

## **Al-Qur'an (Re)Presentation in the Short Video App Tiktok: Reading, Teaching, and Interpretive**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Several previous studies have proven the significant role of social media in the reading, teaching, and interpretation of al-Qur'an. Therefore, this study aims to determine the models, factors, and implications of teaching al-Qur'an using the TikTok application, a popular social media platform utilizing a logical structure to emphasize the importance of its contents. A qualitative approach was applied in this study to mediate this function by collecting 47 al-Qur'an-related contents from six influential accounts. The results showed that TikTok is a mediator in disseminating al-Qur'an-related content, especially in teaching al-Qur'an. It is indicated by illustrations of how to recite al-Qur'an properly by following the *tajweed*, displaying a variety of beautiful and contextually meaningful readings. Furthermore, the uploaded contents are driven by the need to teach and recite al-Qur'an, expand *da'wah*, and respond to encountered questions and events. Therefore, the teaching, recitation, and interpretation of al-Qur'an on TikTok have an impact on the shift of the authority of the traditional al-Qur'an teaching to the more dynamic social media.

In other words, this learning model forms a variation in how people learn al-Qur'an, from the conventional system to online through social media. These changes in the way and form of teaching on TikTok indicate that this application can be effectively used for *da'wah* and is an excellent way to spread the recitation of al-Qur'an without distorting the meaning and intention of its users.

**Keywords:** Mediation, new media, teaching al-Qur'an, TikTok

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## INTRODUCTION

Approximately 689 million TikTok users were recorded by the Global Web Index (2021) in 2020, which has increased significantly to date. According to Domingues et al. (2020), TikTok is a social media platform that creates and shares short, attractive, and funny videos ranging from 15 to 60 seconds. It is also a social media platform for disseminating the Quran's contents and teachings, making it more enjoyable (Azzam, 2021; Ibrahim, 2021; Salsabila, 2021; Setiadi, 2021). This application is a medium that functions as a window, mirror, and guide for young people in need of information on learning the Quran. In this context, it serves as mediation in the knowledge building of the community through social media (McQuail, 1987). The significant increase in users has a positive impact on its function as a medium in expanding the teaching and study of the Quran.

Presently, studies on the use of TikTok in constructing religious narratives are limited to the validity of the content and narrowing of meaning. Therefore, this application is considered a channel that needs to be watched out for due to possible negative impacts. The role of TikTok as a mediator in message delivery has been neglected in the following previous studies. The literature review on the studies of al-Qur'an in TikTok revealed three patterns. The first are studies on the Islamic views of this application and its use, which was considered a medium containing harmful elements, not by the values of the Qur'an (Malihah, 2019; Wand,

2020). According to Soedardi (2020), the Islamic attributes used by TikTok actors do not reflect Islamic values; therefore, it needs to be properly analyzed using the da'wa method. The second is studies that visualize this application as a medium of da'wa and an alternative in educational ways (Amelia, 2021; Hikmawati & Farida, 2021; Salsabila, 2020). The third is studies that explain the positive and negative impacts of TikTok, such as a medium of friendship (Dini, 2021) and displaying content that is not following Islamic values (Sa'ad et al., 2020). This study aims to assess TikTok as an application that negatively impacts the spread of religious narratives. The mediative function of TikTok towards disseminating the Quranic verse in various aspects is abandoned. According to Hjarvard (2014), studying al-Qur'an in social media leads to mediatization; therefore, social media logic forces religious narratives according to the readers' tendencies. This study places TikTok as a mediator that provides new media opportunities to convey the teaching recital of reading the al-Qur'an, display the beauty of recitation, and responding the current problem with the al-Qur'an.

This research is intended to complement the shortcomings of preliminary studies by analyzing Quran narration on TikTok as an intermediary medium capable of teaching, displaying the aesthetics of reading, and explaining the meaning of al-Quran. Therefore, this study led to three research questions; (1) How is al-Qur'an represented on TikTok? (2) what are the factors that promote its realization? (3)

what are the implications of (re) presenting it on TikTok? These questions are supported by evidence of a mediation function in disseminating the content and teaching of al-Qur'an through the TikTok application. Therefore, it is carried out as a form of explanation by account owners to spread al-Qur'an in various forms by building a narrative to deliver verses and disseminate the content and teachings of al-Qur'an on TikTok.

