

## TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS LEARNING: EMPOWERING FAITH THROUGH VIRTUAL CONGREGATION IN INDONESIA

Lukis Alam<sup>1\*</sup>, Muh Iqbal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Institut Teknologi Nasional, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

[lukisalam@itny.ac.id](mailto:lukisalam@itny.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> Institut Teknologi Nasional, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

[muhiqbal@itny.ac.id](mailto:muhiqbal@itny.ac.id)

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### Abstract

This paper examines virtual congregations in Indonesia, addressing how they are shaping religious learning there. With digital technology, religious learning has encountered new modes of dissemination and engagement. This study examines the proliferation of virtual congregations, their methods of instruction, and their influence on Indonesian Muslims' practice through a comprehensive review of literature and case studies. According to the findings of this paper, virtual congregation provides unprecedented accessibility, flexibility, and inclusivity. Furthermore, in a virtual congregation, audiences can foster solidarity and mutually empower each other to deepen their faith, transcending geographical limitations.

### Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji kajian virtual di Indonesia, memfokuskan bagaimana kajian virtual melibatkan diri sebagai bagian dari pembelajaran agama di Indonesia. Adanya teknologi digital, pembelajaran agama dihadapkan pada model penyelenggaraan dan pelibatan terbaru di dalamnya. Melalui tinjauan literatur serta studi kasus yang mendalam, penelitian ini menganalisis eksistensi kajian virtual, metode pengajaran dan praktik keagamaan di kalangan Muslim Indonesia. Temuan penelitian dalam kajian virtual ini menawarkan aksesibilitas, fleksibilitas, dan inklusivitas yang belum pernah ada sebelumnya. Selain itu, audiens yang tergabung dalam kajian virtual dapat membangun solidaritas dan saling memberdayakan individu memperdalam keimanan tanpa terkendala oleh faktor geografis.

### Kata Kunci:

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## Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of digital technology and religious education has sparked profound transformations in Indonesia's Islamic landscape. Central to this evolution is the rise of virtual congregation, which has redefined traditional modes of Islamic instruction and engagement.<sup>1</sup> These virtual congregations offer a modern solution to the challenges of accessibility and inclusivity in religious learning, particularly in a vast archipelago like Indonesia where physical access to traditional institutions can be limited. Through digital platforms, audiences can engage with religious learning from anywhere with an internet connection, breaking down geographical barriers and enabling a more widespread dissemination of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The widespread access to the internet among the populace has led to a significant increase in information dissemination. This dissemination is becoming increasingly unstoppable, fuelled by the ease of internet access through mobile devices. The number of internet users in Indonesia in 2024 reached 221,563,479 out of a total population of 278,696,200 in 2023, and the internet penetration rate in Indonesia reached 79.5%. Compared to the previous period, there has been an increase of 1.4%.

The presence of online technology has compelled, transformed, and even robbed society's social and religious order. On the one hand, its presence in religious learning serves as a powerful force, facilitating and cheapening access to various forms of distribution, whether economic or knowledge-based, but on the other, it poses a threat to the long-established and functioning order of values, norms, ethics, and even authorities within society.<sup>3</sup> The status quo of religious learning in the face of virtual technology is in jeopardy, requiring one of the oldest institutions to not only improve but also introduce a new breakthrough that can effectively leverage online media.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, virtual congregation provides a dynamic and interactive learning environment that caters to the digital-native generation. Utilizing multimedia resources, virtual classrooms, and discussion forums for discussion, these platforms enhance engagement and retention of religious learnings among

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<sup>1</sup>Suadi Zainal, Muhammad Anggung Manumanoso Prasetyo, and Che Mohd Aziz Yaacob, "Adopting Pesantren-Based Junior High School Programs: The Pesantren Change Its Educational System Without Conflict," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 22, no. 2 (August 4, 2022): 260, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v22i2.13525>.

<sup>2</sup>Suryadi Nasution, Muhammad Ikbāl, and Ali Jusri Pohan, "Dinamika Pesantren: Studi Futuristic Transformasi-Tansmisi Sistem Pesantren Di Mandailing Natal," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 001 (2021): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v10i001.1853>.

<sup>3</sup>Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, "Pesantren Online: Pergeseran Otoritas Keagamaan Di Dunia Maya," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 2, no. 2 (November 24, 2019): 169, <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v2i2.2010>.

