

Analysis of the Framing of Islamic Preaching Messages in Ustaz Muda's TikTok Islamic Preaching Content

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Abstract: This research analyzes the framing of Islamic preaching messages in TikTok content created by ustaz muda (young preachers) as a new form of religious communication in the digital era. The study aims to understand how Islamic teachings are framed, expressed, and received through short-form video content that combines elements of faith, entertainment, and social interaction. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and framing analysis, the research examines selected TikTok da'wah videos to explore how message structure, language use, visual style, and audience engagement strategies contribute to the formation of contemporary digital religiosity. The findings reveal that TikTok da'wah represents an innovative model of "edutainment da'wah," where Islamic messages are delivered through creative and emotionally resonant storytelling. Ustaz muda use relatable language, humor, and motivational framing to appeal to younger audiences who prefer accessible and positive representations of faith. The research also identifies a significant shift in religious authority, where credibility is increasingly based on digital influence and audience interaction rather than formal religious institutions. While this democratization of da'wah enhances inclusivity and engagement, it also raises concerns about message simplification, theological accuracy, and the influence of social media algorithms on religious discourse. Overall, the study concludes that the framing of Islamic preaching on TikTok reflects broader transformations in religious communication, generational identity, and media culture. It highlights both the opportunities and challenges of digital da'wah in balancing creativity with authenticity and popularity with depth. The research contributes to the growing body of knowledge in Islamic communication studies and media framing theory, emphasizing the need for ethical awareness and critical media literacy in the practice of online religious preaching.

Research Highlights:

- **Emergence of "Edutainment Da'wah":** The study identifies a new form of Islamic preaching on TikTok that merges faith with entertainment. Ustaz muda use storytelling, humor, and creative visuals to make religious teachings engaging and accessible for digital audiences.
- **Generational Shift in Religious Engagement:** Findings reveal that younger audiences prefer relatable, optimistic, and emotionally resonant messages rather than authoritative sermons. This shift influences how preachers frame their content to align with youth communication styles and values.
- **Media Framing and Religious Understanding:** The framing of da'wah messages on TikTok simplifies complex theological ideas into short, easily digestible narratives. While this increases reach and engagement, it also poses challenges to maintaining doctrinal depth and accuracy.
- **Transformation of Religious Authority:** TikTok da'wah reflects a shift from traditional institutional authority to popularity-based credibility, where a preacher's influence is measured by follower

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count, engagement, and digital presence rather than formal religious credentials.

- Social Impact of Digital Da'wah: TikTok preaching democratizes access to religious knowledge and fosters a sense of digital community among Muslims. However, it also raises concerns about algorithmic influence, ethical responsibility, and the commercialization of faith.
- Contribution to Islamic Communication Studies: This research expands theoretical understanding of how media framing shapes religious discourse in the digital age and highlights the need for balanced, ethical, and media-literate approaches to online da'wah.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media has transformed not only the way people communicate but also the way religious messages are disseminated and received. Among various social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential mediums, particularly among younger audiences, due to its short-form, visually engaging, and algorithm-driven content (Athique, 2013). The accessibility and popularity of TikTok have given rise to a new wave of religious communicators young Islamic preachers (ustaz muda) who utilize this platform to share da'wah (Islamic preaching) in innovative and relatable ways. This phenomenon reflects a significant shift in how Islamic teachings are communicated, moving from traditional sermons and lectures to digital spaces where religious discourse is often packaged as entertainment or lifestyle content.

The increasing presence of ustaz muda on TikTok marks an important development in contemporary Islamic communication and media studies. Unlike traditional religious authorities who deliver messages in formal settings such as mosques or television programs, young preachers on social media tend to adopt a more casual, interactive, and personalized style (Halim, 2018). They frequently blend humor, storytelling, visual symbolism, and popular culture to engage audiences, especially the younger generation who consume digital content daily. While this approach helps make Islamic messages more accessible and appealing, it also raises critical questions about how these messages are framed, what values they emphasize, and how audiences interpret them within the fast-paced and fragmented environment of social media.

Framing, as a key concept in communication theory, refers to the way information is organized and presented to shape audience interpretation. According to scholars such as Entman (1993), framing involves selecting certain aspects of reality and making them more salient in a communication text, thereby promoting particular problem definitions, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations. In the context of digital da'wah, the framing of Islamic messages by ustaz muda determines not only the content of religious knowledge being shared but also how Islam itself is represented and understood in the digital public sphere (Pembayun et al., 2021). The use of specific frames such as moral reform, personal motivation, social harmony, or spiritual awakening can influence the audience's perception of what constitutes "authentic" or "modern" Islam.

The rise of Islamic preaching on TikTok also reflects broader socio-cultural transformations in the Muslim community, where religious authority is no longer monopolized by traditional scholars but is increasingly decentralized and mediated by social media influencers. This democratization of religious discourse allows for more diverse interpretations of Islam but also poses challenges related to credibility, simplification of complex teachings, and potential misinterpretation of religious values (Sahin, 2018). As a result, studying how ustaz muda frame their messages on TikTok is essential for understanding how digital media reshape the dynamics of da'wah and religious education in the 21st century.