This study is based on the argument that the use of TikTok in disseminating content and teaching of al-Quran lies in placing its function as a medium capable of delivering user messages to the public. During this time, the role of TikTok and other social media platforms are placed as a tool capable of changing the social structure by maintaining the media logic in delivering messages till the meaning and intent of the message are vulnerable to distortion (Couldry, 2008). By putting this application in the mediation function, teaching the al-Quran as content plays a significant role in developing the study of the al-Quran in the new media sphere, independent of the social media logic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Underline Theory and Model between Mediation and Mediatization**

Increased use of social media has a significant impact on studies on its function in delivering messages. Hjarvard (2014) stated that the role of media is classified into two types, mediation and mediatization. The difference in this role is based on input and

output processes, where the input is related to media definition as an object of economic value useful for society. Meanwhile, the output process is associated with the impact produced in constructing the social order of media users. Following Couldry's (2008) research, the construction created by social media is very significant because social reality depends on media. Therefore, it is considered a means of bridging the delivery of messages and carrying out social construction.

Media are considered a means of conveying messages to society. Karunianingsih (2020) defines media as a transmission tool with a mediation function. The mediation function means the overall impact produced by the media (Ahmad, 2018). Silverstone (2002) states that mediation is a fundamental dialectical process involving communication media to circulate symbols in messages conveyed to the public. This dialectical process allows the media to capture various dynamics in production and understanding. However, the meaning in the mediation process is limited in the media sphere and closed to the possibility of conveying other symbols outside the message content (Couldry, 2008). Therefore, the role of media in the mediation context is limited to the message being transmitted without other tendencies that affect its understanding.

The media play a significant role in social, cultural, and political representation. It is because all kinds of interactions that occur in the life of modern society take place within this space. It is a tool

capable of influencing social, cultural, and political structures by following media logic (mediatization) (Couldry, 2008). Mediatization describes many transformations of different social and cultural processes into appropriate forms or formats for media representation. The argument is not only on message transmission but on incorporating media-based logic and norms into social, cultural, and political actions. Mediatization denotes quantitative and qualitative changes in cultural life's social structure and texture. According to Hjarvard (2013), mediatization is interpreted as a process in which culture and society increasingly depend on media logic. The idea is not that the media "colonize" every other domain of society and strip them of their deepest reasons. Rather, there is a growing interdependence in which it acts as a construct and other important factors (Hjarvard, 2017; Miski, 2021). The media acts as a key structure in the mediatization of construction inline people's lives without paying attention to the delivery of the message contained.

### **Background of the Study: Dialectics Between Religion and Social Media**

The existence of religious narratives and the media is like a double-edged knife. While the media makes it easy to spread religious narratives and form virtual communities, it can also distort religion's narrow meaning and understanding within a wide range (Henry, 2021). The spread of religious narratives takes place outside religious institutions as a sign of the formation of

communities in the virtual world. Exploration of religious developments is approached with media construction through mediation, mediatization, new social construction, and the process of adapting religion (Evolvi, 2021). Meanwhile, the existence of a virtual religious community in Rota (2019) forms an understanding of uniform religion. Its presence in social media has positive and negative implications.

The existence of religion in social media impacts the ease of accessing religious information quickly. Hidayat (2018) stated three ways to strengthen the legitimacy of religious narratives in social media: self-presentation, switching code, and textual reference. These strategies also create maturity and commitment among young people in understanding and carrying out religious orders (Retpitasaki & Oktavia, 2020). Basri and Murtadlo (2020) stated that the media is important in increasing spiritual knowledge and learning about religion. The speed of delivery and acceptance of religious narratives in social media is the main force associated with having a positive impact on the spiritual improvement of the community.

The existence of religion in social media also impacts a series of consequences that lead to negative representation. According to Fakhruji et al. (2020) and Wibowo (2018), the narrative building formed is symbolic. It appears as a subjective representation ambiguous in understanding sacred and profane areas. The media also significantly accelerate the spread of hate speech with religious nuances, especially on issues related to religion and politics

(Aminuddin, 2017). The media is also considered a bad element in creating political and social chaos, originating from beliefs, especially those related to controversial and conservative issues.

The relationship between the media and religion can shape new spiritual realities and collectivities. The existence of religion in social media also provides space for religious adherents to create and exercise authority collectively (Cheong, 2017; Makinuddin, 2021). The need to use the media in spreading religious narratives affects all actions and behaviors of modern society (Wahyuni, 2017). Social media provide a change in people's behavior that leads to the value of the message contained (Abidin & Fahmi, 2019; Sari, 2017). Furthermore, it significantly influences people's behavior and acts as an alternative to delivering Islamic da'wa (Pitchan et al., 2018). A similar analysis was explained by Jafar (2017) by revealing the important role of the media as a means to make friends, exchange ideas and thoughts, develop business, and preach. In addition, religion and media in modern life are two inseparable elements.

