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Da'wah by Millennial Preachers on TikTok and Religious Literacy among Muslim Senior High School Students in Tunggak Cerme Village

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Abstract: This study examines the phenomenon of millennial preachers (da'i milenial) on TikTok and its implications for the religious literacy of Muslim high school adolescents in Tunggak Cerme Village, Probolinggo Regency. Employing a qualitative descriptive case study approach, this research aims to deeply understand the characteristics of digital preaching, the level of religious literacy, and the process of internalizing religious messages among adolescents. The findings reveal that millennial preachers on TikTok employ egalitarian communication styles, use popular and contextual language, and present short, interactive visual content that resonates with the spiritual and psychological needs of youth. TikTok functions as an informal learning space that strengthens the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of students' religious literacy. However, the brevity and fragmented nature of content often lead to partial understanding and limit the development of critical and moderate religious literacy. The effectiveness of such digital preaching depends heavily on the guidance of teachers, parents, and supportive religious environments. This study concludes that millennial preachers' digital da'wah on TikTok represents a strategic innovation in contemporary Islamic propagation, with the potential to enhance youth religiosity when accompanied by strengthened digital literacy, ethical media engagement, and synergy between formal and non-formal religious education.

Keywords: Digital Dakwah, TikTok, Millennial Preachers, Religious Literacy, Muslim Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Developments in information and communication technology during the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution have created a new ecosystem in the religious lives of Muslim communities, particularly among younger generations. Indonesia is recorded as the country with the second-largest number of TikTok users worldwide, with approximately 113 million users as of April 2023, the majority of whom are young people. The proportion of adolescent users aged 13-17 accounts for around 14.4% of total users, indicating that junior and senior high school students constitute a highly strategic segment within the TikTok ecosystem (Social, 2023). Various surveys show that Generation Z in Indonesia utilises TikTok not only as a platform for entertainment, but also as a source of information, including religious content that they consume in their daily lives (Purwaningtyas et al., 2024).

Field observations indicate that Muslim adolescents, including senior high school students, spend a relatively substantial amount of time accessing TikTok and following a wide range of content creators, including millennial preachers. Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher in Tunggak Cerme Village, Wonomerto Subdistrict, Probolinggo Regency, reveal that some Muslim senior high school students regularly watch da'wah content on TikTok, using short video clips as inspiration for religious practice, references for practical religious rulings (*fatwas*), and motivation for spiritual transformation (*hijrah*). On the one hand, this phenomenon highlights the significant potential of TikTok as a medium for social learning and the internalisation of Islamic values (Mawaddah Rahmah et al., 2025). On the other hand, adolescents' reliance on short-form, algorithm-driven content raises critical questions regarding the quality of religious understanding formed through such exposure (Anisatul Luthfia, 2024).

This phenomenon has been met by preachers through the development of digital forms of da'wah via millennial preachers' TikTok accounts. Numerous studies indicate that da'wah delivered through TikTok can effectively reach young audiences by employing communication styles that are concise, visual, interactive, and aligned with contemporary issues. The use of music, visual effects, colloquial language, and trending hashtags makes da'wah messages feel more relatable to adolescents' everyday experiences (Nihlatunisa, Fatimah Raihani, Ilyas Kamilul, 2025). From a socio-religious perspective, the presence of millennial preachers on TikTok represents a transformation of religious authority from conventional pulpits to virtual spaces shaped by algorithmic logics and popular culture (Zaman, 2025).

However, the rapid flow of religious information on social media has also given rise to a range of challenges. The emergence of so-called 'instant ustadz', who do not always possess adequate scholarly authority, the proliferation of shallow and sensationalised religious content aimed at maximising viewership, and religious narratives that may foster intolerance or radical attitudes all illustrate these concerns (Niza Putri Nurfajrin et al., 2025). Adolescents, who are in a critical phase of identity formation, are particularly vulnerable to such influences. While they constitute the primary consumers of digital content, they do not necessarily possess sufficient levels of religious and digital literacy to filter, critically assess, and meaningfully interpret the religious information they encounter. This condition places adolescents in a "precarious" position: an abundance of information does not automatically translate into an abundance of understanding (Silvana, 2024).

