

The Mediatization of Islamic Discourse on Instagram: Aestheticization, Personalization, and Newsjacking within Indonesian Media Logic

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Abstract

This article examines how media logic shapes Islamic discourse on the Instagram account @barengquran. Unlike studies of digital da'wah that emphasize the impact of participation, this research focuses on the mechanisms of discourse production through the framework of the mediatization of religion. Employing a qualitative case-study approach, the study analyzes fourteen purposively selected pieces of content using discourse analysis. The findings reveal three mutually reinforcing processes: aestheticization and dramaturgy, which package teachings through provocative hooks and a surreal-horror aesthetic; personalization, which shifts the validation of meaning from scholarly authority to the reader's emotional resonance; and newsjacking, which links the emergence of discourse to viral events. Together, these processes demonstrate that mediatization does not merely disseminate religious messages but reconfigures the form, target audience, and agenda of Islamic discourse, while simultaneously filtering which religious aspects are deemed suitable for presentation. This study is limited to the dimension of text production and does not include an analysis of audience reception or commodification.

Keywords: *Mediatization of Religion; Islamic Discourse; Media Logic; Digital Da'wah; Instagram*

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Introduction

The dominant narrative in digital religion research has centered on a single, almost apocalyptic premise: that the digital migration of faith inherently diminishes the sovereignty of religious institutions and subjects sacred texts to platform logic. Much attention has been given to how digital spaces transform religious authority, giving rise to



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“networked religion” characterized by shifting and fluid authority.¹ However, most of the literature focuses primarily on the impacts of digital participation—such as expanded reach, increased intimacy, or changing authority—while paying less attention to how media logic systematically shapes Islamic discourse itself from the production stage: how teachings are packaged, to whom they are directed, and the events that trigger their dissemination. For example, studies on visual da’wah in Indonesia often celebrate the creativity and productivity of digital Islamic content but rarely analyze the discursive mechanisms that determine which religious aspects gain visibility and which are marginalized.² This creates a significant academic gap regarding how media logic does not merely disseminate religious messages but actively reconfigures the form, target audience, and agenda of Islamic discourse within the digital sphere.

Against the backdrop of this debate, the Indonesian Instagram account @barengquran—boasting 1.3 million followers and producing up to 140 pieces of content per month—serves as a compelling empirical case study illustrating how Islamic discourse is shaped by media logic. Three features of the account vividly demonstrate the issues mentioned above. First, religious teachings are packaged using a surreal-horror aesthetic and provocative, clickbait-style headlines; for example, content regarding the prayer for entering the bathroom is presented with imagery of a dark figure with glowing eyes and the headline “You Must Know Who *Khubthi wal-Khaba’ith* Are...”³—demonstrating that media visual styling, rather than the systematic principles of exegesis, serves as the organizing logic. Second, classical exegetical concepts—such as *fiṭrah* (innate human nature) and *nafs muṭma’innah* (the tranquil soul)⁴—are translated into therapeutic language that addresses the individual personally, shifting the validation of meaning from scholarly authority to the reader’s emotional resonance. Third, the content is tied to viral events—ranging from volcanic eruptions and earthquakes to widely discussed cases of religious

¹ H. A. Campbell, “Understanding the Relationship between Religion Online and Offline in a Networked Society,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 1 (March 1, 2012): 64–93, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfr074>.

² Eva F. Nisa, “Creative and Lucrative Da’wa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia,” *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, no. 1–2 (February 14, 2018): 68–99, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340085>.

³ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kamu Harus Tau Siapa Itu Khubutsi Wal Khabaits Yang Sering Kita Sebut Dalam Doa Masuk Kamar Mandi?,” Instagram Photos, September 9, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DdCAsWak9z2/>.

⁴ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Al-Quran Gambarkan Jiwa Yang Kehilangan Dirinya Sendiri...,” Instagram Photo, August 18, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DcLQ0-pE7c_/.

blasphemy—meaning that the event itself, rather than a pre-planned study agenda, determines which Quranic verses are highlighted. These three phenomena make @barengquran an ideal case study for examining the role of mediatization in shaping contemporary Islamic discourse.

Existing literature on the Quran and Islamic teachings in social media generally falls into three main categories: the digitization of exegesis, the visual transmission of da'wah, and audience reception of religious content. While the digitization of exegesis is viewed as expanding access to study, it also challenges traditional scholarly authority.⁵ Meanwhile, visual da'wah⁶ and reception analysis emphasize the effectiveness of comprehension and the psychological impact of imagery over traditional text.⁷ However, these models typically focus on analyzing content impact—such as reach, emotional influence, or audience reception patterns. There has been no specific analysis of how “media logic” systematically shapes Islamic discourse from the production stage: how teachings are aestheticized, to whom they are personalized, and in response to which events they are presented. This lack of analysis regarding production mechanisms is particularly evident

⁵ Nurizza Ilham Firdaus, “Digitalisasi Kajian Alquran: Peluang Dan Tantangan Media Sosial,” *Ulul Albab: Journal Dawah and Social Religiosity* 3, no. 1 (2025); Muhamad Fajar Mubarak and Muhamad Fanji Romdhoni, “Digitalisasi Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir Media Sosial Di Indonesia,” *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 1, no. 1 (2021): 110–14, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v1i1.11552>; Zahratul Farhah and Rizki Mulia, “Mediatization of Cyber-Religious Crises: National-Local Media Asymmetry and the Secularization of Blasphemy in Indonesia,” *Journal of Islam, Media and Society* 1, no. 1 (June 13, 2026): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.66277/JIMS.1.1.233>.

⁶ Rendy Pradana and Amanansyah Sakti Marito Harahap, “Ontological Flattening on the Screen: Spiritual Domestication and the Syncretism of Pop-Sufi Art Consumption among Urban Indonesian Muslims,” *Journal of Islam, Media and Society* 1, no. 1 (June 20, 2026): 63–87, <https://doi.org/10.66277/JIMS.1.1.232>; Carla Adiba, “From Normative Propositions to Affective Screens: Algorithmic Architecture, Visual Femininity, and the Domestication of Sacred Texts in Islamic Pop Music,” *Journal of Islam, Media and Society* 1, no. 1 (June 25, 2026): 88–112, <https://doi.org/10.66277/JIMS.1.1.248>.

⁷ Antika Wulandari, “Johanna Pink: Transformasi Digitalisasi Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Masa Kini Berbasis Media Sosial,” *Qudwah Qur'aniyah: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (July 13, 2023): 19–28, <https://doi.org/10.30631/qudwahquraniyah.v1i1.1847>; Abdu Zikrillah and Yayah Nurhidayah, “Psikologi Persepsi Visual Pada Konten Dakwah Visual Instagram,” *Prophetic: Professional, Empathy, Islamic Counseling Journal* 4, no. 2 (2021): 233–48, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24235/prophetic.v4i2.9667>; Althaf Husein Muzakky, Faisal Haitomi, and Maula Sari, “Resepsi Tafsir Q.S. Al-Mujādilah Di Tik-Tok Sebagai Upaya Edukasi Dan Pembelaan Hak-Hak Perempuan,” *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, Dan Tradisi)* 8, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v8i1.1555>; Nabila Alifa Alfawaid, “The Algorithmic Turn in Quranic Reception: Reconfiguring Aesthetic Distance and Horizon Fusion on Indonesian Instagram,” *Journal of Quranic Media Studies* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2026): 95–118, <https://doi.org/10.66277/JQMS.1.1.239>.

in the case of the Instagram account @barengquran. Addressing this gap, this study aims to analyze how Islamic discourse on @barengquran is shaped by media logic through the framework of the mediatization of religion.

