



Operationalizing Hadith in Digital Ta'aruf: A Living Hadith Study of TikTok @taarufmenikah

Muhammad Asgar Muzakki

Institut Daarul Qur'an Jakarta

Email: asgarmuzakki@gmail.com

Abstract. This study examines the function of hadith in digital ta'aruf practices facilitated by the TikTok account @taarufmenikah. Using a living hadith approach, the research analyzes 36 TikTok posts containing hadith or Qur'anic references and is supported by interviews with practitioners of online and offline ta'aruf conducted through snowball sampling. The findings indicate that the cited texts originate from authoritative sources with acceptable levels of authenticity but are presented in simplified and decontextualized forms adapted to TikTok's short-video format. In this context, hadith functions as normative legitimization, motivational encouragement, pragmatic guidance, and interpretive simplification, while its authority is shaped less by traditional religious figures and more by platform visibility and repetition, reflecting a form of algorithmic authority. The study concludes that digital ta'aruf reshapes the relationship between religious texts, authority, and user practices, illustrating a contemporary form of living hadith in social media spaces.

Keywords: digital ta'aruf; algorithmic authority; online matchmaking

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji fungsi hadis dalam praktik ta'aruf digital yang difasilitasi oleh akun TikTok @taarufmenikah. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan living hadis, penelitian ini menganalisis 36 unggahan TikTok yang memuat kutipan hadis atau ayat Al-Qur'an serta didukung oleh wawancara dengan praktisi ta'aruf daring dan luring yang dikumpulkan melalui teknik snowball sampling. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teks-teks yang dikutip berasal dari sumber otoritatif dengan tingkat kesabihan yang dapat diterima, namun disajikan dalam bentuk yang disederhanakan dan terlepas dari konteks klasik agar sesuai dengan format video singkat TikTok. Dalam konteks ini, hadis berfungsi sebagai legitimasi normatif, penguatan motivasi, panduan pragmatis, dan penyederhanaan makna, sementara otoritasnya dibentuk tidak lagi oleh figur keagamaan tradisional, melainkan oleh visibilitas dan repetisi platform, yang mencerminkan bentuk *algorithmic authority*. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa praktik ta'aruf digital membentuk ulang relasi antara teks keagamaan, otoritas, dan praktik pengguna, serta merepresentasikan bentuk living hadis kontemporer di ruang media sosial.

Kata kunci: ta'aruf digital; otoritas algoritmik; perjodohan online.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the practice of *ta'aruf* has undergone a significant transformation. Traditionally, *ta'aruf* functioned as a private and mediated process of introduction, involving family members, religious mentors, or trusted community figures who supervised communication and ensured ethical boundaries. In recent years, however, this practice has increasingly shifted into digital spaces, particularly social media platforms. Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as a prominent arena due to its algorithmic structure, short-video format, and dominance among younger users (Kusumawati & Sitika, 2024). As a result, religious guidance related to marriage—including Qur'anic verses and hadith—circulates not through formal instruction, but through repetitive, visually engaging, and highly consumable content.

This transformation occurs alongside broader generational anxieties toward marriage. Studies show that narratives such as “*marriage is scary*” have gained traction among young Muslims, reflecting fears related to emotional vulnerability, economic insecurity, and negative relationship representations in digital media (Sulfinadia dkk., 2025). Within this context, digital *ta'aruf* content offers a counter-narrative that frames marriage as manageable and religiously meaningful when approached through structured ethical guidance. Social media thus becomes not merely a communication tool, but a space where religious norms surrounding pre-marital interaction are negotiated and rearticulated.

Although *ta'aruf* in digital form is often perceived as a recent innovation, online and semi-online Islamic matchmaking platforms existed prior to TikTok's rise. Platforms such as MUZZ, Mawaddah, and Rumah Ta'aruf have long provided structured systems grounded in explicit religious authority and institutional oversight (Ishak Tri Nugroho, 2021; Maulana, 2025). These platforms typically rely on recognized religious figures or organizations to establish legitimacy and regulate interaction. In contrast, TikTok-based *ta'aruf* operates within a media environment characterized by informality, speed, and entertainment-oriented culture, raising questions about how religious authority is produced and sustained in such settings.

