

MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring Marketing Communication Strategies and Islamic Ethics in TikTok Live Streaming for Social Commerce

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ABSTRACT

This study explores marketing communication strategies and the application of Islamic ethics in TikTok live streaming within social commerce. As live streaming becomes a prominent promotional tool, understanding its ethical implications is essential, especially for Muslim entrepreneurs. This qualitative research employed semi-structured interviews with selected TikTok influencers and micro-entrepreneurs actively engaged in live selling. The findings reveal that effective marketing strategies on TikTok include real-time audience engagement, influencer credibility, scarcity-based promotions, and informal entertainment styles to build emotional connections. However, several practices conflict with Islamic ethical principles, particularly regarding truthfulness (*ṣidq*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), and respectful conduct (*adab*). Exaggerated product claims and misleading demonstrations were observed, potentially violating Islamic business ethics. The study concludes that while TikTok live streaming offers strategic advantages for social commerce, ethical compliance remains a challenge. It recommends increasing digital ethical literacy and developing Islamic marketing guidelines for practitioners. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how contemporary digital marketing can align with religious values in the evolving landscape of e-commerce.

Keywords: Social Commerce, Islamic ethics, TikTok Live, Marketing Communication, @Gmeelan.Official.Shop.

JEL Code: M31, Z12, L81, M14.

I. Introduction

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the marketing landscape, particularly with the emergence of social commerce as an effective marketing strategy (Alotaibi et al., 2019). Social commerce refers to commercial activities conducted through social media platforms, where interactions between sellers and buyers occur directly and in real-time (Arora et al., 2019; Lee & Chen, 2021). One platform that has increasingly been utilized for social commerce is TikTok Live Streaming. Initially recognized as a short-video sharing platform, TikTok has evolved into a powerful marketing tool that facilitates instant interaction between businesses and their consumers (Liu et al., 2022). The live-streaming format offers a more interactive shopping experience, allowing customers to ask questions, view products in

real-time, and make purchasing decisions based on direct responses from sellers' sections. In digital marketing, communication is crucial in building customer trust (Soedarsono et al., 2020). This trust can be fostered through effective communication strategies, responsive interactions, and transparency in conveying product information (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). In the digital era, customers are concerned with product quality and sellers' shopping experience (Safitri & Komaryatin, 2025). Therefore, an interactive, transparent, and customer-oriented communication strategy is key to enhancing customer loyalty in social commerce.

Despite the effectiveness of this marketing tool, concerns have emerged regarding the ethical dimensions of live selling, especially for Muslim entrepreneurs who must align their business practices with Islamic values. This creates a critical tension: how can marketing strategies designed to trigger impulsive buying coexist with the Islamic principles of honesty (*sidq*), trust (*amānah*), and ethical conduct (*adab*)? Previous studies have examined social commerce and digital marketing trends, yet limited attention has been paid to integrating Islamic ethics in the context of TikTok live selling. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research that investigates how these strategies are applied and perceived in practice, particularly within a Muslim consumer context.

This study addresses this gap by examining the marketing communication strategies employed in TikTok live streaming and evaluating their compatibility with Islamic ethical norms. The research aims to provide practical insights and contribute to a more ethical framework for social commerce in Muslim-majority markets by focusing on selected TikTok influencers and small-scale sellers. However, not all digital marketing strategies adhere to ethical principles (Anjum et al., 2020). Some businesses still employ misleading marketing techniques like clickbait, lack of transparency, and excessive persuasive strategy (dos Reis et al., 2022). In Islam, ethical communication is a fundamental aspect of business transactions. Principles such as honesty (*shidq*), transparency (*bayyanah*), and moral responsibility in trade are integral Islamic values that should be upheld in marketing activities. Thus, optimizing digital marketing through TikTok Live Streaming requires effective communication strategies and adherence to Islamic business ethics.

