



Aqīdah in the Digital Age: Social Media, Religious Authority, and an Islamic Legal Framework

Manzoor Ahmed Kalwar^{1*}, Danyal Ahmad²,
Hafiza Sana Rehman Khan³, Najmul Sahar Ilyas⁴
^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia
⁴Bahria University Health Sciences Campus, Karachi, Pakistan

*(Corresponding author) e-mail: manzoor.ahmed@uiii.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose - The rapid growth of digital technology and social media has significantly impacted how religious knowledge is accessed, interpreted, and practised among Muslim youth. Concurrently, this shift has contributed to the decentralisation of religious authority in Indonesia, raising concerns about the authenticity, consistency, and integrity of Islamic creed (*‘aqīdah*) within largely unregulated digital environments. Although existing literature has predominantly examined these developments through sociological and media perspectives, limited attention has been given to their implications within Islamic legal and theological paradigms. This study aims to examine the role of digital platforms in the formation, negotiation, and maintenance of *‘aqīdah* among Muslim youth, while also analysing these dynamics through the lens of Islamic jurisprudence.

Methodology/approach - To achieve this, the research employs a qualitative method, combining a comprehensive literature review with thematic analysis, supported by selected case examples of Islamic digital preaching (*da‘wah*) movements in Indonesia. The analytical framework is grounded in key Islamic legal concepts, including verification (*tabayyun*), ethical responsibility (*amānah*), the authority of qualified scholars, and the overarching framework of the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*), particularly the preservation of religion (*hifz al-dīn*).

Findings - The findings reveal that digital media has restructured Islamic discourse: it has made it more participatory and accessible; yet, it has also facilitated misinformation, fragmented knowledge, and contributed to the erosion of traditional authority structures. These dynamics present both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, they enable broader access to religious education; on the other, they pose risks to the integrity of *‘aqīdah*. The study concludes that digital religious interaction must be guided by an Islamic legal-ethical framework to safeguard doctrinal integrity.

Conclusion - This research contributes a normative-analytical framework that bridges Islamic theology, sociology, and jurisprudence. It further recommends strengthening digital religious literacy, enhancing the presence of qualified scholars in online spaces, and establishing ethical standards for digital religious discourse.

Keywords: *‘Aqīdah*; Digital Religion; Islamic Law; Muslim Youth; Social Media.

Paper type: Research paper.

Article info:

Received	: 25 January 2026
Received in revised from	: 05 March 2026

Accepted	: 15 April 2026
Published	: 30 April 2026

© Manzoor Ahmed Kalwar, Danyal Ahmad, Hafiza Sana Rehman Khan, Najmul Sahar Ilyas. This article is published under the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](#) license. Individuals are permitted to reproduce and distribute the work in any medium or format, provided that appropriate credit is given to the original authors and the source. However, any commercial utilization of the published material necessitates prior written consent from the copyright holder.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests: The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest pertaining to the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently, devoid of any commercial or financial relationships that could be interpreted as a potential conflict of interest.

Introduction

Digital technology and social media have significantly transformed the nature of communication, learning, and religious involvement in the contemporary world. Religious education is no longer confined to traditional institutions such as mosques, Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), and formal educational settings; it increasingly takes place within digitally mediated environments. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and X have become critical channels for the dissemination, negotiation, and consumption of Islamic discourse among Muslim youth. Scholars of digital religion argue that the process of mediatization, alongside communication processes driven by algorithms, has profoundly influenced the formation of religious authority, participation, and identity in modern society¹. The digital era has also disrupted *da'wah* in Muslim societies by shifting its structure from centralized to participatory and from traditional to media-centric communication practices².

Indonesia ranks among the world's largest digital societies, with social media playing a significant role in the daily lives of the younger generation. Data from Reportal indicate that there are over 139 million social media users in Indonesia, while data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) report that internet penetration among the youth exceeds 90 per cent³. The visibility of influential figures such as Hanan Attaki and other digital Islamic preachers has surged, making them prominent religious actors within urban Muslim youth in online *hijrah* communities and digital religious campaigns⁴. Several studies on Indonesian Muslim youth suggest that short-form religious content that emphasises emotional spirituality, *hijrah* narratives, and motivational preaching tends to garner higher engagement than doctrinal or jurisprudential discussions⁵.

Consequently, in recent years, the role of digital platforms has expanded in terms of understanding, representation, and practising Islamic creed (*'aqīdah*) in contemporary Muslim society. However, these opportunities also raise significant theological and ethical questions within the digital context. Algorithms-driven technologies are more likely to promote sensational and emotionally appealing content over the pursuit of scholarly authenticity, thus

¹ Natasha Constantin et al., "Religious Transformation in Digital Era: Mediatization Impact on Religious Practice," *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies* 4, no. 10 (October 2024): 8977–89, <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v4i10.1313>; Constantin Grigore and Alexandra Cobzeanu, "The Impact of Digitalization on Religious Practices and Community Dynamics Following the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review," *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala* 17, no. 2 (June 2025): 302–43, <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/17.2/984>.

² Rafinita Aditia and Evi Hafizah, "Transformation of the Spread of Islamic Messages through the Transition from Traditional Media to Digital Media in Contemporary Da'wah," *Jurnal Al Nahyan* 1, no. 1 (March 2025): 14–23, <https://doi.org/10.58326/jan.v1i1.209>.

³ antaranews.com, "APJII catat tingkat penetrasi internet Indonesia capai 80,66 persen," Antara News, August 6, 2025, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5019229/apjii-catat-tingkat-penetrasi-internet-indonesia-capai-8066-persen>.

⁴ Inna A'thoina and Abdullah Mustafa Mohamad Al-Aboosi, "Navigating Digital Da'wah: Hanan Attaki's Approach and Nahdatul Ulama's Authority on Social Media," *Penamas* 37, no. 2 (December 2024): 158–71, <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v37i2.822>.

⁵ Endang Sumiati et al., "Transformation of Islamic Higher Education: Policy Strategy, Challenges, and Opportunities," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 4 (December 2024): 1399–417, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v8i4.46>.

facilitating the spread of misinformation and unverified religious teachings⁶. Previous studies have also shown that online discussions surrounding the movement of *hijrah*, theological exclusivism, and viral preaching within Islamic circles in Indonesia can further polarise and fragment religious authority among young Muslims⁷. In such scenarios, traditional methods of scholarly verification are undermined, and new challenges arise in upholding *'aqidah* digitally. Numerous viral Islamic contents circulating on TikTok and Instagram in Indonesia have generated public debate due to emotionally charged religious claims, oversimplified theological interpretations, and the absence of scholarly references, particularly within online *hijrah* and motivational preaching content aimed at youth audiences⁸.

From the perspective of Islamic law, digital religious engagement should therefore be examined through the lens of ethical issues, such as verification of information (*tabāyun*), ethical responsibility (*amānah*), and reliance on qualified scholarship. The principle of *tabāyun* in the Qur'ān (49:6) is a commandment to verify information and accept only what is confirmed⁹. Trustworthy transmission of knowledge, epistemological discipline, and scholarly authority were also emphasised by classical Muslim thinkers such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldun, al-Shātibi, and Ibn Ashūr in maintaining religious purity and social stability¹⁰. Existing studies on digital religion have successfully elucidated the sociological transformation of religious authority, identity formation, and online religious participation; however, they have paid limited attention to the normative dimension of Islamic legal ethics in evaluating religious engagement within algorithm-driven digital environments¹¹.

Moreover, previous studies rarely integrate the sociology of religion with Islamic legal ethics in analysing how Muslim youth negotiate religious authority and *'aqidah* within algorithm-driven digital environments in Indonesia¹². This gap indicates the necessity for an interdisciplinary approach that centres on the sociology of religion, digital religion studies, and Islamic legal ethics in exploring digital religious change today. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the effect of social media and digital technology on the development and maintenance of *'aqidah* for Muslim youth in Indonesia. The study focuses on the evolving nature of religious authority, religious activity on the internet, misinformation, and ethical

⁶ Shodiq Abdullah et al., "Religious Confusion and Emptiness: Evaluating the Impact of Online Islamic Learning among Indonesian Muslim Adolescents," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (May 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9510>.