<sup>4</sup>Mukhibat Mukhibat and Muhammad Ghafar, "Virtual Pesantren: New Trend of Islamic Education Model in Indonesia," *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 5, no. 2 (2019): 105–17.

audiences. By integrating technology into religious learning, virtual congregation not only adapts to learners' changing needs, but also empowers them with the tools to navigate the complexities of modern life while upholding their faith.

As Indonesia expands its use of digital technology, a virtual congregation can be compared to a virtual pesantren. The term 'pesantren' has also found its place in the virtual world. Phrases like virtual pesantren and digital pesantren have emerged, blurring the traditional understanding of what a pesantren is.<sup>5</sup> These terms compel people to reconsider the essence of pesantren, potentially giving rise to a new genre within the concept. Several core components of the traditional definition of pesantren have transcended their conventional boundaries. Linguistically, online or digital pesantren, which lack physical premises or complexes, have superseded the term 'pesantren', which originally referred to a simple physical complex or boarding school.<sup>6</sup> As a result, questions arise about who the audiences are and who the religious leaders are, adding to the discussion's complexity.

Furthermore, the rise of virtual congregation fosters a sense of community and collaboration among audiences and scholars, transcending physical boundaries.<sup>7</sup> Through online networks, audiences can connect with peers and mentors from diverse backgrounds, enriching their understanding of Islam through shared experiences and perspectives. This interconnectedness also facilitates the exchange of ideas and knowledge, contributing to the continuous evolution and enrichment of religious learning in Indonesia. In essence, digital platforms represent a transformative force in empowering faith by harnessing technology's potential to make religious knowledge more accessible, engaging, and inclusive.<sup>8</sup>

The paper *Pesantren Virtual: Dinamisasi atau Disrupsi Pesantren?* Hatta Fakhurrozi<sup>9</sup> examines the effects of the industrial revolution on Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and their adaptation to the digital age. It focuses on the rise of virtual pesantren, which operate entirely online without a physical presence in the community. These virtual schools use online platforms to reach a broader audience and build a community in cyberspace.

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<sup>5</sup> Dwi Puspitarini et al., "Humanistic Pesantren: Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Visualization Analysis on Character, Moral, and Ethical Values," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 31, no. 2 (April 12, 2023): 465–90, <https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.31.2.01>.

<sup>6</sup> Husmiaty Hasyim, "Transformasi Pendidikan Islam (Konteks Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam-Ta'lim* 13, no. 1 (2015): 55–77.

<sup>7</sup> Supriyono Supriyono, "Pesantren, the COVID-19 Pandemic and Digital Transformation: A Global Development Perspective," *Muslim Education Review* 1, no. 1 (July 26, 2022): 37–58, <https://doi.org/10.56529/mer.v1i1.10>.

<sup>8</sup> Dhian Marita Sari, "Pendidikan Islam Dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional," *At Turats: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (December 1, 2019): 144–69, <https://doi.org/10.51468/jpi.v1i2.13>.

<sup>9</sup> Hatta Fakhurrozi, "Pesantren Virtual: Dinamisasi Atau Disrupsi Pesantren?," *Paedagogia: Jurnal Pendidikan* 10, no. 1 (April 12, 2021): 153–68, <https://doi.org/10.24239/pdg.Vol10.Iss1.154>.

The research above investigates the characteristics of virtual pesantren and their interaction with traditional pesantren in the context of Industry 4.0. Through content analysis of various virtual Islamic boarding schools, the study aims to pinpoint differences in their features and assess their impact on the dynamics of pesantren in the digital era. The findings reveal the complexities of having both virtual and traditional pesantren coexist online, stressing the need for clear differentiation to avoid confusion among stakeholders. Overall, the paper offers valuable insights into the changing landscape of Islamic education in response to technological progress, highlighting the necessity of understanding the impact of virtual pesantren on the traditional educational system.

Masruroh's<sup>10</sup> research examines the transition from traditional to virtual recitations in Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, in response to the challenges posed by globalization and modernization. The study investigates how pesantren is adapting to advancements in information and communication technology, particularly the use of new media platforms like the internet. It highlights the importance of pesantren evolving to preserve their cultural heritage while actively engaging in contemporary society and the global community through modern media channels for Islamic activities.

