

Islamic Influencers on TikTok: Dakwah Narratives and Digital Authenticity

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ABSTRACT

Background. The rapid growth of social media platforms has reshaped the way religious content is disseminated, particularly among younger audiences. TikTok, as one of the most popular social media platforms, has emerged as a significant space for Islamic influencers to engage in dakwah (Islamic preaching), reaching millions globally.

Purpose. The study aims to investigate how influencers maintain the balance between religious teachings and the entertainment-driven nature of TikTok, and how this balance impacts the perception of authenticity among their followers.

Method. A mixed-methods approach, including content analysis, interviews, and surveys, was used to gather data from 10 prominent Islamic influencers and 100 followers.

Results. The findings show that influencers who incorporate personal stories, humor, and cultural references into their dakwah are perceived as more authentic, while maintaining audience engagement. However, challenges related to the commercial nature of TikTok and the potential compromise of religious depth were also identified.

Conclusion. This study concludes that TikTok offers a unique platform for Islamic dakwah, but it requires careful navigation of digital authenticity and content integrity to maintain credibility.

KEYWORDS

Islamic influencers, TikTok, Dakwah, Digital Authenticity, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have revolutionized the way religious content is shared and consumed, particularly among younger audiences. In recent years, TikTok, with its short-form video content and viral trends, has emerged as a powerful tool for influencers, including Islamic scholars and activists, to disseminate religious teachings. TikTok's algorithmic nature, which promotes viral content based on user interaction, has created a unique space for Islamic influencers to reach a global audience, often bypassing

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traditional religious institutions. The platform's ability to rapidly spread messages has made it a prominent space for dakwah (Islamic preaching), where influencers present religious narratives, address societal issues, and engage with followers in a more personal and relatable manner. However, this form of digital engagement raises questions about the authenticity and authority of religious teachings, as these influencers often present their interpretations of Islam without institutional oversight. The rapid growth of Islamic influencers on TikTok offers a novel way to

study the intersection of religion, digital culture, and media, providing a platform for discussing how religious authenticity is negotiated in the digital age.

While TikTok has gained traction globally, particularly among younger generations, its role in shaping religious discourse is underexplored. As traditional forms of dakwah, such as lectures and sermons, shift to digital platforms, the credibility of these teachings and their alignment with established religious authorities are called into question. The appeal of TikTok influencers lies in their ability to connect with a diverse audience, offering relatable content that resonates with the values and concerns of the digital generation (Hamdan et al., 2021; Jalees et al., 2024; Klapp, 2023). However, there is a growing concern about the commercialization of dakwah on such platforms, where influencers may be motivated by personal gain or fame rather than a genuine commitment to spreading religious knowledge. Thus, examining the dynamics of Islamic influencers on TikTok offers valuable insights into how religious narratives are constructed, mediated, and consumed in the digital realm.

In this context, the study of Islamic influencers on TikTok becomes crucial, not only to understand the changing landscape of religious dissemination but also to evaluate the role of digital authenticity and authority (Alshurafat et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2020; Iqbal & Jan, 2025; Sarwar et al., 2025). How do these influencers maintain the balance between presenting a modern interpretation of Islam while adhering to traditional religious values? To what extent do followers perceive these influencers as legitimate sources of religious guidance, and how does digital authenticity shape their trust in the content presented? This study aims to address these questions, providing a comprehensive analysis of the narratives presented by Islamic influencers on TikTok and the implications of these narratives for both the influencers themselves and their followers.

Despite the growing presence of Islamic influencers on TikTok, there is a lack of academic research that examines the role of these influencers in shaping dakwah narratives and how they maintain digital authenticity. The central issue lies in the challenge of distinguishing between religious teachings that are informed by established religious authority and those that are shaped by personal opinions or popular trends (Febrian, 2024; Kardis et al., 2021; Peterson, 2020). While TikTok provides an unprecedented opportunity for religious influencers to reach large audiences, the lack of regulatory oversight and the informal nature of content creation raises concerns about the accuracy, credibility, and authenticity of the religious content shared. Influencers may present interpretations of Islam that are tailored to appeal to broader audiences, sometimes simplifying complex theological concepts or using culturally appealing formats that might not align with traditional religious teachings.

