

# Jurnal Sosiologi Agama

Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi Agama dan Perubahan Sosial

Vol. 18. No. 2  
July-December,  
2024

p-ISSN: 1978-4457  
e-ISSN: 2548-477X

## Article History

Submitted:  
29-07-2024

Accepted:  
05-01-2025

Published:  
07-01-2025

## Mediatization and Hypermediation in Digital Religion and the Transformation of Indonesian Muslim Religious Practices through Social Media Usage

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### DOI

<http://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2024.182-01>

### Pages

133-150

## Abstract

This article examines mediatization and hypermediation in digital religion concerning contemporary Muslim religious practices, particularly in Indonesia, through social media. This study employed a qualitative approach through library study of offline and online sources. The findings reveal that mediatization has altered the way Indonesian Muslims understand and practice their religion. Social media facilitates virtual religious practices and creates a hybrid space between online and offline religious activities. Hypermediation, through platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, strengthens individual religious identity and collectively reinforces religious communities. Social media also affects the structure of religious communities by challenging traditional authority through the emergence of popular religious figures in the virtual world. This article contributes significantly to understanding religious transformation in the digital age and is a foundation for further research. The article emphasizes the importance of understanding the social and cultural implications of integrating social media into Muslim religious practices in Indonesia. It highlights the complexity of the relationship between religion, technology, and identity in the current context of digital globalization.

Keywords: mediatization; hypermediation; digital religion; Indonesian muslim religious practices; social media



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## Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji mediatisasi dan hipermediasi dalam agama digital terhadap praktik keagamaan Muslim kontemporer, khususnya di Indonesia, melalui media sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi pustaka dari sumber-sumber offline dan online. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mediatisasi telah mengubah cara umat Muslim Indonesia memahami dan mempraktikkan agama mereka. Media sosial memfasilitasi praktik keagamaan virtual dan menciptakan ruang hibrida antara aktivitas keagamaan online dan offline. Hipermediasi, melalui platform seperti Instagram dan WhatsApp, memperkuat identitas keagamaan individu dan secara kolektif memperkuat komunitas keagamaan. Media sosial juga memengaruhi struktur komunitas keagamaan dengan menantang otoritas tradisional melalui kemunculan tokoh agama populer di dunia virtual. Artikel ini memberikan kontribusi signifikan dalam memahami transformasi keagamaan di era digital dan menjadi landasan untuk penelitian lebih lanjut. Artikel ini menekankan pentingnya memahami implikasi sosial dan budaya dari integrasi media sosial dalam praktik keagamaan Muslim di Indonesia. Artikel ini juga menyoroti kompleksitas hubungan antara agama, teknologi, dan identitas dalam konteks globalisasi digital saat ini.

Kata Kunci: mediatisasi; hipermediasi; agama digital; transformasi praktik keagamaan Muslim Indonesia; media sosial

## INTRODUCTION

Mediatization and hypermediation play a crucial role in shaping digital religion, mainly through the effect of social media on changing religious practices. Campbell coined digital religion to describe integrating technological and cultural spaces with online and offline religious practices. Digital religion is a bridge that connects and expands online religious practices into offline contexts and vice versa. This concept encompasses online cultural characteristics such as interactivity, convergence, user-generated content, and traditional elements like belief patterns and historical rituals (H. A. Campbell, 2013). Digital religion examines the relationship between new media technologies, religion, and digital culture, including the interactions of religious communities with the internet, expressions of religiosity through digital practices, and the extent to which technology can be considered a spiritual endeavor (H. A. Campbell, 2017).

