

Religious Branding in Social Media Analysis of TikTok Users' Reactions to the #Muthawwif Boy We Trust Account

**Kamila Rakhmawati, Samsia Afriani Nst, Siti Aisyah,
Muhammad Pajri Ramadhan, Toni Hartono,**

Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau State Islamic University

12340420491@students.uin-suska.ac.id, 12340420662@students.uin-suska.ac.id
12340420755@students.uin-suska.ac.id
12340413456@students.uin-suska.ac.id
toni.hartono@uin-suska.ac.id

Abstract

This article discusses religious branding in social media, analyzing the reactions of TikTok users to the viral phenomenon #muthawwifboywetrust on the TikTok platform. Given that this virtual phenomenon has caused public anxiety due to alleged inappropriate behavior from a muthawwif, a figure known as a religious person. The various reactions of social media users, especially on the TikTok platform, to the discrepancy between the religious image and personal behavior of a preacher are the focus of study in this article. This research aims to analyze TikTok users' responses to the phenomenon using qualitative methods through a netnography approach, namely observation and analysis of comments on TikTok. Data were analyzed using categorization of response types: negative, positive, and neutral. The results showed that the majority of comments were negative, with a tone of criticism of the dissonance between religious branding and khalwat behavior. However, there are also positive comments that call for objectivity and ethics in giving criticism, as well as neutral comments that invite the public to be wise in assessing cases. This research shows that in the digital era, the religious image built through social media is vulnerable to a crisis of trust if it is not aligned with real behavior. Personal integrity and digital literacy are crucial in maintaining the credibility of religious professions in the public sphere.

Keywords: muthawwif; religious; khalwat

Abstrack

Artikel ini membahas tentang branding religi di media sosial, menganalisis reaksi pengguna TikTok terhadap fenomena viral #muthawwifboywetrust di platform TikTok. Mengingat fenomena maya tersebut menimbulkan keresahan masyarakat akibat dugaan perilaku tidak pantas yang dilakukan seorang muthawwif, sosok yang dikenal sebagai orang yang beragama. Beragam reaksi pengguna media sosial khususnya platform TikTok terhadap ketidaksesuaian antara citra keagamaan dan perilaku pribadi seorang khatib

menjadi fokus kajian dalam artikel ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis respon pengguna TikTok terhadap fenomena tersebut dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui pendekatan netnografi yaitu observasi dan analisis komentar di TikTok. Data dianalisis menggunakan kategorisasi jenis respons: negatif, positif, dan netral. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan mayoritas komentar bernada negatif, bernada kritik terhadap disonansi antara branding agama dan perilaku khalwat. Namun ada juga komentar positif yang menuntut objektivitas dan etika dalam memberikan kritik, serta komentar netral yang mengajak masyarakat bijak dalam menilai suatu kasus. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa di era digital, citra keagamaan yang dibangun melalui media sosial rentan mengalami krisis kepercayaan jika tidak diselaraskan dengan perilaku nyata. Integritas pribadi dan literasi digital sangat penting dalam menjaga kredibilitas profesi keagamaan di ranah publik.

Kata Kunci: muthawif; religious; khalwat

Introduction

Prolonged discourse, coloring the cyberspace, especially with the phenomenon of the emergence of the hashtag #muthawifboywetrust so as to be able to stir up the issue of da'wah displayed in virtual space. Although, social media is believed to be an important part in the sustainability of Islamic da'wah, social media does not always have a positive impact on da'wah itself.¹ Especially with the viral #muthawifboywetrust account that occurred at the end of April 2025, it became a hot conversation, because of the alleged *khalwat* committed by a muthawif. The term muthawif actually comes from the word tawaf which means to circumambulate the ka'bah, then becomes isim fa'il muthawif, which is the person who circumambulates the ka'bah. But nowadays the term muthawif has a popular meaning, which is a term for people who guide pilgrims in carrying out Hajj or Umrah.² The term muthawif, has now developed into a designation for a profession, where the profession of muthawif has long historical roots, namely since the time of the prophet Muhammad SAW, where the companions often guided the jama'ah who came from outside Arabia to carry out the order of Hajj.³

The muthawif profession is a noble profession, because a muthawif can work, do charity, as well as preach. One form of da'wah from a muthawif today is through social media platforms. A lot of muthawifs share their experiences in guiding Hajj

¹ Tia Nur Amrina dkk., "Respon Mahasiswa Iai Al-Aziz Dalam Menanggapi Konten Dakwah Islam di Media Sosial Tiktok," *ALADALAH: Jurnal Politik, Sosial, Hukum dan Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (1 Januari 2023): 111, <https://doi.org/10.59246/aladalah.v1i1.152>.

² Lina Fadiyah, "Peran Muthawif Dalam Meningkatkan Pelayanan Jamaah Di Biro Haji Dan Umrah AsbiHu-Nu Purwokerto," 2018, 14.