From an educational perspective, religious literacy is regarded as one of the key pillars in the formation of students' religious character and the promotion of religious moderation (Hasanuddin et al., 2025). Numerous studies at the senior high school level indicate that religious literacy programmes integrated into Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI*) instruction and extracurricular activities can make a significant contribution to the development of students' religious knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. In the contemporary era, religious literacy is no longer understood merely as the ability to read religious texts; rather, it encompasses the capacity to comprehend Islamic teachings holistically (the cognitive dimension), to cultivate positive attitudes and moral commitment (the affective dimension), to practise Islamic values in everyday life (the behavioural dimension), and to adopt a critical and moderate stance towards diverse religious narratives, including those circulating in digital media (Sirajuddin, 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, the phenomenon of adolescents using TikTok to access da'wah can be analysed through the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory (Nurmaya & Juni Wati Sri Rizki, 2024). This theory emphasises that audiences actively select media to satisfy specific needs, such as the need for information, entertainment, personal identity, and social interaction. In the context of this study, Muslim senior high school students use TikTok and follow millennial preachers' accounts to fulfil their needs for religious knowledge, religiously

themed entertainment, the search for ‘contemporary’ religious role models, and confirmation of their Islamic identity. At the same time, the concepts of religious literacy and digital religious literacy serve as important overarching theoretical frameworks for understanding the extent to which adolescents are able to manage exposure to digital da‘wah—whether it leads to the strengthening of moderate religious understanding or, conversely, to the reduction of religious understanding into short, decontextualised slogans (Ridho, 2024).

From a socio-religious perspective, Tunggak Cerme Village is characterised by a strong religious environment, as reflected in the presence of mosques, madrasahs, and educational institutions that actively organise religious activities. Previous studies have shown that social media plays a role in shaping adolescents’ attitudes towards religious moderation and have underscored the importance of synergy between digital literacy education, the strengthening of religious understanding, and parental guidance (Muh Akhyar et al., 2025). However, these studies have not specifically examined the forms of da‘wah produced by millennial preachers on TikTok that are accessed by Muslim senior high school students in this village, how adolescents interpret and internalise these da‘wah messages, or how such processes relate to their levels of religious literacy. In other words, the relationship between exposure to digital da‘wah on TikTok and the religious literacy of Muslim senior high school students in this rural context remains underexplored.

It is here that the gap between ideal conditions and empirical realities becomes evident. Ideally, Muslim senior high school students are expected to possess adequate levels of religious literacy, to understand Islamic teachings in a proportional and moderate manner, and to demonstrate sufficient digital literacy skills to critically engage with religious content on social media. However, empirical realities indicate that many adolescents rely on TikTok as a primary reference for religious information, often without the accompanying ability to verify sources, assess the depth of the material, or reject extreme or deviant narratives. As a consequence, religious understanding risks being reduced to short video fragments detached from scriptural context, methodologies of legal reasoning (*istinbāt al-hukm*), and the broader traditions of Islamic scholarship.

This study is therefore both important and timely. It seeks to provide an in-depth account of the characteristics of millennial preachers’ da‘wah on TikTok as accessed by Muslim senior high school students, the forms and levels of their religious literacy in the context of exposure to digital da‘wah, and the processes through which da‘wah messages are interpreted and internalised in their everyday religious lives. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of scholarship on digital da‘wah and Islamic religious education. Practically, it offers an empirical foundation for schools, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, parents, millennial preachers, and relevant institutions to design da‘wah strategies and programmes for strengthening adolescents’ religious literacy that are more attuned to the realities of social media use—particularly TikTok—in rural contexts such as Tunggak Cerme Village.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design (Ilhami et al., 2024). A qualitative approach is selected because the focus of the research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of millennial preachers’ da‘wah on TikTok and the religious literacy of Muslim senior high school students. This approach enables the researcher to capture adolescents’ subjective experiences, perspectives, processes of meaning-making, and the internalisation of da‘wah messages within the context of their everyday lives (Ilhami et al., 2024).

As a descriptive case study, this research examines in depth a single, specific case—namely, the practice of millennial preachers’ da‘wah on TikTok as accessed, interpreted, and

internalised by Muslim senior high school students in Tunggak Cerme Village. Through this case study approach, the researcher seeks to produce a rich, or ‘thick’, description of the relationship between digital da‘wah and adolescents’ religious literacy within a local rural context that is religious in character yet simultaneously connected to global social media culture (Adji, 2024).

