

Religious Expression in the Digital Age: Shalawat Practices among Generation Z Indonesians

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ABSTRACT

A new religious trend on TikTok social media expressed by urban Muslim millennials in the form of *shalawat* is taking place in the current information age. This article is aimed at investigating the religious expression of urban Muslim millennials through *shalawat* impressions often featured on their homepage. This research is a descriptive qualitative study that employed a virtual ethnography approach. The research data were collected by selecting *shalawat* contents played by urban Muslim youth on TikTok. We selected 3 *shalawat* contents that are considered viral and often circulate on TikTok. In this study, the sources included religious virtual entities and communities enriched by a number of literatures as references such as books, journals, and research reports. The results of this study show that TikTok as a space for expressing the religiosity of urban Muslim millennials plays an important part in increasing social religious activities, fostering religious spirit and self-existence by openly displaying religious symbols, products, and identities. The religious expression of urban Muslim millennials also campaigns for Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* (a mercy to all creation) on TikTok in the form of *shalawat* content mediated by the internet. The activism of young urban Muslims massively carries out religious rituals that naturally takes shape in the form of virtual *taklim* (Islamic study group) assemblies that bring out passion in religion.

Keywords: *Shalawat, TikTok Social Media, Urban Muslim Millennials*

Introduction

The interaction between religion and media takes place massively in the current era of information technology development, its presence is even able to unite various groups of people from children, youths, adults to the elderly (Syarifuddin & Fauziah, 2021). The phenomenon of digitalization of religious practices is formed naturally as technological developments and the growth of information are increasingly dynamic, encouraging entities or

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communities to carry out simulative religious rituals. Digital media-based human activities have become an important part of everyday life, whether it is an effort to access information, a means of reference for knowledge, or an instrument for obtaining religious contents (Rofidah & Muhid, 2022). *Shalawat* content is no exception. *Shalawat* is a form of praise and respect for the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which is often conveyed in the form of prayer or dhikr. When *shalawat* comes from Allah SWT, the meaning is mercy and pleasure to the Prophet. If the *shalawat* is carried out by the angels, it implies a request for forgiveness for the Prophet. Meanwhile, if it is performed by the followers of the Prophet Muhammad, *shalawat* serves as a form of flattery and hope that the grace and pleasure of Allah will always accompany the Prophet Muhammad and his people (Wargadinata, 2010)

The rise of *shalawat* content appearing on various digital platforms has attracted the attention of Muslim youths leading to their being immersed in religious rituals facilitated by the internet network (Imam, 2019). The religious activities of young people today are slowly shifting toward religious rituals in virtual spaces as long as they are connected online, allowing them to connect between users. Yasraf Amir Piliang said that digital media offers a new pattern in facilitating users to carry out religious rituals so that they are practical (Piliang, 2011). The new direction of the young generation's appetite for consumption and activities in artificial space in expressing religion through the chanting of *shalawat* has become a new magnet, even creating a soothing religious climate and giving rise to new phenomena of religious activities in the cyber world (Fauziah & Santoso, 2021). Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association in 2024 shows that 221 million Indonesians are connected to the internet network (APJII, 2024). The penetration of generation Z's activities in the digital world tends to increase along with technological advances through a number of newly offered features that are increasingly diverse and complete. The development of information technology is positively welcomed by the younger generation making them capable of adapting quickly and even transforming dynamically (Triantoro, 2020b)

This phenomenon underlies digital media as an instrument to promote *shalawat* content as a religious musical art displaying a polite Islamic identity. *Shalawat* and digital media among young people play a key role in the arena of Islamic da'wah in cyberspace and even its development in the future is allegedly progressing (Arini & Mardhiya, 2020). Introducing the musical art of chanting *shalawat* into crisp and joyful reading is a shared responsibility and is disseminated through a number of digital media platforms. This also does not undermine the sacredness of religion, in fact, the religious expression of *shalawat* in virtual space actually heightens the Islamic behavior of the younger generation. Although, ideally, chanting *shalawat* is done anywhere be it at home, in the mosque, or in the field (Amiliya, 2022).

