

The Implications of Religious Content on Social Media for the Religious Behaviour of Students in Gresik

Mohammad Ahyan Yusuf Sya'bani¹, Satria Apree Nugroho²

^{1,2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik, Indonesia

ahyanyusuf@umg.ac.id¹

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to detail the model of the implications of religious content on social media and the religious behaviour of students. The urgency of this research is, first, that there has been no previous study focusing on the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour. Second, it can realise inclusive and tolerant religious behaviour among students based on religious content that is open from various perspectives. Third, minimising negative activities (juvenile delinquency) often carried out by students both on and off campus. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The data collection technique used interviews with informants, observations, and documentation related to the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour. The data analysis used the stages of data collection, data reduction, data display, and data verification. The research results show that the implications of religious content on social media on students' religious behaviour are divided into three models: psychological implications, cognitive implications, and emotional implications, which then give rise to religious behaviour categorised into three types: worship-related religious behaviour, social religious behaviour, and reconstructive religious behaviour. The implication of the results of this study is to find three models of implications of religious content on social media, including the psychological implications model, cognitive implications, and emotional implications, which then have an impact on giving rise to three categorizations of students' religious behavior, namely religious behavior of worship, social religious behavior, and reconstructive religious behavior.

Keywords : *Implications, Religious Content, Religious Behaviour.*

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan secara detail model implikasi konten religi media sosial dan perilaku keagamaan mahasiswa. Urgensi penelitian yaitu pertama, belum ada penelitian sebelumnya yang fokus membahas implikasi konten religi media sosial pada perilaku keagamaan mahasiswa. Kedua, mampu mewujudkan perilaku keagamaan mahasiswa yang inklusif dan toleran berdasarkan konten religi yang bersifat terbuka dari berbagai sudut pandang. Ketiga, meminimalisasi kegiatan negatif (kenakalan remaja) yang sering dilakukan mahasiswa baik saat di kampus maupun di luar kampus. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi hermeneutik. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara kepada informan, observasi, dan dokumentasi terkait implikasi konten religi media sosial pada perilaku keagamaan mahasiswa. Analisis datanya menggunakan tahapan pengumpulan data, reduksi data, data display dan verifikasi data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan implikasi konten religi media sosial pada perilaku keagamaan mahasiswa terbagi menjadi tiga model yaitu model implikasi psikologis, implikasi kognitif, dan implikasi emosional kemudian melahirkan perilaku keagamaan yang terbagi dalam tiga kategorisasi yaitu perilaku keagamaan ibadah, perilaku keagamaan sosial, dan perilaku keagamaan rekonstruktif. Implikasi hasil penelitian ini adalah menemukan tiga model implikasi konten religi media sosial di antaranya model implikasi psikologis, implikasi kognitif, dan implikasi emosional kemudian berdampak

memunculkan tiga kategorisasi perilaku keagamaan mahasiswa yaitu perilaku keagamaan ibadah, perilaku keagamaan sosial, dan perilaku keagamaan rekonstruktif.

Kata kunci : Implikasi, Konten Religi, Perilaku Keagamaan.

PENDAHULUAN

Religious content on social media has become an interesting topic to discuss, considering that recently individuals have been able to create personal religious-based content (Shafiq & Parveen, 2023) on social media easily, quickly, and with high mobility. An easy example is the social media platform Facebook, which already has over 1 billion (1,184,000,000) subscribers, not to mention others (Shabur & Siddiki, 2024). Even in a very short time, social media technology has developed rapidly, changing all ways of communicating and interacting with others, ultimately opening new channels and more opportunities for collaboration (engagement) and participation with anyone (cooperation) (Pangrazio & Sefton-Green, 2021).

The variety of social media platforms, from Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, and many more, has led to religious content spreading massively on social media, especially since Covid-19 (Atwa et al., 2024). Online media has gained immense popularity (Lamba et al., 2023). The increasing use of social media (Latif, 2022), including the emergence of various religious content, has turned social media into a new religion for the millennial community (Nurudin, 2018). This means that society, including students, is given open, easy, and quick access to information, including religious knowledge and teachings.

All of this is certainly in stark contrast to the numerous incidents involving students in various deviations (juvenile delinquency) that are increasingly occurring (Haddar et al., 2023). Recently, there was a raid and confiscation of dozens of motor vehicles involved in illegal street racing by the Gresik Police (DP, 2024). Several of the detained individuals were also students from various educational institutions in Gresik. The city of Gresik, which has earned the titles of a city of santri, a city of saints, and an industrial city, does not seem to live up to these titles when there are still many shops selling large-scale alcoholic beverages that are easily accessible to students (Rosidin, 2024).

