

The latest religious practices of da'i influencer and content creator in digital da'wah

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Abstract

Purpose - The aim of this research is to describe new religious practices in digital media.

Method - Digital ethnography and literature review are the methods used in this research.

Result - A new form of religious practice has emerged, conducted by influencers (A'yun, Ulfi, and Hijrapedia). This includes online *muroja'ah*, online Quran waqf, and online umrah substitutes. All three clearly indicate the existence of negotiations between offline and online spaces.

Implication - This research definitively shows the shift from conventional preaching to digital methods without diminishing traditional religious authority. It is a definitive reference point for other new religious practices.

Originality/Value - This research offers originality by revealing how digital media reshapes religious practices, introducing unique forms such as online *muroja'ah*, Quran waqf, and umrah substitutes led by influencers. It bridges the gap between traditional and digital spaces, challenging conventional sociological views and providing new insights into the evolution of religion in the digital age.

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Kata kunci:

Praktik keagamaan baru, agama digital, muroja'ah online, wakaf online, badal online.

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Abstrak

Tujuan - Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan praktik-praktik keagamaan baru di media digital.

Metode - Etnografi digital dan tinjauan literatur adalah metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini.

Hasil - Bentuk praktik keagamaan baru telah muncul, yang dilakukan oleh para influencer (A'yun, Ulfi, dan Hijrapedia). Hal ini mencakup muroja'ah online, wakaf Alquran online, dan pengganti umrah online. Ketiganya dengan jelas menunjukkan adanya negosiasi antara ruang luring dan daring.

Implikasi - Penelitian ini secara definitif menunjukkan pergeseran dari da'wah konvensional ke metode digital tanpa mengurangi otoritas keagamaan tradisional. Penelitian ini merupakan titik referensi yang pasti untuk praktik-praktik keagamaan baru lainnya.

Orisinalitas/Nilai - Penelitian ini menawarkan orisinalitas dengan mengungkapkan bagaimana media digital membentuk kembali praktik keagamaan, memperkenalkan bentuk-bentuk unik seperti muroja'ah daring, wakaf Alquran, dan pengganti umrah yang dipimpin oleh influencer. Penelitian ini menjembatani kesenjangan antara ruang tradisional dan digital, menantang pandangan sosiologis konvensional dan memberikan wawasan baru tentang evolusi agama di era digital

Introduction

Influencer preachers and content creators are increasingly shaping new religious practices through digital culture. People are worried that changing religious practices so that they can be sold for money will change the way people normally get religious information and weaken the power of traditional religious institutions. This study examines the forms of religious practices produced by influencer preachers or content creators. The article's goal is to talk about new religious practices in digital media from the point of view of digital religion, which looks at how digital technology and culture affect religious practices in digital media (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020).

Influencer preachers creatively combine commercial and religious participation through platforms like YouTube and Instagram (Qudsy et al., 2021). From a marketing perspective, influencers monetize product reviews and endorsements communicated via social media. Beyond marketing, content creators emphasize that social media users use these platforms as a source of income (Goanta & De Gregorio, 2021). Influencer preachers engage in entrepreneurial practices known as "*da'wah* business." They frame these commercial activities as beneficial to their followers by introducing steps necessary to become successful Muslims (Beta, 2019; Nisa, 2018b).

The commercialization of religious propagation is evident in figures such as Oki Setiana Dewi, who has 21 million Instagram followers. Oki was recognized as the most innovative influencer preacher of 2023 by the Indonesian Preachers Association (Rantung, 2023).

An influencer is defined as someone who has the ability to inspire or persuade others to take action or change opinions or behaviors. Influencers impact fairness and support for organizations or communities through donations or promoting goods or services. They are media content creators who monetize their influence for commercial or non-commercial persuasion, impacting a specific follower base (Goanta & De Gregorio, 2021). Based on their follower count, we categorize influencers as either macro or micro. Micro-influencers have between 10,000 and 100,000 followers, while macro-influencers have more than 100,000 followers (Anonim, n.d.).

Influencer preachers are active social media users who spread religious messages intending to persuade their audience's actions or opinions. An influencer preacher is defined as someone with more than 10,000 social media followers.

Influencer preachers are changing religious practices from traditional to modern. Religious practice is understood as a Muslim's symbolic obedience through rituals such as prayer, almsgiving, pilgrimage, fasting, Quran recitation, supplication, or life events like weddings and funerals (Ancok & Suroso, 1994). Online and offline religious practices influence each other and cannot exist independently (Arifin, 2019). New religious practices include rituals mediated by digital platforms.

During the 2020 pandemic, the number of influencers and content creators in Indonesia surged, with verified accounts ranging between 2,552 and 7,730 per month. Most creators are Millennials and Generation Z (Tesalonica, 2020). Examples include YouTube channels such as Ustadz Abdul Somad (3.48 million subscribers) and Adi Hidayat (3.72 million subscribers). On Instagram, notable influencer preachers include AA Gym (7.3 million followers) and Oki Setiana Dewi (19.8 million followers).

The shift from traditional to digital practices suggests that digital media could become the primary source of religious knowledge, potentially diminishing traditional authorities (Solahudin &

Fakhruroji, 2020). Online religious learning and sermons challenge traditional religious authority. Examples of new practices include online prayer and Quran recitation sessions and virtual pilgrimage services, such as those initiated by Clara Shinta via Hijrapedia with 100,000 Instagram followers (Hannan, 2022). Other examples include online philanthropy programs and digital religious gatherings (Fakhruroji et al., 2020).

Exposure to digital media has moderated conservative religious views among Muslim audiences. Social and political contexts, rather than solely religious teachings, shape religiosity. Regular exposure to digital religious content changes perspectives on family, social, and political life, including worship practices. Increased engagement with digital media correlates with a shift from conservative to moderate understandings, particularly among Millennials (Mudhofi et al., 2023). Research shows that higher exposure to digital sermons elevates audience religiosity levels (Syah, 2019). Additionally, the credibility of preachers and the influence of social media content significantly impact adolescent religiosity (Fitria et al., 2021).

Digital media enables individuals to negotiate religious platforms and reconstruct their identities. However, the rise of influencer preachers raises concerns about their qualifications and motivations. Many prioritize personal branding and financial gain over providing genuine religious guidance. For instance, Yusuf Mansur, an influencer preacher, faced legal action over alleged fraud involving an Islamic investment program promoted during his televised sermons in 2022 (Purwanti, 2022).

This study adopts the perspective of digital religion, exploring the intersection of digital media technology, religion, and digital culture. Digital religion examines how religious communities engage with the internet and express religiosity through digital practices. Religious groups must adapt to digital media's influence on traditions, authority, and authenticity to maintain their legitimacy. Digital religion combines online cultural traits (interactivity, user-generated content) with offline religious patterns (community beliefs and rituals).

Research indicates that digital platforms foster new religious practices, such as group prayers, Quran recitations, and online sermons (Hannan, 2022). While digital media challenges traditional authority, established institutions like Nahdlatul Ulama use it to strengthen their influence rather than erode it (Ikhwan, 2022).

Research method

The research methodology employed is digital ethnography, which analyzes content on digital media. This method positions digital media as a system of interaction among individuals. Interactions in digital media shape discourses that represent the thought patterns within a society (Saprillah et al., 2020). Solahudin's research, on the other hand, used case studies to look at how Islamic learning practices affect religious authority in digital preaching. This study is different from that research. It also differs from Wiwik's research on how university students adapted religious practices during the pandemic, which used in-depth interviews (Khasbullah, 2021). Moreover, Hannan's research on the disruption of Islamic religiosity in Indonesia during the pandemic utilized digital ethnography to highlight new religious practices initiated by the government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Hannan, 2022). In contrast, this study focuses on active digital media

users who deliberately influence others to adopt new religious practices, some of which have commercialization objectives.

