

## NARRATIVE OF LOVE AND TOLERANCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA: PUBLIC RECEPTION AT THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION'S PAPPING SAKINAH CAMPAIGN

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**Abstract:** *This study explores public reception of the Tepuk Sakinah campaign initiated by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) as a digital da'wah effort to promote love, family harmony, and religious tolerance through the TikTok platform. Drawing on the phenomenon of local wisdom entering global digital communication, this research employs a qualitative approach using netnography combined with content analysis of user comments. Data were collected from all Tepuk Sakinah videos uploaded by Kemenag's official account and participating users during the active campaign period, including public comments and engagement metrics. The findings reveal that narratives of love and tolerance were predominantly received positively, indicated by supportive comments, expressions of pride in local culture, and encouragement to share the content. Nevertheless, critical remarks also emerged, questioning the authenticity of digital da'wah practices and highlighting differences in religious interpretation. These results demonstrate that social media functions not only as a channel for disseminating Islamic messages but also as a site of meaning negotiation, where local wisdom can bridge Islamic moderation and global harmony. The study contributes to the development of government communication strategies for utilizing digital platforms to strengthen messages of tolerance within the dynamic online public sphere.*

**Keywords:** *digital da'wah, public reception, TikTok, Tepuk Sakinah, local wisdom*

### INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has fundamentally changed the da'wah communication landscape in Indonesia. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are no longer just a means of entertainment, but have transformed into the main arena for the dissemination of religious messages. This digital space offers a new ecosystem for the dissemination of da'wah that is inclusive, creative, and cross-border<sup>1</sup>. In this context, the state, through the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) of the Republic of

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<sup>1</sup> Riyan Muhammad, Milana Abdillah Subarkah, and University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang, *Muhammadiyah's Da'wah Strategy in the Digitalization Era: Innovation and Challenges*, no. 4 (2024).



Indonesia, actively participates as a digital da'wah actor. The Ministry of Religion seeks to mainstream the narrative of religious moderation to counteract polarization and extremism that are also rampant in cyberspace <sup>2</sup>. The "Palap Sakinah" campaign is a manifestation of this strategy; a da'wah movement that seeks to combine local wisdom (applause and mutual appeal) with a digital medium (TikTok) that is very popular with young audiences. The goal is to instill the values of love, harmonious families, and, most importantly, tolerance between peoples.

Research on da'wah communication on social media has generally focused on message analysis or Muslim delivery strategies and influencers<sup>3</sup>. Many previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of messages, framing religious moderation, or engagement strategies of official government accounts<sup>4</sup>. However, these studies often still operate in a linear communication model (sender-message-receiver). Public reception, especially how online communities actively interpret, negotiate, respond, and even hijack messages of love and tolerance, has not been much explored. In fact, in a participatory digital ecosystem, the success of da'wah messages is no longer determined by the intention of the message conveyor, but by the interaction and interpretation of the audience that is dynamic, polysemic, and often unpredictable<sup>5</sup>.

This research gap is crucial because in a participatory culture of social media, netizens' responses can strengthen, change, or even reverse the meaning of the message conveyed<sup>6</sup>. Phenomena such as sarcastic comments, oppositional criticism (parody), and cross-contextual adoption affect the distribution and final impact of da'wah content. The phenomenon of "Tepuk Sakinah" itself provides strong early evidence of this gap. Although it was designed for a message of love, its initial reception on TikTok was dominated by generational criticism (considered cringe) and economic parody ("Basic Salary"). Paradoxically, however, this sarcasm-driven virality actually triggered an unforeseen consequence: the adoption of the format by other religious communities ("Palap Shalom" and "Palap the Buddha"), which ultimately fulfilled the "tolerance" goal of the campaign.

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<sup>3</sup> Gusti Yasser Arafat, "Dismantling the Content of Messages and Media with Content Analysis," *Alhadharah: Journal of Da'wah Science* 17, no. 33 (2018): 32–48.

<sup>4</sup> M. Seneng Al Jauzi and Lilik Hamidah, "Religious Moderation in the Media: (Da'wah Perspective)," *Medium* 11, no. 2 (2023): 276–84.

