

# Religious Tolerance in War Takjil Content on TikTok @eloardoaruanse: A Virtual Ethnographic Study

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#### **ABSTRACT**

#### Keywords

War Takjil; TikTok; religious tolerance; Ramadan; interfaith interaction; virtual ethnography; social media, Indonesia The "War Takjil" phenomenon, a viral trend during the Ramadan month in Indonesia, has become a powerful symbol of interfaith cooperation and tolerance, particularly among younger generations. This study investigates the role of TikTok in fostering religious tolerance during Ramadan 2024 by analyzing viral "War Takjil" content that promotes inclusivity and humor among different religious communities. Adopting a qualitative research approach, this study uses virtual ethnography to analyze TikTok videos and audience interactions, exploring how these videos communicate messages of unity and coexistence. Findings reveal that TikTok videos focusing on cross-religious participation in "War Takjil" use humor and shared traditions to break down barriers and create spaces for respectful dialogue. This study argues that TikTok, with its interactive and engaging format, is an effective platform for promoting religious tolerance, offering new insights into how digital media can foster social change and cultural understanding.

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia, with its rich cultural and religious diversity, is home to the world's largest Muslim population, as well as numerous other religious communities. Religious tolerance is one of the key pillars of social harmony in this pluralistic society. However, fostering interfaith unity remains a significant challenge, especially amid growing religious polarization. This issue is particularly pertinent during the Ramadan month, a time when Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, reflecting on their faith and community. Ramadan presents both a challenge and an opportunity for promoting religious tolerance, as the rituals and shared experiences of fasting and breaking the fast create potential for interfaith interactions.

Traditionally, Ramadan has been a time for Muslims to bond over shared rituals and practices. However, increasingly, other religious communities have shown interest in participating in Ramadan-related activities, leading to the emergence of interfaith interactions. One such phenomenon is the "War Takjil" trend, which has gained significant traction on TikTok. Originally a practice for Muslims to share food (takjil) to break their fast, War Takjil has evolved into a cross-religious tradition where individuals from different faiths engage in the practice of sharing food and participating in Ramadan-related activities.

"War Takjil" is a social phenomenon in Indonesia, particularly during the month of Ramadan, where the community has a tradition of serving and selling light snacks (takjil) as preparation for breaking the fast. Takjil refers to food or drinks consumed first during iftar, often consisting of dates, fruit ice, kolak, and various other traditional regional foods. This phenomenon not only serves as a culinary aspect but also reflects social interaction, cultural values, and economic aspects within society (Zakiyah & Rochim, 2024).

The month of Ramadan is a holy month for Muslims, involving fasting from dawn until sunset. The tradition of breaking the fast with takjil has deep historical roots, with the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) advising Muslims to break their fast with dates or water. This tradition emphasizes that Islam encourages ease and not hardship in the practice of worship (Prwairakusumah, 2024).

In the context of Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population, War Takjil has become a highly popular phenomenon. With the diversity of ethnicities, races, and cultures in Indonesia, the variety of takjil offered is also diverse, ranging from traditional creations to modern innovations (Sakina & Widyasari, 2023).

Beyond the economic aspect, War Takjil also serves as a means to strengthen social interaction among community members. When the fasting month arrives, especially during iftar, balconies, porches, and sidewalks in various places become gathering spots for people to share food. In this context, the moment of breaking the fast together provides an opportunity for families, friends, and neighbors to bond and strengthen their social relationships, while also reinforcing a sense of solidarity and unity in the community (Gantira, 2024).

War Takjil is not just about selling and consuming food to break the fast, but also represents the intertwining of culture, social interaction, and economic dynamics in Indonesian society. To this day, this practice remains relevant and an important part of the Ramadan tradition, which not only enriches the spiritual experience of Muslims but also has a positive impact on social and economic aspects. With the increasing development of technology and social media, War Takjil has the potential to innovate further in terms of presentation, marketing, and product diversification, which also presents a challenge for small and medium enterprises to continuously adapt and grow their businesses in the future (Lestari & Fauzi, 2023).

