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Romance, Religion, and Recommendation: The Role of Algorithms in Shaping the Future of Digital Religious Fiction

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Kata Kunci:
Novel digital; Romansa religius; Algoritma; Platformisasi; pemasaran sastra.

Abstrak

Studi ini membahas pengaruh algoritma platform digital terhadap strategi pemasaran dan persepsi pembaca novel roman religius di era platformisasi. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi peran algoritma dalam distribusi karya, respons pembaca terhadap nilai-nilai religius dalam narasi, serta strategi pemasaran yang relevan bagi novelis roman religius. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif melalui analisis konten dan survei daring terhadap pengguna Wattpad, Fizzo, dan KBM App. Data dikumpulkan dari teks populer, interaksi pembaca, serta respons terhadap tema dan nilai moral yang ditampilkan dalam cerita. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa algoritma secara signifikan memengaruhi jangkauan karya. Penulis yang aktif, konsisten menggunakan tagar, dan membangun interaksi mendapatkan visibilitas yang lebih besar. Pembaca mengapresiasi konflik antara cinta dan nilai-nilai religius, dan menjadikan novel sebagai media refleksi spiritual. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan kolaborasi antara penulis, pembaca, dan platform untuk menciptakan ekosistem sastra religius yang adaptif dan inklusif.

Keywords:
Digital novel; Religious romance; Algorithm; Platformization; literary marketing.

Abstract

This study discusses the influence of digital platform algorithms on marketing strategies and readers' perception of religious romance novels in the era of platformization. The aim of the research is to explore the role of algorithms in the distribution of works, readers' responses to religious values in narratives, as well as relevant market strategies for religious romance novelists. The method used is a qualitative approach through content analysis and online surveys of Wattpad, Fizzo, and KBM App. Data was collected from popular texts, reader interactions, as well as responses to the themes and moral values featured in the story. The results show that the algorithm significantly affects the reach of the work. Writers who are active, consistently use tags, and build interactions get greater visibility. Readers appreciate the conflict between love and religious values, and make the novel a medium of spiritual reflection. This research recommends collaboration between authors, readers, and platforms to create an adaptive and inclusive religious literary ecosystem.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, a significant transformation in the way we interact with literature, particularly in the genre of religious romance novels, has become very evident. With the advent of digital platforms that facilitate the distribution and marketing of novels, algorithms play an important role in determining how and to whom the novel is reached. These algorithms not only affect the visibility and popularity of a work, but also tailor the reader's experience to their preferences and behaviors monitored by the platform. The study aims to explore more deeply how the algorithm affects the distribution and marketing of religious romance novels and their relevance amid increasingly widespread platformization (Aunul & Handoko, 2022; Zaid et al., 2022). In conclusion, algorithms in digital platforms play an important role in shaping the distribution, marketing, and reading experience of religious novels in the digital age.

The influence of digital technology has also penetrated into the publishing sector, which fundamentally changes the consumption pattern of literature. With the increasing accessibility of novels through digital platforms, literary consumerism has undergone a radical change. Readers now not only act as passive receivers of information, but also actively participate in determining the content they want. Various platforms, from Google Books to Amazon and social media, have put readers in a position to intervene in the literary market, influencing authors and publishers in their creative process (Saran, 2023; Wang et al., 2025). In this context, a deeper exploration of algorithms and their contribution to religious-based works is crucial.

Especially in the genre of religious romance novels, cultural and religious relevance cannot be separated from the marketing process of these works. These novels usually convey religious values and teachings through compelling stories, capturing the attention of readers who in their daily lives may face many challenges related to their beliefs. Therefore, understanding how digital platforms shape the reader's experience and response to values in religious romance novels is a significant research task (Jima’ain, 2023; Royan, 2022). Examining how digital platforms mediate readers’ engagement with the cultural and religious values embedded in religious romance novels is essential to understanding the genre’s position and influence in today’s literary landscape.

