

THE PHENOMENON OF ISLAMIC JOKES ON SOCIAL MEDIA: BETWEEN ENTERTAINMENT AND THE INTERNALIZATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION VALUES

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of Islamic jokes on social media has become increasingly popular alongside the rapid growth of digital platforms as spaces for expression and education. This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic jokes as a form of entertainment as well as a medium for the internalization of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) values. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach through content analysis of Islamic humor-themed posts on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, with a specific focus on TikTok. The findings indicate that Islamic jokes serve two primary functions. First, they function as a light, contextual, and easily accessible form of entertainment for the digital generation. Second, they possess the potential to internalize Islamic values through moral messages, character development, and the creative delivery of religious teachings. Nevertheless, the study also identifies the risk of meaning distortion and oversimplification of religious teachings when such content is not accompanied by proper understanding. This research emphasizes that Islamic jokes can serve as an effective educational medium when presented proportionally, ethically, and in accordance with Islamic legal and moral principles. These findings are expected to provide references for educators, content creators, and researchers in developing Islamic education and da'wah strategies that are relevant to contemporary social media culture.

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, social media has become a fundamental aspect of life for both younger and older generations. More than 354 million users access social media platforms daily (Rifandi, 2021). This is supported by a survey conducted by Suharno (2025) in collaboration with the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), which identified five of the most frequently used social media platforms: TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter (X), and Facebook. TikTok ranked first, experiencing a significant increase of 18.61% compared to the previous year, while other platforms experienced declines. These data confirm that TikTok is the only major platform

showing positive growth. According to Tempo (2025) social media video content is categorized into six types: short online videos, social media videos, long-form internet-based TV, online music, online games, and podcasts. Among these, short online videos remain the most popular entertainment category in Indonesia, accounting for 30.16% of user preferences.

According to Nasrullah (2017) a new phenomenon has emerged in Islamic da'wah that is creatively and entertainingly packaged, one of which is manifested through Islamic jokes. This type of content represents a form of humor that conveys Islamic messages and is particularly appealing to young audiences who are closely engaged with digital culture. This argument is reinforced by Nabilah et al., (2025) who state that it is an inherent human instinct, present from birth, to seek pleasure, happiness, joy, and entertainment. Fundamentally, human beings engage in various routines and activities that can exhaust both mental and physical energy. In line with this perspective, Warsah et al., (2021) further emphasize that humans naturally enjoy humorous narratives because humor can stimulate the release of endorphins, which generate feelings of happiness and enjoyment after individuals confront the pressures and busyness of daily life.

From the Islamic perspective, humor or entertainment is not prohibited as long as it does not involve elements of falsehood, insult, or disrespect toward religion. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself was known to engage in light-hearted humor while remaining firmly grounded in truth, as reflected in his statement, *إِنِّي لَأَمْزُحُ، وَلَا أَقُولُ إِلَّا حَقًّا* "Indeed, I do joke, but I do not say anything except the truth" (At-Tirmidzi). This demonstrates that humor can serve as a means of moral and spiritual education when utilized appropriately. Within the context of Islamic religious education, Islamic jokes have the potential to function as an effective medium for internalizing Islamic values such as honesty, courtesy, and sincerity (Lickona, 1991).

Nevertheless, this phenomenon also presents ethical and theological challenges, as not all content labeled as "Islamic" genuinely reflects authentic Islamic values. Some content creators merely utilize religious humor as a means of entertainment or as a strategy to increase popularity, without adequate understanding of Islamic etiquette (*adab*) and moral conduct (*akhlaq*) (Siregar, 2023). Other scholars, such as Linnaja et al., (2025) argue that humor or entertainment is indeed necessary in conveying Islamic religious education values in order to achieve optimal learning outcomes, provided that the substance and essence of those values remain central. In line with this view, Yuliasih (2021) explains that social media serves as a new medium for transmitting Islamic values, allowing the millennial generation to access religious content anytime and anywhere. However, it must be emphasized that entertainment or Islamic jokes should not contradict the fundamental principles and authentic values of Islam.