This research explores how TikTok has become a platform for fostering religious tolerance during Ramadan, specifically through viral videos centered around War Takjil. TikTok's popularity among the younger generation, combined with its interactive, user-generated content format, has created an unprecedented opportunity to reach a wide audience and promote positive social values, such as religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

While previous studies have explored interfaith dialogue in physical spaces, this research aims to explore how TikTok, a digital platform, can be used to foster religious tolerance by facilitating crossreligious participation and dialogue. The research will examine how humor, shared cultural practices, and online engagement can be leveraged to convey messages of unity, respect, and coexistence during Ramadan.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how TikTok's "War Takjil" phenomenon contributes to promoting religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue during Ramadan. Specifically, the study aims to analyze TikTok videos related to War Takjil, identifying how such content contributes to religious dialogue and cultural exchange among different religious communities.

To achieve these objectives, this study adopts a qualitative research approach, using virtual ethnography to examine interactions between content creators and TikTok users. This research will analyze TikTok videos, audience comments, and online engagement to uncover how digital platforms like TikTok can reshape religious narratives, promote tolerance, and foster better understanding across religious boundaries.

The findings of this research aim to provide new insights into how digital content, particularly on social media platforms, can bridge religious divides and offer a model for promoting inclusive social interactions. The research will demonstrate how TikTok, with its wide reach and interactive format, can serve as a tool for positive social change and religious unity in a diverse society.

This paper will proceed by examining the methodology used to analyze TikTok content, followed by a detailed discussion of the findings and their implications for promoting social cohesion in the digital era.

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## 2. Method

# Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is especially suited for exploring complex social phenomena that occur within digital environments. A qualitative approach is essential because it allows for an in-depth exploration of how TikTok users engage with content that promotes religious tolerance during Ramadan, providing insights into human behavior, meaning-making, and cultural exchanges in a digital space.

The goal of this research is not to generalize findings to the larger population but to understand the dynamics of interfaith interactions on TikTok during Ramadan. This approach enables a holistic understanding of the War Takjil phenomenon, capturing the social, cultural, and symbolic elements that help foster social cohesion across religious boundaries.

By focusing on the experiences and interactions of TikTok users, this approach offers a nuanced view of how humor, shared practices, and religious diversity come together in online content. It also helps identify the social dynamics and messages that emerge from the content and audience engagement.

# Virtual Ethnography

Virtual Ethnography, also known as Netnography, is a research method that combines the principles of traditional ethnography with digital observation techniques to understand social interactions within online communities. This method has gained popularity in the digital age, especially in analyzing social phenomena occurring on social media. Virtual ethnography allows researchers to analyze interactions, communication, and culture that develop in virtual spaces, where participation and communication occur differently than in physical settings (Zakiyah & Rochim, 2024;Prwairakusumah, 2024).

One application of virtual ethnography can be seen in research on fandoms, such as the study of K-Pop fans, specifically NCTzen, conducted on Twitter. This research shows how fans not only interact but also build a collective culture supporting their idols through collaborative actions such as streaming and voting (Zakiyah & Rochim, 2024;Sakina & Widyasari, 2023). Similarly, research on other communities, such as Betta fish enthusiasts on Facebook, reveals the norms and distinct identities that emerge through the use of certain terms in everyday interactions (Anwar & Nurhaliza, 2023). These studies demonstrate that virtual ethnography provides deep insights into how norms and culture are formed and maintained within online communities.

The methodology of virtual ethnography has also been adopted to understand the phenomenon of digital da'wah (religious preaching), where scholars and preachers use platforms like TikTok and Instagram to spread religious messages (Gantira, 2024; Lestari & Fauzi, 2023). Research examining the da'wah communication style of Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar on social media has shown how the appropriate use of language and message presentation can capture the attention of the younger generation, highlighting a significant shift in how da'wah is conducted in the digital age (Lestari & Fauzi, 2023). This indicates that virtual ethnography is not only relevant in the entertainment field but also in education and the dissemination of information (Sugianto & Abadi, 2024).