Previous studies on *ta'aruf* can be categorized into three main strands. First, psychological research emphasizes marital satisfaction, emotional

readiness, and partner compatibility among couples who undergo *ta'aruf* (Kurnia dkk., 2021; Mas'udah & Yoenanto, 2023; Rosita & Indriana, 2014). Second, communication studies examine patterns of interpersonal interaction, self-disclosure, and value negotiation during the *ta'aruf* process, both offline and online (Samhati, 2020; Supratman & Mardianti, 2016). Rakhmawati (2013), for instance, demonstrates that self-disclosure in *ta'aruf* is selective and context-dependent, shaped by norms of propriety and perceived religious responsibility. Third, fiqh-oriented studies focus on normative procedures of *ta'aruf*, such as *naẓar*, communication ethics, and interaction boundaries, often emphasizing ideal models derived from classical jurisprudence (Hakim, 2014; Kamaluddin, 2022; Syifa, 2025).

More recent scholarship has begun to explore online *ta'aruf* platforms, particularly those managed by well-known religious figures or institutions. Studies on platforms such as Rumaysho highlight how hierarchical religious authority and the presence of recognized ustadz play a central role in legitimizing digital matchmaking practices (Jayadimuda, 2024; Maymun, 2025). However, these studies tend to assume that religious authority must be attached to identifiable scholars or formal institutions, leaving less attention to platforms that operate without such figures.

This gap becomes evident in the case of the TikTok account @taarufmenikah. Unlike institutionally managed platforms, this account facilitates *ta'aruf* without a publicly identifiable religious authority. Instead, it relies on short-form TikTok content and administrative coordination via WhatsApp to guide users through the process. Qur'anic verses and hadith are selectively cited and simplified to legitimize procedures, motivate participants, and provide pragmatic guidance. In this context, religious authority is not derived from scholarly credentials, but from platform visibility, content repetition, and user trust—an arrangement that reflects what scholars describe as algorithmic authority (Lustig dkk., 2016; Muttaqin, 2024).

The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of digital *ta'aruf* as a form of living hadith shaped by algorithmic mediation. Rather than evaluating whether digital *ta'aruf* conforms to ideal juridical models, this research examines how hadith functions in practice: how it is cited, transformed, and operationalized within a social media environment that lacks conventional

religious hierarchies. By focusing on TikTok-based *ta'aruf*, this study extends living hadith scholarship into the domain of short-video culture and contemporary digital religiosity (Ahmad Ubaydi Hasbillah, 2019; Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, 2016).

Accordingly, this study focuses on examining how Qur'anic verses and hadith are selected, simplified, and presented within the @*taarufmenikah* TikTok content, as well as the functions these texts serve in legitimizing, motivating, and operationalizing digital *ta'aruf* practices. It further explores how religious authority is constructed and negotiated in a platform environment that operates without identifiable religious figures, where visibility, repetition, and user engagement play a central role in shaping trust and legitimacy.

Methodologically, this research employs a living hadith approach, emphasizing how prophetic traditions are enacted and negotiated within contemporary social practices. Data were collected through content analysis of 36 TikTok posts containing hadith or Qur'anic references, complemented by interviews with practitioners of both online and offline *ta'aruf*. Informants were recruited using snowball sampling to capture diverse experiences embedded in natural social networks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, *living hadith* is employed not to assess the normative validity of prophetic traditions, but to examine how hadith operates, is enacted, and acquires meaning within lived social practices. As formulated by Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy (Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, 2016), living hadith focuses on the reception and manifestation of hadith in everyday Muslim life, where prophetic traditions function beyond textual transmission and become embedded in social behavior, rituals, and communal norms. This approach shifts the analytical focus from questions of sanad and classical interpretation toward the ways hadith is practiced, negotiated, and made relevant in specific socio-cultural contexts. Accordingly, hadith is understood here as a dynamic reference that interacts with social structures, media environments, and user needs.