This research was conducted at a senior high school located in Tunggak Cerme Village, Wonomerto Subdistrict, Probolinggo Regency, East Java. The selection of this site was based on several considerations. First, the majority of students at the school reside in Tunggak Cerme Village, making them representative of Muslim senior high school adolescents in the local community. Second, Tunggak Cerme Village is characterised by an agrarian rural setting with relatively strong religious life, as evidenced by the presence of mosques, madrasahs, and primary educational institutions that actively organise religious activities. Third, despite its rural character, access to the internet and social media in this village is relatively widespread, providing adolescents with substantial opportunities to access da‘wah content on TikTok.

The research participants consisted of ten Muslim senior high school adolescents (Grades X-XII) who are active TikTok users, follow millennial preachers’ accounts, and report frequent engagement with da‘wah content on TikTok; one preacher (a religious figure actively engaged in da‘wah on TikTok) who is familiar with adolescents’ religious lives; and five parents of Muslim adolescents. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on criteria of relevance and the depth of information they could provide, and this was supplemented by snowball sampling where necessary (Nurhayati et al., 2024). The study was conducted over a three-month period, from October to December 2025, encompassing the stages of observation, in-depth interviews, and simultaneous data analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The findings indicate that the da‘wah of millennial preachers on TikTok accessed by Muslim senior high school students in Tunggak Cerme Village exhibits distinctive characteristics in terms of communication style, thematic focus, content format, and patterns of interaction. Adolescents reported that the young preachers’ accounts frequently appearing on their For You Page (FYP) employ a relaxed delivery style, using colloquial yet respectful language, accompanied by light humour, friendly expressions, and a non-patronising tone. Parents confirmed this impression, noting that TikTok-based da‘wah is perceived as more ‘contemporary’ and capable of attracting adolescents’ interest, while still emphasising the importance of maintaining propriety and religious decorum. The millennial preachers themselves consciously design a communication style that is simple, warm, and attuned to adolescents’ linguistic habits, with the aim of reducing psychological distance and conveying religious messages that feel reassuring rather than intimidating.

In terms of thematic focus, the da‘wah content most frequently consumed by adolescents centres on issues that are highly relevant to their everyday lives, such as proper conduct towards parents and teachers, interactions with the opposite sex, dating from an Islamic perspective, spiritual transformation (hijrah), motivation to become better Muslims, and psychological concerns such as feelings of insecurity linked to faith. Millennial preachers select these themes based on adolescents’ questions and personal disclosures expressed in comment sections and private messages, rendering the topics responsive to their perceived needs. Parents regard these themes as highly pertinent for senior high school students; however, they also express concern that complex issues are sometimes presented in an overly brief format, which may lead to oversimplification.

The content formats most favoured by adolescents are short videos lasting between 30 and 60 seconds, which combine on-screen text, quotations from Qur’anic verses or hadith, and

soft background music. Brief dialogue sketches that conclude with moral advice are also popular, as they are perceived to be easy to understand and remember. Millennial preachers acknowledge that they deliberately employ short monologues and concise storytelling, with a maximum duration of approximately one minute, in order to align with the platform's affordances and adolescents' attention spans. Parents view this format as effective in preventing boredom; however, they caution that the limited duration may cause complex issues of fiqh and 'aqidah to appear overly simplified and resolved within a single video.

With regard to patterns of interaction, adolescents generally respond to da'wah content by liking, saving, and occasionally commenting, either to express appreciation or to ask practical religious questions. Some adolescents reported receiving brief responses from the preacher or account administrators, whether in the comment section or through subsequent videos, which fostered a sense of being 'acknowledged' or 'noticed'. Millennial preachers strive to actively address serious comments, organise live sessions for direct question-and-answer interactions, and respond to direct messages (DMs) as far as possible. In certain cases, they direct adolescents to consult teachers or parents, indicating that interaction on TikTok does not stand alone but is ideally connected to religious authority in offline, real-world contexts.

In the context of religious literacy, adolescents assess their understanding of basic Islamic teachings as being at a moderate level: foundational elements such as the pillars of faith (*arkān al-īmān*), the pillars of Islam (*arkān al-islām*), and ritual practices are primarily acquired through school and madrasah education, while TikTok functions as a supplementary source (Hasanudin, 2024). Through TikTok, they gain more detailed and practical explanations concerning issues such as etiquette in social media use, guarding one's speech, the importance of intention, and matters considered makrūh that are rarely addressed explicitly in classroom settings. To ensure the credibility of the content, adolescents do not accept information uncritically; rather, they consider the preacher's reputation, read comment sections, consult Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, or search for additional sources such as Google. Nevertheless, differing opinions among preachers on TikTok occasionally lead to confusion; in such situations, adolescents tend to return to teachers whom they regard as more authoritative. Parents observe that their children's religious knowledge has increased, but this has not always been accompanied by the ability to distinguish between core religious teachings and issues of *khilāfiyyah*.

