

## Algorithmic Logic and the Transformation of Islamic Communication Ethics on Social Media

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### Abstract

*The growing prominence of engagement-oriented social media environments has created new tensions between Islamic communication ethics and digitally mediated practices, yet the relationship between platform-mediated visibility and ethical communication remains insufficiently understood. This study examined how algorithmic logic was related to violations of Islamic communication ethics and the negotiation of moral authority on social media. Employing a multilayered qualitative case study, the research analyzed 30 highly engaged publicly accessible content items from Instagram, X, Facebook, and TikTok, complemented by semi-structured interviews with 10 active social media users. Data were examined through thematic analysis and triangulation of content, audience interactions, and user perceptions. The findings highlighted three recurrent ethical concerns: impolite speech, privacy violations, and misleading information, which were associated with observable patterns of audience interaction and platform-mediated visibility. Rather than demonstrating direct algorithmic causation, the findings showed that Islamic communication ethics was negotiated through the interaction of communicative practices, audience responses, and engagement-oriented platform conditions. By integrating Islamic communication ethics, mediatization theory, and algorithm studies, this study extends ethical analysis beyond individual responsibility toward the structural conditions of digital communication and contributes to broader debates on digital religion, platform governance, and responsible digital citizenship.*

## A. Introduction

The rapid expansion of social media is transforming not only how religious messages circulate but also who and what shapes moral authority in digital society (Zaid et al., 2022). Families, teachers, and religious leaders have traditionally served as important sources of moral and religious guidance, yet they increasingly operate alongside digital influencers and algorithmically mediated platforms that shape what users encounter, discuss, and consider socially relevant. This transformation is particularly consequential for Islamic communication, whose ethical framework emphasizes truthfulness, civility, responsibility, and respect for others (Mowlana, 2007). Rather than merely serving as neutral channels for disseminating religious values, social media environments increasingly privilege visibility, engagement, and rapid circulation, creating new pressures on established ethical norms. Research has shown that social media engagement can be strongly associated with contentious and antagonistic content (Rathje et al., 2021).

Within this changing environment, violations of Islamic communication ethics have become increasingly visible, particularly when communicative practices are shaped by pressures for virality, controversy, and audience engagement. Digital media have also expanded the role of influencers in shaping religious understanding and practices among younger users (Zaid et al., 2022). This shift is reflected in evidence indicating that 58% of young people prefer learning about religion through platforms such as YouTube and Instagram (Soraya, 2020). These developments expose a growing tension between the normative ideals of Islamic communication and the communicative conditions of contemporary social media. Yet the interaction between Islamic ethical principles and algorithmically mediated environments remains insufficiently understood. This unresolved relationship makes it necessary to examine how algorithmic logic relates to the implementation and transformation of Islamic communication ethics in digital spaces.

A growing body of scholarship has noted that algorithms are not merely technical tools but also carry significant social, cultural, and political implications (Maryam & Ahmad, 2023). Their increasing involvement in organizing digital communication generates new moral dynamics in which established values interact with pragmatic, engagement-oriented, and viral forms of communication (Bavel et al., 2024). Consequently, understanding how social media transformations affect the authority of values and the reorientation of societal norms has become increasingly important. Existing studies have examined several dimensions of this transformation.

For instance, Masur et al. (2023) and Akhmad et al., (2024) demonstrate how social media reshapes norms related to openness, self-expression, and privacy, highlighting the transition from traditional social norms to emerging digital norms.

Research on digital religion has likewise examined online religious engagement and changing patterns of religious authority, but the ethical implications of algorithmically mediated communication remain less developed. Existing studies primarily illuminate sociocultural and behavioral transformations without sufficiently connecting algorithmic systems to ethical communication from an Islamic perspective. Consequently, the relationship among algorithmically mediated communication, Islamic communication ethics, and changing forms of moral authority remains insufficiently explained. This limitation is particularly important because digital platforms increasingly mediate how religious messages become visible, circulated, and socially validated (Hayes et al., 2023; Zaid et al., 2022). A more integrated perspective is therefore needed to explain how technological mediation intersects with Islamic ethical principles and established sources of moral authority.

Islamic communication ethics provides an important normative foundation for addressing this problem. Mowlana (2007) underscores that Islamic communication ethics rests on the principles of *tawhīd*, *amr ma'rūf nahi munkar*, *ummah*, *taqwā*, and *amānah*. These principles position communication as a moral responsibility rather than merely an exchange of information. In contrast, contemporary online discourse frequently involves hate speech, insults, vulgar language, and provocative expressions (Hrdina, 2016), practices that contradict Islamic principles of *qaulan karīman* (noble speech) and *qaulan layyinān* (gentle words) (Ballantyne & Podkalicka, 2020). This tension becomes more complex in algorithmically mediated environments, where communication is shaped not only by individual choices but also by platform mechanisms that influence the visibility and circulation of content (Hayes et al., 2023; Zaid et al., 2022).