On the other hand, virtual ethnography also demonstrates its ability to analyze social impacts, as seen in studies of public opinion related to the Kanjuruhan Stadium tragedy on Twitter, where polarization of views in the digital space is clearly visible and offers insights into public responses (Rabathy et al., 2023) and social support in communities like "Rahasia Gadis," which depicts active participation in the virtual world (Husna et al., 2024). Through this method, researchers can capture the nuances of social interactions that may not be visible in traditional analyses.

Through various applications of virtual ethnography, it is clear how essential this method is in understanding various aspects of social life in the digital era, from fan interactions and da'wah communication to the existence of public opinion on social media. With the increasing use of digital platforms, virtual ethnography offers a promising new perspective for research in various fields, including communication, sociology, and cultural studies (Iskandar & Irawati, 2023; Sudiana & Sari, 2023).

This method is ideal for studying the War Takjil phenomenon on TikTok, as it allows for the examination of user-generated content such as videos, comments, likes, shares, and other forms of engagement. TikTok's format, which encourages user interaction and response, makes it a suitable platform for virtual ethnography. It enables researchers to observe how humor and shared cultural experiences are used to promote religious tolerance and create spaces for cross-religious communication.

In this study, virtual ethnography was used as the primary research method, which involved three key aspects: digital observation, participant observation, and content analysis. First, digital observation involved directly observing TikTok videos related to the "War Takjil" phenomenon and the interactions that followed, such as user comments, likes, shares, and views. This provided valuable insights into how audiences engaged with the content and its impact on promoting interfaith cooperation. Secondly, participant observation involved interacting with the TikTok community by commenting on videos and engaging with content creators, which helped gather further context on user motivations and how religious tolerance was perceived across different groups. Lastly, content analysis focused on examining the videos themselves, including their captions, cultural symbols, and humor used to convey messages of unity, inclusion, and interfaith dialogue, particularly exploring how shared cultural practices like breaking fast were used to bridge religious divides.

# 3. Result and Discussion

# 3.1. Presenting the Results

The following section presents the key findings of the research based on the analysis of TikTok videos related to the "War Takjil" phenomenon, and the interactions observed in the comment sections of those videos. The findings reveal significant insights into how TikTok serves as a platform for promoting religious tolerance during Ramadan 2024.

Konten	Interaksi Penggemar di Kolom Komentar	Element
"Baru kali ini minoritas menang melawan mayoritas"	alooyy ₩ walau kasian lihat temen yg gak kebagian takjil tapi aku bahagia ternyata rukun tak harus sejalan dulu duluan nyari takjil juga indah  3-14 Balas ♡ 1.749 ♀	Element [1]
"Serangan fajar dengan membagikan takjil gratis"	Hany salam damaipuji Tuhan kita semua saudarasaling berbagi apapun itu ivennyaseht sell kakaknya yg lg bagi bagigbu  3-21 Balas	Element [2]
"Lagi ngelece geng sebelah yang bukber nya wacana doang, Aku yg kristen, tapi hampir tiap hari ikut acara Bukber"	Maria Magdalena Benerr bangg,, yg puasa malah susah diajak bukbernya wkkwkw gue yg nonisss gasss terusss 😂 😂  3-28 Balas 💛 🖓	Element [3]
"Dapat bocoran, katanya yg merayakan kemenangan tetap umat Muslim, padahal kan skor akhir 10 – 3 lawan Non Is Ada yg bisa cari info kenapa wak?"	PT.BINTANGBATARA Non Is sudah menang Duluan BangPaskah hari Kemenangan kitasaudara muslim Merayakan Kemenangan Krn mereka puasa 1 bulan penuhgimana kira kira?   salam toleransi   4-5 Balas	Element [4]