Complementing this perspective, Ahmad Ubaydi Hasbillah emphasizes that living hadith research pays close attention to the transformation of

hadith authority in contemporary settings, particularly when prophetic traditions are mediated through modern institutions and technologies. Rather than treating deviations from classical formulations as distortions, this framework views such changes as forms of contextual adaptation shaped by historical conditions, social expectations, and practical demands (Ahmad Ubaydi Hasbillah, 2019). In the context of digital ta'aruf on TikTok, this study applies the living hadith approach to analyze how hadith is selectively cited, simplified, and operationalized within a platform-driven environment, allowing prophetic traditions to function as moral guidance, motivation, and legitimizing reference under conditions of algorithmic visibility rather than formal religious authority.

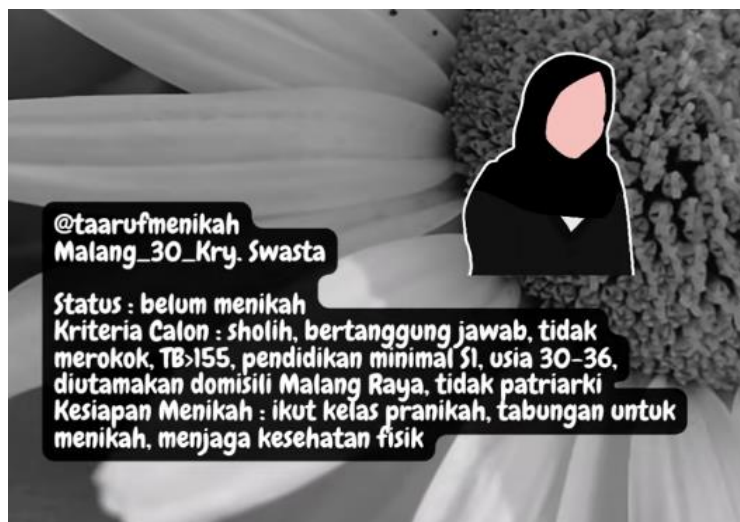
Digital Ta'aruf Practices on the TikTok Account @taarufmenikah

Picture 1. Platform Profile Overview



The TikTok account @taarufmenikah stands out as a digital space consistently dedicated to matchmaking through the ta'aruf method, operating within an ecosystem otherwise dominated by entertainment-driven content. According to publicly available analytics (Kalodata & Exolyt), the account has over 100,000 followers, 1.3 million likes, and approximately 3,800 uploaded videos. This large volume of output indicates that the account functions much like an active matchmaking hub, with a high posting frequency and a stable rhythm of content production.

Picture 2. Standardized Ta'aruf Profile



The videos published on the account are largely dominated by short CV-style introductions created by users who wish to seek a spouse through the ta'aruf process. Each video typically presents basic personal information such as name, age, occupation, domicile, marital status, preferred partner criteria, and a statement regarding readiness for marriage. The format is highly standardized: aesthetic backgrounds (sunsets, cherry blossoms, clouds, serene nature scenes), faceless avatars, and neatly arranged text descriptions. The absence of actual photos is consistent with ta'aruf ethics, which emphasize modesty and privacy.

Picture 3. Normative Ta'aruf Advice



In addition to posting user CVs, the admin occasionally includes motivational content, practical ta'aruf tips, and short informational posts containing Qur'anic verses or hadiths related to marriage. The delivery style is semi-formal—often beginning with phrases like “*Did you know...*” or light conversational openers familiar to social media culture. This helps educational content remain accessible and relatable to younger audiences without sounding overly didactic.

Based on content analysis and information provided by an informant who personally underwent the *ta'aruf* process through this service, a relatively consistent procedural pattern can be identified. The process typically begins on TikTok, where a user interested in a candidate contacts the admin via the WhatsApp number listed in the account profile. After being informed of an administrative fee of approximately IDR 100,000, the user is directed to join a designated WhatsApp group managed by the service. This transition from TikTok to WhatsApp marks a key stage of verification and coordination, during which participants are required to complete a detailed biodata form that extends beyond the brief CV displayed in the videos.

The biodata includes personal, familial, and religious information, as well as preferences regarding marriage timelines and spouse criteria. Participants are also asked to specify their expectations for an ideal partner, covering aspects such as age range, marital status, education, occupation, religious orientation, and domicile. Once this administrative process is completed, the candidate initially identified on TikTok is prioritized for matching, while alternative options may be proposed from the broader participant database if necessary. This procedure illustrates how @taarufmenikah combines the accessibility of TikTok with a more structured and standardized screening process behind the scenes.