**METHOD**

**Objectives**

This study aims to determine the models, factors, and implications of teaching al-Qur'an using the TikTok application. The form of mediation is analyzed based on content that provides education on how to read al-Qur'an correctly according to *tajwid* (reading rules), displays readings by highlighting the beauty of the voice, and giving meaning to the verse according to the context faced (Figure 1). Data is analyzed critically and transformatively to strengthen the existence of TikTok as a mediator in the delivery of teaching, aesthetics, and the meaning of al-Qur'an.

**Sources of Data**

This study's data source is based on TikTok, a significant contribution among young people. The significant account is based on the number of followers exceeding one million and accounts that consistently narrated al-Qur'an teachings in their posts with the number of likes. These criteria are the primary data source. After determining the accounts, this study limits the data by

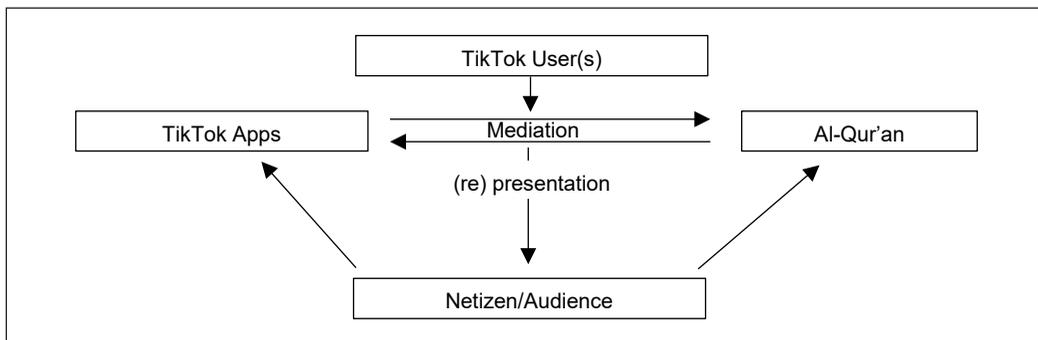


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Table 1  
*Primary data sources*

Account	Follower	Like	Total Data
SD1	1 billion	24.9 billion	15 videos
SD2	123.5 thousand	1.2 billion	4 videos
SD3	971.9 thousand	25 billion	8 videos
SD4	2 billion	57.3 billion	4 videos
SD5	425.1 thousand	10.4 billion	15 videos
SD6	3.5 billion	100 billion	4 videos

taking posts from April 14 to May 13, 2021, which coincides with the month of Ramadan 1442 H. A total of 47 contents were found in the sample data, as shown in Table 1. This study is also based on secondary data based on preliminary studies conducted from 2017 to 2021 related to mediation and mediatization problems.

### Methodology

This study's methodology is used a qualitative method to generate new concepts with data collected from TikTok accounts that promote the teachings and meaning of al-Qur'an. Hancock et al. (2002) stated that qualitative methods focus on describing and interpreting data that develop new concepts or theories. It is also the evaluation of processes in an organization used to understand and generate new concepts to convey the teachings of al-Qur'an using TikTok. Data is collected from TikTok accounts that consistently display the narratives of al-Qur'an posts through documentation. The data was collected based on the process mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1984).

### Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using three flows simultaneously: reduction, visualization, and conclusion drawing/verifications (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Data reduction is selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting the narratives that appear on TikTok related to the dissemination of the meaning and contents of the al-Quran. After the data selection process, the next stage is the visualization before it is compiled, sorted, and assembled to make possible conclusions. Furthermore, the data is arranged based on the forms, factors, and implications of the Quranic narrative in TikTok. This study also used content analysis to explore and discover new concepts that Miles and Huberman (1984) argued. According to Grimmer and Stewart (2013), content analysis is a tool used to qualitatively determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts. Therefore, using the content analysis method, valid and replicable conclusions can be made from the data obtained (White & Marsh, 2006). In addition, the methodical appearance of data makes it easier to draw conclusions and verify the results.

**RESULTS**

This section presents the narrative form of al-Qur'an in the TikTok application. The explanation of various forms of the Qur'anic narrative in TikTok is explained in three models. The first is descriptive explanations, which include the form explanations carried out by the account owners to spread al-Quran in various models. The second is critical explanations comprising the need to build a narrative by choosing the verses' delivery. The third is the transformative explanations comprising the impact obtained by the account owner in explaining al-Qur'an.

**The Model of Qur'anic (Re) Presentation on TikTok**

The development of al-Quran study in social media is carried out in various forms and ways. The data shows three models used by young people to understand al-Qur'an on TikTok: reading, learning, and interpretative.

**Theme 1: Reading the Quran**

The first theme is derived from TikTokers' recitation of al-Qur'an, which consists of three sub-themes: (a) The beauty of reciting

al-Qur'an; (b) Visual as a mediator; and (c) The role of music in making a dramatic impression.