The process of internalising TikTok-based da'wah messages in adolescents' everyday lives is evident through a series of cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses. After watching content that they perceive as emotionally resonant, adolescents tend to save and rewatch the videos, share them with peers, and use them as material for personal reflection. Messages that leave a particularly strong impression—such as the importance of performing the dawn prayer (*ṣalāt al-fajr*) on time and the prohibition against speaking harshly to one's parents—encourage adolescents to become more disciplined in waking early, to experience feelings of guilt when negligent, to regulate their emotions in interactions with parents, and to exercise greater caution in their use of social media. Millennial preachers report receiving numerous testimonies from adolescents who claim to have begun improving their ablution practices, discontinuing romantic relationships, wearing the hijab more appropriately, or reducing the use of coarse language after engaging with the content. Parents likewise corroborate these changes, noting increased attentiveness to prayer, greater caution in social interactions, and more frequent engagement with Qur'anic reading, albeit not yet consistently.

However, this process of internalisation also involves negotiation with family and school values. Adolescents report experiencing confusion when encountering differences between the views expressed by preachers on TikTok and those held by parents or embedded in local traditions, for example regarding music or modes of dress. In response, they attempt to

find a middle ground by consulting Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and adhering to household norms. Parents tend to address these differences not through outright rejection, but by explaining that Islam encompasses a diversity of scholarly opinions and by emphasising the importance of refraining from hastily judging others. Consequently, the internalisation of da'wah messages unfolds through processes of dialogue and clarification across multiple spaces: digital platforms, the family, and the school.

Several factors support the effectiveness of millennial preachers' da'wah on TikTok. These include the short and engaging nature of the content, relatively affordable internet access, a peer culture that encourages content sharing, and TikTok's algorithm, which enables da'wah messages to spread widely within a short period of time. Support from da'wah institutions and schools, which subsequently invite preachers to deliver offline religious sessions, further strengthens the impact of digital da'wah. From a familial perspective, the religious foundations established at home and at school, together with open communication between parents and children, constitute important resources that enable TikTok content to be interpreted in a constructive manner.

On the other hand, several constraining factors were identified. Adolescents' timelines, which contain a mixture of da'wah and entertainment content, make sustained focus difficult; limited video duration constrains the delivery of complex religious material; and misinformation as well as contradictory religious narratives from other accounts may confuse adolescents whose religious literacy is still developing. Peer environments that are not always supportive, families that may at times be insufficiently responsive to adolescents' aspirations for spiritual transformation (*hijrah*), and prolonged screen-time habits further compound these challenges. Parents express concern regarding the scholarly authority of some TikTok preachers and the potential emergence of rigid religious attitudes when adolescents rely unilaterally on a single source. These findings underscore that while TikTok plays an important role as an entry point for da'wah and a reinforcement of adolescents' religious literacy, its effectiveness is highly contingent upon parental and teacher guidance, adolescents' critical capacities, and synergy with face-to-face religious mentoring within schools and the wider community.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Millennial Preachers' Da'wah on TikTok Accessed by Muslim Senior High School Students in Tunggak Cerme Village

The findings indicate that the da'wah of millennial preachers on TikTok accessed by Muslim senior high school students in Tunggak Cerme Village is characterised by four prominent aspects: communication style, thematic focus, content format, and patterns of interaction.

First, in terms of communication style, millennial preachers employ simple, everyday language that is communicative and frequently interspersed with light humour. Adolescents describe this mode of delivery as 'like chatting with a friend', rather than resembling a formal sermon delivered from the pulpit. This approach aligns with the concept of *da'wah bil-ḥikmah wa al-maw'izah al-ḥasanah*, which emphasises the use of wisdom, gentleness, and approaches that are attuned to the conditions of the *mad'ū* (the audience of da'wah) (Nurrochim & Rahman, 2025). From the perspective of da'wah communication studies, such a dialogical, egalitarian style that resonates with youth culture enhances the acceptability of da'wah messages by reducing psychological distance between preachers and adolescents (Ahmadi & Gunarti, 2024).

