



SOCIAL BEHAVIOR DISRUPTION AMONG MUSLIM STUDENTS DUE TO THE TIKTOK SYNDROME: A STUDY OF DIGITAL ETHICS IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze TikTok syndrome among Muslim students, its ethical relevance, and its implications for Islamic education. TikTok's expansion has intensified concerns over behavior, communication, and judgment among Muslim youth. In Islamic higher education, excessive use may weaken adab, privacy awareness, and responsibility. This research used a qualitative case study in pesantren-based Islamic higher education. Data were gathered through focus group discussions, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman. The findings show that TikTok syndrome causes routine disruption, compulsive use, fragmented interaction, and self-exposure. High use duration was linked to weakened time discipline and reduced control over activities. However, some students limited usage effectively, indicating that disruption is mediated by self-regulation. Islamic digital ethics was found relevant for self-control, verification, and responsible online conduct. Respondents with ethical awareness were more critical toward viral or extreme content. TikTok also had ambivalent implications for Islamic education, supporting learning but disrupting worship consistency and character formation. This study contributes an integrative perspective linking digital disruption, Islamic ethics, and Islamic education objectives. Future research should test Islamic digital literacy interventions in broader settings.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital media has made research on TikTok syndrome important not only for academic discussion but also for society at large. In the era of the 4.0 revolution, social change no longer moves gradually because digital platforms are able to reshape habits, values, and interaction patterns in a very short time. In this context, disruption is not merely a technological shift, but a social transformation that changes established norms and everyday behavior

(Frey et al., 2022; Hopster, 2021; Saniuk et al., 2020). TikTok represents one of the strongest examples of this transformation because it combines algorithmic attraction, short video formats, and easy creative tools that encourage continuous participation (Collie & Wilson-Barnao, 2020; Kułaga, 2024; Qi, 2025). Its global and national reach also shows the scale of the issue, with 825.48 million downloads in 2024 and Indonesian users spending an average of 38 hours and 26 minutes per month on the platform (Huwae & Azis, 2024; Tewu et al., 2025). Therefore, examining TikTok syndrome is important because it helps explain how digital media can influence social conduct, moral judgment, and the direction of character formation in contemporary society.

The broader problem faced by society is that intensive digital consumption often grows faster than people's ethical capacity to manage it. TikTok is not inherently harmful, yet its excessive use can trigger time displacement, weaken self-control, and reduce attention to responsibilities that should be prioritized in daily life. Among young people, this problem becomes more serious because adolescence and early adulthood are periods in which identity, values, and social habits are still being formed. Previous findings show that excessive TikTok use tends to shift attention away from academic obligations and encourage the prioritization of non-obligatory social activity, often at the expense of time discipline and productive routines (Chao et al., 2023; Rogowska & Cincio, 2024). In Muslim youth communities, the problem extends beyond productivity because it also concerns the weakening of adab, modesty, and moral restraint in digital spaces. When social media behavior is guided more by visibility and instant validation than by ethical awareness, society faces a deeper challenge, namely the emergence of a generation that is digitally active but morally less prepared to respond to the consequences of its online actions.

This problem is increasingly visible in the field, especially among Muslim students who actively consume and produce TikTok content. The platform's features make it easy for users to imitate trends, upload performative content, and interact in ways that blur the boundaries between self-expression and ethical responsibility. Empirical indications in the existing manuscript show that this condition is no longer abstract. Research on TikTok content among Muslim students in Islamic higher education found that 69% of the analyzed content reflected behavior that deviated from Islamic ethical indicators, including the display of inappropriate images, reduced modesty, and the use of inappropriate language (Arifa, 2023; Nazila et al., 2025). This phenomenon becomes more concerning when placed within the institutional mission of Islamic Higher Education, which is expected to produce graduates with the character of *Ulul Albab* and to develop spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and social integrity (Ruroh et al., 2024; Witoro, 2022). Since Islamic General Education aims to cultivate noble character and guide students to internalize and practice Islamic values, the persistence of ethically problematic digital behavior shows a concrete tension between educational ideals and students' lived digital practices (Abror & Noviani, 2025; Yusnita et al., 2023).