Figure 1. Fan Interaction in the Comment Section

The analysis of TikTok videos demonstrated that the "War Takjil" trend encouraged cross-religious participation. In several viral videos, non-Muslims were shown participating in activities traditionally associated with Muslims, such as joining the takjil hunt (searching for food to break the fast). A particularly popular video, titled "Baru Kali Ini Minoritas Menang Melawan Mayoritas" [1] (For the First Time, Minorities Win Over the Majority), humorously depicted non-Muslims outperforming Muslims in finding takjil. This blending of humor and cultural participation

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emphasized the shared human experience of celebration and togetherness, transcending religious boundaries.

The audience feedback on TikTok was overwhelmingly positive, as seen through the comments, shares, and likes on the videos. For example, in the video titled "Serangan Fajar dengan Takjil Gratis" [2] (Dawn Attack with Free Takjil), viewers commented with phrases such as "Salam damai, puji Tuhan kita semua saudara" (Peace greetings, thank God we are all brothers), indicating the positive impact of these videos on religious solidarity. The comments suggested that the content resonated strongly across religious lines, fostering mutual respect and reinforcing social cohesion.

Humor played a crucial role in the engagement of War Takjil content. Many videos, like "Aku yang Kristen, Tapi Hampir Tiap Hari Ikut Bukber" [3][4] (I'm Christian, But I Join the Iftar Every Day), used humor to draw attention to the idea that religious differences could be set aside for shared activities, such as breaking the fast together. The humorous nature of these videos made them more relatable and shareable, allowing viewers to approach sensitive topics such as religion and cultural practices in a non-threatening way.

TikTok's format, with its short, interactive videos, proved to be an effective platform for spreading messages of religious tolerance. The algorithm allowed these videos to reach a large and diverse audience. With millions of views, likes, and shares, the videos were able to convey messages of unity and tolerance across a broad demographic. The platform's ease of use for sharing and commenting made TikTok a prime tool for promoting interfaith cooperation in the digital age.

#### 3.2. Create a Discussion

In the results above highlight several critical aspects of how TikTok serves as an effective platform for promoting religious tolerance through the War Takjil phenomenon during Ramadan. In this section, we discuss the implications of these findings and their broader impact.

Virtual ethnography is an invaluable tool in cultural studies, especially in the context of social media platforms such as TikTok, which strongly indicates intercultural interactions. TikTok, as a video-based platform, offers a unique space for users from diverse cultural backgrounds to creatively share their experiences, facilitating the exchange of ideas and traditions that were previously inaccessible (Kawashima, 2024).

One intriguing aspect of TikTok usage is how the platform functions as a space for users to build and express their cultural identities. In Japan, for example, TikTok has facilitated the formation of identity among ACGN (Anime, Comics, Games, Novels) fans through creative ways that combine traditional and contemporary cultural elements (Kawashima, 2024). The use of interactive TikTok features, such as challenges and collaborations, allows users to not only showcase their own culture but also interact with others, creating a bridge of communication that enriches intercultural understanding.

Furthermore, research indicates that TikTok allows users from different backgrounds to voice their perspectives and engage in cross-cultural discussions. In the context of language learning, users often employ TikTok content to practice vocabulary and foreign language phrases, stimulating deeper intercultural communication (Fenghua, 2023). In other words, TikTok serves not just as an entertainment platform but also as a space for learning and cultural development.

The cultural resonance that emerges through TikTok is also influenced by how users choose to blend their own cultural elements with external influences, creating a unique form of hybridization (Chen, 2024). In the context of Chinese culture, for instance, songs using TikTok as a communication platform have successfully crossed language and cultural boundaries, capturing international attention (Chen, 2024).