Several scholars have documented the rapid adoption of TikTok as a medium for Islamic preaching and the benefits this brings for reaching young audiences. Aini (2023) analysed da'wah content on TikTok and found that the platform's affordances short-form video, high interactivity, and creative editing make

it effective for delivering accessible and relevant religious messages to Generation Z, increasing engagement and strengthening religious identity among younger users.

Other researchers have examined how practitioners intentionally repackage traditional religious content to fit social-media norms. Muhammad Aldi (accepted December 28, 2024) studied the utilization of TikTok as an innovative da'wah medium and described strategies by which Islamic values are simplified, dramatized, or visually reframed so they resonate with contemporary digital lifestyles; the study highlights both opportunity (wider reach, creativity) and risk (oversimplification of complex doctrines).

Several case studies have explored specific preachers and accounts to illustrate communicative techniques and the mediatization process. For example, research on how hadiths and sermonic material are mediated on TikTok demonstrates how traditional textual religious sources are recontextualized with visual cues, captions, and music to produce new meanings for online audiences (Mediatization of Da'wah Hadith, 2025). Similarly, focused analyses of prominent figures such as Gus Miftah show how rhetorical strategies are adapted to the platform's brevity while negotiating audience reaction and Islamic character education. These studies argue that such mediatization reshapes both content and authority in contemporary da'wah.

Complementing descriptive work, scholars interested in framing and algorithmic culture have begun to analyse how platform features and narrative frames interact. Reinis (2025), in a study of religious engagement on TikTok (focused on evangelical users), argues that users and preachers construct "algorithmic imaginaries" and frame platform visibility itself as meaningful a dynamic likely relevant to Islamic da'wah as well, because framing on TikTok includes not only message content but also how creators present their visibility and reach. This line of work points to the need to study framing both as textual strategy and as a practice embedded in platform logics.

Qualitative studies using interviews, observation, and discourse analysis have also documented interactive models of TikTok da'wah (Maghfirah et al., 2021). Research on interactive da'wah communication e.g., studies of individual ustadz accounts finds that creators use dialogic features (comments, duets, replies) to cultivate parasocial relationships, manage credibility, and tailor frames to audience concerns such as mental health, morality, and daily practice. These studies emphasize that framing choices (moralizing, motivational, pastoral) are shaped by both audience feedback and attempts to optimize engagement.

Finally, comparative and review studies highlight broader trends: digital da'wah represents a paradigmatic shift from institutional sermonization to decentralized, influencer-driven religious communication (systematic reviews of digital da'wah strategies, 2025). This literature collectively signals gaps that are directly relevant to your research: while many studies document the existence and strategies of TikTok da'wah, fewer have systematically applied framing theory to analyze which frames dominate, how frames are constructed (textual + visual + paratextual features), and what implications these frames have for religious authority and audience interpretation precisely the gap your study proposes to address.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the framing of Islamic preaching messages in the TikTok content of ustaz muda, focusing on how religious narratives are constructed, what types of frames are dominant, and what implications these have for Islamic communication and media literacy. The findings are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical discussions on media framing, digital da'wah, and the evolving landscape of Islamic communication in the age of social media.

METHOD

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Framing Theory, which provides a conceptual lens for analyzing how information is organized, emphasized, and presented to shape audience perception. Originally introduced by Erving Goffman (1974) in his work *Frame Analysis*, the theory posits that people interpret events and experiences through cognitive "frames" structures that define situations and guide understanding. In the context of media studies, framing refers to the way communicators select certain aspects of reality and make them more salient in a text to promote a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or treatment recommendation. Robert Entman (1993) further developed this concept by identifying four key functions of framing: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. This framework is particularly relevant for studying how ustaz muda construct

and present their da'wah messages on TikTok, as each video represents a selective and purposeful representation of Islamic values and ideas.

In media communication, framing operates both at the content level and the contextual level (D'Angelo, 2017). At the content level, it involves linguistic, visual, and symbolic elements that emphasize specific meanings while omitting others. On TikTok, these framing devices can include captions, background music, tone of voice, gestures, video editing, and even hashtags that reinforce the preacher's intended message. At the contextual level, framing is influenced by the platform's algorithmic and cultural environment, where the competition for attention and engagement drives content creators to adapt religious messages to audience preferences. As such, framing in TikTok-based da'wah is not only a matter of communication strategy but also a negotiation between religious authenticity and digital visibility.

To better understand these dynamics, this study also draws on the Mediatization Theory of Religion proposed by Stig Hjarvard (2008), which explains how religious communication adapts to and is transformed by media logic. Hjarvard argues that as media become central to social life, they begin to influence the form, content, and authority of religion (Hjarvard, 2008). In the case of TikTok da'wah, media logic manifests through brevity, entertainment value, interactivity, and personalization all of which affect how Islamic teachings are framed. Ustaz muda must therefore balance their role as religious educators with their roles as digital influencers, adapting to audience expectations while maintaining doctrinal integrity. This tension shapes the framing process, where religious messages are stylized, simplified, or dramatized to ensure relevance in the fast-paced digital environment.