A number of previous studies have discussed TikTok from different perspectives, but their focus remains fragmented. Kerim et al. (2025) and Muslimin (2025) examined the effects of TikTok use on the development of social skills, showing that the platform has consequences for how young users interact and construct relationships. Ziemba et al. (2025) analyzed TikTok in relation to the dissemination of general Islamic teachings, indicating that the platform can also function as a channel for religious communication. Meanwhile, Conte et al. (2024) studied the impact of TikTok on adolescent mental health, and Haliza & Surawan (2025) and Hutami (2025) explored how religious content on TikTok affects the mental health of young people. These studies are valuable because they confirm that TikTok is not simply an entertainment application but a digital environment that shapes cognition, emotion, and social engagement. However, the literature still tends to examine separate dimensions, such as social skills, dissemination of Islamic content, or mental health, without integrating them into a specific ethical analysis of Muslim students' social behavior in higher education settings. As a result, the educational and moral implications of TikTok syndrome remain insufficiently connected to the framework of Islamic digital ethics.

Other studies also confirm that the negative effects of excessive TikTok use are not limited to the general public, but extend to specific groups, including Muslim adolescents (Khan et al., 2025; Rahman, 2023). This indicates that religious identity alone does not automatically protect young users from the pressures of algorithmic popularity, narcissistic self-presentation, and the tendency toward individualistic behavior in digital spaces. The digital ethical crisis associated with TikTok syndrome may encourage narcissism, individualism, and the spread of self-centeredness (Bossen & Kottasz, 2020; Jordan Nelson & Emmanuel, 2025; Meng & Leung, 2021). Even so, previous studies have not specifically examined how TikTok syndrome functions as a source of social and psychological disruption among Muslim students within the digital ethical framework developed in Islamic Higher Education. In other words, the research gap lies not merely in the topic of TikTok itself, but in the absence of an integrative analysis that connects platform overuse, shifts in Muslim students' social behavior, ethical evaluation based on Islamic values, and the implications for Islamic General Education. This gap is important because without such analysis, educational institutions will have limited conceptual guidance for responding to digital moral problems that increasingly affect student life.

Based on that gap, this study offers a clear state of the art by placing TikTok syndrome, Muslim students' social behavior, and Islamic digital ethics within one analytical framework. The novelty of this research lies in its effort to move beyond descriptive discussions of social media effects and toward an integrative explanation of how digital disruption influences behavior, how Islamic ethical principles can be used to assess that disruption, and how both can be translated into the context of Islamic General Education. This position makes the study important because the problem is no longer only about media consumption, but about the direction of character formation in an era where digital platforms actively shape attention, interaction, and self-image. By connecting contemporary

digital practices with the educational mission of forming morally grounded individuals, this research seeks to produce a more adaptive understanding of moral education for the digital era. In that sense, the study is expected to strengthen the relevance of Islamic education in responding to everyday technological realities faced by Muslim youth.

Accordingly, this study is directed by three main problems, namely the extent to which TikTok syndrome disrupts the social behavior of Muslim youth, the extent to which Islamic digital ethics is relevant for addressing this condition within the Islamic education community, and the implications of this phenomenon for Islamic education. The temporary argument proposed in this introduction is that TikTok syndrome contributes to a shift in social behavior by normalizing patterns of excessive exposure, reduced time discipline, and weakened ethical restraint in digital interaction. At the same time, Islamic digital ethics is assumed to remain relevant as a normative and practical framework for evaluating and correcting such behavior because it emphasizes responsibility, modesty, self-control, and moral awareness. On that basis, this study argues that Islamic education cannot remain limited to conventional moral instruction, but must actively formulate an adaptive educational response that addresses digital behavior as part of character formation. Through this argument, the research is expected to contribute conceptually to Islamic educational discourse and practically to the development of ethically responsive learning strategies in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used was a qualitative approach using a case study design, which has the advantage of capturing the realities reflected in the results, as it is considered a form of feedback for the institution conducting the formative evaluation (Mtisi, 2022; Subrahmanyam, 2025). This method was chosen because the researcher aimed to explore various aspects of the TikTok syndrome that occurred in the study.

