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Healing Culture on Screen: Presence, Authority, and Audience Reception of Digital *Ruqya* on Two Indonesian YouTube Channels

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ABSTRACT

Ruqya, a Qurʾanic healing practice embedded in Indonesian healing culture, normatively presupposes physical co-presence, yet has migrated to YouTube, where authority is fluid and religion is commodified. Drawing on Grant's Communication Technology Ecosystem, the method follows a convergent mixed-methods design that analyzes purposively selected videos by prominent practitioners Muhammad Faizar and Dhanu and codes 786 random comments from their 20 most-viewed videos and Shorts. The results show that Faizar's real-time instructions transfer the *rāqī's* bodily acts to viewers, whereas Dhanu's consultation narratives position viewers as distant followers; presence featured in 40.2% and 24.2% of comments, respectively. Faizar's authority was affirmed in 23.4% of comments, chiefly through self-reported bodily relief, whereas Dhanu's was affirmed and rejected equally (8.8% each). Both channels drew consultation requests, but commodification, often framed as entertainment, was salient mainly on Dhanu (10.1% vs. 1.0%). The article contributes the concepts of mediated devotional presence, somatic authority validation, and ambivalent reception to digital religion studies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has transformed religious practices that once required physical co-presence, and *ruqya*, an Islaṃic healing practice rooted in Qurʾanic recitation, has followed this trajectory by moving to audio-visual formats on platforms such as YouTube (Nabila, 2024; Othman, 2022; Parish, 2020). This migration creates three interrelated tensions. The first concerns presence. Much of the literature frames *ruqya* as requiring the physical co-presence of practitioner (*rāqī*) and recipient (*marqī*), with *masḥ* (laying on of hands) and *nafth* (light breath blowing) regarded by some scholars as integral to its validity (Hakim et al., 2026; Omar et al., 2025), a view supported by ethnographies of healing through bodily proximity and directed breath (Marlow, 2022; Suhr, 2019) and by the hadith of a companion who healed a tribal chief by reciting al-Fatiha over him (al-Bukhari, 1993, Vol. 2, p. 795, Kitab al-Ijara, no. 5792). Yet reports of the Prophet's self-*ruqya* (al-Bukhari, 1993, Kitab al-Tibb, no. 5403) and the hadith permitting *ruqya* as long as it contains no *shirk* (Muslim, n.d., Kitab al-Salam, no. 2200) suggest that recitation, rather than bodily contact, is its essential element. Juristic opinion on remote *ruqya* is therefore divided (Hakim et al., 2026), making its digital migration a site of tension rather than a settled deviation.

The second tension concerns authority. Online, religious authority is increasingly negotiated through communicative performance, audience engagement, and algorithmic visibility rather than through mastery of texts or scholarly standing (Ats Tsaqofi et al., 2025; Campbell, 2020; Lohlker & Wahid, 2026), opening space for non-institutional figures to claim healing authority through image management and emotional proximity (Febrian, 2024), whereas Islamic tradition ties authority to a verifiable chain of knowledge transmission (Siregar et al., 2025; Whyte, 2022). The third tension concerns commodification. YouTube commodifies attention and rewards views and engagement (Kopf, 2020; Ørmen & Gregersen, 2023), and sensational formats gain greater visibility (Haroon et al., 2023), rendering *ruqya* vulnerable to spectacle-driven exorcism scenes that sit uneasily with the principle that *daʿwa* should be grounded in sincerity rather than material gain (Yuwafik et al., 2025). These tensions also bear on religious moderation, since digital healing content is prone to exclusive claims of authority, accusations of sorcery, the stigmatization of other healing practices, and polarization, while misinformation and uneven digital literacy amplify these risks (Al-Zaman, 2024; Cahyono et al., 2025; Setia & Haq, 2023).

Existing scholarship addresses these tensions only partially. Hakim et al. (2026) argue from a *tawḥīd*-based perspective that online *ruqya* undermines the procedural validity of the practice, and Omar et al. (2025) find that face-to-face interaction enhances its perceived effectiveness in Malaysia. In Indonesia, Salsabila et al. (2024) and Nabila (2024) read Faizar's channel as a *daʿwa* medium whose viewers report benefits, while Mupida (2020) and Azizah (2021) portray Dhanu as a religious entrepreneur whose

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televised healing prioritizes spectacle. Beyond Islamic healing, studies of online worship show communities improvising mediated ritual while debating whether it can substitute for embodied gathering (Črnič & Jurekovič, 2026; Othman, 2022; Parish, 2020), and religious communities negotiate media according to their values and authority structures (Campbell, 2017; ̓Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). Digital *ruqya* also continues Nusantara healing repertoires, from the *dukun* to *suwuk* and *pengobatan alternatif* (alternative medicine), which have long combined recitation, breath, and touch, and against which the label *ruqya sharʿiyya* marks a scripturally purified boundary (Ishmah & A'yun, 2021; Riswanto & Younis, 2023; Suyami et al., 2025). Research on Indonesian digital Islam, finally, has examined preacher economies, online piety, *daʿwa* visual culture, and commodified authority (Husein & Slama, 2018; Nisa, 2018; Raya, 2025; Slama, 2017), but not healing, a domain in which authority is tested against the bodily and spiritual experiences of audiences.

Three gaps follow. Studies of Faizar document content and reception but not how platform logic shapes presence and authority; studies of Dhanu remain on the production side and leave audience acceptance or contestation unexamined; and no study has compared the two practitioners, although they represent contrasting approaches to digital *ruqya* within the same platform ecosystem, at the intersection of digital religion, platform studies, and Islamic communication (Campbell, 2024; Wahid, 2024). This study therefore asks how physical absence and religious authority are negotiated in the digital *ruqya* practices of Muhammad Faizar and Dhanu, two of the most widely followed Indonesian *ruqya* practitioners on YouTube (see Table 1). Specifically, it asks (1) how presence is constructed through their content strategies, (2) to what extent audiences accept or contest their authority in user comments, and (3) how audience comments reveal the role of the YouTube technological ecosystem in shaping these patterns.

To answer these questions, the study combines two frameworks. The first is Grant's Communication Technology Ecosystem (CTE), which conceives a communication technology as interacting layers of hardware, software, content, organizational infrastructure, the social system (laws, norms, and cultural values), and individual users, who traverse all layers and ultimately determine how a technology is made meaningful (Grant, 2022). Here, hardware refers to the screen-mediated separation of *rāqī* and *marqī*; software to platform features such as Shorts, live streaming, and the comment section; content to the visual and instructional strategies of the videos; organizational infrastructure to monetization, advertisements, memberships, and contact details for paid consultation; the social system to Islamic norms and Indonesian healing culture; and individual users to the commenters whose responses form the main dataset. CTE is preferred over the religious-social shaping of technology (Campbell, 2017) or mediatization approaches because its layered structure allows the material, economic, and normative conditions of the platform to be read together, while these digital-religion frameworks are used in the Discussion to interpret the findings.

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The second framework is Qurʾanic. *Maʿiyya* (divine with-ness) is grounded in Q.S. al-Hadid 57:4, "He is with you wherever you are," which classical exegesis reads as God's encompassing knowledge and watchfulness over His servants wherever they may be (Ibn Kathir, 1999), and in Q.S. al-Baqara 2:186, "I am near; I respond to the call of the supplicant when he calls upon Me," making it a form of presence independent of physical location. *Shifāʾ* (healing) is grounded in Q.S. al-Israʾ 17:82 and Q.S. Yunus 10:57, which describe the Qurʾan as healing and mercy for the believers and "healing for what is in the breasts"; al-Qurtubi (1964) records the exegetical debate over whether this healing concerns hearts alone or also bodily ailments through *ruqya*. In this study, *maʿiyya* is operationalized as comments expressing prayer, supplication, or a sense of being with God and the ritual community, and *shifāʾ* as comments reporting physical or spiritual relief.