**Sub-Theme 1: The Beauty of Reciting al-Qur'an.**

The data show that recitations in a beautiful tone and voice were emphasized and used by TikToker(s) to present the beauty of reciting the verses of al-Qur'an. There are two ways of displaying the graceful recitation of al-Qur'an, i.e., (1) using your voice and (2) featuring the voices of famous figures. SD3, SD5, and SD6 display the recitation of al-Qur'an by highlighting the correct reading, great memorization, and melodious voice. In contrast, SD1 uploads euphonious and eloquent recitations by others. The chosen *surahs* are the ones that are popular and widely read by Indonesians, such as QS. al-Ikhlâs (112), QS. al-Falaq (113), QS. al-Nas (114) (SD6), QS. al-Kahf (18), QS. al-Waqi'ah (56) (SD1), and al-'Ashr (SD6; SD5) or verses that are relevant to the motive of *da'wah* (SD3). Several uploaded recitations of al-Qur'an on TikTok reveal the acceptance and interest of the younger generation to explore and learn about the beauty of al-Qur'an.

Table 2  
*Thematic analysis*

Themes	Sub-themes
Reading al-Qur'an	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The beauty of reciting al-Qur'an</li> <li>2. Visual as a mediator</li> <li>3. The role of music in making a dramatic impression</li> </ol>
Teaching al-Qur'an effectively and enjoyably	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provision of information on the recitation of al-Qur'an</li> <li>2. Techniques of memorizing al-Qur'an</li> <li>3. Music as a mediator to teach al-Qur'an enjoyably</li> </ol>
Interpretive of al-Qur'an on TikTok	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explanation of the function of <i>surah</i> or verse</li> <li>2. Congruence of meaning with reality.</li> </ol>

**Sub-Theme 2: Visual as a Mediator.**

High-resolution images and videos are used to support the recitation of al-Qur'an. The data shows three methods for leveraging visuals on the TikTok app.: First, displaying images with added background sounds, readings in Latin, ornate pictures, and Indonesian translation to get a dramatic impression of the meaning of the verses (SD1). Second, presenting the abstraction of meaning through certain images and tones, the images are used as a supporting medium (SD2) with an emphasis on tones that complement the visualization to add to the impression of visually meaningful recitations of al-Quran (SD3). For example, for the recitation of *surah* QS. al-Ankabut (29: 57), *kullu nafs da'iqat al-mawt* (every soul will taste death), the chosen opening and tone are fearful and sorrowful (SD3). It reinforces the conveyance of the meaning of death in the verse. In addition, SD3 also uses a specific tone to present the dramatic situation related to the meaning of the recited verse (Figure 2). Third, putting the content creators on view when they do the recitations; SD2, SD5, and SD6 perform this

method to give confidence in the ability to memorize and recite al-Qur'an correctly and beautifully to provide examples to follow. Images are used to leave a mesmerizing and sacred impression in the recitation of al-Qur'an to engage young TikTok users.

**Theme 2: Teaching al-Qur'an Effectively and Enjoyably**

The second theme is obtained from the teaching of al-Qur'an by TikTok users with three sub-themes: (a) Provision of information on the recitation of al-Qur'an; (b) Techniques of memorizing al-Qur'an; and (c) Music as a mediator to teach al-Qur'an enjoyably.

**Sub-theme 1: Providing Information on Ways to Read the Qur'an.** The ways to read the Qur'an emphasize the rules of *tajwid* (the science of reading the Koran), such as *makharij al-huruf* (pronouncing letters) (SD5; SD6), reading law (SD5), *waqaf* (stop) signs (SD4), and analyzing the beginning of a letter (*al-ahruf al-muqatta'ah*) (SD3).



Figure 2. Visualization of al-Qur'an on TikTok: (a) SD1 model; (b) SD3 model; and (c) Sd4 model

How to read *Surah al-Kauthar*? First, when a nun conducts *tasydid*, they must be detained for reading it because of *ghunnah*. When there is *mad jaiz*, it means that the reading was prolonged. Attention needs to be paid to bold letters, such as *tha'* and *shad*. Finally, when there is a *ra'* that is *sukun* (dead) because of the *waqf* preceded by the *harakat fathah*, then the *ra'* becomes thick. (SD5)

(You must know) The sign of *waqf* in al-Qur'an م must stop, لا should not stop, صلى should continue, ∴ ∴ stop at one of the signs, ج may stop, may continue, قلى preferably stop, س pause without taking a breath. (SD4)

According to SD5, the teaching of al-Qur'an is also done by correcting inaccurate readings often performed by the public. In addition, correct reading techniques are displayed to teach how to recite al-Qur'an through the TikTok app to make it more widely accessible.