Stig Hjarvard introduces mediatization as a central concept for understanding the significance of media in culture and society. Mediatization has been applied in various contexts to describe the influence of media on different phenomena (Hjarvard, 2008b, 2013), including religion. Mediatization also refers to the process in which media acts as an intermediary in communication (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). It serves as a framework for analyzing how media affects religious beliefs, practices, and interpretations. The interaction between media and religion demonstrates that media can sometimes reinforce traditional religious structures. Mediatization also highlights how religious imagery and practices are increasingly embedded in media as texts, summaries, and discussions on spiritual matters. Furthermore, mediatization studies examine how media shapes religious imagery according to popular religious genres and provides moral and spiritual lessons that influence public perceptions of religious issues (Hjarvard, 2013). The logic of media impacts religious institutions and practices, driving transformations in religious authority and cultural

dynamics (Bandaso et al., 2022).

On the other hand, hypermediation theory examines the multifaceted nature of digital religion, emphasizing the intertwining of material and digital realms in religious actions and spaces (Evolvi, 2022). Scholars such as Campbell and Tsuria have extensively studied digital religion, highlighting how the internet and digital media have become integral to religious rituals and expressions, shaping believers' identities and community affiliations (H. A. Campbell & Rule, 2020; Sumeyye, 2022). Hypermediation adds a layer of complexity by providing rich and interactive experiences through digital technology. Hypermediation involves using various digital platforms that enable individuals to interact more dynamically with religious content.

As a tangible form of hypermediation, social media allows individuals to express their religious identities personally and connect with global religious communities. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitate the rapid dissemination of religious teachings, participation in virtual rituals, and real-time religious discussions, strengthening individual's attachment and engagement with their beliefs (H. A. Campbell, 2013). The pervasive presence of social media in the digital landscape significantly influences and reshapes religious practices, highlighting the evolving relationship between technology and spirituality.

Moreover, social media facilitates the formation of more inclusive and connected religious identities. In a religious context, the use of social media creates new forms of religious communities and interactions that are not bound by geographical or institutional limitations. Religious practices to become more flexible and responsive to individual needs in the digital era. Studies show that using social media by religious groups can enhance engagement and participation and provide a platform for broader religious discussion and reflection (Stout, 2013). Both mediatization and hypermediation significantly impact religious practices in the digital age. They contribute to transforming how religion is accessed, understood, and practiced and shaping new religious identities and communities that are more dynamic and digitally connected. This phenomenon reflects a fundamental shift in the contemporary religious landscape, where media plays a central role in reshaping religious experiences and practices (Tsuria & Campbell, 2021). Social media is one of the most widespread and influential communication tools in the digital era. The influence of social media extends beyond social and economic aspects, reaching into the realm of religion (Bolter & Grusin, 2000).

In the context of Islam, social media has played a significant role in transforming the religious practices of Muslims. Muslims use platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to share religious content, conduct online lectures, and even perform religious rituals virtually. Muslims in Indonesia use social media platforms daily to express their religious piety (Husein & Slama, 2018). Research indicates that social media can enhance accessibility to religious information and foster global communities, but it also brings

challenges such as misinformation dissemination and the potential for radicalization (Awan, 2017; H. A. Campbell, 2013). In Brunei, for instance, there have been transformations in terms of religiosity, especially among young people, and the portrayal of youth's religiosities is a result of the use of social media, in addition to their aspirations and negotiations with the community's expectations (Mohamad, 2023).

This article aims to analyze how mediation and hypermediation through social media influence the religious practices of Muslims, particularly in Indonesia. By examining existing literature, this research provides the theoretical and empirical foundation to understand the transformation of religious practices in the digital era. The article focuses on the transformation of Indonesian Muslim religious practices through mediation and hypermediation on social media, posing three main research questions: How does mediatization influence changes in Indonesian Muslim religious practices? Second, what role does hypermediation play in shaping the identities and communities of Indonesian Muslims in the digital era? Third, what are the impacts of social media use on religious authority and community structures among Indonesian Muslims? This research is crucial as it offers deep insights into how digital technology and social media are reshaping the religious landscape while highlighting the evolving relationship between technology and spirituality in the context of Islam.