³ Aridla, "Tertarik Jadi Muthawif? Ini 5 Syarat Yang Wajib Kamu Tau!," 2025, <https://tazkiyahitour.co.id/muthawif/>.

or Umrah, so that it can be known by the public. The Hajj pilgrimage, which is considered the completion of the pillars of Islam, has made the baitullah pilgrimage industry (Hajj and Umrah) have a strong attraction to attract the interest of ordinary people to be able to go to the baitullah⁴, because in fact only the human spirit that comes from the emanation of Allah's nur will be called by Allah to be able to perform the Hajj. Hajj is a special worship, not everyone is able to perform it, as Allah SWT says in Q.S Al-Imran verse 97

فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

"Therein are clear signs, (among them) the Maqam of Ibrahim. Whoever enters it (the House of Allah), he will be safe. (Among) the obligations of man towards Allah is to perform the pilgrimage to the House of Allah, (for) those who can afford to travel there. Whoever denies (the obligation of Hajj), then surely Allah is rich (in need of nothing) of all the worlds".⁵

One of the hardest acts of worship to perform is the Hajj pilgrimage because, it requires a balance of spirit between a servant and His Lord, physical readiness, financial, and mental strength in order to travel and perform the Hajj pilgrimage.⁶ This increasing interest in the pilgrimage to the baitullah has also brought about developments in the Hajj and Umrah travel industry, in Indonesia in particular, competition between travelers has emerged, and each traveler must have their own strategy in *marketing* and serving the congregation. As feedback from the enthusiasm of the congregation, nowadays there are many Hajj and Umrah travel agencies that provide muthawwif or people who will guide the congregation in the baitullah.

This phenomenon is booming on social media platforms such as tiktok and instagram with the hashtag #muthawwifboywetrust. Though it is clear, one of the requirements that must be possessed by a muthawwif is to understand religious knowledge in depth, so ideally a muthawwif becomes someone who has religious branding. The development of technology that makes the flow of information dissemination accessible so quickly, the #muthawwifboywetrust phenomenon has caused various reactions among the public, especially TikTok users. In a shari'ah

⁴ Mohd Sabri Bin Jamaludin dan Noor Raudhiah Abu Bakar, "Kompetensi Dan Prestasi Mutawwif Dalam Tugas Membimbing Jemaah Umrah," Muzakarah Fiqh & International Conference, 2022.

⁵ "Surat Ali 'Imran Ayat 97: Arab, Latin, Terjemah Dan Tafsir Lengkap | Quran NU Online," diakses 12 Juni 2025, <https://quran.nu.or.id/ali-imran/97>.

⁶ Noor Hamid, *Manajemen Haji Dan Umrah: Mengelola Perjalanan Tamu Allah Ke Tanah Suci*, (Yogyakarta: Semesta Aksara, 2020).

perspective, muthawwif is not only in charge of guiding the congregation, but must also be able to set a good moral example.⁷ How can a person who carries the mandate to guide God's guests, actually do something unethical, namely khalwat.

Literally khalwat means solitude or being alone, in the context of worship khalwat means being alone in order to increase spirituality, while in another context it means activities between men and women who are not mahrams in a quiet and quiet place unreachable from the views of others. In this context, khalwat is certainly included in the violation of religious norms⁸, therefore, khalwat is an act that is wrong and can harm men and women, so that Muslims and Muslim women must know the limits in association, as a form of self-preservation in order to avoid acts prohibited by religion.⁹ In the hadith narrated by Bukhori number 4832 the prophet Muhammad SAW said:

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرُو عَنْ أَبِي مَعْبُدٍ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا يَخْلُوَنَّ رَجُلٌ بِامْرَأَةٍ إِلَّا مَعَ ذِي مَحْرَمٍ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ امْرَأَتِي خَرَجَتْ حَاجًّا وَاسْتَبِثْتُ فِي غَزْوَةٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا قَالَ أَتَجْعَلُ فُحْجٌ مَعَ امْرَأَتِكَ.

Narrated to us ('Ali ibn 'Abdullah) Narrated to us (Sufyān) Narrated to us (Amr) from (Abu Ma'bad) from (Ibn 'Abbas) from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who said: "Let no man be alone with a woman except in the company of his mahram." Then a man got up and said: "O Messenger of Allah, my wife is going for Hajj and I am obliged to join such and such a war." He said: "Then go back and perform Hajj with your wife."¹⁰

Based on the explanation above, khalwat is an activity between men and women who are alone in a place that is far from the reach of others, but in the midst of the rapid development of technology, this activity is not only done directly but also follows the times by berkhalwat through social media such as *Chatting* and *Video Call* interactions.¹¹

This research uses several previous studies as a source of information that is

⁷ Yusuf sidiq Khoiruman, "Viral di Tiktok Makna Sebenarnya Muthawif Boys: Tren Viral yang Buat Ukhti Yalili Gelisah, Ternyata Lebih Parah dari Walid," 2025, <https://www.poskota.co.id/2025/04/19/viral-di-tiktok-makna-sebenarnya-muthawif-boys-tren-viral-yang-buat-ukhti-yalili-gelisah-ternyata-lebih-parah-dari-walid>.

