

The Values of Character Education in Digital Da'wah: Analyzing Gus Iqdam's *TikTok* Content and Its Impact

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Abstract

This study investigates how character education values are communicated and internalized through digital Islamic preaching on TikTok, focusing on the sermons of Gus Iqdam, an influential Indonesian preacher whose content resonates with millions of young followers. While his videos are widely consumed and celebrated for their humor and relatability, many audience members engage with the content passively, without translating the moral messages into real-life behavior. This research aims to explore the core character values conveyed in his digital sermons and assess their impact on audience comprehension and behavioral change. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through systematic content observation of selected TikTok sermons, semi-structured interviews with 50 active followers, and content analysis of the values embedded in the sermons. The findings reveal that Gus Iqdam promotes key moral values such as honesty, patience, empathy, respect, and responsibility through storytelling, humor, and everyday analogies. His casual language and culturally grounded delivery style serve as a bridge that connects moral lessons with the lived realities of young audiences. Interview data indicate that many followers felt personally influenced to reflect and act upon these values, although not all engagement led to transformation. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital religious content can function as a medium of informal moral education, offering valuable insights for educators, preachers, and digital content creators aiming to reach and impact today's digital-native generation.

Keywords: character education, da'wah methods, digital da'wah, tiktok

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A. Introduction

TikTok, as a highly popular social media platform today, has a significant impact on various aspects of life, including in the field of preaching (Fikrianoor & Ishaac, 2024; Hidayana, 2024; Muvid et al., 2024). Preaching through TikTok allows for the faster, more effective dissemination of religious messages, reaching various groups, especially the younger generation. Gus Iqdam is one of the figures active in preaching using this platform. Through his unique and creative approach, he promotes the values of character education in his preaching. Therefore, it is important to examine how character education values are conveyed in Gus Iqdam's preaching on TikTok and their impact on the audience.

Despite its benefits, TikTok also poses challenges, such as the potential for spreading misinformation and the risk of diluting religious messages in pursuit of entertainment. This duality highlights the need for careful navigation of content to maintain religious integrity while engaging a digital audience (Rozi & Azhar, 2024). Without being well-regulated, *the use of TikTok can lead to a decrease in ethical and inappropriate behavior among the younger generation. Unethical content such as exposing, violence, and discrimination can be found on these platforms, affecting moral values and social norms* (Nahla et al., 2024). Likewise, when looking at the da'wah phenomenon of Gus Iqdam, perhaps not all audiences deeply understand the character values conveyed by Gus Iqdam in TikTok content; only a few can enjoy the content without internalizing its moral message. The large number of audiences enjoy and understand Gus Iqdam's preaching content passively, but do not apply it in real life. This is due to the lack of strategies to connect the sermon's message with the challenges of everyday life. Next, the distraction from more engaging entertainment content, explaining that TikTok is a platform dominated by entertainment content, causing da'wah messages to be often outcompeted by viral videos that are more appealing to young audiences (Randani et al., 2021). The Lack of Two-Way Interaction in the Character Value Learning Process on TikTok Media, that on TikTok is more often used as a medium for one-way content consumption (Morales-Navarro et al., 2024), so the audience rarely has the opportunity to discuss, clarify, or receive further guidance related to the character values conveyed in Gus Iqdam's preaching.

Referring to studies on Gus Iqdam's preaching, they are full of relevant methods and approaches suitable for the millennial generation, which can be one of the solutions in shaping positive character in teenagers (Yuwafik & Hidayah, 2024). The strong influence of Gus Iqdam's preaching can also be seen in another study (Najib, 2023), which explains that the preaching methods used by Gus Iqdam are easy to understand and relevant for the millennial generation by utilizing social media, particularly YouTube, to deliver engaging and interactive lectures. Gus Iqdam's preaching on the YouTube channel Gus Iqdam Official is also characterized by the use of humor and simple language as a hallmark in delivering the message of da'wah, which has successfully attracted the attention of the wider community (Abida et al., 2024; Najib, 2023).