The religious expression of the younger Muslim generation has now shifted and even its development is very dynamic as technology provides new features and the growth rate is increasing rapidly so that human activities are connected through the internet network. Young people see cyber media as an instrument to express their religiousness by reading *shalawat* to help boost spirituality. The sophistication of digital technology, as an arena for Islamic preaching activities, is able to build a soothing religious climate in the midst of the moral crisis experienced by the younger generation. This religious phenomenon is relevant to Prof Baharun's argument as written by Suci Wahyu Fajriani, one of the reasons young people perform *hijrah* is that there is a vacant soul and inner insecurity they feel resulting in their seeking for religious activities (Fajriani & Sugandi, 2019). As posited by HM Amin Syukur, the development of information technology encourages community participation in using technology massively along with the rapid advancement of technology. In turn, humans are placed as technological objects that are forged continuously as digital technology offers a variety of new platforms (Syukur, 2012). The religious climate with the nuances of *shalawat* is rampant among urban Muslim millennials, even *shalawat* as a medium for building religious social harmony continuously without space

and time barriers facilitated by internet connections. The young generation's dependence on technology reflects the culture, practices, and religious rituals that take place in cyberspace as long as they are connected online (Baidawi, 2023). The religious expression of young people adds to the religious spirit and adorns the face of cyber media through the production, distribution, and consumption of *shalawat* content taking place massively amidst the invasion of positive and negative mixed information. Martin van Bruinessen's research involving 935 participants, with a dominant younger generation population conducted in 18 cities, found symptoms of increased expression and enthusiasm of Muslims in social religious activities. This finding results in the hobby of the younger generation tending to polish identity, improve appearance, communication models, and the culture of consumerism of religious symbols that occur (Bruinessen, 2013).

Religious expression among young people has been the topic of many studies, as is a study by Syamsul Rijal mentioning one of the current religious phenomena attracting the attention of young people is *majelis taklim* (Islamic study group). The interest of the younger generation in the *taklim* assembly through the recitation of *shalawat* was found to not only be an effort to learn about religion and improve spirituality, but express religiousness through the *majelis taklim* forum with the chanting of *shalawat* being a new phenomenon after the new order. The role of *habibs* in *majelis taklim* is most influential on the participation of today's youth groups in religious activities (Rijal, 2018). Research by Hofizal Wadi and Roy Bagaskara also explains that religious social movements through *majelis taklim* are able to increase the participation of today's youth through reading *shalawat* or learning about religion. The emergence of religious communities as a religious trend among millennials is echoed in response to the restlessness of young people. This new religious phenomenon accommodates the younger generation in religious activities so that it has a positive impact on *akhlaq* (moral) and spiritual values. The emergence of religious communities as a form of youth religious expression is the new face of religious movements in the current era of information globalization (Wadi & Bagaskara, 2022).

The emergence of various *shalawat* content produced by urban Muslim millennials has given rise to a virtual religious community that takes place communicatively and interactively. The speed of religious information in a matter of seconds indicates the dynamic life of social religious activities that can go beyond geographical boundaries. The advantage of using cyber media as an instrument to produce and consume religious content allows for two-way communication, exchange of information, and sharing content quickly without considering national borders (Jauhari, 2021). The young generation of media-savvy Muslims dominates in the landscape of religious social activities taking place in the virtual public space as part of today's advances in information technology that is useful in fostering the spirit of religion and a means of increasing spirituality. The presence of *shalawat* content raises new religious trends among urban Muslim millennials in religion in the digital space making learning Islam flexible and easy. Nevertheless, young people are confronted with the ideas and ideologies carried by certain groups that have the potential to divide (Hizbullah, 2023).

Piliang continued, virtual space slowly creates intense alienation that tends to increase along with rapid technological advances and it even facilitates to focus the attention of the audience rather than creating direct experience in the real world (Piliang, 2011). Even though the virtual world is a simulation made by humans, positive and negative information has been mixed up. The thesis proposed by Jeff Zaleski, an expert on cyberspace and spirituality, explains that cyberspace is an arena of free access through the production and consumption of content that is carried out simultaneously as long as it is connected online (Zaleski, 1999). Zaleski provides a middle ground where technology is accepted as a necessity that has an impact on human activities connected in parallel so that media wisdom becomes a strategy in using digital media (Zaleski, 1999). Research by Slavomir Galik, Sabina Galikova Tolnaiova states that cyberspace creates a new dimension to human existence, where various activities, including aspects of religion and spirituality, have undergone significant shifts. On the one hand, traditional religions utilize cyberspace to

spread their teachings and perform rituals digitally. Meanwhile, concurrently, new forms of non-traditional spirituality are emerging through mediums such as video games and other digital platforms.