⁸ "khalwat," 5 Januari 2025, https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halaman_Utama. diakses pada 12 Juni 2025

⁹ Irfan, "Khalwat Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Tanjung Layar Putih Makassar)," *Mazahibuna* 2 No. 1 (2020): 113.

¹⁰ "Hadits Bukhari No. 4832 | Janganlah seorang lelaki menyepi dengan seorang wanita kecuali dengan mahramnya," diakses 12 Juni 2025, <https://www.hadits.id/hadits/bukhari/4832>.

¹¹ Muhamad Yoga Firdaus Nurhusna Rahma Dina Taufik Rahman, "Khalwat melalui Chatting dan Video Call: Studi Takhrij dan Syarah Hadis," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* vol 8 (2022): 486.

relevant to the topic of this research. *First*, research conducted by Lina Fadliyah, a student of da'wah management at IAIN Purwokerto in 2018 in a thesis entitled "The Role of Muthawif in Improving Pilgrims Services at the Hajj and Umrah Bureau Asbihi-Nu Purwokerto". From this research it can be seen that a muthawwif has a role to show the location of worship, provide guidance and guidance on the implementation of Hajj and Umrah, take pilgrims to shopping places, help lost pilgrims, help solve pilgrims' problems that occur while in the holy land, provide information about Arabic language and culture, teach practical things, take sick pilgrims to the hospital.

Second, research conducted by Muhammad Sabri and Noor Raudhiah Abu Bakar from the International Islamic University College Selangor in 2022 with the research title "Competence and Achievement of Mutawwif in Assignments to Guide Umrah Pilgrims". The result of this study is that the competence of mutawwif is positively and significantly related to work performance, this shows that if the competence of muthawwwif increases, it will also increase his performance.

Third, research conducted by Hasza Jiwanda, Eka Sri Wahyuni, and Makmur from UIN Fatmawati Bengkulu in 2025. The research entitled "Muthawif's Strategy in Providing Umrah Manasik Guidance at Pt Alhijaz Indowisata Bengkulu" revealed the results that, in providing umrah manasik guidance, a muthawif can use four strategies, namely (1) learning umrah material, (2) effective communication, (3) coaching manasik practices, and (4) providing motivation and advice.¹²

This research focuses on the reactions of TikTok users, who have commented on videos related to the #muthawwifboywetrust phenomenon as a response in interpreting this phenomenon. Previously, there were no studies that examined the #muthawwifboywetrust phenomenon, this became a reaserch gap for researchers to be able to analyze the impact of the pollution of the muthawwif profession which was not in line between the religious personal branding attached to it and existing social practices. The subject of the #muthawwifboywetrust phenomenon is Salman Alfarisy, a muthawwif and CEO of the Hajj and Umrah travel agency Sahara Group in Central Java.

From this phenomenon, researchers can raise several issues, including the pollution of the muthowif profession, which is actually a religious profession, the violation of a muthawwif's manners in terms of interaction boundaries, and finally the community who thinks that muthawwifs only build Islamic branding, but are not in line with their behavioral practices. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the reactions of TikTok users to the #muthawwifboywetrust phenomenon, so that researchers hope that this article can open new, more comprehensive insights into the #muthawwifboywetrust phenomenon.

¹² Hasza Jiwanda, "Strategi Muthawif Dalam Memberikan Bimbingan Manasik Umroh Di Pt Alhijaz Indowisata Bengkulu" 10, no. 2 (2025).

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with the netnography method to analyze how TikTok application users respond to the #muthawif boy with trust phenomenon, whose data will be collected through the comments column. Netnography is a research study that focuses on understanding the space that exists in cyberspace where people interact with each other so that they can form their own culture and community system.¹³

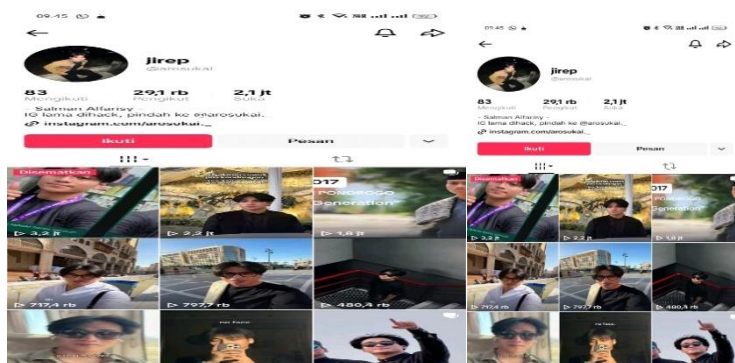
With this method, researchers observe and analyze the interactions and conversations that occur in the comment section to understand the meaning and patterns of audience response. The data that has been collected will be analyzed using descriptive coding and categorization techniques, which means that each comment found will be grouped based on categories and response patterns. The response categories used in this study include negative responses, positive responses, and neutral responses. So that researchers can clearly see how the variety of responses that arise from the audience.