Another study by Zaid examined the role of social media influencers in redefining Islam and reshaping spiritual beliefs and religious practices among young people in the Gulf region and the Middle East. His research utilized digital ethnography on four social media influencers in the Gulf area and found that these influencers challenge traditional religious authorities (Zaid et al., 2022). Another study on religious practices using a literature review approach concluded that information technology facilitates Muslims in worship and deepening religious knowledge flexibly. However, it also raises challenges such as the individualization of worship and the fragmentation of religious understanding (Jaenudin, 2024). This indicates that no research has yet explored new religious practices conducted by da'i influencers on digital media, particularly in Indonesia.

Another study described the online Islamic community in Indonesia known as One Day One Juz (ODOJ). Through in-depth interviews, it was demonstrated that ODOJ altered the religious practices of several of its members and enabled a "new way of practicing religion." Understanding ODOJ as "digital religion," the study detailed the social and technological dimensions of the group's disciplinary mechanisms as a type of new religious institution. This includes the online network structure of ODOJ, the reflective engagement of its members with its rules, and the specific technological capabilities of the applied apps and devices (Muslim, 2017). However, this research concentrates on da'i, who autonomously oversee digital preaching accounts without belonging to any particular community.

This study is significant because it can help the public understand contemporary religious developments, encourage critical discussions about religion and technology, identify emerging new religious practices, and enhance understanding and appreciation of religious diversity.

This study is library research (literature review) aimed at analyzing writings in both popular and scholarly online media related to preaching in the digital era. The literature review serves as an initial stage to establish the research foundation, aiming to obtain information from similar studies and deepen theoretical discussions (Khatibah, 2011). This literature review seeks to understand the concepts of da'i influencers and content creator preachers, as well as the forms of new religious practices in digital media, by gathering and analyzing information from written sources or documents such as journals, books, and articles.

This descriptive and interpretative method aims to analyze the emergence of new religious practices by da'i influencers or content creators in digital preaching. Specifically, it explores the forms of new religious practices generated by Da'i influencers on Instagram. Digital ethnography is used to collect data, such as the narrative content of religious practices. Interviews are also done to find out why da'i influencers came up with these new religious practices. Subjects interviewed include the da'i and followers of the da'i influencer accounts. The researchers cross-check, categorize, and interpret the collected data. Lastly, the researchers visualize the data through descriptive responses.

Results And Discussion

Results

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The term *da'wah* etymologically originates from Arabic, meaning a call, invitation, or appeal. M. Natsir defines *da'wah* as the act of promoting virtue (*amar ma'ruf*) and preventing vice (*nahi munkar*). Cik Hasan Bisri emphasizes that *da'wah* encompasses several essential elements as the material object of the science of *da'wah*: the preacher (*da'i*), the audience (*mad'u*), the methods of *da'wah*, the *da'wah* messages, and the media used in *da'wah* (Aziz, 2004b). Furthermore, the effects of *da'wah* (*atsar*) are considered one of its components (AB, 2013; Dulwahab, 2010). The concept of *da'wah* reflects these elements, suggesting that *da'wah* initiatives must integrate these components harmoniously to achieve optimal outcomes. As an act of inviting or calling, *da'wah* can also be associated with terms like propaganda, enlightenment, dissemination, education, and teaching.

In this study, *da'wah* focuses on dissemination and education through digital media. Spreading *da'wah* messages is what dissemination is all about. For example, @ulfisinta talks about the benefits of Quran gifts (*wakaf*), and @hijrapedia talks about the importance of proxy pilgrimage (*badal umrah*). On the other hand, educational *da'wah* emphasizes the transmission of knowledge, as demonstrated by @q.ayunsadun in promoting *muroja'ah* (revision of Quranic knowledge) (Alimuddin, 2007).

In the digital era, *da'wah* increasingly features young *da'i*. Fahrudin's research reveals that millennial audiences value the communication skills, message content, and personalities of the most favored young preachers, such as Hanan Attaki. The organizational affiliations of *da'i* are not significant to millennial audiences. Instead, millennials prefer themes such as contemporary issues, life topics, motivation, marriage, youth-related concerns, faith reinforcement, Quranic themes, and others. Furthermore, millennials value the personal branding of *da'i*. Digital media enables *da'i* to establish their personal brands, helping them instill religious values among millennials (Fahrudin & Islamy, 2022).

In addition to personal branding, a *da'i* must also possess qualifications in religious knowledge, behavior, and skills to effectively disseminate Islamic teachings (Choirin, 2023). Younger *da'i* increasingly rely on digital platforms for religious information. People no longer view scholars from religious schools (*madrasah*) or Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) as the best sources of advice. Instead, digital media has become an important tool for spreading the word (Moefad et al., 2021).

Digital media offers opportunities for preachers to deliver *da'wah* messages effectively. Its accessibility accelerates the rise of *Da'i* with progressive and contemporary approaches. These new *da'i* can come from various backgrounds, whether traditional Islamic education or general education, and they are not necessarily religious scholars (*kyai*) or clerics (*ulama*). However, they often have broader access to information and resources to support their religious initiatives. The presence of these new *da'i* provides hope for societal change and fosters constructive critique, making them a novel form of religious authority (Jinan, 2013).

New *da'i* also interact directly with followers on social media, making *da'wah* accessible to everyone, not only those with extensive religious knowledge. However, these new *da'i* often produce content that transcends religion and covers secular topics. This secularization of *da'wah* can

provoke negative reactions from some groups, as *da'wah* loses its sacredness. The Quran and Hadith encourage peace, but *da'wah* often becomes entangled with politics, economics, and other contentious issues instead. Sometimes, unknown agendas manipulate *da'wah*, resulting in misinformation or "hoaxes." The widespread use of social media democratizes *da'wah*, allowing anyone to become a da'i. This "democratization of da'i" prioritizes strong social media communication skills over traditional educational backgrounds (Rosidi, 2018).

Content Creator and Da'i Influencer

Content creators or influencers are part of the broader category of celebrities, often referred to as micro-celebrities. These individuals are not only appealing from a business profitability perspective but also in terms of gaining political power (Lewis, 2020). Today, individuals worldwide have the freedom to own social media channels or accounts (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok) and create content to generate income. Growing opportunities to monetize social media traffic have facilitated this development. From a semantic perspective, the Cambridge Dictionary defines an influencer as someone paid by a company to showcase and describe its products and services on social media, thereby encouraging others to purchase them or follow their recommendations. Similarly, the European Commission describes influencers as individuals with greater reach and influence than conventional marketing promotions, with influencer marketing relying on promoting and selling products or services via social media. Influencers represent marketing activities involving advertisers and distributors, specifically through paid communication about products that benefit the advertisers. According to the Word-of-Mouth Marketing Association, influencers can inspire or contribute to others taking action or changing opinions and behaviors. This definition is based on three considerations: influencers are paid to promote something, they operate on social media platforms, and they engage in commercial persuasion within their sphere of influence.

Based on their reach and follower base, we categorize influencers into different levels. Mega influencers are the most famous creators, followed by micro influencers, who are rising stars with fewer followers and less popularity. There are also nano influencers, who operate on a smaller scale and focus on word-of-mouth promotion. Influencers do not solely engage in commercial persuasion; they also participate in other communication activities, such as political or religious communication (*da'wah*). These activities aim to influence justice, support organizations or communities, or promote goods and services through donations or marketing. Influencers, as monetized content creators, engage in either commercial or non-commercial persuasion, impacting their specific follower base (Goanta & De Gregorio, 2021).