The question that arises is to what extent is traditional spirituality able to adapt to this new digital medium, especially in maintaining the depth of spirituality that is more clearly manifested in the form of mysticism. Non-traditional spirituality in cyberspace often ignores the importance of the physical body as an integral element in human spiritual experience. True spirituality, according to this view, requires a deeper connection with physical existence that cannot be fully replicated in cyberspace or digital media. This thinking leads to further reflection on how traditional religion and spirituality should adapt to technological developments without losing the core essence of its teachings (Galik & Galikova, 2023). The phenomenon of digitization of religious practices above poses a serious challenge to hegemonic religious disruption and encourages people to carry out simulated religious rituals facilitated by the internet network. However, at the same time, religious virtual entities or communities progressively increase social religious activities (online), exchange religious symbols, and foster religious spirit. Therefore, Muslim teenagers are at the forefront of campaigning for Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* through *shalawat* content in virtual spaces so that Islam plays a role in facing technological challenges (Hidayatullah & Dharmawan, 2003). This article seeks to investigate the phenomenon of religious expression among young people in enhancing spirituality through the production and consumption of *shalawat* content on TikTok social media. The massive use of TikTok among urban youth is well known, and in this case it is manifested through the consumption of *shalawat* content. Seeing the religious phenomenon unfolding in this virtual world, the involvement of young people in religious activities, in learning about religious knowledge or instruments to enhance spirituality, raises religious spirit. Hjarvard's thesis on this phenomenon is referred to as virtual Islam, namely studying Islam in cyberspace through the packaging of religious music art in the form of chanting *shalawat*.

Methods

This research is a qualitative study that employed a virtual ethnography approach to observe the activities of urban Muslim millennials consuming *shalawat* content as an effort to exist and increase social religious activities facilitated by internet connections (Nasrullah, 2017b). The research data were collected by selecting *shalawat* contents played by urban Muslim millennials in virtual space. This is manifested in active user accounts producing or re-sharing *shalawat* content on TikTok. We selected 3 *shalawat* contents among urban Muslim millennials based on video uploads from June to December 2023 with a duration of 30 seconds to one minute. The virtual ethnography method is defined as an attempt to capture both visible and invisible reality mediated by digital media networks among social groups in cyberspace. The role of the researcher in this study is to actively participate in perceiving the religious phenomenon of urban Muslim millennials in TikTok media as an expression of religion (Hine, 2000). Urban Muslim millennials who actively use social media revealed religious social activities that formed naturally in artificially mediated space through the internet. Entities or virtual communities simultaneously create Islamic cyber culture and religious activities that generate parallel interactions between users on TikTok. *Shalawat* functions as a magnet channeling their religious expression, thus displaying products, symbols, and identities that blend with the reality of cyberspace. Virtual ethnography studies understand what the phenomenon of urban Muslim millennials presenting *shalawat* as a medium of religious expression looks like (Nasrullah, 2017). Meanwhile, the selection criteria for *shalawat* contents are based on the 'For Your Page' (fyp), which is a page where relevant and even viral contents and videos on TikTok are displayed, by considering the time of viewing, the ratio of likes, views, and comments.

Generation Z amidst the Digitalization of Religious Practices

Generation Z is synonymous with quick adaptation to change, especially advances in information technology today have changed young people's behavior, particularly in expressing their religion (Abdurrahman, 2020). The rapid development of digital technology has increasingly raised complex challenges among young people, wherein technological advances are accepted as a necessity for increasingly dynamic changes. The consequence of social media presence is the merging of the real and virtual worlds and the amalgamation of various positive and negative information (Moefad et al., 2021). The use of TikTok social media among urban youth tends to be complex, in terms of efforts to access information, scientific references or religious content in a cheap and practical way. This condition places generation Z at the forefront in the progress of the times in producing information or campaigning for moderate Islam through Islamic content (Helmy et al., 2021).