**Sub-Theme 2: Techniques of Memorizing al-Qur'an.** SD2's TikTok account consistently displays the processes and methods used to teach children to memorize al-Qur'an in a fun way. For example, she shows her son's ability to memorize short *surahs* in *juz* (part) 30 correctly and adequately. S2 tests his rote ability in two ways; (1) the child recites the memorized verses independently, and (2) he continues

the verse (S2). The ability to memorize a specific verse can also be accompanied by a description of the *faidah* (benefits) contained in it (S2).

**Sub-Theme 3: Music as a Mediator to Teach al-Qur'an Enjoyably.** The advantage of TikTok as a medium that accommodates music as a background sound for videos or images is to strengthen the impression of fun al-Qur'an learning. For example, S4 uses "Bika Moulhimi" by Maher Zain in teaching the rules of *waqf* (stopping). Similarly, S5 provides background sounds for the contents. For example, S5 chooses the instrumental "River Flows in You" by Yiruma to learn about the pronunciation of the letter *ta'* and uses different music when teaching how to connect the first and second verses of QS. al-Ikhlâs (112: 1-2). The suitability of song lyrics with the explanatory narrations becomes another model of using music as a background sound. For instance, S4 uses "What Do You Like in Me" by Nasty Cherry, whose lyrics contain the phrase "you want me," to describe Dajjal's speech for people who are lazy in memorizing *surah* al-Kahf (18). Adding various sounds as the background for explanation videos exemplifies that learning al-Qur'an can be fun and exciting.

### Theme 3: Interpretation of Al-Qur'an on TikTok

The third theme is TikTokers' interpretation with three sub-themes, i.e., (a) explanation of the function of *surah* or verse and (b) congruence of meaning with reality.

**Sub-Theme 1: Explanation of the Function of *surah* or Verse.** The explanation of the meaning of the certain verse is displayed along with its function, which is to address and overcome the problems experienced by young people. SD4 features the *faidah* (benefit) of QS. al-Ra'd (13: 28), *alladhina amanu wa tathmainnu qulubuhum bi zikr Allah* (those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah) as a remedy for people who need self-healing. Besides, economic issues also motivate TikTok users to search for al-Qur'an-related content that explains the *faidah* (benefit) of certain *surah* or verse which relates to the problems they face. A video entitled "7 sustenance magnets for merchants" (SD4), for example, explains the *faidah* (benefit) of reading al-Waqi'ah (QS. 56) to attract fortune. The other benefits of al-Quran readings are explained in SD4's videos related to the virtues of reciting QS. al-Anbiya' (21: 87) to achieve *hajat* (intention) and QS. al-Sharh (94: 1–8) to facilitate sustenance collection (SD4). The concern of TikTok content creators so that young people practice al-Qur'an in their everyday life encourages posts related to daily behavior. SD3 describes the function of reciting QS. al-Ikhlās (112), QS. al-Falaq (113), and QS. al-Nas (114) before going to bed to protect against evil at night. The needs of young people as TikTok users are satisfied by using attractive images and videos as parts of explanations of the functions of certain *surahs* or verses that are relevant to daily life.

**Sub-Theme 2: Congruence of Meaning with Reality.** Contents that explain the meaning of a particular *surah* or verse are given to respond to the phenomena encountered by many, with the suitability of the meaning for the narrative. For example, SD6 interprets the 18<sup>th</sup> verse of *surah* al-Dhariyat (51:18), *wa bi al-asharihum yastaghfirun* (and in the hours before dawn, they would ask forgiveness) as the basis to argue that women get rewarded during menstruation in the month of Ramadan. Meanwhile, SD3 presents an interpretation of the 152<sup>nd</sup> verse of *surah* al-Baqarah (2:156), *idha ashhabathum musibah, qalu Inna lillah wa Inna ilayh raji'un* (Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return") in response to the sinking of the Nanggala submarine which became a national issue at that time. Explanations of the *faidah* (benefit) and the meaning of a particular *surah* or verse relevant to the existing context are part of the dissemination of al-Qur'an teaching through the TikTok application.

