With neat visual production and straightforward narratives, this account emphasizes preaching as a public discourse that opens up space for dialogue across perspectives.

The form of interaction between viewers and creators on this account shows a more rational discourse. Viewers often ask questions, give opinions, and discuss in the comments section. Although not all comments are responded to directly by the creator, some of the video content is actually a response to comments or issues that are currently viral. This pattern shows the formation of bridging social capital that connects various groups in the digital dakwah space. The religious authority built by Husein Ja'far is more deliberative in nature, namely through arguments, Islamic literacy, and participatory communication.

3. @kadamsidik00: Spiritual Reflection and Religious Emotions

Different from the previous two accounts, the @kadamsidik00 account presents a more emotional and contemplative approach to preaching. The content tends to touch the inner self, such as advice on patience, repentance, and reminders of death. The calm narrative style, coupled with touching background music, makes this content very emotionally resonant for viewers. In some videos, Kadam Sidik delivers brief yet profound spiritual messages, such as "Perhaps I appear good because Allah has concealed all my flaws."

Viewer responses demonstrate a strong emotional engagement. Many comments include personal testimonies, requests for prayers, and even confessions of sin or regret. Although the creator rarely responds directly, interactions among

viewers form a strong spiritual solidarity. In this way, the account becomes a space for emotional bonding and shared spirituality, reinforcing the role of social capital in the form of digital religious intimacy.

In general, these three accounts show that the form of interaction between viewers and content creators in digital daʻwah is very diverse, depending on the style of delivery, type of content, and character of the community that has been built. This interaction not only reflects passive participation but also active and emotional involvement in shaping shared religious meaning. In the context of Islamic religious education, this underscores that the process of spiritual learning now also takes place within a digital ecosystem that is dialogical, informal, and community-based. This demonstrates that digital platforms have become a new space for establishing religious authority, building social connections, and conveying Islamic values through an approach that is contextual and resonant with today's digital society (Laelani & Mukarom, 2025).

To clarify the characteristics of digital daʻwah on the three accounts studied, the following comparative table illustrates the communication style, form of interaction, and social capital formed in each account. This table aims to systematize the findings of digital ethnography described earlier, while also showing the variety of daʻwah approaches that have developed in the contemporary digital space.

Analysis Aspects	@wakkajishodiq	@huseinjafar	@kadamsidik00
Communication Style	Local, simple, humorous, typical of East Java	Intellectual, narrative-reflective, moderate	Emotional, contemplative, deeply spiritual
Language Used	Javanese mixed with Indonesian	Standard and popular Indonesian language	Poetic and nuanced Indonesian language
Content Format	Short videos 30–60 seconds long, everyday situations	Mini lectures, educational, responsive to current issues	Spiritual advice, short and touching sentences
Visual Characteristics	Natural, simple, without cinematic effects	Neat, aesthetic, sometimes with graphic illustrations	Aesthetic, with soft background music
Message Focus	Moral advice, morals, everyday life	Tolerance, diversity, Islamic literacy	Repentance, death, reminders of the afterlife
Creator Response	Sometimes responds to comments, friendly	Responses in the form of new content from viewer comments	Rarely responds directly
Types of Viewer Interaction	Emotional, expressions of gratitude, confessions	Discursive, question and answer, reflective	Emotional, testimonials, requests for prayer
Interaction between Viewers	Active, mutual prayers, responds to	Sometimes discussions in the	Very active, creating a space for solidarity

	comments	comments	
Religious Authority	Cultural, from linguistic and cultural closeness	Intellectual-popular, argument-based & literacy	Spiritual, charismatic, empathy-based
Social Capital Formed	Bonding social capital: a sense of togetherness based on locality	Bridging social capital: bridging across groups	Spiritual bonding: religious emotional solidarity
Role in Islamic Religious Education	Moral preaching based on local culture	Moderate and reflective Islamic education	Emotional internalization of spiritual values

From this comparison, it can be concluded that each account has its own unique characteristics in building relationships with digital audiences. @wakkajishodiq emphasizes cultural and local language proximity as a medium for down-to-earth preaching; @huseinjafar prioritizes moderate discourse based on Islamic literacy; while @kadamsidik00 activates emotional depth as a means of digital spiritualization. These three models reflect different approaches to articulating informal Islamic religious education in virtual spaces, where interactions between creators and viewers form a social capital network that enables Islamic values to be conveyed, exchanged, and internalized in a participatory and contextual manner.

