

## The Effectiveness of Youtube as a Platform for Islamic Da'wah and Counseling for Generation Z in the Digital Era

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the effectiveness of YouTube as a platform for Islamic preaching and counseling for Generation Z in the digital era. Using a literature study approach, this research analyzes various relevant sources, including books, scientific journals, and articles obtained from the internet. The findings show that YouTube is effective as a medium for Islamic preaching and counseling for Generation Z in the digital era. The platform can deliver messages in an engaging, easy-to-understand manner and align with the characteristics of Generation Z, who are closely connected to interactive visual content. Proper utilization of YouTube can enhance audience engagement and support the achievement of Islamic preaching and counseling objectives. This study recommends the development of creative and innovative content based on the needs of Generation Z to make preaching and counseling more relevant and optimal.

**Keywords:** YouTube, Preaching, Islamic Counseling, Generation Z.

### INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of da'wah (Afrilia, 2018). The emergence of digital media such as the internet, social media, and mobile applications has created new opportunities for preachers (da'i) to reach a wider audience and convey Islamic messages more effectively. The use of digital-based da'wah media has become an interesting phenomenon to study, considering the potential and challenges it faces in the context of spreading Islamic messages in the digital era, especially in reaching Generation Z (Gen Z). The rapid development of modern technology has had a broad impact on society by making access to information easier, faster, and more open to everyone around the world. Little John emphasizes that the digital era brings major changes in communication and information patterns, which are now increasingly utilized in everyday life (Prasetyo Utomo, 2020).

The digital era has brought great changes in how information is delivered and managed. Various computer devices, both hardware and software, play an important role in controlling this process with the support of increasingly sophisticated networks. Digital technology appears as a system capable of working automatically without relying on much manual human activity. Although it generally operates in a computerized or automated system with a computer-readable format, da'wah still has a role as a call from the da'i to the mad'u to behave well and avoid bad deeds. The purpose of da'wah is for individuals to live meaningful lives in this world and the hereafter, in

accordance with the guidance of Allah SWT and the teachings conveyed by His Messenger (Hamid Bashori & Jalaluddin, 2021).

According to a report by the organization *We Are Social*, as quoted by Nasrullah, research results show that the level of internet and social media usage is quite high. It is recorded that 15% of total internet penetration, or more than 38 million people, already use the internet. The study also revealed that Indonesians spend an average of about 3 hours each day accessing and browsing social media through smartphones. The development of technology opens up space for da'wah beyond places of worship by utilizing digital platforms. The presence of technology makes society increasingly accustomed to using modern devices. This condition can be seen as an opportunity for preachers to convey religious teachings and values through new media more effectively.

Social media, in addition to being a space for da'wah, can also be used as a medium for counseling. This is because social media provides an open communication space that is easily accessible and can reach anyone without being limited by distance or time. Through private messaging features, discussion forums, or even live broadcasts, counselors can provide guidance, advice, and motivation to clients more flexibly. Social media also allows for closer and more informal relationships between counselors and counselees, making the counseling process feel more comfortable. Thus, the function of social media is not limited to spreading da'wah but also has great potential as a modern counseling medium that is relevant to current societal needs.

Various social media platforms now facilitate da'wah activities. The use of media such as YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, and Facebook is believed to influence the image and reputation of a da'i (Wibowo, 2019). Among the many options, YouTube has become the most prominent and popular medium among the public, even globally. YouTube is used by users to watch various types of video content, including live broadcasts. This platform is easier to access, offers a wider variety of content, and can be used as a means of da'wah through video lectures.

Da'wah videos are one of the ways to convey messages that stimulate both sight and hearing. This form has been implemented through television, video, interactive multimedia, and other types of media. Through da'wah videos, both can communicate religious messages in a more interactive and engaging way, making them easier to understand and accept by teenagers or Generation Z. Teenagers also have a high level of curiosity about religious teachings and tend to seek information that is simple, realistic, and easy to understand through da'wah accounts on YouTube.

Recent data shows that the number of monthly registered viewers on YouTube has reached 2 billion. This achievement increased by about 5% compared to 2018, when it was at 1.8 billion. This statement was conveyed by YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki during her presentation at YouTube's annual Brandcast event for advertisers in New York City, USA. This number does not yet include other internet users who often watch YouTube videos without having an account (Hamdan & Mahmuddin, 2021).