⁷ Cucu Nur Hayati, A. Bakir Ihsan, and Muhammad Farras Shaka, "The Influence of Social Media on Religious Identity Politics among Indonesian Millennial Generation," *Simulacra* 5, no. 2 (November 2022): 57–70, <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v5i2.16621>.

⁸ Shodiq Abdullah et al., "Religious Confusion and Emptiness: Evaluating the Impact of Online Islamic Learning among Indonesian Muslim Adolescents," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (May 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9510>.

⁹ "Surah Al-Hujurat - 6," accessed April 24, 2026, <https://quran.com/al-hujurat?locale=en&font=v1&reading=false&translations=131%2C20>.

¹⁰ Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, "Ihya'ulum al-Din: The Revival of the Religious Sciences," *Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust*, 2015; Khaldun Ibn, "The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History (F. Rosenthal, Trans.)," *Princeton University Press*. (Original Work Published 1377). <https://la903106.us.archive.org/22/items/Etaoin/The%20Muqaddimah> 20 (1967): E2; I. Al-Shatibi, "Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul al-Shari'ah [The Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law]," *Dar Al-Ma'rifah*, 2004; Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur, *Treatise on Maqāsid Al-Shari'ah* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2006).

¹¹ Heidi Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds* (2013).

¹² Ismaael AlMzaedh et al., "Digital Religion in Platform Societies: Authority, Mediation, and Social Cohesion in Algorithmic Publics (2010–2025)," *Frontiers in Sociology* 11 (April 2026): 1802281, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2026.1802281>.

issues in digital activism within selected online *da'wah* movements, along with the influence of prominent religious figures on Indonesian social media platforms.

This research posits that the principles of *tabāyun*, *amānah*, and qualified scholarship can serve as ethical markers for the protection of religion (*hifz al-dīn*) to evaluate religious involvement in the contemporary mediated religious landscape. This study integrates perspectives from the sociology of religion, digital religion studies, and Islamic legal ethics to provide an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how Muslim youth navigate their negotiation of religious authority, *'aqīdah*, and digital religious participation in modern Indonesia. The originality of this study lies in its proposal of Islamic legal ethics as a practical evaluative framework for safeguarding *'aqīdah* and regulating the ethical communication of religion within the contemporary digital context.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study utilises a qualitative descriptive approach, incorporating digital content analysis and a sociology of religion perspective, to examine the influence of social media on the formation and preservation of *'aqīdah* among Muslim youth in Indonesia. A qualitative approach was adopted as this study aims to interpret patterns of religious behaviour, transformations of religious authority, ethical challenges, and processes of identity formation within digitally mediated Islamic environments, rather than to measure statistical relationships¹³. Digital content analysis was deemed appropriate due to the study's focus on interpreting religious narratives, patterns of audience interaction, symbolic communication, and representations of religious authority circulating within social media contexts.

The sociology of religion perspective was applied to analyse how digital communication reshapes religious authority, communal interaction, symbolic religiosity, and the formation of religious identity among Muslim youth in Indonesia. Particular attention was directed towards the processes by which the visibility of online platforms, audience interactions, emotional responses, and participatory digital culture reshape religious legitimacy within contemporary Islamic contexts¹⁴. This perspective also facilitated the investigation of changes in patterns of religious learning, authority negotiation, and collective religious belonging within networked Muslim communities.

The sources of information included *da'wah* movements accessible on the internet and influential religious figures in Indonesia who maintain a presence on social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and X. The discussion encompasses various digital *da'wah* communities and youth-oriented Islamic influencers highlighted in recent scholarship and the Indonesian digital religious discourse, such as *Pemuda Hijrah* and notable Islamic speakers who have garnered substantial online followings. The selected accounts and social media platforms were purposively chosen for several reasons: (1) they exhibited high engagement with young audiences; (2) they consistently posted religion-related content; (3) they were highly visible on social media; (4) they were pertinent to discussions on *'aqīdah* and Islamic identity; and (5) they held significant influence within online Muslim communities. These sources were selected as they represent the most visible forms of contemporary youth-

¹³ Campbell, *Digital Religion*.

¹⁴ Gary R. Bunt, *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority* (UNC Press Books, 2018); Yildiz Sumeyye, "Heidi A. Campbell & Ruth Tsuria (Eds.), 'Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media (2nd Edition)', Routledge, 2022. ISBN 978-0-367-25775-7," *Al-Adabiya: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan* 17, no. 2 (December 2022): 123–29, <https://doi.org/10.37680/adabiya.v17i2.1316>.

oriented digital *da'wah* in Indonesia and have been identified as having a considerable impact on online Islamic discourse, *hijrah* narratives, and the religious engagement of urban Muslim youth.

The data analysed consist of a selection of religious videos, short-form religious preaching clips, captions, audience comment interactions, and online discussions uploaded between January 2024 and March 2025, along with digital religious campaigns. Approximately 120 digital contents, including short videos, livestream discussions, captions, reposts, and comment interactions across TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and X, were observed and analysed during the research period. Special emphasis was placed on religious narratives regarding *'aqidah*, discourse on *hijrah*, religious authority, digital preaching, verification of religious information, and the portrayal of Islamic identity in an online context. Additionally, selected observations from viral online religious discussions and documented empirical cases discussed in previous studies concerning Muslim youth religiosity and digital engagement in Indonesia were incorporated to contextualise the findings.

Secondary data sources included scholarly books, journal articles, institutional reports, conference proceedings, and prior empirical research on digital religion, sociology of religion, social media, Islamic education, Islamic law, Islamic ethics, and Muslim youth religious engagement. These sources were utilised to frame the findings and enhance the interdisciplinary examination of current digital religious changes.

The coding process was conducted in multiple phases. The digital religious content was initially classified by platform, type of content, audience interaction, and thematic focus. Subsequently, open coding was employed to identify recurring themes related to religious authority, *hijrah* narratives, *'aqidah* discourse, ethical discussions, misinformation, emotional discourse, and audience engagement¹⁵. Thirdly, the identified themes were clustered into broader categories for analysis and interpreted through the lens of the sociology of religion and Islamic legal ethics. The analysis was conducted using a two-pronged approach: one inductive, whereby themes emerged from the observed data, and the other deductive, based on the concepts of *tabāyun*, *amānah*, qualified scholarship, and *hifz al-dīn*.

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the principles of Islamic legal ethics and the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). Analytical tools employed included concepts from Islamic law, such as verification of information (*tabāyun*), ethical responsibility (*amānah*), and reliance on qualified scholars (*ahl al-'ilm*). *Tabāyun* is derived from the verse of Surah Al Hujurat (verse 6), which pertains to the verification and responsible communication prior to believing and disseminating information. The concepts of *tabāyun*, *amānah*, and epistemological authority are also discussed in classical Islamic texts, including al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' Ulum al-Dīn*, Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, al-Shātibī's *al-Muwāfaqat*, and Ibn Ashūr's *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah*. The term "*amānah*" denotes honesty, trustworthiness, and moral responsibility in the dissemination of religious information and knowledge, whereas "*amān*" refers to the trust placed in qualified scholarship, epistemological authority, and scholarly competence regarding Islamic teachings.

The content and interactions examined in this study were both publicly accessible and visible on open social media platforms. Ethical research practices were adhered to by anonymising usernames or personal identifiers found in online comments during the research process and by refraining from collecting private user data. The findings of the study should

¹⁵ Victoria Clarke and Virginia Braun, "Thematic Analysis," *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, May 4, 2017, world, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>.

be regarded as a cross-section of the most prominent youth-focused Islamic digital media accounts in Indonesia. As the study emphasises these notable accounts, the results may not comprehensively reflect the practice of digital religious engagement among Muslim youths in other regional and ideological contexts. The study is qualitative and interpretative; therefore, the findings should be understood as analytical insights into the patterns of digital religiosity experienced by the youth, rather than as statistical data that can be generalised to all Muslim youth groups in Indonesia.