Second, with regard to religious themes, the content most frequently consumed by adolescents focuses on matters of morality (*akhlāq*) and social relations, including proper conduct towards parents and teachers, boundaries in interactions with the opposite sex, the

phenomenon of dating, spiritual transformation (*hijrah*), consistency in religious practice, and motivation for self-improvement. The selection of these themes aligns with adolescents' developmental tasks, as they are in a phase of identity exploration characterised by the tension between identity and role confusion (Nadiah et al., 2021). In da'wah theory, the choice of material should take into account the actual needs and problems of the mad'u. In line with Uses and Gratifications Theory, adolescents are not passive recipients but actively select content that they perceive as capable of fulfilling their cognitive needs (information), affective needs (emotional and spiritual reinforcement), and personal integrative needs (the search for religious identity) (Adistri & Rusman, 2024).

Third, in terms of content format, millennial preachers utilise short video formats (30-60 seconds) that combine on-screen text, excerpts from Qur'anic verses or hadith, soft background music, and dramatised sketches of everyday life (Chanra & Tasruddin, 2025). From a theoretical perspective, the use of such meaning-dense audiovisual media aligns with the principles of multimodal learning, whereby messages presented through integrated visual and verbal modes are more easily understood and retained. Within the framework of da'wah in new media, the strategic use of platform-specific features-such as short duration, scrolling mechanisms, the For You Page (FYP), music, and visual effects-constitutes a form of media adaptation, enabling religious messages to resonate with the technological characteristics and fast-paced, concise cultural preferences of TikTok users (Nurmaya & Juni Wati Sri Rizki, 2024).

Fourth, patterns of interaction between preachers and adolescents indicate a shift from a one-way (monologic) model of da'wah towards a more participatory and dialogical approach (Hanum & Baidawi, 2025). Adolescents are not merely recipients of messages but active respondents through practices such as liking, commenting, sharing, direct messaging (DM), and participating in live broadcasts. From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, this underscores the position of the audience as active subjects (*active audiences*) who seek, respond to, and even co-construct meaning from the messages they receive (Floraya, 2023). This approach is also closely aligned with the concept of the prosumer (producer-consumer) in digital culture, wherein adolescents are not only consumers of da'wah content but also contribute to the dissemination of messages through sharing practices (Prasetyo & Ramadhan, n.d.).

Thus, the characteristics of millennial preachers' da'wah on TikTok as accessed by adolescents in Tunggak Cerme Village correspond closely with the defining features of da'wah in the digital era: a communicative and popular style, contextual themes, short and visually oriented content formats, and two-way interaction. These characteristics reinforce contemporary da'wah theories, which emphasise that the effectiveness of da'wah on social media is largely determined by preachers' ability to read digital culture and respond to the needs of younger generations, while remaining faithful to the substantive teachings of Islam.

Forms and Levels of Adolescents' Religious Literacy in the Context of Exposure to TikTok-Based Da'wah

The findings indicate that the religious literacy of Muslim senior high school adolescents in Tunggak Cerme Village is at a moderate level, with relatively strong development in the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions, but remaining comparatively weak in the critical-moderative dimension.

Cognitively, adolescents demonstrate a foundational understanding of Islamic teachings acquired through formal educational pathways, such as Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools, madrasahs, and religious study circles. TikTok functions as a complementary source that provides additional explanations through concrete examples closely connected to everyday life, such as etiquette in social media use, the importance of intention, or brief

explanations of *makrūh* behaviours (Khotimah, 2023). This conception aligns with definitions of religious literacy as the capacity not only to read religious texts, but also to understand, interpret, and relate them to lived contexts (Ilyas & Maknun, 2023). From the perspective of religious education, TikTok thus serves as an ‘informal learning space’ that strengthens the applied dimension of religious teachings, in line with constructivist views which posit that learning can occur anytime and anywhere through interaction with symbolic environments, including media.

In the affective dimension, TikTok da‘wah content has been shown to engage adolescents’ religious consciousness. They report reflecting more frequently on their actions, becoming more sensitive to proper conduct towards parents, and experiencing a ‘moral nudge’ when watching certain da‘wah videos. This aligns with the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasise not only the transfer of knowledge but also the transfer of values (Alinata et al., 2024). Theoretically, this corresponds with the concepts of *taḍkiyatun-nafs* and moral education, in which religious understanding is expected to manifest in moral sensitivity (Harahap & Ependi, 2023).