Furthermore, the demands of in-depth analysis of the dynamics between content, commercialization, and digital platforms are becoming increasingly urgent. On the one hand, the phenomenon of commercialization of literary works presents its own challenges in maintaining the authenticity and depth of the religious message that is intended to be conveyed. On the other hand, there is an opportunity for writers to reach a wider audience through new marketing strategies supported by algorithmic analysis (Setia & Rahim,

2024; Ul-Haq & Kwok, 2024). Therefore, there needs to be a systematic approach to understanding these interactions and how writers and publishers can navigate this ever-changing landscape.

The significance of this research is especially felt given that religious romance novels are often a medium that builds identity and community. Through association with digital platforms, these novels are accessible to a wider and more diverse audience, providing space for personal reflection as well as discussions about faith and spirituality (Fitriansyah & Lubis, 2023; Sulvinajayanti et al., 2024). Thus, this study answers important questions related to how the existence of religious romance novels adapts in the midst of digital changes and dynamic social markets.

In addition, consideration of the reader's interaction with the text is also an important aspect of this research. Changes in the way readers interact with literary works, both through *online* reviews and forum discussions, create a diversity of interpretations and understandings of the religious values conveyed. This study analyzes how these aspects are influenced by the algorithm's tendency to promote certain content and how it shapes the mindset of readers in general (Parnell, 2023; Sharma & Sharma, 2025). Analyzing how algorithms influence reader–text interactions reveals not only shifts in interpretation and understanding of religious values but also the broader cultural impact of digital mediation on literary engagement.

Given the emergence of religious digitalization in the context of social media and digital platforms, it is necessary to identify the contribution that religious romance novels can make in strengthening social interactions and discussions about beliefs. These novels are not only a means of entertainment, but also an important medium to convey religious values and tolerance, contributing further to interreligious dialogue (Mutaqin et al., 2024). Through this study, it is hoped that broader conclusions can be drawn about how digital platforms function as spaces for spiritual interaction and cultural exchange.

Finally, by understanding the role of algorithms in the context of the distribution and marketing of religious romance novels, this research is expected to provide new insights for academics and practitioners in the field of literary publishing and marketing. With a solid foundation in this study, it is hoped that a new paradigm can be created in understanding the commercialization of literary works and their impact on society (Kharismatunisa, 2023; Yi, 2023). The study also further explores how authors and publishers can leverage this dynamic to reach new readers while maintaining the religious integrity of their work.

Digital platforms in the context of the literary industry can be defined as the technological infrastructure that enables the production, distribution, and consumption of literary content. In Indonesia, some examples of well-known platforms include Wattpad, KBM, and Fizzo. These platforms not only serve as a place to publish works, but also as an arena for interaction between writers and readers, where direct feedback from readers can influence the way writers develop their stories (Laimeheriwa, 2018; Yerizal, 2023). In this regard, digital platforms play an important role in driving the literary economy, where the creative process can be directly connected to the wider market and readership.

Platform competition theory focuses on market dynamics involving various parties interacting with each other in the digital ecosystem. In the context of digital literature, writers, publishers, and readers all operate at interdependent levels, creating an ecosystem where each party's choices can affect the sustainability and success of the platform itself. The theory also includes the concept of "winner-takes-all", where only a few large platforms can dominate the market, while others struggle to survive (Aftriyandawi & Wijaya, 2024; Diati et al., 2024). This creates its own challenges for religious romance novelists who want to stand out in the midst of a sea of digital content.

With so many digital platforms, algorithms play a key role in determining the visibility and reach of literary works. The algorithm not only regulates how content is displayed to readers, but also helps in personalizing the user experience, making it easier for readers to find novels that match their interests. This process impacts the reader's behavior in choosing a read, which in turn influences the marketing strategies used by authors and publishers (Purwanto & Widijatmoko, 2024; Taryana, 2023). Algorithms significantly shape the visibility, accessibility, and marketing dynamics of literary works, ultimately redefining how readers discover and engage with novels in the digital era.

Religious romance novels have distinctive characteristics, among which they often feature themes of love attached to religious values and morality. Elements such as the conflict between faith and love, strong portrayal of characters in the face of moral dilemmas, and the use of settings that reflect religious values are very common in this genre (Aulia & Harto, 2024; Sari & Ronaldo, 2024). These aspects make the religious romance novel not only a form of entertainment, but also a means of conveying moral and spiritual messages to the reader.