## **RESEARCH SETTINGS**

This article employed a qualitative approach through library research to analyze the influence of mediatization and hypermediation on Indonesian Muslim religious practices through social media. Primary data sources include relevant literature such as books, journal articles, monographs, and other documents about the influence of mediatization on Indonesian Muslim religious practices, the role of hypermediation in shaping Indonesian Muslim identities and communities, and the impacts of social media use on Indonesian Muslim religious authorities and community structures. Empirical studies by scholars like H. Campbell (2006; 2013), Hjarvard (2008b, 2013), and Evolvi (2022b) are also analyzed to deepen understanding of the research topic.

Research steps involve data collection, organization, analysis, synthesis of findings, and presentation of results. Researchers identify and gather relevant literature from primary and secondary sources during data collection. The collected data is then categorized based on main themes such as the influence of mediatization on religious practices, the role of hypermediation in shaping religious identity and community, and the impact of social media on religious authority and community structures (H. A. Campbell, 2013; Evolvi, 2022; Hjarvard, 2008a).

Data analysis utilizes the theoretical frameworks of mediatization and hypermediation to understand changes in Indonesian Muslim religious practices. Patterns and relationships emerging from the literature are critically analyzed and synthesized in a systematic narrative format to address research questions and present relevant conclusions. Findings are structured

to provide a comprehensive overview of the transformation of Indonesian Muslim religious practices through social media within the framework of mediatization and hypermediation in the digital era.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Theory of Mediatization, Hypermediation, and Digital Religion

#### *Mediatization*

Mediatization is crucial for understanding the influence of media on culture and society. Initially applied to political communication, mediatization describes how media affect the political system and gain autonomy from political sources. Researchers such as Hernes, Altheide, and Snow have expanded this concept to include other social institutions like education, religion, and societal power distribution (Hjarvard, 2008b).

The theory of mediatization of religion, popularized by Stig Hjarvard and illustrated through various studies, depicts how mass media, including digital media, influence and transform religious practices in contemporary society. Hjarvard argues that mediatization is a two-sided process in late modernity, where media become independent institutions with their logic and integrate as essential parts of other institutions, including religion (H. A. Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2008b, 2013).

Hjarvard's perspective suggests that religion increasingly becomes entangled in media logic through mediatization. Media serve as channels for delivering religious content, as languages that shape religious imagination according to popular cultural genres, and as environments facilitating social functions by institutionalized religion. For instance, mass media such as film and television become primary sources of religious ideas for people who interact more with religion through media than by attending physical places of worship (H. A. Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2008b, 2013).

Religion influenced by media logic impacts institutional norms, symbolic content, and individual practices (Hjarvard, 2008b). This phenomenon challenges traditional religious organizations' authority and enables new beliefs and religious practices (Hjarvard, 2016). Thus, mediatization also addresses shifts in traditional religious authority towards forms of authority that are more open and personal in the new media culture. It highlights how digital media allow for the manipulation, reinterpretation, and broader sharing of religious symbols and representations in digital networks, transforming how the broader society accesses and interprets these symbols (H. A. Campbell, 2017).

The theories of mediatization and religion have sparked debates about changes in the communication landscape of religion in modern society, highlighting the complex relationship between religion and media in contemporary interactions (Lövheim, 2014). Digital mediatization further amplifies ideas of religion and religiosity, changing how contemporary religions are communicated and practiced in the digital era (Sbardelotto,

2016). Digital media not only alter traditional modes of religious communication but also enable the formation of new public spheres where religious adherents and groups can produce their ideas in ways previously impossible within traditional religious contexts. Social media, for instance, platforms expand the reach and authority of individuals within religious communities, as demonstrated by research on female Muslim bloggers in Scandinavia (Hjarvard & Lövheim, 2012).

