INSTANTS SPIRITUALITY: ANALYSING THE PHENOMENON OF PRACTICAL PRAYERS AND DEEDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Tri Utami Oktafiani

Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, Semarang, Indonesia

utamiokta@walisongo.ac.id

Wawaysadhya

Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, Semarang, Indonesia

sadhyawaway@walisongo.ac.id

Badrul Munir Chair

Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, Semarang, Indonesia

badrul_munir_chair@walisongo.ac.id

Abstract: *In recent years, the transformative influence of Social Media on religious practices has been profound. A notable phenomenon is the emergence of Social Media accounts with millions of followers, offering guidance on prayers and daily deeds for specific intentions. This research will examine the phenomenon of seeking prayers on Social Media for instant and practical purposes using Jean Baudrillard's theory of Simulacra and Hyperreality. The aim of this research is to understand the impact of seeking and practicing prayers and religious acts on social media by exploring content related to that and the responses of followers to such content. This research is qualitative in nature, using a phenomenological approach. Data was collected from three influential TikTok accounts: Irfan Rizki, Meliza Arnelia, and Ajie Pangestu, known for their large following and engaging content on religious practices. The results show that there are two types of responses from netizens' comments regarding the prayers and deeds on the content: the first group reports success and positive outcomes after practicing certain prayers and religious acts; the second group responds by stating that they did not experience the expected changes even though they practiced as advised. The analysis concludes that the content of such practical prayers and deeds on social media operates in a similar purpose with advertisements containing hyperreal signs to attract audience attention. The group that successfully practices a certain prayer or religious act provides testimonials about their success, thus creating a perspective that these prayers and deeds are merely products that can be applied practically and have an immediate impact. The effect of this viewpoint is the emergence of instant spirituality, placing religion in a reciprocal relationship. Meanwhile, the group that fails to achieve instant effects from the prayers and rituals tends to consider the prayers useless.*

Keywords: *Prayers, instants spirituality, hyperreality, simulacra, social media*

Abstrak: Kehadiran media sosial telah mengubah pola keberagamaan masyarakat dalam beberapa tahun terakhir. Salah satu fenomena yang muncul adalah maraknya akun media sosial dengan jutaan follower yang menyajikan konten doa-doa dan amalan- amalan praktis untuk berbagai tujuan tertentu. Penelitian ini akan mengkaji fenomena pencarian doa-doa di media sosial untuk tujuan instan dan praktis dengan menggunakan teori Simulakra dan Hiperrealitas Jean Baudrillard. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dampak pencarian dan pengalaman doa-doa dan amalan-amalan praktis di media sosial dengan menelusuri isi konten yang terkait dengan doa-doa praktis dan respon para follower atas konten-konten tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dari tiga akun media sosial TikTok yaitu Irfan Rizki, Meliza Arnelia, dan Ajie Pangestu. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat dua macam respon dari komentar- komentar netizen atas konten tersebut, yaitu: kelompok pertama, yang membuktikan keberhasilan dan kesuksesan setelah mengamalkan doa-doa tertentu; dan kedua, kelompok yang merespon dengan menceritakan tidak adanya perubahan yang diharapkan setelah mengamalkan doa-doa tersebut. Hasil analisis dari penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa konten doa-doa praktis di media sosial memiliki peran serupa iklan yang mengandung hiperrealitas penandaan untuk menarik perhatian audiens. Kelompok yang berhasil mengamalkan suatu doa atau amalan tertentu memberikan testimoni tentang keberhasilan mereka sehingga memunculkan suatu sudut pandang bahwa amalan-amalan dan doa-doa adalah seperti produk yang dapat diaplikasikan secara praktis dan langsung berdampak secara instan. Dampak dari pandangan tersebut adalah munculnya spiritualitas instan dan menempatkan agama sebagai hubungan timbal-balik. Sementara kelompok yang merasakan kegagalan dalam memperoleh dampak instan dari doa-doa dan amalan-amalan tersebut cenderung beranggapan bahwa doa itu tidak berguna.

Kata Kunci : *Doa, spiritualitas instan, hiperrealitas, simulakra, media sosial*

Introduction

Salah satu masalah psikologis dan sosial yang paling umum dihadapi oleh generasi muda saat ini adalah fenomena *quarter life crisis* atau krisis seperempat abad. Gangguan ini biasanya dialami oleh individu berusia antara 18 hingga 30 tahun dan ditandai dengan kecemasan, kehilangan arah hidup, serta ketidakpastian terhadap masa depan terutama yang berkaitan dengan karier, hubungan interpersonal, dan pencarian makna hidup. Seiring dengan pesatnya perkembangan teknologi dan media sosial, tekanan untuk mencapai kesuksesan di usia muda semakin meningkat. Budaya perbandingan sosial yang terus-menerus dipupuk melalui media sosial membuat individu merasa tidak cukup baik dibandingkan dengan pencapaian orang lain. Kondisi tersebut memperparah krisis identitas dan kebingungan eksistensial yang dialami oleh banyak anak muda, sehingga *quarter life crisis* tidak lagi hanya dipahami sebagai persoalan psikologis, tetapi juga menjadi problem eksistensial manusia modern [1].