Religion has a significant influence in shaping the narrative and characters in romance novels. Religious values are often discussed and woven into the storyline, influencing the character's actions and decisions. For example, characters in a religious romance novel may have to choose between following religious teachings or pursuing

romantic love that goes against their beliefs (Hadiwijaya et al., 2023). This shows that the writing of a religious romance novel is not only about the relationships between characters, but also about exploring and exploring deep spiritual themes, where the reader is invited to reflect on their faith.

Furthermore, the popularity of digital platforms as a medium for the distribution of literary works allows authors to explore these religious themes more deeply and broadly to a diverse audience. With platforms like Wattpad, religious romance novelists can reach a wider community of readers and interact directly with their readers, which in turn can influence the construction of the narrative and themes raised (Parluhutan, 2021).

In the context of interpenetration between culture and technology, digital platforms play an important role as a link in content production and consumption. In an increasingly digitized society, platforms allow for publication and wider cultural dissemination, where readers can access a wide variety of literary works from different cultural backgrounds (Hashim et al., 2024; Laraskana & Suhendra, 2024). This concept of interpenetration emphasizes how platforms not only facilitate access, but also change the way people interact with and understand literary content, including religious romance novels.

Digital platforms create opportunities for greater collaboration and participation from readers, who are now not only consumers but also content producers. For example, readers can provide feedback, discuss, and even contribute to story development, which makes the creative process more inclusive and collaborative (Judijanto et al., 2023; Wilestari et al., 2023). In this case, the dynamics between the contribution of the reader and the author help to create a participatory space that enriches the content and themes discussed in the religious romance novel.

Overall, an analysis of how digital platforms affect the production and consumption of literary content, including in the genre of religious romance novels, provides a solid foundation for understanding the literary industry landscape in the digital age. This research is expected to be able to explain how the interaction between technology and culture produces texts that are not only relevant, but also able to adapt to the social and economic changes that are taking place in today's society (Istiqomah et al., 2024; Putri & Priyana, 2023). Thus, this research is expected to contribute both academically and practically to enriching contemporary literary studies and opening up new avenues for understanding the transformation of literary works in the digital age.

METHOD

In this study, we used a qualitative research design as the primary method to analyze a number of narrative texts related to religious romance novels published on digital platforms. This approach is appropriate because qualitative methods allow for an in-depth exploration of textual patterns, narrative strategies, and cultural meanings embedded in the novels, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative approaches. Moreover, since the focus of this research is on how algorithms shape the circulation and reception of literary works, a qualitative framework enables us to critically interpret not only the textual content but also the socio-cultural and technological contexts in which these narratives are produced, distributed, and consumed. The research process is divided into several stages, starting from data collection, content analysis, to interpretation of results. Using qualitative methods, researchers will focus more on the quality of the narrative and the themes that emerge, as well as how these themes interact with the religious values carried by the novel. To deepen this understanding, an analysis was conducted on some of the most popular religious romance novels from the platforms namely Wattpad, Fizzo, and KBM which have a large number of visitors and active readers.

We will also conduct an online survey to collect data on readers' preferences and behaviors towards religious romance novels. The survey is designed to explore important aspects such as what drives readers to choose a particular novel, the type of value or theme that appeals most to them, as well as their experiences related to interaction on digital platforms. The data collected from this survey will be analyzed to draw conclusions regarding how the marketing strategies implemented by authors and platforms affect religious romance novel reading decisions.

Throughout the entire research process, special attention will be paid to ethical aspects, including the protection of respondents' privacy in online surveys and recognition of the copyright of the literary works analyzed. This research will ensure that all data collected will be used by maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' identities and following research ethics guidelines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that algorithms on digital platforms such as Wattpad, Fizzo, and KBM have a significant impact on the visibility of religious romance novels. The algorithm works by analyzing user behavior data, including reading preferences, reading time, and interactions with literary works. On Wattpad, for example, the algorithm recommends

novels based on the preferences that previous readers have shown, this contributes to increased exposure to works that have the potential to explode in popularity (Suárez-Tangil et al., 2020). When readers actively engage with the text through comments, reviews, and reading status, the algorithm will prioritize those novels more in recommendations to other users.

