

SELF-BRANDING STRATEGIES IN DIGITAL DA'WAH: A CASE STUDY OF GEN Z MUSLIM TIKTOK CREATOR @kadamsidik

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Abstrak: Perkembangan platform media sosial telah menciptakan kesempatan baru untuk penyebaran dakwah melalui digital, terutama untuk Generasi Z yang aktif di aplikasi seperti TikTok. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana strategi branding diri dan komunikasi dakwah diterapkan dalam konten akun TikTok @kadamsidik00. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan analisis konten serta kajian pustaka, dan data dikumpulkan melalui pengamatan video serta sumber yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa TikTok memberikan kesempatan dengan jangkauan yang luas dan fitur kreatif yang mendukung cara penyampaian pesan dakwah, namun juga menghadirkan tantangan seperti distraksi dari konten hiburan, kecenderungan sekularisme, dan beragam latar belakang budaya audiens. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya penggunaan strategi dakwah yang kreatif, relevan, dan mampu beradaptasi terhadap karakteristik generasi digital native untuk meningkatkan efektivitas komunikasi dakwah di media sosial.

Kata Kunci : Dakwah digital, Gen Z, Komunikasi, Self-branding, TikTok

Abstract: The development of social media platforms has created new opportunities for spreading religious teachings digitally, especially for Generation Z who are active on apps such as TikTok. This study explores how self-branding and religious communication strategies are applied in the content of the TikTok account @kadamsidik00. The methods used in this study are qualitative with content analysis and literature review, and data was collected through video observation and relevant sources. The results of the study show that TikTok provides opportunities with a wide reach and creative features that support the delivery of religious messages, but also presents challenges such as distractions from entertainment content, secularism tendencies, and diverse cultural backgrounds of the audience. These findings emphasize the importance of using creative, relevant, and adaptable religious strategies to the characteristics of the digital native generation to increase the effectiveness of religious communication on social media.

Keywords : Communication, Digital preaching, Gen Z, Self-branding, TikTok

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology and social media has changed the way religion is communicated, especially for Generation Z, who define their identity and beliefs through online spaces. This generation prefers fast, visual, and interactive media, which has led to changes in the way religious

preaching is conducted: preaching is no longer only done in person, but also through online platforms such as TikTok.¹ In media studies, the term self-branding refers to an individual's conscious effort to create a public image that reflects authenticity, credibility, and consistency of identity in order to attract audience interest. Research on social media users shows that personal branding involves strategic self-presentation and identity formation, which are influenced by platform features and audience dynamics.² Social media functions as a performance space where identity, reputation, and social capital are constantly negotiated and managed.

In research on religious communication, it was found that young preachers use social media to create an identity as mini religious celebrities, combining religious influence with the phenomenon of fame in the digital world.³ In this case, self-image is not just a marketing tactic, but also an effort to harmonize religious authenticity and media appearance, which influences how audiences view legitimacy and trust. This dynamic is particularly important on TikTok, a platform with short videos, algorithms, and high interaction, which changes how messages are conveyed and how identities are perceived.⁴

However, recent studies on digital da'wah and personal branding rarely explore how Gen Z Muslim creators on TikTok shape their brands and simultaneously adapt their religious identity, media capabilities, and audience expectations. The majority of previous studies have focused more on the content of da'wah in general or social media behavior in general, without focusing primarily on identity determination strategies. For example, there is Instagram-based research that observes self-presentation trends among young preachers.⁵ Research related to TikTok and religious preaching tends to focus more on content or message analysis, rather than how creators build their personal brands before delivering religious messages.⁶ This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the self-branding strategies employed by Gen Z Muslim creator @kadamsidik in his TikTok videos. This study will examine how he builds a credible public identity, how he adapts his communication style and content to Gen Z characteristics, and how these strategies can increase the credibility and impact of his preaching. Thus, this study connects the theories of self-presentation/personal branding, digital preaching communication, and symbolic interaction in the context of social media.