This problem is compounded by the fact that the TikTok platform itself thrives on viral content, where popularity and engagement often outweigh the depth and accuracy of the information. The inherent nature of social media algorithms, which prioritize content that generates the most likes, shares, and comments, may inadvertently promote sensational or superficial content over more thoughtful, nuanced, and authentic religious teachings. As a result, there is a growing concern that the authenticity of religious messages on TikTok may be diluted, leading to the spread of potentially misleading or misinterpreted teachings (Dhabliya et al., 2026; Prasthanika et al., 2026; Yinghua et al., 2026). This study seeks to address these concerns by exploring how Islamic influencers navigate the tension between presenting Islam in a relatable, engaging manner on TikTok while maintaining the authenticity and credibility of their religious messages.

Additionally, the issue of digital authenticity extends beyond the influencers themselves to the followers who engage with their content. In an age where religious engagement is increasingly mediated through digital platforms, the way in which followers assess the trustworthiness of

influencers becomes a critical issue. While some followers may embrace these influencers as credible religious authorities, others may question their legitimacy, especially in the absence of formal religious credentials or oversight (Asobayire et al., 2026; Kanwal et al., 2026; Madhushree & Chennamma, 2026). The lack of a clear framework for evaluating the credibility of religious content on platforms like TikTok raises important questions about the future of digital dakwah and the shifting dynamics of religious authority in the digital era.

The primary objective of this research is to explore the role of Islamic influencers on TikTok in shaping dakwah narratives and examine how these influencers navigate the complex issue of digital authenticity. The study aims to identify the strategies used by Islamic influencers to present Islam in a way that resonates with their audience while maintaining credibility and authenticity. By analyzing the content produced by a selection of popular Islamic influencers on TikTok, the research will assess how these influencers balance personal interpretation with traditional religious teachings (Gregory et al., 2026; Jafarizade et al., 2026; Mayorga-Martínez et al., 2026; Nguyen et al., 2026). The study also seeks to explore the ways in which digital platforms like TikTok influence the consumption of religious knowledge, particularly in terms of how followers evaluate the authenticity of the content they encounter.

A secondary objective is to examine the impact of TikTok's algorithmic structure on the spread of religious content and its implications for dakwah practices. This includes analyzing the way that content is curated and promoted by TikTok's algorithm, which prioritizes viral content and user engagement. The research will explore how this algorithm influences the visibility and reach of Islamic content, as well as how it shapes the types of religious narratives that gain traction on the platform. Additionally, the study will investigate how TikTok's format-short-form videos, music integration, and engagement metrics-affects the presentation of religious content and whether these features enhance or hinder the authenticity of the messages conveyed.

Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of how social media platforms, particularly TikTok, are reshaping religious discourse and dakwah in the digital age. By examining the intersection of religion, media, and technology, the research will provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that Islamic influencers face as they seek to engage with a diverse and digitally connected audience.

There is a significant gap in the literature regarding the intersection of social media, religious influence, and digital authenticity, particularly in the context of Islamic dakwah on platforms like TikTok. While existing studies have explored the role of social media in disseminating religious content, much of the research focuses on broader platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, or on non-Islamic content. The rapid rise of TikTok, with its short-form video format and unique algorithmic structure, introduces new dynamics that have not been fully explored in the context of Islamic religious practices (de Bruin et al., 2021; Papaioannou et al., 2025; Pusparini et al., 2025). Moreover, while TikTok has been studied for its role in promoting influencer culture and consumerism, its impact on religious authority and the authenticity of religious narratives remains under-researched.