In addition to framing and mediatization, the study is informed by Religious Communication Theory, which emphasizes that da'wah is both a spiritual and communicative act aimed at transmitting divine messages in ways that foster understanding and behavioral change. According to Effendy (2003), effective religious communication requires the alignment of message, medium, and audience context. TikTok, as a contemporary medium, introduces new patterns of interaction between preacher and listener transforming the once one-directional sermon into a participatory dialogue where viewers can respond, comment, and even remix religious content. This interaction shapes the framing of messages, as ustaz muda often adjust their presentation to feedback, trends, and audience reception.

By integrating Framing Theory, Mediatization Theory, and Religious Communication Theory, this study establishes a comprehensive theoretical foundation to analyze how Islamic messages are constructed and conveyed in TikTok preaching content. These theories collectively explain not only what frames are used but also why and how they emerge within a broader sociocultural and technological context. The framework thus allows the researcher to examine the intersection of religion, media, and communication strategy providing insight into how ustaz muda negotiate religious meaning, authority, and influence in the digital age.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design with a focus on framing analysis as the main analytical approach. A qualitative method is chosen because this research aims to explore and interpret meanings, symbols, and communication patterns rather than measure numerical data (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how Islamic preaching messages are constructed, presented, and framed by young preachers (ustaz muda) on TikTok. Through framing analysis, this study seeks to uncover how specific linguistic and visual elements are selected and emphasized to convey religious values and shape audience perceptions in a digital environment.

The object of this research is the Islamic preaching content created and uploaded by ustaz muda on the TikTok platform. TikTok is chosen as the focus because it represents a dominant space for youth interaction and has become an increasingly influential medium for religious communication (Clarke, 2020). The content of ustaz muda is particularly interesting because it combines traditional Islamic teachings with modern communication styles suited for short-form video formats. This study focuses on videos that contain clear elements of da'wah such as moral advice, Quranic reflections, or motivational messages rather than general lifestyle or entertainment content.

The data source in this research consists of TikTok videos produced by selected ustaz muda. The researcher uses purposive sampling to determine which accounts and videos to analyze based on several criteria: (1) the account belongs to a young Islamic preacher aged approximately 20–40 years, (2) the account actively uploads Islamic preaching content, (3) the account has a significant following or engagement, and (4) the content is publicly accessible and relevant to Islamic communication. From each

selected account, several videos are chosen based on their popularity, clarity of message, and thematic variation to ensure diverse representation of preaching styles.

Data collection is carried out through observation and documentation. The researcher observes TikTok content to identify suitable samples, then downloads or records key information from each video, including transcripts of verbal messages, descriptions of visuals, and contextual details such as captions, hashtags, and audience engagement (Li et al., 2021). Each video is then transcribed to facilitate analysis of both the spoken and visual components. In addition, secondary data such as journal articles, books, and online sources related to Islamic communication, digital da'wah, and media framing are used to support interpretation and provide theoretical grounding.

The data are analyzed using Robert Entman's (1993) framing analysis model, which consists of four key elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. This analytical framework helps identify how ustaz muda define moral or social problems, explain their causes, apply religious or ethical evaluations, and propose recommended actions based on Islamic teachings. Both verbal (language, narrative, moral emphasis) and non-verbal (gestures, visuals, tone, editing) components are examined to reveal the overall framing strategy. By applying Entman's model, the study can determine dominant frames such as moral reform, personal faith development, or social harmony within the preaching content.

To ensure data validity and credibility, this research applies several verification techniques. Triangulation is used by comparing data across multiple sources and checking consistency between different ustaz muda accounts. Peer discussions and expert consultations are also conducted to minimize subjective bias in interpretation (Langfeldt, 2004). Furthermore, the researcher provides thick descriptions of the analyzed content, ensuring transparency and depth in the analytical process. The data interpretation process involves iterative reading, coding, and categorization to accurately capture recurring framing patterns.

The research procedure includes several stages: identifying the research problem, reviewing relevant literature, collecting and selecting TikTok content, transcribing and coding data, conducting framing analysis, interpreting results, and drawing conclusions. Throughout these stages, the researcher maintains reflexivity to recognize how personal assumptions may influence interpretation. Finally, ethical considerations are carefully observed: only public TikTok content is analyzed, and personal information unrelated to the research is not disclosed. The study upholds respect for religious values, content creators, and digital ethics in handling all data.

In summary, this methodology provides a systematic framework for exploring how Islamic preaching messages are framed by ustaz muda on TikTok. By combining qualitative descriptive methods with Entman's framing analysis, the research aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of how young preachers communicate Islamic values through digital media and how these framing practices shape contemporary Islamic discourse online.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Framing Strategy

The findings of this research indicate that ustaz muda (young preachers) on TikTok employ distinct framing strategies to effectively communicate Islamic messages within the limitations and opportunities of short-form video content. Through qualitative content analysis, several dominant frames emerged that shape how Islamic teachings are interpreted, simplified, and presented to resonate with young digital audiences (Rahman, 2020). These framing strategies serve not only to deliver religious messages but also to attract attention, foster engagement, and create a sense of community among viewers.