¹ Sarahdiba Khairunisa, "Constructing Identity on Social Media: A Discourse Analysis of Personal Branding on TikTok," *ICELS* 2, no. 1 (2025).

² R. D. Pradina and T. Azizah, "Motives and Self-branding Strategies of UPN Veteran Jawa Timur Communication Science Students in Building Virality on TikTok," *Priviet Social Sciences Journal* 5, no. 11 (2025): 460, <https://doi.org/10.55942/pssj.v5i11.932>.

³ I. Afidah et al., "Religious Micro-celebrity: Young Preachers' Self-Presentation in Digital Sphere," *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 23, no. 2 (2024): 235, <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v23i2.13680>.

⁴ Amirah Nabilah, Bhunga Aulia, and Dwi Yuniar, "Personal Branding through Da'wah on TikTok Social Media," *Journal of Digital Marketing and Halal Industry* 3, no. 1 (2021): 85, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jdmhi.2021.3.1.7366>.

⁵ Siti Mutmainah et al., "Online Da'wah on Social Media: Personal Branding of a Female Celebrity Preacher on Instagram," *Lentera* 6, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.21093/lentera.v6i1.4803>.

⁶ Cindy Mafidah and Mutrofin Mutrofin, "ANALYSIS OF DA'WAH MESSAGES THROUGH CONTENT ON TIKTOK ACCOUNT @ZAHIDSAMOSIR," *Qaulan: Journal of Islamic Communication* 4, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.21154/qaulan.v4i1.6019>.

The issues discussed in this study are how Muslim creators from Generation Z on TikTok construct their self-image in the context of digital da'wah dissemination? What communication strategies are applied to create authenticity, credibility, and emotional connection with the audience? How does the self-branding process impact the reach, engagement, and acceptance of da'wah content among young audiences? The novelty of this research lies in the use of the perspectives of self-branding and identity formation in relation to digital da'wah on TikTok, which is still rarely discussed in the current literature. Furthermore, by highlighting Muslim creators from Generation Z, this research provides insights into how religious identity and persona in the media interact in the culture of today's young Muslims.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with literature study methods and descriptive content analysis. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the self-branding strategies in digital da'wah carried out by Gen Z Muslim creators on TikTok. The focus of the research is to analyze the self-branding strategy of Gen Z Muslim creators, Husain Basyaiban (Kadam Sidik), in conveying da'wah through the TikTok account @kadamsidik00. The main data was obtained from the content of TikTok videos uploaded by Husain Basyaiban during the research period, while supporting data came from literature such as scientific journals, books, and relevant online articles.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach through non-participant observation and documentation. The researcher monitored publicly accessible content on Husain Basyaiban's TikTok account without engaging in any interaction that could influence the creator or audience. A total of 10 videos uploaded between August and November were selected purposively based on their relevance to the themes of da'wah communication, self-branding elements, and audience engagement. The data collected included message content, visual appearance, self-branding indicators, and audience responses such as impressions, number of likes, and comment patterns. Supporting literature was also used to strengthen the analytical framework. The selected videos were summarized based on message theme, delivery method, and form of identity presentation. The summaries were then compared to find similarities and patterns. The patterns that emerged were grouped into broad themes such as visual strategies, da'wah delivery techniques, self-branding practices, and forms of interaction with the audience. These findings were used to explain how self-branding strategies are developed and applied in digital da'wah on TikTok.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Da'wah media can be seen as a means to convey the content or message of Islamic teachings to the audience of da'wah or mad'u. In the context of Islamic communication, the media functions as an intermediary for da'wah messages to reach them effectively and in accordance with the character of the

audience. Da'wah media is used as a way to spread the message of da'wah to targeted people with a variety of different approaches. In the digital era, which is characterized by a massive and unstoppable flow of information, the role of social media in shaping religious behavior is increasingly strategic.⁷ The selection of da'wah media cannot be done uniformly, because each media has different characteristics, advantages, and limitations. The presence of Islamic da'wah content on various digital platforms is no longer just an alternative, but has become the main source in the formation of the religious identity of the younger generation.⁸