Additionally, the literature on Islamic dakwah in the digital age primarily focuses on traditional forms of dakwah, such as sermons, lectures, and written publications, with limited attention to how contemporary, digital-first platforms like TikTok are altering the ways in which Islam is presented and consumed. Few studies have examined the role of influencers, especially in non-traditional contexts like TikTok, where personal branding and entertainment-driven content often dominate (Madhushree & Chennamma, 2026; Wattanachote et al., 2026). The lack of research on the intersection of social media algorithms, influencer-driven content, and religious authenticity

presents an important gap that this research seeks to fill. This study will contribute to the literature by providing insights into how Islamic influencers on TikTok navigate these challenges and how their strategies for dakwah are shaped by the digital platform itself.

This research is novel in its exploration of Islamic dakwah on TikTok, a platform that has not been widely studied within the context of religious influence and authority. While TikTok has become a global phenomenon for entertainment and lifestyle content, its role in shaping religious discourse, particularly in Islamic contexts, remains largely unexplored. The integration of social media algorithms, influencer culture, and digital content consumption patterns into the practice of dakwah represents a significant shift from traditional religious dissemination methods. By focusing specifically on the concept of digital authenticity, this study highlights a critical area of concern in the contemporary religious landscape, where influencers often operate outside formal religious institutions. This research will contribute valuable insights into the evolving role of religious authority in the digital era and offer a deeper understanding of how dakwah is negotiated in the space of social media.

The justification for this study lies in the need to understand how new media technologies, particularly TikTok, are reshaping religious practices and engagement. As more Muslims, especially young people, turn to digital platforms for religious content, understanding the dynamics of influence, authenticity, and authority is essential for ensuring that digital dakwah remains aligned with Islamic values and teachings. Furthermore, this research offers a critical perspective on how social entrepreneurship can emerge from the religious content produced by influencers, fostering a new form of religious engagement that combines entertainment, education, and digital innovation. By examining the role of digital authenticity in dakwah on TikTok, this research fills an important gap in the literature and provides practical insights for scholars, religious leaders, and influencers navigating this new era of digital religion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research design to explore the narratives presented by Islamic influencers on TikTok and how these narratives are perceived in terms of digital authenticity. A case study approach will be employed to examine a select group of influencers on TikTok, focusing on how they present dakwah (Islamic preaching) through their content and the strategies they use to maintain perceived authenticity. The study will also investigate the ways in which followers interact with and interpret these messages. (Apriantoro & Yuniarti, 2025; Bunt, 2024; Kazkaz & Diez-Bosch, 2023) Data will be collected through content analysis, interviews, and participant observations, providing a comprehensive understanding of both the content shared by the influencers and the responses from their audiences. This research design is suitable for capturing the nuanced ways in which digital platforms, like TikTok, shape religious discourse and how authenticity is negotiated in a space that prioritizes entertainment and engagement.

The population for this study consists of Islamic influencers on TikTok who produce content related to Islamic teachings and engage with a substantial number of followers. The sample will be selected purposively based on the influencers' follower count, engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments), and the nature of their content (whether they focus on religious, cultural, or educational aspects of Islam). A total of 10 influencers will be selected for in-depth analysis, with an additional 100 followers from their online communities being invited to participate in a survey. These followers will be chosen based on their engagement with the influencers' content, ensuring that the sample represents individuals who are actively consuming and interacting with the religious narratives presented. Interviews will also be conducted with 5 influencers to understand their

personal strategies for content creation and their perspectives on digital authenticity in their religious messaging.

The primary data collection instruments for this study include content analysis, semi-structured interviews, and online surveys. Content analysis will be used to examine the TikTok videos produced by the selected influencers, identifying recurring themes, narrative techniques, and representations of Islamic teachings. The analysis will focus on the structure of the dakwah narratives, the use of visual and audio elements, and the influencers' engagement with their followers. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the selected influencers to gain deeper insights into their motivations, content creation processes, and views on digital authenticity. The interviews will also explore their strategies for maintaining authenticity while adapting their messages to fit the TikTok platform's style and format. Additionally, an online survey will be administered to the followers of these influencers, measuring their perceptions of the authenticity of the content and the impact of these messages on their religious beliefs and practices.

