

From Revelation to Engagement: Generative AI Visuals, Platform Affordances, and the Desacralization of the Qur'an in Cyberspace

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Abstract

The mediatization of sacred texts in cyberspace is often perceived as a neutral extension of the medium; however, generative AI (Gen-AI) and algorithmic architectures increasingly disrupt the hermeneutical stability of scripture. This study explores the epistemological conflict between social media architecture and divine revelation through an exploratory-qualitative approach combined with netnography. By analyzing textual and visual data from the Instagram account @abdullmaa using Jean Baudrillard's postmodern socio-semiotic framework, the findings reveal that platform affordances function as a circuit of simulacra that undermine the Qur'an's transcendental autonomy. This occurs through three pathways of desacralization: extreme syntactic fragmentation, Gen-AI generated cinematic hyperreality replacing contemplative engagement (*tadabbur*), and the implosion of meaning into metric-driven popular scientific jargon. Consequently, this study highlights a critical shift in the locus of authenticity, where scriptural interpretation is no longer validated by traditional exegetical authority but is instead algorithmically engineered by digital platforms.

Keywords: Baudrillard, Digital Religion, Generative AI, Instagram, symbolic consumption, Simulacra.

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Introduction

The mediatization of sacred texts—originally conceived as a neutral medium to expand the reach of revelation—has encountered a profound epistemological clash when confronted with the architecture of global social media, which acts as an active agent undermining the integrity of the Qur'an. In the contemporary cyber-religious landscape, platform logic now wields the power to dictate, engineer, and domesticate the structure of sacred texts to satisfy the demands of the transnational attention economy. This



phenomenon is clearly exemplified by the Instagram account @abdullmaa. The carousel feature compels the Qur’anic text to undergo extreme syntactic reduction, fragmenting it into brief phrases to fit pixel-space constraints. These fragments are then combined with a barrage of popular science jargon lacking scholarly references, while the text’s spiritual depth is supplanted by the cinematic splendor of Generative AI visual spectacles.¹ At this stage, the sacred text experiences referential paralysis under global technological standardization. The authenticity of interpretation is no longer validated by traditional exegetical authority but is instead reduced to engagement metrics. Consequently, the Qur’an loses its transcendental autonomy and is diminished to an artificial visual commodity circulating autonomously within cyber-hyperreal space.

In the existing academic literature, studies on artificial intelligence in the religious sphere can be broadly categorized into three main approaches: the theological-aesthetic approach, which examines the symbolic boundaries of AI-generated visuals;² the sociological-discursive approach, which analyzes shifts in religious authority through the “Gen-AI Professor” phenomenon;³ and the critical-ethical approach, which addresses the risks of digital radicalism and propaganda.⁴ While these studies have significantly contributed to understanding how AI shapes religious discourse and social interactions, they generally position technology as an external actor or a mere instrument of representation outside the text itself. This study addresses these limitations by offering a different perspective. Using the @abdullmaa account as an empirical case, it shifts the focus from the impact of AI on audiences to how global digital infrastructure actively

¹ David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 132.

² Mariusz Chrostowski and Andrzej Jacek Najda, “From Verse to Vision: Exploring AI-Generated Religious Imagery in Bible Teaching,” *Religions* 16, no. 8 (August 14, 2025): 1051, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16081051>; Marta Kawka, “Theological Imaginal Reflections with AI Artworks: Revealing and Obscuring Divine Knowledge in Aesthetic Experience,” *Practical Theology* 18, no. 2 (March 4, 2025): 152–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2025.2474318>.

³ Yunus Ergen, “Exploring the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Religion on YouTube Narratives,” *Selçuk İletişim* 18, no. 2 (October 15, 2025): 693–716, <https://doi.org/10.18094/josc.1697087>; Beth Singler, “‘Specialists without Spirit’: GenAI Professors, Epistemic Networks, and Religious Education,” *Zeitschrift Für Pädagogik Und Theologie* 77, no. 4 (November 21, 2025): 362–78, <https://doi.org/10.1515/zpt-2025-2042>; Tanya Giannelia and Abby Golub, “Breaking the Taboo of Religion and Spirituality in IS Research,” *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* 57, no. 1 (2025): 617–36, <https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.05726>.

⁴ Katarzyna Czornik, “AI and GenAI as Tools in the Hands of Islamic Terrorist Organisations,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 24, no. 72 (December 3, 2025): 32–48.

intervenes in the internal stability and hermeneutical integrity of the revelatory text through mechanisms of syntactic distortion, visual hyperreality, and semantic implosion.

The study comprehensively examines the epistemological conflict between the global social media architecture and the hermeneutic stability of the sacred text through three interconnected stages of analysis. First, it identifies how platform logic distorts meaning by fragmenting the Qur'anic text and severing its classical scholarly context within the pixelated interface. Second, it maps the visual aesthetic morphology of generative AI (Gen-AI), which creates conditions of hyperreality where artificial transcendental objects replace the depth of textual contemplation (*tadabbur*) and shift the locus of religious authenticity for cyber audiences. Finally, it analyzes the phase of semantic implosion, in which the Qur'an's theological messages dissolve into secular empirical jargon and are repurposed as instruments to boost interactions.