Results and Discussion

TikTok Account Profile Subject #muthawifboywetrust.

The #muthawifboywetrust phenomenon emerged on social media, especially TikTok, after a muthawif who was originally known to look religious and active in his content about Umrah, suddenly became the spotlight and drew a lot of responses from TikTok users, due to allegations of khalwat with a Muslim woman celebrity. This behavior is considered incompatible with the religious image he has been presenting, especially because of his role as a hajj/umrah worship guide.

Figure 1 subject profile & branding #muthawif boywetrust

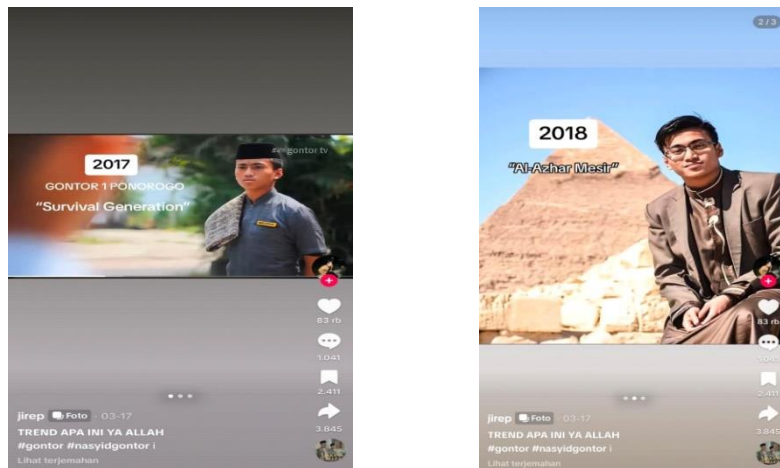


The TikTok profile of subject #muthawifboywetrust with username jirep, has

¹³ steeve A J Muntu, Joanne Pingkan M Tangkudung, Dan Leviane J H Lotulung, "Studi Netnografi Pada Media Sosial Instagram," 2021.

29 thousand followers and 2 million likes. His real name is Salman Alfariy, a muthawwif and CEO of the hajj / umrah travel Sahara Group. Salman Alfariy studied at the Darussalam Gontor Islamic boarding school in 2017, then continued his studies at Al-Azhar University Cairo Egypt in 2018 as uploaded in his tiktok account regarding his education. Salman Alfariy became famous in cyberspace since 2023 when he uploaded a video on his TikTok account showing his activities while guiding the hajj / umrah pilgrims. This attracts public attention, because of the beauty of his face and appearance, so that it can build religious personal branding.

Figure 2. Education History



Religious Branding in Islamic Perspective

In the industrial era 5.0, where the digital world has controlled all elements of society and made today's society dependent on the use of technology (social media). Through the development of information and communication technology, it has proven to provide benefits for its users, all levels of society can access social media to express themselves, one of which is by expressing opinions in the form of suggestions and criticisms.¹⁴ In addition, the trend of using social media is also an effective medium for building personal branding.

Personal branding is an effort made by a person to attract public perception, using himself or his career as a *brand*.¹⁵ The purpose of individuals building personal

¹⁴ Nur Rahmawati, Muslichatun Muslichatun, dan M Marizal, "Kebebasan Berpendapat Terhadap Pemerintah Melalui Media Sosial Dalam Perspektif Uu Itc," *Widya Pranata Hukum : Jurnal Kajian dan Penelitian Hukum* 3, no. 1 (4 April 2021): 62–75, <https://doi.org/10.37631/widyapranata.v3i1.270>.

¹⁵ Vinessa Irene Kusuma dan Sinta Paramita, "Analisis Personal Branding dalam Meningkatkan Brand Awareness di TikTok," *Prologia* 8, no. 2 (1 Oktober 2024): 448, <https://doi.org/10.24912/pr.v8i2.27658>.

branding is to control the way others perceive and perceive the individual.¹⁶ Thus, social media users are expected to be able to maintain their attitude when using social media, because it will greatly affect the individual's personal branding.