Overall, this pattern underscores how traditional ta'aruf culture—typically involving family mediation, direct intermediaries, and structured introductions—has been transformed into a digital format that is more systematic, documented, and standardized. Despite operating through a fluid social media platform like TikTok, the underlying process still retains elements of formality and caution characteristic of conventional ta'aruf practices—similar to earlier offline marriage bureaus before the rise of social

media (Surur dkk., 2024). The difference, however, is that the digital service does not possess any formal religious or communal authority; it functions merely as a facilitator that connects participants, without exercising hierarchical roles such as advisers or gatekeepers.

In traditional offline *ta'aruf* practices, the introduction process typically unfolds through recommendations from individuals who possess close spiritual or social ties to the prospective participants. These figures may include a *murabbi* (a religious mentor responsible for spiritual guidance and moral supervision), a *musyrif* (a supervisor who oversees interpersonal interaction), religious mentors, community elders, parents, or other trusted intermediaries (Samhati, 2020). Their role extends beyond merely introducing candidates; they accompany the entire process of information exchange, including biodata review, preliminary discussions, and conversations concerning marriage readiness. This form of accompaniment functions as an ethical safeguard, ensuring that interaction remains within Islamic norms by preventing *khalwat*, minimizing potential *fitna*, and maintaining appropriate decorum (Hildawati & Lestari, 2019; Supratman & Mardianti, 2016).

In the case of @taarufmenikah, this element of accompaniment is retained but significantly transformed. Rather than operating through direct interpersonal mediation, guidance is largely conducted through a dedicated WhatsApp group used for administrative coordination and initial communication. The admin facilitates biodata exchange, regulates the flow of interaction, and provides general reminders, but does not engage in sustained relational supervision. Once the candidates agree to meet offline, the admin's role is limited to granting procedural permission and advising the presence of a family companion. Compared to other sharia-compliant matchmaking platforms—such as Mawaddah or Rumah Ta'aruf—which are often overseen by identifiable religious figures or marriage counselors, @taarufmenikah operates without transparent religious authority, relying instead on administrative supervision rather than formal religious mediation.

The admin of @taarufmenikah remains entirely anonymous. Although several participants—including the informant of this study—casually refer to the admin as an “ustadz,” there is no publicly available information indicating that the admin possesses formal religious credentials. This absence of an identifiable authoritative figure reinforces the informal and non-hierarchical

character of the platform, distinguishing it from community-based *ta'aruf* practices that rely on recognized religious mediation.

Within this context, Islamic norms are maintained not through direct religious instruction or personal authority, but through technical and procedural mechanisms, such as communication limits, the use of group chats, and general reminders regarding appropriate conduct during meetings.

Identification of Hadiths and Qur'anic Verses Used in @taarufmenikah Content

Within the TikTok playlist titled “*Seputar Ta'aruf*”, the admin produces bite-sized content containing motivational messages, ethical guidelines, and practical advice related to the *ta'aruf* process. Not all videos cite scriptural sources; many deliver general tips (e.g., asking for clarity from a potential match or *ta'aruf* tips for introverts). However, based on the researcher’s curation, several hadiths and Qur’anic verses appear consistently in the content. They can be categorized as follows:

Table 1. Textual Overview

No.	Textual Reference	Source	Theme/Topic
1	“Look at her, for that is more likely to create affection between you.”	At-Tirmizi, no. 1087, vol. 3, p. 389, an-Nasa’i, no. 3235, vol. 6, p. 69	<i>Nazar</i> (seeing a potential spouse)
2	“Whoever has been tested by immoral acts should conceal them with Allah’s concealment.”	Al-Baihaqi, 2003, no. 7599, Vol. 8, p. 572,	Concealing past sins
3	Supplications during sujūd, between adhān and iqāmah, while fasting, etc.	Various ḥadīth collections	Accepted times for supplication
4	“A woman is married for four reasons...”	Al-Bukhari, 1997. no. 5090 Vol. 7, p. 7	Criteria for choosing a spouse
5	“If there comes to you one whose religion and character you are pleased with...”	At-Tirmizi, 2000, no. 1083 Vol. 3, p. 386,	Criteria for choosing a husband