Visual Communication Strategies for Da'wah and Audience Interaction Patterns

In the contemporary digital da'wah landscape, visual communication strategies are crucial elements in effectively conveying religious messages, especially on short video platforms such as TikTok. Unlike traditional lecture formats that rely on verbal communication and physical space, digital da'wah depends on powerful audiovisual elements that are concise, succinct, and capable of triggering emotional resonance in a short period of time. Visual communication in this context encompasses the structure of message visualization, non-verbal expressions, text usage, and accompanying audio design (Sigmon, 2023).

The visual strategy of the @wakkajishodiq account is based on simplicity and a naturalistic approach. The content uploaded is generally recorded in domestic spaces such as homes, yards, or private vehicles, without professionally engineered backgrounds. The absence of cinematic visual elements actually reinforces the authentic and cultural impression. The narrative is delivered with a firm tone, friendly gestures, and uses down-to-earth East Javanese language. Visual elements are enhanced with bright, contrasting punchline text, displayed briefly yet prominently (Mannerfelt, 2022). The pattern of audience interaction on this account is affective and reflective. Many comments reflect daily spiritual experiences, such as feelings of being moved, regret, or requests for prayer. Other

users often respond to these comments with mutual prayers, demonstrating emotional solidarity based on religious values. This finding is in line with the research, which found that personal and cultural visual communication is more capable of building bonding social capital in digital communities (Williams, 2019).

Compared to @wakkajishodiq's cultural approach, the @huseinjafar account employs a more structured and formal visual strategy. Each video is recorded with good lighting, a minimalist background, and narration delivered articulately and logically. Creators utilize text elements in the form of narrative quotes or reflective questions that invite the audience to engage in intellectual dialogue. Some content also includes graphic illustrations or data to strengthen the argument, showing the connection between digital preaching and religious literacy (Auladana, 2022).

The comments that appear on this account reflect patterns of discursive interaction, such as theological questions, social discussions, and critical reflections on contemporary issues. Although the creator does not always respond directly to comments, they often produce content that answers questions or responds to public dynamics. This pattern shows that digital preaching also serves as a deliberative and participatory space that expands the model of non-formal Islamic religious education (Ningrum, 2025). The account @kadamsidik00 presents a visual approach that is contemplative and emotional. The videos uploaded are dominated by cool color tones, slow-motion visual effects, and the use of background music that touches the emotional side of the audience. The narration is delivered in the form of short, meaningful sentences, with a soft and flat voice, creating an atmosphere of reflection and spiritual introspection. Visual text is often inserted in a minimalist format that appears slowly, following the rhythm of the narration (Mannerfelt, 2022).

Audience interaction on this account is very intense affectively. Many comments contain personal testimonies, confessions of sin, life regrets, and requests for prayer support from other users. The community in the comments shows a pattern of horizontal support that reinforces the communal religious aspect. This shows that emotional visual strategies contribute to creating spiritual bonding in the digital space, in line with the findings of Laelani (2025) which underscore the importance of the affective dimension in the success of social media-based da'wah communication (Laelani & Mukarom, 2025). Here is a concise table (textual infographic) presenting a comparison of visual communication strategies and audience interaction patterns from the three Islamic TikTok accounts.

TikTok Account	Visual Strategy	Characteristics of Visual Narrative	Audience Interaction Patterns
@wakkajishodiq	Simple visuals, natural, without	Big punchline text, contrasting colors,	Affective comments: personal testimonies,

	special effects, background of a house, car, or road	firm and friendly expression	expressions of gratitude, mutual prayers
@huseinjafar	Neat and minimalist visuals, well-arranged lighting, sometimes there are illustrations or graphics	Soft narrative text, short reflective sentences, arranged like quotes	Discursive comments: questions and answers, reflections, critical/agreeing statements
@kadamsidik00	Melancholic visuals; cool color tones, slow-motion effects, emotional background music	Short and touching reflective sentences emerging slowly in a minimalist format	Emotional comments: sharing personal stories, requests for prayers, tales of sorrow, spiritual encouragement

Transformation of Da'wah into Non-Formal Religious Education

The transformation of Islamic preaching in the digital era shows a fundamental shift from conventional delivery patterns to an adaptive, participatory, and community-based online religious communication model. If previously da'wah was limited to formal institutions such as mosques, study circles, or Islamic boarding schools, now da'wah has transformed into a form of non-formal religious education that exists in digital spaces (Whyte, 2022). This expands the reach of Islamic education to a more diverse group of society, especially the younger generation who are familiar with technology and social media.