From the perspective of Islamic religious education, the phenomenon of Islamic jokes constitutes a highly relevant and compelling subject for deeper scholarly examination. As demonstrated by Husaini (2021) advances in technology and the widespread accessibility of social media—particularly entertainment content with Islamic nuances—have the potential to shift the orientation of Islamic education from a predominantly conceptual approach toward one that is more contextual and engaging. Meanwhile, Khosla and Yunusi (2024) argue that Islamic content disseminated through social media platforms such as TikTok, especially content presented in a humorous format, can make a meaningful contribution to the field of education. Its positive impact lies in enhancing creativity in the delivery of Islamic religious education values, thereby facilitating the achievement of learning objectives. However, the use of TikTok also entails several negative implications, including exposure to content that is inappropriate for children, the potential for cyberbullying and negative commentary, excessive screen time, and the decline of concentration and productivity. Therefore, the role of teachers is crucial in guiding, supervising, and contextualizing the use of such platforms within educational settings.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze several examples of the Islamic jokes phenomenon on social media, with a particular focus on TikTok, as a form of entertainment as well as a medium for the internalization of Islamic religious education values. This study is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic religious education in the digital era in a manner that is adaptive and creative, while remaining firmly grounded in the core values of *tawhid* and Islamic moral conduct (*akhlaq*).

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological study design. This approach was selected because the research focuses on understanding the meanings and values embedded in the phenomenon of Islamic Jokes on social media, examined from communicative, cultural, and religious perspectives. According to Creswell (2018), phenomenological research seeks to explore the meaning of individuals' subjective experiences of phenomena that they encounter directly. After the data were collected, the researchers applied the Miles & Huberman (2014) analytical model, which consists of three main stages: 1). Data reduction, focusing on information relevant to Islamic education values, forms of humor, and audience perceptions. 2). Data display, in which the data were organized into categories such as religious value themes, types of humor, and educational impacts. 3). Conclusion drawing and verification, involving the interpretation of findings to identify how Islamic Jokes function as a medium for the internalization of religious values within the context of digital entertainment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Jokes and Social Media Culture

The development of social media has brought about significant changes in the way Muslim communities express their religious values (Bayu et al., 2020). According to Sari et al., (2024), social media constitutes a new cultural space in which religious expressions are constructed through symbols, texts, and digital interactions. Social media has become a systematic part of contemporary life; this phenomenon not only encompasses personal aspects but also influences social, political, economic, cultural, and educational dynamics on a broader scale (Gulo, 2023). Within this context, the phenomenon of Islamic Jokes has emerged as a form of religious humor that combines elements of entertainment with Islamic moral messages (Hapiz et al., 2024). This is further reinforced by Ahmad et al., (2024), who argue that in recent years there has been a significant evolution of social media platforms as spaces for religious discourse. Much of this transformation is driven by the distinctive communication tendencies of the millennial and centennial generations, which shape online religious narratives and conversational styles.

Humor as a form of social expression has long been examined within the fields of communication and cultural studies. Meyer (2000) explains that humor serves a dual function: strengthening social solidarity and affirming the boundaries of group identity. Meanwhile, Martin (2009) classifies humor into three main dimensions, namely sense of humor, humor appreciation, and humor production, which refer respectively to an individual's disposition toward humor, the ability to appreciate humorous content, and the capacity to create humor.

Within the Islamic context, humor can function as a light yet meaningful medium of da'wah (Herlambang & Muhtar, 2025). Islamic Jokes content on social media often presents light narratives, moral satire, or religious reflections delivered in a humorous and contextual manner, making it readily acceptable to digital audiences (Fathurrahman, 2021). In line with previous studies, Aziz (2022) argues that the presence of social media has made religious values more accessible and enjoyable, particularly through humor-based content, which tends to be more easily received by younger audiences and generates higher levels of engagement than formally styled content (Rofiqoh & Azis, 2024).

Islamic Jokes appear in a wide range of forms and variations, largely depending on the creativity of humor creators in crafting content for their audiences. The interaction between humor producers and consumers can manifest in various forms and serve different functions. According to Hanifah et al. (2025), the functions of humor can be classified into three domains: 1). Physical health, as laughter can enhance the immune system (Usman et al., 2023). 2). Positive well-being, in which humor generates feelings of happiness and vitality, thereby stimulating positive emotions. 3). Social relationships, where humor serves as a means of expressing joy and strengthening interpersonal bonds (Nabilah et al., 2025).