This study was conducted at several Islamic higher education institutions based on pesantren in the region. The participants in this study were Muslim students at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, specifically the Islamic education study program. This location was selected based on the consideration that the Muslim community there is Islamic and the pesantren-based higher education institution is considered highly relevant to the Islamic education curriculum and its application in daily life, thereby facilitating researchers in conducting their studies.

Data collection techniques were employed through focus group discussions, observations, and documentation (Almusaed et al., 2025; Monaro et al., 2022). Focus group discussions were conducted with several active TikTok users, lecturers, and counselors to explore their experiences and identify various challenges related to the social phenomenon known as TikTok syndrome, which were subsequently analyzed and presented anonymously in the report. Observations were conducted by analyzing participants' social interactions within groups and their behavior on TikTok (the content they posted). Documentation

was conducted to analyze relevant TikTok content that was shared. Meanwhile, the analysis technique employed utilizes the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three core stages: data reduction, data interpretation, and drawing conclusions (Dahal, 2023; Li & Zhang, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study aims to analyze the forms of social and behavioral disruption among Muslim youth caused by the TikTok syndrome, to examine the relevance of Islamic digital ethics in addressing the TikTok syndrome within the Islamic education community, and to examine the implications of this phenomenon for the objectives of Islamic education.

Forms of Social Behavioral Disruption Among Muslim Students Due to TikTok Syndrome

This finding elucidates how TikTok syndrome operates as a form of socio-digital disruption that reconfigures the everyday behavioral patterns of Muslim students. The interview data demonstrate that such disruption is not confined to excessive screen exposure, but is expressed through a set of interrelated consequences, including the erosion of daily routine discipline, the emergence of compulsive platform dependence, the fragmentation of interpersonal communication, and the normalization of self-exposure in digital space. These tendencies indicate that TikTok functions not merely as an entertainment platform, but as a behavioral environment that shapes attention, interaction, and self-presentation in ways that may weaken ethical restraint and social regulation. For Muslim students, this condition is particularly consequential because digital practices are inseparable from questions of adab, modesty, and moral accountability in both virtual and physical domains. Accordingly, this section argues that TikTok syndrome should be understood as a substantive transformation of social behavior, rather than a superficial byproduct of media use, with important implications for the formation of student conduct in the contemporary digital era.

This pattern is first evident in the disruption of students' daily routines, particularly in relation to the intensity and duration of TikTok use. The interview data reveal that several informants allocate a considerable amount of time to accessing the platform each day, indicating that TikTok has increasingly occupied spaces that were previously used for more structured and productive activities. In this regard, the accounts of DK, AG, and FA provide an initial illustration of how prolonged exposure to TikTok contributes to the weakening of routine discipline and the growing difficulty of regulating everyday time use.

Research findings indicate that several social activities have been disrupted since the emergence of TikTok.

Table 1. Categorization of Forms of Social Behavioral Disruption

Category of Social Behavioral Disruption	Supporting Informants	Indicators / Findings
Disruption of Daily Routines	DK, AG, FA	TikTok use ranging from 3 to 7 hours per day disrupted daily routines and reduced time management effectiveness.
Controlled Use of TikTok	C	TikTok use was limited to approximately 20 minutes per day, so it did not interfere with daily activities.
Psychological Dependence	BB, I	Informants showed a recurring urge to open TikTok every day, indicating signs of mild compulsive use and psychological attachment.
Social Distraction and Fragmented Interaction	SN	Social interactions were affected by the growing use of TikTok-related slang, which shifted and fragmented everyday conversations.
Privacy and Self-Exposure Issues	NR	Some users prioritized engagement over privacy and social boundaries by sharing content that reflected excessive self-exposure in public digital spaces.

