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A Qualitative Content Analysis of Norm-Violating TikTok Content by Selected West Sumatran Creators: Islamic Ethical and Minangkabau Cultural Perspectives

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Abstract

TikTok has become an influential space in which individual self-presentation, algorithmic visibility, religious norms, and local cultural identities are negotiated. This study aims to identify forms of norm-violating TikTok content associated with selected West Sumatran creators and interpret them through Islamic ethics and the Minangkabau framework of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. It employed directed qualitative content analysis of a bounded, purposively selected corpus of publicly accessible videos, documented TikTok Live segments, captions, audiovisual features, and relevant comment threads uploaded during 2024-2025 and collected between February and June 2026. Data were documented digitally, coded through theory-informed and context-sensitive categories, and analyzed using the interactive stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion verification. The findings identified three case-based clusters: coarse or sexually suggestive speech, including *bacaruik*; dance performances involving movement, dress, or visual framing considered inconsistent with selected standards of propriety; and sexually suggestive TikTok Live interactions. Islamic ethical analysis connected these practices with responsible speech, protection of dignity, modesty, and appropriate public interaction. Minangkabau cultural analysis related them to *Sumbang Kato, Sumbang Pakai, Sumbang Mancaliak, Sumbang Bagaua*, and *Sumbang Duduak*. Audience comments revealed competing interpretations rather than a uniform communal response. The study's originality lies in integrating two mutually reinforcing but analytically distinct normative frameworks: Islamic ethics emphasizes individual moral accountability, whereas *Sumbang Duo Baleh* adds contextual propriety and relational responsibility toward family, kin, and *nagari*. This study contributes a culturally situated framework for digital content analysis and supports the development of platform-aware, ethically responsible, and culturally sensitive digital literacy without claiming prevalence, creator motivation, algorithmic causation, or audience effects. It also identifies priorities for comparative, audience-based, and participatory future research.

Keywords: digital ethics; Islamic communication ethics; Minangkabau culture; norm-violating content; qualitative content analysis; *Sumbang Duo Baleh*; TikTok

Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technologies has transformed how individuals produce, circulate, and interpret cultural meanings. Social media platforms are no longer merely channels for interpersonal communication; they have become algorithmically organized environments in which visibility, identity, social recognition, and public discourse are continuously negotiated. Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as a particularly influential short-form video application because it combines audiovisual creation tools, participatory features, and a personalized recommendation system within a highly accessible interface. Its music integration, filters, hashtags, challenges, live-streaming facilities, and For You Page (FYP) allow user-generated content to circulate rapidly beyond creators' established follower networks (Siti Maudillah et al., 2025). TikTok should therefore be understood not simply as a neutral distribution channel but as a platform whose technological affordances configure—without entirely determining—how content is created, encountered, interpreted, and reproduced (Kaye et al., 2021; Schellewald, 2023).

The prominence of the FYP distinguishes TikTok from social media platforms that organize content primarily through pre-existing interpersonal networks. TikTok's recommendation system continuously personalizes users' feeds based on behavioral and engagement signals, making algorithmic curation central to the experience of both content consumption and self-presentation. Bhandari and Bimo (2022) describe this relationship as the formation of an "algorithmized self," in which creators become increasingly conscious of how their performances may be recognized, classified, and circulated by the platform. This structure can facilitate creativity, education, religious communication, cultural promotion, entertainment, and community formation. At the same time, the pursuit of algorithmic visibility may encourage some creators to adopt sensational, provocative, or norm-contesting forms of self-presentation. However, platform affordances should not be treated as automatically producing particular behavior because users actively interpret and appropriate TikTok according to their social circumstances, interests, and cultural contexts (Schellewald, 2023; Zeng et al., 2021).

Consequently, TikTok content cannot be adequately classified through a rigid binary opposition between "educational" and "destructive" content. Individual videos may simultaneously contain entertainment, satire, criticism, commercial self-promotion, cultural expression, religious messaging, or behavior considered inappropriate by particular audiences. Their meanings may also vary according to language, context, intended audience, and the norms employed in evaluating them. Nevertheless, previous studies have expressed concern about content involving offensive language, disinformation, harassment, sexually suggestive performances, and other practices perceived as conflicting with moral or religious norms (Niasti et al., 2025; Harifuddin, 2024). In the present study, the term *norm-violating content* is therefore used as a context-dependent analytical category rather than an inherent or universally applicable label. It refers specifically to selected TikTok content

that displays observable communicative, visual, or interactional features that can be systematically assessed against the principles of Islamic ethics and Minangkabau cultural propriety.

Indonesia constitutes an important setting for examining these issues because TikTok has become deeply embedded in the country's everyday communicative, commercial, educational, and religious practices. Although estimates of the number of users vary according to the reporting period, measurement method, and distinction between registered, active, and advertising-reachable users, Indonesia is consistently identified as one of TikTok's largest national markets. Reliable province-level figures are more difficult to establish; therefore, claims regarding the precise number of TikTok users in West Sumatra should be treated cautiously. What can be observed more securely is the increasing presence of TikTok in the social lives of West Sumatran communities and the growing interaction between global digital trends and local cultural identities. This interaction does not necessarily result in the automatic displacement of local culture, because social media can also support cultural preservation and adaptation. Nevertheless, unequal digital literacy and rapid exposure to decontextualized trends may create tensions between platform-based practices and locally established standards of propriety (Saputra et al., 2025; Alis et al., 2025).