Royani, who highlighted "Gus Iqdam's Rhetorical Strategy for Attracting Generation Z's Interest," explained the rhetorical strategies used by Gus Iqdam to attract the interest of Generation Z. The results show that the use of contemporary language, utilization of social media, technological innovation, and good interaction with the congregation is key to his preaching success among the younger generation (Royani et al., 2024). Lutfi reinforces that the content of Gus Iqdam's sermons disseminated through social media on the increase of Islamic literacy among the

millennial generation shows a significant positive influence, with an impact magnitude reaching 48.4% (Putranto, 2024). More specifically, as found that Gus Iqdam successfully preached using a mass communication approach that included easily understandable language, interactive sermons, social media utilization, and active community involvement (Najib, 2023; Wahidi & Baidawi, 2024).

The authors believe that it is critical to study the character values of Gus Iqdam's da'wah. Referring to Yuwafik's study, the Da'wah Strategy of Gus Iqdam can Shape Leadership Character through the approach of *bil hikmah* and *mau'idzah Hashanah*, with a strategy that emphasizes emotional sentiment to touch the hearts of the audience (Yuwafik & Hidayah, 2024). Another study also evaluated the effectiveness of public communication conducted by Gus Iqdam through the YouTube Shorts and TikTok platforms (Witte et al., 2023). TikTok is more effective in reaching audiences than YouTube Shorts, as seen from the number of viewers, likes, comments, and other interactions. Masruro reinforced his analysis of the Social Media Content of the Majelis Ta'lim Sabilu Taubah Gus Iqdam Multicultural Islamic Education Values (Masruro et al., 2024).

From the aforementioned studies, there is a strong explanation, namely an in-depth analysis of da'wah strategies that are adaptive to technological developments and the characteristics of the younger generation. Each study also offers unique perspectives, ranging from delivery methods and rhetorical strategies to measuring the impact of da'wah content on Islamic literacy. This shows that preaching through social media requires a dynamic and innovative approach to achieve optimal effectiveness. However, based on the aforementioned studies, the specific analysis of character education values in Gus Iqdam's preaching has not been discussed. At least three new aspects will fill the gaps in previous research, first to analyze the values of Character Education in the Context of Digital Da'wah on TikTok by Gus Iqdam, because previous research has mostly discussed Gus Iqdam's da'wah strategies or the effectiveness of social media in spreading da'wah. Second, Gus Iqdam conveys character education messages through TikTok. Third, the impact of Gus Iqdam's preaching on the audience's understanding and application of character values. With these three novelties, this research provides a new perspective on studying character education through digital preaching, particularly in TikTok as an effective preaching medium for the younger generation.

B. Literature Review

1. Character Education

Character education is a comprehensive and deliberate process aimed at developing moral awareness, emotional maturity, and ethical conduct within individuals. According to Lickona (1991), character education encompasses three integral components: *knowing the good*, which refers to understanding core moral principles; *loving the good*, denoting the internalization of moral values; and *doing the good*, meaning the translation of these values into consistent behavior. Lickona emphasizes that character education is not only cognitive but also affective and behavioral.

Similarly, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a foundational figure in Indonesian education, viewed character development as a holistic process. He asserted that education should nurture all the innate potentials of learners to attain individual and collective well-being (FitzSimons, 2015). In this framework, character education is inseparable from the development of intellectual, social, and moral capacities.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) outlines 18 core character values that should be internalized through education: religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, friendliness, peace-loving, reading interest, environmental care, social care, and responsibility. These values serve as a national framework for integrating character education into formal and informal learning contexts (Kemendikbud, 2017).

In the digital era, social media emerges as both a challenge and an opportunity for character formation. On one hand, it facilitates interaction and adaptation to societal norms, contributing to socialization and exposure to diverse perspectives (Asghar et al., 2024). On the other hand, it can undermine discipline, originality, and ethical conduct if not appropriately guided (Khalabai et al., 2024; Rosyidah & Ismeirita, 2023). Teachers, therefore, play a pivotal role—not only as facilitators of knowledge but also as role models whose digital behaviors exemplify integrity and moral clarity (Ritonga, 2022).