In the realm of digital religion, mediatization helps understand how digital media create new communication patterns within religious communities. Digital media capabilities enable individuals to express their religious views in public spaces previously unavailable in traditional contexts. It opens up opportunities for individual agencies within religion, enhances the visibility of religion in public spaces, and changes the flow of information within religious communities. Overall, the mediatization theory of religion provides a rich and relevant perspective on how media, especially digital media, serve as mediums for conveying religious information and shaping and transforming religious practices and broader social and cultural dynamics in contemporary society.

### *Hypermediation*

Connoting something “excessive” or “exceeding,” hypermediation has been utilised across various disciplines to denote the relationship between different forms of media. It involves using and integrating various media forms within a single space, indicating complex relationships between text, image, sound, and other media technologies (Evolvi, 2022). This concept originates from the thinking of Bolter and Grusin, who linked it with the remediation process, where old media are re-presented through new media (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). Scolari offers a more modern definition, describing hypermediation as a complex network of social production, consumption, and exchange within a media environment involving multiple social actors and technologies (Scolari, 2012).

In the context of digital religion, hypermediation illustrates how new technologies influence religious practices and narratives, emphasizing materiality, institutions, and technology as crucial aspects to understand. This perspective acknowledges the role of media in creating more complex and interconnected religious narratives in the digital era (Bolter & Grusin, 2000; Scolari, 2012). The concept refers to the intricate interaction between physical and digital actions in religious practices, creating affective spaces that bridge material characteristics and technology (Evolvi, 2022b, 2022a). It enables the dissemination, interpretation, and practice of religious beliefs through digital media. These technologies allow religions to reach broader audiences and provide interactive platforms. Campbell states that digital media provides access to and distributes religious information and enables the formation of digital communities to share and debate beliefs (H. Campbell, 2010).

Several studies indicate that digital media are transforming religious practices and perceptions. Hoover and Echchaibi argue that hypermediation facilitates more creative and

diverse expressions of religion, facilitating participation and engagement that may not be available in traditional contexts (Stout, 2013). Cheong, Poon, and Huang demonstrate that hypermediation, involving extensive use of various forms and channels of media in organizational communication within religious contexts, plays a significant role in shaping religious authority. Through hypermediation, new mediations based on old communication practices function as sources of life for evolving religious authority and forms of religious organization. The interconnection between hypermediation and religious authority highlights the importance of understanding diverse online and embodied religious communication practices to gain deeper insights into digital religion on a global scale (Cheong, 2017).

### ***Digital Religion***

Campbell proposes the concept of digital religion to explain the technological and cultural space used to discuss the integration of online and offline religious realms. Digital religion acts as a channel that links and encompasses online religious practices into offline religious contexts and vice versa. This fusion of new and existing religious practices signifies the characteristic of digital religion as both online cultural features (such as interactivity, convergence, and audience-generated content) and traditional religion (such as religious beliefs and rituals associated with specific communities) (H. A. Campbell, 2013). It delves into the interconnection between new media technology, religion, and digital culture, encompassing topics such as the interaction of faith communities with the internet, the expression of piety through digital manners, and considerations of technological employment as part of as a religious or spiritual effort (H. A. Campbell, 2017).

Heidi A. Campbell cites Hoover and Echchaibi, stating that when offline religious practices meet digital culture, a “third space” emerges—a hybrid and fluid context that requires new logic and engenders new forms of meaning production. Here, the concept of digital religion recognizes how the unique characteristics of technology and digital culture shape religious ideas and practices and how religions look to enculturate new media contexts with traditional ways and views on the nature of reality and the world. As described by Heidi A. Campbell, religious hybridity denotes the merging of online and offline religious realms within technological culture (Campbell, 2013), where these realms are interconnected and influence each other. In this regard, digital religion is influenced by the characteristics of digital media, broader socio-technical tendencies, and changes in public religious practices that shift from established efforts to varied forms of everyday lived religion (Campbell & Bellar, 2022).

