

Dialogic Communication under Algorithmic Mediation in TikTok Live: A Case Study of Religious Services

Rayyan Halim Yuwono*

Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Dr. Soetomo,
60118, Surabaya, Indonesia
rayyanhalim@gmail.com

Harliantara

Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Dr. Soetomo,
60118, Surabaya, Indonesia
harliantara@unitomo.ac.id

Nur'annafi Farni Syam Maella

Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Dr. Soetomo,
60118, Surabaya, Indonesia
nurannafi@unitomo.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines how algorithm-based dialogic communication operates in TikTok Live as a form of digital religious service at the Bulukerto Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). The research aims to analyze interaction patterns, the role of algorithmic mediation, and the adaptation of dialogic communication principles in platform-based environments. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the TikTok Live host and non-participant observation of five live sessions. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring interaction structures. The findings reveal that communication does not occur randomly but follows a structured pattern consisting of three interconnected mechanisms: responsiveness, amplification, and selectivity. Responsiveness enables real-time interaction, amplification increases visibility through engagement signals, and selectivity filters which interactions receive attention. These mechanisms form an iterative communication system shaped by both human agency and algorithmic governance. This study contributes to the development of communication theory by integrating dialogic communication with algorithmic mediation into a conceptual model. Practically, the findings provide insights for public institutions in

optimizing digital religious services within algorithm-driven platforms.

Keywords: algorithmic communication, dialogic communication, TikTok Live, digital religion, public communication

1. Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital platforms has fundamentally reshaped institutional communication with public. Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as a dominant space for content distribution and user engagement, characterized by short-form videos, real-time interaction, and algorithmically curated visibility. Unlike traditional media, TikTok combines participatory culture with automated recommendation systems, enabling continuous interaction between content creators and audiences. This shift has transformed communication from a linear process into a dynamic, feedback-driven system in which visibility and engagement are closely intertwined.

Short video platforms introduce a distinct communication environment. TikTok combines algorithmic recommendation systems with real-time interaction, allowing users to engage directly through live sessions. Kaye et al. (2022, pp. 1-21) explain that TikTok operates through a hybrid model of content distribution and participatory culture. This model alters how messages circulate and how audiences respond. Hsu et al. (2025) Further, it argues that live streaming creates a continuous feedback loop between content creators and viewers, making interaction more dynamic compared to static media.

Public institutions increasingly adopt these platforms to maintain relevance. Morejón-Llamas et al. (2024) Note that digital communication strategies in public sectors now emphasize engagement rather than one-way information delivery. In Indonesia, this trend appears in government and religious institutions. Hidayat and Prasetyo (2023) show that KUA has begun integrating digital platforms into its service model. This transition reflects a shift from formal bureaucratic communication to more interactive and accessible formats.

Religious communication also undergoes a significant transformation. Aliman et al. (2025) Describe how digital media reshapes da'wah practices by encouraging conversational and audience-centered approaches. Liu et al. (2025) Add that younger audiences expect religious content to be delivered in formats that align with their digital habits. TikTok becomes a strategic platform because it supports personalization and real-time engagement. Einstein (2024, p. 15) highlights that religious messages on TikTok often rely on tailored content to reach specific audience segments.

Theoretical discussions on communication in digital environments point to dialogic communication as a central framework. Dialogic communication emphasizes reciprocity, responsiveness, and mutual understanding between communicators. Moffett and Rice (2024, pp. 89-110) argue that digital engagement depends on interactive participation rather than passive reception. However, this framework evolves in platform-based environments where algorithms influence interaction patterns. Gillespie (2022, pp. 1-13) explains that algorithmic governance shapes what users see and how they interact, introducing a non-human actor into communication processes.

The presence of algorithms creates a shift in how dialogue occurs. Klug et al. (2021) show that users often misunderstand how TikTok algorithms operate, even though these systems strongly affect content visibility. Ades (2026) demonstrates that engagement outcomes depend on how well content aligns with algorithmic preferences. This suggests that dialogic communication in digital spaces cannot be separated from algorithmic mediation. The interaction becomes partially structured by system logic rather than purely human intention.

Empirical studies reveal mixed findings regarding this relationship. Şot (2022) argues that TikTok fosters intimacy and creates a sense of safe interaction space, supporting dialogic engagement. In contrast, Boeker and Urman (2022, pp. 2681-2700) indicate that platform affordances can prioritize visibility over meaningful interaction. This difference highlights an unresolved issue in the literature: whether algorithm-driven environments enhance or limit dialogic communication. The lack of consensus suggests the need for context-specific analysis.

