

The Digital Transformation of Generation Z's Da'wah Through Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence on TikTok

Dede Ahmad Fauzan¹, Ilham Maulana², Muhammad Khoirul³, Abin Maulan Aksa⁴
^{1,2,3,4} Nahdlatul Ulama University of Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received : 12 13, 2025

Revised : 12 29, 2025

Accepted : 05 31, 2026

Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence;

Interest in Da'wah;

Generation Z;

TikTok;

Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the effect of exposure to viral artificial intelligence (AI)-based da'wah content on TikTok on Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah. This quantitative study involved 30 active TikTok users aged 18–25 through an online questionnaire survey supplemented with qualitative data from open-ended questions. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression with the Microsoft Excel Data Analysis ToolPak. The results of the analysis showed a positive but weak correlation between exposure to AI-based da'wah content and interest in digital da'wah ($R = 0.233$; $R^2 = 0.054$; $p = 0.215$). This effect was not statistically significant and explained only 5.4% of the variation in interest in digital da'wah. Thematic analysis revealed that while AI-generated da'wah content has the potential to enhance accessibility and the appeal of the message, respondents expressed concerns about the credibility of the source, the loss of personal nuance, and the risk of misinformation. These findings suggest that the virality of AI-generated da'wah content has not yet become a primary driver of Gen Z's interest in digital da'wah. Other factors, such as personal motivation, social support, and digital literacy, are believed to play a greater role and should therefore be investigated further

Corresponding Author:

Dede Ahmad Fauzan,
dedeahmadfauza348@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Advances in information and communication technology have revolutionized the way messages are disseminated, including in the context of Islamic da'wah. One platform that now dominates the digital space is TikTok, a non-gaming app with over 1.5 billion users worldwide, the majority of whom are from Generation Z (Rahmayani et al., 2021). Thanks to its cutting-edge personalization algorithm, TikTok possesses a unique ability to accelerate content dissemination, enabling it to reach millions of users in a short period of time even through extremely short videos. This platform has also transformed into a strategic arena for digital da'wah, reshaping the dynamics of religious communication and opening new avenues for preachers to connect with a broader audience, particularly Generation Z (Montag et al., 2021). It is important to clarify from the outset what is meant by "AI-generated da'wah content" in this study, given that the term can refer to a variety of different technologies. AI-generated da'wah content is defined as da'wah material that is partially or entirely produced with the aid of generative artificial intelligence, encompassing three main forms: (1) AI avatars or figures that deliver sermons using synthetic faces and voices (text-to-speech or voice cloning); (2) AI chatbots that automatically generate da'wah scripts or answer religious questions (Insana et al., 2024); and (3) religious narratives or texts composed by AI language

models, which are then narrated or visualized into video content. This definition is intentionally distinguished from conventional digital da'wah that is, sermons that are recorded and uploaded without the involvement of AI systems in the content production process even though both are distributed via digital platforms. This distinction is important because the perceived credibility of the source and the viewing experience for these two types of content have the potential to differ significantly (Batubara, 2024).

In line with this, the variable “interest in digital da'wah” is also broken down into distinct dimensions to avoid being too generic. This study operationalizes interest in digital da'wah into three dimensions: (1) intention to become a creator, which refers to the tendency to create or contribute to the production of one's own da'wah content; (2) intention to share and interact, which refers to the tendency to disseminate, comment on, or discuss existing da'wah content; and (3) intention to support digital da'wah, which refers to the willingness to provide both non-financial and financial support (e.g., through content donations or the “gift” feature on platforms) for others' digital da'wah activities. These three dimensions serve as a reference for developing questionnaire items in the sections on Instruments, Data Collection Techniques, and Bias Mitigation.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. To strengthen the conceptual foundation, this study integrates two relevant theoretical perspectives. First, Uses and Gratifications Theory explains that Generation Z actively selects and consumes AI-generated religious content on TikTok to fulfill specific needs, such as religious information, entertainment, and the convenience of short-form video formats (Manik & Sidharta, 2026) . This theory is used to explain why and how Generation Z seeks out AI-generated religious content amid the overwhelming flood of TikTok content. Second, Social Learning Theory explains that individuals can learn new attitudes and behaviors through observation of models, including symbolic models that appear in the media (Bandura, 2024) . AI da'wah avatars that appear convincing and relatable have the potential to function as symbolic models that shape Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah through the processes of attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. These two theories form the basis of the conceptual hypothesis that the higher the exposure (driven by the gratification obtained) and the stronger the perceived modeling effect, the higher the interest in digital da'wah; this hypothesis is then empirically tested through regression analysis in Section 3

METHOD

This study employs the waterfall method because its structured phases are well-suited for projects with clearly defined requirements. The waterfall method used in this study is considered relevant for library information system development, as it features structured and sequential phases, as has been applied and validated in previous research (Nugraha et al., 2024). Requirements analysis was conducted through a literature review and observation of digital library systems. Functional requirements include book search, collection detail display, online borrowing and returns, book and member data management, and the provision of borrowing reports, while non-functional requirements include login security and access rights management, ease of use, interface responsiveness, and system access speed (Giofandi et al., 2023).