This argument is consistent with Bauer's (2023) view, which posits that jokes or humor constitute one of the means through which feelings of happiness are created and expressed through laughter, serving as a way to break silence and foster stronger bonds of friendship and social interaction. However, not all jokes are received positively by others. Accordingly, Gunawan and Alimin (2018) delimit several types of humor, as outlined below:

Surprise and Incongruity

According to the same source, one type of humor frequently employed in literary works is oddity or surprise. This form of humor may appear in the form of absurd scenes or spontaneous actions performed by characters or actors. An example can be found in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams (2021).

a) Self-Deprecating Humor

This genre of humor involves “roasting” or belittling oneself with the intention of attracting the interlocutor’s interest and creating amusement for both audiences and readers.

b) Situational Humor

This genre of humor is typically created by actors or writers through an awareness of situational contexts, utilizing imagination and the surrounding environment to generate humor. An example of situational humor can be found in *The Accidental Tourist* by Anne Tyler (2009).

c) Irony as Humor

This genre of humor is also widely employed in literary texts through the humorous use of irony. There are several forms of irony, all of which involve a contrast between what is said or appears to occur and what actually happens. One such form is dramatic irony, in which readers possess knowledge that the characters do not. An example of this can be found in *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut (Paz, 2016).

d) Understatement Humor

In literary works, when an author describes a situation or event in an explicitly understated manner, it can produce humorous effects for readers. The key element is that readers fully recognize the actual situation and perceive the absurdity of the understated claim. An example appears in *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut (Paz, 2016).

e) Exaggeration or Hyperbole

Another type of humor involves exaggerating situations to create comedic effects. In this case, readers understand the actual circumstances and are entertained by the author’s deliberate overstatement. Steve Martin employs exaggerated statements in the section on dieting in his book *Cruel Shoes* (1979).

f) Satirical Humor

When an author adopts a serious tone to discuss a ridiculous topic, this technique often takes the form of satire, which is widely found in literary works. This method has been employed by numerous writers, ranging from *Shakespeare* to *Douglas Adams*. A well-known example of satire is *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift (Freiburg, 2020).

Islamic Jokes in the Perspective of Islam

Humor in Islam is not prohibited as long as it does not contain elements of falsehood, mockery, or disrespect toward religion. According to Al-Qaradawi (2001), Islam acknowledges the human fitrah to experience joy and laughter, while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of maintaining propriety (adab) and truthfulness in humor. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provided a model demonstrating that humor can form part of noble character (akhlaq) when it is used to cultivate compassion and strengthen ukhuwah (brotherhood) (Aji, 2024).

Islamic literature records numerous Muslim Sufi figures who produced remarkable humorous works, such as Nasruddin Hoja, Bahlul, Hani al-‘Arabiyy, the witty Abu Nawas, as well as various characters found in Islamic fables and literary narratives. These figures are often portrayed as unconventional individuals—characterized by unique traits, apparent foolishness, mischief, and behavior that deviates from social norms. Nevertheless, their words and actions frequently embody profound wisdom and insight, serving as a reminder of human vulnerability and dependence before Allah SWT (Nurul, 2019).

From this perspective, Islamic Jokes may be regarded as a form of moral communication that aligns with the values of Islamic education, as they encompass elements of ma‘rifah (knowledge), akhlaq (ethics), and hikmah (wisdom). However, Husain (2021) cautions that uncontrolled humor may diminish the dignity of religion and lead to value distortion. Therefore, digital religious literacy is required to ensure that Islamic Jokes function as an educational medium rather than merely as profane entertainment.

In line with Husain’s argument, the Qur’an provides explicit guidance on this matter in Surah At-Tawbah (9:65–66):

يَخَذِرُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنَّ نُزُلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةُ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۚ قُلْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْرِجٌ مَا تَخْتَرُونَ

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

Translation: *The hypocrites fear that a sūrah should be revealed about them, exposing what is in their hearts. Say, 'O Prophet, "Keep mocking! Allah will definitely bring to light what you fear." If you question them, they will certainly say, "We were only talking idly and joking around." Say, "Was it Allah, His revelations, and His Messenger that you ridiculed?"*

According to Amrullah in (Tasfir Al-Azhar.), these verses serve as a guideline for Muslims who engage in joking or humor, emphasizing that such expressions must not insult or demean the religion of Islam. This position is further reinforced by As-Suyuthi (1998), who asserts that joking or creating humor with the intention of making others happy is highly encouraged, provided that it does not hurt others' feelings or lead to the denigration of Islamic religious law.

Based on the above discussion, Hanifah et al. (2025) propose a classification of jokes or humor that are permissible according to Islamic teachings. **First**, humor must not contain elements of falsehood, as stated in a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ حَدَّثَنَا سَفْيَانُ عَنْ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ الْأَفْرَعَ بْنَ حَابِسٍ أَبْصَرَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ حَسْبُنَا فَقَالَ إِنَّ لِي عَشْرَةَ مِنَ الْوَلَدِ مَا فَعَلْتُ هَذَا يَوَاجِدُ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ لَا يَرْحَمُ