This study examines the TikTok business account @Gmeelan.Official.Shop as a case study to understand how marketing communication strategies are implemented in TikTok Live Streaming and how Islamic ethical communication principles can be integrated into digital marketing practices (Thaib, 2019). This account was selected due to its active use of TikTok Live as a marketing medium and its high level of audience engagement. This case study aims to analyze how @Gmeelan.Official.Shop's marketing communication fosters customer interaction and trust and how Islamic ethical communication principles are applied in its marketing strategies. Based on the background above, this study aims to address two main research questions: How are marketing communication strategies implemented in TikTok Live Streaming on the @Gmeelan.Official.Shop account to build customer interaction and trust? How are ethical communication principles from an Islamic perspective applied in TikTok Live Streaming-based social commerce strategies? This research is expected to provide both academic and practical contributions. Academically, it enhances understanding of the role of social commerce in digital marketing, mainly through the TikTok Live Streaming platform, and contributes to the development of studies on digital marketing communication and the application of Islamic ethical communication in marketing strategies. Furthermore, this study can serve as a reference for future research in social commerce based on Islamic principles. From a practical perspective, this research offers guidance for digital business practitioners on effective marketing communication strategies aligned with Islamic ethical principles. It helps business owners recognize the importance of honesty, transparency, and meaningful interactions in building customer trust through TikTok Live. Additionally, it provides recommendations for TikTok business account owners to enhance their marketing effectiveness by implementing more professional and ethical communication strategies.

This study presents a novel contribution that distinguishes it from previous research. Its primary focus is on TikTok Live Streaming marketing strategies, marketing communication aspects, and Islamic ethical communication principles within the social commerce context. The case study of @Gmeelan.Official.Shop provides real-world insights into how marketing communication is practiced in digital business. Moreover, this research adopts a qualitative approach with direct communication analysis in TikTok Live Streaming, a

topic that remains underexplored in previous studies. By linking modern digital marketing trends with Islamic values, this study offers a model for business practitioners who seek to operate by Islamic teachings (Suandi et al., 2023). Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to academics, digital business practitioners, and the broader community by deepening the understanding of how ethical, Islam-based marketing communication can be optimized in social commerce through TikTok Live Streaming.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Social commerce is a digital marketing concept that integrates social interaction with business transactions, enabling customers to engage in a more interactive shopping experience (Zhao et al., 2023). The rapid development of social commerce has been driven by platforms such as TikTok, which allows users to conduct live streaming to promote their products. TikTok Live Streaming facilitates two-way communication between sellers and buyers, where customers can ask questions and receive immediate responses, ultimately enhancing customer trust and engagement in the purchasing process.

Effective marketing communication is pivotal in building and maintaining relationships between brands and customers. Keller (2009) argues that successful marketing communication should incorporate clear, interactive, and persuasive strategies to enhance customer engagement and foster brand loyalty. The emergence of live-streaming commerce—a synthesis of e-commerce and real-time interaction between hosts and audiences—has redefined how brands engage with their consumers (Jamirul, 2021). In this context, interactive communication is a delivery tool and a relational strategy that fosters intimacy, immersion, and emotional connection during the shopping experience.

Live streaming offers strategic advantages compared to traditional marketing, particularly fostering deeper interaction. Through features such as live product demonstrations, real-time Q&A sessions, and instant feedback via comments or polls, live-streaming commerce enables customers to participate actively in decision-making (Lee & Chen, 2021). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) by Allison et al., (2017) supports this by explaining how customers are persuaded either through the central route—focusing on content and logic—or the peripheral route—driven by visual aesthetics, emotions, or the presenter's credibility (Rahmi et al., 2024). This dual perspective allows businesses to appeal to a broader audience, accommodating different levels of customer involvement.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics in live commerce enhance marketing communication's precision. Personalized recommendations, tailored messaging, and content segmentation allow sellers to address customer needs more effectively, thus increasing conversion rates and customer satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2022). This demonstrates how digital tools amplify message delivery and optimize the user experience within live-streaming environments. While these developments highlight the functional strength of social commerce, they raise critical questions regarding ethical conduct, particularly when the marketing environment becomes highly persuasive and emotionally driven. The current study seeks to bridge this gap by integrating ethical considerations rooted in Islamic marketing principles. In Islam, marketing communication must adhere to core values such as honesty (*ṣidq*), transparency (*bayān*), and trustworthiness (*amānah*) (Komala, 2020b). Islam strictly prohibits unethical practices such as *gharar* (excessive uncertainty), hoarding (*iḥtikār*), and deceptive advertising that may mislead consumers or cause harm (Nasution et al., 2021).