The categorization of findings demonstrates that TikTok syndrome among Muslim students operates as a multidimensional form of social behavioral disruption rather than a singular issue of excessive media use. At the most immediate level, prolonged daily exposure to TikTok, as reflected in the experiences of DK, AG, and FA, indicates the erosion of routine discipline and the weakening of time management, suggesting that the platform increasingly competes with structured daily obligations. However, the presence of Informant C also shows that disruption is not inevitable, but is mediated by the user's capacity for self-regulation, thereby highlighting personal control as a critical differentiating factor. More deeply, the emergence of psychological dependence among BB and I points to a shift from voluntary use to habitual compulsion, where TikTok becomes embedded in the affective management of boredom and everyday impulses. This pattern is further intensified by the findings on social distraction and fragmented interaction, where TikTok-related slang begins to reshape conversational practices and subtly alters the quality of interpersonal communication. Finally, the issue of privacy and self-exposure suggests that the platform not only influences how students consume content, but also how they construct visibility, negotiate social boundaries, and pursue recognition in digital public spaces. Taken together, these findings indicate that TikTok syndrome reorients students' behavioral patterns across temporal, psychological, interactional, and moral dimensions, making it a significant socio-digital challenge within the lives of Muslim students.

In an interview, Informant DK stated: "I can spend 5-6 hours a day watching TikTok, and this activity has disrupted my daily routine."

A similar finding was reported by AG, who stated: "I can spend 5-7 hours a day watching TikTok."

Similarly, an informant FA stated: "I can spend 3–5 hours within a 24-hour period."

These findings indicate that the group in question has a relatively high intensity of TikTok usage, ranging from 3 to 7 hours per day. This high level of usage is linked to the disruption of their daily routines and activities, indicating potential for distraction and disruption in the management of daily activities.

This finding aligns with the statement from Informant C, who explained: "I can control my TikTok usage wisely, so the app doesn't interfere with my daily activities because I limit my usage to about 20 minutes a day." The informant explained that she manages her TikTok usage wisely by limiting her access to about 20 minutes per day, so that the app does not interfere with her daily routine.

High intensity of TikTok usage can lead to social disruption in the form of psychological dependence. As stated by informant BB: "I'm definitely driven to open TikTok, it's just a form of entertainment to relieve boredom."

This sentiment is echoed by Informant I, who stated in the interview: "Every day, I feel the urge to open TikTok, even if it's just for a moment."

This survey highlights how the high intensity of TikTok usage triggers signs of psychological dependence among some users. This is evident from the internal urge to keep opening the app, as well as the constant flow of entertainment and social interaction from various sources. Furthermore, there is a tendency to access TikTok daily, even if only for brief periods, indicating a pattern of mild compulsive use.

Beyond psychological dependence, the tendency to seek distraction and the disruption of social interaction also constitute a form of disruption associated with TikTok syndrome. This is confirmed by the respondents, who noted that the habit of scrolling, which was previously done gradually, has begun to follow the trends currently popular on TikTok. This statement is reinforced by SN, who noted that "Currently, there are various slang terms used by active TikTok users, such as *anjir*, *cuaks*, *ngab*, etc. The use of these slang terms causes social interaction to become fragmented, as conversations often get sidetracked by the slang terms used by the slang users themselves."

The most significant form of social disruption is the content on TikTok regarding privacy and self-exposure. Although some respondents argued that maintaining privacy is more important than pursuing engagement, NR's analysis suggests the opposite, stating: "In my view, the social disruption caused by these issues isn't just about the content itself, but also about the level of engagement and the behavior that's actually reflected in the content that's being shared. Social media users who create such content are not merely making cheap jokes in the name of TikTok content to boost engagement."

These findings reveal that the social disruption caused by the TikTok syndrome is not limited to online interactions, but also extends to real-world social interactions and behavior in public spaces. In order to gain engagement, some social media users are willing to perform actions such as posting simple jokes on social media without considering prevailing social norms and boundaries. This

highlights the shift in how social media users express themselves and interpret public spaces in the digital age.