The research also delves into the impact of globalization on scholarly development within pesantren, urging these institutions to adopt new technologies to stay relevant. It emphasizes the complexities pesantren face in modernizing their educational methods and scholarly practices to keep pace with globalization. Moreover, the study discusses the role of social media platforms as essential sources of religious information for the younger generation, leading to a shift towards online religious education. Pesantren are leveraging platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook to reach a broader audience and bridge cultural gaps, thereby maintaining their relevance and engagement with contemporary society.

In conclusion, Masruroh's research provides an in-depth analysis of how Pesantren are adapting to the digital age by incorporating new media technologies into their educational and preaching methods. The study underscores the necessity for Pesantren to evolve in order to meet the challenges of globalization and modernization while preserving their cultural traditions and engaging with the global community through modern media platforms.

The research gap between Masruroh's and Fakhurrozi's studies lies in the contrasting dynamics and implications of traditional and virtual pesantren amidst technological advancement. Masruroh's study concentrates on the shift from traditional to virtual recitations in pesantren, emphasizing their adjustment to information technology, modernization, and globalization. Fakhurrozi's research delves into the emergence of virtual pesantren operating solely online,

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<sup>10</sup> Sayidah Afyatul Masruroh and Abdul Muhid, "Migrasi Pengajian Konvensional Ke Pengajian Virtual Di Pesantren," *Dinamika Penelitian: Media Komunikasi Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 22, no. 01 (October 23, 2022): 108–29, <https://doi.org/10.21274/dinamika.2022.22.01.108-129>.

presenting challenges when interacting with traditional pesantren in cyberspace. Fakhrruzi's study emphasizes the ambiguity arising from virtual pesantren using identical names as real ones, leading to a distinct community formation online.

In this study, the author highlights the transformative potential of virtual congregations in Indonesia, emphasizing the unprecedented accessibility, flexibility, and inclusivity offered by these virtual communities. These online platforms challenge traditional norms and methods of learning Islam by breaking down geographical barriers and making religious learning available to a broader audience. Unlike conventional pesantren, which require physical presence and adherence to rigid schedules, virtual congregations allow audiences to access religious learnings and resources at their convenience. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for individuals who may have other commitments or reside in remote areas, thereby democratizing access to religious knowledge and fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

Moreover, this study underscores how these online platforms foster a sense of community and belonging, empowering individuals to deepen their faith regardless of geographical constraints. Digital platforms facilitate interactive and engaging learning experiences through forums, virtual classes, and social media, creating a supportive community for learners. This interconnectedness enhances the sense of ummah (community) and provides a space for shared religious discourse and practice. By focusing on the intersection of technology, education, and religious studies, this research sheds light on the evolving landscape of religious learning in Indonesia. It explores its implications for religious discourse and practice, demonstrating how digital platforms can sustain and even enhance traditional Islamic values while adapting to contemporary technological advancements.

## **Methodology**

This study employs exploratory qualitative research to investigate the emergence and impact of virtual congregations in Indonesia. It draws upon technology, education, and religious studies to understand the evolving dynamics of religious education in the country. The primary data sources include an extensive review of existing literature and in-depth case studies of various digital platforms. The data collection process incorporates multiple qualitative methods. Initially, the author conducts a thorough literature review to compile existing knowledge and identify gaps in the current understanding of digital platforms, utilizing academic articles, reports, and other relevant documents. The author then conducts detailed case studies, utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis to provide comprehensive insights into specific digital phenomena.

The author uses qualitative data analysis techniques such as thematic analysis and narrative inquiry to analyze the collected data. Thematic analysis entails coding the data to identify significant patterns and themes, elucidating the

key aspects and impacts of a virtual congregation. Narrative inquiry explores individual experiences and stories, offering a deeper understanding of how these virtual institutions influence religious discourse and practice. These methods aim to uncover the underlying patterns, themes, and narratives characterizing the experiences of individuals engaging with these virtual institutions, thereby providing in-depth insights into how online platforms can revolutionize religious learning and foster spiritual development in contemporary Indonesia.