Recent research has begun to explore the intersection of digital business and Islamic ethics. For instance, Indriana et al. (2023) emphasize that applying Islamic ethical principles in online commerce improves business sustainability and strengthens consumer trust. Saputra et al (2022) found that integrating sharia-compliant communication enhances loyalty and brings spiritual value (*barakah*) to transactions. However, few studies have examined how these values can be systematically embedded in modern live-streaming practices, especially on platforms like TikTok.

This study contributes to filling that research gap by analyzing how live-streaming-based marketing communication can be aligned with Islamic ethical standards. Using @Gmeelan.Official.Shop as a case study,

the research builds upon prior frameworks and extends the literature by showing how ethical marketing principles can be actualized in real-time digital commerce. Furthermore, the findings are expected to offer practical implications for Muslim business practitioners seeking to adopt ethically responsible strategies in social commerce.

III. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach to explore marketing communication strategies in TikTok Live Streaming and their alignment with Islamic ethical communication principles. These principles—*ṣidq* (truthfulness), *bayān* (transparency), and *amānah* (trustworthiness)—emphasize honesty, clarity, and responsibility in delivering information during business transactions. The focus is on the TikTok account @Gmeelan.Official.Shop, chosen through purposive sampling based on its consistent live-streaming activities and strong audience engagement.

Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and content analysis. Observations were conducted by attending and documenting live sessions over one month. In-depth interviews involved two marketing team members and five customers, selected using criterion-based purposive sampling to ensure relevant experience and active participation. Content analysis included reviewing recorded videos, audience comments, and metrics such as viewer count and likes to assess communication strategies and audience reactions.

Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-step framework: familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, definition, and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data were interpreted based on social commerce theory and Islamic ethical communication values. This allowed the identification of key communication patterns, marketing effectiveness, and alignment with moral principles in the digital marketplace. This methodology aligns with a constructivist paradigm, emphasizing meaning-making in specific social contexts. It contributes academically by integrating ethical Islamic values into digital marketing discourse and practically by offering insights for business practitioners on ethical communication practices in live commerce. The findings aim to guide Muslim entrepreneurs and digital marketers in enhancing customer trust and engagement while maintaining integrity in the TikTok Live Streaming environment.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. TikTok Live @Gmeelan.Official.Shop Marketing Communication Strategy

The marketing communication strategy implemented in TikTok Live @Gmeelan.Official.Shop prioritizes interactivity as the key element in attracting and retaining audiences (Septriyanti et al., 2023). Interviews with hosts reveal that persuasive language, real-time responses, and direct product demonstrations are routinely used to foster engagement. One host explained that they aim to create an engaging atmosphere by individually greeting customers, answering questions live, and offering limited-time deals. One host stated:

"We always strive to create an engaging live atmosphere by greeting customers individually, answering their questions in real-time, and offering exclusive deals available only during the live session."

This aligns with Duncan and Moriarty's (1998) interactive marketing communication theory, highlighting that two-way interaction increases consumer trust and purchase intention. Compared to traditional one-way advertising, this live and conversational format generates stronger emotional connections with customers. In social commerce, the communication strategy also emphasizes leveraging TikTok Live features to build a loyal community. The marketing team at @Gmeelan.Official.Shop revealed that

they utilize features such as pinned comments, polls, and flash sales to boost interaction and create a sense of urgency for purchases. One customer stated:

"I enjoy joining their live sessions because there are always special discounts I cannot get outside the live stream. Plus, I can ask questions about the products before purchasing."