---

[1] Fitria Rahmi and Irwa R. Zarkasi, "Analisis Fenomena Quarter–Life Crisis Pada Usia Muda: Studi Pada Pengguna Aktif Instagram," *Jurnal Al Azhar Indonesia Seri Ilmu Sosial* 6, no. 1 (2025): 28, https://doi.org/10.36722/jaiss.v6i1.3908.

The presence of social media has had a significant impact on society's religious practices. Among the most notable changes is the widespread use of social media as a hub of information for various religious-related inquiries. According to Piff and Warburg (2005), internet-based social media have been extensively utilized by religious communities to enable instant and interactive communication in various forms. One of the ways religious communities use social media is as an interactive medium to shape and control the flow of information to internet users who visit a website. In other cases, social media is used as a communication platform that provides space for discussions on ongoing issues, where these discussions do not always need to be formal[2].

Social media plays a significant role in shaping religious identity, including the emergence of various online religious communities and social media accounts that portray themselves as centers of religious information. In fact, according to Rosalid I. J. Hackett (2006), the internet has revolutionized the growth and spread of religion. While more in-depth research is needed on the changes in the form of practices and expressions of religious use of the internet, it is undeniable that we have entered an era of religious democratization, where every religious group, and even individuals, can freely spread their beliefs and reach a wider audience by utilizing the internet. As a result, religious identity is gradually shifting[3]. There is concern among some religious groups that religious practices on the internet could erase religious identity and disrupt the hierarchical structures of ethics and morality that are the heart of traditional religions. The internet is seen as a product that could destroy the traditional values of Islam[4].

Despite concerns about the erosion of traditional ethical values, the use of social media as a medium for practicing religion has become increasingly unstoppable. The high interest in using technology for religious practices, as noted by Ngainun Naim (2017), is influenced by the spiritual dimension present in society, particularly among urban communities, which leads to a high interest in religious matters. One indicator of this is the proliferation of spirituality websites. In the complexity of modern life, society seems to still crave spiritual values[5]. The spirituality of modern society has unique characteristics that shift traditional spiritual values, such as the tendency to use instant methods to acquire religious knowledge. In this context, social media serves as a source of inspiration for religious practices.

---

[2] David Piff dan Margit Warburg (2005). *Chapter 6: Seeking for Truth*, dalam Morten T. Hojsgaardan Margit Warburg, *Religion and Cyberspace*, Routledge.

[3] Hackett, R. I. J. (2006). Religion and the Internet. *Diogenes*, *53*(3), 67–76. DOI: **10.1177/0392192106069015**

[4] Spigelman, S. (2000). *Islam and Internet: The Correlation Between Islamic Religion and Internet Diffusion*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

[5] Ngainun Naim (2017). *Kebangkitan Spiritualitas Masyarakat Modern*, in *Kalam: Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2013, pp. 237-258.

One example of using social media for religious purposes is the search for practical prayers. The public utilizes social media as a reference for finding the prayers they need. This has led to the phenomenon of social media accounts with millions of followers providing content related to prayers and practical rituals for various purposes. In the era of social media, audiences or followers no longer consider religious authority as one of the factors in acquiring religious knowledge. The main considerations are the accessibility and practicality of religious sources that they can easily access[6].

Based on the background above, this study will examine the phenomenon of searching for prayers on social media for instant and practical purposes. The study aims to explore the impact of searching for and experiencing practical prayers and rituals on social media by examining the content related to these prayers and the responses from followers to such content. Further, this study will analyze the impact of using practical prayers found on social media on followers' perceptions of the power of prayer.

This research is a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. Data for the study were collected from two TikTok accounts, *@melizaarnelia* and *@ajiepangestu*, and one Instagram account, *@tausiahtiktok*. Data was collected by mapping the content from these three social media accounts that contained guidance on practical prayers or daily rituals. Subsequently, the content related to these practical prayers was categorized into three topics: first, prayers and rituals related to financial prosperity; second, prayers and rituals related to romance and marriage; and third, prayers and rituals for overcoming daily anxiety. The data collected in this study will be analyzed using Jean Baudrillard's theory of Simulacra and Hyperreality.

Jean Baudrillard's theory of Simulacra and Hyperreality was chosen for this study considering that the social media accounts examined often use advertising narratives and language to attract the attention of audiences. One example of advertising narratives used by the three TikTok accounts is: "There Will Be 10 Million in Your Bank Account in 2 Hours from Now," "Spin 3x, Your Pain Will Heal, Your Dreams Will Come True," "Watch Till the End, Unexpected Rezeki Will Come," which are posts from the @tausiahtiktok account with 2,027 contents and 391,000 followers[7].

Results and Discussion
Theory of Simulacra

Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) explores the processes by which signs and symbols evolve, detaching from their original reference points and becoming autonomous realities in themselves. In this influential work, Baudrillard outlines four distinct stages that describe how representations of reality change and

---

[6] Badrul Munir Chair, Wawaysadhya, and Tri Utami Oktafiani (2024). *Cyber-Religion and the Issue of Religious Authority: How Indonesian Youth Learn Religion through Social Media?*, in *Al-Adalah*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2024), DOI: https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v27i1.440.