Digital *da'wah* and Islamic communication in contemporary Muslim societies

The study of digital religion has emerged as a significant interdisciplinary field that examines the implications of new forms of religious communication, authority, identity, and practice that have arisen due to digital technology. Campbell defines digital religion as the intersection between religious life and digitally mediated environments, asserting that digital media serves as both a medium for religious practice and a mechanism for altering religious practices and authority structures¹⁶. This perspective is further corroborated by recent scholarly research, which illustrates how mediatization and digitalisation have profoundly impacted worship practices, community life, and religious experiences, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, which catalysed an increased reliance on digital platforms for worship and community engagement¹⁷. Existing scholarship on digital religion effectively demonstrates how digital media reshapes religious participation, identity formation, and authority structures through networked communication and participatory culture. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, digital platforms increasingly function as mediated social spaces where religious legitimacy, communal belonging, and religious identity are continuously negotiated¹⁸. However, much of this scholarship primarily emphasises sociological transformation while providing limited discussion regarding normative Islamic ethical mechanisms for evaluating religious engagement in digital environments.

In Muslim societies, digital transformation has significantly altered Islamic communication, *da'wah*, and religious education. Islamic preaching has become more accessible, interactive, and visually appealing to youth through the utilisation of social media platforms and smartphones¹⁹. The e-*da'wah* movement in Indonesia, represented by Pemuda Hijrah, exemplifies how digital media creates new experiences for urban Muslim youth in establishing their identity and community. Research also indicates that young online influencers increasingly shape contemporary understandings of Islam through motivational sermons, short-form videos, and emotionally engaging religious narratives disseminated via platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. These developments reflect broader sociological transformations in contemporary Muslim societies, where religious authority is progressively shifting from institutional scholarship towards digitally mediated forms of visibility, popularity, emotional engagement, and algorithmic circulation. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this transformation signifies the decentralisation of religious authority

¹⁶ Sumeyye, "Heidi A. Campbell & Ruth Tsuria (Eds.), "Digital Religion."

¹⁷ AlMazaedh et al., "Digital Religion in Platform Societies."

¹⁸ Dindin Solahudin and Moch Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority," *Religions* 11, no. 1 (December 2019): 19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010019>.

¹⁹ Shodiq Abdullah, "Internet and Religiousness: The Examination of Indonesian Muslim Youth Population's Use of the Internet," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (May 2022): 17–32, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2022.16.1.11962>; Solahudin and Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia."

in contemporary Muslim societies, where legitimacy is increasingly negotiated through participatory digital interactions rather than solely through institutional religious structures.

In modern scholarship, the relationship between social media and the religiousness of Muslim youth has been a central concern. Anggreani and Rafi'i define digital faith as the manner in which interactions in cyberspace influence religious involvement, expression, and identity formation among Muslim youth²⁰. Similarly, Douglass describes how young Muslims negotiate religious meanings within digital spaces and online communities²¹. In Indonesia, social media has emerged as a new medium that influences representations of Islam, youth religious orientation, and identity politics. These developments indicate a growing emergence of networked religiosity among Muslim youth, wherein religious learning, identity formation, and communal belonging are increasingly shaped through emotionally engaging digital interactions rather than exclusively through traditional religious institutions. Nevertheless, much of the existing scholarship remains concentrated on identity construction and patterns of online participation while insufficiently addressing how digitally mediated religious engagement impacts theological authority, epistemological discipline, and mechanisms for preserving *'aqidah* among Muslim youth²².

However, theologically and ethically significant issues also emerge in the current digital religious contexts. al-Zaman posits that algorithmic platforms prioritise attention-seeking and uninformed religious content over academic rigor²³. Likewise, Abdullah demonstrates that Muslim teenagers in Indonesia may encounter religious misinformation and theological confusion if the use of online Islamic education becomes excessive²⁴. The rapid dissemination of religion through short-form digital content can result in superficial *'aqidah* and a lack of profound religious knowledge²⁵. The conditions outlined illustrate the non-technological nature of digital religious communication while also presenting an epistemological problem that raises issues of both religious credibility and interpretative authority, as well as ethical responsibility in the transmission of Islamic knowledge.

Existing research on digital religion, online *da'wah*, and the intersection of Muslim youth and social media has provided valuable insights into the sociological and communicative aspects of contemporary Islamic transformation²⁶. Earlier studies have concentrated on the phenomena of 'mediatization,' 'online identity formation,' and 'participatory religious cultures,' while neglecting the 'normative' and 'ethical' dimensions of

²⁰ Mutia Nova Anggreani and Muhammad Rafi'i, "Digital Faith: How Social Media Shapes the Religious Identity of Muslim Youth," *Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies*, no. 0 (March 2025): 0, <https://doi.org/10.3059/insis.v0i0.23736>.

²¹ Caitlin H. Douglass et al., "Social Media and Online Digital Technology Use Among Muslim Young People and Parents: Qualitative Focus Group Study," *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting* 5, no. 2 (May 2022): e36858, <https://doi.org/10.2196/36858>.

²² "Aqidah - The Importance of Aqidah | PDF | Muhammad | Husayn Ibn Ali," Scribd, accessed August 3, 2025, <https://www.scribd.com/document/27580532/Aqidah-The-Importance-of-Aqidah>.

²³ Md. Sayeed Al-Zaman, "Social Media Users' Engagement with Religious Misinformation: An Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Analysis," *Emerging Media* 2, no. 2 (June 2024): 181–209, <https://doi.org/10.1177/27523543241257715>.

²⁴ Shodiq Abdullah, "Internet and Religiousness: The Examination of Indonesian Muslim Youth Population's Use of the Internet," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (May 2022): 17–32, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2022.16.1.11962>.

²⁵ Ahmad Zuhdi et al., *Digital Da'wah Strategy for Generation Alpha: Case Study*, 2024.

²⁶ Mochammad Irfan Achfandhy and Dawam Multazamy Rohmatulloh, "Piety, Social Pressure, and Riya': Religious Practices of Yogyakarta Urban Muslim Youth in Digital Media," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 19, no. 02 (February 2025): 249–68, <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2024.19.02.249-268>.

Islamic jurisprudence in regulating digital religious cultures²⁷. Specifically, few interdisciplinary studies have explored the potential application of Islamic legal concepts such as *tabāyun*, *amānah*, qualified scholar, and *hifz al-dīn* as ethical tools for assessing religious authority and maintaining *‘aqīdah* in algorithmic digital contexts²⁸.

This limitation is significant because the absence of a normative ethical framework may undermine critical awareness regarding the negotiation of religious credibility, authority, and theological authenticity within highly mediated online environments. Furthermore, research within the sociology of religion has not frequently examined the issue of religious legitimacy and knowledge enacted by Muslim youth in the Indonesian digital space through the lens of Islamic legal ethics. Additionally, there has been a paucity of prior research integrating the sociology of religion and Islamic legal ethics to elucidate the negotiation of religious legitimacy and knowledge by Muslim youth within the Indonesian digital landscape. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by integrating the sociology of religion, digital religion studies, and Islamic legal ethics into an interdisciplinary framework for examining religious authority, digital religiosity, and the preservation of *‘aqīdah* among Muslim youth in Indonesia.

Digital behaviour of religious youth and associated issues

The results of the analysis of selected digital religious content uploaded from January 2024 to March 2025 indicate that social media has significantly impacted the flow of learning, authority, and *‘aqīdah* formation among Muslim youths in Indonesia. Evidence from TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and X suggests that the landscape of religious learning for young people is increasingly characterised by short-form religious content, motivational *hijrah* stories, religious materials from the online space, and religious conversations²⁹.