Addressing this gap, this article aims to explain how “media logic” shapes Islamic discourse on the @barengquran account, beginning with the production stage. Specifically, this study answers three fundamental questions. First, how are Islamic teachings aestheticized and dramatized through provocative hooks, surreal horror imagery, and narrative structures that prioritize attention as the organizing principle—meaning that only those religious aspects translatable into the language of entertainment gain visibility? Second, how is Islamic discourse personalized through direct address, digital-life analogies, and the translation of classical exegesis concepts into therapeutic vocabulary, thereby shifting the validation of meaning from scholarly authority to the reader’s emotional resonance? Third, how is the selection of discourse topics governed by news logic through the “newsjacking” of current events, such that viral trends—rather than a study agenda—determine which Quranic verses are highlighted? By addressing these three questions, this research offers new theoretical insights into how mediatization not only disseminates religious messages but also reconfigures the form, target audience, and agenda of Islamic discourse in the digital space.

This article argues that what appears to be an effort to bring the Quran closer to digital audiences is, in reality, a process of subjecting Islamic discourse to the rules of the platform. Unlike literature that views digital participation as merely additive⁸—expanding reach, deepening intimacy, or establishing new forms of authority—the content of @barengquran demonstrates that media logic functions as both an organizer and a filter: it determines how teachings are packaged, to whom they are directed, and in response to which events they are articulated.⁹ When the substance of a religious message remains unchanged but its form, target audience, and agenda are reorganized to meet the demands of attention, affective proximity, and the news cycle, what shifts is not the doctrinal content but the criteria for its visibility—moving from alignment with scholarly tradition to alignment with the logic of spectacle. Consequently, the circulation of Islamic discourse on mobile screens cannot be viewed merely as an expansion of da’wah; rather, it represents an ongoing negotiation between Islamic teachings and the digital cultural industry,

⁸ Nisa, “Creative and Lucrative Da’wa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia.”

⁹ Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 2013), 17.

wherein “media logic” quietly filters which aspects of the religion are permitted to appear and which tend to remain silent.

Method

This research utilizes the Instagram account @barengquran as both the unit of analysis and the primary object of study. The account was selected due to its significance as one of the largest producers of digital Islamic content in Indonesia, boasting 1,353,257 followers, a total of 5,268 uploads, and a production rate of approximately 140 pieces of content in the last thirty days as of September 2026.¹⁰ It explicitly states its editorial orientation as aiming to “tell current realities through the POV of the Al-Qur’an,” making it a pertinent case for examining how media logic influence the formation of Islamic discourse. The scale of its reach is further demonstrated by an average of 8,500 likes and 221 comments per post, along with an increase of more than 37,000 followers in the past month.¹¹ Case selection was conducted purposively according to clear inclusion criteria: content produced between 2025 and 2026; covering a variety of themes (creation, worship, disaster, family, psychology, and cultural criticism); representing the account’s three main formats (video, carousel, and carousel-video); and meeting a high-engagement threshold of more than 30,000 likes as an indicator of the most widely circulated content. Based on these criteria, fourteen pieces of content were selected as the main corpus, supplemented by supporting data such as editorial slogans and recurring product markers appearing across the content.

This research employs a qualitative design with a case-study approach,¹² enabling an in-depth examination of a single account as a comprehensive unit. Secondary data sources include of textual and audiovisual materials, such as text on slides, titles, captions, screenshots of verses, and visual and audio elements from the fourteen selected content pieces, supplemented by account statistical data for contextual information. Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation and documentation: the researchers observed, downloaded, and archived each content piece, then transcribed all textual elements and described the visual and auditory components in data sheets categorized according to three analytical dimensions. Data analysis proceeded in several

¹⁰ Social Blade, “Bareng Quran’s Instagram Statistics,” socialblade.com, September 15, 2026, <https://socialblade.com/instagram/user/barengquran>.

¹¹ Social Blade.

¹² Bent Flyvbjerg, “Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 219–45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363>.

stages: first, data reduction by sorting relevant quotations and content elements; second, categorization of findings into three dimensions of media logic—aestheticization and dramaturgy, personalization and relatability, and topicality and newsjacking; third, interpretation of cross-content patterns by relating them to the framework of the mediatization of religion; and fourth, the formulation of reflective-interpretative conclusions. The analytical technique employed is discourse analysis, which treats aestheticization, personalization, and agenda-setting as interconnected discursive operations that collectively shape Islamic discourse. This research is limited to the dimensions of text production and representation and does not include analysis of audience reception or commodification claims, which would require transactional data.

Aestheticization, Dramaturgy, and Selection: Packaging Islamic Discourse through the Logic of Visual Media

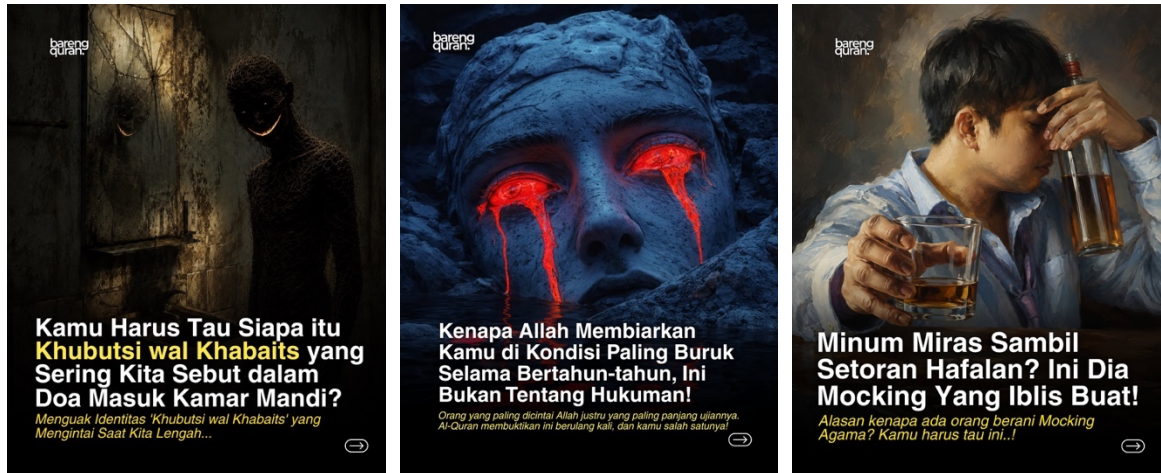
The packaging of Islamic discourse in the digital space no longer functions as a straightforward presentation of teachings governed by traditional scholarly interpretation. Instead, this communication has transformed into a cultural strategy shaped by media logic—a set of formatting, aesthetic, and dramaturgical rules developed by media platforms to capture and retain attention.¹³ Within the framework of the mediatization of religion, sacred texts that enter the architecture of visual platforms undergo formal adjustments. While the core message may remain unchanged, its delivery is reorganized to meet the demands of the media environment: from curiosity-provoking openings to the use of imagery specifically designed to halt scrolling.¹⁴ In the content of @barengquran, this logic operates through three mutually reinforcing devices: a provocative hook combined with dramatic visual aesthetics on the cover slide; a three-act narrative structure that guides the audience’s emotional journey, supported by audio-sensory elements and typography; and a hybrid legitimation device that constructs authority through cross-platform curation, classical citations, and media-native displays of verses. Together, these three devices illustrate how Islamic discourse is aestheticized and dramatized to align with the dynamics of the digital attention economy.