The Islamic perspective also encourages us to build branding on social media well because there is a study in Saudi Arabia which reveals that there is a relationship between Islamic human values and personal branding in social media life.¹⁷ Personal branding plays an important role in shaping a credible self-image in the eyes of the public. Through personal branding, a person can show their unique side so that they are more easily recognized by the audience. In addition, people who have religious branding can also be utilized as a unique attention grabber for the mad'u (community or audience).¹⁸ In the business world, this becomes an entry point to establish cooperation, partnerships, or even seize opportunities that are usually only open to those who have influence, such as influencers.¹⁹

According to Peter Mentoya, there are eight main concepts to build a personal branding, one of which is that what someone instills into the community must also match the behavior behind the community.²⁰ In this context, muthawwif must also build personal branding to attract more worshipers on social media through a religious, warm, and professional appearance. However, when the image displayed is not in line with real behavior, then this can actually cause a crisis of trust from the public. Personal branding, which was originally intended to build trust, can turn into a boomerang when the image and reality contradict.²¹ Branding is an attempt to shape perceptions or influence public opinion, as well as a means for a person to introduce himself to the wider community.²² From the religious branding displayed by her personal TikTok profile, it very quickly attracts attention, especially from women, which can be seen from comments that show admiration, interest, and even romantic hopes. These comments appear as below:

¹⁶ Mike Ayu Anjani dan Encep Taufik Rahman, "PersonalBrandingMubalig Di Media Sosial," t.t.

¹⁷ Salsyab Vivi Feronica Althof, "Analysis of Sosial media usage and islamic human value towards personal branding for career success of millennial muslim generation," t.t., 21.

¹⁸ Anisah Nur Laili, "POPULISME RELIGIUS: Promosi Image-Branding Majelis Shalawat dalam Industri Dakwah Kontemporer," *TRILOGI: Jurnal Ilmu Teknologi, Kesehatan, dan Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (6 Agustus 2020): 14, <https://doi.org/10.33650/trilogi.v1i1.1593>.

¹⁹ Rizkyana Nisa, "Analisis Personal Branding Pada Akun sosial media ditinjau dari teori digital marketing syariah," t.t.

²⁰ Anisa Kamila, "Personal Branding Takdir Alisyahbana Ridwan Sebagai Influencer Melalui Media Sosial," 2023, 34.

²¹ Andiwi Meifilina, "Pelatihan Personal Branding Dalam Membangun Citra Diri," *Science Contribution to Society Journal* 2, no. 1 (12 Juli 2022): 32–48, <https://doi.org/10.35457/scs.v2i1.2410>.

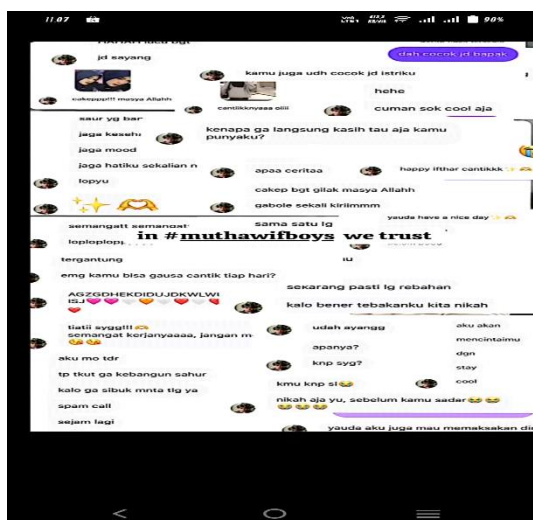
²² Amrin H Kanda, "Personal Branding Melalui Instagram" 17, no. 1 (t.t.).

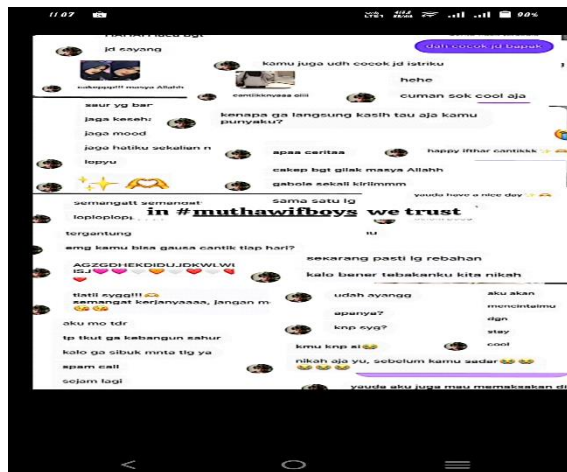
triggered a wave of great disappointment because what was originally considered an ideal representation was suddenly questioned by the public.

TikTok Users' Response to the #Muthawwifboywetrust Phenomenon

The personal branding owned by the subject #muthawwufboywetrust turned out to be inconsistent between what was displayed and the reality that occurred, the religious branding did not last long because it turned out that several TikTok accounts began to *speak up* that he had been approached and courted by the subject #muthawwufboywetrust via Instagram DM. Since then, the expression #muthawwifboywetrust, which was previously used as a form of admiration, has turned sarcastically to satirize this behavior. What became the public spotlight was not only a violation of personal ethics, but also had an impact on public perception of the muthawwif profession in general. Before the controversy, the #muthawwifboywetrust account attracted the attention of netizens and formed a strong image as an ideal Muslim man, polite, calming and religious.