In Fizzo and KBM, the algorithm settings also focus on "tagging" and genre categories that allow these literary works to be easily found. Religious romance novelists who use relevant tags gain wider reach (Chen & Tang, 2020), Writers who consistently optimize keyword usage and engage with readers can also leverage algorithms to increase their visibility output. Authors are required to include a certain amount of metadata in their novels so they can be read by algorithms. The metadata submitted by authors to the digital literature platform can be seen in Table 1 below.

Platform	Aspek	Interpretasi
Fizzo	Title, Type of Work, Language, Age Range, Classification, Hashtags, Keywords, Short Description, Cover	Fizzo emphasizes its algorithm on classification, hashtags, and keywords.
KBM	Title, Category, Synopsis, Keywords, Novel Cover	KBM emphasizes its algorithm on categories and keywords.
Wattpad	Title, Description, Main Characters, Category, Tags, Target Audience, Copyright Language, Rating, and Cover	Wattpad emphasizes its algorithm on Hashtag Categories, and Target Readers

Table 1. List of Metadata Aspects on Fizzo, KBM, and Wattpad

This research shows that a good understanding of how these algorithms operate allows authors to develop more effective marketing strategies, by adapting their content to fit the preferences of the recorded readers. Furthermore, the algorithms on these three platforms not only affect the visibility of the work, but also the quality of interaction between the author and the reader. On Wattpad, for example, writers who actively engage with readers through comments and personal messages can improve relationships which in turn results in loyal readers who are more deeply invested in the work they produce. This is different from the traditional model where readers and writers operate separately. This interaction also creates a sense of community that results in more loyal supporters of the author (Muzellec et al., 2015).

In addition, the pricing and subsidy techniques used by the platform also play an important role in the marketing strategy (C. Li et al., 2023). Authors can use competitive pricing or provide free access within a certain period of time to attract the attention of new readers. This change not only benefits the author but also helps the platform in developing a more solid user ecosystem. The combination of direct interaction with readers and

pricing optimization is a key factor for the success of religious romance novels in this digital age.

Both aspects, algorithms and user interaction, are closely related to the fact that works that receive high attention will be categorized at the top of the platform's recommendations, triggering a network effect where the more sympathy generated the higher the exposure. This is important to understand because this network effect often creates a "winner-takes-all" situation, where only a few works manage to stand out in a sea of content (Z. Li, 2022). Good marketing, a combination of quality content and adaptation to algorithmic mechanisms, allows writers to overcome these challenges.

In the context of religious romance novel marketing, writers need to be smarter in tapping into existing trends and understanding the audience's ongoing preferences. A story presentation tailored to a combination of reader experience, as well as an active presence in the online community, is essential in optimizing the use of the platform's algorithms to achieve success. This study shows that smart writers can use algorithms as tools in the creative process and marketing, rather than just seeing them as obstacles (Suárez-Tangil et al., 2020).

In conclusion, the study concludes that the algorithms on Wattpad, Fizzo, and KBM have a profound impact on the marketing of religious romance novels. Authors who understand and adapt to these mechanisms can significantly increase their chances of reaching a wider audience and building stronger literacy partnerships in digital contexts. Writers and platforms must continue to collaborate to create an inclusive space, making room for diverse works while driving the growth of the religious romance novel market in this digital age.

Readers' Responses to Religious Romance Novels in the Digital Age

This study analyzed the demographic data and behavior of readers of religious romance novels on digital platforms such as Wattpad, KBM, and Fizzo. The data collected shows that the majority of readers of this novel are women aged 18 to 30, which is the most dominant age group among users of digital platforms. Chart 1 shows the age of digital novel readers on digital literature platforms.