One of the most prevalent strategies observed is the motivational or inspirational frame. Ustaz muda frequently present Islam as a source of positivity, hope, and personal growth. The content often focuses on themes such as gratitude (*syukur*), perseverance (*sabar*), and faith during adversity (*tawakal*). By using emotional appeals and relatable language, preachers connect Islamic values with common life challenges such as stress, heartbreak, or self-doubt faced by young audiences. This framing transforms religious advice into motivational narratives, making Islam appear approachable and relevant to modern lifestyles. The use of calm background music, soft lighting, and expressive facial gestures enhances the emotional tone, creating a sense of sincerity and intimacy that resonates deeply with viewers.

Another key strategy is the educational frame, where ustaz muda focus on clarifying misconceptions and simplifying Islamic concepts. This includes short explanations about fiqh (Islamic law), akhlak (ethics), or aqidah (faith) using casual and easy-to-understand language. The educational frame often employs analogies, humor, and real-life examples to make religious teachings accessible to audiences who may have limited formal religious education (Cairney, 2018). Interestingly, these preachers avoid using complex theological jargon, preferring instead to translate core ideas into everyday communication that aligns with the conversational tone typical of TikTok. This strategy allows religious learning to occur in an informal, relaxed setting bridging the gap between scholarly discourse and youth culture.

The social identity frame emerged as another dominant approach used by ustaz muda. In this framing, preachers emphasize the importance of being proud, confident, and expressive as modern Muslims. They often integrate trending sounds, memes, and hashtags while maintaining modest and respectful content, signaling that religious identity and digital participation can coexist harmoniously. This frame creates a sense of belonging among Muslim youth, encouraging them to live out their faith confidently within social media spaces. It also promotes a form of digital ummah (online Muslim community), where users feel connected to one another through shared beliefs and values expressed via comments, *du'a* (prayers), and mutual encouragement.

A subtler yet important framing strategy identified is the moral reminder or corrective frame. Here, ustaz muda act as gentle moral guides rather than authoritative figures. They address social behaviors such as materialism, online ethics, and relationship boundaries using empathetic and non-judgmental tones. This frame often encourages self-reflection rather than direct correction, positioning the preacher as a peer who shares moral insights rather than imposing them. The framing relies heavily on empathy and humility, fostering dialogue and encouraging audiences to improve themselves voluntarily rather than through fear or guilt.

A noteworthy trend across all observed content is the integration of entertainment and spirituality, often described as *edutainment* (Khalid & Ahmed, 2014). Ustaz muda combine humor, trending challenges, and aesthetic creativity with religious messages to capture the attention of fast-scrolling audiences. This strategy ensures that Islamic preaching aligns with the visual and algorithmic culture of TikTok. However, while this approach increases reach and relatability, it also raises concerns about message simplification and the potential loss of theological depth. Nonetheless, it demonstrates how ustaz muda adapt their communication techniques to maintain relevance in a competitive, fast-paced digital environment.

Language and Visual Expression

The study found that the language used by ustaz muda is predominantly conversational, inclusive, and emotionally engaging. Instead of employing formal Arabic terms or traditional sermon language, these preachers prefer simple Indonesian mixed with everyday expressions, slang, and sometimes light humor. This linguistic approach makes the content sound natural and relatable, giving the impression that the ustaz is speaking as a friend or older sibling rather than as an authority figure. Such familiarity encourages followers to feel comfortable engaging through comments, likes, or questions. Additionally, the preachers often use inclusive pronouns like "*kita*" (we) or "*teman-teman*" (friends) to build a sense of community and equality between the speaker and the audience. This language style reduces psychological distance and promotes a peer-to-peer communication model rather than the traditional ustaz jamaah (preacher congregation) hierarchy.

The emotional tone of the language plays a vital role in enhancing message impact. Ustaz muda often deliver their messages with warmth, empathy, and encouragement. The choice of words tends to evoke hope, self-reflection, and spiritual comfort (Minton et al., 2018). For instance, when addressing sensitive topics such as sin, repentance, or hardship, the preachers use reassuring phrases like "*Allah selalu menunggu taubatmu*" ("Allah is always waiting for your repentance") or "*Setiap ujian pasti ada hikmahnya*" ("Every trial comes with wisdom"). This positive and empathetic tone contrasts with older styles of *da'wah* that emphasized warnings or guilt, signaling a generational shift in how Islamic messages are communicated to youth. The persuasive element lies in emotional resonance rather than doctrinal argument, allowing the message to inspire rather than instruct.

In terms of visual expression, ustaz muda make extensive use of digital aesthetics and production techniques to enhance the appeal of their content. The use of soft color tones, natural lighting, and minimalist backgrounds helps create a calm and focused atmosphere that complements the spiritual nature of the message. Some videos employ cinematic effects, subtle transitions, or slow-motion visuals to emphasize emotional moments. The framing of the video often in close-up shots creates a feeling of

intimacy, as if the preacher is speaking directly to the viewer. This personalized visual framing strengthens emotional connection and increases viewer retention.

Moreover, ustaz muda frequently use text overlays, captions, and emojis to highlight key messages and make the content more accessible to users who watch without sound. The synchronization between speech and on-screen text enhances comprehension and reinforces important points (Rodriguez-Alsina et al., 2012). In some cases, trending TikTok features such as filters, background music, or sound effects are integrated to make the preaching appear more contemporary and engaging. However, these elements are used carefully to avoid undermining the seriousness of the religious message.