In early January 2024, the Gresik Civil Service Police Unit conducted a raid due to the large number of bottles of alcoholic beverages being sold. The level of deviation (misconduct) committed by students raises significant questions, especially considering the ease and speed of accessing religious content on social media. Therefore, in order to address this issue, it is important to conduct research (analysis) on the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour.

This research focuses on three formulated questions: 1) What types of religious content on social media are most intensively accessed by students?; 2) What are the implications of religious content on social media for the religious

behaviour of students in Gresik? (Including identifying several models of implications that occur); 3) What do students do in response after accessing religious content on social media?; therefore, research on the implications of religious content on social media for the religious behaviour of students is very important and urgently needed to be conducted.

The aims and implications of this research are: first, there has been no previous research specifically and focused on discussing the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour. Most previous research has been conducted on social media-based learning, the mental state of social media users (Shafiq & Parveen, 2023), and addiction to social media use. Second, it can foster inclusive and tolerant religious behaviour among students based on religious content that is open from various perspectives. Third, minimising negative activities (bad behaviour) carried out by students both on and off campus.

METHODS

The research process begins with the determination of the research method used, namely the qualitative method with a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Gonçalves, 2022) to uncover the meaning of an event's implications of religious content on social media on students' religious behaviour. The process of determining the research location is at Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik. The selection of the research location is based on Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik's advantages in virtual classes and e-learning through an LMS (Learning Management System). The object of the research is all processes related to the implications of religious content on social media on students' religious behaviour, while the subjects of the research (Creswell, 2015) are several informants who can provide accurate information related to the focus of this research, among whom are students, lecturers, and educational staff within the environment of Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik.

The data collection process uses three techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation (Braun et al., 2021). The data that has been successfully collected is then subjected to data analysis. Data analysis uses the interactive model method by Miles and Hubberman. The steps are as follows: First, collect data on the implications of religious content on social media on students' religious behaviour using the three data collection techniques. Second, data reduction from all the collected data. Then, it is selected according to the research focus on the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour.

Third, data display is used to place the reduced data within the focus of each discussion. Fourth, data verification related to the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour is conducted to ensure greater validity, followed by drawing conclusions (Tracy, 2024). The validity of the data was tested using triangulation techniques (Thomas et al., 2022), specifically

triangulation of data collection techniques and triangulation of research subjects (informants), namely students, lecturers, and educational staff.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Types of Religious Content on Social Media Accessed by Students

The implications of religious content on students' religious behaviour have actually occurred on a massive scale. This means that there is a continuous process here that leads to real implications. If we look at the data from observations and documentation, most students access religious content continuously but in a varied manner, especially when supported by interview data.

According to the statement from the research conducted by Md. Abdus Shabur, social media platforms are very influential and have massive involvement in academic matters, especially in interactive learning (Shabur & Siddiki, 2024). In fact, social media is more beneficial if managed according to learning needs. Therefore, in this case, a student named Hafizah stated in an interview that she often accesses religious content in the form of short study clips by Ustadz Adi Hidayat through the TikTok platform. She does this because she likes Ustadz Adi Hidayat's way of thinking and rhetoric in answering several questions during a study session. Not only that, they often access motivational quotes from snippets of Ustadz Adi Hidayat's videos, which makes the students feel more motivated (enthusiastic) in their daily activities (studies).

On the other hand, interview data show that some students like Cornelia, Dinda, and Fachri often access religious content through Instagram in the form of short videos. Short videos containing content with themes such as "don't get tired of being a good person" and stories with the theme "God never makes mistakes in giving tests." Videos featuring someone's activities with specific religious themes make students more motivated in their religious practices. Moreover, through the TikTok platform with the FYP (For Your Page) program (Alam et al., 2025), students do not get bored watching the constantly updated short videos. Indirectly, these short videos create a continuous sense of curiosity (Rakatiwi et al., 2023) for those who access them, especially if the content is related to religion.

Short videos on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok certainly showcase a wide variety of content. The types of content include excerpts of someone's sermon (short sermons), stories, Islamic motivation, wise words, quotes from verses and hadiths, religious songs, Quran recitation, and even Arabic language learning. The variety of short videos that are frequently accessed, especially on the four main platforms, namely Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

There is a reason why students often access religious content through several main social media platforms, for example, as stated by Raisya, the main reason is the easy accessibility without requiring special and lengthy effort, because everything is at their fingertips in the form of a smartphone. Then, the majority of

increasingly accessed and favoured, possibly because it has become accustomed to appearing frequently on their feeds.