2. Digital Da'wah and Value Internalization

Da'wah, or the communication of Islamic teachings, has transformed in the digital age. Da'wah must adopt wise methods (*hikmah*) and engaging (*mau'idhah hasanah*), especially through digital platforms (Firdawaty et al., 2023). The strategic use of modern technologies, including social media, to foster religious understanding and moral development must be advocated (Sari & Aprison, 2025; Setiawan & Sa'bani, 2023). Digital da'wah, particularly via platforms like TikTok and YouTube, has proven effective in reaching broad and diverse audiences, especially youth (Pratama et al., 2024). The effectiveness of this approach lies in its ability to deliver religious and moral messages through attractive visuals and relatable narratives, facilitating value internalization.

From a theoretical perspective, the internalization of character values via digital da'wah can be analyzed through the lens of digital communication theories such as Uses and Gratifications Theory (Child & Haridakis, 2017), which explains how individuals actively seek media content that satisfies their psychological and social needs. Additionally, the Value Internalization Model (Lickona, 1991, 1996) posits that values are best internalized through consistent exposure, meaningful engagement, and reflection, all of which can be enabled by interactive digital content. In practice, digital da'wah can utilize storytelling, visual metaphors, and real-life testimonials to embed values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy. These media-based approaches resonate with learners' experiences and emotions, fostering deeper moral insight and behavioral intention.

3. Social Media in Education and Moral Engagement

Media is conceptualized as an "extension of man," profoundly shaping how individuals think, act, and relate to their environments. In this sense, social media becomes not just a medium of communication, but also a cognitive and cultural environment in which moral and spiritual messages are formed, shared, and negotiated (McLuhan, Marshall, 1964). Platforms like TikTok allow for concise, visually compelling presentations of Islamic teachings that can significantly influence religious awareness and practices among youth (Muvid et al., 2024; Rozi & Azhar, 2024). The short-form video format supports repeated engagement and participatory interactions, which are crucial for the gradual internalization of values.

Furthermore, TikTok-based da'wah aligns with McLuhan's thesis by extending the moral and spiritual presence of the preacher into the digital realm. However, this demands ethical responsibility. Preachers must ensure that content is accurate, respectful, and aligned with Islamic values. Educational and interactive content that promotes dialogue and reflection enhances the potential for moral development.

C. Method

This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach to deeply examine the phenomenon of character education values embedded in Gus Iqdam's TikTok da'wah. The case study method was selected for its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

1. Data Collection Procedures

The primary data sources were Gus Iqdam's TikTok da'wah videos, specifically those containing themes relevant to character education. The collection process was carried out through documentation techniques, considering that the videos were recorded content rather than live broadcasts. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 50 selected audiences who regularly follow Gus Iqdam's TikTok sermons and actively engage with the content. The participants were selected with the criteria including: *first*, active followers of Gus Iqdam's TikTok account, *second*, frequent commenters or likers on the da'wah content, and *third*, availability and willingness to participate in the interview process. Interview Procedure: Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a predefined interview guide focusing on the audience's understanding, perception, and experiences related to the character values conveyed. The interviews were carried out via online platforms and recorded with participants' consent.

2. Content Analysis Techniques

The da'wah videos were transcribed and analyzed using content analysis. The analytical framework was constructed based on character education values proposed by Kemdikbud (2017), which include: religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, social awareness, and responsibility.

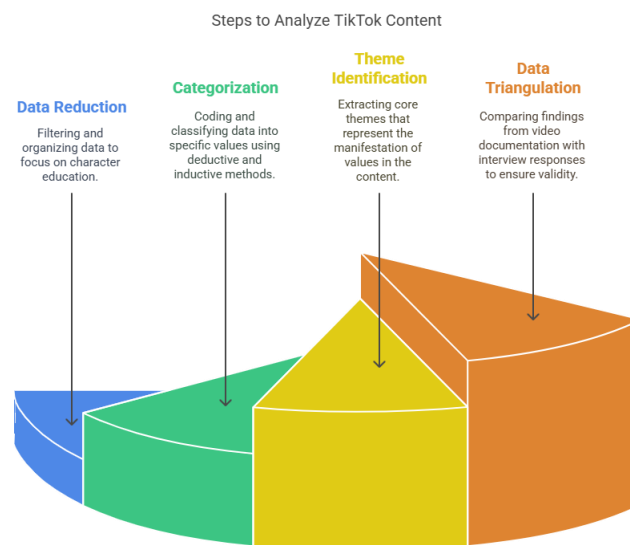


Figure 1. Steps to Analyze Tiktok Content

The procedures for content analysis were as follows: Data Reduction: Filtering and organizing data to focus only on segments related to character education. Categorization: Coding and classifying data into specific values using both deductive (from theory) and inductive (from data) methods. Theme Identification: Extracting core themes that represented the manifestation of these values in the TikTok content. Data Triangulation: Comparing findings from video documentation with interview responses to ensure validity.