Nonverbal cues are another critical aspect of visual framing. The research found that ustaz muda rely heavily on facial expressions, hand gestures, and eye contact to strengthen their verbal delivery. Gentle smiles, nods, and expressive eye movements are used to convey sincerity and emotional connection. In contrast, when addressing serious or reflective topics, their tone becomes calm, and facial expressions soften to evoke empathy. This effective use of body language helps humanize the preacher and build credibility among young viewers, who often value authenticity over authority.

Finally, the results indicate that ustaz muda maintain a delicate balance between entertainment and reverence in their language and visual presentation. While they adopt popular communication techniques such as trending sounds or humor they remain careful not to trivialize sacred content. Their creativity is directed toward enhancing message delivery without diluting religious meaning. This balance allows them to remain relevant in the fast-paced digital culture while preserving the dignity of Islamic preaching.

Audience Engagement

The findings of this research reveal that audience engagement plays a central role in shaping the effectiveness and reception of ustaz muda's Islamic preaching content on TikTok. The most visible indicators of engagement are likes, comments, and shares, which reflect how well a message resonates with viewers. The data show that TikTok videos emphasizing positive, motivational, and relatable themes tend to receive higher engagement compared to those focusing on abstract theological concepts or moral warnings. For example, videos about gratitude, patience, or self-worth generate thousands of likes and comments expressing agreement or personal stories. The "share" feature is also used frequently by followers to spread inspiring messages within their social circles, demonstrating that TikTok has become a platform for digital da'wah amplification, where audiences act as secondary disseminators of religious content.

Audience responses in the comment sections often reveal deep emotional engagement. Many users express feelings of comfort, inspiration, and spiritual renewal after watching short clips (Janicke-Bowles et al., 2019). Comments such as "MasyaAllah, saya jadi semangat lagi untuk hijrah" ("MasyaAllah, I feel motivated again to change") or "Terima kasih ustaz, kata-kata ini menenangkan hati saya" ("Thank you, Ustaz, your words calm my heart") illustrate how these videos trigger emotional and spiritual reflection. This pattern suggests that ustaz muda's ability to frame messages empathetically and positively encourages viewers to engage not only with the content but also with their own inner religious experiences. The digital environment thus becomes a space of collective emotional expression, where users find comfort and solidarity through shared faith-based sentiments.

Another important finding is the emergence of interactive communication between ustaz muda and their audiences. Unlike traditional preaching where interaction is limited to physical gatherings, TikTok allows instant feedback through comments, replies, and live sessions (Teplin, 2021). Many ustaz muda take the time to respond to followers' questions or provide short, personalized advice, fostering a sense of personal connection and mentorship. This interaction builds trust and loyalty among followers, who often return for more content and view the preacher as both a spiritual guide and a relatable friend. Such sustained engagement indicates that the ustaz muda are not merely content creators but also community builders within the digital Islamic ecosystem.

The study also found that ustaz muda are increasingly aware of TikTok's algorithmic dynamics and intentionally design content to maximize visibility and engagement. By using trending hashtags, engaging hooks in the first few seconds, and concise storytelling, they ensure that their videos reach broader audiences. High engagement rates further boost algorithmic promotion, making religious content more likely to appear on viewers' "For You Page" (FYP). This synergy between algorithmic mechanics and audience responsiveness represents a new kind of da'wah dissemination one driven by digital virality

rather than institutional authority. However, this reliance on algorithms also encourages content that is emotionally appealing and visually stimulating, sometimes at the expense of theological depth.

Audience engagement extends beyond individual interaction; it contributes to the formation of online faith communities. Followers who regularly engage with a particular ustaz muda often begin to identify as part of that preacher's digital community. This collective identity is reinforced through repeated exchanges, shared values, and the use of specific hashtags or slogans (Chodak, 2001). For example, phrases like "#HijrahBareng" ("Let's Change Together") or "#MuslimMilenial" ("Millennial Muslim") serve as markers of belonging. These communities function as spaces of mutual encouragement, where users support each other in faith-related journeys, thus transforming TikTok from an entertainment platform into a social network for spiritual growth.

Interestingly, not all audience engagement is purely positive. The research also found instances of critical engagement, where viewers question interpretations or debate the preacher's statements. These discussions, though sometimes contentious, demonstrate a growing religious literacy and critical awareness among young audiences. Rather than passively accepting information, followers actively negotiate meanings and seek clarification. This trend suggests that digital da'wah is fostering a more participatory form of religious discourse, where audiences are both learners and contributors to the conversation.

Religious Authority Shifts

The findings of this research reveal that the rise of ustaz muda (young preachers) on TikTok has contributed to a significant shift in religious authority within contemporary Islamic communication. The study found that ustaz muda often gain influence not through formal religious institutions but through their digital presence and audience trust. Many of them come from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, including secular fields, yet their ability to communicate Islamic values effectively and empathetically makes them widely accepted as credible sources of spiritual guidance. This phenomenon demonstrates that religious legitimacy is becoming more audience-driven as followers evaluate authenticity based on perceived sincerity, moral consistency, and the preacher's ability to connect emotionally, rather than on formal theological qualifications. TikTok's algorithm amplifies this shift by rewarding engaging personalities and relatable storytelling, enabling ustaz muda to build large followings that rival or surpass those of traditional scholars.