Within this context, algorithms have become central to digital infrastructures, supporting functions ranging from information retrieval and content recommendation to data processing and security systems. Algorithms process large volumes of data to identify patterns and generate automated decisions (Fayiz et al., 2020), while recommendation systems influence which information receives greater visibility and how it is presented to users (Wang et al., 2023). Their significance therefore extends beyond technical content organization to the broader conditions under which communication and social interaction occur. This development raises an important ethical question concerning whether algorithmically mediated visibility contributes to changes in moral authority and ethical communication. Accordingly, algorithms need to be examined not

merely as technical mechanisms of content selection but also in relation to their broader normative implications for digital communication.

Mahmud et al. (2024) identify three factors that may significantly increase trust in algorithms: familiarity with the algorithm itself, familiarity with the task at hand, and familiarity with the algorithm's performance. Cultural context further shapes how algorithmic systems are perceived and trusted (Liu et al., 2023). Existing scholarship has therefore provided important insights into algorithmic trust, user engagement, and the sociocultural conditions surrounding human-algorithm interaction. However, considerably less attention has been paid to the ethical implications of these systems from the perspective of Islamic communication ethics. In particular, it remains insufficiently understood how algorithmically mediated communication intersects with Islamic ethical values and contributes to changes in moral authority within digital environments.

This problem becomes particularly important because platform environments can shape the visibility, circulation, and reception of communication rather than simply organize information. Previous research suggests that provocative and emotionally charged content may receive increased visibility within algorithmically mediated environments (Corsi, 2024). Recommendation systems may also increase the circulation of personal content, potentially blurring boundaries between private and public spheres (Aderus et al., 2023; Gandini et al., 2026). Similarly, engagement-oriented platform dynamics may prioritize attention over verification, creating conditions in which misleading information can circulate rapidly (Latuheru & Cangara, 2024). Taken together, these developments raise important questions about how platform-mediated communication relates to civility, privacy, truthfulness, and responsibility. Examining these relationships through Islamic communication ethics therefore provides an important basis for understanding the ethical consequences of contemporary digital communication.

Despite these developments, previous studies have predominantly examined Islamic communication ethics as a normative framework, the social consequences of digital media, or algorithms as technological and behavioral systems. Limited attention has been given to the intersection of these domains, particularly to how algorithmic logic mediates communication practices while interacting with Islamic ethical principles and established forms of moral authority. This leaves a conceptual and empirical gap in understanding the relationship between platform-mediated visibility, Islamic communication ethics, and the transformation of moral authority in Muslim digital environments. Addressing this gap, the present study integrates mediatization theory, algorithm theory, and Islamic communication ethics within a single analytical framework. Rather than proposing a new theory, it offers

an integrative conceptual approach to understanding how media logics, algorithmic systems, and Islamic ethical principles interact in shaping communication practices, visibility, engagement, and moral authority in contemporary Muslim digital communities.

On this basis, the present study examines how algorithmic logic relates to the implementation and transformation of Islamic communication ethics on social media and how these dynamics contribute to the reconfiguration of moral authority in digital spaces. Algorithms are approached as potential normative actors whose significance is examined through highly engaged content, patterns of user responses, and changing forms of social validation, rather than as directly observable causal mechanisms. Specifically, the study focuses on recurring ethical concerns involving impolite speech, privacy violations, and misleading information within algorithmically mediated communication environments. By connecting these empirical patterns with Islamic ethical principles and contemporary discussions of platform mediation, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ethical challenges in Muslim digital communication and to extend discussions of Islamic communication ethics beyond individual moral responsibility toward the structural conditions of contemporary digital environments.

## **B. Method**

This study employed a qualitative design using a multilayered case study approach to examine violations of Islamic communication ethics within their social and digital contexts. Qualitative research is appropriate for understanding meanings embedded in social phenomena within their natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018), while case studies enable an in-depth investigation of complex phenomena in specific social, cultural, and digital contexts (Yin, 2018). The multilayered approach involved three interconnected analytical layers: digital content, audience responses, and the algorithmically mediated platform environment. The first examined texts, images, videos, captions, and posts containing potential ethical violations; the second analyzed comments, reply chains, shares, reposts, and other visible interactions; and the third considered observable indicators of content visibility and engagement intensity. Algorithmic logic was therefore treated as an analytical lens for interpreting platform-mediated conditions rather than as a directly observable causal mechanism.

Data were collected from June to August 2025 across Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and TikTok. Publicly accessible content was screened according to three criteria: high audience engagement reflected in comments, shares, reposts, or other visible interactions; relevance to Islamic communication ethics, particularly impolite or hateful

speech, privacy violations, and misleading information; and public accessibility. This process produced 30 content items comprising posts, videos, captions, images, comments, and related online materials. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 active social media users to obtain complementary insights into audience perceptions and experiences of ethical violations. Relevant content was identified through keyword searches and systematic observation using terms related to hate speech, privacy violations, misinformation, and Islamic ethics. Selected materials were archived through screenshots, URLs, and field notes to ensure documentation and traceability.

The collected materials were organized according to platform, ethical issue, publication date, and available engagement indicators. The units of analysis comprised social media content and audience interactions. Digital content provided primary evidence of potential ethical violations, while comments, reply chains, shares, reposts, and other visible interactions provided contextual evidence of how such content was interpreted, negotiated, and circulated. Interview data complemented these materials by capturing users' perceptions of the ethical and social implications of the identified communication practices. The research proceeded through interconnected stages of data identification and collection, documentation and organization, coding, thematic analysis, interpretation, and triangulation. The relationship among the research inputs, analytical processes, and resulting thematic findings is summarized in Figure 1.