So in conclusion, the types of religious content that students frequently access are, first, short videos containing religious content on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook; second, short sermons from contemporary speakers on TikTok such as Habib Jakfar and Ustadz Adi Hidayat; third, religious songs available on YouTube and TikTok; fourth, podcasts discussing religious, social, and moral topics on YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok.

Implications of Religious Content on Social Media for the Religious Behaviour of Students in Gresik (Model of Implications that Occur)

First, the issue of student responses or opinions regarding religious content that has been going viral lately and receiving a large number of views is presented. Some responses from students indicate that most choose to access religious content because the religious content on social media relates to their personal lives. For example, according to Zunka, they are more interested in accessing religious content about motivation framed with religious values rather than religious content about sermons and studies. He tends to prefer podcast programs that tell stories about motivation in life, especially someone's experiences.

The model of implications arising from religious content on social media on students' religious behaviour can actually be classified into several main aspects, such as, first, psychological implications (triggering elements). Several articles explain the close relationship currently between internet technology and education (Ng et al., 2024). Large platforms like ChatGPT are also widely used in practices supporting learning.

The results of interviews with students explain that this model of psychological implications occurs in the form of their acknowledgement that high intensity in accessing religious content will increase their enthusiasm for worship. The psychological implications described by Rossita include the spirituality that emerges after accessing religious content on YouTube to perform other acts of worship, such as prayer.

Other data show the existence of another model of implications besides the ones mentioned above, namely, cognitive implications. The cognitive implications referred to are the impacts that occur due to access to religious content on a person's knowledge and way of thinking (Makransky & Petersen, 2021). These cognitive implications manifest as an increase in a person's knowledge and insights due to accessing several religious contents.

According to the students' statements, some mentioned that after frequently accessing religious content in the form of short lectures from several religious figures, such as Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Habib Jakfar, and Ustadz Adi Hidayat, through TikTok, their religious knowledge has increased. Diana stated that she actually gained a lot of new knowledge about religious issues from the short lectures of

religious leaders who are active on social media like TikTok. The new material she obtained includes an understanding of prayer, which is mostly taught in university classes only in terms of its execution, but through TikTok, she gained a lot of knowledge about the benefits of prayer in daily activities.

Thirdly, there is the model of affective (emotional) implications that emphasises religious content impacting one's mood to motivate someone to act based on emotional impulses (You et al., 2026).. A student stated that they actually gained awareness to be careful in their actions and consider all possible consequences from a short lecture by a teacher on YouTube discussing the relationship between faith and deeds (charity). Even some students were moved to do more to help others by a short video that told the story of a physically disabled person who still wanted to help a physically normal person walk, even though he himself was in a state of need; this was found on Instagram.

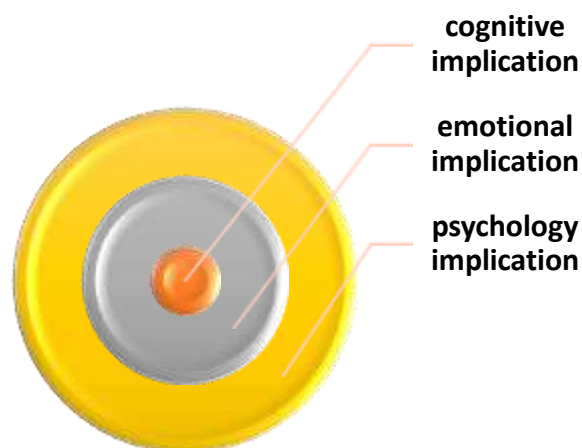


Figure 2. Model of Religious Content Implications

So, if we conclude here that the implications of religious content on social media for the religious behaviour of students in Gresik, the implications model that occurs is formed into three models: the psychological implication model, the cognitive implication model, and the affective (emotional) implication model.

Forms of Student Religious Behavioural Responses After Accessing Religious Content on Social Media

Three models of the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour have been discussed, followed by actual religious behaviour demonstrated by students after several instances (intensity) of accessing religious content on social media. At this stage, the researcher identifies students' responses through direct statements (confessions) from them via interviews or by using documentation and observation methods.

The religious behaviour referred to is an action that consciously arises within a person based on or influenced by known religious material, thereby internalising in the affective aspect of that person (Alamgir et al., 2026). The emergence of morality or good deeds (religious behaviour) is substantially very likely influenced by a person's religiosity (Shimizu & Sakurai, 2026). The higher a person's spirituality, the better their actions will be; conversely, the lower the level of spirituality, the worse their actions will be.