Within the Indonesian context, research on TikTok focuses mainly on education, public communication, and cultural expression. Putri and Astutik (2021) Identify TikTok as an effective medium for Islamic learning among younger audiences. Sari and Nugroho (2024, pp. 67-82) show that public institutions use TikTok to increase transparency and engagement. Kartika et al. (2026) Add that language and cultural identity influence audience interaction patterns. Despite these contributions, studies rarely examine live streaming as a site of structured dialogue.

The concept of dialogic communication provides an important theoretical framework for understanding these changes. Dialogic communication emphasizes reciprocity, responsiveness, and mutual exchange between communicators and audiences. In digital environments, however, these principles are increasingly mediated by algorithmic systems that regulate visibility and participation. The previous studies have examined TikTok as a platform for engagement, digital religion as a field of mediated practice, and public communication as a domain of

institutional interaction. However, these areas are often treated separately. While prior research highlights participation, visibility, and engagement, it rarely explains how algorithmic system structures real-time dialogic interaction within institutional live streaming contexts. This affects the implementation of dialogic communication principles in practice.

This gap is especially relevant in the context of institutional religious services conducted through live streaming. Platforms such as TikTok Live create high-density interaction environments where communication is simultaneously shaped by human responsiveness and algorithmic filtering. This study examines TikTok Live as a site of real-time interaction where institutional communication and platform logic intersect. Focusing on a digital service conducted by an Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Indonesia, the study explores how dialogic communication operates under algorithmically mediated conditions. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do interaction patterns emerge in TikTok Live religious services? (2) How does algorithmic mediation influence visibility and participation in these interactions? and (3) How are dialogic communication principles adapted under algorithmically mediated conditions? By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to communication research by providing a more precise understanding of how dialogic interaction is structured with platform-based environments. It also offers practical insights for public and religious institutions seeking to optimize communication strategies in algorithm-driven digital ecosystems.

2. Methods

This study applies a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore how algorithm-based dialogic communication operates within TikTok Live as a form of digital religious service in Indonesia, especially at the Bulukerto KUA. A qualitative design allows the researcher to capture interactional depth, interpret meaning, and understand communication processes within their natural setting rather than reducing them into numerical indicators (Sugiyono, 2021; Yusuf, 2020). The research was conducted in April 2026 and involved one key informant, namely the TikTok Live host of KUA Bulukerto, who directly manages and performs the communication process. The selection of a single key informant is based on their central role as the primary communicator responsible for managing and performing all TikTok Live sessions, making them the most relevant source for capturing interaction dynamics.

Data were collected in April 2024 through two complementary techniques: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews and (2) non-participant observation of TikTok Live sessions. The interview involved one key

informant, namely the TikTok Live host responsible for managing and delivering the communication. This informant was selected based on their central role in shaping real-time interaction. However, the study does not rely solely on the host's account; it integrates observational data from audience interactions to capture dialogic communication more comprehensively.

To address the absence of direct audience interviews, audience participation was analyzed through comment flows, response patterns, and engagement indicators observed during live sessions. Observation was conducted across five TikTok Live sessions, each lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. These sessions were selected to capture variation in interaction intensity and engagement dynamics rather than to achieve statistical representativeness. The focus of observation included: the structure and velocity of audience comments; host response patterns; and visible engagement signals (e.g., likes, viewer fluctuations). The number of sessions was considered sufficient when recurring interaction patterns became consistently observable across sessions, indicating analytical saturation within the scope of this case.

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. The analysis was guided by a theoretically informed coding framework derived from dialogic communication (e.g., responsiveness, reciprocity) and platform dynamics (e.g., amplification, visibility, selectivity). The analytical process consisted of three stages: (1) initial coding, where interaction segments were labeled; (2) focused coding, where codes were grouped into broader categories; and (3) interpretative analysis, where the relationships between categories were examined.

To enhance credibility, this study employed data triangulation by integrating interview data with observational data across multiple live sessions. Patterns were validated through consistency across different interaction contexts. Reflexivity was also applied by acknowledging the research's interpretative role. To minimize subjectivity, interpretations were grounded in observable interaction patterns and supported by empirical data. Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from the interview participant prior to data collection. All identifiable personal information has been anonymized. Observational data were derived from publicly accessible TikTok Live sessions. Only non-identifiable interaction data (e.g., comment patterns and engagement indicators) were analyzed.

This study has several limitations. The reliance on a single case and one key informant limits the diversity of perspectives, particularly from the audience side. Although audience interaction is analyzed through comment data, the absence of direct audience interviews restricts deeper

insight into user perspectives. In addition, the limited number of observed sessions represented a specific temporal snapshot, which may not fully capture long-term interaction patterns. Finally, this study does not access TikTok’s internal algorithmic system and therefore interprets algorithmic influence based on observable interaction outcomes.