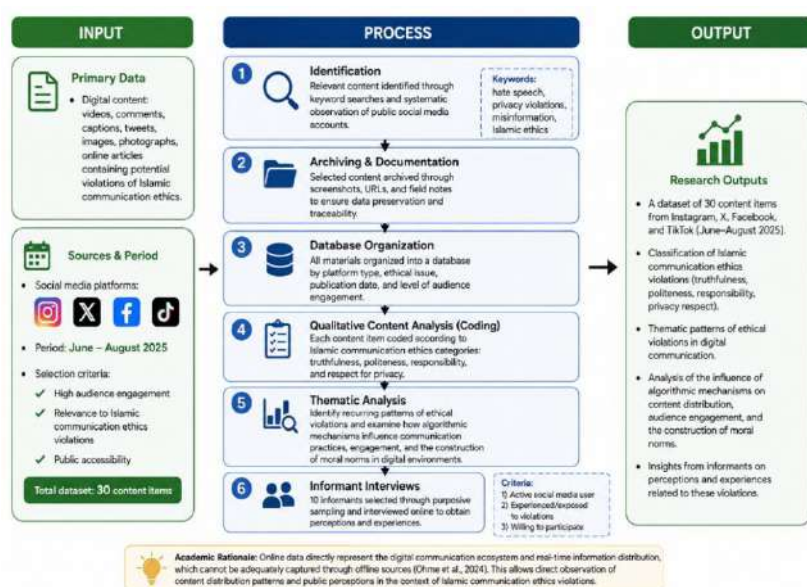


Figure 1. Research Procedure Based on the Input–Process–Output Framework

Thematic analysis involved data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. Coding was guided by Islamic communication principles concerning truthfulness, politeness, responsibility, and respect for privacy. Related codes were compared and grouped into three recurring categories reflected in the findings: impolite speech, privacy violations, and misleading information. These themes were examined alongside audience interactions and observable patterns of circulation, engagement, and visibility across the four platforms. To strengthen credibility and trustworthiness, methodological triangulation integrated social media content, audience interactions, and interview data. Cross-platform comparisons, verification of emerging themes across data sources, reflective memo-writing, and repeated reviews of coding decisions were conducted to strengthen analytical consistency, transparency, and rigor. This procedure enabled interpretation of the relationship among Islamic communication ethics, audience responses, and platform-mediated visibility without attributing direct causal effects to proprietary algorithmic mechanisms.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting. Before the interviews, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, intended use of the data, and their right to withdraw at any stage, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality was maintained by identifying participants only through initials and excluding full names, contact details, and other personally identifying information from the manuscript. Social media data were restricted to publicly accessible content; no private accounts, closed groups, or restricted communications were accessed. Although screenshots and URLs were archived for research documentation and traceability, identifying information that was not analytically necessary was masked, anonymized, or excluded to minimize potential harm to content creators and users.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

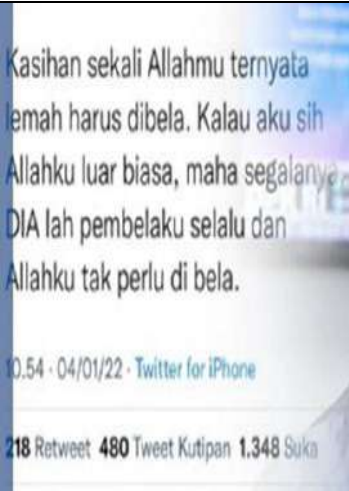
Through this qualitative, multilayered case study design, the data were analyzed to demonstrate how algorithms contribute to violations of Islamic communication ethics on social media. Based on the content examined and interviews concerning user perceptions and experiences, this study presents a comprehensive picture of the forms such ethical violations take within the digital public sphere.

1. Results

a. The Production of Impolite Speech in Digital Communication

Impolite speech has become a common feature of digital-based religious preaching. The tendency to employ impolite or offensive expressions has drawn wide public attention, particularly with regard to questions of morality in communication. The following section maps the patterns of impolite language use within Islamic preaching conducted through digital media. Table 1 presents in detail the use of such language across various instances of online religious communication.

Table 1. The Production of Impolite Speech in Digital Communication

| Type               | Cases                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hate Speech        | <div><p>Source: X</p></div> <div><p>Source: Facebook</p></div>   |
| Vulgar Expressions | <div><p>Source: X</p></div> <div><p>Source: Facebook</p></div> |

| Type                 | Cases                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Insults              |  <p>Source: Facebook</p>  <p>Source: Facebook</p>     |
| Provocative Language |  <p>Source: Instagram</p>  <p>Source: Instagram</p> |

Table 1 illustrates the widespread use of impolite speech across different contexts of Islamic broadcasting online. Such speech manifests in the forms of hate speech, vulgar expressions, insults, and provocative language. The findings indicate that hate speech, insults, and provocative expressions frequently appeared in public discussions across social media platforms. Although precise engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and views were not available for all cases, the selected content generated extensive audience interaction, as reflected in large numbers of comments, reply chains, and prolonged discussions. These interaction patterns suggest that the content achieved considerable visibility within the platform environment.