## Result

### *Today's Islamic Educational Systems*

Pesantren, the enduring educational institution in Indonesia, retains its traditional essence despite the changing tides of modernity and technological advancement. Situated predominantly in rural areas, pesantren remains steadfast as the primary hub for Islamic learning in the country. Recognized for its pivotal role in Indonesia's development, pesantren continues to garner trust from both the government and society. Despite the onward march of scientific progress that has ushered in societal, cultural, and technological shifts, pesantren steadfastly adheres to its time-honored methods of education.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, Indonesian Muslims continue to entrust their children's education to pesantren, or boarding schools. This is partly due to the affordability of living in pesantren, as well as the belief that it provides an unparalleled environment for fostering virtuous character and attitudes in future generations. Pesantren, which predated Indonesian independence, stands as a beacon of Islamic education in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> Led by revered teachers known as *kyai* and attended by students referred to as *santri*, pesantren typically encompasses various essential facilities such as mosques for worship, dormitories for student accommodation, classrooms, and *kyai* residences.<sup>13</sup>

The curriculum offered at pesantren spans diverse fields of knowledge, including fiqh, tawhīd, Arabic grammar, theology, and Qur'anic studies. Much of the scholarly literature underpinning pesantren education draws from the rich

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<sup>11</sup> Achmad Riduan, . Ahmad, and . Yono, "Strategi Dakwah Digital Berbasis Pesantren di Masa Pandemi (Studi Kasus Channel Youtube Ponpes Darul Muttaqien Parung & Channel Youtube Ponpes Awwaliyah Al-Asiyah Cibinong)," *Inspiratif Pendidikan* 11, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.24252/ip.v11i1.29545>.

<sup>12</sup> Irham Abdul Haris, "Pesantren: Karakteristik Dan Unsur-Unsur Kelembagaan," *An-Najah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Sosial Agama* 02, no. 04 (2023).

<sup>13</sup> Ali Rahmat and Anwar Rudi, "Quo Vadis Pendidikan Pesantren Di Era Digital," *Kariman: Jurnal Pendidikan Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.52185/kariman.v11i1.298>.

tradition of Middle Eastern scholarship.<sup>14</sup> Pesantren, initially rooted in traditional educational structures centered around mosques or boarding schools, has evolved into a modern institution offering education across various levels, from primary to tertiary. According to the Ministry of Religion, 36,600 pesantren were reported nationwide as of 2023, catering to a total student population of 5 million. In Java alone, encompassing West Java, Banten, DKI Jakarta, Central Java, and East Java, there are 32,227 pesantren serving 3.5 million students.<sup>15</sup> The proliferation of pesantren signifies the broader expansion of Islamic learning groups, typically housed within mosques or the residences of religious leaders, and serves as a symbol of Islamic resilience and identity within the *santri* community.

As an ancient institution rooted in indigenous traditions, pesantren embraces various methods of learning, each evolving according to its own system. Among these, the sorogan method entails *santri* reading the designated texts individually, while another involves *kyai* reading aloud while *santri* attentively listens and engages in discussions to grasp the book's meaning. These approaches, steeped in tradition, have persisted since the inception of Islamic boarding schools.

Modern educational systems have made digital technology a cornerstone, significantly influencing the transmission and acquisition of knowledge. In the 1980s, the emergence of digital visualization marked a significant shift towards more effective, efficient, interactive, and visually appealing educational tools.<sup>16</sup> Pesantren is adapting to the digital era by embracing digital communication channels such as websites and social media platforms like YouTube. This shift underscores the necessity for educational institutions to evolve alongside technological advancements to remain relevant and effective.

Educational theorists frequently use the term 'industrial revolution', coined in 2011 at the Hannover Fair in Germany,<sup>17</sup> to describe the integration of cyber technology into both physical and non-physical learning environments. This integration has facilitated the widespread dissemination of education, presenting both opportunities and challenges for Islamic education in pesantren.

In navigating these rapid changes, the religious learning system must equip itself with a diverse set of skills. This includes traditional literacies like

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<sup>14</sup> Dwi Puspitarini et al., "Humanistic Pesantren: Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Visualization Analysis on Character, Moral, and Ethical Values," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 31, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.47836/PJSSH.31.2.01>.

<sup>15</sup> Imam Nur Aziz et al., "Exploring Students' Online Self-Regulated Learning on Writing Skills at Pesantren Education in the Pandemic Era," *Contemporary Educational Researches Journal* 13, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.18844/cej.v13i2.9007>.

<sup>16</sup> Supriyono, "Pesantren, the COVID-19 Pandemic and Digital Transformation: A Global Development Perspective," *Muslim Education Review* 1, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.56529/mer.v1i1.10>.