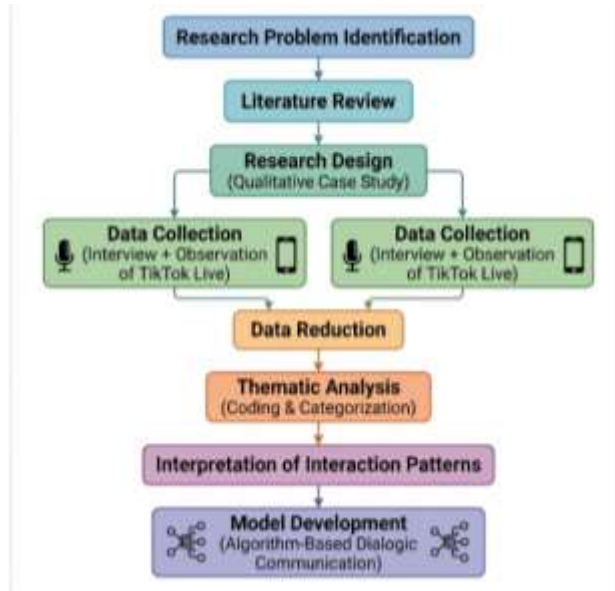


Figure 1. Research Procedure

This figure illustrates the stages of data collection and thematic analysis, showing how interaction data from TikTok Live sessions and interviews were processed to identify recurring patterns and develop the conceptual model.

3. Results

3.1 Interaction Patterns in TikTok Live

The empirical data from five TikTok Live sessions consistently indicate high engagement intensity, particularly reflected in comment volume and interaction continuity. The sessions generated between 1.5K and 5.5K views, with likes ranging from 6.8K to 36K and comments between 275 and 2,016 per session, indicating a strong level of audience participation. The majority of traffic originated from TikTok’s LIVE recommendation system, accounting for approximately 89%–91% of total viewers, which suggests a dominant role of algorithmic distribution in audience acquisition. Audience demographics show a predominance of male users (66%–73%) and users located in Indonesia (96%–97%), with a relatively small proportion of young users aged 18–24. These descriptive patterns confirm that TikTok Live functions as a high-density interaction

space where communication intensity is shaped by platform-driven exposure rather than organic follower-based reach. This finding aligns with prior studies that emphasize algorithmic amplification as a key driver of visibility and engagement in short-video platforms (Kaye, 2022; Gillespie, 2022).

Table 1. Summary of Engagement Metrics Across TikTok Live Sessions

Date	Duration	Views	Comments	Likes	Key Pattern
14 Apr 2026	1h 51m	5,500	2,016	36,000	Peak interaction after mid-session
15 Apr 2026	1h 09m	2,900	979	6,800	Stable engagement growth
16 Apr 2026 (AM)	46m	1,500	275	15,500	Lower interaction, network issue noted
16 Apr 2026 (PM)	1h 27m	3,200	872	21,600	Interaction stabilizes after Q&A
17 Apr 2026	1h 14m	4,200	1,300	18,400	Rapid engagement increases the early session

As shown in Table 1, across the five observed sessions, engagement levels varied in terms of views, likes, and comment volume. However, these metrics are treated as indicators of activity rather than direct evidence of dialogic communication. For instance, while sessions generated high comment counts, not all comments reflected meaningful interaction. A closer inspection shows that comments consisted of different types, including questions related to religious topics, greetings (e.g., “Assalamualaikum), repetitive or duplicated questions, and off-topic remarks. This differentiation indicates that high comment volume does not necessarily correspond to dialogic exchange.

3.2 Algorithmic Mediation and Analytical Interpretation

The analysis shows that dialogic communication follows a recurring interaction structure shaped by real-time responsiveness and platform-driven visibility. The host consistently responds to audience questions in real time, as observed in repeated instances of immediate clarification during live sessions (Observation, April 2026). This responsiveness establishes a two-way communication structure, moving beyond one-directional information delivery. The presence of dialogic loops, where users ask follow-up questions and receive continued responses, indicates sustained interaction rather than isolated exchanges. This finding supports the concept of dialogic communication as an ongoing process of mutual exchange rather than a single interaction event (Moffett & Rice, 2024).

Changes in viewer counts and engagement often occurred alongside increases in likes and comment activity. However, this study does not directly measure algorithmic processes but infers their influence from observable patterns. The host stated, “We usually ask viewers to tap the screen when he likes increase, viewers also come.” However, this statement reflects practical perception rather than technical knowledge of the algorithm. Therefore, algorithmic mediation is interpreted cautiously as a perceived influence rather than a verified causal mechanism. Based on recurring patterns, three interaction tendencies are identified: Responsiveness, amplification, and selectivity. These elements are presented as analytical interpretations derived from observed patterns, rather than fixed or universally applicable mechanisms.