From an Islamic ethical perspective, digital communication is part of morally accountable human conduct rather than an ethically neutral activity. Communication and self-expression should be grounded in honesty (*ṣiddiq*), responsibility, respect, and *adab*, while avoiding harm to oneself and others. The Qur'anic instruction to speak kindly to people in QS. Al-Baqarah: 83 and the Prophetic emphasis on the perfection of noble character provide a normative basis for evaluating conduct in both offline and digital settings. Accordingly, hate speech, deception, humiliation, provocation, and irresponsible dissemination of information may contradict Islamic principles of truthful, courteous, and accountable communication (Al Farouqy & Ridla, 2022; Abdullah & Kahina, 2022). Such principles should nevertheless be applied with contextual and interpretive care: different communicative violations may relate to different ethical concepts, and an ethical evaluation should not automatically be presented as a definitive legal ruling without an appropriate method of Islamic legal reasoning.

Islamic digital ethics also requires attention to the dignity and privacy of those whose conduct is being evaluated. Criticizing potentially inappropriate content does not justify exposing, humiliating, or making unverifiable accusations against its creator. Principles such as *tabayyun* (verification), the protection of personal dignity, avoidance of slander, and proportionality in responding to wrongdoing are therefore relevant to researchers as well as social media users. This broader perspective prevents Islamic ethics from being reduced to the classification of prohibited behavior and instead positions it as a framework for responsible communication, interpretation, criticism, and social intervention. It is particularly important in an algorithmic environment where decontextualized videos can be

reproduced, commented upon, and subjected to collective judgment far beyond their original audiences.

The Islamic ethical framework intersects with the cultural foundation of Minangkabau society expressed in the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), which establishes an ideal relationship between customary principles and Islamic teachings. One manifestation of this philosophy is *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, a system of twelve principles governing socially appropriate conduct. These principles include, among others, *Sumbang Kato* concerning speech, *Sumbang Bapakaian* or *Sumbang Pakai* concerning dress, and *Sumbang Bagaua* concerning social interaction. *Sumbang Duo Baleh* has historically functioned as a mechanism of character education, social responsibility, and the protection of dignity, particularly in discussions of the cultural position of Minangkabau women and *Bundo Kanduang* (Wahyuni et al., 2025). Its application to contemporary digital practices, however, requires contextual interpretation because norms developed in embodied communal settings cannot simply be transferred to algorithmic spaces without considering changes in audience, visibility, gender relations, and modes of interaction.

Publicly accessible TikTok content associated with selected West Sumatran creators during 2024–2025 indicates that digital self-presentation can become a site of negotiation over Islamic and Minangkabau norms. Examples discussed in public and scholarly sources include the use of coarse or sexually suggestive language, dance performances regarded by some audiences as excessively revealing, and live-streaming interactions perceived as inconsistent with religious or customary propriety (Siti Maudillah et al., 2025; Harifuddin, 2024). Such content should not be treated as representative of all West Sumatran or Minangkabau creators. Nor should audience criticism be assumed to constitute a single, homogeneous community response. Rather, these cases provide a bounded body of material through which competing interpretations of digital visibility, entertainment, individual agency, Islamic ethics, and communal identity can be examined.

Existing TikTok scholarship has provided important insights into platformization, algorithmic recommendation, user motivation, identity performance, and everyday consumption practices (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022; Kaye et al., 2021; Montag et al., 2021; Schellewald, 2023; Zeng et al., 2021). Indonesian studies have also addressed Islamic communication ethics, the educational and religious use of TikTok, and the effects of social media on behavior and character. Separately, research on Minangkabau culture has explained the educational and normative significance of ABS-SBK and *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. However, the relationship among platform-specific audiovisual practices, Islamic ethical categories, and Minangkabau cultural norms remains insufficiently conceptualized. Previous studies have rarely developed a transparent analytical correspondence between observable elements of TikTok content—such as speech, dress, bodily performance, and live interaction—and the distinct but interconnected principles provided by Islamic ethics and *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. This constitutes the central research gap addressed by the present study.

Employing a qualitative content analysis of a bounded selection of TikTok content associated with West Sumatran creators, this study addresses three questions: (1) What observable forms of norm-violating content appear in the selected TikTok materials? (2) How can these forms be interpreted through relevant principles of Islamic ethics? and (3) How do the selected forms correspond to, differ from, or complicate the principles of propriety contained in *Sumbang Duo Baleh*? These questions are interpretive rather than causal. The study does not seek to measure the prevalence of norm-violating content among all West Sumatran creators, establish the intentions of creators, or determine the behavioral effects of TikTok content on audiences.

This study offers three principal contributions. Empirically, it provides a contextually bounded account of selected TikTok practices associated with West Sumatra rather than generalizing from isolated viral cases to the entire Minangkabau community. Conceptually, it examines both the convergence and the distinct analytical functions of Islamic ethics and *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, thereby avoiding the assumption that the two frameworks are interchangeable in every respect. Methodologically, it demonstrates how observable features of short-form videos and live-streaming interactions can be systematically connected to culturally and religiously situated ethical categories. In practical terms, the findings may inform culturally sensitive digital-literacy initiatives involving families, educational institutions, religious scholars, customary leaders, and policymakers, while recognizing that the effectiveness of such initiatives must be evaluated through further research.

Method

This study employed a qualitative directed content analysis to examine norm-violating TikTok content associated with selected creators from West Sumatra. A qualitative design was selected because the study sought to interpret communicative meanings, audiovisual representations, and culturally situated ethical evaluations rather than determine the statistical prevalence or causal effects of the content (Abdussamad, 2021). Directed qualitative content analysis was considered appropriate because the initial analytical categories were derived from established principles of Islamic ethics and the Minangkabau customary framework of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, while the analysis remained open to contextual meanings and additional categories emerging from the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The study did not adopt phenomenology because it did not collect first-person accounts of the lived experiences of creators or audiences. Instead, Patton's (2002) interpretive qualitative perspective was used to emphasize contextual interpretation and researcher reflexivity. The analysis focused on publicly accessible digital materials without direct interviews or interaction with the creators. Consequently, the study examined what could be observed in the content and its immediate digital context, rather than making claims about creators' intentions, psychological conditions, religious commitments, or personal motivations.