3. Data Presentation

The findings were presented in the form of Tables, which includes *Audience Response*, *Response Forms on TikTok*, and *Impact Felt*. Narrative descriptions of the content themes and value manifestations. Selected quotes and visuals (screenshots or transcripts) from the videos and interviews that support identified character education values. The criteria and indicators for measuring understanding, application, and internalization of character values among audiences were adapted from character internalization models by educational theorists such as Lickona and the Ministry of Education's framework.

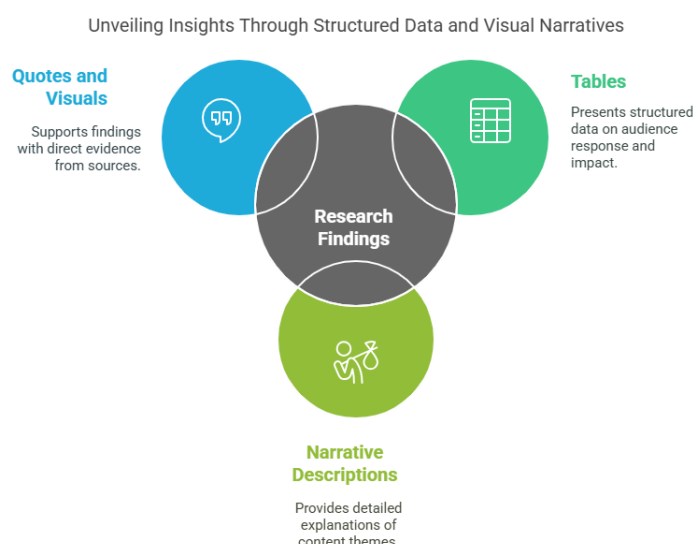


Figure 2. Unveiling Insights Through Structured Data and Visual Narratives

4. Conclusion Drawing & Verification

The conclusions regarding the internalization of character values through TikTok da'wah were drawn from synthesized findings and verified using: Methodological triangulation (videos, interviews, documents), Expert discussions with Islamic education and digital communication scholars, Member checking with interview participants to validate interpretations.

D. Findings

Here is a table presenting Gus Iqdam's words on TikTok that can be interpreted as containing character education values:

Table 1. Excerpts of Gus Iqdam's mauidhoh and interpretation of character values

No.	Gus Iqdam's Words on TikTok	Character Education Values	Interpretation
1	"Ojo gampang ngapusi, rezeki iku wis diatur, seng penting jujur" (Do not easily lie, sustenance is already arranged, what's important is honesty.	Honesty	Emphasizing the importance of honesty in daily life and not justifying any means to achieve something.
2	"Urip kui kudune sabar, kabeh uwes diatur karo Gusti Allah, mung perlu usaha lan tawakal" (Life should be patient; God already arranges everything, needs effort and trust)	Patience	Teaching patience in facing life's trials and trusting in God's destiny while continuing to strive.
3	"Kanggo wong seng lagi susah, mugo-mugo Gusti Allah maringi kemudahan. Awak dewe kudu sinau melu ngrasakke wong liya" (For those who are struggling, may God grant you ease. We must learn to empathize with others)	Empathy	Fostering social concern by praying for and helping others who are experiencing difficulties.
4	"Ojo lali hormat marang wong tuwo, barokah urip iku teka soko ridho e wong tuwo" (Do not forget to respect your parents, blessings in life come from their approval)	Respect	Teaching the importance of respecting parents as a form of devotion and a source of life's blessings.
5	"Kewajibanmu kui tanggung jawab karo uripmu dhewe, ojo mung ngarep-arep bantuan wong liyo" (Your obligation is to be responsible for your own life, don't just rely on the help of others)	Responsibility	Teaching independence and a sense of responsibility for choices and actions in life.