Digital religion shows the increasing integration of online and offline life in society. It is frequently considered a form of “lived religion,” emphasizing how individuals integrate their religious faith and practices into daily life and articulate them. It highlights individual expressions rather than top-down definitions set by institutions, communities, or official religious leaders. The concept of digital religion asserts that current religion exists simultaneously in traditional, tangible systems and modern, technologically mediated

contexts, proposing an approach to viewing religion as operating in both spaces, with expressions progressively interwoven or embedded in each other. Additionally, this concept underscores that traditional religious institutions have started to recognize how much their communities rely on digital media and how they are interconnected with the culture created by that media (Campbell & Bellar, 2022).

Studies on digital religion began in the mid-1990s when scholars started documenting how religious individuals introduced their religious practices to the internet by establishing faith communities and centers of their ritual practices and conducting religious rituals online. Currently, scholars have attempted to discuss how religious individuals and groups introduce their spiritual activities online and to examine the extent to which digital technologies allow them to reflect or require them to alter traditional religious practices (Tsuria et al., 2017).

According to Campbell and Lovheim (2011), digital religion research can be divided into four waves, each reflecting academic insights into the internet and the characteristics of different methodological approaches. The first wave, the descriptive era, focused on describing the new phenomena occurring online while assessing idealist and realist discourses about the effect of the Internet on society. The second wave, the categorization period, saw scholars creating typologies of ordinary religious internet manners. The third wave, the theoretical shift, emphasized the development of theoretical frameworks for explaining and examining patterns of offline faith communities' negotiation with new media. The fourth wave, the contemporary era, focuses on how religious adherents navigate the relationship between various aspects of their online and offline lives (Tsuria et al., 2017).

Digital religion scholars have acknowledged that certain methods are better suited for studying specific theoretical questions, adapting social media and religion studies approaches to studies on digital religion. The most widely utilised methods include online and offline ethnography and text analysis. Research in digital religion indicates that hybrid religious spaces and digital media dynamics can potentially transform religious ideas, practices, and actions worldwide. The future of digital religion studies is expected to continue exploring how integrating digital environments and religious practices can significantly change how believers understand and practice their faith. By integrating theoretical and methodological approaches, digital religion studies will provide further insights into how digital technologies influence and shape religious contexts, both online and offline (Tsuria et al., 2017).

### **Mediatization and Changes in Muslim Religious Practices in Indonesia**

Mediatization is the process by which media becomes essential to nearly every aspect of social life, including religious practices. Mediatization of religion examines how mass media, including digital media, influences and transforms religious practices in contemporary society (Hjarvard, 2008b, 2013). It has resulted in significant changes in religious expression and experience in contemporary Muslim practices. One of the most important changes in Islam in Indonesia is the reliance of Muslims on social media in practicing their religious

lives and their perception of online activities as part of their religious efforts to increase their religiosity (Slama, 2018). (Nisa, 2018b), For instance, it uncovers the use of WhatsApp to connect its members and oblige them to recite One Day On Juz (section) of the Quran, which has become an online Islamic movement in Indonesia. Digital and mass media have facilitated Muslims in accessing religious information. Information previously only available through local communities or mosques can now be accessed through various online platforms, including social media, websites, and mobile applications. Muslims can access various interpretations of religious texts and fatwas from scholars worldwide via the internet, which can negatively impact their understanding and practice of religion (Eickelman, 2003). Nowadays, many Indonesian Muslims have used various social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter to express their piety (Husein & Slama, 2018).

Mediatization affects the logic of various institutions, including religion, and restores identities and community dynamics (Hjarvard, 2008a; Putri & Sunesti, 2022). (Hjarvard, 2008a; Putri & Sunesti, 2022). This process changes the operational aspects of religious institutions and transforms how people interact with religion in the modern digital context. Mediatization has led to the commodification of religious texts, influencing Muslim consumption behavior and creating new markets for Islamic goods and services. Advertisements for Sharia-compliant housing are a concrete example of how mediatization integrates religious aspects with commercial interests, offering products that provide religious identity to consumers increasingly exposed to digital media (Putri & Sunesti, 2022).