### **Contributing Factors for the (Re) Presentation of al-Qur'an on TikTok**

The creation of TikTok accounts with various motives is closely related to the use of this social media platform as a medium for spreading the teachings of al-Qur'an by the younger generation. Representations of al-Qur'an on TikTok involve not only how the identity of al-Qur'an is produced and reconstructed through the uploaded videos but also how the content creators display

this identity as well as audience reception to it. On this basis, three contributing factors affect the reshaping of the identity of al-Qur'an on TikTok. The first is public reception to the media. The production of al-Qur'an-related content on TikTok is encouraged by the high acceptance of its users; they agree on the advantages of using this application as a means of sharing experiences and exhibiting the ability to recite al-Qur'an to motivate others to learn. SD1 emphasizes the visualization of al-Qur'an by featuring the melodious voices of several prominent figures in the contents, whereas SD2 educates children and motivates them to memorize al-Qur'an. Meanwhile, SD3 and SD5 show their ability to recite al-Qur'an beautifully. As a religious figure, SD6 puts more emphasis on the aspect of *da'wah* by responding more to the religious questions of the people. The diversity of the presentation of al-Qur'an on TikTok is produced and reconstructed according to the capabilities possessed by the creators as parts of their self-actualization on this popular social media platform.

The second factor is the reproduction of realities. The urge to spread the virtues of al-Qur'an properly and correctly according to the rules of recitation is the main motive for TikTokers to identify themselves as preachers and teachers of al-Qur'an (SD5; SD3; SD6). Self-identification as a *da'i* impacts the purpose of providing teachings to improve the condition of the people. The basis of educating how to recite verses unfamiliar to many people (SD4) and

practicing them to be followed (SD5) becomes an effort to reproduce reality in the recitation of al-Qur'an with the correct rules. This reproduction of realities in reciting al-Qur'an is done by answering audience questions about previously unknown ways and rules of recitation correctly. For example, the SD5 account consistently responds to various questions on reading problems from a verse with the correct *makharij al-huruf* (pronouncing letters). Meanwhile, the SD3 account is more directed at correcting various wrong readings made by the public.

(@khodijah830: I still cannot tell the difference between *mad jaiz* and *mad wajib*...) It is really easy to tell the difference between *both*. For instance, the *mad wajib* rule has a length of 4/5 *harakat*, assuming there is a *mad tabi'i* meeting with *hamzah* in one word. Meanwhile, *mad jaiz* has 2, 4, or 5 *harakat* lengths, supposing *mad tabi'i* meets *hamzah* in two words. (SD5)

The desire to respond and provide teaching on al-Qur'an is an incentive for young people to use TikTok.

The practice of al-Qur'an in social life is conducted by responding to phenomena relevant to particular verses. For example, it can be seen in SD3's posts related to three phenomena, namely: (1) the recitation of QS. al-Baqarah (2: 156) in response to the sinking of the Nanggala submarine; (2) the recitation of QS. al-Kahf (18) on Fridays during Ramadan; and (3) the recitation of QS. al-Isra' (17: 27) (Indeed, the wasteful

are brothers of the devils) in response to a video depicting someone throwing money. SD6 and SD5 account conducted similar activities by responding to phenomena during the fasting month. The depiction of these verses in the actual phenomena makes al-Qur'an applicable in everyday life.

The third factor is self-branding. Content production on TikTok cannot be separated from lifestyle branding as the embodiment of young people's lives in the digital era. The ability to recite correctly, the beautiful voice, and an ample number of followers are the main reasons for producing al-Qur'an-related TikTok videos. SD3 features previously recorded recitations of al-Qur'an with magnificent sound effects. In addition, he uploads a video of himself reciting al-Qur'an lip-synchronously. Representation of al-Qur'an also refers to how TikTok users portray realities to present themselves in front of an audience. SD6 exhibits al-Qur'an through the beauty of the recitations he does when he becomes the imam of *salat*. Similarly, SD4 presents himself as an "expert" in the recitation of al-Qur'an by responding to various comments of his audience and claiming that they are wrong. Thus, al-Qur'an is a tool to create self-branding by utilizing many followers.

### **Implications of Spreading the Teachings of al-Qur'an on TikTok**

The representation of al-Qur'an on TikTok aims to display messages and teachings facilitated by limited media in 15–60 second videos. The appearance of the 'new face' of al-Qur'an in this media has given rise

to various expressions of pride that has attracted young people. The widespread access of TikTok as a medium for learning al-Qur'an has impacted the shifting of the traditionally institutionalized authority into a more modern and widely accessible medium. With their TikTok accounts, SD3, SD5, and SD6 can replace the role of traditional formal institutions in teaching al-Qur'an. The great interest of the TikTok audience in learning al-Qur'an through modern media is evidenced by SD5, which routinely organizes al-Qur'an teachings. SD3 also receives the same response for his posts that provide *tajwid* teaching, which gains 1.1 million views. The transfer of teaching media by TikTok user(s) can shift institutional authority in the traditional teachings of al-Qur'an to social media through the representation of al-Qur'an.