6	“Our Lord, grant us from our spouses and offspring the comfort of our eyes.”	Qur'an 25:74	Supplication for family and marriage
7	“My Lord, indeed I am in need of whatever good You send down to me.”	Qur'an 28:24	Reliance on divine provision
8	Qur'an 32:16–17 (on night prayer and divine reward)	Qur'an 32:16–17	Tahajjud and spiritual striving
9	Marriage as obligatory, recommended, discouraged, or forbidden	Classical fiqh summary	Legal status of marriage
10	“Good women are for good men...”	Qur'an 24:26	Compatibility (<i>kafā'ah</i>)

Overall, the Qur'anic verses and hadith presented in the table function as accessible religious references that frame *ta'aruf* as a morally guided and spiritually meaningful process. Within the @taarufmenikah content, these texts are primarily used to normalize the pursuit of marriage, reduce anxiety surrounding readiness and uncertainty, and provide reassurance that the desire to seek a spouse aligns with Islamic values. Rather than serving as rigid legal prescriptions, the verses and narrations operate as moral signposts that affirm users' intentions, encourage patience, and reinforce the idea that marriage is part of a broader ethical and devotional journey.

At the same time, the selected texts play an important pedagogical role by translating complex religious discourses into simplified, everyday guidance that resonates with social media users. By highlighting well-known verses, widely accepted hadith, and general fiqh principles, the content avoids doctrinal controversy and instead emphasizes shared moral ground. This strategy allows religious texts to function as a common symbolic language within the platform, facilitating communication between the admin and users while maintaining a sense of religious legitimacy. In this way, Qur'anic verses and hadith serve not only as sources of guidance, but also as tools for mediation, expectation-setting, and community-building within the digital *ta'aruf* environment.

Analysis: Functions and Transformations of Hadith in Digital Ta'aruf Practice

From the perspective of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, the emergence of digital ta'aruf can be understood within the framework of changing social means (*wasā'il*) while maintaining the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). Scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi argue that new social practices are not judged solely by their forms, but by their purposes, benefits, and potential harms, particularly in matters of social interaction (*mu'āmalāt*). This approach has been applied in recent studies on online matchmaking and Islamic courtship, which suggest that digital ta'aruf is permissible as long as it preserves ethical boundaries, avoids *kebahwat* and deception, and is oriented toward lawful marriage (Hildawati & Lestari, 2019; Surur dkk., 2024). Similarly, Wahbah al-Zuhayli, in his discussion of pre-marital interaction, emphasizes that practices such as *nazar* and preliminary communication are context-sensitive and may vary according to social conditions and mechanisms of control. Contemporary journal-based fiqh analyses draw on this reasoning to conclude that digitally mediated ta'aruf cannot be deemed unlawful per se; rather, its legal status depends on the procedures, safeguards, and ethical discipline embedded in the platform (Kamaluddin, 2022; Syifa, 2025).

Within the Indonesian context, the flexibility of ta'aruf practices is further reinforced by the views of M. Quraish Shihab, who consistently maintains that the Qur'an and Sunnah regulate the moral principles of pre-marital interaction rather than prescribing rigid technical procedures. Several contemporary studies on Islamic marriage discourse in Indonesia adopt this perspective, arguing that the form of ta'aruf may evolve in response to social and technological change, provided that values such as modesty, responsibility, and transparency are upheld (Hakim, 2014; Rakhmawati, 2013). From this standpoint, digital ta'aruf platforms function as contextual tools rather than doctrinal innovations, enabling Muslims to pursue marriage within new social environments. This normative openness provides an important analytical backdrop for understanding how hadiths cited in digital ta'aruf practices are not only transmitted but selectively adapted and operationalized in accordance with contemporary socio-digital realities.