The account @wakkajishodiq showcases a grounded and culturally-based model of preaching. With an approach using local language and everyday narratives, the video content presented represents a practice of religious learning that is horizontal, personal, and contextual. These contents provide the internalization of moral and religious values without a formal structure, but rather through symbolic and visual repetition that can be accessed anytime. This supports Whyte (2022) finding that social media serves as a space for non-formal spiritual literacy that enables learning based on social experience. Meanwhile, the account @huseinjafar demonstrates a more reflective and literacy-based educational approach. With a calm, neat, and systematic rhetorical style, he delivers sermons in the form of short yet substantial narratives, often addressing social issues or answering audience questions. This account implicitly demonstrates a form of religious education based on critical digital literacy, where the audience is invited to understand Islamic values rationally and contextually (Bilki et al., 2023). Interactions on this account demonstrate dialogic learning activities that are deliberative and stimulate religious reasoning, indicating that preaching can function as educational discourse in the digital public sphere.

Unlike the other two, the account @kadamsidik00 focuses on reflective and spiritual-emotional content. With melancholic visuals, meaningful short sentences, and a slow narrative voice, this account guides the audience towards a deep and personal religious experience. This form of preaching creates a non-formal spiritual learning space that is more affective than cognitive. The audience involved in the comments show expressions of repentance, a sense of loss, or a desire to return to the path of God. These findings align with the study by Dudy et al., (2022), which emphasizes that affective-based preaching content significantly contributes to the process of religious internalization among digital natives (Effendi et al., 2022). The transformation of da'wah from these three accounts shows that Islamic religious education now not only takes place through formal institutions but also occurs through spontaneous and algorithm-based micro-learning. Social media users can experience the process of religious learning in brief moments, either consciously or unconsciously, through repeated exposure to religious content that is emotionally, culturally, or intellectually relevant (Brubaker & Haigh, 2017).

Thus, these three Islamic TikTok accounts represent a new face of non-formal Islamic religious education: from those based on local communities and cultural language (@wakkajishodiq), based on literacy and discourse (@huseinjafar), to those based on affection and personal spirituality (@kadamsidik00). This transformation not only indicates a change in the medium of preaching but also shows an epistemological shift in Islamic education in the virtual era from being instructional and institutional to being relational, participatory, and multidimensional.

Repositioning Islamic Education in the Digital Ecosystem

The development of information technology has substantially changed the face of Islamic propagation. Islamic education is no longer exclusively delivered through physical spaces tied to traditional social structures, such as mosques, Islamic boarding schools, or majelis taklim. Now, Islamic education migrates to digital spaces that are open, non-hierarchical, and based on interactivity (Panuju, 2000). This phenomenon marks the repositioning of Islamic education from vertical communication centered on religious authority, to horizontal communication built through audience participation and emotional engagement (Sigmon, 2023).

In this context, social media platforms such as TikTok act as a new terrain for religious articulation (Miller, 2022). TikTok's characteristics that emphasize short narratives, dynamic visuals, and engagement-based algorithms have allowed Islamic education to appear in a format that is more personal, fast-paced, and resonant with everyday life. Da'wah is no longer limited to the delivery of doctrine,

but is transformed into content that can be widely consumed, shared, and even debated by the digital public (Schellewald, 2021). This repositioning shows that the digital platform of Islamic education is not only a media shift, but also an epistemological shift (Hakim & Dahri, 2025). The relationship between teachers and audiences is no longer built on the basis of institutional authority, but through symbolic credibility that is formed performatively and affectively in cyberspace (Panuju, 2000). Religious power in digital space shifts from a top-down model to a participatory model, where users are active in interpreting, modifying, and interpreting religious messages (Hope Cheong & Poon, 2008).

These three TikTok accounts show how this repositioning works in practice. Each account presents a different style of religious communication, but both rely on symbolic proximity and narrative authenticity as the main capital. By shaping an open and participatory space of religious expression, these accounts not only transmit Islamic teachings, but also facilitate the birth of a digital religious public space that is dialogic, affective, and communicative (Salsabila et al., 2025).

This repositioning of Islamic education also indicates that social media has become a new social infrastructure for religious practice. Islamic education on digital platforms not only expands the reach of Islamic messages, but also reshapes the way Muslims build relationships with religious figures, interpret spirituality, and build collective identities as part of an online community. Therefore, understanding the form of viewer interaction with content creators cannot be separated from the context of the digital ecosystem that allows for shifting forms of authority, scholarship, and participation in contemporary Islamic education.