The study seeks to make three contributions. Conceptually, it proposes three concepts developed in the Discussion, namely mediated devotional presence, somatic authority validation, and ambivalent reception, which add a bodily and reception-oriented dimension to digital religion scholarship. Methodologically, it is, to the authors' knowledge, one of the first to apply Grant's Communication Technology Ecosystem (Grant, 2022) to Islamic healing practice. Empirically, it compares both practitioners through a mixed-methods analysis of video content and a random sample of 786 comments drawn from 66,852 parent comments. The study argues that digital *ruqya* is not merely ritual relocated online but a religious practice reshaped by the logic of the platform in which it operates.

2. METHODS

This study is grounded in an interpretive-critical paradigm, which views social reality not as a fixed external entity but as a construction of meaning shaped by social structures and relations of power (Lincoln et al., 2023). The interpretive dimension enables the study to read how presence and authority are experienced and made meaningful by practitioners and audiences, while the critical dimension allows for an examination of the structural and algorithmic conditions that produce those meanings within the YouTube ecosystem (Lövheim & Campbell, 2017). The study adopts a transdisciplinary approach that fuses three disciplines into a single analytical framework: *daʿwa* studies, communication studies, and Qurʾanic and *tafsīr* studies. Following Klein's typology (Klein, 2017), this transdisciplinary integration goes beyond multidisciplinary juxtaposition or interdisciplinary synthesis, dissolving disciplinary boundaries into one unified framework capable of reading digital *ruqya* as simultaneously a religious practice, a mediated communicative event, a form of Qurʾanic reception, and a cultural practice continuous with Indonesian healing traditions. The Qurʾanic and *tafsīr* strand is operationalized through the concepts of *maʿiyya* and *shifāʾ*, which are defined from exegetical sources, used as coding categories, and reapplied as interpretive lenses in the

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Discussion. The study employs a convergent mixed-methods design, in which the qualitative and quantitative strands are collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and merged at the interpretation stage, where findings are also read against Indonesian healing culture, the social-system layer of the CTE framework, combining qualitative analysis of video content with quantitative analysis of sampled user comments to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon than either approach could yield alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research object/informants/participants

The subjects of this study are Muhammad Faizar and Dhanu, selected because they are among the most widely followed digital *ruqya* practitioners on YouTube in Indonesia, with approximately 3.02 million and 1.63 million subscribers, respectively, at the time of data collection (Table 1). Their selection also enables a comparative reading of how divergent content strategies produce different patterns of presence construction and authority negotiation within the same platform ecosystem. The objects of this study are the *ruqya* practices presented through both channels, encompassing video content presentation patterns, comment section interactions, and the negotiation of presence and authority that unfolds within them.

Table 1. Profile of the two channels at the time of data collection (April 2026)

Indicator	Muhammad Faizar	Ustadz Dhanu – Official Channel
Subscribers	3.02 million	1.63 million
Channel start date	February 8, 2020	January 18, 2016
Parent comments extracted	54,925	11,927
Comments sampled (Slovin, e = 5%)	398	388
Dominant content format	Live and recorded mass *ruqya* recitation with bodily instructions	Consultation narratives with clients and short prayer tips (Shorts)

Note. Subscriber counts are taken from the channel pages captured in April 2026.

Data collection technique

Data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, video observation was conducted on purposively selected videos from each channel, chosen because they most clearly display the visual and instructional strategies relevant to the research questions, such as an online ruqya session in which Faizar addresses a viewer's specific problem remotely. These observed videos are not necessarily among those from which comments were extracted. This technique enables the researcher to capture visual and instructional patterns through which presence is constructed and authority communicated, which is consistent with Creswell and Creswell's position that observation of audiovisual materials constitutes a robust qualitative data collection strategy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Second, selective documentary research was conducted covering scholarly literature on digital religion, religious authority, and *ruqya*, as well as *tafsīr* and hadith sources that ground the study's conceptual framework. Third, user comments were extracted from the five most-viewed videos and the five most-

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viewed Shorts from each channel (20 items in total; Appendix Table 1), selected on the basis of view count as an indicator of the content most widely consumed by audiences, using the YouTube Data API combined with a Python script, a method with established methodological precedent in social science research for yielding systematic, reproducible, and comprehensivè data coverage compared to manual collection (Breuer et al., 2023). Only parent comments were extracted because they constitute direct responses to the content, whereas replies are largely interpersonal exchanges among users; this choice, however, excludes part of the conversational contestation that unfolds in reply threads.

Validity technique

To maintain the credibility and trustworthiness of findings, this study employs triangulation as its primary validation strategy, which Creswell and Creswell describe as the examination of evidence from multiple sources to build coherent justification for emerging themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Triangulation is operationalized at three levels simultaneously. At the theory level, findings are read through both Grant's Communication Technology Ecosystem theory and the Qurʾanic conceptual framework, ensuring that no single theoretical lens dominates the interpretation. At the source level, data drawn from video content are compared and brought into dialogue with data drawn from user comments, so that practitioner constructions of presence and authority can be confirmed or contested by audience responses. At the method level, qualitative readings of visual and narrative content strategies are combined with quantitative pattern analysis of comment data, ensuring that findings do not rest on a single mode of reading.

Data analysis techniques

Data analysis follows an adaptation of the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, whose components of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification are operationalized here as reduction, categorization, and interpretation (Miles et al., 2014). At the reduction stage, purposively selected videos from each channel were examined through qualitative content analysis, while all parent comments on the five most-viewed videos and five most-viewed Shorts from each channel (20 items in total) were extracted via the YouTube Data API on the cut-off date in April 2026, yielding 54,925 comments from the Faizar channel and 11,927 comments from the Dhanu channel. Given the volume of these data, sample sizes were determined using the Slovin formula with a five percent margin of error. Although the formula has been criticized for ignoring the expected proportion and confidence level, it yields samples slightly larger than Cochran's formula for proportions at 95% confidence with $p = 0.5$ and finite population correction (approximately 382 and 373), and is therefore conservative for the descriptive proportions reported here. Simple random sampling was then applied in Python with a fixed random seed (42) to ensure that the sample can be reproduced, producing a sample of 398 comments from the Faizar channel and 388 comments from the Dhanu channel. At the categorization stage, emerging patterns were

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grouped according to the three analytical dimensions that correspond to the study's research questions: the negotiation of presence, the negotiation of authority, and the role of the platform ecosystem in shaping both. Coding was conducted deductively using a three-level codebook that links each comment to the study's analytical dimensions. Each sampled parent comment served as the unit of coding and was assigned first to a main category (presence, authority, platform ecosystem, or commodification), then to the concept grounding that category (*maʿiyya* for presence; *ahl al-dhikr* and *shifāʾ* for authority; Grant's Communication Technology Ecosystem for platform-related comments), and finally to a sub-code. Categories were mutually exclusive: each comment received a single category and a single sub-code based on its dominant meaning. The ten substantive sub-codes were communal prayer and affirmation, co-presence and attentive listening, and supplication for healing (presence); spiritual *shifāʾ*, physical *shifāʾ*, verbal acknowledgment, and rejection (authority); requests for solutions or contact (platform ecosystem); and advertisements and entertainment/fees (commodification). Sub-code frequencies were tallied for each channel and reported as percentages of the sampled comments. Comments unrelated to presence, authority, the platform, or commodification were coded as "other" (off-topic) and retained in the denominator for all percentages.