[7] https://www.instagram.com/tausiahtiktok/

progressively distance themselves from the actual, leading to what he calls "simulation."

The first stage, Representation, refers to a direct reflection of reality. In this phase, the image or sign is closely aligned with what it represents, acting like a mirror that reflects the deep, underlying truth. For example, a painting or a religious ritual in its traditional form serves as a faithful representation of a certain truth, belief, or reality. It still maintains a direct connection to its origins, whether through artistic interpretation or religious texts. Baudrillard uses the example of the classical map, where the map is a precise, though scaled-down, representation of the territory it covers. The image is grounded in reality, offering an authentic depiction of the world[8]. At this stage, there is a clear and conscious relationship between the symbol and the reality it mimics.

In the second stage, Masking and Distortion, the image begins to move away from being a mere reflection of reality and starts to mask or distort it. The image no longer serves to represent truth directly but rather introduces alterations or omissions that shift the understanding of what is real. This stage is characterized by the manipulation of the image, which could be for purposes of idealization, propaganda, or artistic reinterpretation. The reality is no longer simply presented but is selectively portrayed or altered to make it seem more palatable or attractive, though not necessarily true. An example Baudrillard might point to is how advertisements or media can distort real-world problems, masking the social and economic issues behind idealized depictions of products, beauty, or happiness. The symbol or sign moves away from its original connection to reality, presenting a version of reality that hides its true essence.

The third stage, the Illusion of Reality, represents a more profound break from authentic reality. The image no longer hides or distorts reality subtly; it begins to create its own form of reality. This stage is marked by a process where the image or sign doesn't just mask the truth—it becomes the truth itself. The distinction between the sign and the reality it represents becomes increasingly blurred. Baudrillard uses the example of the media and its coverage of events. Media doesn't just present events; it constructs them, often shaping reality through public perception, sensationalism, or narrative framing. In this stage, people start believing the image is real. The symbol or representation appears so convincing that it overshadows any other understanding of reality. It leads individuals to experience a fabricated, mediated version of the world that feels just as real—if not more so—than the actual reality.

The last stage, Detachment from Reality, marks the ultimate stage, where the image or sign bears no relationship to any original reality. At this stage, the simulation has completely detached from the real and has come to exist in its own right. Baudrillard

---

[8] Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by Sheila FariaGlaser. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press.

argues that in this final stage, the image doesn't just mimic or distort reality; it has become a reality. An example of this is the phenomenon of virtual worlds or digital simulations, where users engage in entirely fabricated environments that bear no connection to the physical world. In such cases, the simulation is experienced as a complete reality by those involved, and the distinction between the virtual and the real becomes irrelevant. The proliferation of virtual experiences in social media, video games, and online entertainment exemplifies this stage, where simulations not only replace real-world experiences but also offer a new mode of existence. This detachment signals the point where the "real" has become obsolete in the face of simulations experienced as more genuine than reality itself.

These stages collectively show how signs, representations, and symbols evolve in the digital and media-driven age, ultimately leading to a world where the line between the real and the simulated is increasingly difficult to distinguish. Baudrillard's analysis of simulacra and simulation offers a profound understanding of how modern media and technology contribute to this process, particularly how they influence society's perception of religion, culture, and even personal identity.

Hasil dan Pembahasan

Fase seperempat abad atau yang sering dikenal dengan istilah *quarter life crisis* merupakan masa ketika seseorang mengalami kecemasan terhadap kemampuan diri serta kebingungan dalam menentukan arah hidup. Istilah *quarter life crisis* pertama kali diperkenalkan oleh Alexandra Robbins dan Abby Wilner pada tahun 2001 berdasarkan hasil penelitian mereka terhadap kalangan muda di Amerika Serikat yang memasuki awal abad ke-21. Istilah ini digunakan untuk menggambarkan krisis emosional dan eksistensial yang dialami individu muda ketika bertransisi dari masa remaja menuju kedewasaan. Menurut Karpika dan Widiyani (2021), *quarter life crisis* adalah fase ketika individu mengalami permasalahan interpersonal akibat adanya ketidaksesuaian (*incongruence*) antara gambaran diri ideal (*ideal self*) dengan realitas diri yang sebenarnya (*real self*). Pada masa ini, individu memiliki keinginan dan harapan yang ideal seperti teman-teman sebayanya, namun dalam kenyataannya masih berada dalam proses menuju kemandirian, misalnya menyelesaikan pendidikan atau mencari kestabilan karier. Ketidaksesuaian tersebut menimbulkan rasa cemas terhadap masa depan, ketakutan akan kegagalan, serta perasaan kehilangan arah hidup [9]. Fenomena ini juga sering disertai dengan munculnya gejala emosional seperti kegelisahan, stres, dan ketidakmampuan dalam mengambil keputusan penting.