Today, the development of information technology also encourages young people to access *shalawat* contents as a means of expression and self-existence in virtual spaces as long as they are connected online. The rise of virtual *majelis taklim* activities has given way to a new phenomenon of the face of Indonesian Islam in the digital space as an effort to respond to technological advances (Wasisto, 2015). The social religious movement, initiated by a number of Habib through *majelis taklim* and the production of *shalawat* contents, is able to attract the attention of the younger generation to appreciate social religious activities so that it slowly builds a soothing polite religious climate. The new direction of young people's religious expression through the consumption of *shalawat* information is a sign that virtual space is increasingly thriving. Young people must play a role in seizing the digital stage from the invasion of increasingly wild religious information, hate speech, and radicalism content (Abdurrahman, 2020). Young people's social religious activities in virtual spaces play an important part in reviving Islam in cyberspace through religious production, values, symbols, and rituals in curtailing the continuous onslaught of pop-up information (Nawawi, 2019). The TikTok social media platform, for example, has become a space to express their religiousness by means of reciting *shalawat*, resharing content, which subsequently has a positive impact on the spiritual value of the younger generation. The participation of young people in reciting *shalawat* in digital space facilitated by internet connection as an instrument to obtain practical religious information and take advantage of this momentum as a place to build social communication, socialize with fellow users, and gain new experiences (Triantoro, 2020)

As we all know, religious problems occur, including spiritual aridity, the phenomenon of virtual Islam and religious disruption has led to the increasingly massive involvement of urban Muslim millennials in religious activities. The encouragement that today's young generation receive in expressing their religion is supported by the role of Ulama or Habib in accommodating the activities of *majelis taklim*, an interesting phenomenon in the era of information technology (Toni et al., 2021). Religious expression is now shifting toward (online) *taklim* assemblies facilitated by the internet where anyone can have access to it. By uploading *shalawat* videos on TikTok, various responses from fellow users emerge. Moreover, packaging *shalawat* using Islamic music attracts the attention of urban Muslim millennials to become immersed in social religious activities. The representation of urban youth in *shalawat* activities fosters religious spirit, increases spirituality, as a means of shifting toward Islamic behavior, and it creates new religious trends in cyberspace facilitated by internet connections as long as they are connected online (Zuhri, 2021).

Active participation of urban Muslim millennials is fully equipped with accessories such as flags, turbans, skullcaps, long dress (*gamisan*), sarong (*sarungan*). While women wear hijab and Islamic attires covering the *aurat*. This condition symbolizes religion in the living virtual public space represented by urban youth (Ramadhani & Kurniawan, 2023). The representation of young people in the production and consumption of *shalawat* content enlivens the *syiar* (propagation) of Islam in virtual space and creates interactive communication. Young people as the future

generation hold a critical role in promoting Islamic narratives in cyber media, one of which is through the chanting of *shalawat* (Sandriansyah, 2020). Young people's involvement in religious activities slowly shapes identity, self-discovery, and *hijrah* efforts. This is in line with Islam requiring its followers to perform good deeds and forbid evil doings. TikTok offers numerous sophisticated new features by facilitating users to like, comment, share on other social media, and upload videos. Users are able to produce, distribute, and consume content simultaneously, which is an opportunity to promote *shalawat* instantly (Nasrullah, 2017). The use of TikTok in social religious activities among young people allows them to leave comments, like, share, and interact online so long as they are connected online. Various expressions of urban millennials are shown in religious activities including the use of accessories, chanting *shalawat*, waving flags, dancing, and even crying in a virtual *majlis taklim* environment. The production of *shalawat* contents on cyber media serves as a channel for sharing information with fellow users so that the Islamic insights are massively disseminated via digital platforms and even go beyond the boundaries of space and time (Syarifuddin & Fauziah, 2021).

One of the strengths of TikTok is the 'for your page' feature, where viral and often watched videos gradually appear on the user's timeline. The dominance of young people in social religious activities in virtual spaces plays a key role in advancing Islamic da'wah (Hashmi et al., 2021). Religious activities in cyberspace are what Gary R Bunt calls the Islamic cyber environment (Setia, 2022). Accordingly, the phenomenon of *shalawat* contents is often found on TikTok featuring urban Muslim millennials wearing *peci*, tasbih, Muslim clothing, *surban*, flags, and even dancing. Muslim women wearing hijab, presenting Muslim attires, even carrying flags in the middle of *majlis taklim*. Jalaluddin Rakhmat's idea of Islam is actually the application of Islamic values in the modernization era, and that it should, at least, be based on solving the problems of contemporary society (Rakhmat, 1989).