This mediatization practice is clearly evident in the textual and visual data corpus of the @barengquran Instagram account. The corpus documents the systematic reframing of Islamic teachings through an attention-driven media logic. The material is presented in

¹³ Stig Hjarvard, “The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change,” *Northern Lights: Film & Media Studies Yearbook* 6, no. 1 (June 1, 2008): 9–26, https://doi.org/10.1386/nl.6.1.9_1.

¹⁴ Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, 13.

video or carousel format on the main feed, where the cover slide served as the primary entry point for information absorption (see Figure 1).



Source: Instagram account @barengquran

Figure 1. Provocative hooks and striking visual aesthetics on the cover slides of @barengquran content.

Figure 1 displays three cover slides that represent recurring hook formulas in the corpus. The first panel features a question that challenges the reader's knowledge: "You Must Know Who *Khubthi wal-Khaba'ith* Are, Whom We Often Mention in the Prayer for Entering the Bathroom?" reinforced by the image of a dark figure with glowing smile in a grimy bathroom.¹⁵ The second panel presents a claim that subverts expectations: "Why Did God Leave You in the Worst Condition for Years? It's Not About Punishment!" accompanied by an image of a rock face shedding tears of lava.¹⁶ The third panel juxtaposes two opposing values: "Drinking Alcohol While Making a Memorization Deposit? This is the Mocking of the Devil!" alongside a painting of a drunk man rendered in gloomy tones.¹⁷ These three covers illustrate how the textual hook and horror-surrealist aesthetic work in synergy: the text provokes curiosity, while the dark imagery— uncommon in conventional da'wah— captures the viewer's attention and interrupts the scroll.

¹⁵ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], "Kamu Harus Tau Siapa Itu Khubutsi Wal Khabaits Yang Sering Kita Sebut Dalam Doa Masuk Kamar Mandi?"

¹⁶ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], "Kenapa Allah Membiarkan Kamu Di Kondisi Paling Buruk Selama Bertahun-Tahun, Ini Bukan Tentang Hukuman!," Instagram Photo, August 18, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DcLjRJ2E1rk/>.

¹⁷ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], "Minum Miras Sambil Setoran Hafalan?," Instagram Photo, August 11, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/Db3pGKQE0RQ/>.

Once the audience's attention is captured by the cover slide, media logic then governs the flow of content delivery. The narrative structure of @barengquran posts demonstrates that the presentation is no longer organized according to the scholarly systematics of traditional exegesis but instead follows a dramaturgical logic that guides the audience's emotions from curiosity to affirmation. All three formats—video, carousel, and carousel-video—are built on a three-act structure (hook, body, conclusion). However, the placement of the Qur'anic verses within the closing act varies according to the technical characteristics of each format: in the video format, the verse serves as the closing climax; in the carousel format, the verse is positioned in the middle (often as an application screenshot), while the climax is occupied by a call to action or product (see Table 1).

Table 1. Three-Act Narrative Structure in @barengquran Content

No.	Hook	Body	Conclusion / Climax	Format
1	"Did you know? The miracle of the camel is that Allah told humans to observe this animal..."	Camel footage: "camel is perfectly designed / perfectly designed for extreme conditions"	Closing verse: QS. al-Ghāshiyah [88]: 18 — "and the sky, how is it raised?"	Video
2	"This brother said goodbye to his <i>Gudeg</i> regular mother, but the video made many people cry."	Parting story: "Here we apologize to each other if there is a wrong word or attitude"	Closing verse: QS. al-Mā'idah [4]: 2 — "Fear Allah"	Video
3	"You Must Know Who <i>Khubthi</i> wal- <i>Khaba'ith</i> Are...?"	Linguistic interpretation of <i>ḍammah/sukūn</i> (Al-Khaṭṭābī) + reflection "alone space: Direct Message, scroll Handphone"	Soft-selling: e-book <i>Qur'an Underrated</i> + QRIS donation slides	Carousel
4	"The creatures you've been afraid of are smarter than you at being grateful!"	The story of the jinn in Nakhlah + interpretation of Ibn Kathīr / As-Sa'dī / Ibn 'Āshūr; " <i>Fa bi-ayyi ālā'i...</i> repeated 31 times"	Soft-selling: <i>Qur'an Underrated</i> (ebook @barengquran & books @barengbooks)	Carousel
5	"15 Kilometers of Ash in the Air... Allah Arranged the Wind to Turn into the Indian Ocean!"	Eruption data (240 times, explosions as far as Bandung) + "only Allah, no BMKG"	Soft-selling: QS. al-Rūm [30]: 41 (screenshot) + e-book <i>Earth in the View of the Al-Qur'an</i>	Carousel and Video

6	“This Influencer Shares a Wish from a NTT Earthquake Victim, Makes Netizens Cry!”	Quotes from Flores earthquake victims (Threads / Sania Leonardo) + list of national disasters	Call to action: “do we move?” + QS. al-Žāriyāt [51]: 19 (without product)	Carousel and Video
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Source: Instagram account @barengquran

The pattern in Table 1 demonstrates that the placement of verses is dictated by the technical requirements of the format rather than by the conventional rules for presenting religious interpretation. In the video format, the verse appears at the end as a climax that solidifies the audience’s emotions. This reverses the typical sequence of traditional exegetical studies, which usually begin with the sacred text followed by explanation.¹⁸ In contrast, the carousel format assigns the climax role to a commercial invitation (soft-selling of the product).¹⁹ Qur’anic verses are relegated to a middle position and are presented not as a *muṣḥaf* but as screenshots from digital applications. This phenomenon indicates that the sacred text has been subordinated to a media-native form. The only exception occurs in content addressing actual humanitarian events, where the ending features a call to action rather than a purchase request.²⁰ This confirms that the closing segment is consistently employed to achieve the action goals set by the content creator. This visual dramaturgy is further reinforced by carefully curated sensory elements: the audio background incorporates popular songs and emotional *nasyīd* (such as “Sal Priadi – Ada Titik di Ujung Doa”), while the typography is standardized in a clean, contemporary bold sans-serif style that replaces traditional calligraphic ornamentation.