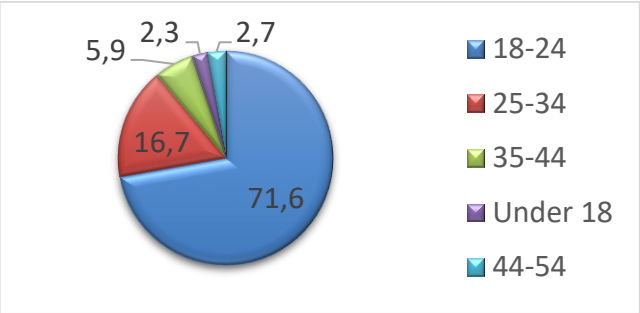

Chart 1. Reader Age Tabulation

They tend to seek out content that is not only entertaining, but also supplies religious and moral values in their reading (Aliyya et al., 2024). In addition, the survey results show that 70% of readers admit to choosing a novel based on recommendations from platforms or interactions in the community, indicating that there is a significant influence of algorithms on their choices.

Readers' reading behavior also suggests that readers tend to spend more time on platforms that provide interaction features, such as comments and discussion forums, compared to more static platforms. Research has found that readers who actively interact with authors and other readers have higher levels of loyalty to the novels they read. This interaction not only affects reading time, but also makes the reader more emotionally engaged with the story and characters in the novel, as evidenced by the more positive response to the story that facilitates the discussion (Yudin, 2023).

From this analysis, it was found that readers highly appreciate the themes and religious values contained in religious romance novels. Many readers reveal that the moral values conveyed through characters and storylines are relevant to their life experiences, thus providing an immersive reading experience (Bulan & Hasani, 2018). Novels that manage to present the internal conflicts that characters face in the face of religious dilemmas often receive a positive response, where the reader feels connected and inspired to reflect on the values they hold.

Research shows that novels with positive content related to the relationship between love and religion, such as mutual respect and understanding differences, are more accepted and often discussed in communities. Readers state that these stories give them reason to believe that there is hope in the midst of life's challenges, as well as encourage them to explore and better understand their religion (Achsani et al., 2020). Thus, digital platforms not only serve as distribution channels but also as a space for readers to discuss and share spiritual experiences.

How Does Platformization Shape Reader Comprehension?

Platformization affects the way readers understand and accept religious romance novels. The presence of interactive features such as comments, polls, and discussion rooms allows readers to participate in larger conversations about content. This contributes to the formation of their identity and understanding of religious romance, where readers feel that their opinions are valued and listened to (Nasir, 2024). In this context, the reader is not only a consumer, but also a producer of meaning for the work they read. The data in figures 1, 2 and 3 show a dialogue between the reader as consumer and the writer as producer.

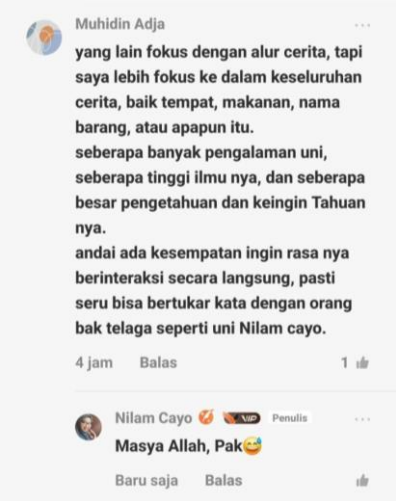

Figure 1. Reader Comments

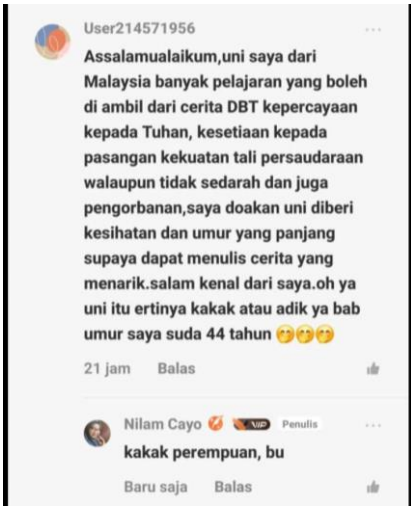

Figure 2. Reader Comments

Figure 3. Reader Comments

The process of dialogue and interaction that occurs on the platform can also be seen from the variety of perspectives that emerge. Readers from different cultural and religious backgrounds provide diverse views, and this has the potential to enrich readers' understanding of the religious themes raised in the novel (Sartika et al., 2023). This discussion often extends to the real-life aspect, where the application of the values of the novel into everyday life is one of the main themes raised in reading forums.