There are previous studies on the effectiveness of YouTube as a platform for da'wah and counseling in the digital era. One such study was conducted by Anis Marti, Ahmad Khairul Nuzuli, and Aan Firtanosa, titled "*The Role of Da'wah Videos on YouTube in Increasing Religious Awareness among Teenagers in the Digital Era.*" The results of this study show that YouTube is effectively used as a medium for da'wah because it is easy to access, has a wide reach, and aligns with the needs of the younger generation. Da'wah content in the form of video lectures has been proven to attract attention, facilitate understanding, and can be applied in daily life, making YouTube a strategic medium for spreading religious messages in the digital era (Marti, Nuzuli, & Firtanosa, 2023).

Another study conducted by Taufikurrahman and Endang Setyowati titled *“Da’wah Communication Systems in the Digital Era through Instagram, Tik Tok, and YouTube”* found that da’wah in the digital era through these platforms can effectively and interactively reach a wider audience. However, responsible communication strategies are needed to avoid inaccurate content and to ensure that the messages conveyed reflect Islamic values (Taufikurrahman & Setyowati, 2024).

Furthermore, research conducted by Noviana Aini titled *“Utilization of Digital Platform Media for Da’wah in the Generation Z Era”* found that digital media has great potential in spreading da’wah to Generation Z because they tend to prefer content that is visual, interactive, and easily accessible through mobile devices. However, the challenges faced include competition with entertainment content, low digital literacy, and the risk of spreading inaccurate information. Therefore, digital da’wah must be presented with creative, relevant, and adaptive strategies, along with improving digital literacy among preachers so that Islamic messages can be effectively received (Noviana Aini, 2023).

Based on the above data, the researcher intends to conduct a study titled *“The Effectiveness of YouTube as a Platform for Islamic Da’wah and Counseling for Generation Z in the Digital Era”* with the aim of understanding the development of YouTube as a platform for Islamic da’wah and counseling among Generation Z (Gen Z).

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach through a literature study or library research. This method is carried out by collecting data and scientific literature related to the research object. The main focus is a literature review aimed at finding solutions to a problem by emphasizing critical and in-depth analysis of relevant library sources (Asmadin & Silvianetri, 2022).

The literature study in this research was conducted by reviewing various scientific sources to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of YouTube as a platform for Islamic da’wah and counseling for Generation Z in the digital era. The data in this study were collected through a literature search obtained from academic reference books and scientific journal articles published between 2018–2023. The search process was conducted using Google Scholar with keywords relevant to the research topic. From the search results, 15 journal articles met the selection criteria.

The data in this research were collected through several methods to ensure accuracy and richness of information. First, participant observation was carried out by directly monitoring the activities of channels discussing Islamic da’wah and counseling, such as likes, comments, and participation in live streaming (Dwi et al., 2024). This observation aimed to see the patterns of audience interaction with Islamic da’wah and counseling content directly. Second, documentation in the form of data collection from recorded lectures and relevant comments was used as additional data sources. The data sources in this study, apart from observation and documentation, were also supported by literature from journals, books, and previous studies discussing digital da’wah suitable for Generation Z.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### YouTube Platform in the Digital Era

The rapid changes in the world are influenced by technological advancements that require humans to adapt in order not to be left behind. This progress has also led to the emergence of

social media as a means of sharing information and experiences (Tomi & Saputri, 2020). Among the many platforms available, YouTube has become one of the most widely used by the public. YouTube is a platform that provides an opportunity for its users to upload and share videos. As it has developed, many people have turned into creators or YouTubers by presenting creative and innovative content that is able to attract viewers' attention. The same thing has also been done by preachers who use YouTube as a medium for da'wah to convey religious teachings, provide the latest information, and introduce Islam to the wider community.

With a wide range of users spread across various countries, this platform has become a potential medium for spreading Islamic da'wah globally. Along with the flow of globalization and advances in information technology, traditional da'wah methods are now shifting toward the digital realm. The presence of YouTube not only opens up opportunities for wider dissemination of da'wah but also provides flexibility in presenting da'wah content in various forms and styles.