Research Variables

This study involves two main variables. The independent variable (X) is exposure to viral AI-generated da'wah content on TikTok, specifically the intensity, frequency, and type of interaction by Generation Z with AI-generated da'wah content, as defined in Section 1. The dependent variable (Y) is Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah, operationalized into three dimensions (intention to become a creator, intention to share/interact, and intention to support digital da'wah). Both variables were measured using a questionnaire instrument with a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1). Additionally, this study identified

the potential benefits and risks arising from exposure to viral AI-generated da'wah content on TikTok regarding Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah, which were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods.

Research Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all members of Generation Z in Indonesia who are active users of the TikTok platform. To maintain consistency in the definition as suggested in the study on the characteristics of Generation Z (Kristyowati, 2021), the age range of Generation Z in this study is strictly limited to 18–25 years. The sample inclusion criteria are as follows: (1) aged 18–25 years; (2) actively using the TikTok platform for at least 1 hour per day; (3) having been exposed to or aware of AI-generated religious content on TikTok; and (4) willing to participate as a respondent and voluntarily complete the questionnaire.

The sampling techniques used were purposive sampling, to select initial respondents based on the inclusion criteria, and snowball sampling, in which initial respondents were asked to recommend other individuals who met the same criteria. This technique is effective for reaching populations with specific characteristics that are difficult to reach directly. The sample size in this study was 30 respondents, in accordance with the guidelines by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2006), which suggest a minimum sample size of 10 times the number of variables under study ($2 \text{ variables} \times 10 = 20 \text{ respondents}$), as well as meeting the minimum criteria for a valid sample in quantitative research (Dr. Sugiyono, 2023). This sample size remains a limitation of the study and is discussed further in Section 4.

Instruments, Data Collection Methods, and Bias Mitigation

The primary instrument of this study is a structured questionnaire in the form of a Google Form designed to measure variables related to exposure to AI-generated da'wah content and interest in digital da'wah, as well as to explore potential benefits and risks. The questionnaire consists of five sections: (A) respondent demographic data (age, gender, education, employment status); (B) examples of AI-generated da'wah content on TikTok (sample video links to ensure consistency in respondents' understanding); (C) exposure to viral AI-generated da'wah content on TikTok (Likert scale and frequency questions); (D) Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah, which measures three dimensions of interest (intention to become a creator, intention to share/interact, and intention to support digital da'wah) using a Likert scale; and (E) potential and risks (essay/open-ended questions). Before use, the questionnaire was pretested on a small number of respondents to ensure the validity and reliability of the items (Boateng et al., 2022). Since this study relies on self-report instruments, there is a risk of social desirability bias that is, the tendency for respondents to answer in accordance with what is considered socially acceptable rather than reflecting their actual attitudes (Bispo Júnior, 2022). To minimize this risk, this study implemented several mitigation measures: (1) the questionnaire was distributed anonymously without including respondents' names; (2) statement items were formulated neutrally and avoided words that implied "expected" answers; (3) respondents were informed at the beginning of the questionnaire that there were no right or wrong answers and that all data would be used solely for academic purposes; and (4) the survey was conducted online and was self-administered without the researcher's presence, thereby reducing social pressure to provide answers considered "ideal" compared to face-to-face interviews.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of quantitative statistical techniques and qualitative thematic analysis. First, descriptive statistical analysis (frequency distribution, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) was used to answer the research questions regarding exposure levels and interest levels. Second, inferential statistical analysis in the form of simple linear regression was conducted using the Microsoft Excel Data Analysis

ToolPak (Rusli et al., 2021) , preceded by tests of classical assumptions (normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity), to answer the question regarding the magnitude of the effect of exposure on interest. Third, a qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) of the essay responses in Section E of the questionnaire was conducted through repeated reading, categorization, theme identification, and interpretation to answer questions regarding potential and risks. All findings were then discussed within the context of the theoretical frameworks (Uses and Gratifications Theory and Social Learning Theory) and linked to the research problem and objectives to arrive at comprehensive conclusions.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results of this study were obtained from 30 Generation Z respondents who completed an online questionnaire. The data presented include the respondents' demographic characteristics, a description of the variables related to exposure to AI-generated da'wah content and interest in digital da'wah, the results of simple linear regression analysis, and the findings of qualitative thematic analysis regarding potential and risks.