When choosing a medium to achieve the goals of da'wah, a da'i must consider several important factors, no medium can be universally applied to all purposes or aspects of da'wah because each medium has its own characteristics, including advantages, disadvantages, and the extent of compatibility. The selection of media must be adjusted based on the capabilities of the intended audience, and must be relevant to the material presented in da'wah.⁹ Therefore, a da'i needs to adapt the media to the social context and literacy level of his audience so that the message can be well received. In this digital era, it is recommended for a da'i to choose da'wah media that is in accordance with his capabilities and that can meet the needs in delivering da'wah messages through various digital platforms. Therefore, TikTok is very popular for its ability to disseminate the latest global information in a short, easy-to-understand, and engaging format.¹⁰ Platforms like TikTok are a real example of a new da'wah space that is able to expand the reach of messages and present a creative form of religious communication. Today's conditions demand adjustments in the implementation of da'wah in accordance with the situation or conditions of the community, by paying attention to the materials, methods, and types of media used. The use of TikTok social media is one method to convey communication messages by a preacher. With the existence of social media platforms, a dai has many opportunities to expand the delivery of his da'wah message, in a way that follows the latest trends, so that it is easier to be accepted by his listeners or followers.

This research highlights the self-branding strategy carried out by Husain Basyaiban, better known as Kadam Sidik as one of the creators of da'wah on TikTok. Kadam Sidik not only uses TikTok for entertainment, but also as a medium to convey religious messages. Kadam Sidik began to steal attention in 2019 when he started creating TikTok content that focused on da'wah. Based on observations through September 2025, the account has 6.3 million followers, 407 million likes from its followers, and tens of

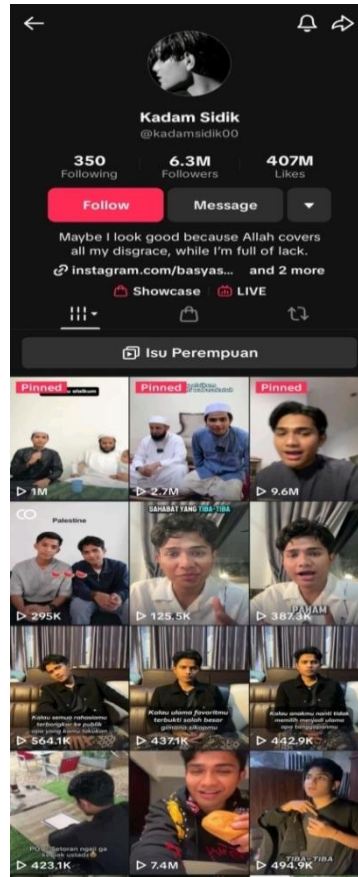
⁷ Q. Abdurrahman and D. Badruzaman, "Tantangan dan Peluang Dakwah Islam di Era Digital," *Komunikasia: Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting* 3, no. 2 (2023): 155, <https://doi.org/10.32923/kpi.v3i2.3877>; T. Hidayat, N. Khalif, and I. Istianah, "Pemanfaatan Teknologi terhadap Dakwah Gen Z," *Al-Mishbah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 20, no. 2 (2025): 148, <https://doi.org/10.24239/al-mishbah.Vol20.Iss2.404>.

⁸ A. K. Sirun and S. Surawan, "Konsumsi Konten Islam Digital dan Kesejahteraan Spiritual Mahasiswa," *Jurnal Studi Islam Indonesia (IJIS)* 1, no. 2 (2025): 224, <https://doi.org/10.62567/ijis.v1i2.905>.

⁹ A. Baidowi and M. Salehudin, "Strategi Dakwah di Era New Normal," *Muttaqien: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2021): 62, <https://doi.org/10.52593/mtq.02.1.04>.

¹⁰ N. Haliza and S. Surawan, "Pengaruh Spiritualitas terhadap Dampak Kesehatan Mental dari Aktivitas Scrolling TikTok pada Mahasiswa Universitas," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Etika* 3, no. 2 (2025): 125, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jee.v3i2.92>.

millions of total impressions. With a bio "Maybe I look good because Allah covers all my disgrace, while I'm full of lack". The majority of the content uploaded is in the form of short videos lasting 15-60 seconds with the theme of light da'wah and Islamic motivation. Through this platform, Kadam Sidik raises various issues around religious issues, especially those that are happening in the current context.