The cases presented in Table 1 were selected because they represented the most recurrent forms of impolite speech identified during the coding process across the dataset. Selection was based on three criteria: relevance to Islamic communication ethics

violations, evidence of audience interaction, and representation of broader patterns observed on multiple social media platforms. Across the analyzed content, hate speech, insults, vulgar expressions, and provocative language consistently generated audience responses in the form of comments, reply chains, and extended discussions. The recurrence of these patterns across platforms indicates that impolite speech constituted a persistent feature of digital religious communication within the analyzed dataset.

Impolite language on social media has elicited varied responses from different segments of society. Several informants underscored these concerns, as reflected in Table 2.

*Table 2. Themes and Informant Statements*

| Theme                | Informant       | Statement                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hate Speech          | Ht (male, 45)   | "Hate speech, sometimes in the form of provocative words on social media, can worsen relationships and divide individuals or groups."                   |
| Insults              | Fz (male, 58)   | "Posts or comments containing insults can trigger identity-based polarization and symbolic conflict."                                                   |
| Vulgar Expressions   | Dn (male, 50)   | "Vulgar words are sometimes twisted into slang, but I worry that this erodes our cultural roots of courtesy."                                           |
| Provocative Language | Rs (female, 28) | "On social media I often see posts or comments with provocative sentences. I never respond; I usually skip them, because there are legal consequences." |

The testimonies presented in Table 2 indicate that participants perceived impolite speech on social media as having negative social consequences. Informants associated hate speech and insults with social division, polarization, and conflict, while vulgar expressions were viewed as undermining norms of courtesy in communication. Participants also reported that provocative language frequently appeared in online interactions and was often avoided because of its potential social and legal implications. These responses suggest that concerns about impolite communication were consistently expressed across different informants and categories of ethical violations.

### **b. Privacy Violations: The Blurring of Private and Public Boundaries**

Privacy violations reflect a disregard for the principles of digital public communication, such as consent, confidentiality, and respect for personal rights. Information that was initially private often loses its boundaries of access once shared in digital spaces, where it can be redistributed or manipulated by unauthorized parties. The blurring of private and public boundaries constitutes a violation of Islamic communication ethics and, in turn,

undermines trust, reputation, and the integrity of relationships in the digital sphere. The classification of privacy violations is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Classification of Privacy Violations in the Public Sphere

| Type                                                       | Cases                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monitoring Digital Activity and Publishing Without Consent |  <p>Source: TikTok</p>  <p>Source: TikTok</p>         |
| Unauthorized Disclosure of Identity (Doxing)               |  <p>Source: X</p>  <p>Source: X</p>                 |
| Breach of Communication Confidentiality                    |  <p>Source: Facebook</p>  <p>Source: Facebook</p> |

| Type                                                           | Cases                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Misuse of Personal Content (edited photos, insulting captions) | <div><p>Source: Instagram</p></div> <div><p>Source: Instagram</p></div> |

Table 3 demonstrates that privacy violations on social media are not merely individual ethical breaches but are closely linked to the dynamics of digital visibility and audience engagement. The identified patterns—unauthorized monitoring and publication of digital activities, identity disclosure (doxing), breaches of communication confidentiality, and misuse of personal content—indicate that personal information is frequently transformed into public content for social exposure and social judgment. In several cases, private data are strategically circulated to attract attention, provoke emotional reactions, and stimulate user interaction. This finding suggests that privacy violations are reinforced by platform environments that reward visibility and engagement. Moreover, when personal information is associated with sensitive issues such as religion or political affiliation, the dissemination process often intensifies stigmatization and collective hostility. From the perspective of Islamic communication ethics, these practices contradict principles of protecting human dignity (*hifz al-'ird*) and respecting privacy, while simultaneously illustrating how algorithm-driven communication environments can amplify ethically problematic content through increased circulation and public participation.

Several informants confirmed the social stigma arising from the blurring of private and public spheres, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Themes and Informant Statements

| Theme                                                      | Informant     | Statement                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monitoring Digital Activity and Publishing Without Consent | Rd (male, 43) | "Tagging someone without reason is unethical because it can damage friendships and disrupt social cohesion." |

| Theme                                                          | Informant       | Statement                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Misuse of Personal Content (edited photos, insulting captions) | Fr (male, 38)   | "Editing someone's photo without permission can damage their image, especially if they are a religious figure, as it may generate stigma against their religion."                                                        |
| Unauthorized Disclosure of Identity (Doxing)                   | Rh (female, 32) | "Revealing someone's identity is equivalent to stealing it. It constitutes digital crime, and there are already laws against it."                                                                                        |
| Breach of Communication Confidentiality                        | Mu (male, 56)   | "If private chat content is made public, that is clearly wrong. It makes people feel unsafe and uncomfortable, and it can also cause legal problems because it involves the violation of communication confidentiality." |

The testimonies presented in Table 4 indicate that participants consistently perceived privacy violations as harmful communication practices. Informants associated unauthorized disclosure, misuse of personal content, and breaches of confidentiality with feelings of discomfort, insecurity, reputational harm, and potential legal consequences. These concerns were expressed across different categories of privacy-related violations, suggesting that the issue was recognized by participants as a recurring problem within digital communication environments. The testimonies also show that participants regarded consent and confidentiality as important elements in protecting personal dignity and maintaining trust in digital interactions. In this sense, privacy was understood not only as control over personal information but also as an ethical responsibility in managing content that involves other individuals.