The respondent data was dominated by males (60%), with 40% being female. The majority of respondents were aged 18–20 (73.3%) and 21–23 (23.3%), with one respondent (3.3%) aged 17—slightly below the 18–25 age range established as the inclusion criterion. This respondent was still included in the descriptive analysis for data transparency; however, this discrepancy is noted as a limitation of the study (see Section 4). The respondents educational levels were dominated by Bachelor's degree (S1) holders at 60%, followed by high school/vocational school/equivalent graduates (36.7%), and 90% of respondents were students, confirming that the target population of Generation Z was successfully reached.

Table 1. Frequency of Exposure to Viral AI Da'wah Content on TikTok

Frequency of Exposure	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Never	7	23,30%
Rarely (less than once a week)	13	43,30%
Sometimes (1–3 times a week)	7	23,30%
Often (4–6 times a week)	3	10%
Very often (every day)	0	0,00%
Total	30	100,00%

Source: Primary data from the questionnaire, 2025

Table 1 shows that respondents' exposure to viral AI-generated religious content on TikTok tends to be low: the majority rarely (43.3%) or never (23.3%) encounter such content; only 10% view it frequently; and none view it daily, indicating that visibility remains limited.

Table 2. Average Viewing Duration of AI-Generated Da'wah Content on TikTok

Viewing Duration	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Less than 15 seconds	11	36,70%
15-30 seconds	9	30,00%
31-60 seconds	5	16,70%
More than 1 minute	1	3%

I didn't watch it at all	4	13,30%
Total	30	100,00%

Table 2 shows that the most common viewing durations are less than 15 seconds (36.7%) or 15–30 seconds (30%), in line with TikTok's characteristic preference for shortform video content. As many as 13.3% of respondents did not watch the content at all, reinforcing the finding of low exposure to this content.

Table 3. Searching for/Subscribing to AI Da'wah Accounts on TikTok

Agreement Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	16,70%
Disagree	6	20%
Somewhat agree	14	46,70%
Agree	4	13%
Strongly agree	1	3,30%
Total	30	100,00%

Table 3 shows that 46.7% of respondents somewhat agree that they actively seek out or subscribe to AI-generated religious content, while 36.7% stated they disagree or strongly disagree, indicating the presence of a group that is not proactive in seeking out this type of content.

Table 4. Trust in the Virality of AI-Generated Da'wah Content on TikTok

Agreement Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	6,70%
Disagree	3	10%
Somewhat agree	19	63,70%
Agree	5	16,70%
Strongly agree	1	3,30%
Total	30	100,00%

Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents (63.3%) somewhat agree that Aigenerated da'wah content on TikTok has high viral potential, reflecting a positive perception of the content's ability to spread, even though their actual exposure to it remains low (Table 3).

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

This inferential analysis aims to examine whether exposure to viral AI-generate da'wah content on TikTok (independent variable) influences Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah (dependent variable), as well as the magnitude of this influence, using simple linear regression with the Microsoft Excel Data Analysis ToolPak (Rusli et al., 2021) .

Table 5. Generation Z's Perception of the Effectiveness of Digital Da'wah

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.23309
R Square	0.054331
Adjusted R Square	0.020557
Standard Error	0.704579
Observations	30

Table 5 shows a Multiple R value of 0.233, indicating a weak positive correlation between the two variables. The R-squared value of 0.054 indicates that only about 5.4% of the variation in Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah can be explained by exposure to Aigenerated da'wah content, while the remaining 94.6% is influenced by other variables outside this model. The low adjusted R-squared (0.021) and relatively high standard error (0.705) confirm that this model has a fairly high level of prediction error based on data from 300 respondents.

Table 6. ANOVA Test Results

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	0.798591	0.798591	1.608663	0.215124
Residual	28	13.90008	0.496431		
Total	29	14.69867			

Table 6 shows a calculated F-value of 1.609 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.215, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05; therefore, the regression model is not statistically significant. This means that, overall, exposure to AI-generated da'wah content has not been proven to have a significant effect on Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah.