Picture 1: TikTok Account Profile @kadamsidik00

(Source: TikTok @kadamsidik00)

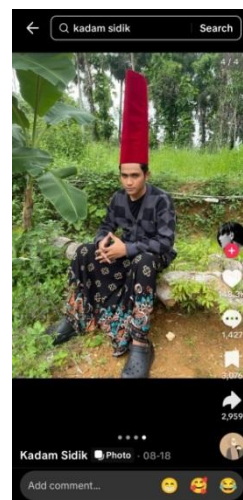
A. Strategy Self Branding

Analysis of TikTok content posted by Kadam Sidik shows that creators use themes of Islamic motivation and practical education to create an authentic and trustworthy public image.¹¹ This strategy is in line with the view that the success of digital da'wah is greatly influenced by the ability of dai to present a credible religious persona that is close to the audience. The video is presented with an interesting narrative, a touch of humor, and language that is easy for the

¹¹ Az-Zahra Ika et al., "Menyebarkan Nilai Islam Di Kalangan Gen-Z: (Studi Kasus Strategi Komunikasi Dakwah Digital Pada Akun Tiktok Kadam Sidik)," *NAAFI: JURNAL ILMIAH MAHASISWA* 1, no. 4 (2025): 428, <https://doi.org/10.62387/naafijurnalilmiahmahasiswa.v2i3.175>.

younger generation to understand.¹² Kadam Sidik is a young preacher who has a relaxed and stylish character, so that the character shown feels close and trustworthy, showing a consistent form of self-branding. Consistency in the selection of themes and ways of delivery helps support the creator's reputation and strengthen their digital identity.¹³ The importance of public identity performance in forming trust and credibility.¹⁴ Kadam Sidik uses the social media platform TikTok to convey religious messages with a creative and interesting approach.

Some of the approaches applied by Kadam Sidik are to choose topics related to daily life, so that the message conveyed is easier to understand by the audience. Kadam Sidik has a deep religious understanding of the Qur'an, Arabic, fiqh, hadith, and sharia science. Kadam Sidik uses simple language and avoids terms that are too formal or difficult for TikTok users to understand,¹⁵ as well as utilizing the various effects and filters available on TikTok to make his da'wah message more interesting and creative, Kadam Sidik also utilizes the TikTok feature that allows interaction from users to participate in the videos he makes, So that the message can feel more touching and relevant to his followers. With a broad understanding of religion, Kadam Sidik is able to provide explanations and answer questions asked by his followers in an easy-to-understand way. He also built an image as a da'i to gain the trust of the public and to be better known, so that the audience was interested in listening to his da'wah. As Kadam Sidik did in spreading da'wah in the digital era, displaying an image as a friendly and relatable young preacher. This can be seen from the choice of clothes which are often in the form of casual t-shirts in the style of young people so that the audience feels more comfortable when enjoying the content.



¹² N. A. B. Prasetyo et al., "Utilization of Tik-Tok as a da'wah media of Kadam Sidik in the contemporary era," *KOMUNIKE: Jurnal Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam* 15, no. 2 (2023): 115, <https://doi.org/10.20414/jurkom.v15i2.8571>.

¹³ M. Mildah and K. Khairuddin, "Dakwah TikTok: Eksplorasi perubahan sikap religiusitas Gen Z melalui konten Husain Basyaiban," *Jurnal Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Dakwah* 18, no. 2 (2024): 40, <https://jurnaliainpontianak.or.id/index.php/alhikmah/article/view/3417/1490>.

¹⁴ R. Robiansyah et al., "The Roles of Islamic Content Quality and Physical Attractiveness of Muslim Influencer on Social Media Consumption: Likeability as Mediator," *Media Ekonomi dan Manajemen* 40, no. 1 (2025): 50.