All comments were coded by the first author. The coded data were re-read in several iterative rounds, during which the codebook was refined and ambiguous assignments were revisited; the codebook and a subsample of coded comments were then reviewed by the co-authors, and disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Because coding was performed by a single coder, inter-coder reliability statistics were not computed, which we acknowledge as a limitation of the study. Differences in proportions between the two channels were tested using Pearson's chi-square test of independence (df = 1), with phi (φ) reported as the effect size, except for the comparison of the internal composition of presence-related comments across its three sub-codes (df = 2), for which Cramér's V is reported. Because 11 such comparisons were conducted without correction for multiple testing, all contrasts reported at $p < .001$ remain significant under a Bonferroni-adjusted threshold ($\alpha = .05/11 \approx .0045$), as does the difference in the internal composition of presence-related comments ($p = .003$). Given the different population sizes, channel ages, and audiences of the two channels, these tests indicate the robustness of contrasts within the samples rather than generalizations to all *ruqya* audiences. At the interpretation stage, categorized findings were read analytically against Grant's Communication Technology Ecosystem framework, with the aim of producing a comprehensive understanding of digital *ruqya* as a religious phenomenon actively shaped by platform logic.

Research ethics and positionality

This study analyzes publicly available YouTube content and comments. Following the ethical guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (franzke et al., 2020), commenters' usernames and profile information are not reported, quotations are limited

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to short unattributed excerpts accompanied by English translations, and health-related disclosures are reported in aggregate wherever possible. Data were collected through the official YouTube Data API. Because the study involved no interaction or intervention with users and relied exclusively on publicly accessible content, it was not submitted for formal ethical review; the safeguards described above were applied instead to minimize the risk of re-identification. Only publicly available comments were retrieved, in accordance with the YouTube API Services Terms of Service. The faces of *ruqya* participants in Figures 2–4 have been blurred, while the two practitioners, as public figures and the channels' owners, are shown unaltered, and the screenshots are reproduced solely for the purposes of scholarly analysis and critique.

The authors approach this study from backgrounds in *daʿwa* and communication studies. The authors have no personal, professional, or financial relationship with either practitioner or with the institutions affiliated with their channels, and the research received no funding or support from them. The study does not adjudicate the efficacy of *ruqya*; comments reporting healing are treated as expressions of perceived experience rather than as evidence of therapeutic effect.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Negotiating Presence

In digital *ruqya*, the hardware of the screen device functions as an absolute limiting factor that eliminates the possibility of physical encounter between *rāqī* and *marqī*, rendering ritual acts such as *masḥ* and *nafth* impossible to perform directly. Yet religious presence does not necessarily dissolve in the absence of physical co-presence; recent scholarship demonstrates that presence can be renegotiated through available media even when bodily co-location is structurally foreclosed (Othman, 2022).

On the Faizar channel, presence is constructed through a combination of visual and instructional strategies that do not attempt to replicate face-to-face encounter but instead build an alternative form of presence. At the visual level, Faizar consistently employs close-up framing with direct gaze toward the camera, as seen in the video "Ruqyah Penghancur Sihir, Powerful Ruqya Against Black Magic." This composition places the face at the center of attention while creating the impression of personal interaction between speaker and viewer. The gaze directed at the lens reinforces the illusion of direct communication despite screen mediation, where the camera functions not merely as a documentation tool but as a medium that constructs symbolic proximity and a perception of presence.

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Figure 1. Muhammad Faizar conducting *ruqya*
(Source: Muhammad Faizar YouTube channel, "Ruqyah Penghancur Sihir", accessed April 2026)

At the instructional level, Faizar combines Qurʾanic recitation with direct guidance to audiences. In videos such as "Live Praktik Ruqyah Massal Bersama Ustadz Muhammad Faizar" (Live mass *ruqya* practice with Ustadz Muhammad Faizar), viewers are invited to respond physically, for instance by touching specific parts of their body when sensing particular sensations during playback. This pattern reveals a role shift in which the physical acts previously performed by the *rāqī* are transferred to the audience upon their own bodies. Digital *ruqya* thus ceases to be a passive experience and instead involves the active bodily participation of audiences within their own private spaces.



Figure 2. Muhammad Faizar leading a mass *ruqya* session
(Source: Muhammad Faizar YouTube channel, "Live Praktik Ruqyah Massal...", accessed April 2026)

Coding of sampled comments indicates that this construction of presence resonates with a substantial share of commenters. Of 398 sampled comments, 160 (40.2%) fell within the presence/*maʿiyya* category. The most dominant response was communal

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prayer and affirmation (amin), recorded in 83 comments (51.9% of presence-related comments), in which audiences accompanied the viewing experience with collective prayer. A further 49 comments (30.6%) took the form of supplications for healing directed to God during or after viewing, indicating that digital *ruqya* sessions evoke a direct sense of God's presence. An additional 28 comments (17.5%) expressed co-presence, with viewers stating that they were actively participating from their own spaces. These three patterns together demonstrate that although the *rāqī* and the audience do not share a physical space, a sense of ritual togetherness remains constructed through the digital medium, with audiences positioning themselves as participants in the ritual rather than as onlookers.

On the Dhanu channel, presence is constructed through a consultative and narrative approach that does not rely on simultaneous engagement during video playback but on the presentation of cases and explanations resembling a consultation process. In content such as "Bagaimana Mengusir Jin Dari Badan Kita? Ruang Ustadz Dhanu" (How do we expel jinn from our bodies? Ustadz Dhanu's room), Dhanu presents interactions with patients and recounts specific cases in narrative form, creating a dialogic atmosphere in which audiences are positioned as those who follow the flow of consultation and reasoning rather than as active simultaneous participants.



Figure 3. Dhanu explaining to a client how to expel jinn
(Source: Ustadz Dhanu YouTube channel, "Bagaimana Mengusir Jin Dari Badan Kita?", accessed April 2026)

Dhanu also provides guidance in the form of explanations and prayer tips that are not bound to the moment of simultaneous viewing. Unlike approaches that direct audiences to perform actions in real time, this practice opens space for audiences to adopt and apply the teachings independently outside the video context. Engagement is therefore not immediate but deferred, contingent on individual interpretation.

Reception patterns on the Dhanu channel reveal a different character. Of 388 sampled comments, 94 (24.2%) fell within the presence/*maʿiyya* category. Communal prayer and affirmation was by far the largest sub-code (69 comments; 73.4% of presence-

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related comments), followed by supplications for healing (18; 19.1%) and co-presence and attentive listening (7; 7.4%). Presence on this channel is expressed almost entirely through brief, formulaic responses of prayer and affirmation such as "amin," while statements of being present alongside the session are rare (7 comments, 1.8% of all sampled comments). Audiences thus affirm the consultation from a distance rather than positioning themselves as participants within it. This pattern, together with the relatively modest share of presence-related comments, is consistent with Dhanu's consultative-narrative pattern, which builds engagement in a deferred and distanced rather than immediate and participatory manner.