Digital Interaction and Religious Social Capital

Digital platforms have created a form of religious interaction that is not only communicative, but also affective and participatory (Salsabila et al., 2025). The relationship between content creators and audiences is not built unilaterally as in the conventional lecture model, but through interaction mechanisms supported by platform affordances such as comments, likes, stitches, duets, and recommendation algorithms (Caliandro & Anselmi, 2021). This allows users not only to be consumers of da'wah messages, but also to be part of an active and reflective discursive ecosystem.

The form of digital interaction built in the three accounts shows that viewers do not just passively receive religious messages, but also affirm, respond, or even redefine the meaning of da'wah through comments based on personal experience. For example, in the @wakkajishodiq account, many comments are affective in nature such as "thank you kaji, I feel calmer" or "pray for me to be strong through life's tests." This is a form of spiritual bonding between viewers and digital da'i

that creates a space of emotional solidarity (Hutchings, 2011). On the other hand, on the @huseinjafar account, digital interactions tend to be discursive and critical. Viewers often respond with questions or reflections such as "what if the context was different?" or "I had a similar experience, but...". This suggests higher cognitive engagement and opens up opportunities for dialogic learning. This kind of interaction reflects a form of cognitive social capital that encourages the production of collective meaning in digital Islamic public spaces (Gutiérrez, 2017).

Meanwhile, the @kadamsidik00 account shows the dominance of reflective and affective interactions. Comments such as "I cried seeing this," "this is a reminder for me who is far from Allah," or "may we all return to the right path" show how emotionally charged visual content can evoke personal spiritual experiences. This is a form of affective social capital characterized by a sense of spiritual connectedness between users (Pooley et al., 2005). These three patterns show that digital interaction in da'wah is not monolithic. It forms new social capital that can be categorized into three forms:

1. Affective social capital: based on emotions and spiritual support (dominated by @wakkajishodiq & @kadamsidik00),
2. Cognitive social capital: based on discussion and critical reflection (dominated by @huseinjafar),
3. Communal social capital: arises when viewers respond to each other, pray for each other, or share religious experiences with each other in the comments section (occurs in all three accounts).

According to Bourdieu (1991) in Lin, n.d., social capital is a collection of actual and potential resources connected through relational networks. In the context of digital da'wah, the viewer-content creator relationship not only builds communication networks, but also produces symbolic values that strengthen a sense of belonging to a virtual faith community. Digital platforms become a space for the reproduction of a new religious habitus, which is no longer tied to physical location, but to the logic of affection, algorithms, and participation (Campbell, 2017). In addition, the TikTok algorithm reinforces the formation of communities based on interest-based clusters, no longer on the lines of madhhabs, mass organizations, or institutions. This means that viewers choose to interact because of personal affinity with the delivery style, narrative, and representation of content creators. The form of interaction that is built not only answers religious needs, but also the needs of identity, relationships, and emotional closeness making da'wah part of everyday affective engagement. Thus, digital interaction between viewers and content creators on TikTok Islamic accounts is not only a tool for spreading teachings, but also a means of forming new religious social capital based on affection, participation, and emotional connectivity in virtual space.

CONCLUSION

The results show that digital platforms such as TikTok have repositioned the teaching of Islamic religious education from a vertical form of communication to a horizontal interaction space that is more open, participatory, and affective. Digital da'wah is not just about delivering religious messages, but has become a space for non-formal religious education that takes place micro, spontaneously, and based on daily spiritual needs. The interaction that occurs between viewers and content creators shows the formation of religious social capital in three main forms: affective, cognitive, and communal. Viewers are not only recipients of messages, but also shape the meaning of da'wah through emotional responses, personal reflections, and spiritual solidarity that appear in the comments section. Thus, digital platforms become a new ecosystem for the articulation of faith and Islamic learning that is more contextual and relevant to the digital generation.

The variety of teaching styles shown by the three accounts also shows how religious authority is constructed performatively in the digital space. The @wakkajishodiq account emphasizes cultural and affective approaches; @huseinjafar carries out critical and reflective literacy-based da'wah; while @kadamsidik00 emphasizes emotional strength and spiritual experience. All three succeeded in forming symbolic authority through personal resonance, not through formal institutionality, which marks the democratization of religious authority in the context of mediatized Islam. Overall, this study confirms that the interaction between viewers and content creators in Islamic accounts on TikTok not only reflects a change in the form of teaching, but also indicates a new direction of Islamic religious education that is informal, community-based, and closely connected to the dynamics of the digital life of contemporary Muslims.

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