The analysis specifically concentrated on uploads from selected Islamic social media accounts in Indonesia, namely *Pemuda Hijrah*, Shift Media, and various *da‘wah* accounts belonging to popular online preachers such as Hanan Attaki³⁰. Approximately 120 digital contents, consisting of short videos, livestream discussions, captions, reposts, and comment interactions across TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and X, were examined. The selected data were manually coded according to themes related to religious authority, *‘aqīdah* discourse, misinformation, *hijrah* narratives, ethical communication, and audience interaction. The findings indicate that motivational themes related to *hijrah*, self-improvement, emotional healing, and everyday Islamic lifestyle consistently generated higher audience engagement than longer theological discussions concerning *‘aqīdah*, *fiqh*, or classical Islamic scholarship³¹.

²⁷ Hanung Sito Rohmawati, Zulkifli, and Nashrul Hakiem, "Mediatization and Hypermediation in Digital Religion and the Transformation of Indonesian Muslim Religious Practices through Social Media Usage," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 18, no. 2 (January 2025): 133–50, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2024.182-01>.

²⁸ Arminsyah Arminsyah, "Maqasid Al-Shariah in Contemporary Legal Systems: An Analysis of Digital Rights and Privacy Protection," *Al-Qadha : Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Perundang-Undangan* 12, no. 2 (July 2025): 289–308, <https://doi.org/10.32505/qadha.v12i2.11178>.

²⁹ AlMazaedh et al., "Digital Religion in Platform Societies"; Sito Rohmawati, Zulkifli, and Hakiem, "Mediatization and Hypermediation in Digital Religion and the Transformation of Indonesian Muslim Religious Practices through Social Media Usage."

³⁰ Ridwan Rustandi and Mukhlis Aliyudin, "Cyber Culture in the Transformation of Urban Da‘wah: A Case Study of Pemuda Hijrah Community Bandung, Indonesia," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 19, no. 1 (March 2025): 29–46, <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v19i1.11453>.

³¹ Asya Dwina Luthfia and Yusuf Rohmat Yanuri, "Nurturing Piety: The Interplay of New Media, Youth Muslim and Commodification: (Hanan Attaki's Sharing Time Study Case)," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 10, no. 2 (January 2025): 213–25, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v10i2.8618.

Unlike *pesantren*, mosques, and formal Islamic institutions, digital platforms foster decentralised, participatory, and algorithmically mediated forms of religious communication³².

The analysis of *Pemuda Hijrah* and Islamic digital campaigns aimed at young people in Indonesia—now one of the movements of *da'wah* that can be conducted online—also reflects that social media plays a crucial role in constructing the image of urban Muslim youth in Indonesia³³. A substantial amount of interaction in the form of likes, reposts, comments, and short-form video engagement is observed with religious content focused on *hijrah* narratives, emotional spirituality, self-improvement, and everyday Islamic lifestyle³⁴. Comment interactions frequently included responses such as expressions of emotional transformation, statements about beginning *hijrah* after consuming online religious content, requests for practical religious guidance, and praise directed towards charismatic preaching styles³⁵. In contrast, relatively few interactions critically examined theological methodology, Qur'anic interpretation, or scholarly references. Observed audience interactions typically included short motivational responses, expressions of emotional identification with *hijrah* narratives, requests for practical religious guidance, and positive reactions towards emotionally persuasive preaching styles³⁶. A review of the interactions among comments on several youth-focused Islamic websites also suggests that a significant number of young Muslims are seeking more practical and emotionally engaging religious advice over theological explanations³⁷.

The findings also illustrate that digital religious communication has contributed to the reconfiguration of Islamic discourse and religious authority. From a sociological perspective, this transformation reflects the mediatization of religion, wherein religious legitimacy is increasingly shaped through digital visibility, audience interaction, and participatory communication, rather than exclusively through institutional religious structures³⁸. Observed engagement patterns indicate that religious legitimacy in digital environments is becoming increasingly associated with visibility metrics such as views, reposts, likes, emotional resonance, and audience interaction, rather than solely with formal scholarly training or institutional religious authority. This phenomenon is described by several scholars as "algorithmic authority," where the influence of the platform plays a significant role in

³² Shodiq Abdullah, "Internet and Religiousness: The Examination of Indonesian Muslim Youth Population's Use of the Internet," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (May 2022): 17–32, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2022.16.1.11962>.

³³ Rustandi and Aliyudin, "Cyber Culture in the Transformation of Urban Da'wah."

³⁴ Shakira Putri Anjeli and Khoirul Jamil, "Construction of Self-Identity of Teenagers Using Instagram Social Media: Phenomenological Study at Islamic University of North Sumatera (UINSU)," *The International Journal of Politics and Sociology Research* 12, no. 2 (July 2024): 139–46, <https://doi.org/10.35335/ijopsor.v12i2.260>.

³⁵ Aditia and Hafizah, "Transformation of the Spread of Islamic Messages through the Transition from Traditional Media to Digital Media in Contemporary Da'wah."

³⁶ Aliyu Alhaji Rabi'u, Ahmad Murad Mohd Noor Merican, and Ghadah Al Murshid, "Ethics in the Digital Age: Exploring the Ethical Challenges of Technology," *Journal of Information Systems and Digital Technologies* 7, no. 1 (May 2025): 29–50, <https://doi.org/10.31436/jisdt.v7i1.555>; Muna Hajar Roslan, Siti Zafrina Mohd Zahari, and Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani, "Da'wah on the Social Media: The Youth Engagement in Digital Islamic Content," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. 1 (2025): 1161–74, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9010098>.

³⁷ Abdullah, "Internet and Religiousness," May 2022.

³⁸ Kardina Engelina Siregar, "Understanding Islamic Aqidah Through the Lens of Religious Studies in Education: A Literature Analysis of Its Influence and Implications," *Proceedings of International Conference on Muslim Society and Thought* 4 (July 2024): 526–42, <https://doi.org/10.15642/ICMUST.4.2024.1716>.

determining content visibility online and user engagement. The results confirm Campbell's theory of digital religion, which posits that digital communication technologies redefine patterns of religious authority and participation in networked environments³⁹.

The findings also highlight key theological and ethical issues emerging within digital religious spaces. Muslim youth are accepting and disseminating religious information during internet conversations and viral religious materials without critically evaluating the credibility of sources, methodological foundations, or scholarly qualifications⁴⁰. In certain observed instances, short religious videos have presented theological topics related to 'aqīdah, religious duty, and Islamic values in an emotional or motivational manner, focusing predominantly on achieving viral success⁴¹.

The results further demonstrate that misinformation and unverified religious material are significant issues within online religious environments⁴². Religious content that is controversial, sensational, and emotionally provocative often garners more views and engagement, as it attracts greater interaction and extended viewing time from the audience. For instance, numerous short-form clips of religious content from the analysed period dealt with *hijrah*, gender interaction, and Islamic morality in very simplistic terms, without providing theological explanation or reference to established scholarly interpretations⁴³. Content is frequently presented in the form of motivational slogans, lacking classical sources, scholarly disagreement, and contextual interpretation in theological discussions. Several observed short-form videos simplified complex theological discussions into emotionally persuasive statements without offering supporting Qur'anic interpretation, hadith analysis, or references to classical scholarly debate⁴⁴. In some comment sections, users accepted these simplified religious messages as authoritative guidance primarily due to the influencer's popularity and emotional appeal. In certain online forums, particularly in TikTok comment sections or X discussion threads, TikTok users often employed the religious statements of influencers as a form of religious jurisprudence without reliance on scholarly qualifications or methodological references⁴⁵.