The researchers could also divide influencers into macro and micro categories. Micro-influencers typically have 10,000 to 100,000 followers. They often develop closer relationships with their smaller audiences, creating a sense of connection and trust that makes followers more receptive to their opinions and advice. This form of engagement resembles word-of-mouth marketing but is more measurable. On the other hand, macro influencers have over 100,000 followers. Their content enhances awareness, increases visibility, and reaches larger audiences, making them aspirational figures in the influencer marketing space.

Social media content creators are often considered influencers if they have a large, loyal follower base on social media channels or other digital platforms and can impact their followers' decisions

(Sorgenfrei, 2021). The emergence of influencers has been driven by the democratization of media, as social media has become an integral part of daily life. This phenomenon has created "mediated social relationships," where media bridges cultural experiences and connects people through digital platforms (Alperstein, 2021).

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A pertinent question arises: Can content creators and influencers actively involved in *da'wah* activities be considered *da'i* (Islamic preachers)? From a communication perspective, content creators act as encoders within a two-way communication model. This approach is effective because it allows the sender and receiver to exchange ideas and discuss the messages conveyed in the communication process (Liliweri, 2011).

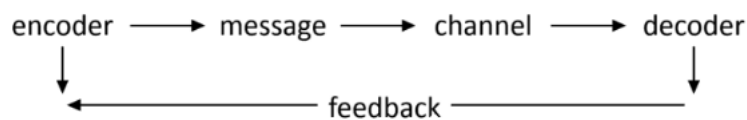


Figure 1 Communication Model

A *da'wah* content creator serves as a communicator who produces information to disseminate various Islamic *da'wah* videos. Using Lasswell's mass communication model, a *da'wah* content creator falls under the category of "Who," the messages or content they produce fall under "Says What," the media they use represent "In Which Channel," the recipients of the communication are categorized as "To Whom," and the effects generated by the content creator are classified as "With What."

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There are several important parts to the communication system that content creators use for *da'wah*: the content creator as the communicator, the audience as the target of the *da'wah*, the methods used, the media used, and the goals of the *da'wah* (Tahir et al., 2020). According to Cik Hasan Bisri, the elements of *da'wah* include the preacher, the audience, the method, the message, and the media (Aziz, 2004b). Additionally, the impact of *da'wah* (*atsar*) is considered one of its key elements (AB, 2013).

An example of a *da'wah* content creator is the Instagram account **narasi_umat**, with 654 followers. Although this account has fewer than 10,000 followers, it consistently produces content about Islamic *da'wah*. This consistency makes it a *da'wah* content creator, although it does not fall under the category of a *da'i influencer*. From the perspective of *da'wah* communication, the owner of the **narasi_umat** account acts as a *da'i*, communicator (Who), and encoder in digital *da'wah* by regularly producing *da'wah* content.

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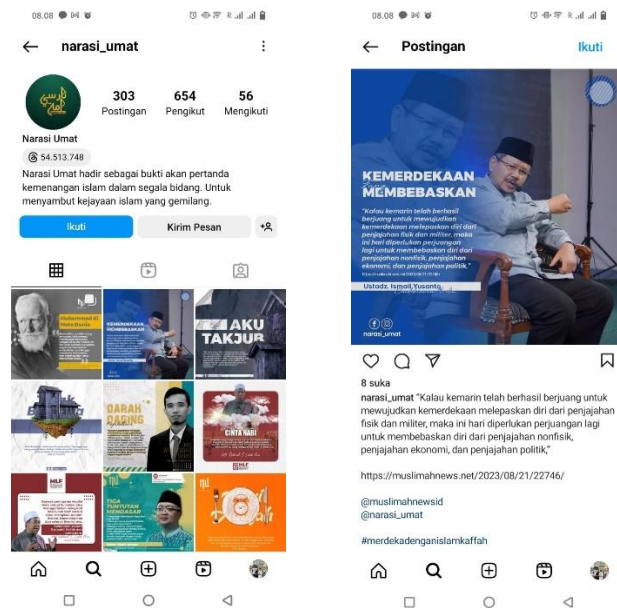


Figure 2 The Instagram Account of Preaching-Content Creator: @narasi_umat

One of the messages conveyed by **narasi_umat** focuses on the theme of liberation, sourced from the teachings of Ustadz Ismail Yusanto. Sources of *da'wah* messages can include the Qur'an and Hadith, historical accounts (*khobar* or *atsar*), *ijma* and *qiyas*, scientific research, exemplary stories and experiences, news and events, literary works, and artistic creations (Aziz, 2004a). The channel utilized is Instagram, while the audience (decoder) consists of 654 followers, with one post receiving eight such as as feedback.



Figure 3 The Instagram Account of Da'i Influencer

Unlike the account **bagas.ihsanulumam**, which has 133,000 followers, Bagas is categorized as a macro influencer because they have more than 100,000 followers. Beyond using social media as a communication tool, Bagas's social media account also serves as a platform to create business opportunities, gain knowledge, generate income, and build personal branding. The term "personal branding" has become increasingly significant with the rise of Instagram, an application for sharing documented content that allows users to capture and share images and videos, apply various digital filters, and connect with other users across social networking services.

Personal branding refers to self-promotion and the construction of a public image, often achieved by highlighting specific skills and experiences. Studies on Instagram algorithms reveal that

the platform is highly conducive to developing a strong personal brand. This phenomenon aligns with the current context, where the ability to present oneself effectively to a wide audience is becoming increasingly crucial for personal and professional success. Personal branding is utilized not only by individuals in the business world but also by diverse groups.

An examination of Instagram highlights numerous content creators from various backgrounds and expertise who actively work to develop and build their personal brands to deliver value to other social media users. In this context, personal branding can be understood as a process or strategy to achieve the goals of an individual's brand. Individuals who possess significant influence within a specific community through their use of social media are typically referred to as "influencers" (Mutmainah & Masrurroh, 2022).



Figure 4 Media Content by Da'i Influencer

Based on the perspective of *da'wah* communication, Bagas is classified as a *da'i* (preacher), communicator, or encoder in *da'wah*. One of the messages he conveys is about the process of repentance from zina (adultery) for the forgiveness of sins. Bagas references **Hadith Bukhari No. 7532** as his source. As a digital *da'wah* communicator or encoder, Bagas reaches 133,000 followers. The effects or feedback on his post include 29,052 likes and 51 comments.

Media serves as a source of communicative interaction for society, a hallmark of the mediatisation process. This process extends beyond religion, encompassing various social domains dependent on media. Mediatisation theory is employed to analyze how media spreads, intertwines, and influences other cultural and social institutions such as consumption, education, research, and religion. Media provides a critical source of information and experiences concerning religious issues. However, it often disseminates institutionalized religious texts in a limited scope. Frequently, the media takes fragments of institutionalized religion and combines them in new ways. Additionally, media does not merely act as a tool for producing and distributing religious information but also formats religion in engaging ways, particularly through popular culture.

The expansion of interactive media enables communities to express religious ideas and sentiments through various genres typically unavailable in traditional religious contexts. Media has taken over certain social functions previously provided by religious institutions. The mediatization of religion means that religion is changing in many ways, including religious texts, practices, and social relationships. In the end, this changes what it means to believe in modern society.

The outcome is not the emergence of a new religion but a new social condition. This new condition leads to a plurality of religious voices in digital media. Such pluralism not only challenges established religious authorities but also fosters more individualized and networked forms of religious communication practices through digital media culture. Blogs and online forums on digital platforms are examples of spaces where religious actors discuss various issues that may challenge previous experiences of religious beliefs and values (Hjarvard, 2020).

Digital Religiosity within the New Religious Practices

Digital media can assist fundamentalist or traditionalist groups in creating communities. Salafi forums in Germany and the Netherlands have already achieved this. Muslim communities use digital media to negotiate religious sources. For example, Salafi Muslims use forums as spaces to present Islamic arguments. Online communities create cohesion among members and communicate certain aspects of religious traditions to potential new followers and audiences.