The central thesis of this study posits that the penetration of global social media architecture into sacred texts no longer function as a neutral medium of representation. Instead, it operates as a circuit of simulacra that gradually erodes the Qur'an's transcendental autonomy. This process of epistemological desacralization unfolds through three systematic phases of sign transformation:⁵ first, the distortion of meaning through radical decontextualization and syntactic mutilation that severs the text from its classical hermeneutic anchors; second; the generation of hyperreality, wherein Generative AI's cinematic aesthetics materialize metaphysical and metaphorical objects into autonomous images that supplant contemplative depth; and third, the total implosion of meaning, whereby the word of God is fully dissolved into secular jargon and repurposed as an engagement tool. At this final stage, religious knowledge in cyberspace is severed from its divine referent and circulates as an autonomous simulation consumed within seconds according to platform algorithm metrics.

Method

This qualitative study employs an exploratory case study approach combined with netnography to investigate the digital transformation occurring in contemporary Qur'anic studies.⁶ The primary object of analysis is the Instagram account @abdullmaa, a digital platform that consistently produces generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI)-based

⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila F. Glaser (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 6.

⁶ Robert V. Kozinets and Rosella Gambetti, *Netnography Unlimited: Understanding Technoculture Using Qualitative Social Media Research* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

visualizations of Qur'anic verses. This single case was selected through purposive sampling based on its digital performance metrics, which were audited via a third-party analytics platform (Social Blade) up to mid-2026. The audit revealed that the account has 60,939 followers, 112 posts, an exceptionally high engagement rate of 10.34%, and an average of 6,250 likes per post. These metrics confirm the account's status as a highly influential micro-influencer in shaping contemporary religious visual trends, making it an ideal case for this study. The primary data sources consist of textual and visual materials extracted from five purposively selected carousel posts. These posts cover the themes including the Companions of the Cave, entomological phenomena, cow's milk nutrition, crow ethology, and the laws of acoustic physics. They are supplemented by secondary data in the form of user comments collected from the platform's interface.

Data collection was conducted out through participatory-passive cyber-observation from January to May 2026. Infographic sheets and captions were downloaded, documented, and archived using digital screen-capture techniques. Once the complete corpus of visual and textual data was assembled, analysis was performed using Jean Baudrillard's postmodern socio-semiotic model. The analytical procedure comprised three systematic phases: formal deconstruction, which identified the level of syntactic reduction in the Qur'anic text and the modeling of generative AI visual forms within the carousel's pixel space; latent analysis, which uncovered the mechanisms of "masking reality" and the substitution of transcendental objects with digital image codes; and critical synthesis, which articulated how conditions of "generative hyperreality" and the "implosion of meaning" give rise to a new form of religious authority that circulates autonomously in cyberspace.

The Escalation of Algorithmic Power and the Challenge of Religious Authenticity in Cyberspace

This study is situated within the broader context of artificial intelligence (AI) evolving from a mere technical tool into a central framework governing socio-cultural dynamics in contemporary social media spaces.⁷ In today's digital ecosystem, AI no longer functions as a passive instrument but operates as a hidden infrastructure shaping nearly every aspect of users' subjective experiences. Through mass personalization, behavioral data analysis, content optimization, and real-time sentiment analysis, AI actively directs

⁷ Matthew N. O. Sadiku et al., "Artificial Intelligence in Social Media," *International Journal of Scientific Advances* 2, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.51542/ijscia.v2i1.4>.

the flow and visibility of information in the online public sphere.⁸ Consequently, digital platforms systematically prioritize emotionally charged, controversial, or visually striking content to maximize engagement, while often sidelining reflective and theologically complex religious narratives.

This dynamic creates a fundamental cultural paradox: although generative AI enables unprecedented speed and volume in content production, it simultaneously undermines perceptions of authenticity and the overall quality of public discourse.⁹ The proliferation of digital da'wah accounts using AI-generated infographics illustrates that this technology is no longer merely decorative but has become a powerful shaper of new visual styles that actively influence audiences' interpretive processes.¹⁰ The integration of AI-generated images into algorithmically optimized carousel formats effectively captures users' attention at first glance. This shift ultimately inverts the traditional hierarchy of signs, allowing pictorial aesthetics to overshadow the text and displace the depth of reflective engagement with sacred scripture.

Such conditions indicate to a systemic form of cyber engineering that confines audiences within filter bubbles, reinforcing cognitive biases and exacerbating social polarization. In this automated, circular media ecosystem, artificial intelligence fundamentally reshapes the traditional relationship between the Qur'anic text, exegetical authority, and patterns of religious consumption within the cyber community.¹¹ This study addresses a critical research gap by examining how sacred texts undergo decontextualization and domestication under digital algorithmic control. Through a detailed analysis of the Instagram account @abdullmaa, it aims to uncover the mechanisms by which the transcendental word of God is compelled to conform to platform engagement metrics, thereby sustaining the autonomous circulation of religious knowledge in cyberspace.