The implications of readers' responses to religious romance novels are closely related to the formation of their identity. Through interaction and reflection on the content they read, readers begin to integrate religious and moral values into their own identity. Most readers reveal that religious romance novels provide them with a foundation to understand themselves as well as their relationships with others and with God (Dwijayanti et al., 2023). This shows that digital literacy not only shapes the way we consume information, but also the way we build ourselves.

The study also found that readers who were actively engaged on the platform were more likely to face identity conflicts because they interacted with diverse views and values.

The discussions that take place in comments and replies create a safe space to express thoughts that sometimes contradict their religious teachings, thus encouraging the development of a more critical and informative identity. This process makes readers more open to the concepts of tolerance, equality, and intercultural understanding (Pasa et al., 2023). Active engagement on digital platforms fosters critical identity formation among readers by exposing them to diverse perspectives, ultimately promoting tolerance, equality, and intercultural understanding.

Successful Market Strategies in Responding to Reader Preferences

The results of this study show that a deep understanding of reader preferences can be the key to success in the market strategy of religious romance novels in the era of platformization. Using the demographic data that has been analyzed, novelists can tailor the themes and elements of the story to better resonate with readers, the majority of whom are young women (Muhamad & Mizerski, 2010). This shows that writers who are able to understand their audience will be more successful in creating compelling and relevant work, encouraging readers to engage more deeply with the text.

The presence of digital platforms like Wattpad, KBM, and Fizzo offers direct channel writers a chance to understand reader preferences through quick interaction and response. Writers who actively respond to feedback from readers tend to have higher engagement rates and get greater support from their audience. This is in line with the concept of "Collaborative Market Driving," which states that collective efforts between writers and readers through active interaction can shape and facilitate the market (Maciel & Fischer, 2020). Writers need to implement an inclusive marketing strategy, by providing space for the audience to provide input and contribute to the narrative.

Furthermore, religious romance novelists are also expected to take advantage of the algorithms on the platform to promote their work. The results of the analysis showed that authors who used the right keywords and interesting parts at the beginning of the story tended to get more attention from the algorithm, which in turn increased the visibility of the novel (Minton, 2019). The pressure to adjust to ongoing reading trends becomes crucial for writers to stay relevant in the eyes of readers. This shows that a market strategy that is responsive to existing trends and analytical data can be the path to success in a competitive market.

The Influence of Reader Interaction on Identity and Understanding

Readers' interaction with religious romance novels on digital platforms has a huge impact on the formation of their identity. Research shows that readers who are involved in the community of readers feel more recognized and have space to share experiences and reflect on the values contained in the narrative. This creates a stronger reader identity and a sense of belonging to the community (Cantoni et al., 2017). In this sense, the novel is not just an object of consumption, but a collective experience that encourages the development of religious understanding among readers.

Additionally, these interactions provide an opportunity for readers to explore different perspectives, which significantly affects the way they understand religious romance. These novels often feature the conflict between love and faith, prompting readers to reflect on the values they carry in their religion and how they apply them in everyday life (Raynold, 2013). The presentation of an open and inclusive story allows readers to forge a deeper connection with the text and the reflection of their identity as individuals in complex religious contexts.

Platformization not only changes the way novels are reached by readers but also the way readers reflect cultural and religious values. Readers with diverse backgrounds interact in discussions on the platform, forming a very broad understanding of religious romance. This indicates that digital platforms are an arena where education and the dissemination of religious values can be carried out more productively (Nieuwkerk, 2012). In this context, writers need to pay attention not only to what they convey in the novel but also how these values are accepted and made part of the collective identity of the reader's community.

The religious romance novel publishing industry must respond to these changes by prioritizing relevant and innovative cultural elements. In doing so, writers and publishers must actively adapt their content to reflect the diverse values and views of readers, creating works that are able to bridge differences and promote positive dialogue (Aarts et al., 2010). By paying attention to readers' perceptions and cultural values, the literary industry can produce works that not only attract attention but also contribute to social harmony.

A religious romance novel that is well-written and attuned to the reader's spiritual needs shows the power of narrative in capturing the audience's attention. This research reveals that readers highly appreciate the religious elements presented, and this provides an opportunity for authors to differentiate their work in a saturated market (Muhamad & Mizerski, 2010). The success of authors in conveying strong moral messages and relevant

stories can make their novels a work that many readers are looking for, especially those who want motivation and inspiration in their lives.