YouTube, as a video-sharing platform, plays an important role as a main medium in the dissemination of da'wah by utilizing various features such as live streaming, comment sections, and direct interaction with the audience. According to the latest report by We Are Social in 2020, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 175.4 million people. Out of a total population of 272.1 million, about 64% of the population has accessed the internet. Meanwhile, 88% of Indonesia's population are recorded as YouTube users, making it the social media platform with the largest number of users in Indonesia, followed by WhatsApp with a percentage of 84%. This data shows that YouTube has become the main choice for the public to both obtain and share information (Nanda Ivan, Annisa, & Aidil Armi, 2022).

According to the results of the *Indonesia Digital Report* released by We Are Social, watching online videos has become the main activity of internet users in Indonesia. The YouTube platform ranks at the top as the most frequently accessed media by the public. The survey results from We Are Social also present data on various social media platforms that are most widely used by the Indonesian people.

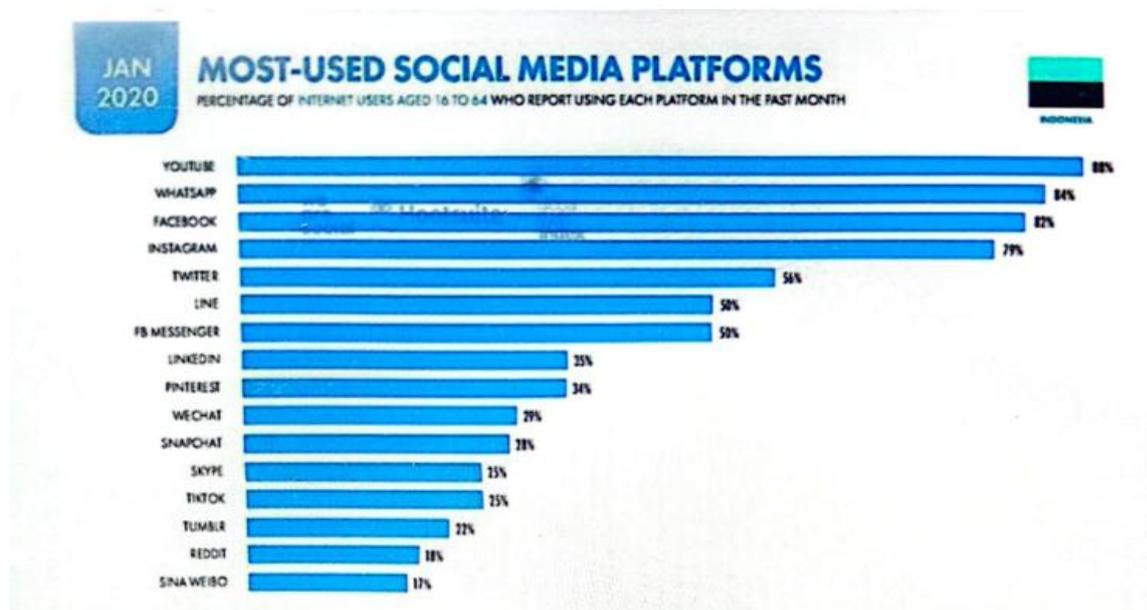


Figure 1. Most-Used Social Media Platforms in Indonesia

This figure shows the percentage of internet users in Indonesia aged 16 to 64 who reported using each social media platform in the past month. YouTube ranks as the most-used platform with 88% of users, followed by WhatsApp (84%), Facebook (82%), and Instagram (79%). Other popular platforms include Twitter (56%), LINE (50%), and Facebook Messenger (50%). Meanwhile, LinkedIn, Pinterest, WeChat, Snapchat, Skype, TikTok, Tumblr, Reddit, and Sina Weibo have lower usage rates, ranging from 35% down to 18%. *Source: We Are Social, January 2020.* Based on the available data, YouTube has managed to reach up to 88% of internet users in Indonesia. This platform is highly favored because it offers ease of access and interaction, whether for searching news, obtaining information, or simply entertainment, such as watching movies, listening to music, or enjoying various other videos.

Like other media, YouTube targets the general public. Over time, this platform has become an important part of people's lives. In fact, compared to television, many people now prefer to use YouTube to gain knowledge and information. YouTube is also considered an effective medium for delivering messages and information because it can reach a wide audience. This is further strengthened by its nature as an audio-visual-based medium. Therefore, most Indonesians use YouTube not only for entertainment but also as a source of information (Muchlas, Setiawan, & Tavani Somae, 2022).