The term *norm-violating content* was used as an analytical category rather than an inherent label attached to a creator or a particular video. It

referred to observable communicative, visual, or interactional features that could be assessed against predefined Islamic ethical principles and corresponding elements of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. Three provisional analytical clusters were established: content containing coarse, insulting, or sexually suggestive speech, including contextually identifiable *bacaruik* expressions; dance or bodily performances accompanied by forms of movement or dress considered potentially inconsistent with the selected ethical and customary criteria; and TikTok Live interactions containing sexually suggestive speech, gestures, or exchanges between creators and audiences. These clusters were treated as context-dependent categories and not as universally applicable definitions of inappropriate content.

The study was conducted entirely in a digital environment and did not involve fieldwork at a physical location. The primary materials consisted of TikTok content originally uploaded during 2024 and 2025. Systematic collection, verification, and documentation were conducted from February 4 to June 29, 2026. This distinction was maintained throughout the study because the upload period defined the historical boundary of the corpus, whereas the collection period indicated when the materials were accessed and archived by the researcher.

The corpus was organized into three case-based analytical clusters that corresponded to the research focus: coarse or sexually suggestive speech, dance performances considered inconsistent with selected standards of modesty and propriety, and sexually suggestive interactions in TikTok Live broadcasts. Each cluster consisted of the publicly retrievable videos, Live recordings or documented Live excerpts, captions, audiovisual elements, and relevant comment threads available during the collection period. These materials were analyzed as a bounded qualitative corpus. They were not treated as a representative sample of all TikTok content produced in West Sumatra.

View counts, likes, shares, and numbers of comments were recorded, where visible, only to describe the digital context at the time of collection. Because these metrics can change, they were not treated as stable measurements. High engagement was also not interpreted automatically as approval, influence, or evidence that viewers had imitated the content. Similarly, the disappearance of a post after the collection date was not interpreted as evidence of wrongdoing or platform intervention unless this was supported by a verifiable source.

Potential cases were identified through TikTok's internal search function using combinations of Indonesian and Minangkabau terms related to the location, creator identity, and three analytical clusters. The searches included terms such as "TikTok Minang," "TikTok Sumbar," "konten TikTok Minangkabau," "bacaruik TikTok," "bahasa kasar TikTok Minang," "joget TikTok Minang," "joget vulgar TikTok," and "TikTok Live Minang." Searches were supplemented by creator names, account names, or descriptions appearing in traceable local and national media reports. TikTok's related-content recommendations were used only to locate potentially relevant

materials and were not treated as systematic evidence of how the FYP algorithm operated.

For every potential case, the researcher recorded the search term, date of access, available account information, upload date, format of the content, and reason for inclusion or exclusion. Duplicate uploads and reposts were compared with the available original content. When the original source could not be identified or the surrounding context could not be reconstructed, the material was excluded. This procedure was intended to prevent edited compilations, reaction videos, or decontextualized reposts from being interpreted as if they were original creator materials.

Criterion-based purposive sampling was used because the study required cases that were directly relevant to the research questions rather than a statistically representative sample (Moleong, 2019; Patton, 2002). An item was included when it met five conditions. First, it was publicly accessible during the collection period. Second, it had originally been uploaded during 2024 or 2025. Third, it contained sufficient audiovisual or interactional context to support interpretation. Fourth, it displayed at least one observable feature corresponding to the preliminary analytical framework. Fifth, the creator's connection with West Sumatra was supported by more than one contextual indicator.

The creator's association with West Sumatra was assessed through a combination of self-declared profile information, explicit references to a West Sumatran location, sustained use of an identifiable Minangkabau linguistic variety, locally situated content, and traceable coverage by local media. Regional or Minangkabau identity was not inferred solely from physical appearance, an account name, a single word or accent, or an unverified statement in the comment section. The designation "selected West Sumatran creators" therefore applied only to the cases that met these contextual criteria and did not imply that the creators represented the Minangkabau population as a whole.

Materials were excluded when they were duplicates, decontextualized compilations, parody or reaction content without access to the original post, private or inaccessible materials, content uploaded outside the study period, items lacking sufficient audiovisual context, or cases whose association with West Sumatra could not be reasonably established. Materials involving identifiable minors were excluded when their inclusion could produce disproportionate privacy or reputational risks. The sampling process prioritized contextual adequacy and relevance to the research questions rather than numerical breadth.

Primary data consisted of publicly accessible TikTok uploads, available recordings or documented excerpts of TikTok Live broadcasts, captions, on-screen text, spoken language, visual performances, hashtags, and public comments relevant to the selected cases. Comments were used to clarify how particular viewers responded to a specific post. They were not treated as representative of public opinion in West Sumatra or of the Minangkabau community. A highly liked comment was therefore interpreted as a visible

response within one comment thread rather than evidence of collective cultural consensus.

Secondary data were obtained from scholarly publications, books, theses, and traceable journalistic reports. Local media included *Padang Ekspres*, *Haluan*, and *Sumbarkita*, while national media included *Kompas* and *Detik*. These sources were used to reconstruct the public context of the selected cases, locate potentially relevant original materials, and compare reported events with available digital documentation (Jabnabillah et al., 2023). Journalistic reports were not automatically considered independent verification. Their evidentiary value depended on whether they identified an original post, creator statement, date, location, or other traceable information.

The literature review included academic publications addressing TikTok, digital communication, Islamic ethics, Islamic perspectives on prohibited conduct, Minangkabau culture, ABS-SBK, and *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. These sources established the conceptual foundation of the coding framework and helped distinguish between Islamic communicative ethics, moral character, customary propriety, and broader claims about social effects (Fariq et al., 2022).