¹⁸ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Abang Ini Pamit Ke Ibu Langganan Gudeg, Tetapi Videonya Mengundang Tangis Banyak Orang,” Instagram Video, September 11, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/reel/DdEh4Wvt14s/>; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Taukah Kamu? Keajaiban Unta Hingga Allah Menyuruh Manusia Mengamati Hewan Satu Ini...,” Instagram Video, September 11, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/reel/DdHFSxVuBdQ/>.

¹⁹ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kamu Harus Tau Siapa Itu Khubutsi Wal Khabaits Yang Sering Kita Sebut Dalam Doa Masuk Kamar Mandi?”; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Menguak Fakta Di Zaman Nabi,” Instagram Photo, September 7, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/Dc6GCg8EzZX/>; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Influencer Ini Bagikan Satu Keinginan Dari Korban Gempa Ntt, Bikin Netizen Menangis!,” Instagram Video and Photo, August 26, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DcYCFG9E0Ei/?img_index=1.

²⁰ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “15 Kilometer Abu Di Udara... Allah Mengatur Angin Membelok Ke Samudra Hindial,” Instagram Video and Photo, September 9, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/Dc-9E4kE3uE/?img_index=1.

Apart from managing narrative and visuals, media logic further enhances its aesthetic strategy by constructing discourse legitimacy through a hybrid approach involving three layers of devices displayed side by side. The first layer consists of curated source credits that identify the content as a reworking of cross-platform material rather than an original production, such as “Source: TT/nationalgeographic” and “Source: IG/explainingquran.”²¹ The second layer includes citations of classical *tafsīr* and *hadīs*—such as Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Ashūr, and Al-Khaṭṭābī—as well as complete hadith references like “HR. Bukhari no. 142, HR. Muslim no. 375.”²² This religious authority is even juxtaposed with secular academic concepts, such as Thorstein Veblen’s theory of conspicuous consumption.²³ The third layer presents verses as screenshots from digital Qur’an applications that display the full interface and verse markers (for example, 30:41, 59:19).²⁴ The combination of these three layers demonstrates how modern religious authority is constructed from a blend of classical scholarly credibility, contemporary academic legitimacy, and the aesthetics of digital technology, which reinforce one another within a media-native format.

The series of hooks, narrative dramaturgy, and hybrid legitimacy in @barengquran exemplify the operation of the mediatization of religion—a process in which religion becomes increasingly conforms to media logic, both in its symbolic content and in individual practices. Cyberspace here is not merely a neutral channel but a cultural environment that shapes religious imagination according to the genres of popular culture. Consequently, religious teachings manifest as “banal religion”: they are widely present and easily consumed within the everyday flow of media.²⁵ The shift in the position of the

²¹ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Taukah Kamu? Keajaiban Unta Hingga Allah Menyuruh Manusia Mengamati Hewan Satu Ini...”; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Sekarang Terbukti Bahwa Ada Api Di Dalam Laut... Dulu Ditertawakan, Sekarang Terbukti Peneliti,” Instagram Video, September 11, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/reel/DdETm0UpPMt/>.

²² Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kamu Harus Tau Siapa Itu Khubutsi Wal Khabaits Yang Sering Kita Sebut Dalam Doa Masuk Kamar Mandi?”; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Menguak Fakta Di Zaman Nabi”; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Minum Miras Sambil Setoran Hafalan?”

²³ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “An-Nisa: Surah Yang Menetapkan Hak Perempuan,” Instagram Photo, August 9, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/barengsiroh/p/Db0r55emch8/?img_index=1.

²⁴ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “15 Kilometer Abu Di Udara... Allah Mengatur Angin Membelok Ke Samudra Hindia!”; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “17 Gunung Aktif Bersamaan Di Seluruh Dunia, Al-Qur’an Sudah Menjawab Mengapa Ini Semua Terjadi!,” Instagram Photo, September 8, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/Dc7_7qyE40L/; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Al-Quran Gambarkan Jiwa Yang Kehilangan Dirinya Sendiri...”

²⁵ Hjarvard, “The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change.”

verse—from the starting point of study to an emotional climax or a mere screenshot—highlights that the authority of the text no longer rests solely on scholarly tradition but also on audience reception and popular culture. Ultimately, aestheticization and dramaturgy are not merely superficial embellishments; they function as mechanisms that renegotiate how Islamic discourse is produced and legitimized, making it compatible with the digital culture industry.

This negotiation process reveals that beneath the diversity of themes and aesthetics in @barengquran's content lies a single underlying demand: in order to appear on Instagram, Islamic discourse must first resemble the entertainment genres that audiences already recognize and consume. Teachings about prayer are presented as horror stories, reflections on life's trials are packaged as motivational content, and interpretations of events are packaged as viral news. In other words, Islam does not enter the digital space as itself but is instead disguised within secular cultural forms that determine eligibility for visibility on the platform.²⁶ What is at work here is not merely a stylistic adjustment but a selection system: only those religious aspects that can be translated into the language of entertainment gain the opportunity to be heard, while dimensions that are not "cinematic," not dramatic, or not viral-worthy tend to be marginalized on their own. This is where the deepest consequence of mediatization emerges: it not only changes how religion is conveyed but also quietly filters which parts of religion are permitted to appear and which are forced to remain silent, according to the logic of spectacle.

This filtering logic contrast with the mainstream of visual da'wah literature, which typically interprets aesthetics additively—that is, merely as a means to expand reach, enrich expressions of intimacy, and establish new forms of authority.²⁷ This research adopts the opposite perspective. Rather than examining what is added, it focuses on what is filtered out: the eligibility requirements for appearing on Instagram demand that Islamic discourse first resemble an entertainment genre. Here, media logic functions not merely

²⁶ David L. Altheide and Robert P. Snow, "Toward a Theory of Mediation," in *Communication Yearbook 11*, ed. James Anderson (London: Routledge, 2012), 206.

²⁷ Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Da'wa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia"; Emma Baulch and Alila Pramiyanti, "Hijabers on Instagram: Using Visual Social Media to Construct the Ideal Muslim Woman," *Social Media + Society* 4, no. 4 (October 9, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118800308>; Annisa R Beta, "Commerce, Piety and Politics: Indonesian Young Muslim Women's Groups as Religious Influencers," *New Media & Society* 21, no. 10 (October 10, 2019): 2140–59, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819838774>; Harry Febrian, "Visualizing Authority: Rise of the Religious Influencers on the Instagram," *Social Media + Society* 10, no. 4 (October 6, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241286850>.

as an amplifier but as a filter that determines which aspects of religion can be expressed and which must remain silent. This shift in focus—from addition to filtering—distinguishes these findings from previous literature and demonstrates that the expansion of digital reach and the narrowing of the space of religious meaning occur simultaneously within the same process.