The Relevance of Islamic Digital Ethics in Addressing the TikTok Syndrome in Islamic Education Settings

The research results indicate that a significant portion of the respondents have a limited understanding of digital ethics in Islam, such as: the prohibition of backbiting, modesty, privacy, and the importance of accountability. This was confirmed by an informant AW who explained: "I understand ethics in Islam, but only in the real world and not on social media."

There were also respondents who considered Islamic digital ethics to be a form of self-control when interacting in the digital world, as explained by Informant BB, who stated: "By understanding the concept of digital ethics, one can become more mindful in interacting on social media, including TikTok."

Understanding the concept of digital ethics within Islam makes respondents less likely to blindly trust viral content. Before sharing the information they encountered, they took the time to cross-check it first to verify the accuracy of the news they found. This aligns with the statement issued by Informant NR regarding: "By verifying the information (content) they encounter, they are effectively upholding the principles of *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar*. Therefore, by sharing valid content, it can serve as a form of social responsibility in countering harmful behavior."

One example of content that is frequently shared is content on TikTok. While a significant number of respondents view content on TikTok as generally helpful, the quality of the content varies and is not always consistent. In its report, BB explained: "The quality of content on TikTok varies widely, so a critical mindset is needed to avoid accepting information that is often extreme." This statement explains that content on TikTok varies in quality, so users need to be critical and selective so as not to blindly accept content that is biased, inaccurate, or with extreme tendencies.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Positive Role of Islamic Digital Ethics in Addressing TikTok Syndrome

Figure 1 illustrates that Islamic digital ethics functions as a protective and transformative framework in addressing TikTok syndrome among Muslim students. The flow of the diagram suggests that a sound understanding of Islamic digital ethics is the foundational element that shapes students' awareness in digital environments. Such understanding then fosters self-control in social media engagement, enabling students to regulate their online behavior more consciously and avoid excessive or impulsive platform use. This ethical awareness further strengthens their capacity to critically evaluate digital content, so that information encountered on TikTok is not accepted or disseminated uncritically. In turn, critical evaluation encourages responsible and ethical sharing practices, reflecting accountability, caution, and moral consideration in digital interaction. Ultimately, the figure demonstrates that the relevance of Islamic digital ethics lies not merely in its normative value, but in its practical role in reducing the harmful effects of TikTok syndrome by guiding Muslim students toward more disciplined, reflective, and ethically grounded digital behavior.

Implications for the Objectives of Islamic education

The research results indicate that the phenomenon of TikTok syndrome has significant implications for the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum, particularly in terms of learning, teaching, character building, and curriculum development

Regarding the aspect of content consistency, some respondents noted that the use of TikTok can disrupt learning processes, particularly in the context of writing assignments and homework. Informant feedback from BB stated: "The use of TikTok has a significant impact on the consistency of religious practices, particularly in managing prayer times."

However, some respondents stated: "These activities do not have a significant impact on our religious practices."

Regarding learning preferences, some respondents noted that Islamic education material is better understood through short videos on TikTok because the content is concise and focuses on the core of the subject matter. However, others still consider it more effective to learn the material through lecturers' explanations and more comprehensive academic references. Informant AG stated: "Each method has its own advantages, so the level of Islamic education material mastery largely depends on the type of content and the learning context itself."

Furthermore, regarding the aspect of character development through learning, the research findings indicate mixed results. DK explained: "TikTok has become a platform for character development, depending on the type of content being consumed. If the content accessed aligns with Islamic education values, it can contribute to character development. Conversely, if it contradicts those values, it has the potential to negatively impact character development."

In addition to the formal aspects of the Islamic education curriculum, informal learning provides diverse opportunities for exploration. Informant FA discussed the issue: "We believe that the Islamic education curriculum should be able to instill and contextualize moral values based on the Quran in the context of

human development.” Informant I explained the issue: “I aim to improve the quality of higher education curriculum to make them more adaptive to the digital era.” Meanwhile, Informant BB stated: “I hope that Islamic education curriculum in higher education institutions will integrate digital literacy based on Islamic values, so that students are not only equipped academically but also spiritually and ethically in navigating digital disruption.”