Figure 4. Evidence of Speak up





Based on this evidence, it can be seen that there is a discrepancy between the personal branding displayed and the actual behavior, where the image that should reflect professionalism is actually used to attract the attention of the opposite sex. This has caused controversy by showing a variety of responses from TikTok users. Response is the feedback (*feed back*) that a person gets on the behavior or communication he has done. This response has a very large role or influence, whether the communication or behavior carried out goes well or not.²³ To understand the response pattern, it can be done by categorizing negative, positive, and neutral responses.²⁴

Negative Response

After the religious image of the subject of the #muthawifboywetrust phenomenon gained a place in the hearts of netizens, especially because of its polite and soothing appearance, the atmosphere changed drastically when their activities appeared which were considered incompatible with the values they displayed, namely berkhawat. The previously vaunted and admired image of piety was suddenly questioned and even attacked. This controversy caused a wave of negative responses in the comments section of their posts, especially from TikTok users who felt morally betrayed.

The religious branding that was originally considered an ideal representation of a Muslim, turned into an irony that triggered disappointment and sharp criticism. Comments of sarcasm, condemnation, and rejection of their content flooded the accounts that were previously filled with praise. In contrast to the previous comments,

²³ M. Rizky Ramadhan, "Respon Pengguna Bahasa Gaul : Media Sosial Tiktok Di Era Digital Native (Studi Pada Siswa MAN 3 Rukoh Banda Aceh)," 2023, 17.

²⁴ Galih Kusuma Wijaya, Adelia Venie Diniar, dan Shata Alwan Jalaluddin, "Dinamika Sentimen Publik dalam Suksesi Pemerintahan Indonesia berdasarkan Analisis Data Media Sosial" 8 (2025): 410.

other parts of the responses showed a tone of disappointment, sarcasm, and even condemnation. After observing the various responses to videos featuring muthawwifs with religious branding styles, it appears that an overwhelming number of TikTok users showed disappointment, criticism, and even sarcasm.

These negative comments represent a critique of what they see as a dissonance between Islamic symbolism (such as clothing, da'wah narratives and the image of an alim) and the reality of behavior that is perceived to contradict these values. For a more structured understanding, these negative responses are classified into the following themes:

Figure 5. Discrepancy between appearance and behavior



The comment above shows criticism of the discrepancy between appearance and behavior, this phenomenon confirms that in the digital space the religious image is not only judged by symbols and appearance, but also by behavioral consistency. When the consistency of behavior is not found, public trust begins to erode. In this context, it shows that the public is not only judging from appearance but also from authenticity. These responses show that digital society has a critical awareness of the possibility of manipulating religious symbols, and demands harmony between the identity formed in the public sphere and the reality that accompanies it. In addition, netizens also highlighted the use of religious symbols as part of a personal branding strategy. Here is an example of a comment that criticizes this.

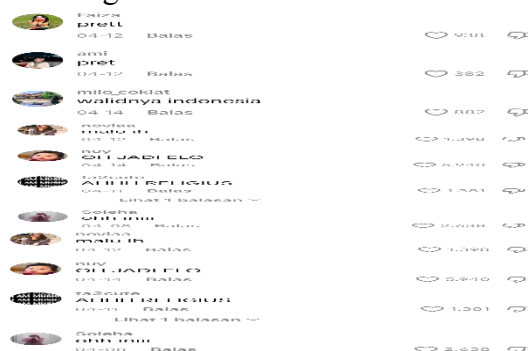
Figure 6. Distrust and sarcasm



These comments show distrust of public figures who are considered to overemphasize Islamic identity in their content. The insinuation of "selling religion" or *religious branding* indicates criticism of the commodification of religious symbols for the sake of popularity on social media. In this context, netizens seem to see the exploitation of religious values to build an ideal image. When this image is not accompanied by moral consistency, digital society shows resistance through cynical and satirical expressions.

This indicates that people's expectations of figures with religious branding are much higher than those who appear ordinary. In fact, behind the various netizen responses, it is necessary to realize that the muthawwif is also a human being who is by nature called *al-insan* because he has a tendency to forget, so that reprimands or warnings are a natural part of efforts to remind and improve themselves.²⁵ In addition to rational criticism, many comments appear as spontaneous emotional responses in the form of ridicule and embarrassment. This reaction shows the deep disappointment of netizens towards the criticized figure.

Figure 7. Ridicule and criticism



²⁵ Hisny Fajrussalam dkk., "Hakikat Dan Eksistensi Manusia Sebagai Mahluk Yang Bermoral," 2, *inovativ : Journal Of Social Science Research* (2023).



In the comment above, it is apparent that TikTok users show a very emotional spontaneous reaction in the form of ridicule, embarrassment, and rejection of the figure being criticized. The comments above indicate that the public feels a strong sense of disappointment, leading to a visceral response that is rude and uncereceremonious. This kind of response reflects that the issue raised is not just limited to intellectual disagreement, but touches the realm of deep negative feelings. Ridicule becomes a mechanism for expressing disappointment as well as social rejection of the figure.