Meaning *"It was narrated to us by Musaddad ibn Musarhad, who said: It was narrated to us by Yahya, from Bahz ibn Hakim, who said: My father narrated to me from his father that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: 'Woe to the one who speaks and lies in order to make people laugh. Woe to him, woe to him'"* (Reported by Abu Dawud)

Second, humor must not involve belittling or insulting others, as emphasized in a hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ

Meaning: *From Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his neighbor. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his guest.*

Third, Islam prohibits excessive joking, as it may lead to the hardening or death of the heart. This is based on a hadith narrated by Ibn Majah in (Sunan Ibn Majah, 2008) :

حَدَّثَنَا بَكْرُ بْنُ خَلْفٍ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ الْحَنْفِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْحَمِيدِ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ حُنَيْنٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا تُكْثِرُوا الضَّحْكَ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الضَّحْكِ تُمَيِّتُ الْقُلُوبَ

Meaning: *It was narrated to us by Bakar ibn Khalaf, who said: It was narrated to us by Abu Bakr al-Hanafî, who said: It was narrated to us by 'Abd al-Hamid ibn Ja'far, from Ibrahim ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hunayn, from Abu Hurairah, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, 'Do not laugh excessively, for excessive laughter deadens the heart.*

Internalization of Islamic Religious Education Values in Content

Every human being is born without knowledge; therefore, education is essential for individuals to navigate and direct their lives (Khairani, BudiYanti, 2024). Islamic education aims to guide human beings to adopt Islam as a way of life and to orient their existence toward worship of Allah (Basri, 2009).

The internalization of values refers to the process of instilling and habituating religious values until they become an integral part of an individual's personality (Lickona, 1991). In the context of Islamic education, this process encompasses three primary dimensions: cognitive (understanding), affective (internalization and appreciation), and psychomotor (practice and application). Islamic religious education seeks to shape individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and possess noble character through learning processes that engage both the emotions and behaviors of learners.

According to Nubuawah et al. (2023), Islamic religious education values represent a synthesis of spiritual and physical experiences encompassing the domains of aqidah, sharia, and akhlaq, all of which play a crucial role in shaping an Islamic personality so that learners may become kaffah (holistic) Muslims. The function of Islamic education values is to serve as a formative framework for learners in internalizing aqidah as the foundation of belief, as well as akhlaq and sharia as their practical manifestations in daily Muslim life (Al-faruqi, 1981).

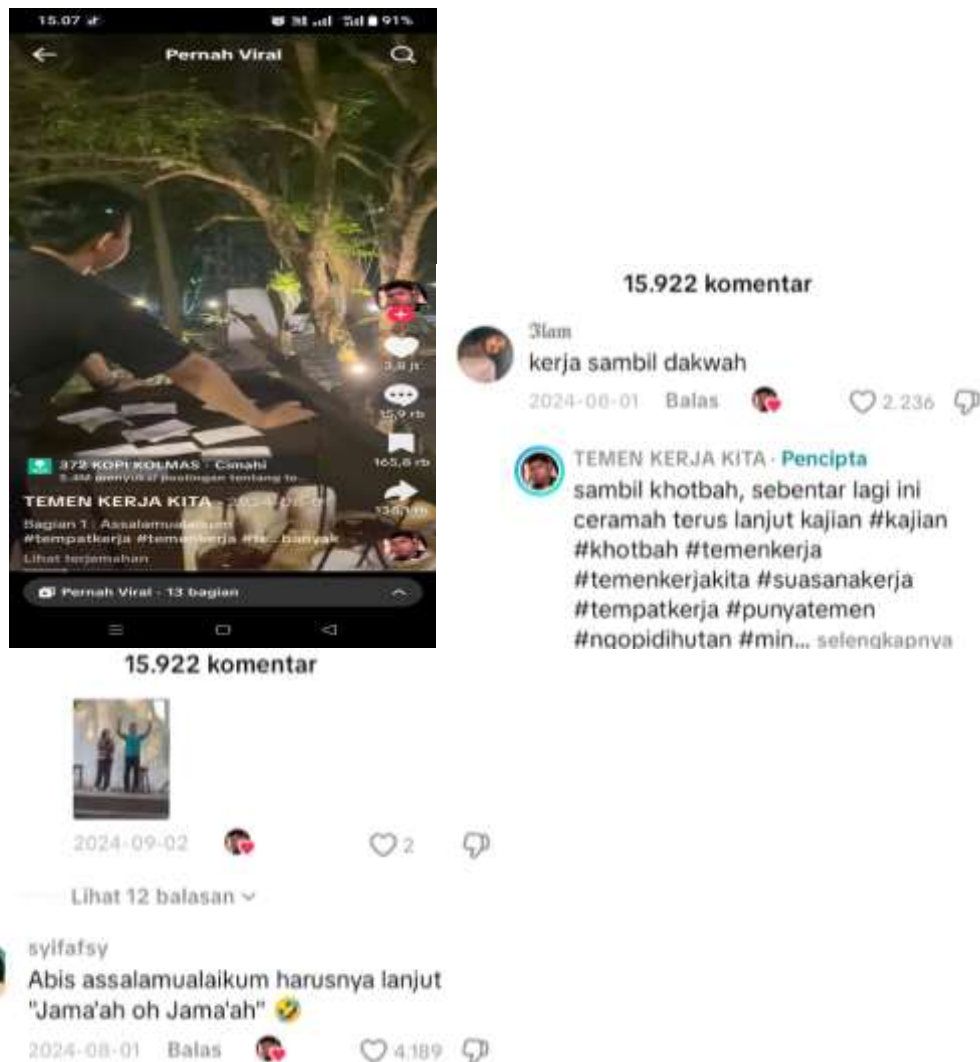
Islamic Jokes possess the potential to serve as a medium for value internalization when they are able to convey relevant religious messages that engage the affective dimension (Amir et al., 2021). Through humor, values such as honesty, simplicity, and compassion can be communicated in a lighter and more engaging manner, particularly for younger generations who inhabit a fast-paced and visually oriented culture (Fahriansyah, 2020). In this way, Islamic Jokes may function as a bridge between the world of digital entertainment and the realm of Islamic moral education.