The primary unit of analysis was an individual TikTok video or a clearly bounded segment of a documented TikTok Live broadcast. For each unit, the researcher examined spoken language, written captions, on-screen text, clothing, bodily movements, gestures, audio, interactional setting, and other visible elements relevant to the research questions. The unit of context included the accompanying caption, relevant hashtags, available surrounding content, and a limited selection of comments necessary to understand immediate audience responses.

The analysis distinguished manifest content from latent interpretation. Manifest coding documented features that could be directly observed or heard, such as particular expressions, gestures, clothing characteristics, dance movements, and forms of interaction. Latent coding examined how those observable features could be interpreted through Islamic ethical principles and *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. This distinction was necessary to prevent normative interpretations from being presented as if they were direct descriptions of the content.

The researcher did not infer sensation-seeking, popularity-seeking, intentional moral provocation, or other creator motivations unless the creator explicitly expressed such motives in the analyzed material. The study also did not claim that exposure to the selected content caused imitation, moral decline, psychological harm, or changes in audience behavior. Such causal questions require audience-based, longitudinal, experimental, or mixed-method evidence beyond the scope of qualitative content analysis.

Digital documentation involved recording the account information available at the time of collection, content URL, upload date, collection date, content format, duration, caption, hashtags, spoken expressions, relevant visual features, and observable engagement metrics. Screenshots, transcription notes, and available recordings were used to preserve the analytical context because TikTok content can be edited, deleted, or made

inaccessible after collection. The date on which each engagement metric was observed was recorded so that changing platform data would not be presented as permanent.

Spoken Indonesian and Minangkabau expressions were transcribed in their original form before being translated into English for publication. Context-specific Minangkabau terms, particularly *bacaruik*, were retained where a direct English translation would remove important cultural meaning. The English translation was accompanied by a contextual explanation rather than a purely literal equivalent. Comments selected for reporting were paraphrased when verbatim quotation could make the account or post searchable.

The preliminary codebook was developed deductively from Islamic ethical scholarship, ABS-SBK, and the principles of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. The Islamic ethical dimensions included responsible speech, truthfulness, respect for personal dignity, modest self-presentation, and propriety in public interaction. The Minangkabau dimensions included *Sumbang Kato*, *Sumbang Bapakaian* or *Sumbang Pakai*, *Sumbang Bagaua*, *Sumbang Mancaliak*, and *Sumbang Duduak* where supported by the observable characteristics of the data. The content validity of these categories was grounded in the selected literature on Islamic ethics and Minangkabau customary philosophy (A M R, 2024).

Each code included a conceptual definition, observable indicators, inclusion rules, exclusion rules, and contextual notes. The codebook also included a category for ambiguous or context-insufficient material. This category prevented uncertain cases from being forced into a predetermined moral classification. During initial coding, definitions were refined when an item could reasonably be interpreted through more than one ethical or customary principle. Additional contextual codes were added when the data contained relevant features that were not adequately captured by the initial categories. This combination of theory-based and data-sensitive coding followed the principles of directed qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Data analysis followed the interactive qualitative model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. During data condensation, the researcher reviewed each analytical unit, identified relevant audiovisual and textual segments, and assigned manifest and interpretive codes using a structured coding matrix. Materials that did not contain sufficient contextual information were separated from the main analysis rather than interpreted speculatively.

During data display, the coded materials were organized into a case-by-code matrix. The matrix linked observable features of each item with the relevant Islamic ethical principle, the corresponding component of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, contextual evidence, and possible alternative interpretations. Descriptive information, such as content format and observed engagement, was used only to characterize the bounded corpus. It was not used to estimate the prevalence of norm-violating content among TikTok creators in West Sumatra.

Conclusion drawing involved comparing similarities and differences across the three analytical clusters. The researcher examined whether the Islamic and Minangkabau frameworks converged, addressed different dimensions of the same content, or produced interpretations requiring further contextual qualification. The two frameworks were not assumed to be identical. Islamic ethics was examined in relation to individual moral responsibility, communication, dignity, and public conduct, whereas *Sumbang Duo Baleh* was also examined in relation to culturally situated propriety and the relational implications of conduct for family, kin, and community.

Interpretations were repeatedly checked against the original digital materials, contextual records, code definitions, and relevant scholarly sources (Moleong, 2019). Negative or ambiguous cases were retained in the analytical notes to identify the limits of the proposed categories. This procedure reduced the risk that the analysis would merely confirm the researcher's initial normative expectations.

Trustworthiness was addressed through source comparison, peer debriefing, an audit trail, negative-case examination, and researcher reflexivity. Source comparison involved checking available TikTok materials against traceable media documentation and scholarly literature while recognizing that each source served a different evidentiary purpose (Sugiyono, 2020). The presence of the same claim in several media reports was not treated as triangulation when those reports relied on the same original source.

Peer debriefing was conducted through consultation with the researchers' academic supervisors. The consultations focused on the appropriateness of the analytical categories, the relationship between observable content and normative interpretation, and the possibility of alternative readings. Because one primary researcher conducted the coding, the study did not claim statistical intercoder reliability. Instead, supervisory review was used as a critical interpretive check. This distinction is important because intercoder reliability should only be reported when two or more coders have independently coded a defined portion of the same dataset (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

An audit trail was maintained through search records, source links, screenshots, transcription notes, coding matrices, category revisions, and analytical memos (Creswell, 2016). These records documented how the cases were identified, why particular materials were included or excluded, how categories were applied, and how interpretations changed during analysis. This procedure increased transparency without suggesting that qualitative interpretation could be made entirely free from researcher judgment.