Products of digital media, such as websites and online forums, represent the first manifestations of online religious communities. New forms of religious engagement through social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have replaced or coexisted with some of these. Traditional media have now evolved into new or digital media, enabling users to develop online identities and perform both traditional and new religious practices through applications, digital games, and chat groups (e.g., WhatsApp).

Additionally, over the past decade, advancements in artificial intelligence have created new opportunities for reflection on how algorithms can shape new forms of authority and assist in the emergence of religious figures in digital culture. Various religious user groups have embraced and/or adapted these innovations. Combined with the development of internet technologies and internet studies, they have given rise to the field of digital religion studies (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020).

Discussions

Digital media has shifted, expanded, and transformed religious practices. It challenges conventional configurations of religious and state authority, giving rise to transnational Muslim communities. Across the globe, digital media enables communities to negotiate religious platforms and reconstruct their identities. Figures such as Ustadz Abdul Somad and Gus Baha are examples of influencer preachers and content creators. They creatively blend commercial and religious participation through their YouTube channels or Instagram profiles. Influencer preachers are defined as individuals or groups capable of integrating their religious interests with financial gains and socio-political change, presenting these as appealing and attainable goals for their followers. They propagate the concept of *da'wah* (preaching) as a broad term encompassing commercial, religious, and political activities (Qudsy et al., 2021).

Digital media has not only transformed religious practices but also reshaped Islamic preaching activities. There are three key points regarding how digital media alters the practice of Islamic preaching. First, digital media serves as a platform for Muslim communities to freely distribute ideas. Second, to build popularity in digital media, preachers must master Islamic knowledge, communication skills, and media strategies. Third, for preachers, the aesthetics and visualization of their *da'wah* enhance visibility, attract attention, and convince audiences to trust their messages (Harry, 2023).

One example of an influencer preacher and content creator is @q.ayunsadun, commonly known as Ayun, on Instagram, with 20,000 followers. Ayun organizes online Qur'an recitations or *muroja'ah* programs, such as the "Special Ramadan Online *Muroja'ah*." As a content creator, Ayun is actively and extensively involved in producing content about Qur'an recitation techniques.

Religious practices today are openly expressed and conducted in public spaces, including mosques, television, and digital media, aiming for inclusivity. However, some trending religious practices are often carried out exclusively, attended by dozens of participants, and addressing both global and local religious issues during study sessions (Pribadi, 2020). Religion utilizes media as a tool for spreading Islamic teachings and *da'wah*. Media functions as a platform for sharing various types of information, including religious content. The relationship between religion and media has grown increasingly complex in the internet era. The internet not only disseminates religious messages but also fosters the development of new religious practices and interpretations of sacred texts (Bibi et al., 2023).

Ayun's religious content illustrates how religious actors and institutions digitize Islamic education and Sharia practices. It transitions from traditional face-to-face interactions to digital formats in everyday life (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020). While online *muroja'ah* involves digital participation, the rituals performed online are not entirely new but rather recreations of existing offline rituals. In other words, new or online religious practices are essentially extensions of older, offline practices. Here, the internet often acts as an instrument for preserving traditional religious practices and reinforcing them in more flexible and accessible ways.

Online *muroja'ah* goes beyond merely existing in the online space; it connects and is shaped by the offline world. Activities such as online *tahsin* (Qur'an recitation improvement) occur both offline and online. Online, members gain knowledge about proper Qur'an recitation, interact with mentors and peers, and receive motivation to enhance their religious practices. In this context, online *muroja'ah* aims to sustain traditional religious practices. From a ritual perspective, digital religion does not create entirely new rituals or radically alter existing ones. However, at an individual level, digital religion offers alternative ways to perform rituals, becoming a "new way of practicing religion" (Muslim, 2017).

Muroja'ah Online

Muroja'ah is a method used in memorising the Qur'an. This method involves revisiting and repeating previously memorised verses. You can either repeat the verses individually or have others or a teacher listen to them (Faishol, Riza, Idi Warsah, Imam Mashuri, 2022). *Muroja'ah* is considered an obligation for every Qur'an memoriser.

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عن أبي موسى رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال "تعاهدوا هذا القرآن فوالذي نفس محمد بيده لهو أشد تفلثًا من الإبل في عقلها". ((متفق عليه)).

The Prophet Muhammad PUBH (ﷺ) says, "Recite the Qur'an regularly. By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, it escapes from memory faster than a camel does from its tying ropes." (Reported by Abu Mus Al-Ash'ari)

This hadith motivated A'yun to organise an online *muroja'ah* program. Previously, A'yun was not fond of learning the Qur'an virtually, as she firmly upheld the traditional religious authority of the Al-Baqoroh Pesantren in Lirboyo, Kediri, East Java.

"Honestly, I didn't really like it. But one day, there was a migrant worker in Taiwan who had previously studied at a *pesantren* (boarding school). Due to circumstances, she had to work abroad. She became confused about whom she could continue studying with. If there was no suitable person, she would resort to learning through YouTube. What a shame, right? I see learning through YouTube as ineffective, especially for Qur'an study. It's a one-way communication. Who will check her recitation? That's what moved me to help her improve her memorising," she explained.

Traditionally, *muroja'ah*, or Qur'an learning practices, are conducted through face-to-face interactions in mosques, madrasas, or other designated places, contextualised as religious engagement. The authority is significant in Islamic learning practices, particularly in Qur'an study or *muroja'ah*. However, the virtual space has made religion more fluid, causing religious authority to become relatively decentralised, which in turn has led to populism (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020).



Figure 5. Online Muroja'ah Registration

A'yun has established an online community through her *muroja'ah* program. Prospective participants are required to register online and select a day for their session. The program offers facilities such as e-certificates, guidance in *tahsin* (improving Qur'an recitation) and *tahfidz*. The online *muroja'ah* sessions are conducted via WhatsApp, utilising phone or video calls. Participants per day. As an alumna of the *tahfidzul Qur'an* program at the Al-Baqoroh Pesantren in Lirboyo, Kediri, she listens to her participants' recitations via phone or video calls.

This illustrates how religious actors digitise Islamic education, providing religious knowledge traditionally conveyed through face-to-face interactions in offline contexts, such as the learning environment of pesantrens. Pesantrens are regarded as one of Indonesia’s most respected religious institutions and holders of traditional religious authority. This online *muroja’ah* practice demonstrates how religious actors can sustain and even expand their authority within the online context (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020).

The recitation of the Qur’an via digital media has already become a trend among Muslims, initially emerging with the advent of Qur’an digitization. However, there is a noticeable difference in how Muslim youths treat digital Qur’ans compared to physical manuscript Qur’ans. People often perceive the digital Qur’an as losing its sacred value because it lacks associated rituals, ethics, and prohibitions. This matter raises concerns that digitisation or digital Qur’an recitation could erode the identity of its sacredness.

As a sacred and revered object, there are specific rites and etiquettes for handling the Qur’an. These include performing *wudhu* (ablution) before touching it, wearing modest clothing, facing the *qibla* (recommended), avoiding loud recitation that could disturb others, placing it in a clean, elevated spot, and protecting it from contamination or disrespect, such as stepping on it or taking it into impure places like toilets.

However, modernisation has altered these etiquettes. With the digitalisation of the Qur’an, many Muslims no longer observe these practices, such as performing *wudhu* before carrying or using the Qur’an, regardless of its form. The diminishing observance of *wudhu* before reciting or holding the Qur’an raises significant concerns. The ritual of *wudhu* serves as a means to maintain the separation between the sacred and the profane. Without this ritual, the boundary risks becoming blurred, potentially compromising the Qur’an’s sanctity (Fajrie et al., 2023).