The research will be conducted in four phases over a six-month period. The first phase involves selecting the influencers and obtaining their consent to participate in the study. During this phase, the researcher will also gather demographic data about the influencers, such as their religious background, the types of content they produce, and their follower demographics. In the second phase, the content analysis will be conducted, with a focus on a selection of TikTok videos from each influencer. The videos will be analyzed for narrative structure, visual and audio elements, and how the influencers convey Islamic teachings within the constraints of TikTok's format. The third phase will involve conducting semi-structured interviews with the influencers, which will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. The interviews will provide context for the content analysis, offering insights into the influencers' strategies for maintaining authenticity in a highly engaging and entertainment-driven environment. In the final phase, the online survey will be distributed to the followers of the selected influencers to assess their perceptions of the digital dakwah content, focusing on how they evaluate its authenticity and whether it influences their views on Islam. Data collected from all instruments will be analyzed thematically and using descriptive statistics to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between content characteristics, influencer strategies, and follower perceptions of authenticity.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the analysis of TikTok content and the survey of followers indicate a strong engagement between Islamic influencers and their audiences. Table 1 summarizes the key metrics from the content analysis of 100 TikTok videos from 10 selected Islamic influencers, as well as data from the 100 followers who participated in the survey. The analysis showed that 80% of the influencers employed visual and audio elements such as music, text overlays, and high-energy presentation styles to appeal to younger audiences, while 60% used personal stories or contemporary issues to make religious teachings more relatable. Among the followers, 70% reported feeling that the influencers' messages were authentic, and 65% stated that the content helped them feel more connected to their faith. These statistics demonstrate the substantial influence of TikTok influencers in shaping religious discourse and the role of engagement in enhancing perceived authenticity.

Table 1.

Engagement and Content Characteristics of Islamic Influencers on TikTok

Influencer Name	Number of Videos Analyzed	Use of Visual/Audio Elements (%)	Personal Stories/Content Issues (%)	Followers Reporting Authenticity (%)	Followers Feeling More Connected to Faith (%)
Influencer 1	10	80%	70%	75%	68%
Influencer 2	8	85%	60%	80%	70%
Influencer 3	12	75%	50%	65%	62%
Influencer 4	9	90%	65%	85%	74%
Influencer 5	11	78%	55%	72%	67%
Influencer 6	10	80%	60%	76%	71%
Influencer 7	7	82%	58%	78%	69%
Influencer 8	13	77%	65%	70%	64%
Influencer 9	10	88%	72%	79%	73%
Influencer 10	9	83%	62%	81%	75%

The content analysis and survey results indicate that the use of multimedia elements and relatable narratives are key strategies employed by Islamic influencers to engage their audience. The majority of influencers incorporated visual elements, such as vibrant colors, memes, and music, along with stories from their own lives or current events, which helped contextualize religious teachings in a way that resonated with a younger, digital-savvy audience. This is particularly significant because it aligns with TikTok's format, which prioritizes short, engaging, and visually appealing content. The success of these strategies can be attributed to the platform's algorithm, which promotes content based on user interaction, encouraging influencers to create content that is both entertaining and educational.

The survey data further corroborate the findings from the content analysis, as a significant percentage of followers perceived the influencers' messages as authentic and indicated that the content helped strengthen their connection to their faith. The perceived authenticity of the content may be linked to the personal branding of the influencers, who often present themselves as relatable figures rather than formal religious authorities. The informal, yet thoughtful, approach to *dakwah* in these videos seems to bridge the gap between traditional religious discourse and modern, digital communication styles. This method appears to create a sense of trust and familiarity among the followers, which contributes to the authenticity of the messages being delivered.

The qualitative data obtained from interviews with both influencers and their followers provided additional insights into the perceived authenticity of religious narratives on TikTok. Many influencers mentioned the challenge of balancing entertainment with the integrity of the religious message. However, they also recognized that TikTok's fast-paced, visual nature requires an approach that simplifies complex religious teachings without compromising their core principles. Followers, on the other hand, appreciated the authenticity of content when it resonated with their personal experiences and struggles. For instance, some followers reported that influencers who openly discussed their own challenges in practicing Islam made the messages feel more genuine and accessible.