¹⁵ S. Hanifah et al., "ETIKA KOMUNIKASI ISLAM: PENERAPAN DALAM BERDAKWAH DI MEDIA SOSIAL PADA AKUN INSTAGRAM @BASYASMAN (KADAM SIDIK)" (2024): 10.

Picture 2: Kadam Sidik is a young preacher who has a relaxed and stylish characteristic.

(Source: TikTok @kadamsidik00)

B. Audience Interaction

Furthermore, interacting with the audience is an important element in a self-branding strategy in the world of digital da'wah, where success in conveying the message depends not only on the quality of the content, but also on how far the audience is engaged. Observations of comments and interactions that appear on Kadam Sidik content show significant engagement, which can be divided into several categories, such as positive comments, questions about Islamic practices, and discussions based on personal experiences. For example, positive comments highlight the audience's acknowledgment of the quality of the content and its impact on their religious behavior, as revealed in an audience member's response: "Masyaallah pray kadam, may I be like you in the female version." In addition, the audience also asks questions or shares personal experiences relevant to the message of da'wah, showing that this pattern of engagement is quite active. This pattern of engagement can be further analyzed through the number of likes, shares, comments, and the use of interactive features such as duets or stitches, which not only increase the visibility of the content, but also strengthen the impact of the message among the audience.

By focusing on reciprocal interaction, creators can create a loyal audience, where communication not only takes place from one direction, but also includes ongoing conversations. Activities such as responding to comments or questions from the audience contribute to building a sense of closeness and trust, which can further increase follower retention rates and strengthen the creator's position as a trusted source of information in the context of digital da'wah.

C. The Utilization of TikTok as a Da'wah Media

The use of TikTok as a means of preaching by creators @kadamsidik00 presents a new way of conveying religious teachings that is in accordance with the digital tendencies of the younger generation, especially Gen Z, who prefer visual and interactive content. Kadam Sidik utilizes various creative features on TikTok, such as visual effects, filters, popular music, overlay text, and captions, to convey da'wah messages in an attractive, convincing, and easy-to-understand way. Visual effects and filters enhance the appeal of the content, while trending music enhances the audience's emotional attachment. Overlay text highlights the key points of the message briefly, and creative captions provide additional narrative stories that encourage thought and interaction. In addition, the use of popular trends or challenges that are currently viral allows

@kadamsidik00 da'wah content to be seen more prominently in user feeds, expand reach and strengthen creators' self-branding.

The success of Kadam Sidik's da'wah on TikTok is also greatly influenced by the development of interactive and educational content, or known as edutainment. By combining entertainment and Islamic education. @kadamsidik00 can convey religious messages in an engaging way without sacrificing the accuracy and essence of the message. Interactive content, such as an invitation to answer a question or join a challenge, can increase audience engagement and extend their time to interact, making messaging more effective. This approach emphasizes that TikTok is not only a flexible communication tool, but also a strategic medium to build @kadamsidik00 selfbranding while delivering da'wah effectively, interactively, and with a wide impact.

D. Challenges and Obstacles

In the practice of digital da'wah carried out by Gen Z Muslim creators, especially @kadamsidik00, there are a number of complex and layered challenges that affect the effectiveness of da'wah communication and the self-branding process carried out. One of the main challenges is the distraction from the abundance of nonreligious content on digital platforms. Audiences are often faced with a flood of entertainment content such as music videos, memes, vlogs, or social media trends that attract attention and easily distract from the message of da'wah. This condition requires creators to develop communication strategies that are able to retain the audience's attention, for example by inserting humor, using familiar language, and presenting relevant daily life analogies so that the message of da'wah remains resonant and does not feel patronizing. This adaptive approach is important to ensure that audiences do not passively access da'wah content, but also actively engage through comments, sharing, or other interactions that support the creator's self-branding.

For example, one of the Kadam Sidik content that is being discussed is the trend of "Yeorobun onereun meokbangeun roti imnida, yareuu." In the content, he gave a mockery of Yeorobun in the context of Arabic, namely "Yaa Robbi." We found one of the relevant audience comments to be: "Yeorobun means everything in Korean, why is it "Yaa Robbi."