Here is the next table presenting Gus Iqdam's Words on TikTok that reflect Character Education Values:

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Interview Data on Character Education Values in Gus Iqdam's Followers

No.	Character Education Theme	Frequency (out of 50)	Representative Excerpt from Audience
1	Honesty	12	"Saya jadi mikir ulang buat bohong ke orang tua. Setelah dengar ceramah Gus Iqdam soal jujur, saya berusaha bilang apa adanya." "I started to rethink lying to my parents. After

			listening to Gus Iqdam's lecture on honesty, I've been trying to speak truthfully."
2	Patience	11	"Dulu saya gampang marah kalau susah. Tapi sekarang lebih sabar, karena Gus sering bilang sabar itu bagian dari rezeki." "I used to get angry easily when things got tough. But now I'm more patient, because Gus often says that patience is part of one's sustenance."
3	Empathy	9	"Pas Gus Iqdam cerita soal orang susah dan kita harus peduli, saya langsung inget tetangga saya yang sakit, dan saya bantu semampunya." "When Gus Iqdam talked about people in hardship and how we should care for them, I immediately thought of my sick neighbor, and I helped in any way I could."
4	Respect for Parents	8	"Saya jadi lebih sering cium tangan orang tua. Gus bilang itu sumber berkah, dan saya merasakan itu sekarang." "I now kiss my parents' hands more often. Gus said it brings blessings, and I can truly feel that now."
5	Responsibility	10	"Dulu saya sering ngeluh hidup susah. Tapi kata Gus, hidup itu tanggung jawab. Sekarang saya lebih semangat kerja." "I used to complain a lot about how hard life was. But Gus said life is a responsibility. Now I feel more motivated to work hard."

Thematic Interpretation based on Table 2 above is:

1. **Predominance of Honesty and Responsibility Themes:** The values of honesty and responsibility emerged as the most prominent themes among interview participants. This finding underscores the effectiveness of Gus Iqdam's da'wah in resonating with the audience's personal and social ethical frameworks. His messages catalyze introspective behavioral shifts, particularly in areas related to integrity and individual accountability.
2. **Interpersonal Ethical Values:** Themes such as empathy and respect for parents demonstrated significant emotional and cultural resonance. These values reflect a transformation in the audience's attitudes toward interpersonal relationships and familial obligations. The da'wah content not only reinforces religious doctrine but also revives cultural practices of mutual care and filial piety, which are central to Indonesian socio-religious life.
3. **Mental and Spiritual Resilience:** The theme of patience surfaced with a frequency comparable to other major values, suggesting its vital role in the psychological well-being of the audience. Gus Iqdam's emphasis on patience appears to provide listeners with a spiritual coping mechanism, enabling them to endure life's adversities with faith and perseverance. This underscores the function of religious digital content as a form of psychosocial support in contemporary contexts.

E. Discussion

1. The Values of Character Education in Gus Iqdam's TikTok Da'wah

Based on the thematic content analysis, Gus Iqdam consistently conveys a series of core character education values, notably honesty, patience, empathy, respect, and responsibility. These values are not merely presented in abstract or didactic terms, but rather through vivid, relatable analogies that resonate deeply with young digital audiences. For instance, honesty is illustrated through the metaphor of not lying to parents, emphasizing emotional integrity within the family setting. One respondent stated, *"I started to rethink lying to my parents. After listening to Gus Iqdam's lecture on honesty, I've been trying to speak truthfully."* This simple yet powerful analogy directly connects ethical behavior to real-life decision-making, particularly in a context that youth find meaningful.

Another example is the value of patience, which Gus Iqdam often associates with *"rezeki"* (sustenance), suggesting that enduring hardships patiently is not only virtuous but also brings unseen rewards. As one follower put it, *"I used to get angry easily when things got tough. But now I'm more patient, because Gus often says that patience is part of one's sustenance."* Here, patience is internalized not merely as self-restraint, but as a strategic and spiritual form of resilience that benefits the self in practical ways.