Another key finding is the emergence of charisma and relatability as defining characteristics of digital religious authority. Ustaz muda cultivate a public persona that combines moral integrity with youthful energy, humor, and approachability. Their appearance often casual yet modest and their language simple, compassionate, and emotionally warm create an image of authenticity that resonates with younger audiences. This form of authority is performative and emotional, built on the preacher's ability to present themselves as genuine and trustworthy in a digital environment. Unlike traditional authority rooted in knowledge hierarchy, this new model thrives on personal connection and affective engagement, positioning ustaz muda as spiritual peers rather than distant mentors.

The findings also reveal that audiences play an active role in constructing and validating the authority of ustaz muda. Through comments, likes, and repeated interaction, followers collectively legitimize these preachers as credible voices in religious discourse (Cheong et al., 2011). This participatory process of authority formation marks a departure from conventional top-down models of religious knowledge dissemination. Instead, legitimacy in digital da'wah becomes co-created and sustained by feedback loops of trust, emotional resonance, and shared moral values between preacher and audience. The ustaz muda's responsiveness to comments, use of follower suggestions, and acknowledgment of viewer experiences further reinforce this reciprocal relationship.

However, the study also identifies underlying tensions between traditional religious authorities and digital preachers. Some established scholars express concern that TikTok-based da'wah may lead to oversimplified interpretations or incomplete theological explanations. The brevity of TikTok videos often forces ustaz muda to condense complex religious topics into catchy, digestible formats, which can inadvertently blur doctrinal accuracy. Despite these concerns, ustaz muda often argue that their goal is not to replace scholars but to complement traditional da'wah by introducing Islamic values in a relatable and accessible way for younger audiences. This dynamic reflects an ongoing negotiation between institutional legitimacy and digital relevance, illustrating a broader transformation in how Islamic knowledge circulates in society.

A significant implication of these findings is the democratization of religious knowledge in the digital era. The accessibility of platforms like TikTok enables anyone with charisma, creativity, and a sincere message to participate in religious discourse. This has positive effects, such as expanding the reach of Islamic teachings and encouraging youth participation. However, it also introduces challenges related to authority fragmentation and content accountability. As more individuals claim the role of digital preachers, audiences are tasked with discerning credible voices from less reliable ones. The authority shift thus requires a new form of digital literacy among believers to critically evaluate online da'wah without undermining its inspirational potential.

Finally, the research identifies the emergence of a hybrid model of authority, where ustaz muda integrate both traditional knowledge and modern media competence. Some of them maintain connections with religious institutions or reference classical texts while simultaneously mastering digital storytelling techniques. This blend allows them to preserve theological authenticity while maintaining cultural relevance. Such hybrid figures represent the future of Islamic communication religious influencers who navigate both the sacred and the social, balancing doctrinal depth with digital adaptability.

The framing of messages in TikTok da'wah represents a new form of religious communication that merges faith with entertainment ("edutainment da'wah")

The framing of messages in TikTok da'wah represents a new and transformative form of religious communication that effectively merges faith with entertainment, commonly referred to as "edutainment da'wah." This phenomenon reflects how religious preaching has evolved in response to the dynamics of digital culture, where attention spans are shorter, content consumption is visual, and engagement is driven by emotion and relatability. TikTok, with its short-form video format and algorithmic personalization, provides a unique space where religious messages can be packaged in creative, entertaining, and accessible ways without entirely losing their spiritual essence (Boffone, 2021). In this context, ustaz muda (young preachers) have become digital storytellers who frame Islamic teachings through humor, trending audio, emotional storytelling, and relatable everyday scenarios.

This approach marks a significant departure from traditional da'wah, which often relied on formal sermons, lectures, or textual study circles. In contrast, TikTok da'wah reframes religious communication as a dialogue rather than a monologue an interaction between preacher and audience rather than a one-way transmission of knowledge. The inclusion of visual cues, popular music, memes, and cinematic editing styles transforms the experience of learning religion into something familiar and enjoyable for the digital generation. This strategy not only enhances engagement but also redefines how spiritual messages are understood, positioning Islam as both relevant and adaptable to contemporary social realities.

Through this "edutainment" approach, ustaz muda frame religious values as part of modern life, integrating moral lessons into topics such as relationships, work, self-care, and social justice. By using humor, empathy, and optimism, they shift the tone of preaching from didactic authority to motivational companionship. This resonates strongly with young audiences who seek authenticity and emotional connection rather than rigid instruction. The framing emphasizes that faith can coexist with fun, and spirituality can thrive within the rhythms of everyday digital life.

However, this blending of entertainment and religion also brings new challenges. The simplification necessary for short-form content can risk reducing complex theological ideas into surface-level takeaways. The tension between accessibility and depth becomes central to the discourse on edutainment da'wah. Yet, despite this limitation, the phenomenon reflects a broader cultural shift in how Islam is communicated and lived: as a dynamic, participatory, and media-driven expression of faith that aligns with the digital habits and sensibilities of modern Muslim youth. In essence, TikTok da'wah illustrates the adaptive power of Islamic communication in the era of social media where preaching is no longer confined to the mosque or pulpit, but flows seamlessly through the digital streams of everyday entertainment.