Table 2. Positive-negative implication matrix

Aspect	Positive Implications	Negative Implications
Learning Process	Short videos may simplify understanding of core Islamic education material	May disrupt focus, homework completion, and study consistency
Religious Practice	Can provide access to religious content	May interfere with prayer time management and consistency of worship
Character Development Curriculum Development	Supports character building if content aligns with Islamic values Encourages curriculum innovation and digital adaptation	May weaken character if content contradicts Islamic values Reveals that existing curriculum may be insufficiently responsive to digital disruption

The table demonstrates that the implications of TikTok syndrome for the objectives of Islamic education are inherently ambivalent, as the platform simultaneously presents pedagogical opportunities and ethical challenges. On the one hand, TikTok may support the learning process by simplifying complex Islamic education material into short and accessible formats, expanding access to religious content, encouraging value-based character formation, and prompting curriculum innovation in response to digital transformation. On the other hand, these potential benefits are accompanied by substantial risks, including reduced learning focus, disruption of homework completion and study consistency, interference with the management of prayer time and worship discipline, and the possibility of weakening moral character when students are exposed to content that contradicts Islamic values. In curricular terms, the findings suggest that the rise of TikTok does not merely introduce a new learning medium, but also exposes the limitations of existing Islamic education approaches that may not yet be sufficiently responsive to digital culture. Overall, the table indicates that TikTok syndrome should not be understood in purely negative or positive terms, but rather as a complex educational phenomenon that requires Islamic education to adopt a more contextual, adaptive, and ethically grounded response.

Overall, this study indicates that TikTok syndrome has complex implications for Islamic studies, necessitating a more contextual, adaptive, and values-based to guide students in navigating the digital era critically and ethically.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that TikTok syndrome among Muslim students should be understood as a gradual form of socio-digital disruption rather than an abrupt or uniformly extreme phenomenon. This result is consistent with Aslan (2020) and Martínez-Álvarez et al. (2025), who found a significant

relationship between intensive TikTok use and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), a condition closely associated with weakened self-control and the risk of digital addiction. The present study likewise shows that prolonged exposure to TikTok may interfere with daily routines, concentration, and the regulation of time (Akgun & Mirzajee, 2024; Goyal, 2025; Qodriyah et al., 2025). At the same time, this study also reveals an important nuance that is less emphasized in the existing literature, namely that disruption is not experienced equally by all users. Some respondents were still able to manage their consumption consciously and prevent the platform from interfering with their responsibilities. This suggests that the disruptive effects of TikTok are mediated by the user's level of self-regulation. In theoretical terms, this finding contributes to the literature by showing that TikTok syndrome is not merely a matter of screen time, but a socially embedded process shaped by moral discipline, behavioral control, and digital habit formation.

The findings also support prior scholarship indicating that digital media reshape communication patterns and social relations. Gebremariam et al. (2024) and Lyons & Tagg (2024) argued that the internet has transformed how society understands communication and relationship-building beyond physical boundaries, and the present study extends this argument by demonstrating that digital culture is increasingly internalized into offline interaction. The emergence of distraction in face-to-face encounters, the adoption of TikTok-related slang, and the tendency toward self-exposure indicate that platform logic has begun to influence not only online behavior but also everyday interpersonal conduct. However, this study differs from a purely technological reading of the issue because it highlights a deeper normative shift, namely the movement from substance toward visibility and popularity. The tendency to sacrifice privacy or personal boundaries for engagement suggests that students are not only adapting to a digital environment, but also renegotiating the values through which social worth is recognized. Theoretically, this implies that social disruption in the TikTok era should be conceptualized as a transformation of value orientation as much as a change in communication practice (Chan et al., 2025; Odei-Appiah & Adu-Mensah, 2025; Rozi, Nuraini, et al., 2025).