Despite the observable impact of algorithmic distribution, the host demonstrates a limited conceptual understanding of how the system operates. As expressed in the interview, “We don’t really understand how the algorithm works yet, so we mostly just go with the flow” (Host Interview, April 2026). This reflects a practical form of algorithmic engagement, where engagement strategies are developed through trial and experience rather than technical knowledge. The reliance on intuitive practices suggests that algorithmic mediation is not consciously managed but implicitly negotiated through interaction. This gap between practice and technical knowledge reflects findings by Klug et al. (2021), who note that users often interact with algorithms without fully understanding their mechanisms.

A tension emerges between dialogic openness and algorithmic selectivity. While the host attempts to respond to all questions, the rapid flow of comments forces selective attention, prioritizing visible or repeated questions. This creates an uneven distribution of interaction, where some users receive responses while others do not. Boeker and Urman (2022)

argue that platform affordances inherently shape communication priorities, often privileging engagement metrics over conversational equality. Similarly, Ades (2026) highlights that strategic communication on TikTok tends to align with algorithmic logic rather than purely dialogic principles. The findings, therefore, suggest that dialogic communication in this context is partially structured by algorithmic constraints.

Although the descriptive findings capture the intensity of engagement, they do not fully explain how interaction is internally structured. To uncover this underlying mechanism, a thematic analysis was conducted to map recurring interaction patterns and their relationship with algorithmic dynamics.

Table 2. Thematic Structure of Algorithm-Based Dialogic Communication

Category	Indicator	Empirical Evidence	Interpretation
Dialogic Communication	Direct response	Host answers questions in real time	Two-way interaction
Dialogic Communication	Dialogic loop	Repeated Q&A between the host and users	Sustained dialogue
Interactivity	Comment intensity	High volume of audience questions	Active participation
Algorithmic Mediation	Viewer spike	Increase in viewers after engagement surge	Algorithm amplification
Engagement	Likes & gifts	Rise during interaction peaks	Non-verbal reinforcement
Communication Style	Informal tone	Use of simple, conversational language	Audience alignment

Table 2 shows that the analysis of comment-response sequences reveals that interaction is structured through selective responsiveness rather than uniform engagement. In several instances, the host responded directly to user questions: “Is it allowed to delay prayer if I am working?” Host: “Yes,

but it depends on the situation. If possible, do it on time.” Such exchanges illustrate direct response patterns, where interaction occurs in a two-way format. However, these interactions are intermittent rather than continuous across all participants.

A recurring pattern is the presence of repeated questions, where similar comments appear multiple times before receiving a response. This creates interaction clustering, in which certain topics gain visibility and are more likely to be addressed. At the same time, a significant portion of comments received no response, indicating that interaction is unevenly distributed.

To further illustrate this model, Figure 2 presents the interaction between responsiveness, amplification, and selectivity within the TikTok Live communication system.

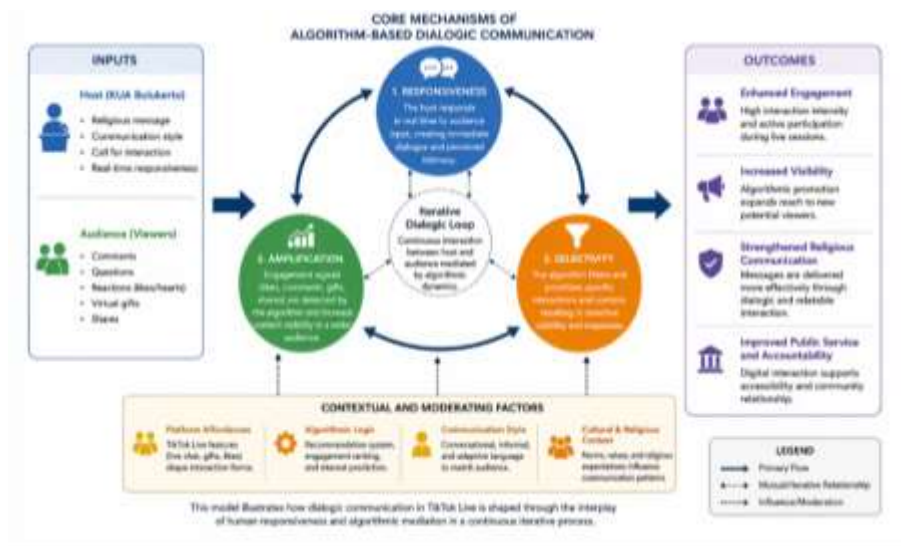


Figure 2. Model of Algorithm-Based Dialogic Communication in TikTok Live at KUA Bulukerto

Figure 2 illustrates that dialogic communication in TikTok Live emerges through the continuous interaction between human responsiveness and algorithmic mediation, rather than being solely driven by direct host–audience exchange. Responsiveness enables immediate interaction, amplification increases reach through engagement signals, and selectivity filters which interactions become prominent. These mechanisms operate simultaneously, forming an iterative communication loop that defines the structure of digital religious and services in this context.