In light of this, the author needs to focus on deep character development and storylines that involve the conflict of religious values with love. This will create a space for readers to reminisce and discover their identity in meaningful stories. A market strategy based on strengthening a rich narrative can not only engage readers but also create a long-term relationship with the audience, making them loyal readers (Prayuana et al., 2023). Prioritizing deep character development and narratives that intertwine love with religious values is key to engaging readers meaningfully while fostering lasting loyalty in the digital literary market

Marketing Strategies That Adapt to the Digital Age

Facing the digital age, religious romance novelists need to implement innovative and integrated marketing strategies. Digital platforms provide a variety of tools for marketing that can be leveraged to increase the reach and visibility of works, including the use of social media, community discussions, and engaging visual content. Authors who utilize digital marketing strategies effectively can reach a wider audience and build a solid fan base (Zhang & Wu, 2023). The use of social media in the form of teasers, interesting quotes, and direct interaction is one of the effective ways to arouse readers' enthusiasm for new novels. Figures 4 to 6 show marketing materials distributed via social media.

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

A combination of data-driven learning and digital marketing strategies can assist authors and publishers in understanding the emerging trends in the market. As such, they can react quickly to changing reader preferences, generate more contextual content, and enhance an enjoyable literacy experience (Halter, 2012). Personalizing the reader's experience through algorithms and the right recommendations will further encourage writers to innovate in creating rich and educational stories.

Collaboration with readers is also an important aspect of the marketing strategy of religious romance novels. Through the active involvement of readers in the marketing process (testimonials, reviews, or participation in writing contests) writers can strengthen loyalty and a sense of ownership to their work (Kratochvíl, 2022). This strategy will not only expand the reach of the novel among new audiences but also create a deeper bond between the author and the reader.

This scenario shows that the religious romance novel market in the era of platformization must be able to embrace social participation in order to build collaborative communities. Readers who feel included in the process of creating and marketing the work will be more likely to support and recommend the novel to others, thus increasing the chances of success in an increasingly competitive market (Chess, 2014). Fostering social participation and collaborative communities is crucial for the sustainability and success of religious romance novels in the platformized literary market.

As the number of platforms and authors increases, the competition in the religious romance novel market is becoming increasingly fierce. Research shows that writers who collaborate with each other can strengthen their position in the market (Albayrak, 2019). This strategy also encourages the exchange of ideas and inspiration, increasing creativity and innovation in writing stronger and more relevant content.

In a broader scope, it is important for writers to maintain creative independence while still adapting to market needs. Writers who are able to convey a powerful message, provide a fresh point of view, and serve as a voice for the community can clearly differentiate themselves, creating a niche in a saturated market. This suggests that the uniqueness and quality of the content are very important in maintaining allure among readers and building a strong identity as a writer (Zehra & Minton, 2019). Sustaining creative independence while addressing market demands enables writers to craft distinctive, high-quality works that resonate with readers and establish a strong literary identity.

Finally, maintaining the availability of content rich in moral and spiritual value becomes an important responsibility for religious romance novelists. Novels that are accompanied by positive messages not only provide a deeper meaning for the reader but also have the potential to encourage readers to live in accordance with the ethics and teachings carried out in the work (Dolbec et al., 2021). Good narrative quality accompanied by valuable life lessons will make religious romance novels in demand and remembered by readers.

This approach should be used as part of a broader marketing strategy to build the reputation of authors and their works. Writers who have high quality content and consistently create works with spiritual themes will gain recognition in the literacy industry, which in turn brings more opportunities for collaboration and wider distribution in the digital market (Hunter-Henin, 2021). This demonstrates that the virtue values carried out by the story can be used as an effective marketing tool in themselves.

Challenges Faced by Religious Romance Novelists

In the context of the marketing of religious romance novels, writers operating in the era of platformization face a number of significant challenges. They need to adapt to the pace of technological innovation and changing reader preferences (Rosário & Dias, 2023). For example, the platform's algorithm changes frequently, which can affect the visibility of their literary works. Writers must constantly monitor and adjust strategies to stay relevant within a dynamic algorithmic system to maintain reader satisfaction (Paul et al., 2021). This requires not only good writing skills, but also a deep understanding of digital marketing.