With regard to Islamic digital ethics, the findings are largely in line with Maspul & Prawiraharjo (2025), who emphasized the relevance of *adab al-raqmiyyah*, including *tabayyun*, decency in interaction, caution toward gossip and rumors, and the protection of personal information in digital spaces. This study shows that respondents generally recognized these ethical principles, particularly in relation to modesty, verification, and moral accountability. Nevertheless, an important discrepancy emerged between ethical knowledge and ethical enactment. Many respondents understood Islamic ethics primarily as principles for offline life and had not yet fully translated them into their social media practices. This finding reinforces the Qur'anic imperative that knowledge must be internalized and practiced, as reflected in QS. Al-Taubah verse 122, while also supporting Adam & Bolatito (2025) and Ahmad et al. (2025), who argued that Muslim adolescents with stronger digital ethical foundations are more capable of controlling impulsive reactions and becoming selective content users. In addition,

the respondents' commitment to verifying information before sharing it reflects the continued relevance of QS. Al-Hujurat verse 6 in contemporary digital contexts. Thus, the study contributes theoretically by positioning Islamic digital ethics not merely as a normative code, but as a mechanism of self-regulation, critical literacy, and constructive moral agency in the platform age.

The study further demonstrates that TikTok should not be viewed in purely negative terms, since its implications for Islamic education are inherently ambivalent. TikTok can function as a medium for the dissemination of Islamic teachings, and the present study confirms that short-form video content may facilitate access to concise and engaging religious material (Aldi, 2024; Jaza & Makrufi, 2025; Rozi, Udhiyah, et al., 2025). However, this positive potential is conditioned by the quality of content and the user's critical literacy. In agreement with Baedowi et al. (2025), the findings indicate that without selectivity and interpretive caution, students may become vulnerable to distorted, superficial, or extreme understandings of religion. The same ambivalence appears in relation to character formation, since TikTok may either support or undermine moral development depending on whether the consumed content is aligned with Islamic values. Practically, this means that Islamic education educators cannot simply reject TikTok as a harmful medium, nor can they adopt it uncritically as an innovative tool. Rather, they must guide students in evaluating content quality, interpreting religious messages responsibly, and using digital media in ways that reinforce rather than weaken ethical formation.

Overall, the findings imply that Islamic education must move beyond a normative-doctrinal orientation and develop into a more transformative and contextual educational framework, as also suggested by (Sari, 2025). The practical implication is clear: Islamic education in higher education should integrate Islamic digital ethics into curriculum content, classroom pedagogy, and informal learning practices. This includes strengthening students' capacity for *tabayyun*, digital self-control, privacy awareness, time discipline, and critical engagement with religious and non-religious content on social media. At the same time, lecturers should develop adaptive strategies that combine the pedagogical attractiveness of short digital formats with the depth of academic explanation and ethical reflection. In theoretical terms, this study contributes to the development of Islamic education scholarship by linking digital disruption, moral self-regulation, and curriculum transformation within a single analytical framework. Therefore, TikTok syndrome should be understood not only as a challenge to student behavior, but also as an opportunity to reposition Islamic education as a living moral system that equips students to navigate the digital era with critical awareness, spiritual integrity, and social responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that TikTok syndrome is not just about excessive social media use, but a multidimensional socio-digital phenomenon that shapes Muslim students' behavior in temporal, psychological, interactional, and moral aspects, especially when it intersects with issues of adab, self-control, privacy, and moral

responsibility in both online and offline life. The findings also highlight that Islamic digital ethics remains highly relevant as a practical framework for encouraging self-regulation, critical content evaluation, and responsible digital behavior, while the role of TikTok in Islamic education is inherently ambivalent, offering both pedagogical opportunities and ethical risks. A key contribution of this study is its integration of three often separate domains TikTok syndrome, Islamic digital ethics, and the objectives of Islamic education thereby providing a more contextual, adaptive, and transformative understanding of moral education in the digital era. However, this study is limited by its interview-based approach within a specific context of Muslim students, meaning the results cannot yet be generalized to broader populations or different settings, and it does not systematically measure long-term effects on religious practice, character formation, or academic performance. Therefore, future research should involve more diverse participants, institutional contexts, and methodologies, including mixed-method and longitudinal designs, as well as explore how Islamic digital ethics can be applied in curriculum models, classroom interventions, and digital literacy programs that are empirically tested for their effectiveness.

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