⁸ I Kadek Aryasatya Danendra and Jonathan Jacob Paul Latupeirissa, "Artificial Intelligence in Social Media: A Systematic Review of Trends," *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi (Indonesian Journal of Communications Studies)* 9, no. 3 (November 28, 2025): 793–810, <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v9i3.10287>.

⁹ Anders Giovanni Møller et al., "The Impact of Generative AI on Social Media: An Experimental Study," June 17, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-026-40110-8>.

¹⁰ Derry Ahmad Rizal, Rif'atul Maula, and Nilna Idamatussilmi, "Transformasi Media Sosial dalam Digitalisasi Agama: Media Dakwah dan Wisata Religi [The Transformation of Social Media in Digital Religion: Da'wah Media and Religious Tourism]," *Mukaddimah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 9, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 206–30, <https://doi.org/10.14421/mjsi.v9i2.3909>.

¹¹ Huma Tahir et al., "Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Social Media Communication in the Digital Era," *Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review* 4, no. 1 (March 16, 2026): 40–53.

Distortions of Meaningful Reality in Generative AI Visuals on Instagram: The Fragmentation of Textual Syntax and the Amputation of Hermeneutic Context

The paradigm shift in the consumption of sacred texts in cyberspace can be understood through the evolving function of signs. These signs no longer reflect fundamental truth; instead, they obscure, manipulate, and distort the original essence of the text.¹² In generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI)-based religious content production, this process occurs through the automatization of signs, which severs the ontological connection between sacred texts and their traditional hermeneutic ecosystem.¹³ On Instagram, Gen-AI visualizations function as instruments that displace classical textual authority through two simultaneous operations: linguistic deconstruction at the syntactic level and the elimination of historicity at the hermeneutic level. This collision between digital platform architecture and revelatory text creates a new theological grammar, validated primarily by aesthetics, where textual literacy is shaped by the effect of empirical proximity.

The effect of empirical proximity in the Qur'anic textual literacy produced by the @abdullmaa account is achieved through mechanistic linguistic deconstruction techniques (see Figure 1).



Source: [instagram.com/abdullmaa](https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa)

Figure 1. Syntactic Reduction of the Qur'an within a Mechanistic Framework

As shown in Figure 1, the syntactic reduction process fragments Qur'anic verses into short phrases of only two to six words to fit the spatial constraints of the carousel infographic.

¹² Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 28.

¹³ Baudrillard, 8.

In the *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* (The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus)-themed content, QS. al-Kahf [18]:18 is radically truncated, retaining only two main lexical units: *nuqallibuhum* (turning them over) and *bāsiṭun zirā'aihi* (stretching out his arms).¹⁴ In the entomological phenomena post, QS. al-Baqarah [2]:26 is reduced to the single word *ba'ūḍah* (female mosquito).¹⁵ Similarly, in the cow's milk nutrition post, QS. al-Nahl [16]:66 is heavily condensed, quoting only the phrase *min baini farṭin wa damin labanan khālīṣan sā'ighan* (from what is within its belly—from between feces and blood—pure milk, easily swallowed).¹⁶

This deliberate fragmentation of complete sentence structures severs the sacred text from its internal coherence within the surah and shifts the theological orientation toward claims rooted in popular material science. Such textual isolation—a clear instance of reality distortion—is evident on users' device screens (see Figure 2).



Source: [instagram.com/abdullmaa](https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa)

Figure 2. Breakdown of the Verse on the Carousel Interface

Figure 2 highlights the complete absence of the official contextual translation, as well as the preceding and following sentences. In the crow-themed content, QS. al-Mā'idah [5]:31

¹⁴ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], "Manusia Ditolak-Balik, Tapi Anjingnya Dibiarkan Diam? [The Humans Alternated, But Their Dog Kept Still?]," Instagram Photo, February 16, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/DUzYjYCD3ef/?img_index=2.

¹⁵ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], "Kamu Kira Mulut Nyamuk Itu Jarum Suntik Biasa? [You Think a Mosquito's Mouth Is Just an Ordinary Needle?]," Instagram Photo, February 11, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/DUncbVmj9Hx/?img_index=2.