Social media facilitates modern religious practices such as virtual prayers, religious discussions, and the sharing of spiritual content. Additionally, social media democratizes access to religious education, weakens traditional authority structures, and facilitates interpersonal communication between religious leaders and communities (Pennington, 2018). With social media, religious information and education have become more accessible to the general public, which may have been previously limited to traditional authorities such as mosques or religious institutions. It also allows for more open dialogue between religious leaders and their congregations through digital platforms that reach a wider audience. The so-called online piety has been widely debated whether it contradicts the noble teaching of sincerity or is a type of *riya'* (being happy when one gets praise from others), which is strongly prohibited in Islam (Husein & Slama, 2018).

The use of social media may have reduced religious knowledge and awareness of Islam and influenced the interpretation and practice of Islam, thus creating new forms of Islam in the public sphere (Echchaibi, 2009). Young Muslims are more business-savvy and adept at conveying religious ideas through social media. It shows that young Muslim generations use social media to interpret religious texts and advance business and communication within their religious context (Echchaibi, 2009; Nisa, 2018a). Social media have been used to accelerate Islamic charities, including documentation of fundraising activities and the changing discourse of Islamic charities, which shift their pattern from social welfare and social justice into economic profit (Kailani & Slama, 2020).

Mediatization in contemporary Muslim religious practices in Indonesia illustrates significant transformations in how Muslims practice and understand their religion through the use of new media technologies. Platforms like Cariustadz.id, as a cyber fatwa medium, provide an alternative to religious teaching that is more inclusive and responsive to post-New Order social dynamics (Zamhari et al., 2021). On the other hand, the One Day One Juz (ODOJ) movement utilizes the WhatsApp application to build a large virtual community, deepening the understanding of the Quran among Muslims. These initiatives demonstrate adaptation to technological developments that not only change the paradigm in religious proselytization but also facilitate competition between traditional religious authorities and new ones in an increasingly dominant digital space (Nisa, 2018b).

In sum, the mediatization of religion in the context of Muslim religious practices shows how new media technologies transform traditional ways of engaging with their religious life into a more dynamic, individual, and networked space for understanding and practicing Islamic teachings in the digital era. This transformation not only broadens access to religious knowledge but also challenges the role of traditional religious institutions by promoting rapidly adaptive and responsive religious expressions to fulfill the needs of Muslim communities in the local and global contexts.

### **Hypermediation and the Muslim Identities in Indonesia**

Hypermediation plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of Muslim religious communities. Evolvi (2022a) defines hypermediation as using various media platforms to create affective spaces between physical and digital actions, influencing how individuals perceive and engage with their religious identity. Nisa (2018a) highlights that the use of social media platforms like Instagram leads to hypermediation among young Muslim women in Indonesia, impacting their religious practices and identity formation. Through proselytization on Instagram, they share positive messages and motivations to spread religious teachings. Visual content plays a significant role in shaping the identity of young Indonesian Muslim women, as they use Instagram to educate each other about virtuous practices and beliefs. Contrary to negative perceptions, social media has positively impacted religious understanding and identity among young Indonesian Muslims, fostering a sense of community and religious exploration.

Furthermore, (Nisa, 2018b) emphasizes that hypermediation facilitated by social media platforms such as WhatsApp has played a vital role in shaping the identity of Muslim religious communities in Indonesia. This technology has enabled the formation of semi-virtual Quranic movements like One Day One Juz (ODOJ), challenging traditional structures and redefining community dynamics. Through online and offline interactions, ODOJ members have strengthened their religious identity and engaged in collective religious practices, highlighting the importance of technology in modern religious expression. In Bandung, social media has been used as sites of digital Islamic sociality to differentiate their Islamic identity and religiosities from other religious groups and movements by promoting and intensifying

the spirit of piety among their members (Lengauer, 2018). Hypermediation through social media platforms influences individual religious identity formation and collectively strengthens religious communities. With platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp, young Muslims in Indonesia can support each other, share knowledge, and reinforce their religious identity in a modern context.