The Al-Qur’an Content Narration

As an influencer, A’yun employs strategies to spark her followers’ interest in the Qur’an by consistently and actively creating Qur’an-related content. Among her 926 posts, A’yun frequently uses the Question and Answer (QnA) method to address topics about Qur’anic recitation and related matters.

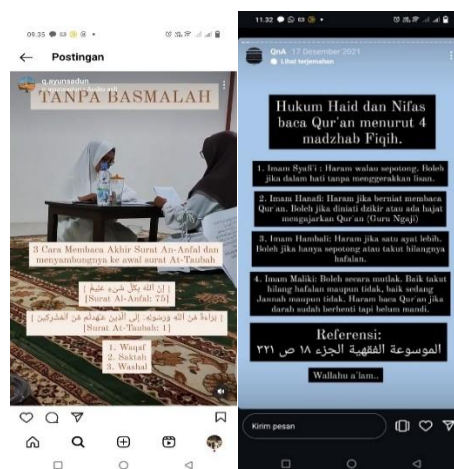


Figure 6. A’yun’s Content in Instagram Platform

The above-mentioned content by A'yun teaches about the Qur'an and fiqh. For example, it talks about "three ways to recite the end of Surah Al-Anfal and connect it to the beginning of Surah At-Taubah." It also talks about menstruation and postpartum bleeding in the Qur'an according to the four fiqh schools. For her educational content, A'yun cites references from classical Islamic texts, such as Al-Mausu'atul Fiqhiyah Muyassaroh.

On Instagram, social media users often employ strategies to grow and retain their followers, including engaging active followers through direct interaction. A'yun's strategy includes the use of Instagram's Q&A feature. This tool allows account owners and their followers to interact directly. Account owners can post a question prompt like "Ask me anything," and followers can respond by typing their questions in the provided field.

From the perspective of digital religion, A'yun's religious engagement on her social media platform is evident in her responses to her followers' questions. This approach demonstrates a modern method of connecting with an audience and disseminating religious knowledge in the digital era.

The New Religious Practices: Online Al-Qur'an Waqf

The practice of online waqf (endowment) has become widespread among Indonesian society. The Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI) has *introduced a digital application known as "e-services" to facilitate the registration of nazhirs (waqf managers)*. Other platforms, such as Kitabisa.com with its *Productive Waqf* program, as well as apps like *berkahwakaf.id*, *wakafsalman.or.id*, and *Smartziswaf*, have also contributed to this trend. Not only have established waqf institutions ventured into these new digital religious practices; individuals are also independently organising waqf programs through digital platforms.

One example of this is the Instagram account *@ulfisinta*, which has 112,000 followers. Ulfi is both an influencer and content creator who initiated a Qur'an waqf program. The program distributes Qur'ans to mosques in the Haram area of Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Interested participants register online, after which Ulfi personally delivers the Qur'ans to the relevant authorities at these mosques.

To promote the Qur'an waqf program, Ulfi creates content narratives to attract her followers' interest. These narratives often include Qur'anic verses highlighting the virtues of waqf or other motivational messages. In this sense, Ulfi acts as a *da'i* (Islamic preacher) by spreading religious messages via Instagram. By leveraging Instagram, *da'is, like Ulfi, believe they can creatively use social media to present their religious agendas in ways that resonate with youth culture and expression*.

Experts argue that the internet has accelerated the democratisation of Islamic knowledge, breaking the monopoly of traditional scholars (ulama) over the interpretation of key religious texts such as the Qur'an, the Hadith, major fiqh works, and collections of fatwas. The rise of Islamic preaching on Instagram has given birth to a new group of young, tech-savvy content creators who reinforce specific interpretations of Islam. These individuals aim to act as agents of Islamic knowledge transformation through their Instagram posts, which often rely on sources they deem authoritative (Nisa, 2018a).

The emergence of new religious practices in digital media not only illustrates the growing media coverage of religion but also signifies the widespread dissemination of religious authority. This diffusion of authority is one of the consequences of Islam’s increasing popularity. Texts, figures, and institutions have traditionally represented religious authority. The appearance of these elements in digital media serves to broaden their reach.

For instance, religious sermons, which were traditionally delivered in mosques or other physical venues, have expanded their scope due to advancements in information and communication technology. This has led to the emergence of new forms of religious practices (Fakhruroji, 2019).

Online Waqf Content Strategy

Digital content refers to bit-based objects distributed through electronic channels. For digital products, both the distribution process and the commodities obtained are inherently digital. An example of a digital product is online endowments. Publishing online endowment projects needs a digital content marketing strategy. Digital content marketing is a management process for finding, anticipating, and meeting customer needs in a profitable way within the context of digital content. Certain traits define digital content, such as its usefulness in certain situations, ability to be copied and shared many times, to be interactive and used again and again, to be delivered through technology, to become outdated, to be the same, to be tangible, and to be considered excellent (Rowley, 2008).

Ulfi leverages digital content to engage her followers and encourage them to participate in the Quran endowment program by showcasing participant data, such as the distribution of approximately 162 Qurans. The content also incorporates messages of Islamic teaching.

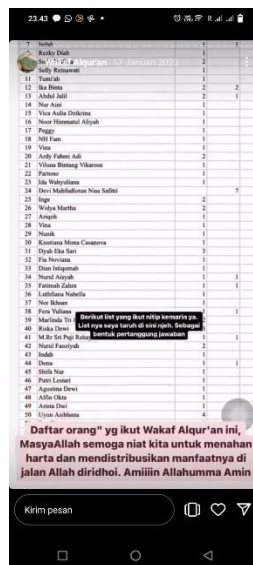


Figure 7. Online Waqf Content

Ulfi, as a content creator, uses Instagram captions to express her thoughts, share experiences, and highlight the wisdom gained from implementing online endowments. The visuals and captions posted by informants range from personal photographs with accompanying personal insights to

images sourced from the internet, paired with Quranic verses, hadiths, or thoughts of others. Despite diverse approaches, the content consistently reflects themes of piety towards Allah and Prophet Muhammad.

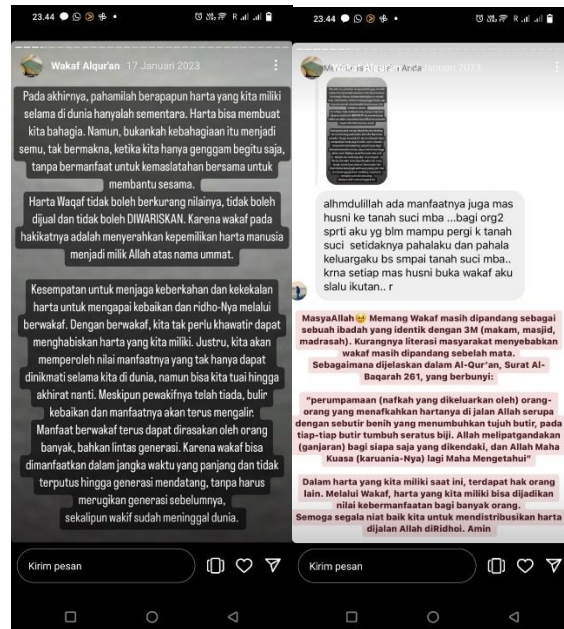


Figure 8. The Cited Captions of Qur'anic Verses on Online Waqf Content

Ulfi includes advisory content to encourage her followers to participate in the online Quran endowment program. Her advice emphasizes the importance of performing good deeds, the virtues of endowment, and provides an interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah verse 261. Social media platforms facilitate the dissemination of Islamic messages packaged in a creative and appealing manner through circulating texts, images, and videos. Ulfi adopts this approach with the hope that her messages convey beautiful and touching da'wah, both visually and in content, making them enjoyable to read and watch.