Research by Naufal Waliyuddin states that the expression of diversity among the younger Muslim generation tends to be conservative. The rise in religious social activities among the younger generation as a religious expression indicates the establishment of religious zeal toward religious products and symbols such as Muslim clothing, turban, cap, hijab, prayer rug, and prayer beads. The advancement of digital technology has actually led to the adoption of narcissistic behavior by urban Muslim millennials, resulting in their tendency in displaying individual or collective religious narcissism. Religious virtual communities play an important role in mainstreaming Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* to encourage urban Muslim millennials who actively use digital technology as a space to express their religiosity (Waliyuddin, 2019). The massive expression of religiousness shown by urban Muslim millennials in virtual spaces has led to an Islamist narcissistic behavior adorning the pages of TikTok. Media digitization is able to pierce the boundaries of space and time and even develop massively, which has contributed to the birth of new religious trends in virtual space. The growth of religious expressions in digital space represents modernization, globalization and Islamization that are automatically formed along with the rapid sophistication of technology coupled by increased internet usage among young people (Febriana & Fauzi, 2023).

Representations of urban Muslim millennials appearing on TikTok add color to social religious activities. Accepted or not, the virtual public space is transformed into an arena for contestation of contemporary religious symbols, products, and attributes through a number of inherent identities. Young Muslims actively engage in and frequently appear on TikTok social media timelines since they consider it a space to express themselves and affirm themselves as someone cool and trendy yet Islamic (Petersen, 2022). Presenting Islam in TikTok media by means of *shalawat* chanting is an important part of the contemporary Islamic da'wah scene, and it has positive implications for the younger generation who are active in cyberspace (Hew, 2018). This exhibits the life of cyberspace through the production and consumption of Islamic contents as technological progress and seizing the digital stage from the invasion of hoax information and

hate speech (Arini & Mardhiya, 2020). The collapse of geographical boundaries and the reduction of distance are able to create a more intimate space for interactions via digital platform channels, which even strengthens the social bonds of urban Muslim millennials. TikTok as a space for bringing together various social religious interests is engaged by various religious actors. This condition is akin to a religious commodity that attracts the attention of young people in social religious activities (Sururi, 2019).

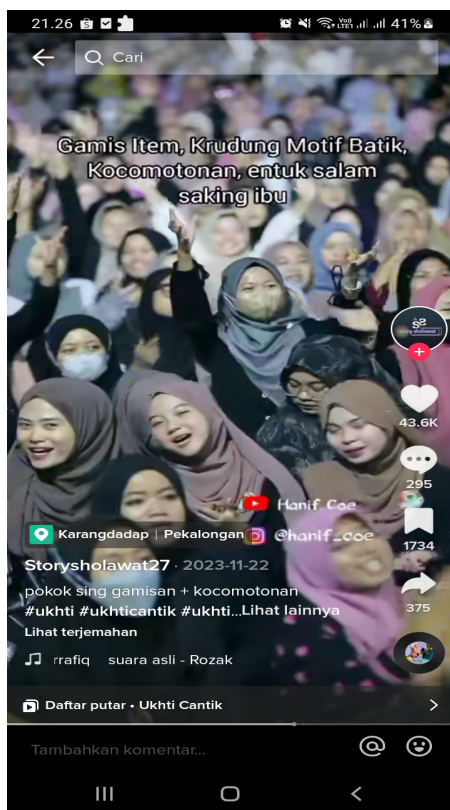


Figure 1:

Religious rituals performed by chanting *Shalawat* among urban Muslim millennials on TikTok

<https://vt.tiktok.com/ZS2PSuNrQ/>

***Shalawat* as a Religious Expression of Urban Muslim Millennials**

The recitation of *shalawat* is ideally done anywhere in the real world or the virtual, either in physical public places or virtual public spaces mediated by the internet network. As information technology develops and permeates throughout various dimensions of people's lives, chanting *shalawat* on TikTok by urban Muslim millennials has become a new habit (Hasanah & Aisa, 2021). Today's young Muslim generation quickly adapts to TikTok media, including the production and consumption of *shalawat* contents alternately adorning the pages of social media. The creativity of young people in producing Islamic contents has led to consumption being viewed as a tool to establish a soothing communication climate (Fajriani & Sugandi, 2019). Content, which is considered power that has a positive impact and provides benefits in virtual space, is freely produced. Contestation of religious symbols and products is found on a number of digital platforms, which are mainly engaged by Muslim teenagers.