"He also knows it, but he is a pity to explain the word 'Yaa Robbi', nowadays if you preach on the plates Gen Z is hard to hear, it's our turn to be like this." This strategy not only maintains the relevance of the message, but also strengthens the credibility of the creator as a da'wah figure who is adaptive and close to the social reality of the audience. Creators should adapt the language, tone, and theme of the content to be widely accepted without offending specific groups. This inclusive and socially sensitive approach allows Kadam Sidik to maintain a balance between

authentic message delivery and broad acceptance. This combination of approaches shows that the self-branding process of Gen Z Muslim creators is not only limited to building self-image, but also integrating adaptive, relevant, and ethical da'wah values in a dynamic and challenging digital ecosystem.



Picture 3: Message relevance strategy.

(Source: TikTok @kadamsidik00)

E. The Impact of Self Branding on the Effectiveness of Da'wah

An in-depth analysis of digital da'wah activities carried out by @kadamsidik00 shows that the self-branding strategy implemented by this creator has a significant impact on the effectiveness of delivering da'wah messages. The consistency of the public persona displayed by Kadam Sidik is the main foundation in building credibility and trust of the audience. In practice, this consistency is reflected in the way creators maintain their identity in various content, both in terms of the values they carry and the communication style used. Audiences, especially Gen Z who tend to be critical and selective about public figures, value this consistency as an indicator of the authenticity and integrity of creators, so that trust in the message of da'wah increases. The credibility formed through self-branding is in line with the principle of da'wah communication which emphasizes the importance of sender reliability as the main factor so that the message is well received.

In addition to the credibility aspect, Kadam Sidik's self-branding strategy also plays a role in creating a strong emotional resonance with the audience. The storytelling applied in the da'wah content is able to present a relatable and captivating narrative, so that the audience not only receives the message informatively, but also feels emotional attachment. Humor that is inserted appropriately reduces the distance between the creator and the audience, making the da'wah

message feel lighter but still meaningful. Interactive interactions, such as polls, Q&A sessions, and personalized replies, further strengthen audience engagement, as they feel part of the communication process. This combination of storytelling, humor, and interactive interaction creates a holistic da'wah experience, where the message is not only understood cognitively, but also received emotionally, thereby increasing the audience's motivation to internalize the values conveyed.

Overall, the self-branding strategy implemented by Kadam Sidik shows that a combination of consistent public persona, compelling storytelling, appropriate humor, and interactive interactions can increase credibility, create emotional resonance, expand reach, and change audience behavior. This approach proves that authentic and consistent self-branding is not just a tool for self-promotion, but is a strategic instrument in optimizing the effectiveness of digital da'wah in the modern social media era, where the relevance of the message, the credibility of the sender, and audience engagement are the main keys to the success of da'wah communication.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that self-branding strategies play an important role in the success of digital da'wah, especially on the TikTok platform which is the main space for Generation Z to interact and express. Through a study of @kadamsidik00 accounts, it was found that Husain Basyaiban (Kadam Sidik) succeeded in building an image of a young preacher who is authentic, relaxed, and close to the audience. This image is formed through the consistency of communication styles, the selection of themes relevant to daily life, and the use of simple language and light humor. This approach makes the message of da'wah easier to accept without losing religious substance. Active interaction with the audience is a key aspect in strengthening trust and emotional closeness. By utilizing TikTok features such as comments, duets, and stitches, Kadam Sidik is able to create two-way communication that expands the reach of da'wah messages and strengthens its credibility. The content packaged in the edutainment format also succeeds in combining elements of entertainment with educational value, making da'wah more relevant for Gen Z who tend to be visual, critical, and dynamic.

Overall, a consistent, authentic, and social-interaction-based self-branding strategy has proven to be able to increase the effectiveness of da'wah in digital media. This research shows that the success of da'wah in the era of social media does not only depend on the content of the message, but also on how the preacher builds identity, credibility, and emotional connection with his audience.

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