In persuasive posts promoting online endowments, da'wah is represented as a visual activity consistently reproduced and reposted across various online and offline platforms. This approach aims to inspire people to embrace the message and persuade them to engage in a new form of religious practice: online endowments (Hew, 2018). The narrative of online endowment content reflects elements of "pop Islamism," which explores how Muslim youth utilize popular culture to promote Islamic agendas (Hew, 2018).

The use of content narratives, popularly known as "captions," serves as a form or symbol of Islamic expression. Commonly used symbols of Islamic expression include Quranic quotations and Arabic vocabulary, intended to enhance the persuasive appeal of promotional activities. This strategy aligns with Islamic teachings, where the Quran is regarded as the ultimate guide for all Muslims. Consequently, using Quranic verses as promotional messages is undoubtedly an effective persuasive communication strategy. Burgon and Huffner argue that valid persuasive communication messages are those supported by evidence, data, or facts, as these elements lend greater credibility to the conveyed message (Jaelani et al., 2019).

In addition to Quranic quotes, Ulfi incorporates Arabic phrases such as *Masya Allah* (an expression of admiration) and *Alhamdulillah* (an expression of gratitude). Using Arabic vocabulary is a particularly effective communication strategy, as the target audience for online endowments is the Muslim community. According to Raharjo, the use of Arabic diction and vocabulary has become a part of lifestyle and new trends in communication among Islamic communities. This shared frame of reference between the communicator and the audience ensures that promotional messages are delivered effectively, yielding positive feedback (Jaelani et al., 2019).



Figure 9. The Documentation of Online Waqf Distribution

Videos documenting the direct distribution process publicise the practise of online endowment to authorised mosque representatives. Participants in online endowment practices, who also served as informants in this study, are predominantly digital natives. They explained that they joined Ulfi's online endowment initiative because they saw her as a trustworthy figure, demonstrated by her personal background and family life as shared on her social media platforms.

One participant stated: *"I've followed her for a long time. I got to know her online and learnt her story, and I have a feeling that Ms. Ulfi is a good person who is trustworthy, has various businesses, and comes from a religious family. That's why I entrusted my endowment to Ulfi Sinta."*

Informants think that Ulfi's religious identity and trustworthiness give her the power to manage online endowments and make it easier for participants to send their donations to mosques in Mecca and Medina. Their arguments highlight that Ulfi's unique value proposition lies in her charismatic public identity, which resonates with the audience's needs and interests. Her attention-grabbing narratives-based personal branding strategy significantly expands her potential for fame and influence. These compelling narratives can attract audiences by being inspirational, relevant, instructional, motivational, and more (Khamis et al., 2017).

In the realm of digital religion, online endowments represent a new form of religious practice. Online, Ulfi and her team collect endowment funds through registrations on her Instagram platform. Offline, they directly distribute Qurans to mosques and publish detailed documentation of the distribution process on social media through Insta Stories to build trust with participants.

Ulfi Sinta's online endowment initiative exemplifies a tangible negotiation between religion and the internet. She establishes "trust" by linking her online activities to offline contexts, such as the

direct handover of endowment goods, while adhering to the principles of endowment. This includes fulfilling the requirement of a formal declaration of waqf to a *nazhir* (custodian responsible for managing the endowed items).

Digital endowments illustrate monetary contributions made by Muslims electronically. Specifically, online endowments involve remote transactions, enabling individuals to donate cash endowments from any location through internet-connected devices. The emergence of online endowments has simplified philanthropic practices for Muslims, allowing them to contribute directly via digital platforms without the need to interact with a trustee in person. This not only saves time and resources but also streamlines the donation process.

In response to the surge in digitisation, endowment institutions have adopted information technology to facilitate cash endowment transactions over the internet. Essentially, cash endowments are now accessible online at any time and from any location (Bonang et al., 2024).

The New Religious Practices: Online Badal Umrah

The Association of Muslim Hajj and Umrah Organisers of the Republic of Indonesia revealed that the number of Indonesian umrah pilgrims has experienced a significant increase each year. In 2014, there were 598,077 umrah pilgrims. The number rose to 649,283 in 2015, 693,332 in 2016, 867,561 in 2017, 1,005,806 in 2018, and by 2023, it reached 1,368,616 pilgrims. With the growing interest in performing umrah, more entities are organising *badal umrah* programs, which are performed on behalf of someone who has passed away.

Clara Shinta manages the Hijrapedia account as an example. The *Hijrapedia* account features advice derived from hadiths and Quranic verses, as well as the benefits of *badal umrah*, utilising influencers like Clara Shinta as its icons. Clara Shinta organises *badal umrah* programs, documenting the rituals to provide evidence to the individuals who entrusted her with carrying out the *badal umrah*.

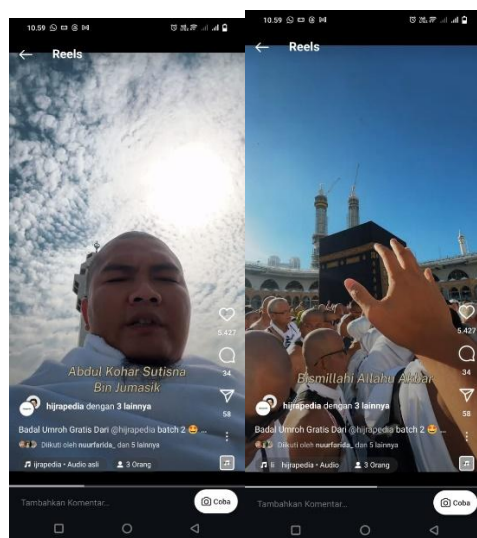


Figure 10. The Online Badal Umroh via Instagram Platform

The *Hijrapedia* team documents *badal umrah* rituals, reflecting a tangible negotiation between offline and online spaces within the perspective of digital religion. The real practice of performing

umrah clearly reflects the offline aspect, while video recordings of the rituals represent the online aspect. Clara Shinta has conducted the *Badal Umrah* program in five batches. Participants choose Clara Shinta's program due to her reputation as a trustworthy influencer, reinforced by the branding she establishes through her social media platforms.

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One participant shared: "I just enjoy seeing Clara Shinta. She's a convert, and she's beautiful too. Even though she's a convert, she seems very eager to learn about Islam. Seeing her makes me happy, which is why I was interested in joining her program."

With 1.9 million followers, Clara Shinta falls into the category of macro-celebrity. Her posts often depict her participation in religious activities such as recitations, umrah, studying the Quran, and delivering Islamic lectures. However, Clara Shinta is not the only one offering online *badal umrah* programs; her popularity as an influencer adds to her appeal.

Before her arrival, Umrah tour and travel companies had already implemented *badal Umrah* programs, broadcasting them live on platforms such as Zoom and YouTube. For example, Zafa Tour, with 127,000 subscribers, organised such a program. The demand for online *badal umrah* increased notably during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when restrictions were imposed on the number of umrah pilgrims allowed to perform the ritual.

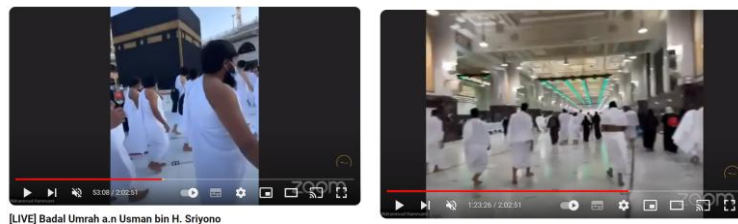


Figure 11. Online Badal Umroh via Zoom Platform

This reflects the phenomenon of digital religion, where religion undergoes transformation and expansion, reaching into more complex realms of spirituality, even touching transcendent spaces. At this stage, the digital space successfully integrates religion, positioning itself as a mirror of a new form of religiosity.