Taken together, the two channels negotiate presence in markedly different ways. Presence-related comments were considerably more common on the Faizar channel than on the Dhanu channel (40.2% vs. 24.2%; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 22.92$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .17$), and their internal composition also differed ($\chi^2(2, N = 254) = 11.89$, $p = .003$, $V = .22$; Figure 5). On Faizar, presence was distributed across communal prayer and affirmation (51.9%), supplication for healing (30.6%), and co-presence (17.5%), whereas on Dhanu it was concentrated in communal prayer and affirmation (73.4%), with co-presence marginal (7.4%). The sharpest contrast lies in co-presence, which appeared roughly four times as often on Faizar (7.0% vs. 1.8% of all sampled comments; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 12.64$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .13$). Faizar's audiences thus negotiate presence as participation in a ritual unfolding in real time, whereas Dhanu's audiences negotiate it as affirmation from a distance, following a consultation rather than entering it.



Figure 4. Dhanu offering a prayer against jinn disturbance in a Short
(Source: Ustadz Dhanu YouTube channel, "Doa Gangguan Jin di Rumah" [Prayer against jinn *disturbance at home], accessed April 2026)*

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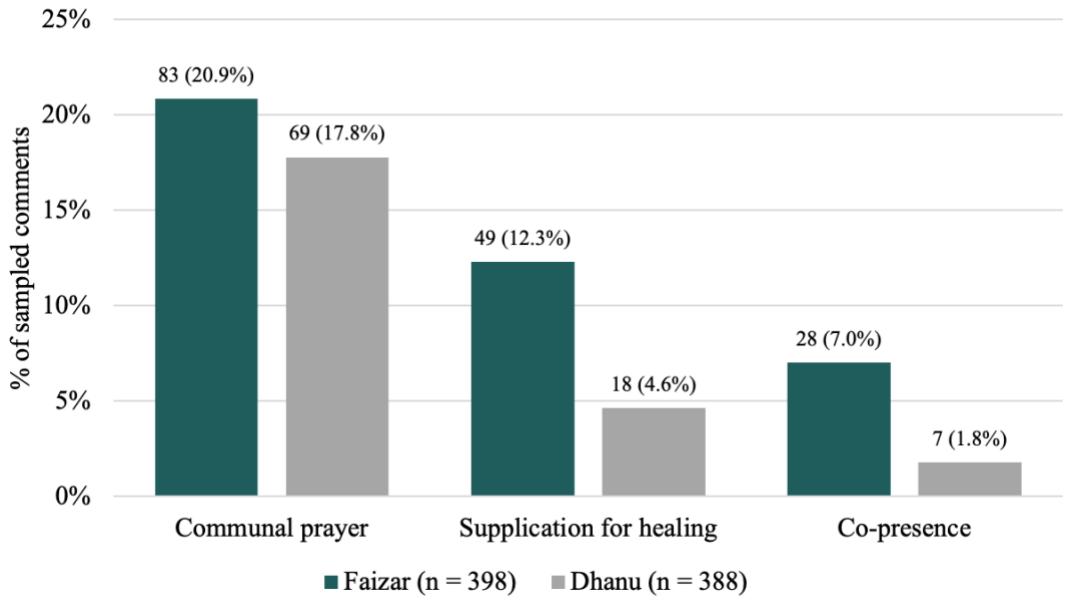


Figure 5. Presence-related comments by sub-code, n (% of sampled comments)
Faizar (n = 398): communal prayer 83 (20.9%), supplication for healing 49 (12.3%), co-presence 28 (7.0%); Dhanu (n = 388): communal prayer 69 (17.8%), supplication for healing 18 (4.6%), co-presence 7 (1.8%)

Negotiating Authority

The question of who holds legitimate religious authority has grown increasingly complex in the digital era. On platforms such as YouTube, audiences do not merely receive authority claims advanced by practitioners but actively affirm or contest them through the comment section, making the negotiation of authority a visible and measurable process (Berger & Golan, 2024; Campbell, 2020).

On the Faizar channel, authority is affirmed far more often than it is contested. Of 398 sampled comments, 116 (29.1%) addressed the practitioner's authority, and 93 of these (80.2% of authority-related comments; 23.4% of all sampled comments) affirmed it. Verbal acknowledgment and appreciation were recorded in 20 comments (5.0%), while responses in the *shifā'* category, both physical (55 comments, 13.8%) and spiritual (18 comments, 4.5%), constitute a deeper form of authority recognition in which audiences do not merely praise the practitioner but report that their own bodies and inner states have responded. Comments such as "Amiiin, alhamdulillah tiap sy segar ruqiah ini badan sy terasa baikan" ("Amen, praise be to God, every time I listen to this ruqya my body feels better") illustrate how self-reported bodily experience becomes the main medium through which authority is affirmed. Rejection of Faizar's authority was comparatively modest, recorded in only 23 comments (5.8%; 19.8% of authority-related comments), and tended toward general skepticism about the supernatural rather than specific contestation of his competence, ranging from mild doubt such as "gak ngefek" ("it has no effect") to ideologically framed dismissal.

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On the Dhanu channel, authority is addressed less often and is far more frequently called into question. Of 388 sampled comments, 68 (17.5%) concerned the practitioner's authority, divided equally between acknowledgment and rejection (34 comments each, 8.8% of all sampled comments). Acknowledgment consisted mainly of verbal appreciation (27 comments, 7.0%); physical *shifāʾ* was rare (7 comments, 1.8%), and spiritual *shifāʾ* was entirely absent. Healing claims do surface, as in "Alhamdullilah dengan mengamini ustad Dhanu di dep an tivi rasa sakit selama 16 tahun sembuh total .." ("Praise be to God, by saying amen along with Ustadz Dhanu in front of the TV, the pain I have had for 16 years is completely healed..."), but such testimony is the exception rather than the dominant way audiences relate to the practitioner. Rejection, which makes up half of all authority-related comments, is directed at Dhanu's expertise itself: commenters question whether the possessions displayed on screen are genuine and, by extension, whether the practitioner can be trusted to diagnose and treat them. A comment such as "Bohongan 👎 rekayasa" ("Fake 👎, staged") condenses this stance, treating the session not as a treatment that failed but as one that was fabricated. Whereas rejection on the Faizar channel tends toward general skepticism about the supernatural, rejection on the Dhanu channel targets the practitioner's competence and the authenticity of his practice.

Taken together, the two channels construct authority in markedly different ways. Authority-related comments were more common on the Faizar channel than on the Dhanu channel (29.1% vs. 17.5%; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 14.80$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .14$), and their internal balance also differed: affirmation accounted for 80.2% of authority-related comments on Faizar but only 50.0% on Dhanu ($\chi^2(1, N = 184) = 18.25$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .31$). The gap in acknowledgment across all sampled comments was likewise significant (23.4% vs. 8.8%; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 30.93$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .20$) and is driven almost entirely by *shifāʾ* testimony, which appeared in 18.3% of Faizar comments but only 1.8% of Dhanu comments ($\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 58.77$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .27$). Neither verbal appreciation (5.0% vs. 7.0%; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 1.31$, $p = .253$, $\varphi = .04$) nor rejection (5.8% vs. 8.8%; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 2.60$, $p = .107$, $\varphi = .06$) differed significantly between the channels; the difference lies instead in the weight each carries within each channel's authority discourse. Faizar's authority thus tends to be confirmed through his audience's reports of healing, whereas Dhanu's expertise is more often met with doubt, with acknowledgment and rejection appearing in equal measure.