### **Generation Z and the Need for Islamic Da'wah**

Generation Z is a demographic group that emerged after the millennial generation and before Generation Alpha. Dimock from the Pew Research Center defines this generation as individuals born between 1997 and 2012. This period is marked by socioeconomic stability and the rapid development of information technology. This generation is often referred to as the "Generation" because of its close relationship with the digital world. Currently, the oldest members of this generation are 26 years old and the youngest are 11 years old, placing them in the early teenage to young adult phase.

Generation Z is a group of people who are highly connected and dependent on technology. They were born when personal computers had already become an essential part of daily life. This generation is very active in the digital world and requires internet access every day. According to Henderson, there are seven distinctive traits of Generation Z that make them known as digital natives: being money- and ambition-oriented, adventurous, more prone to anxiety, having clear boundaries, highly skilled in online gaming, nostalgic about the past, and highly active in using social media in various ways.

According to data from Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik) in 2023, around 27.94% of Indonesia's population belongs to Generation Z. Generation Z in Indonesia has experienced various social, economic, and political events, ranging from the 1998 monetary and political crisis, the 2008 economic crisis, the emergence of more precarious employment systems due to the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, rapid technological and internet development, and the global COVID-19 pandemic that has influenced their views on careers and the world of work.

Several studies have been conducted to determine why Generation Z chooses certain jobs and careers. Some factors include job stability and security, competitive salaries, work-life balance, supportive supervisors, career opportunities, job satisfaction, and flexible working hours. Discussing stereotypes about work culture across generations is an interesting topic that can be developed into a separate study in workplace research. Costanza and Finkelstein noted that such

research remains relatively rare in academia. There are various myths that persist, especially in human resource management, even though the topic is intriguing and not yet deeply explored.

In the field of library science, research by Hayes et al. showed that intergenerational stereotypes have a significant impact on interactions among librarians and colleagues in academic libraries, which cannot be ignored. These long-standing stereotypes are still felt by Generation Z as members of the workforce. They are often perceived as impatient, poor at socializing, communicating, and collaborating in teams due to limited work experience. This is often cited as a major complaint (Kamil & Laksmi, 2023).

Gilles Kepel, a French Islamic scholar, has demonstrated the extent to which Muslim scholars have used mass media to convey their Islamic messages. For example, he showed how Sheikh Abdal-Hamid Kishk used recordings to spread his sermons. Sheikh Kishk popularized Islamic teachings through his recorded sermons, which resonated among the public not only in the streets of Cairo but also throughout the Arab and Islamic world. Similarly, Sreberny-Mohammadi argued that small media (cassette tapes, photocopies, tape recorders, and the use of telephones), rather than mass media, played a special role in triggering the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

Long before the rise of social media among young Muslims, some jihadist groups recognized the power of digital media in indoctrinating and recruiting like-minded potential terrorists. Bunt noted that jihadists turned the blogosphere into "Blogistan," using it to spread rigid and linear interpretations of sacred texts. El-Nawawy and Khamis found that online discussions did not facilitate "rational-critical discourse" as envisioned by the Habermasian public sphere, nor did they embody *shura* (consultation), *ijtihad* (independent interpretation), or *ijma'* (consensus) in the tradition of Islamic intellectual debate.

The topic of religion and social media influencers has recently attracted scholarly attention. The focus on social media influencers shows that the use of social media for religious purposes has reached a higher level, marked by its permanent and sophisticated nature. Besides brands using social media to promote products, religious social media influencers also use these platforms to spread moral and spiritual messages. Rozehnal examined new religious expressions among various "cyber-Muslims," including religious practitioners, groups, and communities. These new communities are unique in that they showcase a diversity of religious identities that include scholars, Sufis, feminists, fashion enthusiasts, artists, activists, and social media influencers.

Digitization and the marketing of religious production and distribution have expanded over the past two decades, creating a blend of commerce and religion where the sacred becomes secular and vice versa. Gauthier and Ibahrine define "marketization" as "the formatting of particular social realities into commodities or 'goods.'" In this context, consumerism becomes a vehicle for circulating symbols, and consequently, consumerism tends to give new form and meaning to religion. Digital culture is inherently performative and promotional. Young people have been socialized into a digital culture that emphasizes individuality, consumerism, branding, and promotional communication. The marketization of religion marks a shift in the structure and dynamics of techno-capitalism, which glorifies expressions of choice, subjectivity, individuality, and identity. The synergy between technology and theology across most religious spectrums has become highly prominent in the engagement and religious practices of young Muslim generations (Zaid, Fedtke, Shin, El Kadoussi, & Ibahrine, 2022).