Some Muslim youths struggle to distinguish between scholarly interpretation, their own opinions, and motivational religious speeches from TikTok interactions in comment sections or discussions they repost on X. In various online discussions concerning the discourse of *hijrah* and contemporary Muslim identity, users frequently cited popularity and 'charisma' on the internet as proxy indicators for religious authority, rather than formal

³⁹ Sumeyye, "Heidi A. Campbell & Ruth Tsuria (Eds.), "Digital Religion."

⁴⁰ Muaddyl Akhyar, Nurfarida Deliani, and Khadijah Khadijah, "The Importance of Religious Education in the Digital Era," *International Journal of Islamic Educational Research* 2, no. 1 (January 2025): 15–30, <https://doi.org/10.61132/ijier.v2i1.146>.

⁴¹ Muaddyl Akhyar, Nurfarida Deliani, and Khadijah Khadijah.

⁴² Fouad Ahmed Atallah, "Digital Mediation and Fatwa Authority in Contemporary Islam: A Critical Islamic Legal and Media-Theoretical Framework," *Religions* 17, no. 3 (March 2026): 350, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel17030350>.

⁴³ "Understanding Aqidah: Islamic Creed Basics | PDF | Muhammad | Husayn Ibn Ali," <https://www.scribd.com/document/27580532/Aqidah-The-Importance-of-Aqidah>.

⁴⁴ Nabila Tabassum and Muhammad Riaz, *Preaching Islam in the Digital Age: A Study of Dr. Farhat Hashmi's Communication and Media Strategies*, September 2, 2024.

⁴⁵ Nita Sofia Sari et al., "Social Media as Self-Reflection: Transforming Student Identity in the Digital Era," *Journal of Communication, Religious, and Social Sciences (JoCRSS)* 3, no. 1 (June 2025): 25–34, <https://doi.org/10.60046/jocrss.v3i1.220>.

scholarly training⁴⁶. This situation contributes to the promotion of fragmentation and decentralisation of religious authority in modern digital Islam.

Another major finding pertains to ideological polarization and selective exposure to religion within algorithmic environments. Social media recommendation systems continually reproduce content aligned with users' previous preferences, thereby creating digital echo chambers that limit exposure to diverse religious perspectives⁴⁷. Several online religious communities reveal that users are often confronted with repeated narratives that reaffirm exclusivist views of Islam, while withholding critical engagement with broader scholarly traditions. In multiple observed interactions, users repeatedly consumed and circulated similar religious narratives that reinforced exclusivist understandings of Islamic identity, showing limited engagement with alternative scholarly interpretations or broader theological discussions. From a sociological perspective, these changes reflect how digital spaces can brand and market religion, signalling a shift towards "performative religions" in which visibility and symbolic acts of piety constitute major components of religious life in the digital age⁴⁸.

However, the results also demonstrate the potential that digital technology possesses to enhance the religious involvement of Muslim youth. The internet has made Islamic education more accessible, enabling individuals to access lessons, conversations, and learning materials from qualified teachers around the world⁴⁹. Other observed digital religious communities also promote charitable activism, communal learning, the study of the Qur'an, and online religious mentoring programmes for youth⁵⁰. Thus, the use of digital technology creates both opportunities and challenges in preserving *'aqidah* and developing modern Islamic discourse in Indonesia.

Ethical principles of Islamic law in the use of social media

The observed patterns of misinformation, emotional simplification of religious teachings, and fragmentation of religious authority indicate the necessity of an ethical framework capable of regulating religious engagement in digital environments. The results demonstrate that the ethical issues arising from the new digital religious environments cannot be resolved through technology or media literacy initiatives alone. Islamic legal ethics provide a valuable moral standard to assist young Muslims in engaging with social media in a responsible manner and maintaining their *aqidah*. *Tabāyun*, *amānah*, and reliance on qualified scholars represent three interrelated ethical pillars that emerge as crucial in this study as the

⁴⁶ Nafik Muthohirin, "Faith in the Digital Age: The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism and the Plurality of Young Muslims' Piety on Social Media," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 19, no. 2 (2025): 199–233.

⁴⁷ Mutia Nova Anggreani and Muhammad Rafi'i, "Digital Faith: How Social Media Shapes the Religious Identity of Muslim Youth," *Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies*, no. 0 (March 2025): 2579–83, <https://doi.org/10.3059/insis.v0i0.23736>.

⁴⁸ Moh. Miftachul Choiri, Abu Muslim, and Abu Mohd Sham Kamis, "The Impact of Social Media on the Formation of Religious Patterns Among Millennial Students in Ponorogo," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 22, no. 2 (December 2024), <https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v22i2.9870>.

⁴⁹ Wafa Abu Hatab, "Islam and Social Media: Attitudes and Views," *Asian Social Science* 12, no. 5 (April 2016): 221, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v12n5p221>.

⁵⁰ Constantin et al., "Religious Transformation in Digital Era."

foundations for regulating religious communication in algorithm-based digital environments⁵¹.

"*Tabāyun*" is a concept derived from Surah al-Hujurat, verse 6, which signifies that information must be verified prior to acceptance, interpretation, and dissemination⁵². In today's context of information proliferation, emotional communication, and algorithmic amplification, *tabāyun* transcends mere factual verification to serve as an epistemological method for safeguarding the authenticity of religious knowledge. An examination of religious interactions on the Internet reveals that many young users disseminate information about Islam without critically assessing the credibility of its sources, the contextual interpretation, or the scholarly legitimacy⁵³. This has resulted in the rapid diffusion of religious teachings that are not sourced from authoritative religious texts and the dissemination of oversimplified narratives of '*aqīdah*' and interpretations that provoke emotional responses online. The findings indicate that numerous viral religious contents circulate rapidly through reposts and algorithmic recommendation systems, despite lacking clear scholarly references or contextual theological explanations, underscoring the continuing relevance of *tabāyun* as a mechanism for epistemological verification in digital religious communication.

In the digital religious sphere, classical Muslim scholars emphasised the necessity of verifying and ensuring the trustworthiness of knowledge transmission in the preservation of religion. Al-Ghazalī asserted that religious knowledge must be conveyed from a genuinely and morally reliable source to protect society from theological confusion and deviation. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun cautioned that the uncritical acceptance of information can lead to "mischief in religion and disorder in society." Within the digital religious context, the concept of *tabāyun* assumes heightened significance, as algorithms are designed to promote virality, speed, and engagement rather than epistemological accuracy. *Tabāyun* can thus be interpreted as a means of safeguarding the '*aqīdah*' from misinformation, manipulation, and theological oversimplification.

Amānah is another central theme in Islamic digital ethics. *Amānah* encompasses more than mere honesty; it embodies moral responsibility and ethical accountability regarding the presentation of information, particularly religious information. The results indicate that social media platforms often foster an environment that promotes sensationalism, exaggeration, and emotional appeal, leading to increased engagement and visibility. Observations from various youth-oriented preaching accounts suggest that emotionally persuasive presentation styles, motivational language, and visually appealing short-form content frequently generate more audience engagement than more academically rigorous religious discussions⁵⁴. Furthermore, observations of preaching revealed a tendency among certain digital religious media to prioritise audience expansion and motivational services over theological issues and scholarly rigor. However, Islamic legal ethics underscore the importance of transmitting the knowledge

⁵¹ Hakikur Rahman, "The Ethical Dimensions of Digital Interactions:" in *Digital Citizenship and Building a Responsible Online Presence*, ed. Hakikur Rahman (IGI Global, 2025), 123–64, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-6675-2.ch005>.

⁵² "Surah Al-Hujurat - 6."

⁵³ Arditya Prayogi, Riki Nasrullah, and Singgih Setiawan, "The Evolution of Fiqh in the Digital Era: Challenges and Adaptations in Islamic Jurisprudence," *The Journal of Religion and Communication Studies* 2, no. 1 (February 2025), <https://doi.org/10.61511/jorcs.v2i1.2025.1751>.

⁵⁴ Roslan, Mohd Zahari, and Abdul Ghani, "Da'wah on the Social Media."

of Islam as a moral duty, conducted with honesty, moderation, and accountability, and approached with sincerity and seriousness⁵⁵.