This finding reinforces social commerce theory, which suggests that real-time social interactions on digital platforms enhance the shopping experience and foster deeper customer engagement. TikTok Live features such as pinned comments, polls, and flash sales further enhance interactivity by encouraging viewer participation and creating urgency. Customers confirm that these features make the shopping experience more compelling and exclusive. This supports the view in social commerce theory that live interaction enhances the shopping experience and the perceived authenticity of brand communication. However, unlike general findings in the literature, this study finds that urgency-based features such as flash sales are especially effective in driving immediate purchases in the TikTok environment, highlighting a context-specific nuance that may not have been fully captured in previous research (Panopoulos et al., 2023). During live sessions, hosts do not merely promote products but also share stories about their benefits based on personal experiences or customer testimonials. This approach has proven effective in building emotional connections with audiences, as confirmed by a customer who stated:

"They often read reviews from previous buyers, making me feel more confident trying the product."

This strategy aligns with narrative-based marketing communication, where storytelling delivers information more effectively, captures attention, and improves consumer recall than traditional advertisements (Sarjono et al., 2025). Regarding visual presentation and product display, TikTok Live @Gmeelan.Official.Shop optimizes dynamic visuals, professional lighting, and appealing camera angles. The marketing team explained that each live session is strategically designed with a pre-planned script and rundown to ensure an optimal viewing experience. A member of the marketing team stated:

"We always make sure the product is visible, use good lighting, and present detailed product demonstrations so that customers feel as if they are seeing the product in person."

Using visual elements—professional lighting, strategic angles, and clean product displays—reinforces visual communication theory, which holds that compelling imagery enhances message retention and appeal (Baldwin & Roberts, 2006). Each live session is executed with a clear script and visual plan, ensuring consistent presentation quality. Influencer collaborations serve to boost credibility. Customers report increased interest when live sessions involve familiar figures, which is consistent with endorsement marketing theory. Beyond transactional goals, the team maintains a CRM database of loyal viewers and offers incentives, demonstrating long-term relationship strategies.

One customer noted increased confidence after hearing previous buyers' experiences read aloud during the live stream. While the literature widely acknowledges storytelling's persuasive power, this case demonstrates how real-time narrative delivery amplifies its impact, particularly in short-form live content environments like TikTok. A more robust future analysis using quantitative metrics such as engagement spikes during storytelling segments would strengthen this claim further. One customer mentioned:

"I was initially interested because I saw my favorite influencer participating in the live session, which made me more confident that the product was genuinely good."

Storytelling and user-generated content (UGC) also emerge as pivotal components of the strategy. Hosts often integrate personal narratives or customer testimonials during product promotion, creating a relatable and trustworthy atmosphere. This confirms the effectiveness of narrative-based marketing in improving audience recall and emotional involvement (Cartwright et al., 2022).

Implementing direct interaction-based marketing communication in TikTok Live has also positively fostered long-term customer relationships. The marketing team noted that they maintain a database of loyal customers who frequently participate in live sessions and actively offer special incentives such as vouchers and exclusive gifts. These findings support Syabania and Rosmawani's (2021) conclusion that live commerce can deepen customer loyalty when paired with personalized engagement. This study shows that successful live-streaming marketing relies on product appeal and real-time, relational, and strategically integrated communication practices that reflect theoretical insights and evolving digital behavior.

The marketing communication strategy applied in TikTok Live @Gmeelan.Official.Shop demonstrates a synergy between social commerce theory and interactive marketing communication. By utilizing real-time features, storytelling, compelling visuals, and influencer collaborations, this strategy successfully creates a more engaging shopping experience and effectively builds customer trust. These findings confirm that the success of live-streaming commerce is not solely dependent on the products offered but also on the communication strategies and interactions implemented during each live session (Li et al., 2020)