### c. The Distribution of Misleading Information in Digital Spaces

Misleading information spreads across digital spaces through shifts in context, visual manipulation, selective presentation, and the circulation of incomplete or inaccurate information. Participants indicated that such content may appear credible because it is often presented through persuasive headlines, edited visuals, or fragmented information. These practices make it difficult for audiences to distinguish verified information from content designed primarily to attract attention. In digital preaching contexts, this creates tension with Islamic communication ethics, particularly the principles of truthfulness, responsibility, and accuracy. The forms and patterns of misleading information identified in the data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The Distribution of Misleading Information in Digital Spaces

| Type                   | Cases                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provocative Headlines  |  <p>Source:</p> <p><a href="https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210124131138-20-597713/nadiem-minta-pemda-pecat-pihak-paksa-siswi-padang-berjilbab?utm_source=twitter&amp;utm_medium=oa&amp;utm_content=cnnindonesia&amp;utm_campaign=cmssocmed">https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210124131138-20-597713/nadiem-minta-pemda-pecat-pihak-paksa-siswi-padang-berjilbab?utm_source=twitter&amp;utm_medium=oa&amp;utm_content=cnnindonesia&amp;utm_campaign=cmssocmed</a></p>  <p>Source:</p> <p><a href="https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210124131138-20-597713/nadiem-minta-pemda-pecat-pihak-paksa-siswi-padang-berjilbab?utm_source=twitter&amp;utm_medium=oa&amp;utm_content=cnnindonesia&amp;utm_campaign=cmssocmed">https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210124131138-20-597713/nadiem-minta-pemda-pecat-pihak-paksa-siswi-padang-berjilbab?utm_source=twitter&amp;utm_medium=oa&amp;utm_content=cnnindonesia&amp;utm_campaign=cmssocmed</a></p> |
| Inaccurate Information |  <p>Source:</p> <p><a href="https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/1715328-2-jemaah-haji-ditangkap-polisi-usai-gelar-tahlilan-di-pelataran-masjid-nabawi?utm_source=dlvr.it&amp;utm_medium=twitter">https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/1715328-2-jemaah-haji-ditangkap-polisi-usai-gelar-tahlilan-di-pelataran-masjid-nabawi?utm_source=dlvr.it&amp;utm_medium=twitter</a></p>  <p>Source:</p> <p><a href="https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/1715328-2-jemaah-haji-ditangkap-polisi-usai-gelar-tahlilan-di-pelataran-masjid-nabawi?utm_source=dlvr.it&amp;utm_medium=twitter">https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/1715328-2-jemaah-haji-ditangkap-polisi-usai-gelar-tahlilan-di-pelataran-masjid-nabawi?utm_source=dlvr.it&amp;utm_medium=twitter</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Type                                  | Cases                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Information from Non-Credible Sources | <div>  <p>Source:<br/> <a href="https://www.tempo.co/arsip/kabar-wali-kota-bekasi-pilih-resmikan-gereja-ketimbang-salat-hoax-718076">https://www.tempo.co/arsip/kabar-wali-kota-bekasi-pilih-resmikan-gereja-ketimbang-salat-hoax-718076</a> </p> </div> <div>  <p>Source:<br/> <a href="https://www.tempo.co/arsip/kabar-wali-kota-bekasi-pilih-resmikan-gereja-ketimbang-salat-hoax-718076">https://www.tempo.co/arsip/kabar-wali-kota-bekasi-pilih-resmikan-gereja-ketimbang-salat-hoax-718076</a> </p> </div> |

Table 5 presents three recurrent forms of misleading information identified across the dataset: provocative headlines, inaccurate information, and content originating from non-credible sources. The cases were selected because they represented frequently observed patterns during the coding process and appeared across multiple digital platforms. Selection was based on three criteria: relevance to violations of Islamic communication ethics, evidence of audience interaction, and representativeness of broader patterns identified within the dataset. Across the analyzed content, misleading information frequently relied on emotionally charged framing, partial presentation of facts, sensational headlines, and controversial religious narratives.

These forms of misleading information generated visible audience responses, including comments, reposts, discussions, and content sharing. Although complete engagement metrics were not available for all cases, recurring patterns across the analyzed platforms indicate that such content achieved substantial visibility and audience interaction within digital communication environments. Content involving sensational claims and controversial topics was repeatedly associated with observable engagement across the dataset. These findings demonstrate a recurring relationship between engagement-oriented content characteristics, audience interaction, and content visibility, while the available data do not establish that such content received greater algorithmic amplification than other types of information.

Several informants emphasized the contestation of informational authority, noting that the most readily accessible information now often comes from social media.