In Islamic jurisprudence, the term "*amānah*" signifies moral safeguarding against the use of religion for self-serving purposes such as popularity, prosperity, and ideological mobilization⁵⁶. Al-Shatibi posits that the protection of religion is contingent upon the safeguarding of religious content and its ethical transmission methods⁵⁷. In a digital era, *amānah* necessitates responsible communication of digital content, wherein religious influencers and communities must avoid false simplifications and prioritise ethical religious education over mere symbolic reverence and piety towards God.

A second significant issue pertains to the integration of qualified religious authority within digital religious contexts. Throughout Islamic scholarship, the importance of religious interpretation by scholars who demonstrate competence in religious methodology and a rigorous intellectual approach has been emphasised⁵⁸. The concept of "*isnād*," or scholarly authorization, has its roots in the preservation of epistemological integrity within Islamic civilization⁵⁹. However, the findings reveal an increasing overlap between trained scholars and online religious influencers. When selecting religious authorities online, many young Muslims tend to favour online friendliness, emotional connection, and popularity over a critical examination of scholarly credentials or methodological approaches. Audience interactions frequently highlight emotional relatability, communication style, and personal inspiration as indicators of religious credibility, rather than scholarly methodology, *sanād*, or formal religious education.

This transformation detracts from the coherence of religious authority and diminishes epistemological discipline in the interpretation of religion. From a sociological perspective, it is evident that there is a growing trend toward networked religious authority, in which legitimacy is established through visibility, interaction, and symbolic influence rather than through academic scholarship within institutional frameworks. While digital accessibility can facilitate the dissemination of religion to the public, it also renders it easier for theologies to be oversimplified and for issues pertaining to *aqidah* to be interpreted without appropriate qualifications.

The concepts of *tabāyun*, *amānah*, and qualified scholarship can be integrated with the broader concept of protection of religion (*hifz al-dīn*) within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*⁶⁰. Classical scholars such as Ibn Ashur describe the preservation of religion as the safeguarding of the authenticity, integrity, and ethical transmission of religious knowledge and practice⁶¹. These classical Islamic perspectives serve as normative references for

⁵⁵ Prayogi, Nasrullah, and Singgih Setiawan, "The Evolution of Fiqh in the Digital Era"; Safaruddin Harefa, "The Fundamental Principles of Islamic Law in the Digital Era: An Ushul Fiqh and Maqashid Sharia Approach," *Journal of Islamic Law on Digital Economy and Business*, August 23, 2025, 84–99, <https://doi.org/10.20885/JILDEB.vol1.iss1.art6>.

⁵⁶ Rabiū, Merican, and Murshid, "ETHICS IN THE DIGITAL AGE."

⁵⁷ Al-Shatibi, "Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul al-Shari'ah [The Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law]."

⁵⁸ Atallah, "Digital Mediation and Fatwa Authority in Contemporary Islam."

⁵⁹ Raidatul Umanah, "The Digital Era of Hadith: Challenges of Authenticity and Opportunities for Innovation," *Al-Iftah: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society* 5, no. 2 (December 2024): 136–48, <https://doi.org/10.35905/aliftah.v5i2.12647>.

⁶⁰ Arminsyah, "Maqasid Al-Shariah in Contemporary Legal Systems."

⁶¹ Taofeeq Olamilekan Sanusi, "Maqasid Al-Shariah as an Evaluative Framework for the Digitalisation of Islamic Education: (Contemporary Hermeneutic Approach Study)," *Permata: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 6, no. 1 (April 2025), <https://doi.org/10.47453/permata.v6i1.3114>.

interpreting contemporary digital religious practices among Muslim youth. In today's digital landscape, threats to religion manifest in various forms, including misinformation, misuse of authority, ideological extremism, and the proliferation of unchecked and unverified religious material. Therefore, the purpose of *tabāyun* is to preserve the authenticity of the religion, the purpose of *amānah* is to maintain the integrity of ethical communication, and the purpose of reliance on scholars is to uphold epistemological integrity.

This study presents an Islamic jurisprudential perspective on digital religion, demonstrating that Islamic legal ethics can provide a systematic approach to regulate religious conduct online and preserve *aqīdah* in the algorithmic digital world. This stands in contrast to previous studies that primarily interpret digital religion through sociological or communication frameworks.

The results further indicate that enhancing Islamic digital literacy among young Muslims is essential for the effective application of the aforementioned moral principles. In this regard, critical engagement with online religious information, responsible communication behaviours, and accessible digital religious content, rooted in reliable Islamic knowledge, should be advocated by Islamic educational institutions, Islamic scholars, families, and religious organisations.

The integration of the Islamic legal framework within the digital religious sphere

Study results have demonstrated that the contemporary digital religious landscape necessitates the reconstruction of Islamic legal ethics to address the rapid transformation of technology and the alteration of religious hierarchies⁶². Previous research conducted on digital religion has primarily focused on sociological adaptation, communication patterns, identity constructions, and the mediatization of digital religion. In contrast, this study concentrates on the significance of integrating Islamic legal principles into the exploration of digital religious engagement among Muslim youth.

The analysis indicates that digital transformation presents opportunities for religious involvement while also posing challenges to theological fidelity. Social media facilitates broader access to Islamic learning, encourages young people's participation in religious discourse, and promotes Islamic *da'wah* beyond the traditional confines of institutional *da'wah*⁶³. Conversely, digital environments can also propagate misinformation, lead to the decentralisation of power, foster polarization, commodify religion, and create algorithmically mediated expressions of piety. The findings of this study suggest that digital technology is ethically neutral; its social and theological impacts depend on the ethical frameworks governing its use.

A primary strength of this study lies in its simultaneous utilisation of the sociology of religion, digital religion studies, and Islamic legal ethics as analytical tools for examining religious participation in digital spaces. This study diverges from existing literature that predominantly focuses on sociological adaptation or communication theory by demonstrating that concepts such as *tabāyun*, *amānah*, and reliance on qualified scholarship can serve as indicators of *hifz al-dīn* within algorithm-driven religious contexts. Through this interdisciplinary approach, a deeper understanding of the negotiation of *aqīdah*, religious

⁶² Prayogi, Nasrullah, and Singgih Setiawan, "The Evolution of Fiqh in the Digital Era."

⁶³ Shohana Binti Hussin Hussin, "Islamic Digital Civilisation: Challenges and Opportunities in Shaping The Values and Ethics of the Ummah: Peradaban Digital Islam: Cabaran dan Peluang dalam Pembentukan Nilai dan Etika Ummah," *International Journal of Islam and Contemporary Affairs* 5, no. 2 (December 2025): 123–42, <https://doi.org/10.61465/jurnalyadim.v5.345>.

authority, and digital participation among Muslim youth is achieved, providing ethical guidance on how to engage with Islam in the contemporary world, which aligns with normative approaches.

Furthermore, the study underscores the necessity of cultivating digital literacy in a holistic manner, encompassing not only digital skills but also a broader ethical framework. Islamic digital literacy must be grounded in moral consciousness, religious duties, sound judgement, and authentic learning alongside algorithmic proselytisation⁶⁴. Consequently, the involvement of Islamic educational institutions, scholars, religious policymakers, and religious organisations in the development of ethical religious education must be enhanced, thereby empowering youth participation in religious affairs in the digital era.

Overall, the findings reveal that a digital religious environment is, indeed, an ethical, sociological, and theological milieu, and as such, it is also a technological one, thereby necessitating responsible governance. Therefore, the reconstruction of legal ethics in Islamic communication within digital contexts is imperative to uphold the integrity of *aqidah*, ensure the responsible development of Islamic communication, and maintain a balanced Islamic presence in the contemporary Muslim society of Indonesia.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates how digital media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and X, have impacted the learning and understanding of Islam among Muslim youth in Indonesia, their relationship with religious authority, and the formation of their beliefs and values. Religious engagement is influenced by short videos, inspirational narratives of *hijrah*, *da'wah* by influencers, and participatory online interactions. The legitimacy of religion in the digital space encompasses not only institutional scholarship but also extends to visible, affective audiences and algorithmic circulation.