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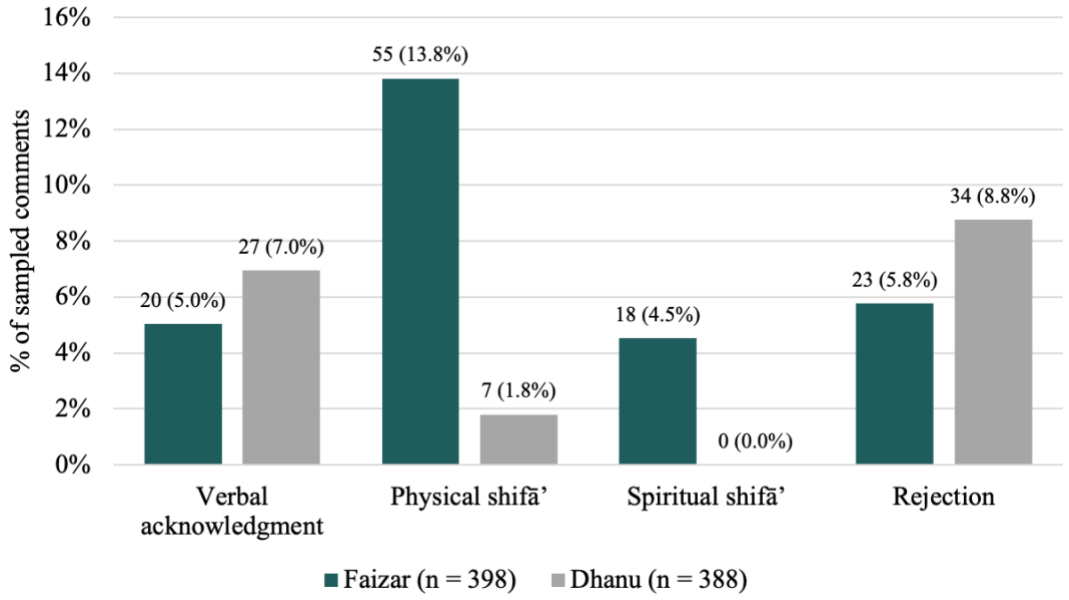


Figure 6. Authority-related comments by sub-code, n (% of sampled comments)
Faizar (n = 398): verbal acknowledgment 20 (5.0%), physical *shifā'* 55 (13.8%), spiritual *shifā'* 18 (4.5%), rejection 23 (5.8%); Dhanu (n = 388): 27 (7.0%), 7 (1.8%), 0 (0.0%), 34 (8.8%)

The Digital Ecosystem as a Shaping Force

The two preceding findings do not unfold in a neutral space but are produced within a technological ecosystem that operates according to its own logic. Grant (2022) affirms that platform organizational infrastructure functions simultaneously as an enabling and limiting force, and that individual users who traverse all ecosystem layers ultimately determine how technology is adopted, used, and made meaningful. Two concrete phenomena emerge from the data that illustrate how the YouTube ecosystem actively shapes the way audiences conduct and perceive digital *ruqya*. The software and organizational layers of the platform are also visible in the video material itself. The captured screens show a channel membership ("Gabung") button on the Faizar channel (Figures 1–2), a sponsored donation advertisement displayed beside a Dhanu video, and a WhatsApp number and clinic telephone number overlaid on Dhanu's consultation video (Figure 3), while the Dhanu channel also distributes prayer tips in the Shorts format (Figure 4). These features show that monetization, paid consultation, and short-form distribution are built into the environment in which audiences encounter *ruqya*.

On the Faizar channel, the YouTube ecosystem redefines *ruqya* first and foremost as a service that can be requested. Of the 398 sampled comments, 47 (11.8%) were coded under the platform dimension, all of them requests for solutions or contact, ranging from asking for the practitioner's WhatsApp number to inquiring how to invite him to one's home. In these comments, the comment section functions less as a space of response than as a front desk through which viewers seek access to the practitioner, reconfiguring the relationship between healer and audience into one resembling that of a service provider

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and client. Explicit commodification, by contrast, is marginal (4 comments; 1.0%): three comments complain that advertisements interrupt the *ruqya* sessions, and one remarks, "sayangnya berobat ke ustad faizar jutaan" ("it's a pity that treatment with Ustadz Faizar costs millions [of rupiah]"). Although few, such concerns do not remain confined to the question of price. A small number of authority-coded comments carry the same suspicion into the evaluation of the practitioner himself, dismissing the sessions as "konten mnipu" ("deceptive content") or warning, "Jgn jualan ayat Al Qur'an" ("don't sell the verses of the Qurʾan"). Here, the perception of a commercial motive becomes grounds for questioning the healer's religious legitimacy, indicating that commodification shapes not only how *ruqya* is accessed but also whether its authority is recognized.

On the Dhanu channel, the platform dimension follows a similar pattern: 51 of the 388 sampled comments (13.1%) request solutions or contact, from asking how to attend Dhanu's sessions to how to reach him for treatment. The difference lies in commodification, which accounts for 39 comments (10.1%), all coded as entertainment/fees. Some of these comments frame the session explicitly in terms of money and production, such as "Tontonan bukan tuntunan....namanya jg cari duit...." ("A spectacle, not guidance... it's all about making money, after all"), or suspect that the session is staged ("settingan") and the mediator paid. Most, however, respond to the exorcism as comedy, as in "episode paling kocak🤣🤣🤣😂 ngakak abiees..." ("the funniest episode ever, I couldn't stop laughing"). The word "episode" is telling: audiences read the *ruqya* session as an installment in a content series, casting the patient and the possessing jinn as performers. In this register, *ruqya* is redefined from a healing ritual into a spectacle valued for its entertainment, and doubts about authenticity ("jgn2 cuma acting," "maybe it's just acting") shade into doubts about the practitioner's authority, as when an authority-coded comment mocks the channel for its exaggerated content titles.

The comparison between the two channels shows where the YouTube ecosystem's redefinition of *ruqya* converges and where it diverges. The share of comments treating the channel as a point of access to the practitioner does not differ significantly between Faizar and Dhanu (11.8% vs. 13.1%; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 0.32$, $p = .571$, $\varphi = .02$), suggesting that the transformation of the comment section into a consultation space is a structural effect of the platform rather than a feature of a particular practitioner. Commodification, by contrast, differs significantly (1.0% vs. 10.1%; $\chi^2(1, N = 786) = 31.09$, $p < .001$, $\varphi = .20$): on the Faizar channel it surfaces as sporadic complaints about fees and advertisements, whereas on the Dhanu channel it emerges as a sustained reading of *ruqya* as *tontonan* (spectacle). Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the YouTube ecosystem does not merely distribute ritual content but leads the public to redefine *ruqya* practice: as a service to be requested, a commodity to be priced, and entertainment to be consumed. Because these redefinitions also inform judgments about the practitioner's legitimacy, the effect of commodification extends into the domain of authority, producing

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what this study terms ambivalent reception, in which the same ritual is simultaneously experienced as genuine spiritual healing and suspected as commercial performance.