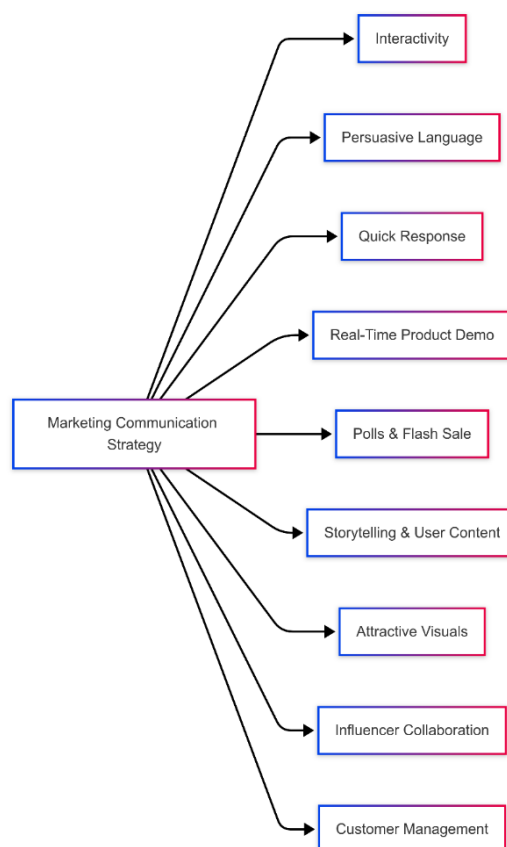


Figure 1. TikTok Live @Gmeelan.Official Marketing Communication Strategy

4.2. TikTok Live @Gmeelan.Official.Shop Marketing Communication Strategy

The ethical principles of Islamic communication—honesty (*ṣidq*), transparency (*bayān*), and justice (*ʿadl*)—serve as foundational values in digital marketing practices, including TikTok Live Commerce (Solekhan, 2023). Hosts from @Gmeelan.Official.Shop emphasized the importance of truthful product representation, avoiding exaggeration to increase sales.

"We always try to explain the products as they are, including showing their strengths and weaknesses. This is not just about customer trust, but also our moral responsibility."

This aligns with Abbas et al. (Abbas et al., 2020), who assert that *ṣidq* is a cornerstone of ethical marketing and leads to sustainable trust. Compared to findings in broader e-commerce studies, where promotional exaggeration is often tolerated, this case highlights a counter-model rooted in Islamic integrity. However, this ethical approach would be stronger if supported by customer retention or satisfaction data to illustrate its long-term impact quantitatively (Razak et al., 2024).

From a social commerce perspective, transparency in marketing communication is a key element in building customer trust. The marketing team at @Gmeelan.Official.Shop emphasized that they actively use features like close-up cameras and live product testing to ensure customers can see the product details in real-time before making a purchase.

"We always show the products in various lighting conditions and display the materials directly to avoid misunderstanding."

Statement from a member of the marketing team. This reflects the principle of *bayān*, where openness in conveying information aims to avoid *gharar* (uncertainty) in transactions. Courteous communication and a focus on benefit (*maslahah*) are crucial aspects of TikTok Live Commerce based on Islamic ethics. Based on live-streaming observations, the hosts consistently use polite language, greet customers respectfully, and do not pressure them to buy. One customer shared:

"I feel comfortable watching their live sessions because there is no pressure to purchase. They only make recommendations based on my needs."

This approach aligns with the concept of *tablīgh* in Islamic marketing communication, which emphasizes conveying messages with wisdom and in a reasonable manner (QS. An-Nahl: 125). The communication strategy also considers the value of justice (*ʿadl*) in customer interactions. The marketing team said they implement a fair pricing system and transparent promotions without misleading practices.

"We do not raise prices before discounts or make exaggerated promises. All the promotions we offer align with the product's value."

Trust (*amānah*) is also a key part of the communication strategy in TikTok Live Commerce. One customer mentioned that they chose to shop from this account because of its trusted reputation.

"I have bought products elsewhere, only to find that they differed from what was shown in the live session. However, here, the items I receive are always as described."

This trust is a fundamental element in Islamic marketing communication, where *amānah* in conveying information is the foundation for building long-term customer relationships. From a social commerce perspective, the values of *taʾawun* (mutual help) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) are also applied through interactions that foster a sense of togetherness. The marketing team mentioned that they often assist customers in selecting products that best meet their needs, even if it means recommending lower-priced items.