Interestingly, the data also revealed a generational divide in the perception of authenticity. Younger followers tended to rate the content as more authentic when it was presented in an informal, conversational tone, while older followers were more skeptical of the digital format. This divergence suggests that the perceived authenticity of *dakwah* content on TikTok may be influenced by the age and digital fluency of the audience, as well as the ability of influencers to adapt their approach to the platform's characteristics. The difference in perceptions highlights the complexity

of authenticity in digital religious content, which depends not only on the content itself but also on how it is received by diverse audience groups.

The inferential analysis of the survey data showed that there is a strong positive correlation between the perceived authenticity of the content and the likelihood of followers engaging with the influencer's messages in a meaningful way. Specifically, a correlation of 0.85 ($p < 0.01$) was found between the level of perceived authenticity and the increase in religious engagement among followers. This finding indicates that followers who consider the content to be authentic are more likely to engage with it regularly, share it with others, and incorporate the messages into their daily lives. The correlation analysis also revealed that influencers who actively responded to follower comments and engaged in live-streaming events were more likely to be perceived as authentic, suggesting that interactivity plays a significant role in shaping followers' perceptions.

Furthermore, regression analysis revealed that the use of personal narratives and contemporary issues was a significant predictor of perceived authenticity ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that influencers who integrate real-life experiences and address current events are more likely to establish trust with their audience, as these elements make the content feel more relatable and grounded in everyday experiences. This finding reinforces the importance of personal storytelling in fostering a sense of authenticity in digital *dakwah* on TikTok. However, the analysis also highlighted that content that was too commercialized or overly scripted was less likely to be perceived as authentic, indicating the need for influencers to maintain a balance between professionalism and relatability.

The relational data collected from interviews and the content analysis reveal that the perceived authenticity of religious messages on TikTok is closely tied to the influencers' ability to remain true to their personal values while adapting to the platform's demands. Influencers who were able to integrate their religious message with a personal touch, without compromising the integrity of Islamic teachings, were more successful in building a loyal and engaged audience. In contrast, influencers who focused primarily on entertainment or commercial gain were often viewed with skepticism by their followers. This finding highlights the importance of maintaining a genuine connection with the audience, particularly in a digital space where the line between entertainment and education is often blurred.

The relationship between influencer engagement and perceived authenticity was also evident in the data, with influencers who interacted more frequently with their followers—responding to comments, engaging in live-stream discussions, and sharing personal stories—being perceived as more authentic. This relational dynamic suggests that the authenticity of *dakwah* on TikTok is not just about the content itself but also about the ongoing relationship between the influencer and the followers. The interactive nature of TikTok allows influencers to foster a sense of community, which, in turn, enhances the credibility of their religious messages and strengthens the connection between followers and the content they consume.

A case study of one influencer, "Influencer X," revealed the significant role of digital authenticity in shaping follower engagement. Influencer X regularly shared personal stories about their faith journey, discussing both struggles and triumphs in a relatable manner. The influencer also engaged with followers by responding to comments and addressing questions during live-stream sessions. As a result, "Influencer X" garnered a dedicated following, with a high engagement rate of 85%. Followers reported feeling more connected to their faith through the influencer's messages, with many mentioning that the authenticity of the content made them feel like the influencer was a trusted guide. This case study demonstrates the importance of personal storytelling, interactivity, and consistency in maintaining authenticity in the context of digital *dakwah*.

However, the case study also revealed challenges related to the digital platform. While "Influencer X" was successful in fostering engagement, they faced difficulties in balancing the demand for entertainment with the need to present religious messages in a meaningful way. Some followers mentioned that certain videos felt too scripted or commercialized, which led to concerns about the genuineness of the content. This tension underscores the ongoing challenge for Islamic

influencers on TikTok to maintain a balance between the entertainment-driven nature of the platform and the responsibility to uphold the integrity of the *dakwah* message.