---

[9] I Puti Karpika and Ni Wayan Widiyani Segel, "Quarter Life Crisis Terhadap Mahasiswa Studi Kasus Di Fakultas Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas PGRI Mahadewa Indonesia," *Widyadari* 22, no. 2 (2021): 513–27, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5550458.

Hyperreality in Religion

Umberto Eco (1986) and Jean Baudrillard (1988) use the term hyperreality to describe how human perception of the world has increasingly relied on the simulation of reality since the development of information technology. In hyperreality, there is a tendency for the audience to accept signs and symbols disseminated through information technology, which have detached from, and even surpassed, their cognitive meaning, making the simulated reality seem more real than reality itself. Therefore, this phenomenon is referred to as hyperreal. "Hyper" means a dimension that goes beyond the normal state. In other words, hyperreality refers to a reality where there is an extra dimension to virtual reality that surpasses normal physical reality[10].

Hyperreality is not only found in the world of advertising but also in the realm of religion. Recently, a new trend has emerged called "hyper-real religions," which refers to religions and spiritualities that mix elements of religious traditions with popular culture[11]. These "hyper-real religions" exhibit characteristics of a synthetic spirituality that draws from both traditional religious practices and modern entertainment media. As Eco (1986) notes, the line between reality and its representation becomes blurred in hyperreality, creating a new form of cultural expression that is both familiar and radically new. In this context, religious symbols and rituals are often adapted to fit contemporary desires and the needs of modern audiences, leading to the creation of spiritual experiences that are simultaneously novel and familiar.

In many instances, the hyperreal manifestation of religion occurs on social media platforms, where religious practices are commodified and presented to audiences in ways that make them accessible and appealing. These representations are often exaggerated or stylized to cater to the demands of the digital audience, creating a form of religious experience that is both instant and immersive. Baudrillard (1988) explains that in hyperreality, what is presented to the audience is not the reality itself but a simulation that is more engaging and compelling than the real world. On platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, religious content is often designed to attract followers through catchy visuals, dramatic language, and simplified messages that resonate with an audience seeking quick answers to existential questions[12].

One example of hyperreal religious content can be found in the proliferation of online spiritual guides and influencers who use social media to offer their audiences prayers, affirmations, and rituals. While grounded in traditional religious themes, these practices are presented in a manner that emphasizes instant transformation and personal empowerment. Followers are invited to engage with these practices not through a long-term spiritual journey but through immediate, almost transactional engagements. For

---

[10] John Tiffin. (2001). *The HyperReality Paradigm*, in John Tiffin & Nobuyoshi Terashima (ed). *Hyperreality; Paradigm for the Third Millennium*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 41-42

[11] Adam Possamai (ed). 2012. *Handbook of Hyper-Real Religions*. Leiden: Brill.

[12] Baudrillard, J. (1988). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

example, a TikTok influencer might post a video claiming that watching it will bring a person immediate financial success or romantic fulfillment through a prayer or affirmation[13]. This focus on rapid gratification aligns with the hyperreal concept, where the power of the ritual is not in its spiritual depth but in its ability to deliver a quick, tangible result that feels more real than the lived experience of religion.

In the case of online hyper-real religions, spiritual content is often marketed as "life hacks" that can solve everyday problems, such as anxiety, loneliness, or financial instability, without addressing the deeper questions of existence or faith[14]. Furthermore, hyper-real religions often present a kind of spirituality that is detached from the communal and moral obligations traditionally associated with religious practice. Baudrillard discusses how, in the age of simulation, societal functions—including religious practices—are transformed into spectacles that serve as entertainment rather than meaningful rituals. This process of commodification allows spiritual practices to be sold as products that promise personal benefits without requiring commitment or community involvement.

This phenomenon of hyper-real religion, where traditional religious practices are reinterpreted and re-packaged for the digital age, raises important questions about the future of religious identity. As Baudrillard asserts, the distinction between reality and its simulation is increasingly difficult to discern today. For individuals engaging with hyper-real religious content, the experience may feel more immediate, more tangible, and more "real" than traditional forms of worship or spiritual community. Yet, this experience is, by its very nature, detached from the deeper rituals and relationships that have historically grounded religious life. Thus, while hyper-real religions offer a new form of spiritual engagement, they also contribute to the dissolution of the traditional religious experience rooted in faith and practice[15].

In *Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-Real Testament* (2005), Adam Possamai explores the complex relationship between religion and popular culture, focusing on how media representations reshape religious experiences[16]. He argues that religious symbols and practices are no longer rooted in their original contexts but have been reimagined and commodified to align with the logic of popular culture. Possamai uses the concept of hyperreality to explain how these religious elements are increasingly detached from their authentic meanings. In transforming these symbols into consumable content, the media creates a new, hyperreal version of religion that is

---

[13] Baudrillard, J. (1988). p.87

[14] Eco, U. (1986). *Travels in Hyperreality*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. p. 215

[15] Baudrillard, J. (1988).

[16] Adam Possamai, (2005). *Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-real Testament*. Brussels: Peter Lang.

more about spectacle than substance. This process challenges our understanding of what constitutes genuine religious experience in an age dominated by media.