<sup>17</sup> Linda Bonekamp and Matthias Sure, "Consequences of Industry 4.0 on Human Labour and Work Organisation," *Journal of Business and Media Psychology* 6, no. 1 (2015): 33–40, [www.journal-bmp.de](http://www.journal-bmp.de).

reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as newer literacies like data, technology, and human understanding. Additionally, higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), critical 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity, and computational thinking skills are indispensable in preparing santri for success in the digital age.<sup>18</sup>

Seen as a distinct subculture, pesantren possess cultural assets that hold significant potential for societal improvement. Technology serves as a conduit for strengthening social bonds and amplifying pesantren's influence in community empowerment initiatives. By leveraging technology, pesantren can effectively expand their networks and fulfill their mission of uplifting society.

Pesantren have become more receptive to the internet's presence, despite widespread initial resistance. These educational institutions now provide facilities and infrastructure to ensure *santri* has internet access. Prior research has demonstrated that the internet outperforms conventional media in capability, serving as a bridge for mass media to effectively reach users. The internet offers numerous benefits and positive values, enabling users to access social media, build networks, and leverage these connections for various purposes.

### ***The Digital Authority Among Kyai***

Nevertheless, a significant portion of pesantren still adheres to a closed model and classical learning methods. These traditional pesantren maintain strict rules to preserve the purity of their learnings from external influences. These institutions forbid students from interacting with the outside world or using mass media and the internet.

The *kyai* stands at the core of pesantren, playing a critical role in both the institution's existence and integrity. They are charismatic figures who serve as a beacon of inspiration for *santri*, fulfill administrative duties, and act as community representatives.<sup>19</sup> Their influence and choices are paramount in preserving the traditions and values upheld by the pesantren.

A charismatic *kyai* holds a unique position of authority within the Islamic community, revered as the ultimate source of religious knowledge and truth. This esteemed position grants the *kyai* unparalleled influence over both the educational framework of pesantren institutions and the behavior of their *santri*. *Santri* dutifully heeds *kyai's* directives without question, placing unwavering trust in his dogmatic teachings. People regard the *kyai's* words as indisputable truths, leaving little room for critical inquiry.

Beyond mere influence, the *kyai* embodies a symbol of integrity, prestige, and wisdom, commanding respect and admiration from the masses. With a firm grasp on religious doctrine, the *kyai* possesses the power to shape the beliefs and

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<sup>18</sup> Pam Nilan, "The 'spirit of Education' in Indonesian Pesantren," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 30, no. 2 (2009): 219–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690802700321>.

<sup>19</sup> Dawam Multazamy Rohmatulloh et al., "Digital Innovation in Pesantren Education: Prediction to Welcome Global Islam Awakening," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5 (2022).



actions of the community at large. He not only disseminates knowledge, but also cultivates a sense of loyalty and devotion among his followers through his charismatic leadership.<sup>20</sup>

In essence, the *kyai's* authority extends beyond mere instruction; it encompasses the embodiment of religious truth and the cultivation of a loyal following. This unique blend of charisma, knowledge, and leadership enables the *kyai* to wield significant influence and attract a substantial following within the Islamic community.

In today's digital landscape, where the locus of religious authority is undergoing significant transformations, the role of *kyai* within traditional Muslim communities remains unparalleled. This enduring relevance stems largely from the institution of pesantren, which serves not only as a hub for Islamic education but also as a bastion for upholding the venerable values of reverence towards *kyai*. Despite the advent of technology, often cited as a catalyst for the reshaping of religious authority, its impact on the dynamics of traditional religious leadership has been rather modest. Pesantren, which often maintain a certain distance from technological advancements, have proven remarkably adept at preserving core values, albeit temporarily, with *kyai* firmly entrenched as the pivotal figure.

As an educational institution, a pesantren functions as a highly effective environment for instilling and perpetuating values and behaviors centered around reverence for the *kyai*. Serving as a focal point for social and cultural development, it fosters a sacred ethos that nurtures a profound respect for the *kyai*. This ethos is instilled in the pesantren environment through the organic transmission of cultural values inherent in santri's daily routines. Furthermore, a pesantren's educational structure revolves around specific curricula that prioritize *kyai* veneration. This comprehensive approach not only teaches academic subjects but also deeply instills the fundamental principles of respect toward the religious and intellectual authority figure, the *kyai*, in the upbringing and education of the *santri*.