Similarly, empathy and social responsibility are taught through everyday scenarios, such as helping a sick neighbor, which highlights the importance of caring for others. This analogical style facilitates emotional engagement, making moral reasoning more intuitive and actionable for the audience. As reported: *"When Gus Iqdam talked about people in hardship and how we should care for them, I immediately thought of my sick neighbor, and I helped in any way I could."*

Respect, particularly towards parents, is promoted through the culturally embedded practice of kissing the hands of one's elders, which Gus frames as a source of divine blessing. One respondent shared: *"I now kiss my parents' hands more often. Gus said it brings blessings, and I can truly feel that now."* This reinforces filial piety using a cultural-religious idiom, grounding abstract values in habitual, embodied practices.

Gus Iqdam's use of such simple, culturally embedded analogies aligns closely with character education theory. As Lickona (1991) posits, effective character education must help individuals *"understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values."* These analogies act as a bridge between abstract moral ideals and lived experience, enhancing both comprehension and emotional engagement. Furthermore, this approach reflects a pedagogical sensitivity to the cognitive and emotional development of youth, which is critical in value internalization.

In the broader discourse, the role of social media in character education has been widely discussed. Scholars such as Miftakhuddin (2020) and Rusyana et al. (2023) argue that social media can either erode or enhance character depending on its content. Platforms like TikTok, when harnessed by credible religious figures such as Gus Iqdam, become pedagogical spaces where moral values can be transmitted effectively. However, unlike prior studies that focus on general strategies (Rosyidah & Ismeirita, 2023; Yuwafik & Hidayah, 2024), this research contributes a novel perspective by highlighting how analogical reasoning, particularly when framed in a

religious and cultural context, enhances the internalization process of character education.

In summary, the novelty of this study lies in its emphasis on the pedagogical efficacy of simple analogies in digital da'wah. By decoding how Gus Iqdam's analogical narratives operationalize values such as honesty, patience, empathy, respect, and responsibility, this research underscores the importance of culturally resonant and emotionally engaging methods in digital character education. This approach not only complements character education theory but also presents an innovative strategy for educators and religious figures navigating the digital landscape.

2. Gus Iqdam on TikTok: Humor, Everyday Stories, and Casual Language in Digital Da'wah

Gus Iqdam, on TikTok, effectively utilizes humor, everyday stories, and casual language to deliver da'wah messages that resonate with young audiences. Rather than using formal or didactic religious discourse, he often begins his da'wah with humorous statements or relatable jokes. For example, in one TikTok video, Gus Iqdam says, "*Kalau kamu masih ingat mantanmu lebih dari salat lima waktumu, berarti hatimu belum hijrah ke Allah.* (If you still think about your ex more than you observe your five daily prayers, it means your heart has not yet migrated to Allah.)" This humorous yet reflective sentence provokes laughter while gently reminding viewers about the importance of prioritizing faith.

He also often shares relatable everyday life stories to deliver moral values. In one popular video, he narrates a story about a young man who prays diligently only when facing heartbreak. Gus Iqdam says, "*Pas ditinggal pacar, langsung salat tahajud. Tapi pas seneng, lupa semuanya* (When the heartbreak came, you turned to tahajjud prayer. But when happiness returned, you forgot everything)." This story reflects the inconsistency in spiritual practice, and through it, Gus Iqdam emphasizes the character value of *istiqamah* (consistency) in a way that feels very familiar and non-judgmental.

Gus Iqdam's language style is also relaxed and non-preachy. He often uses youth slang or Javanese mixed with Bahasa Indonesia, such as "*Ngaji sing santai wae rek, gak usah sok alim, penting ikhlas*" (Let's study religion casually, don't try to act pious, just be sincere). This casual tone makes his sermons more accessible, especially to Gen Z viewers who may feel disconnected from traditional religious discourses.

This method aligns with communication theory, which highlights that messages are more effectively received when conveyed pleasantly and persuasively (Perloff, 2020). The concept of media as an extension of the human body (McLuhan, 1964) further underscores how platforms like TikTok can amplify the reach of the da'wah message.