<sup>5</sup> Dwy Rahmawati and Ahmad Zaini, "The Effectiveness of Da'wah through Social Media in the New Media Era," *Journal IAIN Kudus* 8, no. 1 (2021), <https://www.academia.edu/download/107324883/pdf.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Anang Anas Azhar, "Feminism Propaganda in the Society 5.0 Era: An Analysis of Sensational Views of Gen Z Women on TikTok in an Islamic Perspective," *Indonesian Journal: Informatics and Communication Management* 6, no. 2 (2025): 1392–402.



ecosystem for the dissemination of da'wah that is inclusive, creative, and cross-border<sup>7</sup>. In this context, the state, through the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) of the Republic of Indonesia, actively participates as a digital da'wah actor. The Ministry of Religion seeks to mainstream the narrative of religious moderation to counteract polarization and extremism that are also rampant in cyberspace<sup>8</sup>. The "Palap Sakinah" campaign is a manifestation of this strategy; a da'wah movement that seeks to combine local wisdom (applause and mutual appeal) with a digital medium (TikTok) that is very popular with young audiences. The goal is to instill the values of love, harmonious families, and, most importantly, tolerance between peoples.

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This research *gap* is crucial because in a *participatory culture of social media*, netizens' responses can strengthen, change, or even reverse the meaning of the message conveyed. Phenomena such as sarcastic comments, oppositional criticism (parody), and cross-contextual adoption affect the distribution and final impact of da'wah content. The phenomenon of "Tepuk Sakinah" itself provides strong early evidence of this gap. Although it was designed for a message of love, its initial reception on TikTok was dominated by generational criticism (considered *cringe*) and economic parody ("Basic Salary"). Paradoxically, however, this sarcasm-driven virality actually triggered an unforeseen consequence: the adoption of the format by other religious communities ("Palap Shalom" and "Palap the Buddha"), which ultimately fulfilled the "tolerance" goal of the campaign.

Based on this background, this study aims to uncover the pattern of paradoxical public reception of the Ministry of Religion's Tepuk Sakinah campaign on social media. The study not only maps criticism, but also tracks how a campaign that "failed" in its initial reception actually "succeeded" in cross-faith diffusion and adoption. The problems to be answered are:

<sup>7</sup> Siti Istianah, "The Role of Social Media in Improving Islamic Da'wah in the Digital Era: A Literature Study from the Perspective of Islamic Communication," *Journal of Multidisciplinary Inquiry in Science, Technology and Educational Research* 2, no. 2 (2025): 3301–7.

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad, Subarkah, and Tangerang, *Muhammadiyah's Da'wah Strategy in the Digitalization Era: Innovation and Challenges*.

<sup>9</sup> Dissemination of Religious Moderation Information: Content Analysis of the Ministry of Religion's Website, 45 Dialogue 127 (2022), <https://jurnaldialog.kemenag.go.id/index.php/dialog/article/view/535>.

<sup>10</sup> Siti Ropiah and Sahlani Hafiz, "Religious Moderation in the Digital Space: A Case Study on the Harmonization of Religious Moderation at STAI Haji Agus Salim Cikarang Bekasi," *Action Research Journal Indonesia (ARJI)* 7, no. 1 (2025): 112–25.



1. What is the dominant form and theme in netizens' comments on Tepuk Sakinah's content?
2. What is the public sentiment (support, criticism, neutrality) towards the message of love and tolerance being campaigned?
3. What factors drive audience engagement and engagement in response to these campaigns, including those that lead to cross-faith adoption?