Online religious practices indicate shifts in three dimensions of Muslim religious life such as the institutional dimension of religion, marked by the virtual representation of religious institutions through websites, channels, and Islamic digital applications; the ritual dimension, characterized by the phenomenon of practicing religion in virtual spaces, also known as *online religion*. Examples include online gatherings for *tabligh*, *dzikir*, *muhasabah*, *istighosah*, and others; and the literacy dimension of religion, highlighted by the pursuit of religious knowledge and references through virtual platforms (*religion online*). This includes modern audiovisual learning practices and streaming (Dudy Imanuddin Effendi et al., 2022; Fakhruroji et al., 2020).

Digital *da'wah* (Islamic proselytisation) is expected to focus on producing and distributing messages that are popular, easy to understand, and attractively packaged. An individual should use methods from different fields, combine technology and religion, stay logical and scientific, and get your information from religious texts like the Quran and Hadith, interpreted in light of current events or social trends (Effendi et al., 2022; Fakhruroji et al., 2020).

The emergence of *da'i* influencers and content creators has created a distinct impact by bringing Islamic activism into a broader public space. This suggests that certain forms of Islamic activism do

not necessarily stem from mainstream religious organizations. Digital media fosters religious populism through the proliferation of diverse and popular forms of Islamic learning (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020).

In the flood of information within digital media, *da'wah* content competes with other streams of information, contributing to the development of a regionally integrated Islamic information society. Such an Islamic information society has the potential to form a global Islamic telemedia network (Muhaemin, 2017).

The New Religious Practices Overseas

Indonesian Islam has introduced new religious practices such as online *muroja'ah*, Quran endowments (*wakaf Alquran*), and online *badal umrah*. This contrasts with Islam in Nigeria, where communities, including the Nigerian diaspora in America, Europe, Asia, and other African nations, engage in online Salafi communities on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp groups. These communities share news about *da'wah* activities and upcoming events like online seminars. Similarly, British Muslims are part of Salafi online communities featuring posts about religious lessons, insights, Quranic verses, and Hadith. However, both in Nigeria and the UK, these Salafi communities often restrict female participants, leading to gender imbalances and limiting women's presence and participation in public spheres. Salafis regard these platforms as extensions of male-dominated public spaces, discouraging intergender interactions (Ibrahim, 2024).

Digital media used by Nigerians facilitates the creation of Salafi virtual *ummah* through diverse social media platforms, altering traditional ways of acquiring Islamic knowledge by personalizing and privatizing access. This illustrates that digital infrastructure not only supports the movement of people, goods, and ideas but also provides a platform for co-presence and the dissemination of Islamic teachings via social media algorithms.

In contrast, for Dutch Muslims, the internet plays a pivotal role in their daily religious practices, such as searching for prayers, sharing experiences (e.g., watching videos of other Muslim women), or reading Islamic stories. Dutch Muslim women often share Islamic narratives in online discussion forums, where participants actively discuss religious claims or pose questions about daily religious practices. While some forums serve as platforms for interaction and exploration, others provide information and interpretations to readers. Many individuals engage in these discussions due to dissatisfaction with how mainstream newspapers address religion. People view Islamic forums as viable alternatives for this discourse. Others prefer independently interpreting and reading religious sources (Midden & Ponzanesi, 2013).

Elsewhere in Western Europe, Shi'a communities also integrate digital media into their religious practices. Their new religious expressions include video content on YouTube, focusing on lamentation practices like *zaakir*, *marsiyya*, and *nauhaya*. These oratorical lamentations involve reciting poetic verses melodically, evoking strong emotions and rhythm, often associated with mourning rituals like *latmiyya*. The videos, typically an hour long, mirror traditional sermon durations, featuring speakers (both men and women) seated cross-legged, dressed in black, and filmed against palettes of black with accents of red, green, and gold. The frame often focuses on the upper half of the speaker, occasionally capturing the audience.

These videos are uploaded by various channels, ranging from single-upload channels to those featuring broader Shi'a content or linked to Shi'a organizations. Initially appearing as simple recordings of offline practices, their increasing frequency—particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic—accompanied by compelling titles and questions about production and audience, reveals a more profound dynamic: these online activities represent a significant moment in digital religious expression (Ali & Sunier, 2024).

The diversity of new religious practices across countries suggests broader implications, particularly regarding their influence on religious authority. These practices influence the negotiation and perception of religious authority, particularly in relation to the role of *da'i* in this dynamic digital environment.

Comodification of Religious Practices: Influencing the Religiosity Authority

New religious practices have significantly influenced the authority of religion, marking a shift in how religious leadership is perceived and exercised. The advent of new media has driven profound changes in social, political, economic, and cultural domains, fundamentally altering interpersonal relationships, individual behavior, and religious practices, including *fatwas* and theological ideas.

While religion traditionally relies on established authorities, its dynamic nature must adapt to contemporary societal changes. In this context, digital platforms provide a stage for *da'i* (preachers) and traditional scholars to engage in *da'wah* actively. Social media influencers have introduced an innovative approach to spreading Islamic teachings by creating entertaining and artistic content aimed at engaging millennial Muslims. To gain credibility and attention in the digital era, especially among younger audiences, possessing formal religious qualifications—such as advanced degrees in Islamic studies, fluency in Arabic, or memorization of the Quran and Hadith—no longer suffices. Influencers instead leverage personal narratives, packaged in visually and emotionally engaging digital content, to establish their authority.

Gauthier describes a shift from an "orthodoxy regime" (focused on doctrine and beliefs) to an "orthopraxy regime," where religion is anchored in practices and personal experiences. Orthopraxy seeks to sacralize the individual and showcase personal expressions of faith rather than emphasizing traditional doctrines or religious institutions. This shift has created tension between traditional religious authorities, who strive to retain their influence, and social media influencers, who dominate the social and cultural domains of religion in the digital age (Zaid et al., 2022).

In industrial societies characterized by high economic levels, easy access to public services, robust security, and assured food supplies, there is a gradual decline in traditional religious practices (Jinan, 2012). These are often replaced by new forms of spirituality or "born-again" religious movements tailored to modern lifestyles, such as yoga, meditation, and televangelism. Among urban Muslims, similar dynamics are evident in the popularity of the *hijrah* movement, which promotes religious transformation and return to Islamic values. Figures like Joel Osteen in the U.S., Amr Khaled in Egypt, Baba Ramdev in India, and Aa Gym (Arung Triantoro, 2020) or Yusuf Mansur (Fealy & White, 2012) in Indonesia exemplify new religious authorities supplying faith through popular media and adapting to the needs of middle-class audiences.

Religion, as a system of meaning and communication, is deeply intertwined with media. New modes of communication—once considered modern—consistently integrate into religious

practices. The emergence of new forms of religious mediation requires traditional religious authorities to adapt to the changing landscape. Religious messages and practices are frequently modified to suit target social markets, based on rigorous market analyses.

This adaptability has given rise to an open and competitive religious economy, characterized by a broad spiritual marketplace. Commodification of religion is evident in how religious practices are packaged, marketed, and consumed. The media plays a pivotal role in promoting religious products and fostering participation in religious rituals, effectively blending faith with consumer culture (Ni'am, 2023).

In this evolving context, *da'i influencers* emerge as new religious authorities. They cater primarily to Indonesia's middle-class Muslims, offering religious teachings through social media infused with popular culture. Their approaches resonate with modern consumers, aligning with their preferences and lifestyles. This trend demonstrates the fluidity of religious authority, where traditional and emerging leaders coexist in a dynamic interplay shaped by technological advancements, market demands, and cultural shifts.