Ustaz muda's message framing reflects generational changes in religious engagement

Ustaz muda's message framing on TikTok reflects a profound generational shift in the ways Muslims, particularly young audiences, engage with religion in the digital era. Unlike traditional preachers who often emphasize authority, formality, and theological depth, ustaz muda adopt a more conversational, empathetic, and relatable communication style. Their preaching aligns with the values, communication preferences, and media consumption patterns of Generation Z and Millennials groups that prioritize authenticity, interactivity, and emotional resonance in the content they consume (Stratton, 2021). This generational change signifies a movement from hierarchical religious instruction toward a more horizontal,

peer-like form of engagement, where the ustaz acts as a “spiritual companion” rather than a distant authority figure.

In this new model, message framing becomes a tool for building connection and trust. Ustaz muda use everyday language, humor, and pop culture references to make Islamic teachings feel approachable and relevant to contemporary life. Rather than presenting Islam as a set of rigid rules, they frame it as a way of life that provides guidance for real-world challenges such as stress, relationships, career struggles, and identity formation. This approach resonates deeply with young Muslims who live in a fast-paced, media-saturated environment where spirituality must compete with countless other sources of attention. The relatable tone and inclusive language of these preachers help bridge the gap between traditional religious norms and the lived experiences of modern youth.

Moreover, the framing used by ustaz muda often emphasizes positivity, hope, and personal growth. Instead of focusing primarily on sin, punishment, or doctrinal debates, their content encourages self-reflection, emotional healing, and social empathy. This mirrors a broader generational shift in religious psychology: younger audiences tend to seek spiritual experiences that are nurturing and human-centered rather than fear-based or authoritative. By presenting faith through the lens of compassion and optimism, ustaz muda cultivate an image of Islam that aligns with the aspirations of a generation seeking meaning, mental well-being, and social harmony.

However, this generational change also raises questions about the balance between accessibility and doctrinal accuracy. The emotional and motivational tone of digital da’wah, while effective in engagement, may risk diluting theological complexity or critical reflection (Rahman, 2020). Nevertheless, the reframing of Islamic messages by ustaz muda underscores the adaptability of religious communication in a changing world. It reflects how faith continues to evolve alongside new cultural sensibilities and technological realities showing that Islam, while timeless in essence, can be communicated in ways that speak directly to the hearts and minds of each generation.

Social impact of TikTok-based Islamic preaching

The social impact of TikTok-based Islamic preaching has become increasingly significant as digital platforms shape how religious values, identity, and community are formed in contemporary Muslim societies. Through TikTok, ustaz muda (young preachers) have transformed the way Islam is communicated and experienced by integrating religious messages into a highly interactive, visual, and entertaining format. This digital phenomenon has made Islamic teachings more accessible to diverse audiences, particularly the younger generation, who are deeply embedded in online culture. By bringing faith into the everyday digital spaces of users, TikTok da’wah fosters a sense of spiritual connection that transcends traditional religious institutions and geographic boundaries.

One of the most notable social impacts is the democratization of religious knowledge. In the past, access to religious learning was often mediated through formal institutions, mosques, or authoritative scholars (Turner & Nasir, 2016). However, TikTok allows anyone with a smartphone and internet access to listen, share, and even create religious content. This accessibility empowers ordinary Muslims to participate in religious discourse, creating a more inclusive digital ummah (community). Ustaz muda, who often share relatable life experiences and use informal communication styles, make religious discussions feel more personal and less intimidating. This has helped many young people reconnect with their faith in a way that aligns with their lifestyles and communication habits.

Furthermore, TikTok-based da’wah contributes to the formation of modern Muslim identities that are both global and culturally adaptive. Young Muslims use social media not only to learn about religion but also to express their spirituality creatively through fashion, lifestyle choices, and social causes. Ustaz muda play a pivotal role in guiding this process by framing Islam as compatible with modern life encouraging kindness, responsibility, and moral awareness in a rapidly changing world. Through their content, they promote a version of Islam that is compassionate, inclusive, and relevant, thus shaping the moral discourse of digital youth culture.

However, the social influence of this digital preaching also presents challenges and risks. The algorithmic nature of TikTok tends to favor sensational or emotionally charged content, which can lead to oversimplification or distortion of complex religious ideas. This environment may give rise to popularity-driven preachers who prioritize engagement over authenticity (Narayanan et al., 2012). Additionally, the informal setting of social media can blur the lines between entertainment and worship, raising ethical concerns about the commercialization of da’wah. Such dynamics underscore the need for critical media

literacy among both preachers and audiences to ensure that religious messages remain accurate, balanced, and contextually appropriate.

TikTok-based Islamic preaching has reshaped the landscape of religious communication and social influence among Muslims. It has opened new avenues for spiritual learning, encouraged cross-generational dialogue, and fostered a sense of community in the digital space (Seibel, 2021). Yet, this transformation also calls for responsible content creation and thoughtful engagement to safeguard the depth and integrity of Islamic teachings. As the digital ummah continues to grow, the challenge lies in harmonizing the power of technology with the timeless values of faith, ethics, and collective responsibility.