Table 7. Regression Coefficients

	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	2.835372	0.483621	5.862794	2.65E-06	1.844719	3.826025	1.844719	3.826025
X	0.228299	0.18	1.268331	0.215124	-0.140412	0.597012	-0.140412	0.597012

Based on Table 7, the regression equation obtained is $Y = 2.835 + 0.228X$, where Y represents Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah and X represents exposure to viral AI da'wah content on TikTok. The constant term (2.835; $p = 2.65E-06$) indicates that without exposure to AI-generated da'wah content ($X = 0$), the average interest in digital da'wah is estimated at 2.835—a relatively high figure on a 1–5 scale, consistent with the high baseline interest among Generation Z observed in Tables 6–10. The positive coefficient for X (0.228) indicates a trend where higher exposure is associated with higher interest in digital da'wah, however, a p-value of 0.215 (>0.05) and a 95% confidence interval that includes zero

(-0.140 to 0.597) suggest that this effect cannot be statistically generalized to a broader population.

A thematic analysis of 30 respondents' essay responses regarding the potential and risks of viral AI-generated da'wah content on TikTok was conducted through repeated reading, coding, categorization, and theme identification (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Potential. Three main themes related to potential were identified. First, increased accessibility and reach of da'wah: Respondent R.4 noted that viral AI-generated da'wah content "can reach more people who are not yet familiar with Islam," while R.30 observed that access to it "has no user restrictions, whether for women or men." Second, an engaging and relatable delivery style: R.1 noted the casual language and appealing visuals, while R.28 stated that the delivery style is "not rigid, but rather relatable and easy to understand," so that users who are usually just scrolling might suddenly be moved to reflect on religion. Third, the potential to reach young people who tend to be less interested in conventional da'wah, as mentioned by R.11.

Risks. Three main risk themes were identified. First, issues of accuracy, credibility, and scholarly sources: R.6 and R.24 expressed concern about the lack of clarity regarding scholarly chains of transmission and the potential for misunderstandings of teachings when da'wah is delivered by AI without validation by religious scholars. Second, a lack of depth, nuance, and personal touch: R.4 assesses that AI-generated da'wah messages are "incomplete or even fragmented," causing the original meaning to change, while R.19 highlights a "lack of nuance and emotion." Third, the potential for misuse and misinformation: R.21, R.16, and R.29 expressed concern that AI could be exploited to spread inaccurate religious information or slander, and that it could lead users to become overly reliant on AI and neglect to verify information from primary sources.

Levels of Exposure and Interest. Although TikTok is the dominant platform among Generation Z, respondents' levels of exposure to viral AI-generated da'wah content on the platform remain low to moderate, with the majority rarely or never having seen such content (Tables 3–4). This may indicate that TikTok's algorithms have not yet widely featured such content on Gen Z's home feeds, or that respondents have not actively sought out this type of content. Conversely, Generation Z's interest in digital da'wah is relatively high across all three dimensions (Tables 7–11): most respondents are interested in learning new da'wah methods, are willing to participate in content creation and dissemination, and believe in the effectiveness of digital da'wah. In line with Social Learning Theory, this willingness to become creators and disseminators of these messages indicates that Gen Z has the potential to adopt AI da'wah avatars as symbolic models, even though actual exposure to such models remains low.

The Effect of Exposure on Interest. Regression analysis shows that exposure to viral AI da'wah content has a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with interest in digital da'wah ($R^2 = 0.054$; $p = 0.215$). These results do not fully support the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which assumes that the fulfillment of needs through media consumption will drive further engagement. One possible explanation is the short viewing duration (the majority <30 seconds, Table 3), meaning the gratification obtained was not yet deep enough to foster interest; another explanation, in line with Social Learning Theory, is that the modeling effect requires credibility and an emotional connection with the mode which were, in fact, the respondents' primary concerns in the thematic analysis (issues of credibility and a lack of personal nuance, Qualitative Thematic Analysis Section: Potential and Risks). In other words, the virality of content alone does not appear to be strong enough to serve as the primary driver of interest in digital da'wah without being accompanied by the credibility of the source and the depth of the message. Nevertheless, the role of social media as a tool for disseminating religious values remains important to acknowledge (Ferlitasari et al., 2020), although in this context the specific influence of AI-generated da'wah content has not yet been proven to be significant.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that Generation Z TikTok users exhibit high enthusiasm and interest in participating in digital da'wah, whether in learning new methods (70%), contributing to content creation (80%), or believing in its effectiveness (76.7%). However, exposure to viral AI-based da'wah content was not found to be the primary driver of this interest in participation ($R^2 = 0.054$; $p = 0.215$). These findings enrich the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Social Learning Theory by confirming that the virality of content alone—without being supported by the credibility of the source and the depth of the message—does not automatically drive active audience participation. This study has several limitations, including a small sample size ($n = 30$), an age discrepancy in one respondent (17 years old), and potential self-report bias. Therefore, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution and verified through follow-up research with a larger and more homogeneous sample.