Research Implication

The implications of this study suggest that new religious practices may, in fact, develop dependencies on new authorities. This begins with the increasing consumption of religion, which can be seen as a consequence of modernization. Religious behavior has changed due to modernization, leading to what is referred to as the disruption of religious identity stability. As a result, society loses direction in religious matters, seeking new sources of moral guidance and assistance through religion. Religious adherents increasingly conduct this search along market lines, seeking new identities and personal meanings in the realm of spiritual commerce.

This process is largely personal and centered on the "consuming self." While earlier generations of Muslims typically acquired religious knowledge from authoritative institutions, today's Muslims resemble clients who freely choose from the many sources available in the marketplace. Previously, religious identification patterns were shaped by common spiritual pathways, but these are now increasingly replaced by fragmented practices, with believers exploring various religious options that best suit their needs. This situation benefits cultural or religious entrepreneurs who can create fresh appeal or establish a place in this market, catering to shifting tastes and desires for new religious products. This dynamic leads to a volatile consumption of religion, as Muslims tend to seek and follow new trends.

Producers of new religious practices aim to meet the needs of the masses so their messages have broad appeal, avoiding narrow and exclusive language or depictions. To get a big share of profitable market segments, they go after specific groups within the religious community that may be looking for something different from what's normally available or want to show that they are unique (Fealy & White, 2012).

The implications of changing religious practices may result in the loss of identity and culture. Producers of new religious practices must possess a clear chain of scholarly transmission (*sanad*). In the tradition of teaching and learning among Muslims, *sanad* (scholarly lineage) is a fundamental element. In every discipline, the *sanad* of knowledge ultimately leads back to Prophet Muhammad. Because *sanad* is so important, scholars have put together their scholarly chains and summed up

religious knowledge from the points of view of riwayat (narration) and dirayah (understanding), as well as from the points of view of what is transmitted (manqul) and what is understandable (ma'qul). The tradition of sanad and scholars' authority to teach—whether generally or specifically—aims to preserve the practices of previous scholars and explain their scholarly backgrounds. This tradition is an unquestionable practice for ensuring consistent preservation across generations (Bizawie, 2015).

The emergence of new forms of religious practices in digital media raises concerns about neglecting the identity of traditional religious practices, such as Quranic recitation (tadarus) that prioritizes sanad. Additionally, the proliferation of Islamic messages through new religious practices in digital media heightens the risk of increasing exclusivity, sectarianism, and militancy.

The third implication of the shift from traditional to new religious practices is the commodification of Islam, creating cultural and spiritual spaces. Spiritually, external practices beyond Islamic norms and rituals have spread, and the consumption of Islamic products has made religion a defining element of many people's lives. New patterns of religious life have also emerged, including a trend toward more personal learning and consumption of Islam, faster changes in tastes, and other Muslim preferences. This is evident in the growing demand for services and spiritual guidance that meet market demands for Islamic guidance that is quick, accessible, and lifestyle-compatible.

The success of digital proselytization (*da'wah*) is not only pursued by influencers and content creators but also requires structural *da'wah*. Religious preaching alone does not lead to rapid and widespread religious growth. On the other hand, structural *da'wah*, especially in the political realm, can cause religion to grow quickly and extensively (Aziz, 2004b). Through structural *da'wah*, the government should play a role in supervising preachers in digital media. To support the success of influencer preachers, they must master the management of Islamic websites and audiovisual content, such as Islamic videos on YouTube and Instagram, platforms with the highest usage among Indonesian youth. Additionally, visual aesthetic quality and a humble, interactive communication approach encourage viewers to watch, subscribe, and follow. Thirdly, effective marketing strategies tailored to the audience's background are essential. Indonesian society's Islamic preaching has reshaped Indonesian Islam, leading to its redefinition (Akmaliah, 2020).

Conclusion

Liquid modernity has broken up traditional religious communities and institutions, forcing people to actively explore and create religious expressions in new, elastic, temporal, and flexible forms. This has led to the practices and expressions of faith in digital religion. The evidence is - the emergence of new preachers, such as influencer preachers and content creators. They use digital media to disseminate Islamic ideas and knowledge to a wider audience, leveraging the popularity, beauty, and visual appeal of their preaching as a form of media strategy. These new preachers package their sermons with popular culture to create a new, more progressive community. The packaging of new religious practices showcased through digital media implies that digital religion can provide the religious elements needed by society without losing the true essence of theological symbols. This encourages scholars to view digital religious practices as a unique and vital innovation, as part of religious expression in contemporary culture (Maulana, 2022).

One example of content creators on the Instagram platform is @q.ayunsadun, who has 20,000 followers and initiated online muroja'ah; @ulfisinta, who has 116,000 followers and collects online Quran donations; and @hijrapedia, who has 150,000 followers and initiated online umrah substitutes. From the perspective of digital religion, this community has the ability to transform tangible (solid) forms of systems and religious expressions into fluid (liquid), easy, and efficient forms through the use of digital facilities. A'yun, Ulfi, and Hijrapedia are all capable of packaging religious practices that were previously conducted offline, combining them with the digital space, and incorporating content strategies derived from popular culture. The content they produce represents current discourse and attracts young people to engage in new religious practices.

Those three accounts could expand old religious practices into new ones based on the characteristics of digital technology in establishing digital religion identity, which is not simply characterized as traditional religious systems packaged in a new form. Rather, it is also a unique phenomenon of digital religion because it can address the anxieties produced by the fluid modern world by utilizing the latest technological aspects to unify the metanarratives of religion and ideology that encompass the digital realm.

According to digital religion, the content narrated by A'yun, Ulfi, and Hijrapedia is interactive, as users accessing the digital world are able to communicate, collaborate, intervene, and respond, as well as see the effects of these activities in real-time. All three are practically capable of opening new ways of communicating as part of a visionary revolution.

Online consultations, online endowments or waqf, and online substitutes for Umrah are examples of new religious practices as a negotiation between online and offline spaces. This negotiation embodies materiality. The use of digital media platforms as part of preaching and digital aesthetics is a form of materiality. There are many digital platforms that facilitate or provide access to religious practices, such as the online umrah service initiated by Clara Shinta through the Hijrapedia account with live broadcast. This matter creates a recognizable and purposeful environment where we can apply the relevant religious rules and expectations.

Digital aesthetics attracts followers of new religious practices to engage with various technologies in an effort to connect with religion in new realms. The intersection of technology and religion is becoming increasingly prominent with the introduction of digital media, and for many people, there has been a significant change in the way they communicate and interact with religion. For instance, people utilize digital media to effortlessly obtain religious information. The correlation between technology and religion can indicate the possibility of a cultural or technological shift. Wagner believes that using digital media for religious purposes can lead to a more individualistic type of religious interaction. The potential shift from community-based religion to individualistic religion could have an impact on forms of authority, community, identity, and traditional religious practices. In addition, new forms of religion, or those that have been diluted, can develop and challenge traditional religions. Campbell also stated that digital or new religious practices are shaping trends and religious culture (Campbell & Connelly, 2020).

Preachers must be responsive to the emergence of new religious practices in digital media, develop information systems and preaching materials, nurture followers with excellent communication skills, have a preaching plan, and carry out therapeutic preaching movements. They

must also put themselves as agents of value socialization, required to package preaching and its sources in a more appealing form through technology.

Furthermore, the success of new religious practices in digital media requires the involvement of the government or community organizations to oversee these practices. Additionally, influencer preachers need to master the visualization of their sermons and the use of technology in virtual spaces. Furthermore, preachers employ an aesthetic visual quality and a humble, interactive communication approach. Third, the preaching strategy should be tailored to the audience's background.

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