4. Discussion

4.1 Rethinking ‘Dialogic’ Communication

The findings suggest that interaction in TikTok Live cannot be fully categorized as dialogic in the traditional sense. While two-way exchanges occur, interaction is uneven, selective, and often fragmented. Rather than fully dialogic communication, the interaction observed may be more accurately described as ‘selectively dialogic’ or ‘interactional engagement’. This challenges the assumption that high participation automatically indicates meaningful dialogue.

The implications of this shift are significant for understanding dialogue in digital spaces. Responsiveness remains central, as the host engages with audience input in real time, but it is constrained by the rapid flow of comments and the need to prioritize visible interactions. This creates a layered structure where some voices gain prominence while others remain peripheral. Dialogue persists but operates under structurally mediated conditions, extending dialogic theory by showing that reciprocity is filtered through system-level dynamics embedded within the communicative process (Gillespie, 2022; Klug et al., 2021).

4.2 Interpreting Algorithmic Influence

The findings demonstrate that algorithmic governance acts as a central structuring force in TikTok Live communication. The algorithm organizes interaction by prioritizing visible engagement signals, while amplification and selectivity show how likes, comments, and retention influence reach and prominence. Communication is shaped through feedback between user activity and algorithmic evaluation, indicating that interaction is co-produced through system-level mediation governing visibility and participation (Gillespie, 2022; Kaye et al., 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

This structuring creates a hierarchy within seemingly open communication environments. Although TikTok Live enables real-time interaction, visibility remains uneven, privileging content aligned with engagement metrics. Amplified interactions receive more responses, while less visible contributions are marginalized. This produces a prioritization system where interaction depends on algorithmic recognition, challenging assumptions of equal participation and revealing a stratified communication structure (Boeker & Urman, 2022; Klug et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023).

The interplay between human agency and algorithmic logic shows that users adapt their communication practices to platform dynamics. The host’s encouragement of likes and interaction reflects alignment with algorithmic preferences, where engagement signals enhance visibility. Algorithmic governance is embedded in everyday communication, as users

adjust strategies through experience rather than technical knowledge, reinforcing adaptive communication practices (Ades, 2026; Klug et al., 2021; Hsu et al., 2025).

These findings indicate a broader transformation in communication authority, which increasingly depends on visibility and engagement metrics. In digital religious contexts, communication outcomes are shaped not only by message content but also by alignment with algorithmic conditions. Algorithmic governance thus functions as an active communicative agent that co-determines interaction patterns and redefines authority within digital environments (Morejón-Llamas et al., 2024; Sari & Nugroho, 2024; Liu et al., 2025).

4.3. Integrating Dialogic Theory and Algorithmic Mediation

The integration of dialogic communication theory with algorithmic governance provides a necessary shift for understanding interaction in platform-based environments. Within this perspective, the model proposed in this study represents an interpretative framework based on observable interaction patterns, rather than a technical reconstruction of platform algorithms (Gillespie, 2022; Kaye et al., 2022; Klug et al., 2021). Dialogic principles such as reciprocity and responsiveness are not eliminated but reconfigured under algorithmic conditions that regulate visibility and interaction flow.

The model, consisting of responsiveness, amplification, and selectivity, explains this integration. Responsiveness reflects the host agency, amplification increases visibility through engagement signals, and selectivity filters prioritized interactions. These mechanisms form an iterative loop where user behavior and algorithmic evaluation shape interaction, demonstrating that communication is dynamically structured rather than linear (Kaye et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023; Hsu et al., 2025).

Table 6 illustrates how dialogic principles are reshaped through algorithmic mediation. Reciprocity becomes selective, engagement becomes measurable input, and interaction evolves into feedback-driven continuity. This confirms that dialogic communication is structurally conditioned rather than inherently egalitarian, extending theoretical discussions on how platform logic reorganizes communication processes (Boeker & Urman, 2022; Klug et al., 2021; Ades, 2026).