The emerging shift of religious institutions is carried out cooperatively in a similar pattern to produce shared purposes in teaching al-Qur'an. The emphasis on the correct recitation of al-Qur'an in accordance with the *makharij al-huruf* (pronouncing letters), which is beautiful and melodious, is a form of a central signifying practice by SD1, SD3, SD5, and SD6. Similarly, SD2 and SD4 provide the same concept about the benefits of memorizing al-Qur'an. At the same time, this model responds to the challenges of al-Qur'an teaching in the era of technological development by shifting to a more modern and digital approach. SD4 answers the question of "why teaching al-Qur'an on TikTok?" by mentioning the historical hadith of al-Bukhari, which states,

“The best of you are those who study al-Qur'an and teach it to others,” in his video with the caption stating that “teaching al-Qur'an can be done anywhere.” The teaching activities of al-Qur'an carried out by various TikTok content creators show efforts to form the usual meaning of the urgency of learning and teaching al-Qur'an through any media.

The belief in the ability to teach al-Qur'an through any media impacts the transformation of al-Qur'an learning. TikTok is a new tool used by content creators to provide the knowledge needed by the people by responding to their audience through the comment section in the form of Q&A sessions. Various questions related to difficulties in reciting al-Qur'an become the basis for creating new content that other viewers appreciate (SD5). Similarly, the responses to questions about the message and meaning of certain verses encourage the production of other contents to explain the posed problems (SD6). The process of constructing the meaning of the verse in the form of relevant images and appropriate contexts gives sacredness to the message contained in the verse (SD1; SD4). The success and experiences in learning and memorizing al-Qur'an can be seen in SD2's TikTok account, which contributes to creating a community that memorizes al-Qur'an at an early age. The gap in learning the meaning of al-Qur'an and the strategies of reciting al-Qur'an among young people is resolved by the existence of al-Qur'an-related content on TikTok.

A more tangible impact for TikTok users is related to the advantages gained by the content creators. This study finds two advantages associated with the teachings of al-Qur'an on TikTok. The first is the existence and expansion of *da'wah*. SD6, a *da'i* famous on television, benefits from the widespread dissemination of *da'wah* narratives among young people. This expansion of *da'wah* can be seen in the numbers of their followers and videos that receive more than 100 million likes. The numbers of followers of SD1, SD4, and SD3 measure the public appreciation for the purposes and benefits of the presented contents. Meanwhile, SD5 expressed on a national television program that he acknowledges the significant impact of teaching al-Qur'an on TikTok by sharing his experiences and teachings of al-Qur'an. Furthermore, popularity provides non-financial benefits to TikTokers through their continued existence on this social media platform.

Second, financial benefits from the account owner manifested from incoming advertisements in products related to attributes commonly used in posts on TikTok. For example, SD5 accounts provide special posts related to *mushaf* products.

What kind of Qur'an is suitable for people learning to read al-Qur'an using the following (1) Ottoman Rasm, (2) textual text, (3) 15-line Qur'an, (3) yellow paper with tajwid markings, and (4) a translation? I (Sandi) have a recommendation for you from the

*tokohadija*. It is really cool and well packaged. The cover can also be custom, according to our choice. (SD5)

SD4 accounts from digital prayer beads and beauty products (SD4) also obtain profits from advertising. Several studies have shown financial benefits' to strengthening account owners' existence in teaching al-Qur'an using TikTok. The benefits obtained are financial and non-financial without eliminating their contribution to the social sphere. Meanwhile, the popularity gained is used to spread social messages. The SD5 account consistently invites its followers to participate in various social activities by facilitating donations channeled to needy people. SD4 did the same thing by actively raising humanitarian issues for Palestine citizens. Meanwhile, SD6 consistently spreads messages related to several government policies dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in its position as a preacher.

## DISCUSSION

This study shows that TikTok is a medium for delivering the narratives of al-Qur'an to provide education without changing perceptions. The data collected indicate that these applications are not used to spread the interests of certain religious sects. Submission of al-Qur'an narration is displaying the beauty of reading, learning, and conveying relevant meaning to the context faced by young people. It makes them easy to appreciate and explore

problems related to al-Qur'an easily and significantly by mediating gaps in reading and understanding. TikTok is used as a mediator to convey the narrative of al-Qur'an with motifs and implications without the forceful use of media logical structure. Schulz (2004) stated that the media majorly function as a means of delivery without any tendency. The dialectical process between al-Qur'an and the media requires TikTok to be involved in the circulation of symbols in social life. This view aligns with Silverstone's (2002) research that the mediation process depicts a fundamental dialectical process in which institutionalized media is involved in circulating symbols in social life. TikTok has become a new medium for young people to spread the contents and teachings of the Quran.