Researcher reflexivity was necessary because concepts such as vulgarity, modesty, appropriate dress, and respectable interaction are shaped by cultural and religious positions. The researcher therefore recorded prior assumptions concerning Islamic ethics, Minangkabau identity, and digital conduct and considered how those assumptions might influence selection and interpretation. Reflexive attention was also given to the risk of stigmatizing

creators, women, families, or Minangkabau society through generalized moral conclusions.

The study relied exclusively on publicly accessible digital materials and did not involve direct interaction, intervention, or interviews with TikTok creators and commenters. Nevertheless, public accessibility was not treated as unrestricted ethical permission. Research using public social media data can create privacy and reputational risks because users may not expect their posts to be reproduced, translated, or subjected to academic moral evaluation (Fiesler & Proferes, 2018).

To minimize these risks, usernames, profile photographs, direct account identifiers, and unnecessary personal information were omitted from the published analysis. Public comments were paraphrased where verbatim quotation could enable search-based identification. Sensitive screenshots and sexually suggestive visual material were not reproduced in the article. Deleted or private content was not newly accessed or redistributed, and materials involving identifiable minors were excluded when adequate protection could not be ensured.

The analysis evaluated observable content rather than the creator's overall personality, morality, religious identity, family, or community. The findings were therefore reported at the level of selected content and bounded cases. They were not generalized to all creators from West Sumatra or to Minangkabau society as a whole. These safeguards were consistent with the study's commitment to minimizing harm, protecting dignity, and applying Islamic and Minangkabau ethical principles to the research process itself.

Results and Discussion

Forms of Norm-Violating TikTok Content in the Selected Cases

The qualitative content analysis identified three case-based clusters of norm-violating TikTok content associated with selected West Sumatran creators during the 2024-2025 study period. The first cluster involved coarse, insulting, or sexually suggestive speech, including expressions contextually identified as *bacaruik*. The second cluster involved dance performances accompanied by bodily movements, clothing, or modes of self-presentation considered potentially inconsistent with selected Islamic and Minangkabau standards of modesty and propriety. The third cluster involved TikTok Live broadcasts containing sexually suggestive speech, gestures, or interactions between creators and viewers. These clusters represent patterns within the bounded corpus and should not be interpreted as estimates of the prevalence of such content among all TikTok creators in West Sumatra.

The categories were developed by distinguishing directly observable features from normative interpretations. Observable features included spoken expressions, on-screen text, clothing, bodily movement, gestures, audiovisual settings, and interactional exchanges. The classification of these features as norm-violating was subsequently based on their correspondence with Islamic ethical principles and selected elements of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. This distinction was necessary because the meaning of a TikTok performance cannot be established solely from its visual appearance. Language, humor,

music, intended audience, local linguistic context, and the relationship between a creator and viewers may affect how the content is interpreted.

Coarse and Sexually Suggestive Speech

The first cluster consisted of short videos, generally between 15 and 60 seconds in duration, in which creators used coarse, insulting, or sexually suggestive expressions. Some expressions were directed at particular individuals, while others appeared to address a general audience. The manifest features included explicit vocabulary, insulting forms of address, sexual references, and an emphatic style of delivery. In several cases, the linguistic meaning depended on knowledge of Minangkabau vocabulary and local communicative conventions. Viewers who did not understand the local language sometimes expressed uncertainty about the meaning of the expressions.

The comments associated with this cluster showed heterogeneous responses. Some commenters criticized the language as inappropriate and inconsistent with religious or customary values. Others treated the expressions as humor, entertainment, or ordinary social media performance. Some commenters asked about the creator's regional identity, while others attempted to distance Minangkabau identity from the observed behavior. A smaller number raised questions about possible religious or legal consequences. These comments indicate the presence of competing interpretations within the analyzed threads. They do not establish a uniform Minangkabau public response or demonstrate that the content produced a particular social effect.

The findings also reveal the importance of linguistic context. An expression categorized as *bacaruik* may carry different levels of offensiveness depending on the relationship between speakers, tone, communicative setting, and local usage. The analysis therefore did not classify every informal, humorous, or emotionally expressive statement as an ethical violation. Coding was limited to cases in which the combination of vocabulary, delivery, and context provided adequate grounds for interpretation under the established criteria.

Dance Performances and Visual Self-Presentation

The second cluster consisted of dance performances accompanied by music and, in some cases, a visual or musical background associated with Minangkabau culture. The relevant manifest features included body-centered camera framing, repetitive or sexually suggestive movements, close-fitting or revealing clothing, and the use of cultural audio or symbols within a performance-oriented setting. The analysis did not assume that dance, popular music, or fashionable clothing was inherently norm-violating. Rather, classification depended on the relationship among movement, clothing, camera framing, context, and the specific ethical and customary principles applied in the study.

Audience reactions were again mixed. Some commenters criticized the performances as inconsistent with Minangkabau propriety and rejected the idea that the creators represented Minangkabau culture. Other commenters responded with humor, appreciation, or neutral engagement. One critical

comment had received 248 likes at the time of documentation and argued that conduct inconsistent with customary propriety should not be taken as representing the Minangkabau community. The number of likes is reported only as a time-specific feature of that comment thread. It cannot establish that the opinion represented the wider Minangkabau population.

The use of Minangkabau-associated music or cultural imagery did not necessarily mean that the creator intended to represent Minangkabau culture formally. TikTok allows sounds, visual templates, and trends to be detached from their original contexts and reused for entertainment, parody, personal expression, or algorithmic participation. The results therefore show a tension between individual digital self-presentation and audience expectations of collective cultural representation, rather than direct evidence that the creator intended to reject or degrade Minangkabau culture.

Sexually Suggestive TikTok Live Interactions

The third cluster involved TikTok Live broadcasts in which creators displayed speech, gestures, or audience interactions interpreted as sexually suggestive under the study's analytical criteria. Unlike prerecorded videos, TikTok Live enables creators to respond immediately to comments, requests, gifts, and other audience signals. The analyzed material showed that the meaning of the broadcast developed through ongoing interaction rather than through the creator's performance alone. Viewers participated by commenting, requesting particular actions, criticizing the performance, or encouraging continued interaction.