The integration highlights a hybrid system where human actors and algorithmic mechanisms jointly shape interaction outcomes. Responsiveness initiates interaction, amplification determines reach, and selectivity filters visibility, challenging traditional distinctions between sender, receiver, and medium. Communication emerges as a sociotechnical process shaped by both human behavior and technological infrastructure (Hsu et al., 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Mirawati et al., 2024).

This hybrid framework has implications for institutional communication, where dialogic principles must align with platform logic. Institutions must remain responsive while adapting to algorithmic conditions that regulate visibility and participation, positioning communication as a negotiated process between human agency and system-level control (Morejón-Llamas et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025; Sari & Nugroho, 2024).

To clarify this relationship analytically, the transformation of dialogic principles within algorithmic environments can be summarized in the following structure:

Table 6. Transformation of Dialogic Communication under Algorithmic Mediation

Dialogic Dimension	Algorithmic Process	Resulting Interaction Pattern
Responsiveness	Amplification	Increased visibility of active exchanges
Reciprocity	Selectivity	Uneven response distribution
Engagement	Feedback loop	Sustained interaction continuity

4.4 Implications for Digital Religious Communication

The findings also indicate that digital religious communication is shaped not only by content but also by interaction structures. However, these findings are limited to a single case and should not be generalized across all institutional religious contexts.

In the context of KUA Bulukerto, TikTok Live functions as a space where institutional authority and audience participation intersect. The host represents a formal institution, yet the communication style is informal and adaptive, reflecting the norms of the platform. This hybrid form of communication challenges traditional boundaries between institutional and personal interaction, creating a more accessible and participatory environment. At the same time, the influence of algorithms introduces new considerations regarding visibility and engagement. This indicates a structural shift in religious authority, where visibility and engagement increasingly function as sources of influence alongside, and sometimes beyond, formal institutional legitimacy. This aligns with recent research highlighting the importance of platform logic in shaping digital religious

practices (Aliman et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

4.5 Conceptual Model of Algorithm-Based Dialogic Communication

The conceptual model proposed in this study positions algorithm-based dialogic communication as an iterative system shaped by the interaction between human responsiveness and algorithmic mediation. Rather than treating communication as a linear exchange, the model conceptualizes interaction as a cyclical process in which each communicative act influences subsequent visibility and participation. Responsiveness initiates the process by enabling direct engagement with audience input, while amplification extends the reach of that interaction through engagement signals. Selectivity then determines which interactions remain visible and are likely to receive further responses. This cyclical configuration indicates that communication is continuously reconstructed through feedback loops that connect user behavior and platform logic. Such an approach aligns with recent perspectives that view digital communication as a dynamic system rather than a static exchange of messages (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023; Hsu et al., 2025).

The first component of the model, responsiveness, reflects the communicative agency of the host in maintaining real-time interaction with the audience. Responsiveness is essential for sustaining dialogic engagement, as it enables immediate acknowledgment of audience input and encourages continued participation. However, the findings indicate that responsiveness is not purely voluntary but is shaped by the visibility of incoming interactions. The host tends to respond to comments that are more prominent or repeated, suggesting that responsiveness is conditioned by algorithmically mediated exposure. This introduces a selective dimension into what is traditionally understood as open dialogue. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of responsiveness in fostering engagement, but this study extends that understanding by showing that responsiveness operates within structural constraints imposed by platform systems (Moffett & Rice, 2024; Şot, 2022; Gillespie, 2022).

The second component, amplification, captures the role of engagement signals in increasing content visibility and expanding the reach of interaction. Likes, comments, and viewer retention function as indicators that trigger algorithmic promotion, allowing certain interactions to gain prominence within the platform. Amplification transforms individual communicative acts into broader interaction patterns by increasing their exposure to a wider audience. This process reinforces the importance of engagement as both a communicative and a strategic resource. The findings suggest that amplification is not neutral but favors interactions that align with platform metrics, thereby shaping the overall communication landscape. This observation is consistent with research

showing that algorithmic systems prioritize content based on measurable engagement, influencing both visibility and interaction outcomes (Kaye et al., 2022; Ades, 2026; Boeker & Urman, 2022).

The third component, selectivity, represents the filtering mechanism through which the algorithm determines which interactions become central within the communication flow. Selectivity operates by prioritizing interactions that generate higher engagement, effectively creating a hierarchy of visibility within the platform. This process influences not only what is seen but also what is responded to, as highly visible interactions are more likely to receive attention from the host. The findings indicate that selectivity introduces asymmetry into the communication process, where not all participants have equal opportunities to engage. This challenges the assumption of equal participation in dialogic communication and highlights the role of algorithmic filtering in shaping interaction dynamics. Similar patterns have been identified in studies examining platform affordances and their impact on communication hierarchies (Klug et al., 2021; Gillespie, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023).