Etymologically, the word *da'wab* is sometimes used in the sense of calling to goodness, whose agents are Allah SWT, the Prophets, and the Messengers, as well as those who have faith and do

righteous deeds. It is also sometimes used in the sense of calling to evil, whose agents are Satan, disbelievers, hypocrites, and the like.

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

*And Allah invites (people) to Paradise and forgiveness by His permission, and Allah makes clear His verses (His commands) to mankind so that they may take heed.*

As for the word *da'wah* which means an invitation to evil, it is mentioned, among others, in the words of Allah in Surah Fatir (35): 6:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

*Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. Truly, Satan only invites his followers to become companions of the blazing Fire.*

From the verse above, it can be understood that *da'wah* in its etymological sense contains two meanings *da'wah* that calls to goodness and *da'wah* that calls to evil. Thus, the meaning, scope, and implementation of *da'wah* are broader than *tabligh*, which is limited to conveying Islamic teachings through speech and writing. In *da'wah*, it also includes *tabsyir* (delivering glad tidings), *inzar* (giving warnings), *mau'izah* (teaching), *nasihah* (advising), *wa'iyah* (giving counsel), and others, which are also carried out through both speech and writing. Meanwhile, *da'wah* encompasses all activities aimed at encouraging people to do good and avoid sin, whether through words and writing, cassette recordings, or through good example and noble character. Therefore, *tabligh* is part of the implementation of *da'wah*. Based on the definition of *da'wah* that has been explained, it can be concluded that *da'wah* is a life-long struggle to implement and uphold divine laws in various aspects of human and social life so that Islamic teachings become a foundational influence that shapes, guides, and enriches human attitudes and behavior in life and social interactions. (*Book of Ilmu Dakwah*)

According to the theory of human needs, there is a natural drive within every individual to feel the presence and unity with God. Life is understood as a long process toward spiritual closeness to the Creator. In this journey, humans are guided to discover and develop their hidden potential and natural disposition (*fitrah*), which can serve as a path toward spiritual advancement.

In the modern era, religion has become an essential need that cannot be abandoned. Even for a moment, humans cannot live without religion. Religion serves as a worldview and guidance in every aspect of life—from birth to death, from sleep to awakening—constantly providing direction so that life may feel peaceful in this world and the hereafter. Mobile phones, which have become an inseparable part of Indonesian society's life, can serve as tools to get closer to God through various spiritually related features.

From the perspective of human needs theory, particularly spiritual needs, it can be understood that humans seek peace of mind. One way to achieve this is through worship. However, a person cannot worship without *da'wah* activities. Therefore, *da'wah* is essential for humanity. There are two important meanings of *da'wah* for humankind, namely:

1. Preserving and Elevating Human Dignity

*Da'wah* is the effort of the *da'i* to invite humans to remain in their natural disposition (*fitrah*), to accept and live by Islamic values so that their lives are prosperous in this world and safe in the hereafter. Humans are expected to carry out their role as *kehalifah* (stewards) in accordance with the purpose of creation, not as agents of destruction. Therefore, *da'wah* must be based on *tawhid*, placing Allah as the center of life, manifested through worship of Him and the fulfillment of social missions according to His will.

## 2. Cultivating Morality and Fostering the Spirit of Humanity

*Da'wah* plays a vital role for humankind, for without it, people are likely to lose their sense of direction in life. This will lead to disorder and a decline in human dignity. Consequently, human morality may *deteriorate*, such as the loss of conscience, the emergence of selfishness, greed, and destructive behavior that oppresses others. As a result, humans may indeed fulfill the angels' concern becoming corrupt and bloodshed-causing beings on earth.

Without *da'wah*, humans will also lose love, compassion, a sense of justice, social concern, and environmental awareness. Humans become increasingly selfish, consumerist, and hedonistic thinking only of themselves, neglecting their environment, and being indifferent to the suffering of others. They exploit everything merely to satisfy their desires and lusts (Kartini, 2022).