It can also be seen as a form of moral judgment from the public who see the figure as not only failing to meet expectations of religious behavior, but also as having personally failed their trust. This reaction also has the potential to reinforce negative stigma and deepen polarization among TikTok users, where the criticized figure is unlikely to find space for clarification or image repair. Psychologically, such emotional responses arise when the public feels that values that are considered sacred or important are being violated in a tangible way, so they use ridicule as a form of expression of anger and disappointment. In the context of da'wah and religion, this shows the high sensitivity that da'wah actors must pay attention to in maintaining the credibility and morals of their public.

Sociologically, this phenomenon reflects how religious identities built in the digital space can quickly backfire when they are not aligned with public expectations. All of the comments above show that public trust in religious figures on social media is very fragile. Once there is a mismatch between image and reality, the reactions that arise can be very intense, personalized, and viral. In the context of digital da'wah, this is a reminder that building a religious image is not just a matter of appearance, but also the responsibility to maintain moral consistency and integrity in front of an increasingly critical public.

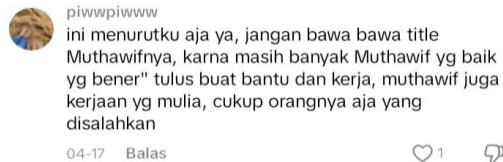
Positive Response

Although the #muthawwif boy we trust phenomenon is dominated by comments with criticism and satire, it turns out that there are still some netizens who choose to respond to the phenomenon through a different perspective. So that some positive responses appear and in accordance with their proportions. A positive response is a form of response that shows acceptance, approval, or support for an object, event, or communication message.²⁶ They tend to separate between individual

²⁶ Muhammad Lukmanul Hakim, "Respons Viewers Terhadap Dakwah Habib Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar Pada Channel Youtube Jeda Nulis," 2023, 69.

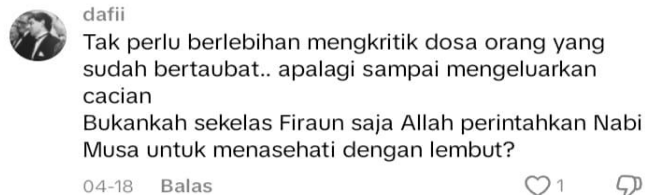
behavior and their profession. Like the comments expressed by the @piwwpiwww account as follows.

Figure 8. An invitation to be more objective



This comment shows a wise attitude by separating individual behavior and the profession he holds. He rejected the generalization that one person's mistake could reflect the entire muthawwif profession. This comment also reflects an effort to maintain the honor of the muthawwif profession and invites people to remain objective in assessing a case. There are also comments that show an empathetic attitude and remind not to be too excessive in judgment, and remind to convey criticism politely. Like the following comment from the @dafii account.

Figure 9. Empathetic attitude



The author of this commentary reminds us of the importance of maintaining good manners in delivering criticism, lest the criticism reach the stage of exaggeration, especially to those who have declared themselves repentant. He emphasized that even if someone has made a mistake, the form of rebuke delivered must be polite, as Allah ordered the prophet Moses a.s to gently advise fir'aun.

Overall, the response of netizens to the #muthawwif boy we trust phenomenon was not entirely negative or emotional. Amidst the wave of widespread criticism and disappointment, there are still positive comments that reflect the wise and constructive attitude of netizens. As Islam has explained about the manners of giving advice, that when delivering a piece of advice, it should be delivered nicely. Because advising is likened to opening a door, if the key is wrong then the door will not open. Likewise, advice if delivered in the wrong way is difficult to be accepted by the person being advised.²⁷

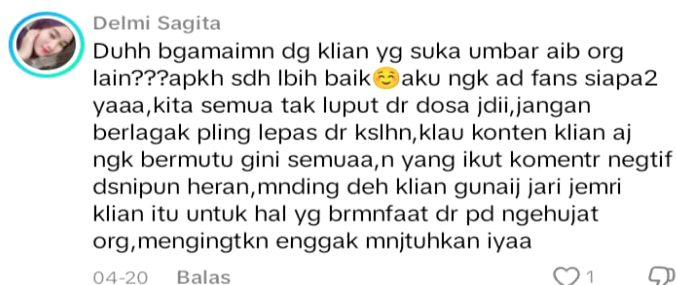
²⁷ Andri Santoso, Surya Afdal, dan Ismail Syakban, "Analisis Materi Pendidikan Agama Islam pada Film Animasi Nussa dan Rarra," *at-Tarbiyah al-Mustamirrah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (25 November 2023): 65, <https://doi.org/10.31958/atjpi.v4i2.10589>.

In addition to being delivered properly, one of the manners in delivering advice is to be delivered in secret. In *Diwan Ash-Shafi'I* page 56, Imam Shafi'I said "give me advice when I am alone. Avoid giving me advice in a crowd. Indeed, advice in a crowd is an abuse that I do not like to hear. If you contradict and reject my advice, then do not be angry if your words are not followed"²⁸.