The "War Takjil" phenomenon in Indonesia can be interpreted as an example of cultural interaction driven by social media, particularly TikTok. Users of this platform create content that highlights local values and traditions while also drawing inspiration from global trends. This demonstrates the dynamics where local traditions and global influences interact, creating a form of intercultural communication (Al Harist & Lani, 2024).

Overall, TikTok as a platform provides a rich format for virtual ethnography exploration. Research in various contexts suggests that using TikTok for cultural expression and communication

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will not only enhance cultural awareness but also serve as a catalyst for dialogue and better understanding among diverse cultural communities (Mushaathoni, 2023; Mailin et al., 2023).

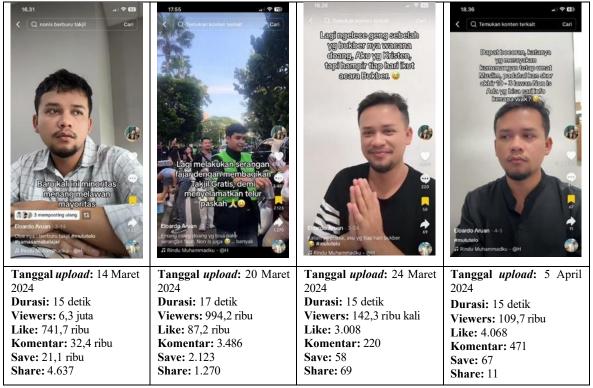


Figure 2. Social media engagement

One of the most significant findings of this study is the role of humor in bridging religious divides. Humor allows users to engage with sensitive topics like religious identity and cultural practices in a lighthearted, non-threatening manner. TikTok creators used humor to convey messages of unity, making religious tolerance more accessible, particularly for younger audiences. This aligns with Goffman's theory of social interaction, which emphasizes that humor can act as a powerful tool for reducing social tensions and fostering a shared social reality. The findings suggest that humor, when used appropriately, can break down traditional barriers and make religious discussions more engaging and inclusive. The use of humor in promoting religious tolerance was a crucial mechanism for creating safe spaces where religious differences were celebrated rather than feared. TikTok's format allowed users to share content that was both entertaining and educational, which significantly enhanced its appeal.

The War Takjil videos demonstrated the power of social media platforms like TikTok to foster interfaith cooperation. Traditionally, interfaith dialogue and cooperation occur in physical spaces, such as churches, mosques, and community centers. However, TikTok has allowed these interactions to occur in a digital space, providing a wider audience with the opportunity to participate in cross-religious activities. This finding underscores how TikTok's interactive format enables non-Muslims to participate in traditions that were once primarily reserved for Muslims. TikTok has shown that digital platforms can serve as virtual meeting grounds for celebrating shared cultural practices, creating spaces where religious differences can be bridged.

TikTok's ability to shape public opinion was evident in how War Takjil content was consumed and shared across a broad demographic. TikTok's viral nature allowed these videos to reach millions of users, making it an ideal tool for spreading positive messages of religious tolerance. By encouraging users to interact with content through comments, shares, and likes, TikTok fosters active participation, which helps influence the direction of the conversation. Social media platforms, like TikTok, thus have a dual role: they can perpetuate divisive narratives, but when used effectively, they can also promote unity and inclusivity. This study suggests that platforms like TikTok can be strategically harnessed to foster social harmony by promoting interfaith understanding.

The War Takjil phenomenon illustrates that religious tolerance does not always have to be discussed in abstract terms or through formal interfaith dialogues. Instead, it can also be enacted through shared actions, such as sharing food during Ramadan. This approach shifts the focus from theoretical discussions of tolerance to practical, real-world actions that can foster unity in diverse societies. The findings suggest that shared cultural practices, like breaking the fast together, provide a tangible way for people from different religious backgrounds to build understanding and form connections. The War Takjil trend exemplifies how even simple, everyday activities can create a sense of unity in a diverse society, contributing to social change in a meaningful way.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study explored the role of TikTok in fostering religious tolerance through the viral "War Takjil" phenomenon during Ramadan 2024. The findings demonstrate that TikTok, as a platform, has the potential to bridge religious divides by utilizing humor, shared cultural practices, and engaging content to create spaces for cross-religious participation and dialogue. The War Takjil trend, which encourages both Muslims and non-Muslims to engage in shared traditions, serves as a powerful example of how digital media can be leveraged to foster social cohesion and unity in a diverse society.