Furthermore, the results indicate that theological, ethical, and sociological issues are increasingly significant in the contemporary religious digital environment, including misinformation, reductionism in religious concepts, diminishing religious authority, and the absence of epistemological control in online religious discourse. Simultaneously, digital platforms provide substantial opportunities for accessing Islamic education, engaging in digital *da'wah*, participating in communal religious discourse, and connecting with qualified scholars. Consequently, digital technology should not be perceived solely from a theological perspective as a threat but as a mediated environment where ethical religious engagement, critical literacy, and responsible communication practices are essential.

Digital technology, however, presents considerable potential to enhance Islamic education and the religious engagement of Muslim youth amidst these challenges. The so-called Islamic knowledge can be made accessible through digital platforms, transcending geographical boundaries and expanding access to *da'wah*, religious participation within the community, and connections to qualified scholars and educational resources. Therefore, the results do not support the perspective that views theology as threatened by digital media; rather, they suggest that digital media can facilitate engagement with religion in an ethical, critically literate, and credible manner, grounded in Islamic scholarship.

⁶⁴ Abdulrohim E-sor et al., "Islamic Communication in the 21st Century: Principles, Methods, Practices, Digital Transformation and Contemporary Applications," *Bulletin of Islamic Research* 3, no. 4 (May 2025): 571–94, <https://doi.org/10.69526/bir.v3i4.354>; Rahman, "The Ethical Dimensions of Digital Interactions."

The key theoretical development of this research is the integration of three fields—sociology of religion, digital religion, and Islamic legal ethics—into a unified framework for assessing religious engagement in the contemporary digital world. *Tabāyun* and *amānah*, alongside reliance on qualified scholarship, may serve as ethical markers of *hifz al-dīn* in safeguarding *‘aqīdah*, upholding epistemological integrity, and regulating religious communications in an algorithm-centric digital environment. This study draws on insights from Islamic legal ethics as both an analytical and normative tool, representing one of the few interdisciplinary efforts in this area.

Additionally, the study underscores the necessity of fostering Islamic digital literacy, which encompasses technical skills, ethical awareness, theological responsibilities, and critical assessment of online religious content. Islamic educational institutions, scholars, families, policymakers, and religious organisations must become more proactive in promoting responsible digital religious engagement based on sound Islamic scholarship and communication ethics. Future research may further explore comparative digital religiosity in Muslim societies, the role of artificial intelligence and recommendation algorithms in shaping religious authority, and their long-term effects on *‘aqīdah* formation and identity construction among Muslim youth.

References

- Abdullah, Shodiq. "Internet and Religiousness: The Examination of Indonesian Muslim Youth Population's Use of the Internet." *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (May 2022): 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2022.16.1.11962>.
- — —. "Internet and Religiousness: The Examination of Indonesian Muslim Youth Population's Use of the Internet." *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (May 2022): 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2022.16.1.11962>.
- — —. "Internet and Religiousness: The Examination of Indonesian Muslim Youth Population's Use of the Internet." *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (May 2022): 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2022.16.1.11962>.
- Abdullah, Shodiq, Mufid Mufid, Ju'subaidi Ju'subaidi, and Purwanto Purwanto. "Religious Confusion and Emptiness: Evaluating the Impact of Online Islamic Learning among Indonesian Muslim Adolescents." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (May 2024). <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9510>.
- — —. "Religious Confusion and Emptiness: Evaluating the Impact of Online Islamic Learning among Indonesian Muslim Adolescents." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (May 2024). <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9510>.
- Abu Hatab, Wafa. "Islam and Social Media: Attitudes and Views." *Asian Social Science* 12, no. 5 (April 2016): 221. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v12n5p221>.
- Achfandhy, Mochammad Irfan, and Dawam Multazamy Rohmatulloh. "Piety, Social Pressure, and Riya': Religious Practices of Yogyakarta Urban Muslim Youth in Digital Media." *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 19, no. 02 (February 2025): 249–68. <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2024.19.02.249-268>.
- Aditia, Rafinita, and Evi Hafizah. "Transformation of the Spread of Islamic Messages through the Transition from Traditional Media to Digital Media in Contemporary Da'wah." *Jurnal Al Nahyan* 1, no. 1 (March 2025): 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.58326/jan.v1i1.209>.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid. "Ihya'ulum al-Din: The Revival of the Religious Sciences." *Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust*, 2015.

- AlMazaedh, Ismaael, Khalaf M. Tahat, Mohannad Alkhalaileh, and Dina N. Tahat. "Digital Religion in Platform Societies: Authority, Mediation, and Social Cohesion in Algorithmic Publics (2010–2025)." *Frontiers in Sociology* 11 (April 2026): 1802281. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2026.1802281>.
- Al-Shatibi, I. "Al-Muwafaqat Fi Usul al-Shari'ah [The Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law]." *Dar Al-Ma'rifah*, 2004.
- Al-Zaman, Md. Sayeed. "Social Media Users' Engagement with Religious Misinformation: An Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Analysis." *Emerging Media* 2, no. 2 (June 2024): 181–209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27523543241257715>.
- Anggreani, Mutia Nova, and Muhammad Rafi'i. "Digital Faith: How Social Media Shapes the Religious Identity of Muslim Youth." *Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies*, no. 0 (March 2025): 0. <https://doi.org/10.3059/insis.v0i0.23736>.
- Anjeli, Shakira Putri, and Khoirul Jamil. "Construction of Self-Identity of Teenagers Using Instagram Social Media: Phenomenological Study at Islamic University of North Sumatera (UINSU)." *The International Journal of Politics and Sociology Research* 12, no. 2 (July 2024): 139–46. <https://doi.org/10.35335/ijopsor.v12i2.260>.
- antaranews.com. "APJII catat tingkat penetrasi internet Indonesia capai 80,66 persen." Antara News, August 6, 2025. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5019229/apjii-catat-tingkat-penetrasi-internet-indonesia-capai-8066-persen>.
- Arminsyah, Arminsyah. "Maqasid Al-Shariah in Contemporary Legal Systems: An Analysis of Digital Rights and Privacy Protection." *Al-Qadha: Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Perundang-Undangan* 12, no. 2 (July 2025): 289–308. <https://doi.org/10.32505/qadha.v12i2.11178>.
- Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir ibn. *Treatise on Maqāṣid Al-Shari'ah*. International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2006.
- Asya Dwina Luthfia, and Yusuf Rohmat Yanuri. "Nurturing Piety: The Interplay of New Media, Youth Muslim and Commodification: (Hanan Attaki's Sharing Time Study Case)." *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 10, no. 2 (January 2025): 213–25. https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v10i2.8618.
- Atallah, Fouad Ahmed. "Digital Mediation and Fatwa Authority in Contemporary Islam: A Critical Islamic Legal and Media-Theoretical Framework." *Religions* 17, no. 3 (March 2026): 350. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel17030350>.
- A'thoina, Inna and Abdullah Mustafa Mohamad Al-Aboosi. "Navigating Digital Da'wah: Hanan Attaki's Approach and Nahdatul Ulama's Authority on Social Media." *Penamas* 37, no. 2 (December 2024): 158–71. <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v37i2.822>.
- Bunt, Gary R. *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority*. UNC Press Books, 2018.
- Campbell, Heidi. *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. 2013.
- Choiri, Moh. Miftachul, Abu Muslim, and Abu Mohd Sham Kamis. "The Impact of Social Media on the Formation of Religious Patterns Among Millennial Students in Ponorogo." *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 22, no. 2 (December 2024). <https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v22i2.9870>.
- Clarke, Victoria, and Virginia Braun. "Thematic Analysis." *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, May 4, 2017. World. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>.
- Constantin, Natasha, Ardina Lukita Wiraputra, Geraldo Rotty, and Desideria Lumongga Dwihadiah. "Religious Transformation in Digital Era: Mediatization Impact on Religious