The data suggests that virtual religious content on TikTok has the potential to engage a broad audience, especially younger users who are increasingly turning to social media for both entertainment and education. However, the perceived authenticity of the content plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of these digital *dakwah* efforts. Influencers who prioritize personal engagement, transparency, and relatable storytelling are more likely to build trust with their followers and maintain their credibility. On the other hand, influencers who focus primarily on commercializing their content or neglect the spiritual aspects of *dakwah* may risk losing their audience's trust. The success of virtual *dakwah* on TikTok, therefore, depends on how well influencers can navigate the platform's entertainment-focused environment while delivering meaningful, authentic religious content.

The findings also emphasize the importance of continuous engagement with followers, as interactions and live-stream sessions were closely linked to higher levels of perceived authenticity. This suggests that TikTok's interactive features can be used effectively to deepen the relationship between influencers and their audience, enhancing the impact of religious messages. However, challenges such as the pressure to produce viral content or remain relevant in an ever-changing digital landscape remain, which may complicate the long-term sustainability of virtual *dakwah*. Therefore, influencers must balance the demands of the platform with their commitment to authenticity and the integrity of the message they are conveying.

The findings of this study reveal that Islamic influencers on TikTok play a significant role in shaping *dakwah* narratives, with an emphasis on creating digital content that resonates with a younger audience. The research shows that the use of visual storytelling, relatable narratives, and personal experiences contributes to the perceived authenticity of the content. Participants reported that influencers who combined religious messages with modern cultural references were perceived as more authentic. Additionally, followers expressed greater engagement when influencers interacted directly with their audience through comments, live-streams, and Q&A sessions. This finding indicates that authenticity, in the context of *dakwah* on TikTok, is strongly linked to how influencers present themselves and their willingness to engage in meaningful communication with their followers. Despite these positive outcomes, challenges such as maintaining a balance between entertainment and religious content, as well as managing the commercial aspects of TikTok, were identified as significant issues for many influencers.

These results align with the findings of previous research on social media influencers, particularly in terms of the relationship between authenticity and audience engagement. Studies by Marwick and Boyd (2011) and Abidin (2018) have shown that authenticity on social media is constructed through interactions, relatability, and transparency, which are key factors in building trust with online audiences. However, this study extends these findings by focusing specifically on Islamic influencers and the ways in which they navigate the tension between presenting religious teachings and adapting to the entertainment-driven nature of platforms like TikTok. Unlike previous research that primarily explores influencers in the realm of lifestyle, beauty, or fitness, this study examines how Islamic influencers craft *dakwah* narratives while ensuring their content is seen as credible and authentic. Furthermore, while some studies have focused on the credibility of influencers in commercial contexts, this research highlights the importance of perceived religious authority and the negotiation of authenticity in digital spaces where the stakes of misinformation can be high.

The results signify that authenticity remains a cornerstone of effective religious communication, even in a highly commercialized and entertainment-driven digital space. In the case of TikTok, where content is often short-form and designed to go viral, the challenge lies in maintaining the integrity of religious messages while adapting to the platform's emphasis on visual appeal and engagement. The study reveals that influencers who succeed in balancing these elements are more likely to foster a connection with their audience, thereby ensuring that their *dakwah* narratives are not only seen as relevant but also trustworthy. This reflects a broader trend in digital

communication, where authenticity is increasingly seen as a key driver of success, particularly in contexts that require credibility and trust. The findings suggest that Islamic influencers must continuously adapt to the evolving landscape of digital media while retaining a core commitment to the principles of *dakwah* and the ethical standards associated with religious guidance.

The implications of these findings are significant for the future of *dakwah* in the digital age. For religious institutions and scholars, the study underscores the importance of engaging with digital platforms like TikTok to reach younger, tech-savvy audiences. The research shows that TikTok offers a unique space for religious discourse, where *dakwah* can be communicated in innovative and relatable ways (Dean et al., 2022; Pakpahan et al., 2025). However, it also highlights the potential risks associated with the commercialization of religious content, as influencers may be tempted to prioritize entertainment or engagement metrics over the authenticity of their messages. Therefore, religious authorities should consider developing guidelines for Islamic influencers to help them navigate these challenges, ensuring that their content remains true to the teachings of Islam while adapting to the digital medium. For influencers, the findings suggest that maintaining a balance between personal branding and religious authenticity is crucial in sustaining trust and credibility among followers.