*Table 6. Themes and Informant Statements*

| Theme                                 | Informant       | Statement                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provocative Headlines                 | Rs (female, 28) | "News headlines that are provocative but do not match the content can trigger panic, because people are easily influenced by titles." |
| Inaccurate Information                | Cn (female, 42) | "If inaccurate information is not verified first, it is dangerous and may provoke acts of violence."                                  |
| Information from Non-Credible Sources | Um (female, 30) | "Sources must be verified before sharing. Some are not credible, and this can be divisive, especially when the issue is sensitive."   |

The testimonies in Table 6 illustrate that misleading information on social media constitutes a serious problem because it obscures factual reality. Such content influences public opinion on events in ways that can generate social conflict, particularly when connected to sensitive issues such as religion.

## 2. Discussion

This study demonstrates that violations of Islamic communication ethics are embedded within a broader interaction among content characteristics, audience responses, and engagement-oriented platform environments. The three recurring patterns—impolite speech, privacy violations, and misleading information—should therefore not be interpreted merely as isolated forms of individual misconduct. Rather, they reflect communicative practices negotiated within digital environments in which visibility and audience engagement have become increasingly salient (Hakim et al., 2025; Zairina et al., 2025). Algorithmic logic serves here as a conceptual lens for understanding these conditions rather than as a directly observable causal mechanism. As Metzler and Garcia (2024) and McLoughlin and Brady (2024) argue, algorithmic systems interact with social behavior in shaping the circulation and visibility of digital content (Ja'far et al., 2026). This interpretation is also consistent with Bavel et al. (2024), who emphasize the complex relationship between social media environments, moral expression, and digitally mediated social behavior.

The first finding concerning impolite speech reveals a significant tension between the expressive affordances of social media and the normative requirements of

Islamic communication. Hate speech, vulgar expressions, insults, and provocative language were recurrent within the analyzed content and were associated with visible audience responses (Ahmad et al., 2024). Prior studies have shown that hate speech exacerbates polarization and intensifies intergroup conflict (Muthohirin et al., 2025; Mutmainah & Romadhon, 2023). Moreover, provocative language undermines the function of communication as a medium for both *da'wah* and unity (Rahman, 2020) (Farida & Abidin, 2024). Rathje et al. (2021) similarly demonstrate that out-group animosity can generate substantial engagement on social media. These patterns suggest that impolite communication is important not only because it violates norms of civility but also because emotionally antagonistic expressions may become particularly salient within engagement-oriented communication environments (Mustapha, 2024; Tarmizi et al., 2024).

This pattern acquires particular significance when interpreted through Islamic communication ethics. Islamic communication places moral responsibility at the center of communicative practice through principles including *qaulan karīman*, *qaulan sadīdan*, *qaulan layyīnan*, *amānah*, and *amr ma'rūf nahi munkar*. These principles require communication to preserve dignity, truthfulness, gentleness, responsibility, and social harmony (Mowlana, 2007; Syamsudduha et al., 2026). The recurrence of aggressive and provocative expression therefore indicates more than declining online politeness; it reveals a tension between normative religious communication and digitally mediated practices that frequently value immediacy, emotional intensity, and visibility (Tarmizi et al., 2024). This tension is consistent with Kaplan and Yuksel (2023), who argue that content producers and users must preserve Islamic communication ethics while adapting religious messages to social media environments. Islamic ethical communication consequently remains relevant not only as an individual moral standard but also as a framework for evaluating changing digital communication structures.

The second finding, concerning privacy violations, further demonstrates how digital communication complicates conventional distinctions between private and public spheres. Unauthorized disclosure of identity, publication without consent, breaches of communication confidentiality, and misuse of personal content transform private information into material for public exposure, commentary, and judgment (Prastyanti & Sharma, 2024; Sutrisni et al., 2024). Masur et al. (2023) show that social norms and expectations significantly influence self-disclosure practices on social media, while

Gandini et al. (2026) highlight how algorithmically mediated public environments complicate contemporary processes of public opinion formation. Within the present findings, privacy is therefore not simply an individual matter of information control. It is also connected to visibility, social judgment, and the circulation of personal information (Ilham et al., 2026). From an Islamic ethical perspective, these practices challenge respect for dignity, confidentiality, responsibility, and the protection of personal boundaries.

The third finding concerning misleading information exposes another tension between Islamic principles of truthfulness and contemporary attention-oriented communication. Provocative headlines, inaccurate information, and content associated with non-credible information practices were repeatedly accompanied by observable audience interaction (Fepriani & Ratnasari, 2026). This pattern should not be interpreted as evidence that algorithms directly caused misleading information to circulate. Rather, it suggests that sensational framing, emotional intensity, audience responses, and platform-mediated visibility may interact in ways that facilitate its circulation (Prastyanti & Srisuk, 2025). Corsi (2024) identifies algorithmic amplification as an important concern in the visibility of low-credibility content, while McLoughlin and Brady (2024) emphasize the role of human-algorithm interactions in explaining misinformation diffusion. Latuheru and Cangara (2024) likewise highlight the role of social media algorithms in shaping communication and conflict dynamics (Tarmizi et al., 2024). These studies support interpreting misinformation as a socio-technical rather than exclusively individual communication problem.