At the core of Possamai's argument is applying Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality to religious depictions in the media. The media tends to amplify and sensationalize religious figures, often emphasizing their public personas rather than their doctrinal or spiritual roles. This distortion is not accidental but part of a broader trend in which the sacred becomes part of the media-driven spectacle. The media has transformed religious symbols into something to be consumed and enjoyed, much like any other form of entertainment.

This commodification of religion is also evident in the way spiritual practices are marketed and redefined in the media. By reframing these practices as secular activities, the media commodifies them, making them more accessible to a wider audience but, in doing so, stripping them of the deeper cultural and spiritual values they once held. In addition to the reimagining of religious practices, Possamai explores the intersection between celebrity culture and religion and how media figures who adopt religious identities do so not necessarily out of faith but to enhance their public image. In this way, they embody a "hyperreal religiosity," where religion is treated as another aspect of the celebrity persona rather than a serious spiritual commitment. This phenomenon speaks to a larger trend in which spirituality is increasingly linked to consumerism and spectacle, rather than genuine belief.

Religion is no longer confined to traditional spaces or practices; instead, it is shaped by the demands and structures of popular culture. This shift calls for reconsidering how we define and engage with religion in the modern world, acknowledging that media-driven portrayals play a significant role in shaping our understanding of spirituality.

Content of Prayers and Practices on Social Media

TikTok Account @melizaarnelia

The TikTok account @melizaarnelia has 922,900 followers, 20.6 million likes, and has been active on TikTok since 2020. Meliza Arnelia has written books titled *"Jangan Pernah Lelah, Ada Nikmat di Setiap Shalawat"* (Never Get Tired, There's Blessing in Every Shalawat) and *"Jangan Pernah Lelah Shalawat"* (Never Get Tired of Shalawat).[17] Meliza Arnelia consistently shares content highlighting the power of *shalawat* (Islamic blessings on the Prophet), focusing on how reciting *shalawat* can help resolve issues such as debts, jobs, personal desires, and social matters.

---

[17] https://www.tiktok.com/@melizaarnelia
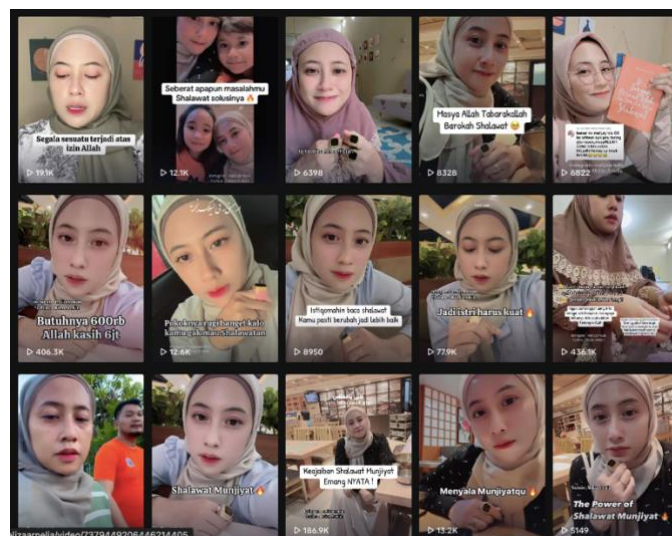
source: Tiktok.com/melizaarnelia

Table 1: Netizen Comments Supporting and Rejecting Financial Issues

The comments on the TikTok content of @melizaarnelia contain both support and opposition. In a post uploaded in 2022, Meliza shared a message stating that she had

successfully bought a car in cash by practicing *shalawat*.[18] The comment section shows more support than opposition to Meliza's message. A supportive comment was made by the TikTok user @FitriQueen, who wrote that after following Meliza's advice, her husband received a promotion. However, a dissenting comment was also made by the user @julienurlaila, who stated that it still takes effort and hard work to earn a lot of money, and *shalawat* alone is insufficient.

Table 2: Netizen Comments Supporting and Rejecting in Desired Career

In another piece of content[19], a message was shared stating that if one wants to be accepted at their dream job—specifically, Meliza mentioned aspiring to be a Civil Servant (PNS)—they should practice *shalawat* and *riyadhloh WY40H*.[20] Interestingly, a comment from the TikTok user @maubuket.id_cutimi.id reminded that *shalawat* is not for worldly purposes. However, this comment was replied to more than a year later

---

[18] https://www.tiktok.com/@melizaarnelia/video/7048785678288702747
[19] https://www.tiktok.com/@melizaarnelia/video/7100092285240495387
[20] Some 'practitioners' of devotional acts are familiar with the term WY40H, an abbreviation for *Waqiah Yasin 40 Days*. They recite Surah al-Waqiah and Yasin, practiced continuously for 40 days

---

by the TikTok user @AhmadMajmuSyarif, who disagreed with the comment and stated that someone who practiced WY40H was accepted as a Civil Servant (PNS).

Table 3: Netizen Comments Supporting and Rejecting the Problem of Anxiety

There is a noteworthy post where Meliza shares a message while showing two books she wrote. The message conveys how to deal with life's problems, particularly regarding anxiety.[21] A comment on this content was written by TikTok user @Orlando, who stated that when they recited *shalawat*, their challenges became more complex, so they stopped reciting it. After stopping and practicing something else, they felt that they were given a path and ease in their life.