Behaviourally, some adolescents have begun to improve their religious practices and moral conduct, striving to perform prayers more punctually, reduce the use of coarse language, behave more respectfully towards their parents, and be more selective in social interactions. This phenomenon can be understood within the framework of Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals learn through observation of models (Sugianto et al., 2025). In this context, millennial preachers on TikTok function as religious role models who are emulated (modelling), both in terms of speech and the lifestyle they present.

However, in the critical–moderative dimension, adolescents’ capacity to assess the validity and diversity of religious opinions remains limited. While they have begun to verify the identity of preachers and read comment sections, they often struggle to distinguish between core religious teachings (*ushūl*) and subsidiary matters (*furū’*) that are subject to scholarly disagreement (*khilāfiyah*). This indicates that their religious literacy has not yet fully developed into ‘critical religious literacy,’ which requires the ability to appreciate differences, reject hateful narratives, and maintain a moderate stance (Pajarianto et al., 2025). Religious moderation theory underscores the importance of this dimension to prevent understanding from veering towards either extremism or relativism.

From a theoretical standpoint, this situation illustrates that TikTok-based da‘wah contributes positively to practical knowledge and religious awareness, but is not yet sufficient to cultivate critical thinking skills and a moderate disposition without the support of formal education and family guidance. TikTok is therefore more appropriately positioned as a reinforcement medium, rather than as the sole source for developing religious literacy.

Adolescents’ Processes of Interpreting and Internalising TikTok Da‘wah Messages in Daily Life

The process by which Muslim senior high school adolescents in Tunggak Cerme Village interpret and internalise da‘wah messages from TikTok can be understood as a gradual process of meaning construction, progressing from message reception, reflection, and negotiation of meaning, to application in everyday life.

First, at the message reception stage, adolescents initially watch da‘wah content due to algorithmic factors (appearing on the For You Page), recommendations from friends, or an interest in particular preachers. From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, it is evident that they are motivated by the desire for information, religiously themed entertainment, and the search for a religious identity. Short, emotionally engaging, and contextually relevant da‘wah content serves as an initial ‘trigger’ for subsequent stages in the internalisation process (Mahendra et al., 2024).

Second, the stage of reflection and meaning-making occurs when the received messages are perceived as personally relevant—for instance, regarding neglected prayers, conflicts with parents, or free social interactions. Adolescents may rewatch, save, or share the videos with friends. This process aligns with constructivist theory, which posits that individuals construct meaning from new information by relating it to pre-existing experiential schemas (Suryana et al., 2022). From the perspective of the psychology of religion, such reflection represents a form of *tadabbur*, in its simple manifestation, whereby adolescents contemplate the personal relevance of religious messages (Ramadhan et al., 2025).

Third, the stage of meaning negotiation occurs when TikTok da‘wah messages encounter values and teachings acquired from parents, teachers, and the local community. Symbolic interactionism is particularly relevant here, as adolescents do not passively accept the symbols and meanings presented on TikTok, but actively negotiate them through interactions with ‘significant others’—including parents, teachers, and local religious figures (Citraningsih & Noviandari, 2022). When differences of opinion arise, adolescents weigh which sources are more authoritative, more acceptable, and more appropriate to their own context. The role of open and supportive parents and teachers is therefore crucial to ensure that this negotiation process does not result in prolonged conflict or confusion.

Fourth, the stage of internalisation and praxis is reflected in observable behavioural changes, such as efforts to improve prayer practices, refine moral conduct in speech, and avoid excessive or inappropriate social interactions. From the perspective of value internalisation theory, this indicates that religious values, initially external, have begun to be internalised and serve as standards for action (Ristianah, n.d.). In this context, millennial preachers on TikTok function as significant models who provide not only information but also inspiration and motivation to act.

However, the consistency of internalisation remains variable. This is influenced by adolescents’ psychological dynamics, peer pressure, and exposure to conflicting content. Without more stable structures of guidance—such as regular religious sessions at the mosque or intensive support from schools and families—the internalisation of values may weaken over time. In other words, TikTok da‘wah opens the door to awareness and initial behavioural change, but its consolidation and reinforcement require the support of formal education systems and a robust religious social environment.

Supporting and Constraining Factors of Millennial Preachers’ TikTok Da‘wah in Strengthening Adolescents’ Religious Literacy

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of millennial preachers’ TikTok da‘wah in strengthening adolescents’ religious literacy is influenced by a combination of media-related, personal, and socio-cultural factors.