Personalization, Relatability, and Therapization: Approaches to Islamic Discourse in the Affective Logic of Media

If the first dimension illustrates how Islamic discourse is packaged to capture attention, the second dimension reveals to whom and in what language the discourse is directed. Media logic not only structures the surface of content but also shifts the focus of discourse from the community as a collective to the individual as a person—reflecting the process of religious individualization, which is the modern tendency for religion to increasingly rely on subjective experiences, personal choices, and private anxieties rather than on communal norms and authority.²⁸ Under mediatized conditions, religion often appears as a “religion of the heart,” whose validity is confirmed through personal resonance. At this point, religion intersects with therapeutic culture, which prioritizes self-fulfillment, authenticity, and inner healing as the primary framework for making sense of life.²⁹ This demonstrates that Islamic discourse on social media is not merely transmitted but is brought closer to the point where it seems to speak directly to each individual’s inner experience.

In the content of @barengquran, this shift operates through three devices that connect the teachings to the personal lives of young audiences. First, a direct “you” address that validates the reader’s emotional exhaustion—such as the confession, “If today you read this with a weary heart...”³⁰—and describes everyday forms of inner emptiness. Second, the use of digital-life analogies that draw religious concepts into the private sphere. For example, the meaning of *khubūsi wa al-khabā’is* is interpreted not merely as a supernatural disturbance but as a personal temptation within digital space: “A room at 2 in the morning when everyone is sleeping? A DM that won’t be caught? That’s where your

²⁸ Paul Heelas et al., *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion Is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 90.

²⁹ Eva Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions, and the Culture of Self-Help* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 8–9.

³⁰ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kenapa Allah Membiarkan Kamu Di Kondisi Paling Buruk Selama Bertahun-Tahun, Ini Bukan Tentang Hukuman!”

version of ‘*khubuts*’ is.”³¹ Third, the explicit use of platform vocabulary compares the power of nature with social-media features: “We can mute, unfollow, skip... But Allah doesn’t need your algorithm.”³² These devices position Islamic discourse as if it speaks directly to the inner experiences of each individual.

This shift in the focus of discourse continues through the retranslation of classical exegetical concepts into a therapeutic language oriented toward self-healing. Theological terms that were originally doctrinal are transformed into a psychological-personal vocabulary of recovery, calm, and self-acceptance. For example, the concept of *fitrah* in QS. al-Rūm [30]: 30 is not explained as original purity within a creedal framework but as “your original architecture, the way you were designed to know the truth.”³³ Likewise, *naḥs muṭma’innah* in QS. al-Fajr [89]: 27–28 is rendered as “a soul that is calm, not because life is easy, not because all problems are finished, but calm because he knows who he is.”³⁴ The call *irjī’ī ilā rabbik*, which textually carries an eschatological connotation, is reinterpreted as a gradual, non-judgmental invitation to recovery: “Come back. It doesn’t mean you have to be perfect first. It doesn’t mean you have to resolve all your wounds first. Going back is the first step.”³⁵ Even the concept of trials in QS. al-‘Ankabūt [29]: 2 is reframed from a form of punishment into a process of self-formation—“Allah is not punishing you. He is forming you”³⁶—while *hawā* in QS. al-Furqān [25]: 43 is explained not as base desire but as “subtle desire: wanting to be approved, wanting to be seen, wanting to be considered enough.”³⁷ Through this semantic shift, Islamic teachings are presented as tools for inner healing that respond to individual psychological anxieties, so that the validity of their meaning no longer rests on a doctrinal-normative framework but on their resonance with the reader’s emotional experience.

This individualization structure is further enhanced by the choice of diction and language register, which deliberately approximates the speech style of the younger generation of social media users. Content titles are crafted following copywriting patterns

³¹ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kamu Harus Tau Siapa Itu Khubutsi Wal Khabaits Yang Sering Kita Sebut Dalam Doa Masuk Kamar Mandi?”

³² Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “17 Gunung Aktif Bersamaan Di Seluruh Dunia, Al-Qur’an Sudah Menjawab Mengapa Ini Semua Terjadi!”

³³ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Al-Quran Gambarkan Jiwa Yang Kehilangan Dirinya Sendiri...”

³⁴ Bareng Quran [@barengquran].

³⁵ Bareng Quran [@barengquran].

³⁶ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kenapa Allah Membiarkan Kamu Di Kondisi Paling Buruk Selama Bertahun-Tahun, Ini Bukan Tentang Hukuman!”

³⁷ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Al-Quran Gambarkan Jiwa Yang Kehilangan Dirinya Sendiri...”

common on digital timelines—employing rhetorical questions, claims that subvert expectations, and direct address—as demonstrated in the series of wedding-themed content (see Table 2).

Table 2. Popular Copywriting Patterns in @barengquran Content Titles

No.	Title	Rhetorical Function
1	“The Qur’an Never Promises You Will Be Loved, But It Promises Something Much Stronger Than Love!”	Sparks curiosity by leading the audience from human emotional uncertainty to theological certainty
2	“Agree or Not: Getting Married Young Without Mental Readiness Is More Dangerous Than Not Getting Married At All?!”	Invites the audience to redefine mental readiness through a theological lens
3	“Why Is the Prayer Taught by the Qur’an for Households Not ‘Be Happy’ but This?”	Challenges normative assumptions about popular wedding prayers
4	“Why the Qur’an Never Discusses the Perfect Soulmate, and What It Discusses Is Much More Important”	Subverts romantic expectations of marriage to spark curiosity
5	“It Turns Out That <i>Sakinah Mawaddah wa Rahmah</i> Is Not a Condition That Immediately Exists; the Qur’an Describes It as a Process!”	Subverts utopian expectations of instant marital bliss

Source: Instagram account @barengquran

Table 2 shows that the content titles are designed not to name the study theme directly but to provoke emotional engagement through rhetorical strategies—challenging questions (“Agree or Not...?!”),³⁸ reversals of expectation (“Not... but...” or “It turns out...”),³⁹ and direct address that invites reflection⁴⁰. A similar popular register is also

³⁸ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Setuju Atau Tidak: Menikah Muda Tanpa Kesiapan Jiwa Lebih Berbahaya Dari Tidak Menikah Sama Sekali?!” Instagram Photo, June 25, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DaAmyITEWH/>.

³⁹ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kenapa Doa Yang Diajarkan Quran Untuk Rumah Tangga Bukan ‘Semoga Bahagia’ Tapi Hal Ini?,” Instagram Photo, August 20, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DcQVUF0k0zj/>; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Al-Quran Tidak Pernah Menjanjikan Kamu Akan Dicintai, Tapi Menjanjikan Sesuatu Yang Jauh Lebih Kuat Dari Cinta!,” Instagram Photo, September 3, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/Dc0kJuWE4fT/>; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Ternyata Sakinah Mawaddah Warahmah Bukan Kondisi Yang Langsung Ada, Alquran Melukisnya Sebagai Proses!,” Instagram Photo, March 10, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/Dc0kJuWE4fT/>.