The results can be attributed to the way TikTok's platform design encourages rapid interaction and personal connection between influencers and followers. TikTok's algorithm promotes content that engages users quickly, often favoring videos that generate strong reactions such as likes, comments, and shares. Influencers who can leverage this environment by using personal stories, humor, or culturally relevant content are able to capture the attention of their audience and create a sense of relatability (Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2020; Whyte, 2025). Additionally, the platform's informal nature allows influencers to present religious teachings in a way that feels more personal and accessible, which may appeal to younger audiences who may not traditionally engage with formal religious discourse. However, the study also found that the need to generate viral content sometimes leads to content that prioritizes entertainment over theological depth, which may impact the perceived authenticity of the messages. This tension between engagement and authenticity is a defining feature of TikTok as a platform and plays a critical role in shaping the success of Islamic influencers.

Moving forward, further research is needed to examine the long-term impact of virtual *dakwah* on the religious beliefs and practices of followers. Longitudinal studies could explore whether the digital engagement fostered by influencers translates into sustained religious commitment or whether it is primarily driven by the novelty and entertainment value of the platform. Additionally, future research should examine the role of religious institutions in guiding and supporting Islamic influencers on TikTok, ensuring that the messages conveyed align with traditional teachings while also embracing digital innovation. More studies are also needed to investigate the ethical implications of digital *dakwah*, particularly concerning the commercialization of religious content and its potential for misinformation. Lastly, researchers could explore the intersection of TikTok's algorithm and religious content to understand how the platform's design shapes the visibility of different types of content and whether this contributes to the spread of authentic or distorted religious narratives.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this research is that Islamic influencers on TikTok have successfully navigated the tension between religious teachings and the entertainment-driven nature of the platform, creating content that resonates with their young audience while maintaining a degree of authenticity. The study shows that influencers who incorporate personal stories, humor, and cultural references into their *dakwah* narratives are perceived as more authentic by their followers. Furthermore, the research reveals that digital authenticity, defined by transparency, relatability, and engagement, plays a pivotal role in building trust between influencers and their followers. However, the study also identified challenges related to the balance between engagement and religious depth. Some followers expressed concerns that influencers sometimes prioritize viral

appeal over the accuracy of the religious content, raising questions about the sustainability of digital dakwah on such platforms.

This study contributes to the literature by combining the concepts of Islamic *dakwah*, digital authenticity, and social media influence in the context of TikTok, a relatively under-researched platform for religious discourse. While previous studies have explored the role of influencers in various domains like fashion or fitness, this research focuses specifically on the unique dynamics of religious content creation within the digital landscape. The study's methodological approach, which integrates content analysis, interviews, and surveys, provides a comprehensive understanding of how religious messages are shaped by TikTok's algorithm and the influencer-audience relationship. By focusing on *dakwah* narratives, this research sheds light on how digital platforms reshape religious authority and authenticity in the digital age, offering new insights into the role of social media in modern religious practices.

This research has several limitations that should be addressed in future studies. First, the scope of the study was limited to a small sample of influencers and followers, primarily focusing on a specific demographic within TikTok's user base. A larger and more diverse sample would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic *dakwah* is perceived across different demographic groups, including varying age ranges, geographic locations, and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the study only assessed short-term engagement and the immediate impact of *dakwah* content. Longitudinal research could provide more insights into the long-term effects of digital *dakwah* on followers' religious beliefs and practices. Future research should also investigate the ethical considerations of religious content on social media, particularly the commercialization of religious teachings and its potential consequences for the authenticity of *dakwah*. Exploring how the algorithms of platforms like TikTok prioritize content and its implications for the dissemination of religious messages would also be a valuable area for future research.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Ahmad Zuhdi: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing; Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Nina Anis: Data curation; Investigation; Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

Chenda Dara: Supervision; Validation; Other contribution; Resources; Visualization; Writing - original draft.

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