Additionally, Pennington (2018) explains that hypermediation through social media platforms like Twitter allows Muslims to share their experiences and perspectives on their religion, shaping a collective identity. It provides a forum for marginalized Muslim groups, such as LGBTQ Muslims, to voice their opinions and gain support. Through campaigns like #MuslimWomensDay, social media helps Muslim communities create public spaces where they can share stories and challenge stereotypes, contributing to a more inclusive representation of Muslim identity.

Besides, media technologies such as the web and satellite television also influence the construction of Muslim community identities by offering new spaces for Islam in the public sphere. The emergence of hyperforms of religiosity transforms various aspects of social, cultural, and economic life into religious issues requiring religious decrees or fatwas. Islamic media and business serve as symbolic inventories for building identities, relationships, and communities, where individuals actively negotiate and choose their identities based on complex messages. The boundaries between producers and consumers become blurred in the media era, impacting how Muslim communities produce and consume religious meanings (Echchaibi, 2009).

Moreover, revitalizing religious moderation through digital spaces is crucial for countering radicalism and shaping Muslim communities' character in the digital transformation era. For instance, anti-gender movements and the reimagining of Islam by social media influencers demonstrate how the affective spaces between physical and digital actions create new religious identities. Hypermediation significantly shapes Muslim religious identities and communities in the digital age, indicating that technology changes how we communicate, understand, and practice religion (Royan, 2022).

### **The Impact of Social Media on Religious Authority and Community Structure Among Indonesian Muslims**

Social media has significantly impacted the authority and structure of Muslim religious communities in Indonesia, leading to the fragmentation of religious authority and new forms of online authority (Hannan & Mursyidi, 2023; Lubis, 2023). Social media platforms provide space for dynamic religious narratives, making religious authority more fluid and complex and challenging traditional institutions (Lubis, 2023). For instance, female scholars use social media to convey progressive Islamic teachings, break patriarchal barriers, and contribute to the evolution of religious discourse (Qoirunnisa et al., 2023). However, a study by (Subchi et al., 2022) has revealed that a lack of social media use among female ulama in

Indonesia has made their popularity lower than that of male ulama, and the online world has silenced their promotion of Islamic humanist perspective. The rise of popular preachers on social media has changed perceptions of traditional Islamic authority, influencing how Muslim communities view religious knowledge and learning (Halim, 2022).

The widespread use of social media among Indonesian Muslims has led to the emergence of “millennial ustadz,” who have more appeal and influence than traditional Islamic scholars (Hannan & Mursyidi, 2023). While early studies suggested a shift from traditional to online authority, it is now recognized that traditional authorities can adapt and coexist in the digital realm. They present themselves in ways that align with modern trends, as seen in the online da’wa strategies of Islamic boarding schools like Sabilul Huda (Kuswana & Pauzian, 2023; Lubis, 2023). Religious figures like Habib Ja’far adapt to youth culture and social media, allowing them to build new religious authority by engaging a broader audience and making religious teachings more entertaining and informative without sacrificing their sanctity (Fitriansyah, 2023). Additionally, NU activists like Gus Baha effectively compete with Islamist activities online through strategic online da’wa, attracting diverse audiences and bolstering moderate Islamic groups in Indonesia (Rohmatulloh & As’ad, 2022).

The interaction between social media and religious authority in Indonesia illustrates a dynamic transformation where traditional and modern religious influences coexist and adapt to the digital era. This transformation challenges and strengthens how Muslim communities construct, negotiate, and disseminate religious knowledge and authority. Social media platforms facilitate modern religious practices such as virtual worship, religious discussions, and the sharing of spiritual content (H. A. Campbell, 2013). Social media democratizes access to religious teachings, weakens traditional authority structures, and facilitates direct communication with religious leaders and communities (H. A. Campbell, 2013). Moreover, social media fosters broader and more informed interpretations of the world, facilitating the global exchange of ideas and perspectives among believers.