¹⁶ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], "Minuman Bersih Ini Keluar Dari Tempat Paling Kotor? [A Pure Drink From the Dirtiest Place?]," Instagram Photo, February 10, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa/p/DULKmn7D0Up/?img_index=2.

is limited to the fragment *fa ba'asa Allāhu ghurāban yabḥaṣu fī al-arḍi* (then Allah sent a crow to scratch the ground).¹⁷ In the post about acoustic sound waves, QS. al-Ra'd [13]:28 is reduced to the short phrase *alā bi zikri Allāhi taṭma'innu al-qulūb* (know that it is only through the remembrance of Allah that hearts find peace) to support a narrative on biological frequencies.¹⁸ Additionally, QS. al-Baqarah [2]:26 is cited without any anchoring text for its physical-scientific interpretation.¹⁹

This textual amputation is further intensified by the complete omission of historical context (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) and references to authoritative exegetical works. The @abdullmaa account provides no citations of exegetes, classical texts, or interpretive methodologies within its infographics. Such explanatory notes appear only later in the comments section, in response to audience questions.²⁰ User comment data indicate that the absence of traditional religious references did not generate significant skepticism. Instead, interactions were dominated by immediate acceptance of the new interpretations,²¹ appreciation of the *murattal* (the rhythmic recitation of the Quran) audio background,²² and debates regarding the scientific claims²³. As a result, content creators have effectively replaced traditional religious authorities as the primary validators of religious understanding in this Instagram digital space.

This situation illustrates how Instagram's digital ecosystem has profoundly transformed the epistemological landscape of Qur'anic studies. By overturning the foundational principles of traditional Qur'anic scholarship—which emphasize *siyāq* (textual coherence), *munāsabah* (inter-verse correlation), and *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) as essential tools for achieving valid understanding (*al-fahm al-ṣaḥīḥ*)—the platform has fundamentally altered interpretive norms.²⁴ The scientific interpretations presented on the @abdullmaa account demonstrate that the disintegration of sacred

¹⁷ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Burung ‘Sial’ Yang Menjadi Guru Peradaban Manusia [The 'Unlucky' Bird That Became the Teacher of Human Civilization],” Instagram Photo, February 10, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa/p/DUlkDvcj9_g/?img_index=1.

¹⁸ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Hukum Fisika Gelombang Suara [The Physics Laws of Sound Waves],” Instagram Photo, February 26, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa/p/DVNYL05D-th/?img_index=1.

¹⁹ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Kamu Kira Mulut Nyamuk Itu Jarum Suntik Biasa?”

²⁰ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Minuman Bersih Ini Keluar Dari Tempat Paling Kotor?”

²¹ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Kamu Kira Mulut Nyamuk Itu Jarum Suntik Biasa?”

²² Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Hukum Fisika Gelombang Suara.”

²³ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Minuman Bersih Ini Keluar Dari Tempat Paling Kotor?”

²⁴ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Al-Žahabī, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 1 (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2007), 39–41.

meaning is not primarily driven by theological intent but rather results logically from the text's subjugation to the platform's media infrastructure.²⁵ The carousel format enforces syntactic reduction due to pixel-space limitations; the attention economy sacrifices historical complexity in favor of viral hooks; and algorithmic metrics (likes, shares, saves) displace the authority of traditional transmission (*isnād*), replacing it with cyber-aesthetic validation.²⁶ Consequently, social media infrastructure has created a new knowledge space in which digital technology no longer functions as a neutral distribution channel but acts as an active epistemic agent that adjudicates, desacralizes, and reduces revelatory texts to the shallow materialism of popular science.

This methodological disintegration demonstrates that the sign no longer functions as a pure representation of meaning but actively distorts and obscures the fundamental reality of the sacred text. In the @abdullmaa digital space, fragments of Qur'anic verses are stripped of their ontological status as transcendental signifiers and repurposed to animate secondary, artificial images detached from the original intent of the revelation. When audience textual literacy is shaped by "empirical proximity" through vivid physical visualizations and popular scientific jargon, the distortion of meaning become pronounced: the sacred text is no longer engaged with in its esoteric depth but is manipulated to appear subordinate to the measurable logic of modern rationality. This "masking of reality" epistemologically reverses the logic of faith, causing the revelatory text to lose its absolute authority and submit to artificial, temporal, and spatial digital imagery.

The circulation of these signs demonstrates that images no longer merely reflect reality but function autonomously in reshaping textual meaning.²⁷ Excerpts from the Qur'an are decontextualized from their classical hermeneutical foundations and reassigned to generate new meanings beyond the text's original historical intent. This process of obscuring the original meaning transforms the tradition of textual verification, subjecting the authenticity of revelation to mediatization and validation through operational, temporal, and spatial digital signs.²⁸ Ultimately, this juxtaposition constructs

²⁵ Heidi Campbell, "How Religious Communities Negotiate New Media Religiously," in *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures*, ed. Pauline Hope Cheong et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 2012).

²⁶ Knut Lundby, "Theoretical Frameworks for Approaching Religion and New Media," in *Digital Religion: Understand Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, ed. Christopher Helland (London: Routledge, 2012), 230.

²⁷ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 5.

²⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1998), 34.

a new value system that elevates empirical-material truth as the primary criterion for the validity of sacred textual meaning. Beneath the seemingly reverent digital presentation lies a subtle mechanism of closure, wherein the ontological status of the Qur'an is gradually diminished to a subordinate instrument legitimizing popular science.²⁹ Sacred texts are no longer primarily used to direct consciousness toward abstract transcendental realities; instead, they are repurposed to produce operational clarity that severs their connection to classical hermeneutics.³⁰

This transformation marks a new era in which religious texts are consumed less as absolute dogmas of faith and more as objects of cyber-aesthetic spectacle governed by modern consumerist logic. While previous studies have generally viewed the digitization of scientific exegesis as a democratizing force that enhances religious literacy by challenging traditional authority,³¹ or as an effective apologetic strategy to maintain religious relevance in modernity,³² this study offers a contrasting perspective. Rather than reinforcing revelation, the syncretism between platform architecture and popular science discourse creates a mechanism of domestication that subjugates the Qur'an. Mediatization on Instagram has progressed beyond the horizontal negotiation of religious authority to a stage of referential substitution,³³ in which the transcendental word of God undergoes a closure of meaning to produce visual spectacles consumed within seconds.

²⁹ Christopher Helland, "Ritual," in *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, ed. Heidi A. Campbell (London: Routledge, 2013), 25.

³⁰ Stig Hjarvard, "The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change," *Northern Lights: Film and Media Studies Yearbook* 6, no. 1 (June 30, 2008): 9–26, https://doi.org/10.1386/NL.6.1.9_1.

³¹ Ruwaiha Al-Najmi, Zareefa Al-Qaysi, and Shu Yanning, "Islamic Education and Digital Public Spheres: Democracy, Social Media, and Religious Learning," *Multicultural Islamic Education Review* 4, no. 1 (March 31, 2026): 103–16, <https://doi.org/10.23917/mier.v4i1.16484>; Agung Mandiro Cahyono et al., "Digital Interpretation in The Social Media Era: The transformation of Religious Authority and The Crisis of Religious Moderation," *West Science Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 31, 2025): 75–82, <https://doi.org/10.58812/wsiss.v3i01.2509>.

³² Iman Mukhroman and Ilim Abdul Halim, "Islamic Apologetics and Social Construction: Framing Bang Zuma's YouTube Content via James Thrower," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 13, no. 1 (June 4, 2025): 51–64, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v13i1.45593>.

³³ Pauline Hope Cheong, "Religious Authority and Social Media Branding in a Culture of Religious Celebrification," in *The Media and Religious Authority*, ed. Stewart M. Hoover (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2016), 81–102.

Generative Hyperreality in Gen-AI Visuals on Instagram: The Aesthetic Morphology of AI Imagery and the Substitution of Transcendental Objects

The evolution of religious visual representations in contemporary cyberspace is marked by the emergence of a condition in which digital simulations no longer merely accompany sacred texts but instead generate an autonomous graphic reality detached from their original referents. On Instagram, this phenomenon manifests through a distinct visual aesthetic morphology driven by generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI). This technology reconstructs transcendental, metaphorical, and abstract entities into new forms of artificial materiality.³⁴ By strategically arranging graphic elements, the platform's visual architecture fills the speculative gaps left by the abstract language of sacred texts, replacing their spiritual depth with hyper-realistic sensory spectacles.³⁵ The fusion of sophisticated visual algorithms and esoteric narratives creates a new pictorial grammar that leads audiences to validate religious authenticity primarily through aesthetic grandeur.

This visual grammar is created through the embodiment of abstract and supernatural objects in cyberspace using generative AI. A prominent feature across the analyzed posts is the use of dramatic cinematic lighting with high contrast ratios, designed to engage the audience's senses. In the *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* illustration (see Figure 3), dim lighting combined with a soft dawn glow from outside the cave subtly highlights spatial details.³⁶ A similar approach is employed in the visualization of the Qur'an's frequency, which depicts particle waves and a glowing heart accompanied by an electrocardiogram.³⁷ These artificial lighting techniques consistently evoke a sacred, majestic, and mysterious atmosphere, crafted to capture immediate sensory attention.

This artificial visual construction materializes abstract objects into tangible forms through richly textured rendering that captivates the cyber audience. The resulting hyperreal spectacle—convincing yet devoid of any original reference—is evident in the digital graphics (see Figure 3).

³⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996), 190.

³⁵ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure*, 122.

³⁶ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], "MasyaAllah, Luar Biasa Kisah Ashabul Kahfi Ini... [MashaAllah, this story of the Seven Sleepers is truly incredible...]," Instagram Photo, February 17, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa/p/DU2ymq7j1yX/?img_index=8.

³⁷ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], "Hukum Fisika Gelombang Suara."



Source: [instagram.com/abdullmaa](https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa)

Figure 3. Generative AI Visual Spectacle of Metaphorical Symbols

The AI-generated illustrations showcase precise and realistic physical details, such as the viscous sheen of milk inside a bottle³⁸ and the macro-scale anatomical structure of a mosquito's wing³⁹. These micro-textures are combined with a surrealistic figurative style, placing the objects in flawless, imaginary spaces free from physical imperfections. This creates a reversal of logic, making the image appear more real than the original text.