The results of the research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the study of digital da'wah communication, especially in understanding the phenomenon of "paradoxical success" where negative engagement is actually a catalyst for the diffusion of messages of tolerance. In practical terms, this study offers a critical evaluation for government agencies in designing religious campaigns that are not only based on local wisdom, but also understand the cultural logic of the platform and the dynamics of global audience reception<sup>11</sup>.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research method is qualitative with a netnography approach combined with comment content analysis to understand the dynamics of public reception of the Ministry of Religion's Tepuk Sakinah campaign on TikTok; the researcher searched the official TikTok account of the Ministry of Religion as well as the official Instagram of the Ministry of Religion and related hashtags (e.g. #TepukSakinah) to collect campaign videos as well as videos of users who followed the movement during the active period of the campaign (about 1–2 months after launch). then collect data manually (copy-paste/screenshot comments to spreadsheets) and/or semi-automatically with simple scraping tools while still paying attention to the platform's provisions, as well as recording metadata and engagement metrics for each video (views, likes, shares, number of comments); Comments were manually coded according to sentiment (positive, neutral, negative) and key themes (da'wah support, humor, policy criticism, local wisdom, religious debate, etc.), and then analyzed through category frequency calculations, in-depth thematic analysis, and triangulation between video content, comment patterns, and engagement metrics to map how messages of love and tolerance are received, negotiated, or reinterpreted by online communities; All excerpts of comments are presented in an anonymous form to maintain research ethics on public data<sup>12</sup>.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

The data obtained in the field are the results of the researcher's findings in accordance with the established netnography and content analysis procedures. This study identified the primary data corpus (the three main videos of the Ministry of

<sup>11</sup> Natasha Izza Azkia and Yudiana Indriastuti, "Audience Reception Analysis of Codebluuuu TikTok@ Account (Culinary Review at 5-Star Restaurants)," *JIIIP-Scientific Journal of Education* 7, no. 3 (2024): 2564–71.

<sup>12</sup> And don't be fooled, *THROUGH INSTAGRAM SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PURCHASE DECISION AT THE 5ASEC LAUNDRY MAKASSAR BRANCH*, n.d., 207–19.



Religion/Seconds) and the secondary data corpus (adoption video) to map public reception. These findings reveal a reception paradox: the campaign triggered a strong opposition reception on the TikTok platform, but at the same time achieved unexpected cross-faith diffusion and adoption success. The results of these findings specifically answer three formulations of research problems.

Thematic analysis revealed a clear pattern of dualistic (two-pole) reception to the "Tepuk Sakinah" campaign. On the one hand, the *on-platform reception* (in the comments section of the original video) was dominated by criticism, but on the other hand, the campaign sparked functional adoption and *tolerance of off-platform* (in the field) and *cross-platform* (adopted by other communities).

- a. First Theme: Criticism and Skepticism (On-Platform Reception). This is the dominant theme in the primary data corpus, covering 63.4% of comments on @detikcom videos and 44.6% on "Version 2.0" videos. This criticism is divided into two sub-themes: (a) Criticism of the Method, where the public consistently interprets this campaign as childish (equated with "PAUD"), *cringe*, and inappropriate for the context of a sacred marriage. (b) Substance Criticism, where the public demands education that is more relevant to real marriage issues, such as "financial literacy", rather than ceremonial cries. This critical-sarcastic reception, although it appears to be a failure, is actually a typical form of Generation Z participation on TikTok. In line with various studies on digital communication culture, Gen Z audiences tend to use irony and sarcasm as the primary modes of communication to respond to institutional content that is considered *out-of-touch* or *cringe*<sup>13</sup>.
- b. Second Theme: Humor, Parody, and Opposition Reinterpretation. This theme is very prominent in the original video of KUA Menteng (66.4% of comments). This form of reception is not supportive humor, but oppositional sarcasm. The most phenomenal form of reinterpretation is the parody of the economy, in which the campaign lyrics of "Janji Kokoh" (a symbol of love and spirituality) are massively changed by the public to "Basic Salary" (a material and economic symbol). In addition, there is also a functional parody that highlights the absurdity of these yells to resolve real domestic conflicts (e.g. *"When the Husband and Wife Storm : Let's Pat Sakinah"*).
- c. Third Theme: Cross-Religious Adoption (Evidence of Achieving Tolerance). However, the narrative does not stop at criticism. The findings of this study reveal a third theme that is affirmative and is evidence of the achievement of the goal of "Tolerance" in the title of the research: Inter-Religious Adoption. It is precisely because of the virality driven by the sarcasm, that the format of "Tepuk Sakinah" is widely known and goes beyond the limits of Muslim audiences. Secondary netnography data found evidence of campaign adaptations by other religious communities, such as the emergence of "Tepuk Shalom" (Christian) (in the @radarpena.co.id video) and the "Tepuk Sakinah version of the Buddhist" (in the