Social media usage among Indonesian Muslims significantly impacts the structure of religious communities, mainly through platforms like Instagram. These platforms allow young Indonesians to engage in soft da’wah, sharing positive messages and religious teachings. Visual content on Instagram is crucial in educating young Muslim women about virtuous practices, contributing to the formation of strong religious communities. Through Instagram, young Indonesian Muslims find a platform to explore and reinforce their religious identities, fostering a sense of community and religious exploration (Nisa, 2018a).

Social media also plays a key role in shaping religious behavior and facilitating online learning communities for Islamic education (Prasetyo et al., 2024). It accelerates the dissemination of religious values, fosters interactions among individuals with diverse religious understandings, and presents challenges such as spreading false information and religious radicalism. Social media discussions on religious issues such as Salafism, Wahhabism, and radicalism can lead to social discord and impact horizontal conflicts.

Regarding sectarian division between Sunnis and Shia in the Middle East, for instance, there has been a phenomenon called the Twitter War, containing sectarian discourses and activism in Twitter as a response to sectarian violence in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq (Siegel, 2017). In this regard, the use of social media has harmed the Indonesian Muslim Millennials' perception of Shia. The more frequently they consume social media for religious information, the more negative their perception of Shia (Zulkifli & Fahri, 2024). Additionally, the issue of religious blasphemy has been reproduced in varied social media platforms, which challenges religious harmony and social integration.

Additionally, social media serves as a platform for sharing knowledge, connecting students with educators, and enriching global understanding of Islam. Digital preachers like Hanan Attaki influence urban youth's piety through social media content. The commercialization of da'wa through social media, exemplified by Hanan Attaki, has transformed the way religion is taught and preaching methods among Indonesian youth (Haq, 2024). It should be noted that religious information in the digital world is not always valid, and "digital resources are not reliable," as suggested by (Wahid and Wardatun, 2023). Thus, social media plays a dual role in the structure of Indonesian Muslim communities, both in strengthening social and spiritual bonds through soft da'wa and religious education and in triggering polarization and conflict through the dissemination of inaccurate information and radicalism.

## CONCLUSION

The significant influence of social media on Indonesian Muslim religious practices through mediatization and hypermediation illustrates a transformative characteristic of the interconnection of technology and religion. Mediatization has significantly shifted how information about Islam is accessed, understood, and practiced. Digital and mass media facilitate the commodification of religious texts and democratize access to religious knowledge, thus weakening traditional Islamic authority structures. This shift inevitably facilitates broader participation and engagement among members of Muslim communities in religious discussions and discourses, fostering more inclusive and digitally connected religious identities while creating religious discords and tensions. Hypermediation, through platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp, enhances religious identity formation and community dynamics among Indonesian Muslims. It allows for the creation of semi-virtual religious movements and spaces where individuals can express their beliefs, share knowledge, and support each other in their religious journeys. This hypermediated interaction shapes a collective identity and redefines traditional religious structures. Social media also impacts religious authority and community structures, leading to the plurality of traditional religious authorities and the emergence of new online religious authorities. Influential figures, including female scholars and millennial ustadz, utilize social media to disseminate progressive Islamic teachings and engage broader audiences. This adaptation challenges and coexists with traditional religious institutions, creating a more fluid and complex religious authority landscape. The study highlights the evolving interconnection

between digital technology and Islam in contemporary Indonesia. While social media democratizes access to religious knowledge, facilitates modern religious practices, and creates new modes of religiosity, it presents challenges, particularly regarding the unreliability and superficiality of digital Islamic sources as sole sources of religious learning, besides a lack of digital literacy among members of Muslim communities. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehensively grasping the transformation of religious practices and authority in the digital era. Because this study depends only on library sources, future research should empirically examine the interrelation between social media and Muslim lives in specific social and political contexts.

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