Interaction data indicate that the dominance of these AI-generated visuals effectively shifts audience attention away from the textual content toward aesthetic appreciation. In the comments on the “Frequency of the Qur’an” and “*Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*” posts, the majority of users expressed admiration for the graphic beauty, inquired about the image-generation tools used, and saved the content in large numbers.⁴⁰ Instagram’s algorithm further reinforces this pattern by prioritizing carousel content that sustains longer visual engagement. Consequently, Generative AI visualizations are no longer supplementary aids to sacred texts; they have become the central element in meaning-making and the primary lens through which audiences interpret religious truths.

³⁸ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Minuman Bersih Ini Keluar Dari Tempat Paling Kotor?”

³⁹ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Fakta Mengejutkan: Nyamuk Sebenarnya Vegan [Surprising Fact: Mosquitoes Are Actually Vegan],” Instagram Photo, February 10, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa/p/DULK-UUj_K6/.

⁴⁰ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Hukum Fisika Gelombang Suara”; Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Mayat Pasti Busuk, Tapi Mereka Tidak [Dead Bodies Always Decay, But They Didn't],” Instagram Photo, February 17, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/abdullmaa/p/DU2CZbHj64_/?img_index=1.

This combination of artificial visual morphology and the affective responses of online audiences reflects a fundamental epistemological transformation in Qur'anic studies, particularly regarding the limits of representation (*taswīr*) of metaphorical (*majāzī*) elements in revelation. In the classical interpretive tradition, the interpretation of abstract concepts and metaphors—such as those involving domestic creatures—was strictly guided by established scholarly frameworks to preserve the transcendental dimension of meaning.⁴¹ However, empirical evidence from the @abdullmaa account demonstrates how social media architecture subverts this convention by providing rigid, micro-textured visual concretizations of these abstract symbols.⁴² The methodological implication is a significant shift in the locus of authenticity within contemporary Qur'anic studies. The validity and appeal of an interpretation are no longer determined primarily by an exegete's ability to unpack semantic structures but are increasingly renegotiated through generative AI's capacity to stimulate the visual sensorium of digital audiences.

This phenomenon is driven by the cultural imperative of postmodern society, which demands the transformation of all abstractions into visually consumable signs. Within the framework of generative hyperreality, the materialization of esoteric objects through AI occurs on a massive scale because digital media architecture effectively provides aesthetic gratification that substitutes for the depth of textual contemplation (*tadabbur*).⁴³ The Qur'anic text is no longer positioned as the anchor of truth that judges reality; instead, it is repurposed as a decorative element that validates the circulation of AI-generated imagery—imagery that often appears more convincing and alluring than the original text itself. At this stage, the Instagram platform operates according to an epistemological reversal: mechanically produced artificial signs have overtaken and become the new reference points for religious consciousness among digital consumers.

This artificial visual morphology represents a radical substitution of transcendental objects through the embodiment of technological aesthetics. Behind the visual staging that appears to accompany the Qur'an lies a structured process of signification, in which abstract, allegorical, and supernatural dimensions are extracted from their speculative

⁴¹ Muḥammad bin Abd Allah Al-Zarkasyī, *Al-Burhān Fi 'Ulūm Al-Qur'an*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, 1957), 149; Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fi 'Ulūm Al-Qur'an*, vol. 4 (Beirut: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1974), 209.

⁴² Nabil Echchaibi, "Alt-Muslim: Muslims and Modernity's Discontents," in *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, ed. Heidi A. Campbell (London: Routledge, 2013), 192.

⁴³ Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, trans. Bernard Schutze and Caroline Schutze (New York: Semiotext(e), 1988), 31.

realm and realized as hyper-realistic material forms.⁴⁴ These macro-pictorial constructions and artificial lighting arrangements do not merely clarify the narrative; they shift the audience's focus from inner contemplation (*tadabbur*) to superficial sensory gratification. This transition marks the emergence of an autonomous cyber-religious space, where esoteric objects once beyond sensory perception are now mechanically simulated by artificial intelligence. Consequently, the visual splendor of AI-generated imagery has become the new authority that judges and dictates how audiences engage with the truth of the sacred text.

Previous studies have generally regarded religious visualizations on social media as supplementary pedagogical tools that simplify abstract sacred texts for broader audiences⁴⁵ or as a form of democratic negotiation of authority that expands religious dissemination without undermining revelation.⁴⁶ In contrast, this study reveals a more radical development. The use of generative AI on Instagram has moved beyond representing or facilitating textual meaning. It has entered a phase of substitution, in which the visual aesthetic morphology generated by AI no longer serves the text but constructs an autonomous hyperreal space that supplants the sacred text and independently defines the parameters of authentic cyber-religious experience.

The Implosion of Meaning in Generative AI Visual Schemes on Instagram: The Rhetoric of Empirical Jargon, Commodification, and the Autonomous Circulation of Digital Knowledge

The mediatization of sacred texts in the digital realm has led to the collapse of the categorical boundaries that once separated the authority of religious texts from the discourse of popular knowledge. On Instagram, this phenomenon manifests as an intensive fusion, where the theological messages of the Qur'an are mechanically embedded within popular scientific jargon and the attention-driven metrics of social media.⁴⁷ Driven by an information architecture that prioritizes rapid consumption, revelatory texts are no

⁴⁴ Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*, 118.