Taken together, these three components form an integrated model that conceptualizes dialogic communication as a hybrid system combining human interaction and algorithmic mediation. The model demonstrates that communication outcomes are not solely determined by communicative intent but are co-produced through the interaction between users and platform systems. This hybrid configuration redefines the boundaries of dialogic communication by incorporating algorithmic processes as integral elements of interaction. It also provides a framework for understanding how communication operates in institutional contexts, where the goals of engagement and service delivery intersect. By articulating the relationships between responsiveness, amplification, and selectivity, the model contributes to the development of a more comprehensive theory of digital communication that accounts for the role of platform logic in shaping interaction (Morejón-Llamas et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Unlike previous studies that focus on engagement or content dissemination, this model explicitly explains how interaction is structurally shaped by the interplay between human responsiveness and algorithmic mediation. This positions the model not merely as a descriptive framework, but as an explanatory mechanism for understanding interaction under algorithmic conditions.

4.6 Implications, Future Directions, and Research Boundaries

The findings of this study carry important implications for the practice of digital religious services, particularly in institutional contexts such as KUA. TikTok Live communication must consider algorithmic

visibility, not only message clarity. Engagement signals such as comments, likes, and viewer retention influence how widely a message is distributed and who is able to participate in the interaction. Institutions must integrate responsiveness with platform awareness. At the same time, maintaining credibility and ethical responsibility remains essential, especially in religious contexts where information accuracy and inclusivity are critical. This dual requirement reflects broader shifts in public sector communication, where engagement and accountability must be balanced within digitally mediated environments (Morejón-Llamas et al., 2024; Sari & Nugroho, 2024; Liu et al., 2025).

The study also suggests that effective digital religious communication involves a form of adaptive interaction, where communicators adjust their style to align with both audience expectations and platform norms. The use of conversational language, real-time responses, and interactive prompts becomes a strategic approach to sustaining engagement. However, this adaptation is not purely stylistic but also structural, as it responds to the logic of algorithmic amplification. These findings indicate that institutional communication is no longer fully controllable, as visibility and audience reach are partially determined by algorithmic systems rather than institutional intent. This creates tension between authenticity and algorithmic optimization. Previous research has shown that digital engagement is often shaped by such adaptive strategies, where communication practices evolve in response to technological affordances (Ades, 2026; Hsu et al., 2025; Mirawati et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of communication theory by integrating dialogic communication with algorithmic governance into a unified framework. The findings demonstrate that dialogic communication cannot be fully understood without considering the role of platform systems that regulate visibility and participation. This shifts the focus of communication theory from purely interpersonal dynamics toward a more systemic understanding of interaction. The proposed model highlights that communication is co-constructed by human agency and technological mediation, suggesting that traditional concepts of reciprocity and openness must be reconsidered in digital contexts. This aligns with recent scholarship that emphasizes the importance of sociotechnical perspectives in analyzing communication processes (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Gillespie, 2022; Moffett & Rice, 2024).

The integration of dialogic theory and algorithmic mediation also opens new directions for future research. One important avenue is the comparative analysis of different platforms, as each platform operates with distinct algorithmic logics that may shape interaction in different ways. Another direction involves examining how different institutional contexts

influence the implementation of dialogic communication strategies. For example, communication practices in religious institutions may differ from those in governmental or educational settings due to variations in audience expectations and institutional goals. Expanding the scope of research in this way would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how algorithm-based communication operates across diverse contexts (Kaye et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023; Boeker & Urman, 2022).

Methodologically, future studies could benefit from combining qualitative approaches with computational analysis to capture interaction patterns at a larger scale. While this study provides in-depth insights into communication processes, the use of manual thematic analysis limits the ability to analyze large volumes of data. Incorporating data-driven methods such as network analysis or machine learning could reveal broader patterns of algorithmic influence and user behavior. Such approaches would complement qualitative findings and provide a more robust understanding of how communication evolves within platform ecosystems. This direction is increasingly relevant in studies of digital media, where large-scale data analysis plays a central role in uncovering interaction dynamics (Hsu et al., 2025; Kartika et al., 2026; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research focuses on a single case within one institutional context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The use of one key informant also restricts the diversity of perspectives captured in the analysis. Additionally, the reliance on manual observation and interpretation may introduce subjectivity, although efforts were made to ensure consistency through triangulation. These limitations highlight the need for caution in extending the findings to other contexts and underscore the importance of further research to validate and refine the proposed model (Miles et al., 2020; Salim & Syahrums, 2021; Boeker & Urman, 2022).

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that dialogic communication in platform-based environments cannot be understood as purely human interaction but must be analyzed as a hybrid system shaped by both communicative intent and algorithmic governance. This reconfiguration redefines the boundaries of dialogic communication theory and positions platform logic as a central component of contemporary interaction processes.