Table 2. Summary of comment coding for both channels

Category / sub-code	Faizar, n (%)	Dhanu, n (%)	χ^2 (p)
Presence (*ma'iyya*), total	160 (40.2)	94 (24.2)	22.92 (< .001)
Communal prayer and affirmation	83 (20.9)	69 (17.8)	1.19 (.276)
Supplication for healing	49 (12.3)	18 (4.6)	14.83 (< .001)
Co-presence and attentive listening	28 (7.0)	7 (1.8)	12.64 (< .001)
Authority affirmed, total	93 (23.4)	34 (8.8)	30.93 (< .001)
Verbal acknowledgment	20 (5.0)	27 (7.0)	1.31 (.253)
Physical *shifā'*	55 (13.8)	7 (1.8)	39.03 (< .001)
Spiritual *shifā'*	18 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	17.96 (< .001)
Authority rejected	23 (5.8)	34 (8.8)	2.60 (.107)
Consultation requests	47 (11.8)	51 (13.1)	0.32 (.571)
Commodification (advertisements, fees, entertainment)	4 (1.0)	39 (10.1)	31.09 (< .001)
Other / uncoded	71 (17.8)	136 (35.1)	30.00 (< .001)
Total sample	398 (100)	388 (100)	

Note. Percentages are of all sampled comments per channel. χ^2 = Pearson's chi-square test of independence, df = 1, N = 786. Categories are mutually exclusive.

Discussion

Negotiating Presence: Mediated Devotional Presence in Screen-Mediated Ritual

The first finding touches on a fundamental question in digital religion scholarship: to what extent can ritual rooted in bodily involvement be transposed to a screen-mediated space? Within the embodiment framework, religious ritual in digital spaces can still produce effects comparable to offline ritual because the body is not abandoned when religious experience migrates to a medium but is extended into forms of mediated engagement that remain corporeal in character (Radde-Antweiler, 2021, p. 105). This framework provides the point of departure for reading what happens to *masḥ* and *nafth* in digital *ruqya*, when the bodily acts that have historically constituted the core of the ritual's procedural validity can no longer be performed directly by the *rāqī*. A recent cross-national study conducted across seven European countries reaches a more cautious conclusion, arguing that digital technology alone cannot sustain a fully embodied religious life because religion is fundamentally embodied and resists complete digital transposition (Črnič & Jurekovič, 2026).

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The findings of this study neither simply confirm nor contradict either position. Instead, they reveal a third possibility situated between the two. On the Faizar channel, the corporeal dimension of ritual does not disappear and is not preserved in its original form but is relocated, as the act of touching the body previously performed by the *rāqī* is now instructed to audiences upon their own bodies, with somatic responses such as warmth and trembling reported directly in the comment section. Embodiment in digital *ruqya* does not collapse when transposed to the screen but remains alive precisely because it is distributed across the private spaces of viewers. This finding extends the thesis of Suhr, who reads *ruqya* as a ritual montage that produces the "absent presence" of the unseen world (Suhr, 2019, p. 121). If in Suhr's account this absent presence operates within physical encounters between *rāqī* and *marqī*, the present findings show that in digital *ruqya* an additional layer of absence is introduced, as the *rāqī* himself is now physically absent, having been displaced from the ritual space by the screen. Yet this added layer does not collapse the experience of presence, as evidenced by the 40.2% of sampled comments on the Faizar channel and 24.2% on the Dhanu channel containing expressions of presence. The concept of absent presence thus proves more elastic than Suhr's account implies, remaining constructible even when the human intermediary has been withdrawn from physical space and replaced by a screen.

The forms of presence that emerge are not uniform, and here the findings simultaneously confirm and extend the perspective of Othman (2022), who in his study of Sufi ritual during social restrictions demonstrates that the act of listening can function as a mode of presence in its own right when physical encounter is foreclosed (Othman, 2022, p. 265). The pattern on the Dhanu channel is partly consistent with Othman's thesis: its consultation narratives position viewers as listeners following a case rather than as participants in it, and presence there surfaces mainly as brief prayer and affirmation (73.4% of presence-related comments) rather than as explicit statements of being present (7.4%), signaling a form of presence anchored in attentive reception rather than action. The pattern on the Faizar channel, however, reveals a form of presence that Othman's framework does not capture, one in which presence extends beyond listening into active bodily participation. Derived from two cases, this study therefore proposes, as a proposition for further testing, that mediated presence in digital *ruqya* spans a spectrum from the reflective-receptive mode observable on the Dhanu channel to the participatory-corporeal mode observable on the Faizar channel, and that the same medium can produce different positions along this spectrum depending on the content strategy chosen by each practitioner. These differences, however, may not stem from content strategy alone. The two channels differ in genre, with Faizar's live mass recitations contrasting with Dhanu's consultation narratives, and in history, as Dhanu has a longer media career that includes television programming (Azizah, 2021). Format, audience composition, and timing are therefore plausible confounding factors. The spectrum also resonates with Indonesian

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digital-Islam scholarship showing that online piety takes both expressive and anxious, reflective forms (Husein & Slama, 2018).

On this basis, this study defines mediated devotional presence as a sense of being with God and with a ritual community that commenters express during or after screen-mediated ritual, operationally identified in comments of communal prayer and affirmation, supplication, and co-presence. It differs from Suhr's absent presence, which concerns the unseen world made present within a physical encounter, and from Othman's listening as presence, which centers on auditory reception, in that it is devotional, directed to God rather than to the practitioner, and can be either receptive or participatory. The Qurʾanic notion of *maʿiyya* clarifies why such presence does not depend on co-location. Q.S. al-Hadid 57:4 affirms that God is with believers wherever they are, which Ibn Kathir (1999) reads as His knowledge and watchfulness encompassing them in every place, and Q.S. al-Baqara 2:186 promises that God is near and answers the one who calls upon Him. The supplications for healing recorded on the two channels (49 and 18 comments) can be read in this light: commenters address their requests not to the *rāqī* on screen but directly to God, treating the video as an occasion for *duʿāʾ* rather than as a substitute for the practitioner's physical touch. In this sense, digital *ruqya* relocates the mediating role of the practitioner while leaving intact the devotional relationship that *maʿiyya* describes.

Negotiating Authority: Somatic Authority Validation

One of the most widely shared positions in digital religion scholarship is that religious authority on platforms is no longer determined by institutional standing but is renegotiated through communicative performance and audience recognition. Campbell affirms that the emergence of religious content creators shifts authority away from the monopoly of traditional scholars toward something co-produced between creators, communities, and audiences (Campbell, 2020, p. 4; Campbell & Garner, 2016, p. 91). This thesis is reinforced from multiple directions: Lohlker and Wahid demonstrate that Islamic authority is increasingly determined by algorithmic visibility (Lohlker & Wahid, 2026), Berger and Golan show that epistemic legitimacy is achieved through engagement metrics (Berger & Golan, 2024, p. 274), while Whyte documents how non-institutional actors claim authority outside conventional scholarly pathways (Whyte, 2022, p. 69). The findings of this study confirm this basic premise, as both Faizar and Dhanu are figures whose authority rests not on institutional recognition but on open testing by audiences in the comment section. However, the findings reveal that authority testing in digital *ruqya* does not remain at the level of discourse, image, or metrics as emphasized by existing scholarship but descends to a level that has thus far been overlooked, namely the body.