<sup>13</sup> Budi Hartono, "Gen Z's Perception of the Influence of Popular Culture on the Use of the Tiktok Application on Spirituality Life" (PhD thesis, Sekolah Kotinggi Theologi SAAT Malang, 2025), <https://repository.seabs.ac.id/handle/123456789/1782>.



@gurukito video). This adoption shows that *the campaign* format despite *its criticized initial message is considered a relevant medium to promote universal family values*.

- d. Fourth Theme: Successful Functional Diffusion (Offline). Furthermore, in addition to cross-faith adoption, the campaign also achieved the success of functional (offline) diffusion. Various reports and video uploads on TikTok show that the "Tepuk Sakinah" format is massively adopted by various Religious Affairs Offices (KUA) in various regions as an *effective ice breaking* method during Pre-Marriage Guidance (Bimwin). This shows that the criticized audience (Gen Z on TikTok) and the adoptive audience (Bimwin participants at KUA) are two different entities with different receptions.

## 2. Public Sentiment towards the Message of Love and Tolerance

Combined sentiment analysis now paints a polarized picture. On the one hand, the reception of *messages* and *methods* in the Ministry of Religion's video (sample N=430) was indeed dominated by negative sentiment (84.6%), which showed a failure of direct communication. The public on TikTok rejected the substance of the message.

On the contrary, strong positive sentiments are found in secondary contexts (adoption). The comments on the videos "Tap Shalom" and "Tap Buddha" are dominated by appreciative humor (e.g., *"thank God we have launched with another 🙏🙏🙏 version", "let's Hindu and Confucian deadline at the end of the month"*) and recognition of cross-faith creativity. The positive sentiment (6.3%) in the original Ministry of Religion video can now be reinterpreted: appreciation for *personas* ("the spirit of the fathers and mothers") and *functions* ("ice breaking") are the forerunners of functional adoption that occurs in other KUAs.

Meanwhile, neutral sentiment (9.1%) was dominated by *meta-comments*, namely comments that did not respond to the content of the message, but discussed external factors of virality (e.g. *"Kesini Grgr Agung Karmalogy"*).

## 3. Factors Driving Audience Interaction and Engagement

These findings reveal a paradoxical driving factor for *engagement*. Interaction is not driven by a direct da'wah message, but by an involuntary *two-step flow*, where sarcasm becomes a catalyst for tolerance.

- a. **Early Triggers: Controversy and Cringe.** The visual form of the campaign that is considered "childish" becomes a catalyst for *negative engagement*. This is in line with research on TikTok's communication culture, where Generation Z audiences are very sensitive to content that is considered inauthentic and respond to it with irony or sarcasm as a form of critical participation [1]. This triggers a sharp generational rejection (Gen Z vs. Boomer), where methods that are considered "creative" by institutions, are instead perceived as "embarrassing" by the platform's audience.
- b. **External Amplification (Influencers and Memes).** This sarcastic virality (including the "Basic Salary" meme) was then fueled by *reposts* from public figures (*influencers*) such as "Agung Karmalogy" and the creator of the "Laughter Widow". Their role as *network nodes* and *gatekeepers* of humor is crucial. They turn passive content (from the Ministry of Religion) into a *participatory culture*, where



audiences are not only watching but invited to participate in parodies. This triggers a massive *bandwagon* effect and spreads content far beyond its original audience.