⁴⁰ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kenapa Quran Tidak Pernah Membahas Jodoh Yang Sempurna, Dan Apa Yang Dibahasnya Jauh Lebih Penting?!” Instagram Photo, May 2, 2026,

evident in product names that employ contemporary idioms, such as the book tagline “*Quran Underrated: From Politics, State, Sexuality, to Social Media Scrolls, Qur’an Got It*,”⁴¹ which deliberately links the Qur’an with the audience’s everyday digital activities. Markers of generational closeness are further inserted through popular-culture references, for example, a Nicolas Cage meme that says “Before the YT era” in science-related content,⁴² as well as conversation-style interactive invitations such as “What do you remember most about your father?”⁴³ Through this diction, these taglines, and these cultural references, Islamic discourse is aligned with the tastes of young audiences, presenting religious messages are presented not as distant authoritative speech but as part of intimate, everyday conversation.

This shift in the discourse target toward the personal realm emphasizes that mediatization not only changes the mode of delivery but also relocates the basis of authority for religious messages. In a mediatized environment, religious legitimacy no longer rests solely on tradition and institutional charisma but depends on the individual’s voluntary acceptance and on references drawn from popular media culture.⁴⁴ When @barengquran addresses the reader as “you,” links prayer with subtle personal messages (DMs), and translates *fiṭrah* and *nafs muṭma’innah* into the vocabulary of self-healing, Islam is positioned not as a norm imposed from above but as an offering of meaning whose validity is tested through the reader’s emotional resonance. This is another manifestation of “banal religion”: a religious representation that is closely intertwined with personal experience and popular cultural genres.⁴⁵ This personalization directly intersects with the individualization of modern religion, in which the authority of meaning moves from the interpreting community to the experiencing subject—so that sacred texts are accepted to the extent that they can heal the individual’s inner self.

<https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DZFIj6Dk04w/>; Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kenapa Doa Yang Diajarkan Quran Untuk Rumah Tangga Bukan ‘Semoga Bahagia’ Tapi Hal Ini?”

⁴¹ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Al-Quran Gambarkan Jiwa Yang Kehilangan Dirinya Sendiri...”

⁴² Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Sekarang Terbukti Bahwa Ada Api Di Dalam Laut... Dulu Ditertawakan, Sekarang Terbukti Peneliti.”

⁴³ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Kanapa Al-Qur’an Lebih Banyak Menampilkan Dialog Ayah Ke Anak, Dan Jawabannya Mengubah Cara Kita Melihat Peran Ayah!,” Instagram Photo, September 1, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/DcvF4XPE2Er/?img_index=1.

⁴⁴ Stig Hjarvard, “Mediatization and the Changing Authority of Religion,” *Media, Culture & Society* 38, no. 1 (January 20, 2016): 8–17, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715615412>.

⁴⁵ Hjarvard, “The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change.”

The personalization of Islamic discourse on @barengquran reveals a shift more profound than a mere change in style of address: a transfer of the criteria of truth from the authority of interpretation to the testimony of feeling. When an interpretation is deemed worthy not because of the validity of its transmission (*sanad*) or the rigor of its argument but because it feels touching, calming, and “relatable” to the reader’s anxiety, the true arbiter of meaning is no longer the scholarly tradition but the individual’s inner experience.⁴⁶ Teachings that provide emotional relief gain validity, while aspects of teaching that demand, rebuke, or disturb comfort tend to lose their appeal—not because they are incorrect, but because they do not feel restorative. Herein lies the deepest consequence: religion is not simply personalized but therapeuticized, transformed into a self-healing resource subject to the affective needs of its consumers. The piety that grows from this kind of relationship is not obedience to what is right but attachment to what heals; and in that shift, the highest authority over the meaning of Islam gradually moves from the interpreter’s pulpit to the private space of each individual’s feelings.

This logic of recovery contrasts with the mainstream of popular Islamic literature, which tends to interpret digital intimacy additively—that is, as merely strengthening affective bonds, fostering solidarity, and expanding the commodification of piety.⁴⁷ This research adopts the opposite perspective. Instead of focusing on what is gained through this intimacy, it shifts attention to how the therapeutic closeness cultivated by @barengquran relocates the very basis of the authority of meaning. When an interpretation is deemed valid because it feels healing rather than because of its scholarly foundation, the criterion of truth moves from the community of interpreters to the inner experience of the reader. This shift—from the addition of relationships to the transfer of authority—distinguishes these findings from previous literature and demonstrates that the personalization of discourse does not simply expand the resonance of da’wah but redefines the measure of the validity of teachings: from conformity with tradition to conformity with individual affective needs.

⁴⁶ Heelas et al., *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion Is Giving Way to Spirituality*, 2.

⁴⁷ Martin Slama, “Practising Islam through Social Media in Indonesia,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (January 2, 2018): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416798>; Abd Hannan, “Rethinking the Indonesian Muslim Identity Endorsed by Hanan Attaki’s Popular Preaching on Social Media,” *Al’Adalah* 27, no. 1 (November 5, 2024): 31–49, <https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v27i1.451>; Toni Hartono, Tika Mutia, and Febby Amelia Trisakti, “Social Media and New Patterns of Religiousness among Urban Millennial Muslim in Indonesia,” *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 7, no. 6 (November 21, 2024): 2025285, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2025285>.

Actuality, Newsjacking, and Frames: Connecting Islamic Discourse to Media News Logic

If the first two dimensions address how discourse is packaged and to whom it is directed, the third-dimension concerns when and on what basis it is expressed. Here, media logic functions like a newsroom: Islamic discourse is produced in response to the pulse of news, novelty, and viral-worthy content. This phenomenon reflects what has been termed “journalism on religion,” where religious representations are shaped according to media agendas and reporting logic.⁴⁸ This orientation is explicitly conveyed through the @barengquran slogan, “telling the current reality through the POV of the Al-Qur’an.” This news logic operates through three mechanisms: the newsjacking of catastrophic events, appropriating of viral trends across platforms, and the theological framing of these events as warnings or calls to action. Together, these three mechanisms demonstrate how Islamic discourse is not only packaged and personalized but also rescheduled to align with the rhythm of the media agenda.

The first device appears in the selection of ongoing disaster events as entry points for discourse, accompanied by factual data that highlight their novelty. @barengquran content explicitly declares this orientation through its editorial slogan—“telling the current reality through the POV of the Qur’an”—and implements it by collecting details of actual events in a manner typical of news reporting (see Table 3).