The real-time character of TikTok Live made contextual interpretation particularly important. A recorded segment could not always reveal what occurred before or after the documented interaction. For this reason, only clearly bounded segments with sufficient contextual information were included. The study did not assume that all viewers were children or adolescents, and it did not establish that the selected broadcasts were accessed by particular age groups. The potential accessibility of public Live content to younger viewers remains an ethical concern, but audience composition and behavioral effects cannot be determined through content analysis alone.

The Live cases also differed from prerecorded videos because visibility and performance were negotiated continuously between the creator and the audience. Comments, virtual gifts, and requests could influence how the interaction developed. Nevertheless, the available data did not permit a causal conclusion that platform rewards or audience encouragement directly produced sexually suggestive behavior. The results support only the more limited observation that TikTok Live provides an interactive setting in which creators and viewers can jointly shape the direction of a public performance.

Cross-Case Patterns

Across the three clusters, the most consistent observable pattern was the public performance of speech, bodily expression, or interaction that became subject to competing moral and cultural interpretations. The analyzed comment threads contained criticism, entertainment-oriented responses, uncertainty, and explicit attempts to distinguish individual conduct from

collective Minangkabau identity. The presence of these different responses demonstrates that digital moral evaluation is negotiated rather than uniform.

The findings do not support the conclusion that every selected item necessarily encouraged imitation, eroded moral character, or lacked all social value. Those claims concern audience effects and require evidence beyond the available corpus. Instead, the findings demonstrate that certain observable features of the selected content could be interpreted as inconsistent with specific principles of Islamic ethics and *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. The results also show that viewers actively participated in negotiating whether an individual creator's conduct should be connected with a broader religious or cultural identity.

Discussion

The three clusters correspond to concerns about offensive speech, sexualized performance, and provocative interaction discussed in previous studies of norm-violating social media content (Niasti et al., 2025; Harifuddin, 2024). However, the present findings suggest that these categories should not be understood only as fixed properties of isolated videos. TikTok content is shaped by the platform's audiovisual templates, recommendation systems, interaction mechanisms, and cultures of repetition. These features affect how content is produced and circulated, although they do not determine creators' behavior.

TikTok's technical design facilitates the repetition and modification of sounds, gestures, challenges, and visual formats. Zulli and Zulli (2022) conceptualize this process as technological mimesis, through which users form "imitation publics" by reproducing and modifying recognizable content patterns. This concept helps explain why similar forms of speech, dance, or performance may appear across multiple accounts. It does not, however, demonstrate that viewing one item causes a user to reproduce it. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory remains relevant as a possible explanatory framework because attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are important conditions of observational learning. Nevertheless, the present content analysis did not measure those processes and therefore cannot empirically confirm audience imitation.

Previous literature has suggested that repeated exposure to discourteous or sensational content may contribute to imitation or normalization (Suwarno, 2023). The current findings provide evidence that potentially imitable formats were present, but not that imitation actually occurred. Replication on TikTok may also be motivated by humor, participation in a trend, creative adaptation, commercial visibility, peer interaction, or technical convenience. These alternative explanations should be considered before reproducing a moral-effects argument.

The relationship between engagement and creator behavior also requires qualification. High numbers of views or comments may indicate visibility, but they do not reveal whether viewers approved, criticized, mocked, or simply encountered the content. Cotter's (2019) concept of the "visibility game" is useful for understanding how creators may orient their practices toward imagined algorithmic rules. However, algorithms structure

opportunities for visibility without unilaterally determining creator conduct. Consequently, the selected content cannot be attributed solely to a desire for popularity unless creators explicitly stated such a motivation.

The FYP algorithm recommends content using behavioral and interactional signals, but the study did not audit TikTok's recommendation system or track the distribution pathways of the selected items. The data therefore do not support the stronger assertion that TikTok is structurally biased toward norm-violating content or that controversial material necessarily receives greater algorithmic promotion than educational material. A more defensible interpretation is that TikTok's recommendation, reuse, and interaction features can create opportunities for rapid circulation, decontextualization, and imitation. Whether a particular item was algorithmically amplified would require platform-level data or an algorithm-audit design.

From an Islamic ethical perspective, the findings were interpreted across three interrelated dimensions: communication, public self-presentation and interaction, and responsible use of digital media. These dimensions provide a moral framework for analysis, but they should not be treated as an automatic legal classification of the creator or content. The present study offers an ethical interpretation and does not constitute a formal fatwa.

In the first dimension, coarse, insulting, and sexually suggestive expressions can conflict with Islamic principles of responsible communication. The concept of *qaulan sadida* emphasizes truthful, appropriate, and responsible speech. Its application is particularly relevant when an expression contains deception, harmful accusation, humiliation, or communication that damages another person's dignity. Coarse language does not necessarily constitute a violation of honesty in every context, but it may conflict with the broader Islamic obligation to speak well and avoid harmful or degrading utterances. The Prophetic instruction that a believer should speak well or remain silent provides an appropriate ethical foundation for this interpretation.

The analyzed speech also relates to QS. Al-Hujurat: 11, which prohibits ridicule, belittlement, and insulting forms of address, and QS. Qaf: 18, which emphasizes accountability for spoken words. These principles suggest that digital speech remains morally consequential even when it is performed for humor or entertainment. The findings are consistent with discussions of courteous and responsible Islamic communication in digital environments (Ibad, 2024; Khotimah, 2024). At the same time, Islamic ethics also requires *tabayyun*, proportionality, protection of dignity, and avoidance of public humiliation. Viewers and researchers therefore have ethical responsibilities when criticizing content or identifying its creator.