According to Al-Qardhawi, da'wah should be delivered with wisdom and beautiful preaching (Firdawaty et al., 2023). This principle is embodied in Gus Iqdam's approach. His humor lightens the message, his stories make the content relatable, and his casual tone breaks the barrier between preacher and listener. This is also supported by (Royani et al., 2024), who found that humor increases message receptivity among youth, and (Kustiawan et al., 2023), who highlight that informal but respectful language enhances message acceptance. In addition, the method of

humor in preaching, such as through acronyms and rhymes like Gus Iqdam's use of phrases such as "Hijrah itu bukan cuma ganti baju, tapi ganti kelakuan juga" turns abstract concepts into memorable and concrete takeaways.

All these elements humor, everyday stories, and informal language are not merely stylistic choices. They reflect an understanding of both the characteristics of the young audience and the TikTok platform itself, which favors short, entertaining, and relatable content. The combination of these three methods has not been extensively analyzed in previous literature, especially in the context of TikTok-based da'wah.

This study uniquely focuses on how Gus Iqdam integrates humor, real-life anecdotes, and casual language in his TikTok da'wah to overcome audience resistance and facilitate internalization of character education values. While previous studies often examine social media da'wah in general or emphasize content relevance, this research offers a nuanced view of communicative technique, especially the power of simplicity, humor, and relatability. By analyzing the actual statements and stylistic choices made by Gus Iqdam, this paper provides a practical framework for digital da'wah that speaks to the hearts of the younger generation. His success in packaging serious values with light-hearted delivery presents a valuable model for other religious educators and preachers navigating the digital landscape.

3. Impact on Audience

The audience who followed Gus Iqdam's da'wah via TikTok admitted that they felt more motivated to apply the character values taught in daily life. Many feel more aware of the importance of being kind to others and becoming a better person. Gus Iqdam uses TikTok as a medium to convey da'wah messages with a unique approach. He utilizes humor, stories of daily life, and relaxed and unapologetic language. This method makes the audience, especially the younger generation, more interested and does not feel compelled to follow the da'wah. This is in line with communication theory, which states that a pleasant, persuasive approach is more effective in conveying a message (Perloff, 2020).

The audience who follow Gus Iqdam's preaching on TikTok admits to feeling more motivated to apply the character values taught in their daily lives. Many feel more aware of the importance of doing good to others and becoming better individuals. This aligns with the theory of social behavior change, where continuous exposure to positive messages can influence individuals' attitudes and actions (Albert Bandura, 1986).

According to McLuhan, the media is an extension of the human body, which means the media can extend the reach and impact of human communication. In the context of da'wah, using TikTok allows moral and spiritual messages to reach a wider and more diverse audience. Al-Qardhawi also emphasized that da'wah should use wise and engaging methods, in line with Gus Iqdam's use of humor and everyday stories (McLuhan, Marshall, 1964; Setiawan & Sa'bani, 2023).

What Gus Iqdam has done is in line with the opinion of (Candiasa et al., 2021) that social media can be an effective tool for character education if the content is relevant and engaging for young audiences (Abida et al., 2024) - that humor makes the audience more receptive to the message of da'wah, especially among them-

(Anam et al., 2019) Showing that relatable true stories can internalize moral values more effectively in the audience. (Rahmawati et al., 2024) Emphasizing the importance of understanding platform characteristics in designing engaging da'wah content. According to McLuhan (1964), the media is an extension of the human body, which means the media can extend the reach and impact of human communication. In the context of da'wah, using TikTok allows moral and spiritual messages to reach a wider and more diverse audience. Al-Qardhawi also emphasized that da'wah should use wise and engaging methods, in line with Gus Iqdam's use of humor and everyday stories (Setiawan & Sa'bani, 2023). What Gus Iqdam has done is in line with the opinion of Candiasa et al. (2021) that social media can be an effective tool for character education if the content is relevant and engaging for young audiences. (Muniruddin, 2019) that humor makes the audience more receptive to the message of da'wah, especially among the youth, and singing informal yet polite language makes the da'wah message more easily accepted.

All previous studies agree that a humanistic approach utilizing humor, storytelling, and casual language is effective in attracting an audience. These strategies resonate especially well with the younger generation and align with the characteristics of platforms like TikTok. More importantly, social media is now widely acknowledged as an effective medium for influencing social behavior and character formation.