Furthermore, this platform is increasingly used by young people as a medium of da'wa in teaching, solving reading problems, and overcoming problems related to al-Qur'an. The dominance of teaching content to read al-Qur'an and display a variety of musical readings indicates a good mediation aspect using the TikTok application. The effectiveness of delivering al-Qur'an learning makes this application a positive in Muslim society. Hamad (2001) stated that most of the messages presented can be conveyed properly without distortion. This function in the mediation aspect proves McQuail's (1987) view that social media can act as a window, mirror, filter, guide, space for mutual agreement, and a connector for separate communities in reality. Strömbäck (2008) stated that the wise use of media

could connect individuals without being limited by distance. Therefore, putting the media only as a liaison avoids the associated logic trap, which aims to change audience perceptions. TikTok is only used as an educational tool without changing perceptions.

The use of TikTok as a teaching medium reflects the community's need for content that provides an understanding of al-Qur'an via reading, learning, and explaining the actual problem. The ease of providing these aspects promotes the advancement of the introduction of al-Qur'an in society using social media. The conventional teaching of al-Qur'an, limited by space and time, can be overcome by diverting the learning and understanding system into a virtual space using social media platforms, such as TikTok. According to Putra (2018), social media has a significant impact on society's understanding of religion, such as Islam. The existence of teaching and understanding of al-Qur'an on social media provides an opportunity for the wider community to explore their curiosity about how to read, listen to the melodious strains, and share problems related to misunderstanding the meaning. TikTok contributes to the understanding of al-Qur'an related to the correct way of reading, listening to the strains of beautiful readings, and contextualizing meaning.

Several studies have shown the impact of social media on the Qur'an and how religion is constructed under social media logic. Couldry (2008) stated that the important messages contained in al-Qur'an

are reduced to political and ideological interests. This study shows that wise media use maximizes important aspects of reading al-Qur'an. The main base of the TikTok application, which uses music, is turned into a melodious chanting of the recitation of al-Qur'an. The video's duration, only 15 to 60 seconds, is used to create short and effective learning content regarding how to read al-Qur'an. The background sound strengthens the meaning of the verse that is read for the reader to understand easily (SD1). This model enables other debated explanations to be reduced by delivering a short narrative related to the verse, which indicates the role of the media as intermediaries manifested in this study. This view is in line with Hjarvard's (2008) research that the media is not only an independent language and environment but also depends on its users. Therefore, the narratives of al-Qur'an in the media do not always lead to a form of mediatization; rather, it refers to mediation.

The freedom to share religious narratives on social media leads to the uncontrolled spreading of the content. It makes it challenging to validate the truth associated with understanding al-Quran. This application's limitations in constructing religious messages are vulnerable to simplifying religious content. It has to shallow religious knowledge caused by the delivery of narrative in creating the widest possible attraction with the content created. Fealy (2012) analyzed the correlation between Islam and consumption in the technological era. Fealy stated that Islamic views tend to decline along with

market demands to simplify religious messages and create attractive videos (Fealy, 2012). Therefore, TikTok users need to pay attention to the potential that can make al-Qur'an narrative on social media without distorting its original meaning.

## CONCLUSION

The old assumption about the logic of the media to reduce religious narratives has proven to be unreasonable. This study shows that media can be used as a mediator to disseminate the teaching, recitation, and interpretation of al-Qur'an through the TikTok application. The contents uploaded to this social media platform teach how to recite in correct *tajwid*, display a beautiful recitation and respond to the problems of the people regarding the recitation of al-Qur'an and the meaning of the verses. The presented representations are not merely popularity-oriented but provide teachings and interpretations. It can transform the way of learning al-Qur'an, replace the authority of the traditional institution, and produce shared purposes in the teachings of al-Qur'an. Although this orientation affects financial and non-financial benefits gained by the content creators, they do not distort the original purposes of providing teachings and interpretations of al-Qur'an in responding to current problems.

This platform can mediate the need for the education and understanding of the Quran effectively and openly. Its effectiveness and breadth of coverage

make it a new alternative for spreading Islamic da'wa through teaching, melodious recitation of verses, and direct interaction with virtual communities. The findings and contributions in this study were achieved by applying the content analysis method. The Quranic narrative objectives using TikTok allow the easiness of drawing correct conclusions from the data. It also provides tools for study to answer the questions; therefore, the function of social media as a mediating tool is found in narrating the understanding and teaching of al-Qur'an on TikTok.

However, this study only used TikTok as a material object with accounts that consistently display the teaching and the meaning of al-Qur'an. This research is limited to the use of TikTok as a medium and al-Qur'an as its content. Therefore, further research is needed to be conducted with the same models to determine the efforts to display al-Qur'an in other social media or content, such as hadith in the TikTok application. A study with this model is needed to provide other evidence or criticism. Similarly, further study needs to be conducted by displaying hadith content or other applications capable of improving Islamic learning in advancing information technology for a more effective broad scope.

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