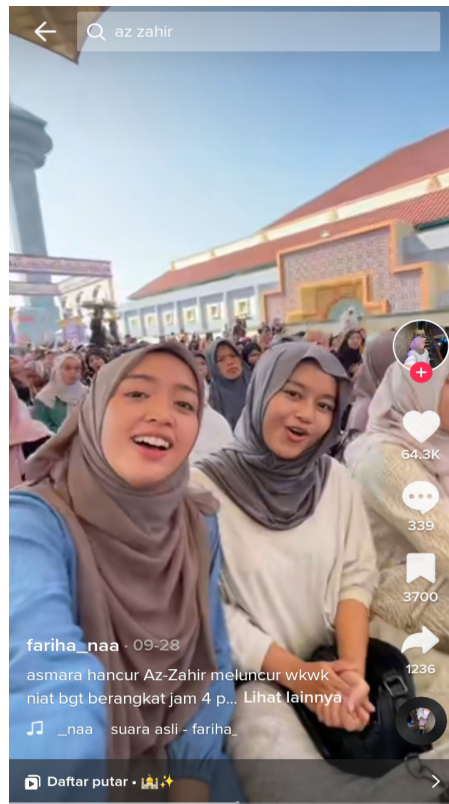


Figure 2:

Religious expressions of urban Muslim millennials on the TikTok platform

<http://vt.tiktok.com/ZSN4KjRNt/>

The dissatisfaction of Muslim millennials living in urban areas in expressing themselves in public spaces may be the basis for expressing their religion on TikTok. This is also an effort to nurture one's religious spirit and prevent spiritual aridity in order to bring inner peace and bring about positive implications for strengthening one's relationship with the creator (Ismail & Hotman, 2013). Social religious activities are increasingly widespread in the form of virtual *majelis taklim* and *shalawat* dominated by hundreds of young people being wholly immersed in the chanting of *shalawat*. *Shalawat* is able to unite various layers of culture, ethnicity, social status in one soul-reassuring assembly. As rapid variety of information jostles on social media, *shalawat* contents play a key part in adorning the visage of digital media (Anggrisia, 2020). The existence of *taklim* and *shalawat* assemblies such as Majelis Az Zahir, Majelis Syubbanul Muslimin, and Majelis Ahbaabul Mustofa, which have added color to the da'wah scene in the contemporary era indicates the abundance of social religious activities. Some offline *taklim* assemblies are gradually migrating toward virtual *taklim* assemblies facilitated by the internet network. The echo of *shalawat*, in both physical public spaces and the cyber world, represents Islamic da'wah in society as a new approach after the new order (Anas et al., 2023). *Shalawat* has become a magnet in uniting urban Muslim millennials as a *syiar* of Islam through massive production and consumption appearing on various digital platforms. The contestation of Islamic identity symbols in cyber public space is a struggle for influence and it dominates posts showcased on various digital platforms. The advantage of expressing religiosity in virtual space is that it transcends geographical boundaries, lowers social barriers, and the contents can be shared at speed via the internet network (Petersen, 2022).

The growth of *shalawat* contents appearing on various digital platforms is marked by the strengthening of social religious activities initiated by Habib, who has changed the da'wah

in TikTok and becomes virtual religious rituals. The tendency to read prayers, chant *shalawat*, and dhikr in virtual spaces is an attraction among urban Muslim millennials. This suggests that the passion for religion in virtual public sphere is increasingly thriving, and it seems that *shalawat* has become a spectacular religious commodity among young people. Prolonged *shalawat* content is often found on TikTok media timeline, and it is able to make user accounts go viral instantly by uploading such contents (Hutchinson, 2021). The 'for your page' feature presents a video page showcasing results from TikTok's algorithm based on the user's watching interests and preferences. This means that contents enjoyed and often watched by the audience are easier to circulate on the TikTok homepage. The fyp feature facilitates users to find content and potentially go viral. Urban Muslim millennials are very familiar with the use of technology, making *shalawat* contents appear every time through various religious symbols displayed. The interaction between TikTok and *shalawat* creates a symbiotic mutualism where the media (TikTok) serves as a means of disseminating Islamic contents and *shalawat* functions as a religious ritual allowing new trends to unfold among young people (Ibrahim, 2024).