The research highlights that social media platforms like TikTok can be effective tools for promoting unity and religious tolerance. TikTok's interactive and participatory features allow for a broad, wide-reaching impact, especially among younger generations, who may otherwise be disconnected from more traditional forms of religious dialogue. By focusing on shared experiences, humor, and inclusivity, TikTok has emerged as a significant platform for positive social change. This study offers insights into how platforms like TikTok can contribute to bridging religious divides and promoting social harmony in a digital age.

# **Implications**

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for several key areas, particularly for social media platforms. This research underscores TikTok's effectiveness in promoting positive social change, showing that while social media is often criticized for amplifying polarization, platforms like TikTok can be harnessed to promote tolerance and social cohesion. Social media platforms provide a unique space where users from diverse backgrounds can interact, share experiences, and promote messages of unity. Content creators and social media companies should actively support the production and dissemination of content that encourages interfaith understanding, community-building, and inclusive messages. TikTok's interactive nature, where users can directly engage with content through likes, comments, and shares, positions it as an ideal platform for reaching large audiences and influencing social change. This model could serve as a guide for other social media platforms aiming to promote similar values of inclusivity, understanding, and solidarity.

The War Takjil phenomenon illustrates that religious and cultural practices can transcend their traditional boundaries when shared in a digital space. As social media becomes a central aspect of everyday life, traditional practices such as breaking the fast during Ramadan can evolve into interfaith activities that foster cross-religious participation. This research shows that religious tolerance can be promoted through simple, shared experiences, such as communal meals, which serve as vehicles for cross-cultural cooperation. By encouraging interfaith participation in these shared traditions, TikTok fosters a cultural shift where religious practices become a platform for building bridges, rather than reinforcing divisions. This suggests that religious practices in the digital era may not only serve spiritual or cultural purposes but can also act as tools for social change and inclusive cultural dialogue.

This study opens several avenues for future research in the domain of digital interfaith dialogue and the role of social media in promoting religious tolerance. Future research could explore how other social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, Facebook) contribute to interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance. Additionally, investigating the long-term effects of viral content that promotes interfaith cooperation and how these platforms influence real-world attitudes toward different religious communities would provide valuable insights. Analyzing the role of TikTok's algorithms in promoting specific content and how this can affect the reach of inclusive and tolerant

content across diverse demographic groups is another important area for future research. Lastly, examining the potential of social media influencers to amplify positive social messages, especially those that promote interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance, could help understand how influencers shape public discourse on these issues.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, the ability of social media to foster cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue is more important than ever. This study highlights the role of digital platforms in creating inclusive spaces for people of different religious and cultural backgrounds. The War Takjil phenomenon on TikTok demonstrates that shared cultural experiences, even in digital spaces, have the power to unite diverse communities and promote social change. By providing a platform for religious and cultural practices to coexist and be celebrated, TikTok exemplifies how digital communities can contribute to broader cultural understanding, extending beyond the limitations of geographic, social, and religious boundaries. This research suggests that social media platforms can play a critical role in fostering social harmony and promoting mutual understanding in increasingly diverse societies. Furthermore, this research illustrates that TikTok, as a digital platform, holds significant potential to foster religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue through shared cultural experiences like War Takjil. Through humor, inclusivity, and active engagement, TikTok serves as an ideal space for promoting social cohesion in a diverse, digital world. The findings of this study contribute to a growing body of literature on the role of digital media in shaping religious narratives and fostering social harmony, offering new avenues for future research and practical applications in promoting tolerance in the digital age.

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