Charismatic authority, unlike traditional authority, has its drawbacks. The concept of legitimacy primarily constrains a *kyai's* charismatic authority. Although certain communities may hold a *kyai* in high regard, this recognition may not be universal. For example, a NU-affiliated *kyai* might wield authority within the NU community but not necessarily beyond it. This disparity also holds true for *kyai*, who is associated with various *sufi brotherhoods* and political factions, each commanding loyalty from distinct followings. The divergence in ideologies has limited the *kyai's* authority to serving as key figures within specific belief systems. As a result, a *kyai's* authority is not comprehensive, but rather

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<sup>20</sup> Imam Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslim in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212>.

fragmented. This fragmentation raises the challenging question of identifying the sole holder of religious authority within Indonesian Muslim society.

However, preachers do not automatically receive the authority to convey these sermons. Preachers must earn and maintain this authority through various means. Educational background is critical in this regard, as it reflects the preacher's depth of understanding and knowledge of Islamic principles. People are more likely to perceive a well-educated *kyai* as credible and trustworthy when conveying religious learnings.<sup>21</sup>

However, due to their frequent media appearances, *kyai* and *ustadz* continue to hold religious authority and influence in society. Those who often appear on television, radio, or even on new media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, video blogs, YouTube, Instagram, and others are more likely to gain fame and become celebrities compared to those who only preach directly (non-media). In the 2000s, television media successfully created popularity for preachers such as Aa Gym, Yusuf Mansyur, and Arifin Ilham.<sup>22</sup> More recently, young preachers like Hanan Attaki and his wife Hanien Akira, as well as Natta Reza, have quickly gained fame for actively delivering their sermons through Instagram. The Instagram platform showcases a religious atmosphere with an intriguing blend of pop culture expressions that appeal to young Muslims, such as posting their sermons in colorful short videos as part of the sophistication of new media technology.

*Kyai* and *ustadz* have the opportunity to ascend to celebrity status by utilizing new media technology, capturing society's undivided attention and cultivating a substantial following. This phenomenon serves to fortify their religious authority, despite their usual status as lay preachers with less extensive Islamic educational backgrounds compared to traditional scholars. It's important to recognize that they transcend mere entertainment, as their messages hold deeper religious significance and resonate with audiences on a profound level, contributing to their widespread influence and recognition in contemporary society.

In Indonesia, religious sermons hold a significant place in the hearts and minds of the Muslim community. They serve not only as a means of disseminating religious knowledge but also as a platform for spiritual guidance and moral upliftment. These sermons, often delivered by respected figures such

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<sup>21</sup> M. Zaki Suaidi Zaki, "Kyai, Pesantren Dan Modernitas," *Taqorrub: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Dan Dakwah* 2, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.55380/taqorrub.v2i1.209>.

<sup>22</sup> Tuve Floden, "Muslim Television Preachers," in *Islamic Studies*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195390155-0273>.

as *kyai*, are not merely informative sessions but rather a form of oratory preaching, as Julian Millie highlights.<sup>23</sup>

One of the key aspects of these sermons is their basis in the Qur'anic exegesis. *Kyai*, acting as interpreters of the Qur'an, delve into its verses to extract meanings and lessons that are relevant to contemporary issues and challenges faced by society. Through this process, they aim to guide people towards obedience to Islamic principles and righteousness in their lives.

Furthermore, the style of language used in these lectures is of paramount importance. *Kyai's* ability to communicate effectively, using language that resonates with the audience, greatly influences the impact of their message. This goes beyond mere vocal delivery; it encompasses the use of rhetorical techniques and storytelling to engage the hearts and minds of listeners.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of religious congregations lies in their ability to touch the hearts of the audience. When delivered with sincerity and authenticity, backed by sound knowledge and communicated in a relatable manner, these lectures have the power to inspire positive change and spiritual growth within the community.<sup>24</sup>

## Discussion

### *Digital Textuality and the Transmission of New Knowledge*

The advancement of the technological era undoubtedly brings unprecedented convenience and innovation, fundamentally transforming the ways in which people conduct business, work, and learn. This transformation extends to both general knowledge and Islamic religious studies, including the interpretation of the Qur'an and Al-Hadith.<sup>25</sup> Today, integrating the digital world into daily routines is commonplace, with many individuals finding opportunities to earn a living within this digital ecosystem. The advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the emergence of Society 5.0 emphasize the necessity for proficiency in digital tools and technologies, as our increasingly advanced era demands.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Julian Millie, *Hearing Allah's Call: Preaching and Performance in Indonesian Islam*, *Hearing Allah's Call: Preaching and Performance in Indonesian Islam*, 2017; Mohd Al Adib Samuri, Azlan Shah Nabees Khan, and Razaleigh Muhamat, "Narratives of Muslim Converts and Muslim Preachers on Muslim Naming Policy," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 13, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.06.2018.006>.