TikTok is one of the many social media platforms widely used by the contemporary generation, where numerous content creators (TikTokers) actively seek to increase viewership and engagement. Among the content shared on TikTok, there are several videos that incorporate humorous elements while simultaneously conveying Islamic religious values. One such example is the TikTok account @temankerjakita, which has approximately 34.3 thousand followers and has accumulated a total of 4.9 million likes across its videos. The account owner is an employee of Kopi Kolmas Cafe, located at Jl. Kolonel Masturi, Km. 3, Cipageran, Cimahi Utara, Cimahi City, West Java 40511, which has received a visitor rating of 4.7. One of the videos from this account has gone viral.



Figure 1 Example content creator

In the video uploaded by the @temankerjakita account, the content creator is shown serving customers by delivering their orders while calling out the customers' names. Unexpectedly, the name mentioned is "*Assalamu'alaikum*," which spontaneously triggers laughter from other visitors. The scenario is then repeated, with the order once again called out under the name "*Assalamu'alaikum*." In response, all customers spontaneously reply in a loud voice, "*Wa'alaikumussalam*," creating an atmosphere within Kopi Kolmas Cafe that resembles a religious gathering (pengajian).



The video received a highly positive response from netizens. Since its upload, it has garnered approximately 3.8 million likes, nearly 16,000 comments, 165,800 saves, and has been shared up to 138,100 times, indicating a high level of audience engagement. When examined more closely, the joke conveys an implicit religious message, namely the encouragement to pronounce and spread greetings (salam), as instructed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the following hadith:

لَا تَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى تَحَابُّوا أَوْ لَا أَدْلُكُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ إِذَا فَعَلْتُمْوَهُ تَحَابَبْتُمْ أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ بَيْنَكُمْ

(رواه مسلم)

Meaning: *ou will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not truly believe until you love one another. Shall I inform you of something which, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread greetings of peace (salam) among yourselves. (Narrated by Muslim).*

This finding aligns with the argument proposed by et al. (2025), who state that humor related to Islam is permissible as long as it adheres to clear ethical boundaries. In the viral video, there are no elements of falsehood, religious insult, harm toward others, or excessive joking that could undermine religious dignity. This argument is further reinforced by Lickona's theory (1991), which positions Islamic jokes in this context as a form of moral knowing, conveyed through implicit religious messaging. The humorous delivery stimulates moral feeling, thereby facilitating the internalization of Islamic educational values. Specifically, the video emphasizes the obligation of responding to greetings (salam), reinforcing religious practice through an engaging and culturally relevant digital medium.

CONCLUSION

In the contemporary digital era, many individuals have gradually shifted away from traditional Islamic learning forums rooted in formal scholarly settings. Instead, they increasingly prefer consuming content through social media platforms, particularly humorous content commonly referred to as jokes. In response to this shift, several social media accounts have begun to internalize and integrate Islamic religious values into humorous digital content. Unconsciously, Islamic jokes have emerged as a new medium for instilling Islamic educational values. Through this approach, the fundamental objectives of Islamic religious education can be achieved in a manner that remains relevant to modern digital culture.

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