Table 3. Collection of Actual Disaster Event Data in @barengquran Content

No.	Content	Factual Data Quoted	News Value
1	Anak Krakatau	“Mount Anak Krakatau spews ash 15 kilometers high. From the Sunda Strait, right between the two most densely populated islands in the world: Java and Sumatra”; “240 eruptions, booms heard as far away as Bandung, sky glowing red in the middle of the night”	Novelty & scale of impact
2	8 Mountains	“8 volcanoes erupt in Indonesia: Krakatoa, Semeru, Merapi, Ibu, Lewotobi... Etna in Italy. Shiveluch in Russia erupts almost every day. Fuego in Guatemala evacuates thousands of people. 17 active volcanoes simultaneously throughout the world”	Global scale & magnitude

⁴⁸ Stig Hjarvard, “Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the Public Face of Religion,” in *Mediatization and Religion: Nordic Perspectives*, ed. Stig Hjarvard and Mia Lövheim (Göteborg: Nordicom, 2012).

3	8 Mountains (ecological data)	“Kalimantan is on fire. 107,000 hectares scorched in half a year. Schools in Malaysia closed due to smoke from Indonesia”	Novelty & cross-border impact
4	Flores Earthquake	“Flores, NTT, was shaken by an earthquake. Central Sulawesi: floods and landslides... Sumatra: fires and floods alternating. Java: extreme drought”	Proximity & simultaneity

Source: Instagram account @barengquran

Table 3 demonstrates that Islamic discourse is constructed on the foundation of news values—novelty, proximity, and scale of impact—which are the conventional criteria for determining the newsworthiness of an event. Technical data, such as the height of the eruption, the number of eruptions, the area of burned land, and lists of affected regions, are collected and organized in the style of news reports before being connected to religious messages. By compiling data on current events, the content is positioned to feel relevant to issues of immediate public concern, making its appearance dependent on the pulse of the news cycle rather than on an independent agenda of Islamic study.

The second device is evident in the highlighting of cases and trends that go viral on other platforms, which are curated and then integrated into Islamic discourse. Unlike geophysical disaster events, these cases take the form of social controversies or viral moments circulating on TikTok, Threads, or Instagram timelines. In this process, @barengquran acts as a curator, connecting the pulse of public conversation with religious messages (see Table 4).

Table 4. Viral Case Escalation and Cross-Platform Curation in @barengquran Content

No.	Case	Content / Viral Trends Raised	Source / Platform Curation
1	Flores Earthquake	Request from NTT earthquake victims: “Mother, can we be given rice? We don’t need side dishes. As for vegetables, we can pick them in the forest. At least we eat rice first.”	Repost of an upload by influencer Sania Leonardo (Threads); packaged in the format “Bareng Quran; News”
2	Mocking Religion	The phenomenon of mocking religion for the sake of going viral: “If you want to go viral? Just pee on the Kaaba / pour Zamzam water”; liquor brand “gives out liquor... the requirement is to memorize QS. al-Ḍuḥā”	Viral discourse on social media
3	QS. al-Ḍuḥā/ Newport	The case of the Newport liquor brand at a concert: a surah-memorization competition with alcohol as prizes; “Sunday, 9 August 2026... there was an audience... giving a	MC’s apology (Threads/ @revna***Ega5)

		competition to recite one of the surahs to other visitors in return”	
4	Mahar / QS. al-Nisā’	Viral dowry that sparked debate: “Dowry worth IDR 1 million. Plus a promise to teach <i>Tafsīr al-Nisā’</i> . The timeline immediately became busy. ‘In her class, that’s all?’”	Screenshot of the “Husain & Najma” invitation and timeline comments

Source: Instagram account @barengquran

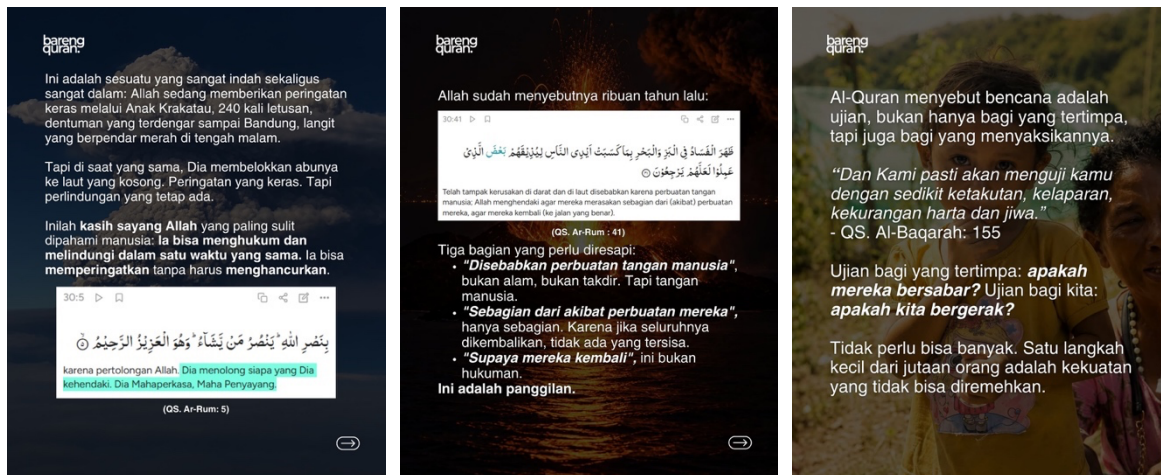
Table 4 shows that @barengquran responds not only to natural events but engages with controversies and viral moments currently circulating on other platforms as material for discourse. The sources of this material are often explicitly cited—such as an influencer’s post on Threads,⁴⁹ a host’s apology,⁵⁰ or even screenshots of invitations and comments⁵¹—indicating that the content is curated across platforms rather than being self-reported. This approach is formalized through the branded format “Bareng Quran; News,” which positions the account to resemble a news channel. By highlighting these viral cases, Islamic discourse aligns itself with heated public conversations, making its relevance dependent on the viral impact of an issue rather than by the intrinsic urgency of religious study.

The third device appears in theological framing, which transforms actual events into messages imbued with meaning. Once factual data have been collected, events that were originally geophysically or socially neutral are connected to interpretive verses and keywords—such as “warning,” “calling,” or “test”—so that they appear as signs demanding a religious response (see Figure 2).

⁴⁹ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Influencer Ini Bagikan Satu Keinginan Dari Korban Gempa Ntt, Bikin Netizen Menangis!”

⁵⁰ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “Surah Yang Menenangkan Nabi, Kini Jadi Bahan Olok-Olok Brand Miras?,” Instagram Photo, August 11, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/barengquran/p/Db42yVnEx0T/>.

⁵¹ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], “An-Nisa: Surah Yang Menetapkan Hak Perempuan.”



Source: Instagram account @barengquran

Figure 2. Theological Framing of Actual Disaster Events in @barengquran Content

Figure 2 presents three slides illustrating theological framing patterns within the corpus. The first panel associates the eruption of Anak Krakatau with QS. al-Rūm [30]: 41, shown as a screenshot from a Qur'an application and framed by the phrase "Hard warning. Love remains,"⁵² thereby interpreting the disaster as both a warning and an act of mercy. The second panel links a series of volcanic eruptions and forest fires to the same verse but emphasizes the keywords "Not punishment. But a call. 'Come back',"⁵³ framing the event as a call for repentance. The third panel connects the Flores earthquake to QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 155 and frames it as a dual test—"A test for those affected: are they patient? A test for us: do we move?"⁵⁴—which calls for reader solidarity. Together, these panels demonstrate how verses presented as application screenshots serve as interpretive devices: neutral actual events are subordinated to a unified religious framework, with all disasters ultimately conveying the message of returning to God.