⁴⁵ Miftahur Rohman and Ifrohan Ifrohan, "Development of Visual Thinking-Based Fiqh Learning Strategies Using Digital Infographics to Improve Learning Outcomes," *Ananda: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Dan Remaja* 2, no. 1 (April 27, 2026): 10–21, <https://doi.org/10.63617/ajpar.v2i1.127>.

⁴⁶ Dimas Erlan Wijaya, Muhammad Nasor, and Ade Nur Istiani, "Desain Grafis Sebagai Media Dakwah Digital: Analisis Komunikasi Visual Pada Akun Instagram @uinradenintan [Graphic Design as a Digital Da'wah Medium: A Visual Communication Analysis of the Instagram Account @uinradenintan]," *J-IKA* 13, no. 1 (April 21, 2026): 60–68, <https://doi.org/10.31294/jika.v13i1.12615>.

⁴⁷ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 82.

longer treated as self-contained, esoteric guidance. Instead, they are transformed into engagement tools intertwined with digital calls to action.⁴⁸ This integration of secular empirical claims, AI-generated visualizations, and strategic prompts creates an autonomous cyber-knowledge ecosystem in which religious values dissolve into the logic of circulation and amplification.

This fusion is achieved through the heavy bombardment of scientific jargon without operational definitions or supporting evidence. The *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* content employs medical terms such as decubitus ulcer, necrosis, oxygen circulation, and cutaneous trunci muscle.⁴⁹ The mosquito post uses entomological terms including maxillae, mandibles, and hypopharynx.⁵⁰ The cow's milk post features biochemical terms like chyme, mammary glands, and nutrient filtration. The crow content incorporates ethological terms such as scavenger, feathered apes, and crow funeral.⁵¹ Finally, the Qur'an's frequency posts contain the highest density of neurophysiological terminology, including cymatics, placebo effect, alpha waves, vagus nerve, acetylcholine, molecular resonance, and heart BPM.⁵² All of this jargon is forcibly juxtaposed with excerpts from the Qur'an.

This accumulation of scientific terminology functions as a rhetorical device to create an illusion of academic credibility—an aura of competence—among lay audiences. The forced integration of sacred texts and secular empirical claims is clearly visible on the platform interface (see Figure 4).



⁴⁸ Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, 22.

⁴⁹ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Manusia Ditolak-Balik, Tapi Anjingnya Dibiarkan Diam?”

⁵⁰ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Kamu Kira Mulut Nyamuk Itu Jarum Suntik Biasa?”

⁵¹ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Minuman Bersih Ini Keluar Dari Tempat Paling Kotor?”

⁵² Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], “Hukum Fisika Gelombang Suara.”

Source: Instagram.com/abdullmaa

Figure 4. The Integration of Theological Messages with the Architecture of the Digital Economy

Figure 4 illustrates that popular scientific terms are presented as outcomes of cutting-edge laboratory experiments purportedly verifying the truth of the Qur'an. Notably, the @abdullmaa account does not provide citations from scientific journals, researchers, or academic institutions to support these claims. For example, the term "precision acoustic formula," used in the context of the Qur'an frequency content, is a one-sided assertion with no established precedent in conventional wave physics, thereby reversing the traditional approach of using empirical evidence to support faith.

Comment data further reveals that this content architecture is closely tied to commercial motives. The carousel posts consistently conclude with uniform calls to action (CTAs) directed at users, such as "Charge your body today,"⁵³ "The wisdom behind the black wings,"⁵⁴ or "Still dare to underestimate?"⁵⁵. Audiences are explicitly encouraged to like, share, save the infographic, and visit a link in the bio to purchase paid digital products. This pattern demonstrates that the production of scientific-religious interpretations on Instagram is not purely a form of da'wah. Instead, the theological messages of the Qur'an have been systematically commodified into digital products designed to generate financial profit for the account owners.

This intensive effort to merge secular empirical terminology with excerpts from the Qur'an reflects a fundamental epistemological collapse in the methodology of contemporary scientific exegesis (*al-tafsīr al-ʿilmī*). In the classical tradition of Qur'anic studies, any attempt to contextualize cosmic verses (*āyāt kawniyyah*) with scientific findings must be rigorously guided by philological tools, semantic consistency, and clear distinctions between the absolute theological realm (*qaṭʿī*) and the relative, hypothetical nature of scientific knowledge (*ẓannī*).⁵⁶ However, the radical decontextualization practiced by the @abdullmaa account reveals how social media's information architecture dissolves these methodological boundaries, producing only a fleeting illusion of cognitive proximity for the audience.⁵⁷ The collapse of these categorical boundaries undermines the authenticity of interpretation. The sacred text no longer functions as an independent

⁵³ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa].

⁵⁴ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], "Burung 'Sial' Yang Menjadi Guru Peradaban Manusia."

⁵⁵ Abdullah Maajid [@abdullmaa], "Kamu Kira Mulut Nyamuk Itu Jarum Suntik Biasa?"