Neutral Response

Amidst the public opinion divided between the camp of critics and the camp of defenders, there were also a number of comments that occupied a neutral position. These neutral responses generally come from netizens who do not directly side with one of the parties, but focus on how the public responds to the case and the social impact caused. Such as the following comment from the @Delmi Sagita account.

Figure 10. Not taking sides with anyone

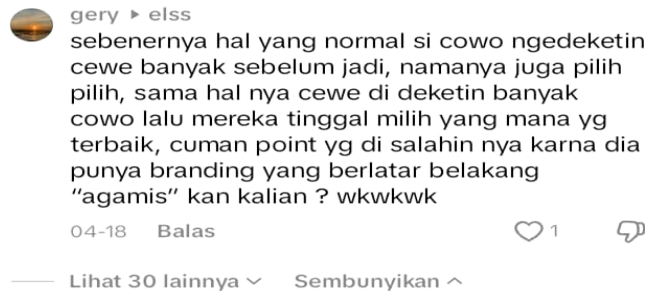


The comment submitted by the account named @Delmi Sagita is a form of neutral response with a corrective tone that is quite emotional. This comment directly says that he does not idolize anyone. He did not directly defend or participate in blasphemy, but instead he highlighted the way people responded to the case, especially those who were considered fond of spreading disgrace and feeling the most righteous, because in fact humans are a place of mistakes and forgetfulness, as said in a proverb that humans are a place of mistakes and forgetfulness.²⁹ In addition to comments highlighting the importance of ethics when giving criticism, there are also other neutral responses that try to understand the issue from a more contextual and realistic point of view. Such as the following comment submitted by the @gery account.

²⁸ Devi Setya, "6 Adab Menasihati Dalam Islam, Jangan Sampai Mempermalukan," *Detik Hikmah* (blog), Desember 2022, <https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-6463599/6-adab-menasehati-dalam-islam-jangan-sampai-mempermalukan>.

²⁹ Harpan Reski Mulia, "Pendidikan Karakter: Analisa Pemikiran Ibnu Miskawaih," t.t.

Figure 11. Different points of view



This comment tries to take a middle position, in his comment, he said that approaching several people of the opposite sex before commitment is a common thing in the process of finding a partner. Both men and women have the same opportunity to get to know more than one person before making a life choice.

However, she also highlighted that the main problem in this case lies not in the activity in general, but rather in the discrepancy between the religious image presented by the muthawwif and the behavior that is considered not to reflect these values. The religious image constructed on social media led to high public expectations, so when his behavior was perceived to be off the mark, disappointment ensued and triggered widespread reactions.

This comment shows that she is not engaging in anger or excessive defense, but rather trying to understand the issue in a balanced way. He wanted to invite people to look at the issue more objectively and not just judge based on emotions. Overall, the two neutral comments analyzed show an attempt to maintain balance in the midst of a heated stream of opinions. Both do not necessarily blaspheme or defend, but rather focus more on ethics in addressing the case and inviting the public to be wiser. Commenting neutrally in the midst of a heated situation can create a sense of calm or peace. People involved in the situation will be more open-minded to digest the phenomena that occur through other perspectives.

Neutral comments or communication that brings a sense of calm or peace above can be based on the communication style mentioned in the Qur'an, namely qaulan ma'rufan. The sentence can be found in Surah Al-Baqarah verses 235 and 263, An-Nisa' verse 5, Al-Ahzab verse 32, and according to Quraisy Shihab the word ma'rufan has meanings including, proper expression, polite, using innuendo (which is not harsh), not hurting or offending, useful, causing a sense of calm, peace for people who hear it.³⁰

³⁰ Muhammad Ridwan, "Dakwah Persuasif Nabi Musa Dalam Perspektif Komunikasi Dakwah Kontemporer" 21, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.59109/addawah.v21i2>.

Conclusion

The viral #muthawwif boy we trust hashtag on the TikTok platform reflects how the use of religious identity through social media can strongly shape public perception, but is also vulnerable to turning into a crisis of trust when personal behavior is not in line with the image he has been presenting. Based on the findings and discussion, there are many responses displayed by TikTok users. The majority of TikTok users' responses to the #muthawwif boy we trust case are dominated by negative responses as illustrated by the many insinuations, criticisms, and expressions of disappointment expressed through the comments column towards the discrepancy between the religious appearance that is used as a religious symbol and the individual behavior of the muthawwif. Even so, there are still positive responses that call for being objective and the importance of ethics in delivering criticism. In addition, neutral responses also emerged from those who chose not to take sides, but invited the public to address this case wisely so as not to cause new problems. This research confirms that in this digital era, religious professions such as muthawwif are not only judged in terms of competence and quality of service, but also personal integrity that is visible in public and digital spaces. Based on these findings, it is suggested to the perpetrators of digital da'wah and religious professions, to maintain harmony between the religious identity displayed publicly and daily behavior, as well as the importance of digital literacy education in managing religious images so that they do not backfire.

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