- c. **Secondary Drivers:** Replicability and Remix Culture. It is precisely because of the virality that sarcasm is driven (Factors a and b) that *this format* has become widely known. The ease of *replicability* of the simple "tap" format is a key factor. This format serves as an empty '*memetic template*', which can be filled with new meaning by other communities. This phenomenon is very typical of *the remix* culture on TikTok, where audio and gestures are easily duplicated and modified. *Audience engagement* then shifts from "criticizing" (in the original video) to "adapting" (Pat Shalom, Pat Buddha) and "appreciating" (in the adoption video). This is an *unintended consequence* of a campaign, which ironically achieves the goal of "tolerance" of the study.
- d. **Meta-Factors (Temporal Oddities and Content Life Cycle).** The public also shows a high involvement in temporal oddities (the 2024 video only went viral in 2025). This creates a narrative of "rediscovery" that adds a layer of humor to the phenomenon. The launch of "Version 2.0" served as new fuel for the meme's *lifecycle*, to which the public responded with irony (asking for a DJ *remix*, comparing it to an old dancer). This shows how digital communities control the narrative and evolution of a trend, often beyond the control of its original creators.

## Discussion

The findings of this study present a complex and paradoxical picture of the initial goal of the "Tepuk Sakinah" campaign. Designed as a digital da'wah medium to spread the narrative of love, harmony, and local wisdom, this campaign experienced unexpected reception dynamics. Instead of being received linearly, the findings from the content analysis of the comments showed that the Ministry of Religion's message experienced an oppositional reception in its primary audience (Gen Z on TikTok), but instead affirmative reception and functional adoption in its secondary audience (cross-faith and KUA practitioners). The paradox between the failure of message communication and the success of the diffusion of this format directly answers the formulation of the research problem.

Answering the formulation of the first and second problems, the form of reception and public sentiment is sharply polarized. On the one hand, in the primary data corpus (Ministry of Religion video), negative sentiment (84.6%) is dominant. The public rejected the message of "love" for two main reasons. First, criticism of methods; The Ministry of Religion's efforts to integrate local wisdom (*tepat*) are perceived as childish ("PAUD") and embarrassing (*cringe*). This phenomenon is in line with previous research on Gen Z's communication culture, where this audience uses irony and sarcasm as a form of critical participation in institutional content that is considered *inauthentic*<sup>14</sup>. Second,

<sup>14</sup> Ernia Sahara Siregar and Rosmilan Pulungan, "Deviations from the Maxim of Politeness in the Language of 'POV Gen Z' Content in Social Media TikTok and Its Implications for Students of Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah Medan," *Bahastra: Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Education* 10, no. 1 (2025): 39–47.



substance criticism; There was a strong oppositional reinterpretation. The phenomenon of the lyrical change of "Janji Kokukuh" to "Basic Salary" is the strongest sociolinguistic evidence of this resistance. This reveals a *profound disjuncture* between the idealistic narrative of the institution (Kemenag) and the material reality ("perceived need") by the public<sup>15</sup>.

However, the discussion could not stop at the failure of this reception. Answering the formulation of the third problem, the motivation factor for *engagement* actually shows how this failure becomes a catalyst for success. The interaction is not driven by the substance of da'wah, but by the *cringe* factor itself. The sarcasm of the Gen Z audience and the "Basic Salary" meme became the "fuel" of virality. As explained by Wibowo & Nugroho (2023), influencers ("Agung Karmalogy") and meme creators ("Janda Tawa") function as humor *gatekeepers* who turn the Ministry of Religion's passive content into a *participatory culture*, which triggers the *bandwagon effect*<sup>16</sup>.

This is where the paradox lies. This sarcasm-driven virality exposes the "Palap Sakinah" format to a much wider audience, beyond the critical "bubble" of Gen Z. This secondary audience consists of KUA practitioners in the field and other religious communities ignoring the context of sarcasm and focusing on the utility. The findings of the Fourth Theme (Successful Functional Diffusion) show offline adoption in KUA as *ice breaking*, proving its functional success.