⁵⁶ Al-Žahabī, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Mufasssīrūn*, 2:359.

⁵⁷ Hjarvard, "The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change."

authority that judges material phenomena; instead, it is absorbed and dissolved into a tool that validates secular signifiers circulating autonomously in cyberspace.

This implosive phenomenon persists due to the systemic demands of the cyber world, which erode textual boundaries to sustain rapid information flow. The accumulation of popular scientific terms attached to Qur'anic fragments on the @abdullmaa account gains acceptance because social media architecture prioritizes the simulation of competence over genuine methodological rigor.⁵⁸ Religious texts and secular empirical markers are forcibly merged not to illuminate one another but to generate instant, consumable knowledge that can be absorbed in seconds through digital prompts.⁵⁹ In this environment, Instagram no longer serves as a neutral medium for conveying meaning; It functions instead as a simulacrum machine that produces superficial cognitive satisfaction, conditioning audiences to validate religious truth not through the depth of the sacred text but through the density and intensity of sign circulation.

This forced fusion reveals a process of epistemological desacralization through the mechanization of interpretation in cyberspace. Behind a seemingly scientific interface, the blurring of boundaries between the sacred and the profane functions as a rhetorical strategy to project an “aura of competence” and elicit immediate audience engagement.⁶⁰ The accumulation of jargon is not intended to provide valid scientific proof but rather constitutes a systematic erosion of meaning, reducing the sacred text to a mere secular signifier.⁶¹ Through call-to-action prompts on the final carousel slide, the theological substance of the Qur'an undergoes referential paralysis: God's word is no longer received as a source of absolute doctrinal guidance but is dissolved into the autonomous, circular attention metrics of digital platforms.

This phenomenon represents a significant theoretical departure from earlier literature. Previous studies have generally viewed the integration of contemporary scientific language into cyber da'wah as a modernizing force that helps sacred texts adapt to the positivistic outlook of younger generations.⁶² Others have regarded digital calls to

⁵⁸ Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, 12.

⁵⁹ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure*, 6.

⁶⁰ Stewart M. Hoover, *Religion in the News: Faith and Journalism in American Public Discourse* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), 146.

⁶¹ Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*, 32.

⁶² Wael Hegazy and Reda Abdelgalil, “Digital Islamic Authority and Muslim Identity within the Western Context,” *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 27 (June 1, 2025): 171–79, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.27.2025.327>.

action as inclusive tools that encourage active participation in virtual religious communities.⁶³ In contrast, this study argues that the forced fusion of the Qur'an with popular scientific jargon on Instagram does not reinforce revelation in the face of modernity. Instead, it signifies a new phase of semantic dissolution, in which sacred texts are no longer merely negotiated but are absorbed into platform engagement parameters that autonomously shape the religious consciousness of cyber audiences.

Conclusion

The use of generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) in the visualizing sacred texts—often assumed to democratize religious knowledge—cannot be substantiated by the findings of this study. An in-depth analysis of the Instagram account @abdullmaa reveals that the integration of Gen-AI technology, combined with extensive use of popular scientific jargon, functions as a simulacrum machine. It enacts radical linguistic deconstruction and severs classical hermeneutical contexts. This study demonstrates that the Qur'anic text is no longer positioned as an absolute theological authority; rather, it has been reduced to a secondary signifier serving the logic of digital platform attention metrics. The findings indicate the emergence of generative hyperreality and the implosion of meaning. In this condition, the visual splendor of machine-generated aesthetics supplants the depth of textual contemplation (*tadabbur*) and becomes the new referent that autonomously shapes the religious consciousness of cyber audiences.

The combination of a netnographic approach with Jean Baudrillard's postmodern socio-semiotic analysis has proven highly effective in uncovering the subtle mechanisms of "masking reality" operating behind social media interfaces. This framework successfully reveals how platform affordances actively engineer new forms of religious authority by manipulating the audience's visual sensorium. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. It focuses on a single Instagram account and relies exclusively on manifest textual and visual data. These constraints open avenues for future research, such as quantitative analyses based on broader platform algorithm audits or experimental audience reception studies. Such approaches could measure shifts in theological cognition among digital communities exposed to AI-generated religious content across various social media platforms.

⁶³ Fouad Ahmed Atallah, "Digital Mediation and Fatwa Authority in Contemporary Islam: A Critical Islamic Legal and Media-Theoretical Framework," *Religions* 17, no. 3 (March 11, 2026): 350, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel17030350>.

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Data Availability Statement:

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.

Disclosure Statement:

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest. The research was conducted independently of any commercial or financial relationships with the media organizations or platforms analyzed in this study.

Ethical Approval:

Ethical approval was not required for this study as it relies entirely on the analysis of digital content that is within the public domain. Data was collected solely from public accounts on Instagram with unrestricted public access. The data collection process adhered to the platform's Terms of Service and API guidelines. To further ensure ethical standards and protect user privacy, any potentially identifiable information, such as user handles and specific metadata, has been anonymized in the final reporting.

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