On the Faizar channel, authority receives its most consequential recognition not through verbal praise but through somatic audience responses, and it is here that the study extends Febrian's framework of visual authority (Febrian, 2024). The close-up framing and direct gaze strategies that Febrian emphasizes are indeed present in Faizar's content, yet the comment data show that audience reception does not stop at the image. The most

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frequent form of affirmation arrives as self-reported bodily relief (13.8%) and spiritual restoration (4.5%), as commenters recount their bodies feeling warm, light, or improved during viewing. On the Dhanu channel, by contrast, self-reported bodily relief is almost absent (1.8%), and authority is contested instead through discursive means, including normative objections, allegations of staging, and laughter and irony, with rejection accounting for half of all authority-related comments (34 of 68), compared with roughly one in five on the Faizar channel (23 of 116).

This contrast clarifies the scope of the concept. Somatic authority validation refers to the affirmation of a practitioner's authority through bodily and spiritual experiences that commenters report about themselves, such as warmth, lightness, or relief during viewing. It differs from Febrian's visual authority, built through the practitioner's image, and from discursive recognition through praise. Its counterpart is not somatic but discursive delegitimization, in which commenters contest authority through normative argument, accusations of staging, and irony, as on the Dhanu channel. Somatic validation and discursive contestation are therefore two different registers of reception rather than two directions of a single bodily process. What distinguishes authority negotiation in digital *ruqya* from that in *daʿwa* more broadly is that what is at stake is not only the credibility of a preacher but also a healing claim that commenters evaluate in light of their own perceived experience. These reports indicate perceived experience rather than therapeutic efficacy, and only a minority of commenters on either channel offered them.

The Qurʾanic notion of *shifāʾ* helps explain why commenters frame their experiences in these terms. Q.S. al-Israʾ 17:82 describes the Qurʾan as "healing and mercy for the believers," and Q.S. Yunus 10:57 as "healing for what is in the breasts." Al-Qurtubi (1964) records two readings of this healing, one confined to the heart through the removal of ignorance and doubt, and one extending to bodily ailments through *ruqya*. The two sub-codes of physical and spiritual *shifāʾ* mirror this exegetical distinction: on the Faizar channel, 55 comments report physical relief and 18 report spiritual relief, suggesting that commenters draw on both readings when interpreting what they experience. Because the healing is attributed to the recited Qurʾan rather than to the practitioner's person, the somatic validation of authority is, in the commenters' own frame, a derivative one: the *rāqī* is affirmed as a competent conduit of Qurʾanic healing rather than as its source.

The Digital Ecosystem as a Shaping Force: Ambivalent Reception

Existing literature on digital religion in Indonesia has productively read online *daʿwa* through the lens of commodification. Raya demonstrates how contemporary Indonesian preachers operate in a space where authority and commodity become inseparable (Raya, 2025, p. 161), while platform economy scholars such as Kopf (2020), Ørmen and Gregersen, and Rieder and colleagues (Ørmen & Gregersen, 2023, p. 225; Rieder et al., 2023) confirm that YouTube structurally incentivizes creators to treat engagement as a revenue source, a tendency that within Grant's framework reflects the

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simultaneously enabling and limiting character of platform organizational infrastructure (Grant, 2022, p. 5; Slama, 2017). Both figures examined in this study have been previously read within similar frameworks: Mupida characterizes Dhanu as a religious entrepreneur (Mupida, 2020, p. 27) and Azizah critiques his practice as laden with commodification (Azizah, 2021, p. 89), while Salsabila and colleagues read Faizar's content as a *daʿwa* medium with some users reporting benefits in the comment section as documented by Nabila (Nabila, 2024; Salsabila et al., 2024, p. 129). The findings of this study confirm that commodification logic is indeed at work, but reveal that the influence of platform structure does not stop at the level of content production by practitioners. It extends into the ways audiences conduct and perceive the ritual itself, in two opposing directions simultaneously.

The first direction shows audiences who treat the ritual with such seriousness that they restructure the comment section into a consultation space, evident in 47 comments (11.8%) on Faizar and 51 comments (13.1%) on Dhanu containing direct requests for personal assistance such as requesting a WhatsApp number or asking how to invite the practitioner to their home. This shift moves beyond what previous scholarship has captured: the comment section itself becomes an infrastructure for requesting care, a function that the organizational layer reinforces when practitioners display contact numbers for paid consultation (Figure 3).

The second direction shows audiences who read the same ritual precisely as commodification, evident in complaints about advertisements interrupting *ruqya* sessions and fees described as reaching "jutaan" on Faizar, and, on Dhanu, readings of the session as staged spectacle and entertainment (*tontonan*) driven by money, as in "Tontonan bukan tuntunan....namanya jg cari duit...." If Mupida and Azizah read commodification as something done by practitioners on the production side, the present findings show that commodification also becomes an object of perception and contestation on the reception side, as audiences actively evaluate and resist the commercial dimensions they experience as disturbing the sanctity of the practice. These evaluations echo the normative principle that *daʿwa* should be grounded in sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) rather than material gain (Yuwafik et al., 2025), a principle that commenters appear to apply themselves when they question advertisements and fees. The YouTube ecosystem thus does not produce a single uniform effect but generates a split experience from the same infrastructure, in which identical ritual content can be embraced as genuine healing sincerely sought and simultaneously suspected as commodified performance. This is the layer that neither commodification theory focused on production nor previous studies of Faizar and Dhanu focused on content have captured: that audiences are not passive recipients of platform logic but active agents whose responses to the same structure branch simultaneously into sincerity and suspicion. Ambivalent reception is thus defined here as the coexistence, within the same audience and toward the same ritual content, of sincere engagement and commercial suspicion. It differs from active-reception approaches (Nurhablisyah & Bakti, 2024),

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which emphasize how audiences decode messages, in that it locates ambivalence in audiences' relation to the platform's economic infrastructure rather than to the message alone.

Ambivalent Reception and Religious Moderation in Digital Healing

The ambivalence documented above also bears on religious moderation, a central concern of Indonesian religious life and policy (Muiz et al., 2026). Q.S. al-Baqara 2:143 describes the Muslim community as *ummatan wasaṭan*, a "middle community," which Ibn Kathir (1999) glosses as the best and most just. Read in this light, the refusal of many commenters to take either an uncritical or a dismissive stance, embracing *ruqya* as Qurʾanic healing while questioning advertisements, fees, and apparently staged performances, can be understood as a form of moderation from below, in which audiences themselves balance devotion and critical judgment. At the same time, the data reveal the risks identified in the literature on digital religion and moderation (Cahyono et al., 2025; Setia & Haq, 2023). Normative objections such as the claim that one must not seek treatment from a practitioner who speaks with jinn show how readily the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate healing is policed online, and *ruqya* content that dramatizes jinn possession and sorcery can feed exclusive claims of authority, suspicion of other healers, and polarization between supporters and critics.

These findings also have a cultural dimension. Faizar's instruction to viewers to place their hands on their own bodies and Dhanu's reported dialogues with jinn, as described by commenters, echo older Nusantara healing repertoires, in which a healer recites formulas, blows, and touches, as in *suwuk*, or negotiates with unseen beings, as associated with the *dukun* (Ishmah & A'yun, 2021; Suyami et al., 2025). Within this cultural field, the label *ruqya sharʿiyya* draws a boundary between Qurʾanic healing and practices regarded as sorcery or *shirk*, while local elements such as water and herbal media continue to be incorporated into *ruqya* practice (Riswanto & Younis, 2023). Comments on Dhanu's channel that ask whether he is a *dukun* or an *ustadz* can therefore be read as audiences policing this boundary, and the ambivalence documented here as part of a wider cultural negotiation over what counts as legitimate healing in Indonesian Islam.