The transformation of *da'wah* through online media and modern technology is considered effective in spreading religious teachings and addressing the spiritual needs of society especially Muslims who previously experienced obstacles or distortions in their religious understanding. Therefore, the use of YouTube as a medium for *da'wah* serves as one of the best alternatives for delivering Islamic messages in a broader and more accessible manner (Hamzah & Islamic Broadcasting Communication, 2021).

## The Effectiveness of YouTube as a Platform for Islamic Da'wah and Counseling

Although preaching (*da'wah*) through YouTube is considered effective, several challenges still arise. One of the issues mentioned is that some *da'wah* materials are difficult to understand, especially for those who do not yet have sufficient religious knowledge. This becomes a challenge in managing discussions on open platforms such as YouTube, where the channel owner has no full control over viewer comments. This challenge shows that digital *da'wah* requires a better moderation approach to ensure that interactions and discussions remain of high quality.

Despite these challenges, preaching through digital platforms such as YouTube provides great opportunities to enhance religious understanding, especially among students. Research results show that YouTube is not only used as a source of religious information but also as a space for discussion and interaction among viewers. This creates a more friendly and interactive *da'wah* space where everyone can participate and learn together. In addition, this study shows that *da'wah* through social media gives *da'i* the opportunity to deliver messages to a wider audience. For example, Khalid Basalamah has successfully attracted millions of followers on YouTube, showing that digital *da'wah* content is highly in demand, especially among the youth. This provides opportunities for *da'i* and religious organizations to spread their messages through other digital platforms as well (Dwi et al., 2024).

In today's technological era, the ease of accessing information helps religious instructors provide a more comprehensive understanding and guidance to the public. Easy access to information enables religious counselors to deliver messages and offer guidance more effectively. Technology allows counselors to reach more people in a more efficient way. Through various

online platforms, religious information can be accessed quickly and easily, enabling religious counselors to provide religious understanding and guidance to society on a wider and more effective scale.

One of the forms of technology applied in Islamic guidance and counseling practices is Cyberextension. This technology functions as an information exchange system, where digital spaces are created through computer network connections and communication devices. Its advantage lies in its flexibility, not being limited by space, time, or specific conditions. Through this technology, religious instructors can obtain diverse and up-to-date information as material for counseling activities. Moreover, Cyberextension also provides opportunities for counselors to systematically develop media according to their needs. With its wide range of information, this technology enables counselors to act as both communicators and receivers of information (Suhaimi & Bashori, 2024).

Islamic counseling is the process of providing guidance, advice, and solutions to life problems based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Through YouTube, Islamic counseling has undergone a unique transformation as it takes place in an interactive digital space. Some tangible forms of Islamic counseling on YouTube include:

1. Islamic motivational content

Many *ustadz* or Muslim counselors use YouTube to deliver spiritual motivational messages, such as how to deal with sadness, anxiety, failure, or family problems. Such videos help audiences find inner peace.

2. Digital Q&A sessions

Through live streaming or the comment feature, audiences can directly ask questions related to life issues and receive real-time answers or Islamic advice from the speakers. This resembles a face-to-face counseling process, only in digital form.

3. Family and youth counselling

Several Islamic YouTube channels focus on family, marriage, and youth interaction issues. These materials are often presented with an Islamic psychological approach, allowing viewers to receive both practical solutions and spiritual guidance.

4. Virtual communities

Audiences who share similar problems often interact in the comment section, sharing experiences and offering moral support. This expands the counseling function, as in addition to listening to the *ustadz*'s advice, viewers also receive social support from fellow digital congregants.

Islamic counseling through YouTube has proven effective as an alternative form of spiritual and psychological guidance in the modern era. In addition to delivering religious messages, this platform also serves as a space for emotional healing, where Muslims can receive advice, solutions, and support in dealing with everyday life challenges. With engaging content presentation and a friendly approach, YouTube can serve as a medium that meets the modern society's need for both *da'wah* and Islamic counseling (Supriadi, Ronda, & Widaningsih, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

YouTube has proven to be effective as a medium for Islamic preaching and counseling for Generation Z. This platform is able to deliver messages in an engaging and easily understandable way while increasing audience engagement. Although there are challenges such as potentially

unclear content and negative comments, the use of YouTube still offers great opportunities to expand the reach of Islamic preaching and counseling services. Therefore, the development of creative, innovative, and relevant content that aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z is highly necessary so that Islamic messages can be conveyed optimally in the digital era.

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