"We prioritize customer satisfaction over merely selling products. If they are happy, they will come back,"

One of the hosts said this approach aligns with the concept of relationship marketing in Islamic marketing, which emphasizes long-term relationships based on mutual trust and benefit. Values such as justice (*ʿadl*), trust (*amānah*), and mutual care (*taʾāwun*) also shape the communication style. The team maintains consistent pricing, avoids manipulative discounting, and often recommends lower-priced products based on customer needs. These actions promote long-term relationships and reflect relationship marketing within an Islamic framework (Komala, 2020a). Practices such as opening sessions with *Duʿāa* and reminding customers to shop wisely illustrate the application of *mīzān* (balance), reinforcing Islamic consumption ethics. Overall, this study shows that TikTok Live Commerce guided by Islamic communication values offers a competitive strategy and a spiritually grounded and socially responsible model. However, its broader applicability would benefit from further comparative or quantitative analysis.

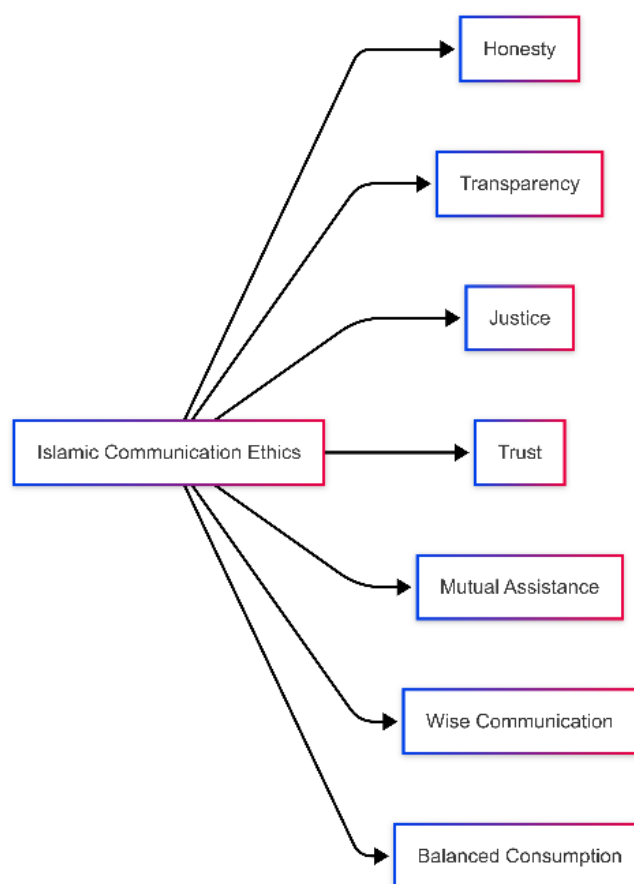


Figure 2. Islamic Communication Ethics in TikTok Live Commerce

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the marketing communication strategy of TikTok Live @Gmeelan.Official.Shop effectively enhances customer engagement and trust. Real-time interaction, ethically persuasive language, and honest product demonstrations allow customers to make informed decisions. Using platform features like pinned comments, polls, and flash sales creates urgency and interactivity, while storytelling and user-generated content foster emotional attachment. These outcomes align with interactive marketing communication and social commerce theory principles. However, future studies could benefit from quantifying engagement metrics such as viewer retention or conversion rates to validate the impact more precisely.

This study also demonstrates that Islamic communication ethics—namely *ṣidq* (honesty), *bayān* (transparency), and *ʿadl* (justice)—can be effectively integrated into digital marketing. These values are evident in the brand's commitment to product clarity, courteous engagement, and fair pricing without manipulation. The consistent application of *amānah* (trust) and *taʿāwun* (mutual support) further reflects a consumer-centric approach that prioritizes long-term relationships over short-term gains. The findings suggest that live-streaming commerce, when guided by ethical communication rooted in Islamic principles, not only supports effective marketing but also builds a responsible and sustainable trading environment. This challenges the dominant narrative that digital commerce must rely on urgency or persuasion alone and offers a model that balances performance with ethical integrity. Future research should explore comparative case studies across different cultural or religious contexts to assess how communication ethics influence customer behavior in live-streaming commerce. Employing mixed-method approaches—such as combining in-depth interviews with quantitative analysis of sales patterns—could provide deeper insight into the measurable impact of ethical communication strategies on consumer loyalty and brand equity.

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