The interview with Firda provided a statement and confession that after accessing religious content, she became more honest and did not want to lie. This is because she often watches sermons by Ustadz Kholid Basalamah. This is a real example of religious behaviour that emerges after students access religious content, even if only through social media platforms like TikTok. The honest behaviour practised by Firda is evidence that, through information and communication technology or the internet, a person can consistently exhibit religious behaviour, as demonstrated in their daily activities.

Furthermore, the data is supported by Vivi Apriliana's statement that she has changed; initially, she often prayed late, but after frequently accessing religious songs on YouTube and listening to the advice in the sermons of Ustadz Adi Hidayat and Felix Siauw, she now always prays on time. The change in religious behaviour in the context of worship experienced by Vivi honestly reflects how a brief piece of advice from someone on social media can alter a person's cycle of religious behaviour.

Other data shows that the explanation provided by Azizah actually led to an understanding that there are also those who respond to the implications of religious content by repeatedly accessing religious content on social media because they believe that religious content can fulfil their spiritual needs and religious knowledge. The behaviour of repeatedly accessing religious content reflects a reconstructive religious behaviour aimed at finding inner satisfaction. Another meaning refers to it as a reorientative religious behaviour to constantly renew a person's religiosity.

Not only that, there are actually many other forms of religious behaviour among students that emerge as an implication of access to religious content on social media. Another example is that some students acknowledge that their religious experiences lead to obedience and compliance in worship practices as a form of evidence of their faith in God and social behaviour as a practice or consequence of the beliefs that have been deeply rooted in their hearts. Obedience is usually manifested in the practice of sharia (worship), such as paying zakat and fasting during the month of Ramadan. Not to mention their obedience in refraining from actions prohibited by religion, such as adultery, gambling, and others.

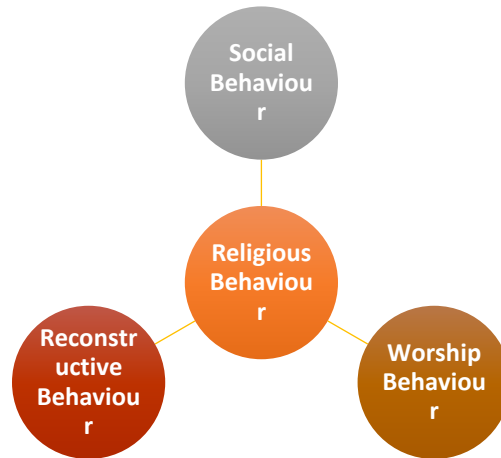


Figure 3. Forms of Students' Religious Behaviour

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the response and religious behaviour of students towards access to religious content give rise to three main criteria: first, worship behaviour (such as praying on time, some being diligent in reciting the Quran after frequently accessing religious content, often participating in study circles and sending blessings); second, social religious behaviour (such as being honest, keeping one's speech from hurting others, being helpful to others, and having high generosity); third, reconstructive or reorientative religious behaviour (such as frequently accessing religious content for spiritual satisfaction, often reviewing religious content to apply it in daily life).

CONCLUSION

The implications of religious content on social media for the religious behaviour of students in Gresik can be categorised into three main models of religious content implications: the psychological implication model, the cognitive implication model, and the emotional implication model. The psychological implication model then affiliates and manifests in students' religious behaviour in a categorisation called worship religious behaviour. The cognitive implication model ultimately manifests in students as reconstructive religious behaviour. Lastly, the emotional implication model can lead students to have social and religious behaviour, which is based on noble character.

Thus, in substance, the implications of religious content on social media for students' religious behaviour are divided into three models: the psychological implication model, the cognitive implication model, and the emotional implication model, which then give rise to religious behaviour categorised into three types: worship religious behaviour, social religious behaviour, and reconstructive religious behaviour.