In the second dimension, selected dance performances and Live interactions were interpreted through the concepts of *tabarruj* and *al-haya'*. QS. Al-Ahzab: 33 and the Prophetic teaching that modesty is part of faith provide a normative basis for discussing public self-presentation. The relevant concern is not the existence of dance or digital visibility in itself, but the

combination of bodily display, movement, clothing, camera framing, and public interaction as interpreted within the selected ethical framework. Previous studies have connected repeated exposure to sexualized digital content with concerns about normalization and declining moral sensitivity (Apriliah, 2023; Muzayanati, 2022). The present study, however, did not measure changes in the moral sensitivity of creators or audiences. It therefore treats normalization as a theoretical risk rather than an observed effect.

Sexually suggestive Live interactions may also be discussed in relation to *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, as reflected in QS. Ali Imran: 104. However, this principle should not be used to justify harassment, collective shaming, or disclosure of personal information. Islamic ethical intervention must itself preserve dignity, prevent greater harm, and distinguish criticism of observable conduct from condemnation of an individual's complete moral character.

The third dimension concerns time management and self-discipline. Previous research has associated prolonged and uncontrolled TikTok use with reduced attention to academic or spiritual responsibilities and with psychological concerns such as anxiety and diminished concentration (Fikrianoor & Ishaac, 2024; Haliza & Surawan, 2025). The concepts of *mujahadah an-nafs* and avoidance of purposeless activity are relevant to responsible platform use. Nevertheless, the application of *tabdzir* in QS. Al-Isra': 27 requires conceptual caution because the verse is primarily concerned with wasteful expenditure. The study therefore does not classify an individual video or every period of scrolling as *tabdzir*. A more appropriate interpretation is that repetitive, uncontrolled, and purposeless consumption may conflict with Islamic expectations of responsible time use and self-discipline.

Evidence concerning social media and psychological well-being is also heterogeneous. An umbrella review found that associations between social media use and adolescent mental health were often weak or inconsistent and depended on how use, outcomes, and individual differences were measured (Valkenburg et al., 2022). Consequently, the current findings cannot establish that the selected TikTok content caused anxiety, concentration problems, or spiritual neglect. These outcomes should be examined through audience-based research.

Previous Islamic scholarship has described content that deliberately disseminates obscenity, exposes the body in prohibited ways, or normalizes offensive language as potentially impermissible (Indriani et al., 2022). The present study retains this normative concern but avoids declaring every selected item categorically *haram*. A definitive legal classification would require more detailed contextual evidence and an appropriate method of Islamic legal reasoning. The contribution of this analysis lies in identifying relevant ethical principles and the observable content features to which they may apply.

Within Minangkabau culture, the selected content was interpreted through the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* and the relevant principles of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. The analysis focused on *Sumbang Kato*, *Sumbang Pakai* or *Sumbang Bapakaian*, *Sumbang Bagaua*,

Sumbang Mancaliak, and *Sumbang Duduak*. It did not assume that all twelve principles were equally relevant to every case.

Coarse and sexually suggestive speech corresponded most directly to *Sumbang Kato*, which regulates propriety, respect, and situational appropriateness in speech. This principle is related to *Kato nan Ampek*, which emphasizes that appropriate communication depends on the speaker, listener, relationship, and social context (Sofiani, 2022). The digital setting complicates this principle because TikTok brings together known and unknown audiences from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Speech understood as humor within one peer group may be encountered as an offensive public statement by a wider audience.

Comments questioning whether the creators were fit to represent Minangkabau identity suggest that some viewers continued to invoke customary values as a form of digital social evaluation (Netizen, 2025). However, the comment data do not prove that customary social control functioned effectively across Minangkabau society. They show only that references to cultural identity and propriety remained available as rhetorical resources within the analyzed discussions.

Dance performances involving close-fitting clothing, body-centered framing, or sexually suggestive movement corresponded most closely to *Sumbang Pakai* and, in some cases, *Sumbang Mancaliak*. *Sumbang Pakai* concerns the contextual propriety of dress, while *Sumbang Mancaliak* addresses propriety of looking and visual attention. This interpretation is consistent with accounts that connect dress and conduct to the broader integration of adat and Islamic teaching under ABS-SBK (Elpalina, 2024). Nevertheless, the analysis should not reduce Minangkabau cultural ethics to surveillance of women's bodies. The principles must also be applied to creators, viewers, commenters, and the wider interactional environment, regardless of gender.

TikTok Live content corresponded primarily to *Sumbang Bagaua*, which concerns propriety in social interaction, and to *Sumbang Duduak* when posture or bodily positioning formed part of the observable performance. Real-time exchanges between creators and viewers demonstrate how customary interactional norms may be challenged by anonymous, commercially mediated, and geographically dispersed digital communication. This tension may also be interpreted through *Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*, which emphasizes learning from social and natural experience. Digital environments can become new spaces of cultural learning, but they can also detach behavior from the communal relationships through which accountability has traditionally been maintained (Tsauri, 2024).

Minangkabau cultural interpretation also includes the relational consequences of individual conduct. Previous accounts describe personal behavior as potentially affecting the perceived honor of family, kin, and *nagari* (Sofiani, 2022). Cultural Value System Theory similarly positions ABS-SBK as a framework through which members of a community evaluate appropriate conduct (Navis, 1984; Koentjaraningrat, 2009). The current findings support the more limited conclusion that this relational understanding appeared in

some audience responses. They do not demonstrate a general decline in Minangkabau culture or prove that a creator's family and community actually experienced reputational damage.

The digital circulation of Minangkabau-associated sounds, language, clothing, and imagery also illustrates that cultural representation on TikTok is selective and platform-dependent. Comparative research on TikTok and Douyin has demonstrated that visually similar platforms can contain culturally differentiated patterns of objects and human actions (Sun et al., 2020). This supports the importance of culturally situated analysis while also cautioning against treating culture as fixed or homogeneous. Minangkabau values may be interpreted differently according to gender, generation, *nagari*, religious orientation, and the specific communicative context.