- Practice." *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies* 4, no. 10 (October 2024): 8977–89. <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v4i10.1313>.
- Douglass, Caitlin H., Aidan Borthwick, Megan S. C. Lim, Bircan Erbas, Senem Eren, and Peter Higgs. "Social Media and Online Digital Technology Use Among Muslim Young People and Parents: Qualitative Focus Group Study." *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting* 5, no. 2 (May 2022): e36858. <https://doi.org/10.2196/36858>.
- E-sor, Abdulrohim, Mahmudulhassan Mahmudulhassan, Muhammad Abuzar, Elias Ahmed, Saif Uddin Ahmed Khondoker, Shikdar Mohammad Riazul, and Obydur Rahman. "Islamic Communication in the 21st Century: Principles, Methods, Practices, Digital Transformation and Contemporary Applications." *Bulletin of Islamic Research* 3, no. 4 (May 2025): 571–94. <https://doi.org/10.69526/bir.v3i4.354>.
- Grigore, Constantin, and Alexandra Cobzeanu. "The Impact of Digitalization on Religious Practices and Community Dynamics Following the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review." *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala* 17, no. 2 (June 2025): 302–43. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/17.2/984>.
- Harefa, Safaruddin. "The Fundamental Principles of Islamic Law in the Digital Era: An Ushul Fiqh and Maqashid Sharia Approach." *Journal of Islamic Law on Digital Economy and Business*, August 23, 2025, 84–99. <https://doi.org/10.20885/JILDEB.vol1.iss1.art6>.
- Hayati, Cucu Nur, A. Bakir Ihsan, and Muhammad Farras Shaka. "The Influence of Social Media on Religious Identity Politics among Indonesian Millennial Generation." *Simulacra* 5, no. 2 (November 2022): 57–70. <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v5i2.16621>.
- Hussin, Shohana Binti Hussin. "Islamic Digital Civilisation: Challenges and Opportunities in Shaping the Values and Ethics of the Ummah: Peradaban Digital Islam: Cabaran dan Peluang dalam Pembentukan Nilai dan Etika Ummah." *International Journal of Islam and Contemporary Affairs* 5, no. 2 (December 2025): 123–42. <https://doi.org/10.61465/jurnalyadim.v5.345>.
- Ibn, Khaldun. "The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History (F. Rosenthal, Trans.)." *Princeton University Press*. (Original Work Published 1377). <https://ia903106.us.archive.org/22/Items/Etaoin/The%20Muqaddimah> 20 (1967): E2.
- Muaddyl Akhyar, Nurfarida Deliani, and Khadijah Khadijah. "The Importance of Religious Education in the Digital Era." *International Journal of Islamic Educational Research* 2, no. 1 (January 2025): 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.61132/ijier.v2i1.146>.
- Muthohirin, Nafik. "Faith in the Digital Age: The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism and the Plurality of Young Muslims' Piety on Social Media." *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 19, no. 2 (2025): 199–233.
- Prayogi, Arditya, Riki Nasrullah, and Singgih Setiawan. "The Evolution of Fiqh in the Digital Era: Challenges and Adaptations in Islamic Jurisprudence." *The Journal of Religion and Communication Studies* 2, no. 1 (February 2025). <https://doi.org/10.61511/jorcs.v2i1.2025.1751>.
- Rabiu, Aliyu Alhaji, Ahmad Murad Mohd Noor Merican, and Ghadah Al Murshid. "Ethics in the Digital Age: Exploring the Ethical Challenges of Technology." *Journal of Information Systems and Digital Technologies* 7, no. 1 (May 2025): 29–50. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jisdtd.v7i1.555>.
- Rahman, Hakikur. "The Ethical Dimensions of Digital Interactions:" In *Digital Citizenship and Building a Responsible Online Presence*, edited by Hakikur Rahman, 123–64. IGI Global, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-6675-2.ch005>.

- Raidatul Umanah. "The Digital Era of Hadith: Challenges of Authenticity and Opportunities for Innovation." *Al-Iftah: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society* 5, no. 2 (December 2024): 136–48. <https://doi.org/10.35905/aliftah.v5i2.12647>.
- Roslan, Muna Hajar, Siti Zafrina Mohd Zahari, and Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani. "Da'wah on the Social Media: The Youth Engagement in Digital Islamic Content." *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. I (2025): 1161–74. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9010098>.
- Rustandi, Ridwan, and Mukhlis Aliyudin. "Cyber Culture in the Transformation of Urban Da'wah: A Case Study of Pemuda Hijrah Community Bandung, Indonesia." *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 19, no. 1 (March 2025): 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v19i1.11453>.
- Sari, Nita Sofia, Meta Nursanti, I. Kadek Dwiki Gotama, Candra Kusuma, and Ine Yudhawati. "Social Media as Self-Reflection: Transforming Student Identity in the Digital Era." *Journal of Communication, Religious, and Social Sciences (JoCRSS)* 3, no. 1 (June 2025): 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.60046/jocrss.v3i1.220>.
- Scribd. "Aqidah - The Importance of Aqidah | PDF | Muhammad | Husayn Ibn Ali." Accessed August 3, 2025. <https://www.scribd.com/document/27580532/Aqidah-The-Importance-of-Aqidah>.
- — —. "Understanding Aqidah: Islamic Creed Basics | PDF | Muhammad | Husayn Ibn Ali." Accessed January 23, 2026. <https://www.scribd.com/document/27580532/Aqidah-The-Importance-of-Aqidah>.
- Siregar, Kardina Engelina. "Understanding Islamic Aqidah Through the Lens of Religious Studies in Education: A Literature Analysis of Its Influence and Implications." *Proceedings of International Conference on Muslim Society and Thought* 4 (July 2024): 526–42. <https://doi.org/10.15642/ICMUST.4.2024.1716>.
- Sito Rohmawati, Hanung, Zulkifli, and Nashrul Hakiem. "Mediatization and Hypermediation in Digital Religion and the Transformation of Indonesian Muslim Religious Practices through Social Media Usage." *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 18, no. 2 (January 2025): 133–50. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2024.182-01>.
- Solahudin, Dindin, and Moch Fakhruroji. "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority." *Religions* 11, no. 1 (December 2019): 19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010019>.
- Sumeyye, Yildiz. "Heidi A. Campbell & Ruth Tsuria (Eds.), 'Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media (2nd Edition)', Routledge, 2022. ISBN 978-0-367-25775-7." *Al-Adabiya: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan* 17, no. 2 (December 2022): 123–29. <https://doi.org/10.37680/adabiya.v17i2.1316>.
- Sumiati, Endang, Sutrisno, Sibawaihi, and Mustafa Tekke. "Transformation of Islamic Higher Education: Policy Strategy, Challenges, and Opportunities." *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 4 (December 2024): 1399–417. <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v8i4.46>.
- "Surah Al-Hujurat - 6." Accessed April 24, 2026. <https://quran.com/al-hujurat?locale=en&font=v1&reading=false&translations=131%2C20>.
- Tabassum, Nabila, and Muhammad Riaz. *Preaching Islam in the Digital Age: A Study of Dr. Farhat Hashmi's Communication and Media Strategies*. September 2, 2024.
- Taofeeq Olamilekan Sanusi. "Maqasid Al-Shariah as an Evaluative Framework for the Digitalisation of Islamic Education: (Contemporary Hermeneutic Approach Study)." *Permata: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 6, no. 1 (April 2025). <https://doi.org/10.47453/permata.v6i1.3114>.

Acknowledgement:

The authors wish to acknowledge the academic support provided by Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia during the preparation of this study.

Funding:

The authors did not receive any specific grant for their research from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.