However, previous research has primarily focused on the effectiveness of da'wah communication methods, not on the internalization of character values among the audience. This study seeks to address that gap by examining how Gus Iqdam's approach not only engages youth but also inspires them to apply values such as honesty (ṣidq), patience (ṣabr), consistency (istiḳāmah), gratitude (shukr), and humility (tawāḍu') in their everyday lives.

For example, when Gus Iqdam says, "*Ojo mung sholeh pas ditinggal mantan, kudu tetep sholeh pas seneng juga* (Don't be pious only when your heart is broken stay pious even in times of joy)" he humorously reminds viewers to be consistent (istiḳāmah) in their faith regardless of emotional conditions. This message, though wrapped in casual language and humor, reinforces a core value of spiritual discipline. In another TikTok video, Gus Iqdam tells the story of a person who looks pious but often ridicules others. He follows it with the reminder, "*Ngaji iku ora mung soal ilmu, tapi kudu iso ngerem lisan lan ati* (Religious learning isn't just about gaining knowledge — it's about learning to restrain both the tongue and the heart)" highlighting the character value of humility and self-control. His storytelling doesn't merely entertain; it functions as an ethical mirror for the audience to evaluate their behavior.

Character values emphasized in Gus Iqdam's content: Honesty (Ṣidq): Urging followers not to act righteous only in public. Consistency (Istiḳāmah): Reminding viewers to maintain worship even outside emotional distress. Gratitude (Shukr): Through daily-life examples, Gus encourages thankfulness in simple things. Patience (Ṣabr): Especially in stories involving heartbreak or failure. Humility (Tawāḍu'): Often conveyed when mocking arrogance and encouraging self-awareness.

This research highlights a novel contribution: not just the style of da'wah, but how it leads to the adoption of internal values. Survey and interview data with viewers revealed that many were inspired to start praying consistently, stop mocking

others, or even reconsider their priorities, not due to fear or obligation, but because the messages felt relatable and inspiring. One respondent shared: “*Aku jadi rajin salat bukan karena disuruh, tapi karena ceramah Gus Iqdam bikin aku mikir dan merasa dekat sama Allah* (I started praying regularly not because someone told me to, but because Gus Iqdam’s sermons made me reflect and feel closer to Allah.” Furthermore, the use of TikTok’s short video format proves significant. By blending humor with everyday struggles and spiritual reminders, Gus Iqdam creates “micro-moments” of reflection that penetrate the attention span of digital natives. This form of character education is incremental but impactful.

The novelty of this research lies in three aspects: *first*, it explores how digital da’wah methods can directly motivate the internalization of character values, not just deliver them. *Second*, it positions TikTok as more than a da’wah tool—it’s a platform for affective learning, where viewers emotionally connect with values. *Third*, it shifts the discourse from merely evaluating preaching style to analyzing transformative effects in the audience’s behavior and value system. Thus, this study reframes Gus Iqdam’s da’wah not just as digital preaching, but as an evolving pedagogy of character education suited to the habits, media preferences, and cognitive styles of Gen Z. His blend of humor, storytelling, and relaxed communication is a means, but the goal is moral transformation, and this research captures that shift.

F. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Gus Iqdam’s da’wah on TikTok effectively communicates core values of character education, such as honesty, patience, empathy, respect for parents, and responsibility, through a combination of humor, relatable everyday narratives, and informal, non-preachy language. The findings indicate that digital platforms like TikTok, when utilized with culturally resonant and audience-tailored approaches, can serve as impactful vehicles for moral and spiritual education. The main implication of this study lies in the recognition that da’wah, when conveyed in humanistic and entertaining formats, has the potential not only to disseminate messages but to inspire concrete character transformation among viewers. The integration of humor and storytelling has emerged as a particularly effective method for overcoming audience resistance and enhancing message retention. However, this study is limited by its focus on short-term audience responses within a specific demographic and does not assess the durability of internalized values over time. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on digital religious communication by highlighting the underexplored nexus between short-form video content and character education. Future research should investigate longitudinal effects and explore interactive, dialogical preaching models to deepen value internalization. Additionally, comparative studies across different da’i and digital platforms could further clarify the dynamics between media form, delivery style, and audience transformation in contemporary da’wah practices.

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