The findings indicate substantial convergence between Islamic ethical principles and the selected elements of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, but the two frameworks are not analytically identical. Islamic ethics emphasizes moral accountability before God, responsibility for speech and conduct, protection of dignity, modesty, and self-discipline. *Sumbang Duo Baleh* translates related values into culturally situated expectations concerning speech, dress, gaze, posture, and social interaction. It also gives particular attention to the relational consequences of conduct for family, kin, and community.

Coarse or degrading speech can therefore be evaluated through Islamic requirements for responsible communication and through *Sumbang Kato*. Body-centered performances can be interpreted through Islamic concepts of modesty and *tabarruj*, as well as through *Sumbang Pakai* and *Sumbang Mancaliak*. Sexually suggestive Live interactions can be examined through Islamic principles of public conduct and *al-haya'*, together with *Sumbang Bagaua* and, where contextually relevant, *Sumbang Duduak*. These correspondences show how the two frameworks can illuminate different dimensions of the same observable material.

The integration also reveals important differences. Islamic ethical evaluation primarily concerns individual moral responsibility and the relationship between human conduct and divine guidance. Minangkabau customary evaluation gives additional emphasis to contextual propriety, relational identity, and communal reputation. Treating these frameworks as completely interchangeable would obscure the specific contribution of local cultural analysis. Their analytical value lies in their convergence as well as in their different modes of moral and social reasoning.

The findings are consistent with Dewi and Rogamelia (2025), who associated exposure to religiously inconsistent TikTok content with concerns about adolescents' morality and religious conduct. The present study extends that discussion by showing how selected content can also be interpreted through Minangkabau categories of speech, dress, visual attention, posture, and social interaction. However, because the study did not collect audience data, it cannot confirm declining religious conduct or cultural internalization among younger users.

The findings suggest that digital-literacy education in West Sumatra could benefit from integrating platform literacy, Islamic communication

ethics, and Minangkabau cultural knowledge. Such education should not focus only on prohibiting content. It should also develop contextual interpretation, verification, privacy awareness, responsible criticism, understanding of platform affordances, and the ability to distinguish individual conduct from collective cultural identity.

Families, educational institutions, customary leaders or *niniak mamak*, religious scholars, and local government can contribute to this process, as also recommended by LKAAM Sumatera Barat (Pos Metro Padang, 2025). However, the present study does not establish that character education is the most effective intervention. Its effectiveness should be examined through program evaluation, comparative research, and direct engagement with creators, students, parents, teachers, religious scholars, and customary leaders.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study analyzed a bounded purposive corpus and cannot estimate the prevalence of norm-violating content among West Sumatran TikTok creators. Second, deleted, private, or inaccessible content could not be examined. Third, TikTok engagement metrics changed over time and did not reveal viewer intentions. Fourth, comments were self-selected responses and did not represent the wider Minangkabau community. Fifth, the study did not interview creators or audiences and therefore could not determine motivation, lived experience, or behavioral effects. Finally, Islamic and customary interpretation was influenced by the selected sources and the researcher's position, despite the use of reflexive documentation and academic peer debriefing.

Future studies should combine content analysis with interviews, focus groups, digital ethnography, audience surveys, or algorithm-audit methods. Comparative research could examine how creators, viewers, religious scholars, *bundo kanduang*, *niniak mamak*, and younger users interpret the same TikTok content. Such research would provide a stronger basis for understanding cultural negotiation, platform influence, and the effectiveness of digital-literacy interventions.

Conclusion

This study identified three clusters of norm-violating TikTok content associated with selected West Sumatran creators during 2024-2025: coarse or sexually suggestive speech, dance performances considered inconsistent with selected standards of propriety, and sexually suggestive TikTok Live interactions. These practices corresponded to Islamic ethical principles concerning responsible speech, dignity, modesty, and public interaction, as well as to *Sumbang Kato*, *Sumbang Pakai*, *Sumbang Mancaliak*, *Sumbang Bagaua*, and *Sumbang Duduak*. The findings show that Islamic ethics and *Sumbang Duo Baleh* are mutually reinforcing but not identical. Islamic ethics emphasizes individual moral accountability, while Minangkabau customary values also emphasize contextual propriety and relational responsibility toward family, kin, and *nagari*. This integrated framework contributes to digital ethics research by demonstrating how religious and local cultural

perspectives can provide complementary interpretations of the same digital practices.

The study was limited to a small, purposively selected, and context-specific corpus, so its findings cannot be generalized to all TikTok creators in West Sumatra or Minangkabau society. Public comments represented self-selected responses rather than collective community views, while changing engagement metrics could not establish audience approval or behavioral influence. Furthermore, because the study did not include interviews, surveys, digital ethnography, experimental observation, or platform-level data, it could not determine creators' motivations, audience effects, behavioral imitation, or the actual role of the FYP algorithm in distributing the selected content.

Future research should examine a larger and more diverse corpus and combine content analysis with interviews, focus groups, audience surveys, digital ethnography, or algorithm-audit methods. Researchers should also involve creators, young users, Islamic scholars, educators, *niniak mamak*, and *bundo kanduang* to capture variations in interpreting Islamic ethics and *Sumbang Duo Baleh*. In practical terms, digital-literacy initiatives in West Sumatra should integrate platform literacy, responsible Islamic communication, privacy awareness, respectful criticism, and Minangkabau cultural knowledge through collaboration among families, educational institutions, religious scholars, customary leaders, creators, and local government. The effectiveness of these initiatives should be empirically evaluated before they are presented as the most appropriate intervention.

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