---

[21] https://www.tiktok.com/@melizaarnelia/video/7411073118556409096

Tiktok Account @ajiepangestu

The TikTok account @ajiepangestu has 1.6 million followers, 60 million likes, and features the phrase "without dancing, we can still create" on its profile page.[22] The account's pinned content, which focuses on dhikr (remembrance of God), the virtues of salawat (sending blessings upon the Prophet), and practices for seeking forgiveness for sins, has garnered the highest number of likes. Ajie Pangestu first uploaded content on February 28, 2021.[23]
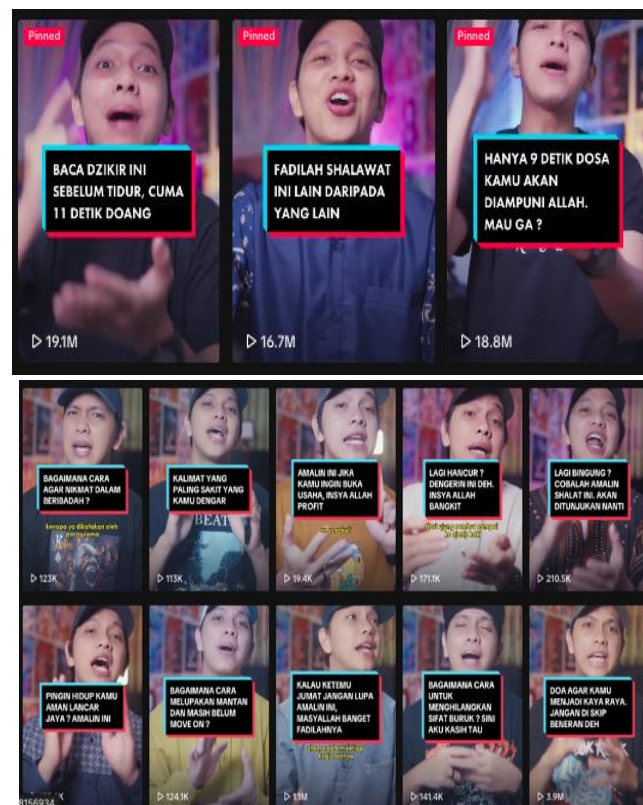
Source: tiktok.com/ajiepangestu

Table 4: Komentar netizen pada salah satu konten @ajiepngestu yang mendukung dan menolak dalam permasalahan keuangan.

---

[22] It is obvious that he tries to make a difference from the current TikTok trend of delivering any kind of messages accompanied by dancing or movements; these phrases capture the essence of engaging in creative work or expression without relying on dancing.
[23] https://www.tiktok.com/@ajiepanqestu/video/6934337851593215234?lang=en

Financial Problems

Similar to Meliza Arnelia, Ajie also shares content featuring messages about prayers and practices to resolve financial problems.[24] Supportive comments on Ajie's messages include one from the TikTok account @liftia_25, who prays for Ajie to enter heaven for spreading such prayers. Another comment from the TikTok account @IG:nurulmagfirahz asks if it's permissible to use a different prayer than the one Ajie mentioned in the content. There are also comments questioning the source of references from TikTok accounts @BABA, @cece, and @war,s2nd. Additionally, TikTok account @afdal_smoking_skills expresses skepticism about the prayers recommended by Ajie, arguing that God already determines sustenance.

---

[24] https://www.tiktok.com/@ajiepanqestu/video/7234128360962673925

Table 5: Netizens' comments on one of @ajiepngestu's posts, supporting and opposing the hope for divine protection and safety in this world.

Another content shared by Ajie includes messages about the benefits of prayers and practices that Muslims can perform. Among these benefits are protection from disturbances by jinn and demons, safety from theft and fire, and protection from sudden death.[25] Ajie consistently advises viewers to save the content so it can be regularly practiced.[26] This message was well-received by a TikTok account with a smiley emoticon and garnered 5,650 likes. However, other comments from TikTok accounts @robbie_berkah_teknik and @SoulScape questioned the reliable religious sources or proofs (*dalil*) supporting Ajie's messages.

Ajie created content featuring prayers and practices intended to ensure that after a person dies, they will not immediately face the punishment of the grave but will first meet with the Prophet Muhammad[27]. There is a comment from the TikTok account @FR,Frepalestiners, which reads, "VT 2024 (the commenter seems to have made a typo, as the video was created in 2023), but Alhamdulillah on August 22, 2024, I received this VT," showing support for Ajie's message. Several other comments also question the sources and references, such as the TikTok account @damr, which suggests that any religious preaching should be accompanied by evidence from Islamic texts.