Taken together, the three findings suggest a broader transformation in how communicative legitimacy and moral authority are negotiated in digital environments. Popularity indicators such as likes, followers, views, comments, and shares can function as visible markers through which users encounter and evaluate content (Muhammad et al., 2025). As Milli et al. (2025) and Tucker et al., (2018) observe, engagement-oriented digital environments are associated with virality, controversy, divisiveness, and polarization (Wuysang et al., 2024). In the Indonesian context, this development intersects with religious values, local customs, and communal norms that have historically shaped expectations of appropriate communication. The emergence of more expressive, confrontational, and fragmented communication may consequently place pressure on established values of courtesy, tolerance, mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*), and deliberation (*musyawarah*) (Pratama et al., 2025). The

issue is therefore not simply technological change but the renegotiation of social norms under changing conditions of digital visibility.

The findings support Hjarvard's (2016) theory of the mediatization of religion by demonstrating that social media platforms do not merely transmit religious messages but also shape the conditions under which religious communication becomes visible and socially meaningful (Zairina et al., 2025). Building on this perspective, algorithmic logic constitutes an important dimension of the platform-mediated environment in which ethical visibility and communicative legitimacy are negotiated (Ja'far et al., 2026). This conceptualization does not imply that specific algorithms directly determine the circulation or prominence of particular content. Rather, consistent with Sandvig et al. (2014) perspective on algorithmic governance, the findings draw attention to the broader role of algorithmically mediated environments in organizing conditions of visibility and audience interaction (Mahfudz & Munib, 2026). Hayes et al. (2023) further emphasize the moral significance of algorithmic tools, supporting the need to examine algorithmic mediation not only technically but also ethically.

This perspective also helps explain changing forms of religious authority. Zaid et al., (2022) demonstrate how social media influencers participate in reconfiguring religious authority and Islamic practices among Muslim millennials (Firdaus & Sidik, 2024; Hakim et al., 2025). Similarly, as Kaplan and Yuksel (2023) argue, both content producers and users must preserve Islamic communication ethics on social media while adapting to platform demands in ways that maintain the holistic integrity of religious messages. Yet many *da'wah* channels on YouTube deliberately select controversial themes to secure traffic and revenue, transforming religious preaching into a competition for popularity (Tarmizi et al., 2024; Al-Zaman, 2022) (Sari et al., 2025). Preachers who employ controversy often go viral through clickbait styles and emotionally expressive presentation. Rather than demonstrating that algorithmic logic determines religious communication, these patterns indicate that religious authority is increasingly negotiated through the interaction of religious legitimacy, content strategies, audience responses, and platform visibility (Zairina et al., 2025).

From the perspective of Islamic communication ethics, these findings reveal a growing tension between normative Islamic principles and engagement-driven algorithmic logics. Islamic teachings emphasize *qaulan karīman*, *qaulan sadīdan*, *qaulan*

*layyinan*, and *amr ma'rūf nahi munkar* as foundations for dignity, truthfulness, social harmony, and moral responsibility (Fepriani & Ratnasari, 2026). This ethical orientation is consistent with Aprianto et al., (2026), who found that Islamic values such as *amanah* support digital trust through transparency, accountability, and responsible communication. Likewise, Firdaus et al. (2025) argue that digital transformation should remain grounded in Islamic ethical and spiritual values (Syamsudduha et al., 2026). The findings further suggest that this tension has a political-economic dimension because social media operate within attention-oriented environments in which engagement possesses economic value. Accordingly, ethical communication must be considered in relation to both individual responsibility and the structural conditions within which digital communication occurs (Ilham et al., 2026).

These findings extend previous scholarship by shifting the analysis of Islamic communication ethics beyond an exclusively individual or normative explanation. While Missier (2025) emphasizes the role of digital influencers and family authority in shaping religious perceptions, the present study indicates that platform-mediated conditions of visibility must also be considered when examining digital religious authority (Firdaus & Sidik, 2024; Hakim et al., 2025). Similarly, Chowdhury (2024) highlights ethical challenges associated with social media from an Islamic perspective, yet these challenges cannot be fully understood solely through the actions of users or content creators. Such explanations may overlook the structural conditions associated with engagement-oriented platform environments, including visibility, virality, and emotional reactions (Pratama et al., 2025). The contribution of this study therefore lies in connecting Islamic communication ethics with mediatization theory and algorithm studies to explain ethical communication as an interaction among individual agency, audience practices, content characteristics, and digital infrastructures (Zairina et al., 2025).

Accordingly, this study proposes an integrative understanding of Islamic communication ethics in which algorithms are not treated as autonomous moral agents or directly observable determinants of user behavior. Instead, algorithmic logic constitutes part of the structural environment within which visibility, attention, communicative legitimacy, and moral authority are negotiated (Ja'far et al., 2026; Mahfudz & Munib, 2026). This qualification is essential because the present qualitative design does not directly examine proprietary recommendation systems or establish causal relationships between particular algorithms and content circulation. Nevertheless, observable patterns

of engagement and visibility indicate that ethical communication cannot be adequately explained without considering platform infrastructures. In this sense, the study extends existing normative approaches by integrating ethical, sociocultural, technological, and structural dimensions (Fepriani & Ratnasari, 2026). It thereby offers a multidisciplinary framework connecting Islamic communication studies, digital sociology, mediatization, and algorithm studies without reducing ethical violations to either technological determinism or individual moral failure.