<sup>24</sup> Abuddin Nata, "Kyai And Character Education," *Psychology and Education Journal* 58, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.17762/pae.v58i1.1795>.

<sup>25</sup> Mahfudlah Fajrie et al., "Al-Quran Digitalization: Adolescent View on the Value of the Digital Al-Quran Application," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 39, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2023-3901-06>.

<sup>26</sup> Adinda Rahma Khumairah, Mira Kania Sabariah, and Veronikha Effendy, "Modeling the Digital Al-Quran User Experience as Tahfidzul Quran Media Using the Task-Centered System

Modern technological applications in religious learning provide numerous methods to expedite and enrich the study and interpretation of religious texts. Technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning can assist in the analysis of Qur'anic verses, offering deeper insights and more precise interpretations. Additionally, online courses and virtual classrooms enable audiences from around the world to access high-quality religious learning, breaking down geographical barriers and fostering a global community of learners.

However, the widespread adoption and usage of social media also raise important questions and concerns regarding privacy, misinformation, and algorithmic bias. The vast amount of personal data shared on these platforms has sparked debates about data privacy and security, prompting calls for greater transparency and regulation. Additionally, the viral spread of misinformation and the proliferation of echo chambers have highlighted the need for media literacy and critical thinking skills in navigating the digital landscape.<sup>27</sup>

Despite these challenges, the global reach and impact of social media are undeniable, with over 4.7 billion individuals actively engaging with these platforms worldwide. As technology continues to evolve and society adapts to the ever-changing digital landscape, it is essential to harness the potential of social media for positive social change while addressing its inherent risks and limitations. By fostering meaningful connections, facilitating public discourse, and empowering communities, social media has become an integral part of contemporary human interaction, shaping the way to communicate, collaborate, and coexist in the digital age.<sup>28</sup>

This informational landscape engenders a risk of misunderstanding and misrepresentation, as users may inadvertently internalize erroneous beliefs or distortions of Islamic principles. Without the context provided by trained religious scholars or the guidance of reputable institutions, individuals may struggle to discern authentic religious learnings from sensationalized or ideologically driven narratives.

Furthermore, the proliferation of unfiltered religious content on the internet has precipitated a notable shift in religious authority. Traditional sources of religious guidance, such as mosques, scholars, and established religious institutions, have historically served as bastions of authority within the Muslim

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Design,” *JURIKOM (Jurnal Riset Komputer)* 9, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.30865/jurikom.v9i4.4649>.

<sup>27</sup> Made Saihu, “Al-Quran And The Need For Islamic Education To Artificial Intelligence,” *Mumtaz: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Keislaman* 3, no. 2 (2019).

<sup>28</sup> Lukman Abdul Mutalib et al., “Scientific Exegesis of Al-Quran and Its Relevance in Dealing with Contemporary Issues: An Appraisal on the Book of ‘al-Jawahir Fi Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim,” *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering* 8, no. 2 Special Issue 11 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.B1089.0982S1119>.

community.<sup>29</sup> However, the democratizing nature of the internet and the rise of social media platforms have ushered in a new era of religious authority, characterized by decentralized sources of information and influence.

In navigating this evolving landscape, it is imperative for individuals to exercise discernment and critical thinking when engaging with religious content online. Relying on reputable sources, seeking guidance from knowledgeable scholars, and fostering a nuanced understanding of Islam's rich theological tradition can mitigate the risks of misinformation and ensure a more authentic engagement with the faith in the digital age.<sup>30</sup>