Ins*tagram Account @tausiahtiktok*

An Instagram account named @tausiahtiktok has 2,027 posts and is followed by 391,000 users.[28] The @tausiahtiktok account is similar to the TikTok accounts of @melizaarnelia and @ajiepangestu in conveying messages about practices to address various issues. The content includes invitations to listen to the call to prayer, play verses from the Quran, and recite various types of *shalawat*.
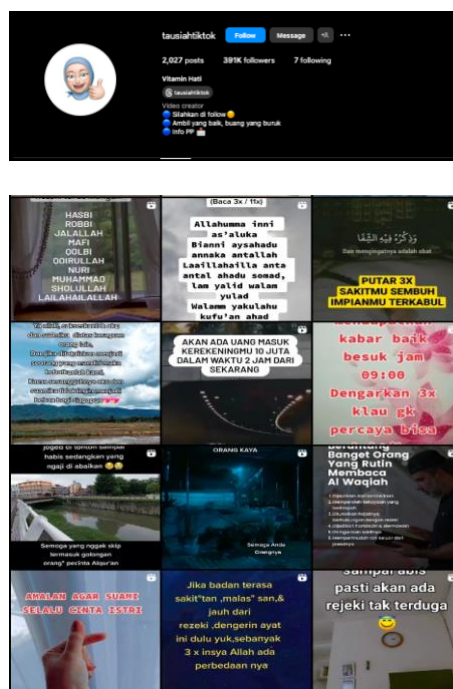
source: Instagram.com/tausiahtiktok

---

[27] https://www.tiktok.com/@ajiepanqestu/video/7257532588288396550?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc

[28] https://www.instagram.com/tausiahtiktok/

Oddly enough, the comments on various posts from the Instagram account @tausiahtiktok show little opposition. Most users accept and affirm the messages shared. For example, in one post from August 9, 2023, which reads, "Believe it or not, if you read this message exactly 3 hours from now, you will receive the good news you've been waiting for. If you believe it, type 'Aamiin,'[29] there were 15 comments of "Aamiin" and no comments of rejection. Similarly, a post from September 13, 2024, stating, "Tomorrow is Friday, September 13. Your home will be flooded with blessings if your fingers are not busy; write 'Aamiin'," also received 15 comments affirming the message.[30]

source: Instagram.com/tausiahtiktok

Simulation and Hyperreality in Prayer and Religious Deeds Content on Social Media

According to Baudrillard (1981), there are four stages of imaging in simulation, which contrast with representation:

1. **Representation**: An image reflects a deep reality like a mirror.

2. **Masking and Distortion**: The image hides and falsifies a deep reality.

3. **Illusion of Reality**: The image hides the fact that there is no reality, presenting itself as its appearance, thereby subordinating reality.

4. **Detachment from Reality**: The image has no relationship whatsoever to any reality.

---

[29] https://www.instagram.com/p/CvuDalQpaBt/

[30] https://www.instagram.com/p/C_0B8-Bzj1Z/

Representation Stage: Reflection of Reality

As the first stage, the representation stage can be observed in the content shared by TikTok accounts *@melizaarnelia* and *@ajiepangestu*, as well as the Instagram account *@tausiahtiktok*. Prayers and religious deeds are portrayed as devotion from a servant to God. This is evident in the content created by these accounts. On TikTok, *@melizaarnelia* emphasizes the importance of *shalawat* (invocations) in addressing various problems, such as financial or work-related challenges. Meanwhile, *@ajiepangestu* highlights *zikr* (remembrance of God) as a form of protection against *jinn* disturbances, which are presented as a cause of anxiety. The Instagram account *@tausiahtiktok* contains content encouraging users to listen to the *adhan* (call to prayer), read specific *surahs* of the Qur'an, and increase their invocation of *shalawat*. However, even within this stage, digital platforms frame these practices to prioritize accessibility and engagement. The content mirrors traditional Islamic teachings but is tailored to fit the fast-paced nature of social media consumption, signalling a transition toward the next stage.

Masking and Distortion: Concealing and Modifying Reality

For religious practitioners, prayer has rules, conditions, and pillars that must be fulfilled for acceptance. Prayer is not merely words spoken; effort is also required to realize the intention of the prayer. As described by Baudrillard in the second stage—masking and distortion of deep reality—the content from these three accounts demonstrates this stage. The second simulation stage reveals a shift in how these religious practices are represented. The image obscures the deeper spiritual realities underlying these practices at this stage. Masking is evident in the TikTok account *@melizaarnelia*, where personal testimonies reinforce spiritual messages, such as claiming that *shalawat* practices led to buying a new car with cash. However, the content predominantly emphasizes *shalawat* for clearly defined purposes, presenting it as a means to achieve particular outcomes. Meliza Arnelia also promotes books she has written, which contain *shalawat* practices and ways to address life's challenges through a spiritual approach. Nevertheless, comments from netizens remind viewers that *shalawat* should not be used for materialistic purposes.

Similarly, on TikTok *@ajiepangestu*, prayers, and specific deeds are presented as solutions to specific issues, such as protection from the torment of the grave or disturbances from *jinn*. The emphasis on instant results in specific religious practices illustrates reality distortion or modification at the second simulation stage. Religious deeds and prayers start to be simplified into tools for instantly solving problems.