Limitations in resources, both financial and human, are also a major challenge for writers of religious romance novels. Many writers, especially those who are new to the market, do not have access to advanced marketing tools that can help them distribute their work more effectively. These limitations can cause high-quality works to not get the visibility they deserve in the digital market, while other low-quality novels can get more attention due to better marketing strategies (Tian & Martin, 2010). Writers need to find ways to collaborate with marketing teams or leverage existing literacy communities to promote their work.

The fast-paced, visually-oriented consumption culture in the digital age puts additional pressure on writers to present content that is not only good in narrative, but also visually appealing. Works that are unable to adapt to audience preferences that prioritize visual and interactive experiences risk being marginalized (Nurhasanah & Sinambela, 2022). Therefore, writers of religious romance novels must innovate in the presentation of content, including through illustrations or multimedia that support the text.

Despite the challenges faced, the era of platformization also brought many opportunities for religious romance novelists. Digitization allows writers to reach a wider audience without geographical restrictions. By leveraging existing platforms, authors can expand the reach of their work, allowing it to be discovered by readers from different backgrounds and cultures (Bao et al., 2021). Authors can also explore collaborations with

illustrators or content creators to create a more immersive reading experience, thus being able to stand out among the diverse works in the market.

Writers have the opportunity to innovate in the way they distribute content. For example, they can use the serialization format on digital platforms, where novels are published in short chapters at regular intervals. Not only does this provide a reason for readers to return to the platform, but it also allows the author to gain quick feedback that can be applied to the next chapter (Almeida et al., 2020) This approach also makes the writer more responsive to the reader's desires and feedback, creating a positive cycle of interaction.

Digital platforms provide a variety of analytical tools that writers can leverage to better understand their audience. Data on who reads their novels, when they read, and which elements most grab readers' attention can provide valuable insights (Marušić, 2014). Authors can use this information to tailor and develop better stories according to the reader's preferences, resulting in work that is not only relevant but also of high quality.

The era of platformization facilitates the formation of a stronger and more connected community of readers. Writers can leverage social media and discussion forums to engage directly with their community of readers (Meijer et al., 2023). This engagement creates a sense of unity and loyalty among readers, which will encourage them to recommend the work to others. Through continuous interaction, writers can maintain reader loyalty and create loyal fans who will support many future works.

Religious romance novels have the potential to educate readers about the positive values associated with love and faith relationships. Authors are expected to not only present a love story, but also to summarize compelling and relevant moral teachings into their narrative (Curiac et al., 2024). Works that are able to summarize these values are certainly more appreciated and accepted by readers.

One of the challenges faced is sustainability in marketing and production models. Writers of religious romance novels should consider long-term scenarios in their strategies. They must always be prepared to adapt to changes in technology and market preferences, as well as actively participate in the community to maintain relevance (Evanita & Fahmi, 2023). In order to survive and grow, the writer needs to have a clear vision and a long-term plan that can be flexibly adapted according to market dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the rise of digital platforms has fundamentally altered the mechanisms of production, distribution, and consumption of religious romance novels in

Indonesia. Algorithmic curation has replaced the traditional role of the editor, positioning visibility and success as outcomes of metadata optimization and reader engagement rather than purely narrative quality. Readers, through their interactions in the form of comments, votes, and discussions, function not only as consumers but also as agents shaping the circulation and reception of these texts. This dynamic illustrates how digital platforms operate as both distributors of content and mediators of meaning.

At the same time, the findings demonstrate that religious romance novels retain strong cultural resonance within this algorithm-driven ecosystem. While challenges such as market saturation, resource constraints, and frequent changes to platform algorithms persist, the genre continues to adapt through strategies like serialization, narrative hooks, and cross-community engagement. Thus, religious romance novels on platforms like Wattpad, Fizzo, and KBM emerge not only as popular entertainment but also as cultural commodities whose circulation and visibility are tightly bound to the logic of algorithmic governance.

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