Across the 36 posts that explicitly cite Qur'anic verses or hadiths, most references originate from canonical collections and possess acceptable levels of authenticity—ranging from *ṣaḥīḥ* to *ḥasan*. Only one instance shows an inaccurate attribution: the hadith on concealing past acts of zina, which the admin cites as narrated by Mālik in *al-Muwatṭa'*. Upon verification, the researcher did not find this narration in *al-Muwatṭa'*, but rather in *Sunan al-Bayhaqī*. Nevertheless, the overall corpus used in the content remains within the bounds of authoritative tradition, with no evidence of fabricated or weak narrations. This suggests that the admin exercises a degree of responsibility in selecting scriptural references, ensuring at minimum that the texts originate from recognized collections.

Based on the admin's selection patterns, the cited hadiths appear to serve four primary functions: (1) normative, legitimizing ta'aruf practices within a *syar'i* framework; (2) motivational, strengthening users' emotional and spiritual resilience; (3) pragmatic, addressing real concerns such as whether to disclose past sins or worries about financial readiness; and (4) simplificatory, adapting complex discourses to the constraints of TikTok as a short-form platform. This bite-sized format leads to citations that are often fragmentary—frequently without full Arabic texts—and stripped of historical context or *asbab al-nurud*. For example, the hadith on concealing past zina originally pertains to avoiding public disclosure that could lead to corporal punishment in early Madinan society, yet in TikTok it is reframed as advice not to reveal past moral failings during ta'aruf. Similarly, Qur'anic supplications once uttered by prophets in moments of hardship are reframed as “du'ā for finding a spouse.”

Within this structure, hadith does not function as a vehicle of religious authority mediated by a recognized scholar. Because the admin does not present himself as a figure of formal authority—and remains anonymous—the hadiths serve instead as a form of borrowed authority, filling the void left by the absence of personal scholarly credentials. User trust arises not from *isnād* or scholarly verification but from three factors: (1) the presence of scriptural citations, which lend an appearance of legitimacy; (2) the admin's posting consistency (over 3,000 uploads), which creates a perception of reliability and successful matchmaking outcomes; and (3) a style of narrative storytelling that aligns with the preferences of TikTok's user base. This

dynamic reflects a shift toward algorithmic authority,(Lustig dkk., 2016; Muttaqin, 2024) where legitimacy is produced by visibility, engagement, and repetition rather than by formal religious hierarchy.

This raises a further question: do the technical procedures promoted in the platform—third-party mediation, structured biodata exchange, and initial screening by the admin—have direct roots in hadith? Based on the researcher's analysis, no explicit hadith prescribes such operational details. The more plausible explanation is that the admin combines personal experience, practices from certain Muslim communities, and user expectations, then translates them into a flexible format adapted to TikTok and WhatsApp. Calling this a “distortion” of textual meaning would be excessive; it is better understood as operational creativity, where scriptural citations function more as motivational framing than as formal legal reasoning. Interviews with informants reveal that this model of ta'aruf is particularly helpful for those who: (a) struggle to find partners offline due to introversion, (b) lack family or community networks that traditionally facilitate ta'aruf, or (c) require a wider pool of potential matches.

Thus, even though the meanings of hadith are negotiated and the operational structure differs from traditional modes, such transformations are an inevitable consequence of the digital environment, which alters the relationships between authoritative texts, interpretation, and user practice

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the TikTok account @taarufmenikah represents a new model of ta'aruf practice that differs markedly from both traditional offline patterns and digital platforms grounded in formal religious authority. Through its combination of short-form TikTok content and administrative guidance via WhatsApp, the account creates an accessible, fluid consultation space tailored to the habits and expectations of younger users. Qur'anic verses and hadiths function as *borrowed authority*, providing normative legitimacy, emotional motivation, and pragmatic guidance throughout the ta'aruf process. Although some scriptural citations are simplified and detached from their classical contexts, the overall textual corpus remains rooted in authoritative sources, preserving a basic level of religious credibility in its messaging.

The transformations observed in this digital ta'aruf environment illustrate how living hadith operates within social media ecosystems: authoritative texts are not merely quoted but actively negotiated, reframed, and adapted to platform logic and user needs. This model proves particularly beneficial for individuals who lack access to traditional matchmaking networks—introverts, those without strong family recommendations, or users seeking a broader pool of potential partners. Ultimately, the findings of this study underscore that social media is not merely a conduit for disseminating religious information; it is a new arena for producing authority, operational creativity, and reinterpreting hadith within contemporary Muslim life.

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