REFERENCES

- Alam, S. M., Abdulhai, M., & Salehi, N. (2025). Blind Faith? User Preference and Expert Assessment of AI-Generated Religious Content. *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, 2451–2479. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3715275.3732162>
- Alamgir, A., Zaro, A., Lawabni, R., Ahmad, F., Webo, J., Alamgir, S., Saidi, M., Nwanokwale, N., Baig, M., Abdelwahab, M., Hassan, A., & Taylor, A. (2026). Religious and Spiritual Behaviors Correlated with Mental and Physical Well-Being Among American Muslims within the Twin Cities. *Journal of Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-026-02600-x>
- Atwa, H. S., El-Din, W. A. N., Kumar, A. P., Potu, B. K., Tayem, Y. I., Al-Ansari, A., Deifalla, A. S., & Shehata, M. H. (2024). Online or Face-to-Face Problem-Based Learning Tutorials? Comparing Perceptions and Preferences of Students and Tutors. *Frontiers in Education*, 9(2), 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1354494>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Boulton, E., Davey, L., & McEvoy, C. (2021). The online survey as a qualitative research tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 24(6), 641–654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1805550>
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches, Third Edition, terj., Ahmad Lintang Lazuardi*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- DP, A. (2024). *Razia Balap Liar di Kawasan Industri Gresik, Polisi Amankan 50 Motor, Disita Sampai Lebaran*. Kabarbaik.Co. <https://kabarbaik.co/razia-balap-liar-di-kawasan-industri-gresik-polisi-amankan-50-motor-disita-sampai-lebaran/>
- Gonçalves, M. (2022). The hermeneutic problem posed by digital humanities. *Journal of Theory of History*, 25(1), 136–150. <https://doi.org/10.5216/rth.v25i1.70880>
- Haddar, G. Al, Haerudin, H., Riyanto, A., & ... (2023). The revolution of islamic education thought in the era of society 5.0: Corrections and analysis of studies in islamic higher education institutions in south kalimantan. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 4(1). <http://injetel.org/index.php/12/article/view/40>
- Lamba, N., Kishore, S., & Khokhlova, O. (2023). Examining racial and gender biases in teaching evaluations of instructors by students on an online platform in the UAE. *Frontiers in Education*, 8(4), 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2023.1237672>
- Latif, D. (2022). *Media Sosial, Suatu Alternatif*. Elex Media Komputindo.
- Makransky, G., & Petersen, G. B. (2021). The Cognitive Affective Model of Immersive Learning (CAMIL): a Theoretical Research-Based Model of Learning in Immersive Virtual Reality. *Educational Psychology Review*, 33(3), 937–958. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09586-2>

- Ng, D. T. K., Tan, C. W., & Leung, J. K. L. (2024). Empowering student self-regulated learning and science education through ChatGPT: A pioneering pilot study. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 55(4), 1328–1353. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13454>
- Nurudin. (2018). *Media sosial : agama baru masyarakat milenial*. Intrans Publishing.
- Pangrazio, L., & Sefton-Green, J. (2021). Digital Rights, Digital Citizenship and Digital Literacy: What's the Difference? *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 10(1), 15–27. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2021.1.616>
- Rakatiwi, Y., Halwati, U., & Nawawi, N. (2023). FYP Dakwah Digital Creator Milenial Melalui Tiktok di Era 5.0. *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan*, 17(3), 1583. <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v17i3.2116>
- Rosidin, K. (2024). *Razia Warung di Wilayah Gresik Kota dan Bandar Grisse, Satpol PP Amankan Ratusan Miras*. Infogresik. <https://infogresik.id/razia-warung-di-wilayah-gresik-kota-dan-bandar-grisse-satpol-pp-amankan-ratusan-miras/>
- Shabur, M. A., & Siddiki, M. R. (2024). Investigating social media's impact on the new era of interactive learning: A case study of Bangladesh. *Heliyon*, 10(4), e26234. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e26234>
- Shafiq, M., & Parveen, K. (2023). Social media usage: Analyzing its effect on academic performance and engagement of higher education students. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 98(3), 2. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102738>
- Shimizu, K., & Sakurai, Y. (2026). Ambiguous Boundaries of Religious Belief, Behavior, and Belonging in Japan: A Descriptive Analysis of Plural and Cultural Religiosity. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.70065>
- Thomas, J. R., Martin, P., Etnier, J. L., & Silverman, S. J. (2022). *Research methods in physical activity*. books.google.com. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=pJFSEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=discussion+method&ots=vUGBQjHra8&sig=tCJTnQfeJSdSfXquGOXN-r7g6Kk>
- Tracy, S. J. (2024). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. books.google.com. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=EVwcEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA17&dq=discussion+method&ots=h8AwKhcA92&sig=AjUZukhOOHPISUdoJPzgbmZq4FU>
- You, X.-R., Cai, W.-H., Yang, Y.-T., Li, Y., & Ni, X.-Q. (2026). Sustained tic reduction through behavioural therapy in children and adolescents with Tourette syndrome: A meta-analysis with implications for affective health. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 405, 121677. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2026.121677>