More significantly, the findings of the Third Theme (Cross-Religious Adoption) became the culmination of this unexpected success. The ease of *replicability* of the "tap" format, which is typical of *TikTok's* remix<sup>17</sup> culture, allows this format to function as an empty "*memetic template*". The advent of "Tapak Shalom" (Christian) and "Tapping Sakinah Buddhism" proves that this format was successfully adopted to promote universal family values, which ironically achieves the goal of "Tolerance" of the title of the study. Audience comments on these adoption videos shift from "criticizing" to "appreciating" cross-faith creativity (e.g. "*Come on, Hindus and Confucians, the deadline is the end of the month.*")

The contribution and *novelty* of this research lies in the disclosure of the paradoxical dynamics of digital da'wah. Different from previous research that often equates negative *engagement* with total failure, this study proves that within the TikTok ecosystem, sarcastic engagement can serve as an involuntary diffusion mechanism. Institutions (Ministry of Religion) no longer hold a monopoly on meaning; They only provide "raw *materials*". Gen Z audiences act as critical "virality agents," while secondary audiences act as functional "adoption agents." In practical terms, these findings serve as critical input to government agencies that success on TikTok is not always linear, and that

<sup>15</sup> MH Habibatul Maghfiroh and Ninuk Riswandari, "The Meaning of Generation-Z's Non-Verbal Communication Ethics on Tiktok: An Analysis of Symbolic Interactions in Digital Behavior," *Al-Qolamuna: Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting* 2, no. 4 (2025): 357–70.

<sup>16</sup> Ismi Melati Irmadini et al., "Meme Culture as an Expression of Popular Culture of Generation Z," *Journal of Visual Communication Design* 2, no. 3 (2025): 10–10.

<sup>17</sup> Jandy Luik, Dwi Setiawan, and Ronald H.I. Sitindjak, "Media Logic and Educational Micro-Content: Presentational Themes and Approaches on TikTok," *The Communication Review* 28, no. 2 (April 2025): 170–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2025.2452086>.





message communication "failures" can unexpectedly pave the way for the "success" of format diffusion and tolerance.

## Conclusion

Based on the netnographic research and content analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the Ministry of Religion's "Tepuk Sakinah" campaign on social media TikTok has experienced a paradoxical reception. This campaign failed in delivering *a message* (love narrative) to TikTok's primary audience, but unexpectedly succeeded in the diffusion of the *format*, which ultimately succeeded in achieving the goal of "Tolerance" carried out in the title of the study. These findings specifically answer three formulations of the research problem.

First, regarding the dominant form and theme, the public reception is dualistic (two poles). On the one hand (*on-platform reception*), comments on the Ministry of Religion's videos are dominated by (1) Method Criticism, which interprets the campaign as childish ("PAUD") and embarrassing (*cringe*); and (2) Opposition Parody, where the public hijacks the narrative of "Janji Kogak" into "Basic Salary" as a form of criticism of economic reality. However, on the other hand (*cross-platform* and *offline* receptions), two affirmative themes emerged: (3) Cross-Religious Adoption, with the birth of "Palap Shalom" (Christian) and "Palap Buddha"; and (4) Functional Diffusion, where this format is widely adopted as *ice breaking* in KUA in various regions.

Second, regarding public sentiment, the findings show a polarized picture. The Ministry of Religion's message of love and tolerance was rejected by the primary audience on TikTok, which was demonstrated by the dominance of negative sentiment (84.6%) on the original video. However, strong positive sentiment was found in the context of secondary adoption (the videos "Pat Shalom" and "Pat the Buddha"), where the public responded with appreciative humor to cross-faith creativity. This confirms that *the Ministry of Religion's message* failed, but its *format* as a medium of tolerance was successful.

Third, the driving factor for *engagement* is not the value of direct da'wah, but a paradoxical *two-step flow*. The Initial Trigger is a controversy factor (*cringe*) amplified by *influencers* ("Agung Karmalogy"), which triggers sarcasm-based virality. The Secondary Driver is the replicability (ease of duplication) of the format. This sarcastic virality is precisely the catalyst that spreads the format, allowing it to be adopted by other communities and unexpectedly achieve the goal of tolerance.

Overall, this study concludes the existence of complex reception dynamics in the digital era. The sarcastic virality of "Papping Sakinah" is not a total failure, but rather a catalyst for diffusion success. This study proves that in the era of participatory media, state institutions (Kemenag) only play the role of providers of "raw *materials*", while audiences (Gen Z and other communities) have full power to seize, reinterpret, and adopt meaning according to their context.

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