5. Conclusion

This study examines how dialogic communication operates under conditions of algorithmic mediation in TikTok Live religious services.

Addressing the research questions, the findings show that interaction patterns emerge through selective responsiveness rather than uniform dialogue, that visibility and participation are influenced by engagement-related dynamics, and that dialogic communication is adapted into a form of uneven conditional interaction.

Rather than demonstrating fully dialogic communication, the study finds that interaction is best understood as selectively distributed engagement, where only a subset of audience contributions receives responses. This suggests that dialogic principles such as reciprocity and openness are not eliminated but reconfigured within platform-based environments.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in reframing dialogic communication as a conditionally mediated process, where interaction is shaped not only by communicative intent but also by visibility constraints and engagement dynamics. The proposed frameworks: responsiveness, amplification, and selectivity, do not introduce entirely new concepts, but synthesize existing ideas into a context-specific analytic lens for understanding interaction in live streaming environments. Importantly, this framework should be understood as a heuristic rather than a universal model, offering a way to interpret interaction patterns rather than a definitive explanation applicable across contexts.

In conclusion, this study highlights that communication in platform-based environments cannot be understood as purely dialogic or purely algorithmic, but as a hybrid process shaped by the interaction between human responsiveness and mediated visibility. This perspective provides a more nuanced foundation for analyzing digital communication in institutional contexts and opens avenues for further theoretical and empirical refinement.

Future research should address these constraints by incorporating audience-based data, expanding the temporal scope of observation, and comparing interaction patterns across different institutional and platform contexts. Such approaches would allow for a more robust evaluation of how dialogic communication operates under varying algorithmic conditions.

References

- Aliman, B. S. (2025). The transformation of da'wah in the digital era. *Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law and Practice*.
- Boeker, M. (2022). Political communication and engagement on TikTok: The role of platform affordances. *New Media & Society*, 2681–2700.

- Dwivedi, Y. E. (2023). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*.
- Einstein, M. (2024). *Faith-centric TikToks: Promoting religion through personalized experience and engagement*. London: Routledge.
- Gillespie, T. (2022). Do not recommend? Platform affordances and algorithmic governance. *Social Media + Society*, 1–13.
- Hidayat, R. (2023). Komunikasi digital KUA dalam pelayanan publik. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, 145–162.
- Hsu, W.-L. S. (2025). Examining stickiness behavior in TikTok live streaming through the lens of sociotechnical systems. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*.
- Interviewee, H. (2026, April). Host Interviewee: TikTok.
- Kartika, R. G. (2026). Coding cultural capital: A sociolinguistic analysis of Indonesian regional dialects and audience engagement on TikTok. *Studies in Media and Communication*.
- Kaye, D. B. (2022). The co-evolution of two Chinese mobile short video apps: Parallel platformization of Douyin and TikTok. *International Journal of Communication*, 1–21.
- Klug D., Q. Y. (2021). User assumptions about the TikTok algorithm: "People think they know how the algorithm works". *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*.
- Liu, Z. G. (2025). Digital religion and Generation Z: A psychological perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*.
- Miles, M. H. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A Methods sourcebook (4th ed.)*. New York: SAGE Publications.
- Mirawati, I. K. (2024). Leveraging TikTok as an Educational platform: Opportunities and challenges. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*.
- Moffett, K. W. (2024). Digital engagement and public participation in online environments. *Journal of Communication*, 89–110.
- Morei3n-Llamas, N. E. (2024). Public institutions and digital communication strategies: Emerging trends and practices. *Public Relations Review*.
- Putri, A. (2021). TikTok as a Generation Z Islamic religious learning media. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*.
- Sari, D. (2024). Transformasi komunikasi publik melalui Tiktok: Studi pada institusi pemerintah. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 67–82.
- Simamora, I. (2024). Rethinking the use of social media in Islamic broadcasting practices. *Pharos Journal of Theology*.

- Social, W. A. (2025, November 11). *Digital 2026: Indonesia*. Retrieved from We are Social: <https://wearesocial.com/id/blog/2025/11/digital-2026-top-digital-and-social-media-trends-in-indonesia/>
- Sot, I. (2022). Fostering intimacy on TikTok: A platform that "listens" and "creates a safe space". *Media Culture and Society*.
- Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode penelitian kualitatif*. Bandung: Alfabet.
- Syahrum, S. (2021). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Citapustaka Media.
- Yusuf, A. (2020). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan penelitian gabungan*. Jakarta: Kencana.
- Zhang, M. E. (2023). Consumer engagement behaviors in short video platforms. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*.