From the perspective of supporting factors, first, the technological characteristics of TikTok—such as the FYP algorithm, short video format, and ease of sharing—align with the principles of *da‘wah fi wasā’il al-ijlām* (da‘wah through mass/new media), which emphasise the importance of utilising media most widely accessed by the public (Lestari, 2024). TikTok facilitates broad and rapid reach, enabling da‘wah content to transcend geographical boundaries between rural and urban areas.

Second, personal factors among adolescents—such as the motivation to seek guidance, the desire for spiritual transformation (*hijrah*), and the need for contemporary religious role models—create a fertile ground for the reception of da‘wah messages. From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, such adolescents can be characterised as a motivated audience (Hans Karunia H, Nauvaliana Ashri, 2021). When these religious motivations intersect with relevant content, the process of strengthening religious literacy is facilitated.

Third, socio-cultural factors-such as the presence of a religious family, open communication between children and parents, and the availability of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and local religious figures willing to engage in dialogue about digital da'wah-serve as crucial supports. From the perspective of ecological systems theory, individuals (adolescents) exist within interrelated systems (family, school, community) that mutually influence one another (Aliim & Darwis, 2024). When these systems are aligned in supporting the use of TikTok da'wah, the strengthening of religious literacy is facilitated.

Conversely, constraining factors arise from multiple sources. First, from the media itself, da'wah content is often interspersed with entertainment material that can sometimes be counterproductive (hedonism, a permissive lifestyle, excessive humour). This creates a situation referred to in the literature as an 'environment of distraction,' where da'wah messages compete with a strong flow of entertaining content.

Second, the limited duration and fragmentary nature of content mean that many issues related to fiqh, 'aqidah, and matters of scholarly disagreement (*khilāfīyah*) are presented only in short segments (Zaki Mubarak, 2022). This aligns with critiques of the 'snack culture' in digital information consumption, where information is consumed rapidly but rarely explored in depth. In the context of da'wah, this may lead to a superficial understanding if not supplemented by study through other channels.

Third, from a socio-cultural perspective, peer pressure and a community culture that is not fully aligned with religious teachings act as obstacles to internalisation. Additionally, not all parents and teachers possess sufficient digital literacy to guide adolescents in filtering content. This reinforces findings from digital religious literacy theory, which emphasise that strengthening religious literacy in the digital era requires not only the ability to understand religious texts, but also the skills to navigate media, identify authoritative sources, and manage exposure to excessive information (Ilyas & Maknun, 2023).

Thus, from a theoretical perspective, millennial preachers' TikTok da'wah holds both considerable potential and notable vulnerabilities. Its potential lies in its capacity to reach adolescents and stimulate religious awareness, while its vulnerabilities emerge when consumed content is not balanced by sufficient religious and digital literacy, and is unsupported by a nurturing family and school environment.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that millennial preachers' TikTok da'wah represents a transformation of religious authority from conventional spaces to digital platforms governed by algorithmic logic and popular culture. Through an egalitarian, relaxed, and contextually relevant communication style, these preachers successfully adapt the principles of *bil hikmah wa al-mau'izhah al-hasanah* into a short, interactive new media format. Such da'wah strategies make TikTok an effective medium for capturing the attention of Muslim senior high school adolescents while simultaneously strengthening the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of their religious literacy.

However, the effectiveness of this digital da'wah is accompanied by potential vulnerabilities. The limited duration and fragmentary nature of the content often result in adolescents developing a superficial understanding of religious teachings, which has yet to reach the level of critical literacy and the ideal of a moderate disposition. Interpretation of TikTok da'wah messages still requires further elaboration through clarification and guidance from PAI teachers, parents, and local religious figures. Therefore, digital da'wah should not be regarded as a replacement for conventional da'wah, but rather as a complementary medium that requires synergy with formal education and religious guidance within the social environment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the scholarship on digital da'wah and Islamic religious education by demonstrating the relevance of integrating Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism in explaining the processes of reception, meaning negotiation, and internalisation of religious values among digital-generation adolescents. TikTok da'wah has proven to be a dialogical medium capable of bridging religious messages with adolescents' lived realities. However, its effectiveness is highly contingent upon the reinforcement of ethical digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and the support of family and school ecosystems. With such synergy, millennial preachers' TikTok da'wah can serve as a strategic instrument for fostering a moderate, contextualised, and adaptive religiosity that aligns with contemporary developments.

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