These dynamics suggest that *ruqya* literacy, understood as knowledge of the conditions under which *ruqya* is permissible, namely recitation of the Qurʾan and the absence of *shirk* (Muslim, n.d., Kitab al-Salam, no. 2200), may serve as a resource for moderation by enabling audiences to evaluate practitioners on normative grounds rather than on spectacle or popularity. Because the study does not measure attitudes toward moderation directly, this reading should be treated as an interpretive proposition for future research.

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Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, it examines only two channels, so its findings cannot be generalized to digital *ruqya* in Indonesia as a whole. Second, it relies on parent comments and excludes reply threads, in which much contestation may unfold. Third, the sample of 786 comments, while adequate for descriptive proportions, cannot capture rare categories with precision. Fourth, it does not analyze systematic platform-level data, such as recommendation patterns or monetization status, so its account of the ecosystem rests on what is visible in comments and screen captures. Fifth, commenters are a self-selected subset of viewers, and their written responses indicate perceived experience rather than the experience of silent viewers or the efficacy of *ruqya*.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to analyze how physical absence and religious authority are negotiated in the digital *ruqya* practices of Muhammad Faizar and Dhanu on YouTube, and it concludes that digital *ruqya* is not merely the relocation of ritual to an online space but a religious practice actively reshaped by the logic of the platform in which it operates. On the dimension of presence, the physical dimension of ritual does not disappear when direct encounter is structurally foreclosed but is sustained through what this study terms mediated devotional presence, spanning a spectrum from the reflective-receptive mode on the Dhanu channel to the participatory-corporeal mode on the Faizar channel. On the dimension of authority, the testing of legitimacy does not remain at the level of discourse, image, or engagement metrics but descends to the bodily level in what this study terms somatic authority validation, through which Faizar's authority is affirmed in audience reports of healing; on the Dhanu channel, where such reports are almost absent, authority is contested instead through discursive means such as normative objections, allegations of staging, and irony, although the overall rate of rejection did not differ significantly between the two channels (8.8% vs. 5.8%, $p = .107$). On the dimension of the ecosystem, the YouTube structure does not produce a single uniform effect but generates ambivalent reception, in which identical ritual content is simultaneously embraced as genuine healing, to the point where the comment section is restructured into a consultation space, and suspected as commodification, ranging from complaints about advertisements and fees to readings of *ruqya* as entertainment. The principal contribution of this study to the development of *da'wa* and Islamic communication lies in these three concepts, which together demonstrate that presence and authority in digital *ruqya* are negotiated not in a neutral space but within a technological ecosystem that shapes how ritual is produced, experienced, recognized, and evaluated, with audiences functioning as reflective actors who ultimately determine its meaning.

For digital *ruqya* practitioners such as Faizar and Dhanu, the findings underscore the importance of maintaining clarity of intention and purity of practice, since audiences have proven sensitive in distinguishing healing that is genuinely experienced from

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practice suspected of commodification, while the restructuring of the comment section into a consultation space signals an ethical responsibility to respond to the personal religious needs that audiences bring to these spaces. For future researchers, given that this study is limited to two figures and to written comment data and therefore does not reach the direct experiential dimension of audiences, subsequent work is encouraged to combine content analysis with in-depth interviews and to extend the scope to other platforms such as TikTok and Instagram or to compare digital *ruqya* across cultural contexts, in order to test whether the patterns of mediated devotional presence, somatic authority validation, and ambivalent reception identified here are specific to Indonesia or hold more broadly. For religious institutions and platform stakeholders concerned with the integrity of digital religious practice, the findings point to the need for digital religious literacy and content governance attentive to the specific vulnerabilities of audiences who seek spiritual healing in commodifying platform environments.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contributions: The first author contributed to the conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, and writing of the original draft of the manuscript. The second author contributed to the preparation of the final manuscript, its revision, and language refinement. The third author developed the theoretical and methodological framework of the study, supervised the research, and critically reviewed the manuscript. The fourth author contributed to proofreading and language editing of the manuscript.

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Generative Artificial Intelligence Use Statement: The author(s) declare that artificial intelligence (AI) was used solely as a language refinement aid in the preparation of this article, limited to improving grammar, clarity, and the readability of the English text. AI was not used as a substitute for the author(s) in the conceptualization of the study, the collection and analysis of data, the development of the discussion, or the drawing of conclusions, all of which were carried out independently by the author(s). The author(s) acknowledge full responsibility for the entire content of this article, including any portions that were linguistically refined with the assistance of AI.

Ethics Approval and Informed Consent: Not applicable. This study analyzed publicly available YouTube videos and comments and involved no direct interaction with human participants. Commenters are not identified by username in this article, and quoted comments are reported only to illustrate coded patterns.

Data Availability: The data supporting the findings of this study were collected by the first author and are available from him upon reasonable request. Because the comment

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dataset contains user-generated content linked to individual account names, it is not deposited in a public repository.

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APPENDIX TABLE. 1

FAIZAR CHANNEL

NO	VIDEO TITLE	LINK	CATEGORY	VIEW	PARENT COMMENT
1	CEK ADAKAH JIN DI TUBUHMU	CLICK	Video	37M	25610
2	RUQYAH PENGHANCUR SIH1R || POWERFUL RUQYA AGAINST BLACK MAGIC	CLICK	Video	18M	12791
3	RUQYAH KORBAN TUMBAL | PART 1	CLICK	Video	12M	5791
4	BUHUL DIRUMAH LALA	CLICK	Video	6.6M	6463
5	PENAMPAKAN POCONG DI RUMAH PANJI PETUALANG	CLICK	Video	5M	2533
6	TANDA PASIEN AKAN MENINGGAL	CLICK	Short	6M	974
7	TUMB4L S4NT3T PALING KUAT	CLICK	Short	1.2M	146
8	APAKAH JIN BISA MENINGGAL ?	CLICK	Short	931K	108
9	BUKAN TRIK, BATU EMPEDU BENAR-BENAR KELUAR LEWAT MUNTAHAN SAAT DIRUQYAH	CLICK	Short	889K	485
10	MOMEN KETIKA SAKARATUL MAUT	CLICK	Short	643K	24
TOTAL					54925

DHANU CHANNEL

NO	VIDEO TITLE	LINK	CATEGORY	VIEW	PARENT COMMENT
1	DI SANTET MANTAN PACAR - SIRAMAN QOLBU UNCENSORED	CLICK	Video	18M	3267
2	GENDERUWO KIRIMAN BOSS - SIRAMAN QOLBU UNCENSORED	CLICK	Video	5.3M	2029
3	PANGLIMA KUMBANG SANG PENANTANG USTADZ DHANU	CLICK	Video	4.3M	482
4	SILUMAN HARIMAU NGAMUK TAK TERKALAHKAN SE SUMATRA DAN JAWA	CLICK	Video	4.1M	302
5	JIN MILENNIAL BRO !! - SIRAMAN QOLBU UNCENSORED	CLICK	Video	3.7M	430
6	JIN INGIN SAHADAT	CLICK	Short	11M	1244
7	DOA KESEMBUHAN ASAM LAMBUNG,GERD	CLICK	Short	1.9M	1778
8	DOA KESEMBUHAN ASAM LAMBUNG,GERD KARENA SIHIR	CLICK	Short	1.6M	1532
9	PENYEBAB TENSI TINGGI	CLICK	Short	1.8	176
10	PENYEBAB GATAL GATAL	CLICK	Short	1.7M	687
TOTAL					11927