REFERENCES

- Bandura, A. (2024). Social learning theory. In *Elgar Encyclopedia of Cross-Cultural Management* (pp. 133–134). <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803928180.ch33>
- Batubara, Y. (2024). Pemanfaatan Artificial Intelligence (AI) Sebagai Strategi Dakwah: Analisis Peluang dan Tantangan. *Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah (TADBIR)*, 6(1), 1–14.
- Bispo Júnior, J. P. (2022). Social desirability bias in qualitative health research. *Revista de Saude Publica*, 56, 101. <https://doi.org/10.11606/s1518-8787.2022056004164>
- Boateng, G. O., Neilands, T. B., Frongillo, E. A., Melgar-Quinonez, H. R., & Young, S. L. (2022). Best Practices for Developing and Validating Scales for Health, Social, and Behavioral Research: A Primer. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 6(June), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00149>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic Analysis* (Vol. 2). American Psychological Association.
- Dr Sugiyono. (2023). *Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D* (kedua). Alfabeta.
- Ferlitasari, R., Suhandi, & Rosana, E. (2020). Pengaruh media sosial istagram terhadap perilaku keagamaan remaja. *Sosio Religia: Jurnal Sosiologi Islam*, 01(02), 2–3.
- Hasibuan, S. E., Dini, F. R., & Hasibuan, N. Y. (2024). Tantangan Etika Digital Islami: Studi Fenomenologis Pada Siswa Yang Mengakses Konten Keagamaan Singkat. *TEACHER : Jurnal Inovasi Karya Ilmiah Guru*, 2(4), 306–312.
- Insana, Z., Satriah, L., Islam, U., Sunan, N., & Djati, G. (2024). *Etika dan Tantangan Dakwah di Era Kecerdasan Buatan Studi Kasus Penggunaan Chatbot AI untuk Konsultasi Keagamaan*. 5(2), 259–272.
- John WCreswell, & Creswell, J. D. (2020). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*.
- Jr., J. F. H., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2023). Multivariate Data Analysis Multivariate Data Analysis. In *Gedrag & Organisatie* (Vol. 19, Issue 3). <https://doi.org/10.5117/2006.019.003.007>
- Kristyowati, Y. (2021). Generasi “Z” Dan Strategi Melayaninya. *Sekolah Tinggi Theologi Indonesia Manado*, 02(1), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/w3d7s>
- Manik, N. K., & Sidharta, A. N. (2026). Does TikTok Shape the Communication Behavior of

Emerging Human Capital ? A PLS-SEM Analysis of For You Page Exposure among University Students. *Publikasi Ilmu Komunikasi, Desain, Seni Budaya*, 3(2), 55–65.
<https://doi.org/doi.org/10.62383/filosofi.v3i2.1103>

- Montag, C., Yang, H., & Elhai, J. D. (2021). On the Psychology of TikTok Use: A First Glimpse From Empirical Findings. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9(March), 1–6.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.641673>
- Nabila, W. M., Fadhilatunnisa, S., Alamsyah, M. I., & Suryandari, M. (2023). Pengaruh Konten Dakwah Terhadap Gen Z dan Milenial (Generasi Muda). *ALADALAH: Jurnal Politik, Sosial, Hukum Dan Humaniora*, 1(1), 9–21.
- Rahmayani, M., Ramdhani, M., & Lubis, F. O. (2021). Pengaruh Penggunaan Aplikasi Tiktok Terhadap Perilaku Kecanduan Mahasiswa. *Pharmacognosy Magazine*, 75(17), 399–405.
- Randani, Y. N. F., Safrinal, S., Latuconsina, J. Z., & Purwanto, M. R. (2021). Strategi Pemanfaatan Aplikasi Tik Tok Sebagai Media Dakwah Untuk Kaum Milenial. *At-Thullab : Jurnal Mahasiswa Studi Islam*, 3(1), 587–601.
<https://doi.org/10.20885/tullab.vol3.iss1.art4>
- Rusli, R., Suradi, S., Rahman, A., Assagaf, S. F., & Hastuty, H. (2021). Analisis Data Penelitian Menggunakan Perangkat Lunak Excel. *Panrannuangku Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.35877/panrannuangku626>
- Setyawan, A. A. (2024). *Pengaruh Persepsi Kemudian dan Kualitas Layanan Terhadap Minat Nasabah Menggunakan Fitur Pembayaran E-Commerce Pada Bank Syariah Indonesia* (Issue Table 10).