Third Stage: The Displacement of Reality by Images

Based on the findings from the comments on content created by @*melizaarnelia, @ajiepangestu,* and @*tausiahtiktok*, netizens are mostly more focused on searching for the right prayers and deeds on social media than on making efforts to solve their problems. In this context, prayers and deeds are perceived as problem-solving tools for life's challenges. This reflects the third stage of simulation, where there is no reality, only images. The image that highlights the importance of applying the prayers and deeds showcased in the uploaded content is demonstrated by all three accounts.

The content on the Instagram account @tausiahtiktok is similar to that of the TikTok accounts @melizaarnelia and @ajiepangestu, featuring spiritual practices such as listening to the *adhan*, reciting verses from the Qur'an, and engaging in *shalawat*. However, @*tausiahtiktok* adopts a more interactive approach by inviting netizens to participate by writing "Aamiin" in the comments section as a way to seek blessings. Followers are promised to receive good news within three hours if they write "Aamiin." The account also leverages the momentum of Fridays, a significant milestone to encourage rituals and connect them with blessings that can be obtained through these practices and comments.

On TikTok, @*melizaarnelia* portrays *shalawat* as a practical tool rather than a ritual or form of worship. Meanwhile, @*ajiepangestu* presents prayers in his content as a new form of belief for some netizens. Many followers trust the content based on its popularity on TikTok rather than on guidance from religious figures. Ajie Pangestu consistently encourages users to save and share his videos so they can practice them repeatedly. This approach promotes religious practices and increases engagement and virality, boosting his recognition among netizens.

According to Baudrillard, in this third stage, the content of prayers and deeds is no longer directly connected to religious sources but is perceived as real by netizens. The prayers and deeds have become simulations because netizens trust the effects portrayed in the content more than the original practices themselves.

Fourth Stage: Hyperreality in Religious Practices

Furthermore, the invitation to write "Aamiin" in the comments section creates a hyperreal sense of worship that feels 'real.' Spiritual reality depends on digital interactions in cyberspace rather than actual religious practices. At the stage of hyperreality, social media creates religious teachings and practices that seem more real than the actual religious practices themselves.

However, some netizens have noted that the prayers and deeds shared in these posts do not help solve their problems. They emphasize that nothing in this world happens instantly; everything requires a process. Meanwhile, the content created by

these accounts presents an image of immediate results. Instant spirituality emerges when religion is expected to provide solutions for all problems and fulfill all human desires, which is perceived as achievable through prayers and deeds obtained via social media

Conclusion

The results of the study show that there are two types of responses from netizens' comments on the content: the first group, which proves the success and achievement after practicing certain prayers, and the second, a group that responds by sharing the lack of change they experienced after practicing those prayers. The analysis of this study concludes that the content of practical prayers on social media plays a role similar to advertisements, containing hyperreality in its signification to attract audience attention. The group that successfully practiced a prayer or certain ritual shared testimonials about their success, creating a perspective that these rituals and prayers are like products that can be applied practically and instantly bring results. The impact of this view is the emergence of instant spirituality, placing religion as a reciprocal relationship. Meanwhile, the group that experienced failure in achieving instant results from those prayers and rituals tends to believe that prayer is ineffective

Bibliography

Alatas, Ismail Fajrie. (2021). *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press

Anggini, Mutiara Dwi., & Jamiati KN. (2023). "Fenomena Cyber Religion sebagai Ekspresi Keberagamaan oleh Habib Jafar." Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 4140-4149.

Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press.

Baudrillard, J. (1988). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Chair, Badrul Munir., Wawaysadhya, and Tri Utami Oktafiani (2024). *Cyber-Religion and the Issue of Religious Authority: How Indonesian Youth Learn Religion through Social Media?*, in *Al-Adalah*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2024), DOI: https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v27i1.440

Cotton, S., Zebracki, K., Rosenthal, S. L., Tsevat, J., & Drotar, D. (2006). "Religion/Spirituality and Adolescent Health Outcomes: A Review." J. Adolesc. Health, 38, 472–480.

Eco, U. (1986). *Travels in Hyperreality*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Flew, Terry. (2002). *New Media: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hojsgaard, Morten, & Warburg, Margit (Eds.). (2005). *Religion and Cyberspace*. New York: Routledge.

Husein, Fatimah and Martin Slama. (2018). "Online piety and its discontent: revisiting Islamic anxieties on Indonesian social media." INDONESIA AND THE MALAY WORLD, 2018 VOL. 46, NO. 134, pp. 80–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1415056

Possamai, Adam. (2005). *Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-real Testament*. Brussels: Peter Lang.

Possamai, Adam. (ed). 2012. *Handbook of Hyper-Real Religions*. Leiden: Brill.

Tiffin, John. & Nobuyoshi Terashima (ed). 2001. *Hyperreality; Paradigm for the Third Millennium*. London and New York: Routledge.

Wawaysadhya, et al. (2022). "Moderasi Beragama di Media Sosial: Narasi Inklusivisme dalam Dakwah." Al-Munir Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam, Volume 13 Nomor 02, Juni-Desember 2022, pp.118-132. http://ejournal.uinib.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/almunir/article/view/4601/0