Religious Expression Based on Islamic Ethics and Communication is Required on TikTok

The massive use of technology among urban Muslim millennials requires communication ethics based on Islamic communication principles that take place interactively through internet network connections (Afriani & Azmi, 2020). Socio-religious activities are disseminated very dynamically every time, this has led to Islamic behavior as a result of today's technological revolution. The challenges that young people face in using TikTok among others are the need for digital literacy and a calming, polite communication model (Arnus, 2018). TikTok as an arena for disseminating information where diverse religious actors from various dimensions of culture, language, race, ethnicity gather, naturally leads to varying religious expressions. Communication models are an important point in producing religious contents so that it has a positive impact on and provides benefits for the people (Peters, 2013). It is undeniable that urban Muslim millennials use technology in their current activities as a lifestyle and online religious rituals. The young generation, standing at the forefront of creating a climate of polite communication, holds a vital role in encouraging and even participating in campaigning for affable Islam in virtual public spaces as an effort to reduce troubling content (Kholili, 2017). In this case, communication ethics are important in wise use of technology, considering how freely and easily an assortment of religious symbols and products are found. Language delivery, verbal and non-verbal messages are used as an effort to convey information in a targeted manner. TikTok as a space for religious expressions is not only seen as a medium for building a calm and peaceful religious climate but as a space for dialogue in achieving religious harmony (Ibrahim, 2023).

The concept of filtering before sharing is very important in disseminating *shalawat* content on social media so that it has a positive impact on online communities. Urban Muslim millennials are prudent in using digital media and shrewd in responding to various information that is constantly launched (Hanafi et al., 2021). Paying attention to communication ethics among urban Muslim millennials on social media gradually creates polite and harmonious religious social relations subsequently creating peace. Effective communication depends on the message delivery between the communicator and the communicant so that a positive atmosphere can be created. The advancement of information technology initiated by western culture little by little brings forth cultural values that affect the morals of young people, and this is why language politeness is key (Rubawati, 2018). Communication on TikTok can be done by using captions, which represent the features of a person's activities in cyber public space making the use of language highly selective. The tendency when engaging in communication activities in cyberspace is that sometimes the communicator has no knowledge about their audience or viewers (communicant). The identity of the viewers is often abstract and it is very likely to be infiltrated by negative content (Baihaki, 2020). People can create fake or false accounts that are manipulative and harm many people.

According to Islam, communication activities are not simply conveying messages but they should have the potential to change attitudes for the better. The dual use of TikTok requires users to be cautious when producing, distributing, consuming, and even sharing information through media channels. In turn, content production can have either a positive or negative impact, the presence of TikTok even has the opportunity to become an arena for hate speech by certain entities or communities, since anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of cyber media crime (Aini & Aulia, 2022).

Implanting social media ethics among urban Muslim millennials active on TikTok media as a place to exist and narcissistically share their activities and experiences is imperative (Latif et al., 2022). Communication ethics reflect the morals of the younger generation, making proficiency in the use of social media an important element, considering that freedom of expression encourages active participation of young people to express their religion on TikTok. This has led to a flood of religious information butting against one another where each one carries various religious symbols, products, and values, and some even confront the ideas and ideologies of conservative groups (Rustandi, 2020). It should be noted that the presence of cyber media has become a powerful weapon in campaigning for exclusive doctrines and ideologies through several digital media platforms including Instagram, YouTube or TikTok as long as they are connected online. The involvement of urban Muslim millennials in preaching Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* through *shalawat* contents on TikTok is a form of persuasive da'wah inviting all young people to move toward better behavior (Muna, 2020). This action reflects the commitment of young people in the da'wah movement, as Islam requires its followers to call upon doing good deeds and forbid evil doings. The proliferation of various *shalawat* displays expressed by urban Muslim millennials add color to the visage of digital media through the various religious identities, products, and symbols that are put on display. This phenomenon is in line with McLuhan's idea of the global village, the integration between humans and media united in a virtual community that creates comprehensive feedback and impact. Islamic sites that flourish on a number of TikTok media platforms represent Islamic identity in the cyber environment, causing continuous interaction (Yasya & Nurhaliza, 2021). The proliferation of information on TikTok has created an abundance of content over time in a matter of seconds resulting in users becoming more prudent in obtaining news. The advancement of information technology is accepted as a necessity and it is used as an opportunity to advocate Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* based on the principles of Islamic communication ethics (Ginting et al., 2021). Jalaluddin Rakhmat proposed his views on six forms of communication in the Qur'an. First is *qaulan sadidan*, which means the right words. The principle of communication ethics on social media should provide honest information so as to create a calm and peaceful atmosphere, particularly since not all social media users use their own name and photos. The Qur'an has clearly explained how communication ethics function as a guide for Muslims, especially those who are active in the digital space. As Allah says in Surah al-Ahzab verse 70:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