Although this study is situated within Indonesia, its implications extend to broader discussions of digital religion, platform governance, and algorithmic ethics. Similar transformations of religious authority occur across digitally connected communities in which religious actors increasingly communicate through transnational platforms governed by engagement-oriented infrastructures (Zaid et al., 2022; Missier, 2025; Abadijah & Dardum, 2025). Concerns surrounding misinformation, polarization, privacy, and moral responsibility therefore have relevance beyond a single national setting (Mustapha, 2024; Prastyanti & Sharma, 2024). From a global media ecology perspective, the Indonesian case demonstrates how universalized platform infrastructures interact with culturally and religiously specific ethical systems. This interaction suggests that digital citizenship and platform governance should account for ethical plurality rather than assuming that technological norms operate independently of cultural and religious contexts. The study thus contributes to international discussions by positioning Islamic communication ethics as a substantive perspective for examining responsible communication within increasingly algorithmically mediated societies.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. The analysis was based on selected cases from Instagram, X, Facebook, and TikTok, and therefore does not capture the full diversity of religious communication across digital platforms. The absence of complete engagement metrics, including views, shares, and impressions, also limited the study's ability to assess algorithmic amplification and proprietary recommendation mechanisms directly. Moreover, the qualitative interpretation of social media content, audience interactions, and user perceptions provides contextual depth but does not allow for computational measurement of platform behavior. As the study was conducted within the Indonesian socio-cultural context, its findings should also be applied cautiously to other Muslim-majority societies with different religious, cultural, and digital environments. These limitations open important directions for future research using larger datasets, longitudinal and computational

approaches, platform analytics, and cross-country comparisons to examine more systematically how digital infrastructures interact with Islamic communication ethics, religious authority, and changing social norms.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study concludes that Islamic communication ethics on social media must be understood within the interaction between individual communicative practices, audience responses, and algorithmically mediated platform environments. Across the analyzed content, three recurring ethical concerns—impolite speech, privacy violations, and misleading information—demonstrate how established principles of truthfulness, civility, responsibility, and respect for privacy are negotiated under conditions of heightened visibility and engagement. Rather than establishing that specific algorithms directly cause ethically problematic content to circulate, the findings indicate that engagement-oriented platform conditions are associated with patterns of visibility and audience interaction surrounding such content. Islamic communication ethics in digital environments should therefore be understood not solely as a matter of individual moral responsibility but also in relation to the technological and structural conditions within which contemporary communication occurs.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Islamic communication scholarship by integrating Islamic communication ethics, mediatization theory, and algorithm studies into an analytical framework that connects normative principles with the structural conditions of digital communication. This perspective extends conventional approaches that primarily locate ethical responsibility at the level of individual users or content producers by demonstrating the relevance of platform-mediated visibility, audience engagement, and digital infrastructures to the negotiation of moral authority and ethical norms. The contribution lies not in proposing a new theory or treating algorithms as autonomous moral agents, but in providing an integrative perspective for understanding how religious values, communicative practices, audience responses, and platform environments interact in contemporary Muslim digital communication.

Practically, the findings underscore the importance of strengthening Islamic digital and algorithmic literacy among social media users, religious communicators, and educational communities. Such literacy should extend beyond technical competence to include critical awareness of how visibility, engagement, misinformation, privacy, and

communicative responsibility intersect within digital environments. The findings also have implications for policymakers and platform providers by highlighting the need for governance approaches that reconcile audience engagement with ethical responsibility, particularly in addressing harmful communication, misleading information, and privacy violations. In this regard, Islamic communication ethics can provide a culturally and religiously grounded perspective for promoting responsible digital citizenship while contributing to broader discussions of ethical communication in increasingly platform-mediated societies.

Given the qualitative scope and contextual boundaries of this study, future research should examine these relationships through larger and more diverse datasets, longitudinal designs, computational approaches, and platform analytics capable of assessing patterns of visibility and engagement more systematically. Comparative studies across Muslim-majority societies would also be valuable for determining how different cultural, religious, and platform contexts shape the relationship between Islamic communication ethics and digitally mediated communication. Such research could provide stronger empirical evidence concerning algorithmic mediation while further examining transformations in religious authority, ethical norms, and social interaction across diverse digital environments. Ultimately, ethical Islamic communication in the digital age requires not only responsible users but also critical awareness of the platform environments that shape visibility, engagement, and moral authority.

### **Declaration of Competing Interest**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### **Declaration of Generative AI**

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Grammarly and QuillBot solely to improve grammar, clarity, readability, and linguistic consistency. These tools were not used for conceptualization, data generation or analysis, interpretation of findings, or development of the study's arguments and conclusions. All AI-assisted suggestions were critically reviewed and revised by the authors, who retain full responsibility for the originality, integrity, accuracy, and academic content of the manuscript.

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