The newsjacking pattern in @barengquran content demonstrates that mediatization not only shapes the form and targets of discourse but also controls the agenda—determining what is appropriate to discuss and when. When the emergence of discourse is driven by events such as volcanic eruptions, forest fires, or viral cases, priorities are no longer set by systematic study but by the news cycle. This represents a

⁵² Bareng Quran [@barengquran], "15 Kilometer Abu Di Udara... Allah Mengatur Angin Membelok Ke Samudra Hindia!"

⁵³ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], "17 Gunung Aktif Bersamaan Di Seluruh Dunia, Al-Qur'an Sudah Menjawab Mengapa Ini Semua Terjadi!"

⁵⁴ Bareng Quran [@barengquran], "Influencer Ini Bagikan Satu Keinginan Dari Korban Gempa Ntt, Bikin Netizen Menangis!"

form of “journalism on religion,” where religious representation that is produced and circulated according to the logic of news reporting rather than being governed by religious institutions.⁵⁵ The consequences are multifaceted: linking discourse to actual events broadens the relevance of da’wah, yet simultaneously makes the religious agenda reactive and dependent on what is doctrinally most important. The verse itself also shifts—from serving as a starting point for interpretation to becoming a concluding statement that confers sacred significance upon an event already chosen for its viral impact.

This reliance of Islamic discourse on actual events reveals a deeper consequence than mere agenda reactivity: an inversion of the relationship between revelation and reality. Within the framework of conventional religious discourse, sacred texts serve as guides that precede and illuminate events. In the logic of newsjacking, however, events come first and summon verses to explain them. As a result, sacred texts are positioned not as continuous guides but as interpreters who speak only when the world is in turmoil⁵⁶—when a mountain erupts, a forest burns, or a case becomes a topic of public discussion. The presence of religious meaning thus becomes contingent on the level of excitement generated by an event: the greater the shock, the more worthy it is to be “sounded through the POV [point of view] of the Qur’an,” while calm and undramatic everyday life tends to escape the spotlight. Herein lies the paradox. Efforts to present the Qur’an as something relevant to the present can actually narrow that relevance, because religion appears to have something to say only when a crisis occurs. What has been shifted is not merely the order of speech between verse and event, but the very nature of how God addresses human beings—from guiding them in everyday silence to rebuking them amid the noise of disaster.

This agenda-setting logic contrasts with mainstream digital Islamic literature, which primarily interprets virality in terms of its effects. Research by Slama demonstrates how social media shapes an affective economy in which preachers must provide the appropriate emotional resonance to retain their followers.⁵⁷ Nisa examines content creativity that transforms preachers into influencers,⁵⁸ while Solahudin and Fakhruroji

⁵⁵ Hjarvard, “Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the Public Face of Religion,” 32.

⁵⁶ Hjarvard, 34.

⁵⁷ Martin Slama, “A Subtle Economy of Time: Social Media and the Transformation of Indonesia’s Islamic Preacher Economy,” *Economic Anthropology* 4, no. 1 (January 11, 2017): 94–106, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12075>.

⁵⁸ Nisa, “Creative and Lucrative Da’wa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia.”

emphasize how populism and virality give rise to new religious authorities.⁵⁹ The common thread among these studies is their focus on what happens after content goes viral. The present findings move in the opposite direction: they highlight how virality itself sets the agenda for interpretation.⁶⁰ In the case of @barengquran, it is not the teachings that select events; rather, busy and newsworthy events determine which verses are recited—a mechanism known as the agenda-setting function of the media. This shift in focus—from the effects of virality to its role as agenda-setter—distinguishes these findings from previous literature.

Conclusion

The content of @barengquran does not bring the Qur'an closer to digital audiences; rather, it compels the Qur'an to conform to the platform's rules before it is allowed to be expressed. This research finds that the Islamic discourse on this account is shaped by three mutually reinforcing operations of media logic. First, aestheticization and dramaturgy package the teachings through provocative hooks, horror-surrealist aesthetics, and narrative structures that prioritize attention—rather than systematic interpretation—as the organizing principle, so that only those religious aspects translatable into the language of entertainment have the opportunity to appear. Second, personalization and therapization shift the discourse's focus from the community to the individual, while simultaneously relocating the basis of interpretive validity from authoritative scholarship to the emotional resonance of the reader, so that an interpretation is considered valid to the extent that it feels healing. Third, topicality and newsjacking tie the emergence of discourse to the cycle of viral events, so that it is not the teachings that select the events to be illuminated, but rather busy and newsworthy events that determine which verses are worth reading. Together, these three operations lead to a single conclusion: the resulting discourse is not governed by its own scholarly logic but is instead reorganized according to the logic of spectacle, affective proximity, and the pulse of the news in terms of its form, target audience, and agenda.

These findings were derived from a discourse analysis of fourteen content pieces within a single framework of the mediatization of religion, which emphasizes the role of

⁵⁹ Dindin Solahudin and Moch Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority," *Religions* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2019): 19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010019>.

⁶⁰ Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972): 176–87.

media logic in shaping discourse. This approach is effective because it treats aestheticization, personalization, and agenda-setting as a set of mutually reinforcing discursive operations rather than as isolated phenomena. However, the research is limited to the dimensions of text production and representation and does not address the reception dimension—that is, how actual audiences interpret, negotiate, or reject the discourse. The study also deliberately refrains from making claims about commodification due to the absence of transaction and donation data; thus, commercial markers are interpreted solely as features of the discourse, not as evidence of economic processes. Future research could therefore pursue reception studies or audience ethnography to examine the extent to which these discursive operations are internalized in everyday religious practice, as well as political-economic analyses that investigate whether commodification underlies the commercial markers. The focus on a single account also presents opportunities for comparative studies across digital da’wah accounts to determine whether this pattern is unique to @barengquran or reflects broader trends in the mediatization of Islam.

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The authors ensure that the datasets necessary to replicate the conclusions of this work are presented in their entirety within the article [and/or] its supplementary information.

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The author(s) declare no conflict of interest and confirm that all data were analyzed objectively and ethically, with proper citation of sources.

Ethical Approval:

This study is based exclusively on publicly available data from the Instagram account @barengquran. All materials analyzed—including posts, captions, visual elements, and account statistics—are openly accessible on a public social media platform and do not involve any private or restricted content. The research did not involve human participants, interviews, surveys, experimental interventions, or the collection of personal data beyond what is already published by the account itself. Consequently, the study falls outside the

scope of research requiring formal ethical review involving human subjects. No institutional ethical clearance was required or sought. The analysis was conducted solely for academic purposes, with due regard for the fair use of publicly disseminated digital content, and all sources have been appropriately attributed.

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