Meaning: O believers! Be mindful of Allah, and say what is right.

The content of the verse above affirms the online community to communicate politely on social media, even Allah reminds humans of the commitment to perform the commandments, to be devoted, and to stay away from all prohibitions. TikTok as a space that brings together diverse identities, understandings, and ideologies presented by individuals or virtual religious groups has been predicted to develop even more massively in the future (Sururi, 2019). Honest communication, manifested in both verbal and non-verbal messages, is important to note so as to create a peaceful and calming communication climate. Third is *qaulan baligha*, which means effective communication. The lack of clarity of messages exchanged between the communicator

and the communicant may lead to miscommunication, resulting in debates, especially in the virtual space. Jalaluddin Rakhmat specified the principle of *qaulan baligha* into two. Communicators adjust their conversations to the communicator's knowledge capacity and communicators carry out communication activities by delivering messages that make an impression on the communicant's memory (Rakhmat, 1989). The principle of *qaulan baligha* in communication activities on social media carried out by urban Muslim millennials plays a significant role in achieving effective communication by way of producing soothing contents (Ariani, 2017). One of the features of social media is that it is an internet-based simulation, enabling young people to dominate information production and help promote affable and encouraging Islam. TikTok is a space of contestation over meaning and influence, which is why religious symbols, identities, and products are massively disseminated (Hatta, 2018). Fourth is *qaulan ma'rufan*, which means good or appropriate speech. Communicating politely in virtual spaces is a guideline for urban Muslim millennials so that their messages bring benefits that enlighten others and are oriented toward solving problems. Good words produce benefits for the ummah, and social media as a field for disseminating Islamic insights is, therefore, an important element to focus on (Marwah, 2021).

Fifth is *qaulan karima*, which means noble words. Communicating politely and making an impression on the hearts of others is important, especially active users on social media when accessing information or knowledge references (Turnip & Siahaan, 2021). It is important to note that maintaining ethics and polite communication on social media is key, considering that cyber media is often a space for bringing together various interests, even if the user's identity is fake (Zaenuri, 2021). The current research observed that social religious activities undertaken by urban Muslim millennials in the form of *shalawat* contents have become a new religious trend on TikTok, and its development has even become a habit of Islamic narcissism. This phenomenon is expected to continue along with the rapid development of information technology that offers new features used by audiences.

Conclusion

Shalawat contents on TikTok performed by urban Muslim millennials have become a new religious trend that is continuously produced and consumed, TikTok even offers many new and usable features. The ease of accessing and creating interactive communication in religious virtual space has led to the adoption of Islamic behavior among young people today, making *shalawat* a magnet for attracting the attention of urban Muslim millennials. *Shalawat* activities conducted in *majelis taklim* are now moving to artificial spaces mediated by digital platform networks, and even more massive development is expected in the future. This religious phenomenon was automatically established and the use of social media has even been able to bring forth audiences with various statuses, social hierarchies, and virtual religious communities. TikTok as an arena for contestation and struggle for religious meaning serves as an effective space in campaigning for Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* based on religious art. In turn, *shalawat* creates an addiction among urban Muslim millennials in communicating with the creator, in expressing their religion, and as a means of enhancing their spirituality. Gradually, the digitalization of religious practices created by urban Muslim millennials further enhances their self-existence, promotes *shalawat*, and forms virtual religious communities in artificial environments. Young urban Muslims take advantage of the emergence of digitalization by producing *shalawat* contents to become religious rituals in the virtual arena. However, social religious activities in the virtual space give rise to narcissistic behavior and plain religious ceremonies. Religious trends that young urban Muslims on TikTok engage in are growing rapidly, consequently, virtual *majelis taklim* are naturally established, which also cultivate *shalawat* information.

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