Implications of media framing for religious understanding

The implications of media framing for religious understanding are profound, particularly in the context of TikTok-based Islamic preaching. Media framing refers to the way messages are shaped, organized, and presented to influence how audiences perceive and interpret information (D'Angelo, 2017). In the realm of digital da'wah, framing plays a crucial role in determining how Islamic teachings are communicated and understood by online audiences. On TikTok, where short-form videos dominate and attention spans are limited, ustaz muda must strategically frame their content to be engaging, concise, and emotionally resonant. While this approach enhances accessibility and appeal, it also shapes the way audiences internalize religious messages often prioritizing emotion, relatability, and simplicity over theological depth and complexity.

One key implication of this framing process is the simplification of religious discourse. To fit within the constraints of a 60-second video, preachers often condense complex Islamic principles into short, memorable statements or visual metaphors. While this makes the message easier to grasp, it can inadvertently lead to an oversimplified or even distorted understanding of certain teachings. For instance, nuanced theological discussions about morality, jurisprudence, or spiritual development may be reduced to motivational slogans or lifestyle advice. This reflects a broader trend in digital communication where content is optimized for virality rather than intellectual depth. As a result, audiences may engage with religion more as a form of inspiration or personal empowerment rather than as a disciplined pursuit of knowledge and reflection.

At the same time, media framing on TikTok can also redefine the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of religious experience. By using visuals, music, and storytelling, ustaz muda evoke emotional connections that strengthen audience engagement. This sensory approach makes Islamic values feel alive and relevant to modern realities, allowing audiences to experience religion as part of their everyday lives (Meyer, 2006). However, it also shifts the focus from cognitive understanding to emotional resonance. The risk here is that religious identity becomes more performative expressed through digital participation and consumption than reflective or deeply rooted in traditional study. In this sense, the framing of religious messages in digital media may influence not only what people believe but how they experience and practice their faith.

Furthermore, the way media frames Islamic messages influences the authority and legitimacy of religious knowledge. On TikTok, the credibility of a preacher is often determined by their charisma, communication skills, and follower count rather than formal religious qualifications. This shift from institutional to popular authority reshapes how audiences perceive authenticity and truth. While it democratizes access to religious voices, it also opens the door to misinformation, selective interpretation, and fragmented understandings of Islam. The platform's algorithmic bias favoring emotionally engaging or sensational content can further amplify certain framings while marginalizing others, thereby shaping the dominant narratives of online religiosity.

The framing of religious messages in media like TikTok carries both opportunities and challenges for religious understanding (Firdian et al., 2011). It enables broader outreach and engagement, allowing Islamic teachings to resonate with younger and more diverse audiences. Yet, it also necessitates caution to prevent the erosion of theological accuracy and intellectual depth. To navigate this tension, both preachers and audiences must cultivate media literacy and critical awareness, recognizing that the way religion is framed in digital spaces profoundly influences how it is perceived, practiced, and lived.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the framing of Islamic preaching messages by ustaz muda on TikTok represents a transformative shift in contemporary religious communication. The integration of faith and

entertainment referred to as “edutainment da’wah” has redefined how Islamic teachings are presented, received, and understood in the digital age. Through short, engaging, and visually appealing content, young preachers successfully make Islamic messages more accessible and relatable to modern audiences, particularly youth who are highly active on social media. This new form of preaching moves beyond traditional sermon formats toward interactive, audience-centered communication that emphasizes emotional connection, personal relevance, and social engagement. The study also finds that the way ustaz muda frame their messages reflects broader generational changes in religious engagement. Younger audiences prefer messages that are positive, empathetic, and grounded in everyday life rather than authoritative or doctrinally rigid. As a result, preachers adopt communication styles that blend humor, storytelling, and motivational discourse to align with these preferences. This shift demonstrates how Islam continues to evolve within changing cultural and technological contexts, showing flexibility in adapting to new modes of communication while maintaining its moral core. Furthermore, the research highlights that while media framing increases accessibility and engagement, it also introduces challenges related to the simplification of theological concepts and the shifting of religious authority. The dominance of short-form, algorithm-driven content risks reducing complex spiritual ideas into easily digestible, emotionally charged narratives. This creates tension between popularity and authenticity, entertainment and education, and accessibility and depth. Lastly, the study concludes that TikTok-based Islamic preaching has had a notable social impact, contributing to the democratization of religious knowledge and the shaping of modern Muslim identities. It fosters community, moral awareness, and inclusivity within digital spaces. However, it also underscores the need for ethical responsibility, doctrinal accuracy, and critical media literacy among both preachers and audiences. In essence, the findings suggest that digital da’wah, when guided by wisdom and integrity, can serve as a powerful medium for spiritual development in the modern world bridging tradition and technology in meaningful and transformative ways.

AUTHORS’ DECLARATION

Authors’ Contributions and Responsibilities

The authors collectively contributed to the conception, development, and completion of this research.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that there are no competing interests that could have influenced the outcomes or interpretations presented in this research.

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