Several prominent pesantren have recognized the importance of digital presence and have established websites to extend their reach and provide access to their educational resources. These websites, such as ([www.langitan.net](http://www.langitan.net)) for *Pondok Pesantren Langitan*, ([www.tebuireng.net](http://www.tebuireng.net)) for *Pondok Pesantren Tebuireng*, ([www.gontor.ac.id](http://www.gontor.ac.id)) for *Pondok Pesantren Gontor*, and ([www.sidogiri.net](http://www.sidogiri.net)) for *Pondok Pesantren Sidogiri*. ([muallimin.sch.id](http://muallimin.sch.id)) for *Madrasah Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta*, ([darularqamgarut.sch.id](http://darularqamgarut.sch.id)) for *Pondok Pesantren Muhammadiyah Garut*, ([www.deamalela.sch.id](http://www.deamalela.sch.id)) for *Pesantren Modern Internasional Dea Malela Sumbawa*, ([trensains.sch.id](http://trensains.sch.id)) for *SMA Trensains Sragen*, ([www.ponpeskarangasem.com](http://www.ponpeskarangasem.com)) for *Pondok Pesantren Karangasem Muhammadiyah Lamongan*, function as virtual campuses, enabling individuals to engage with these pesantren remotely and at any time. Through these online platforms, communities can access a wealth of information about the institutions, their programs, faculty, and activities, fostering greater transparency and connectivity.

However, it's crucial to understand that while these Islamic boarding schools may have a digital presence and utilize technology in their educational activities, they do not fall strictly under the category of digital pesantren. Instead, they often operate as *pesantren modern*, which integrates modern technology as a supplement to their conventional pedagogical methods. This integration of technology enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, allowing audiences to access learning materials, communicate with instructors, and collaborate with peers more conveniently.<sup>31</sup>

Preachers committed to spreading the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith have embraced technology as an essential tool to fulfill their religious obligations. This contemporary strategy involves employing diverse communication methods to engage with their audience, referred to as recitation attendees. Leveraging mobile phones, laptops, and other digital gadgets, preachers can effectively manage and disseminate their messages. This incorporation of technology

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<sup>29</sup> Tazul Islam, "Expansion of Maqasid Thought Beyond Maqahid Al-Shariah: Maqasid Al-Quran As A New Paradigm," *Hamdard Islamicus* 45, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.57144/hi.v45i4.514>.

<sup>30</sup> Abul Hasan Al Asyari, "Tantangan Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren Di Era Modern," *Risalatuna: Journal of Pesantren Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.54471/rjps.v2i1.1572>.

<sup>31</sup> Hendi Kariyanto, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Dalam Masyarakat Modern," *Jurnal Pendidikan "Edukasia Multikultura"* 2, no. 2 (2020).

guarantees that their outreach efforts are both prompt and extensive, facilitating connections with audiences residing in various regions.<sup>32</sup>

An essential element of their use of technology revolves around tapping into an extensive range of online references and religious materials. The abundance of resources available on the internet empowers preacher to deepen their understanding and provide more thorough guidance during their sermon.<sup>33</sup> Online repositories, academic papers, and digital collections of Qur'an and Hadith texts serve as invaluable resources for crafting sermons and educational programs. This instant access to information enables preachers to stay up to date on diverse interpretations and contemporary concerns, which they can then incorporate into their teachings.

Moreover, technology is instrumental in storing and managing the content utilized by preachers during recitations. Digital storage options like cloud services and external drives enable them to amass extensive collections of sermons, lectures, and educational resources. This not only simplifies the retrieval and utilization of these materials during sessions but also guarantees the preservation and accessibility of valuable content for subsequent use. The capacity to digitally store and organize vast amounts of data assists preachers in upholding a systematic approach to their da'wa endeavors.

These applications, such as *Maktabah Syamilah*, *Maktabah Alfiyah li al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, and *Lidwa Pusaka Da'wa*, mark a significant advancement in leveraging technology to enhance preaching activities in today's world. They serve as indispensable tools for preachers, providing access to valuable insights into the various challenges faced by fellow preachers across different regions. By utilizing these platforms, preachers can navigate the complexities of their preaching environment more effectively, equipped with a deeper understanding of the subtle issues encountered by the communities they aim to reach.<sup>34</sup> These platforms enable preachers to address local issues more efficiently by fostering this exchange, drawing on their peers' collective knowledge and experiences. This collaborative approach not only improves the quality of da'wa efforts but also fosters a sense of unity and mutual support among preachers, strengthening the bonds within the broader Islamic community. As preachers embrace technological advancements, they demonstrate a commitment to adapting their methods to suit the demands of the present era. By utilizing these tools, they broaden the reach of their preaching activities, transcending traditional limitations

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<sup>32</sup> Dawam Multazamy Rohmatulloh, Muhammad As'ad, and Robi'Ah Machtumah Malayati, "Gus Baha, Snatri Gayeng, and The Rise of Traditionalist Preacher on Social Media," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.2.303-325>.

<sup>33</sup> Ahmad Sultra Rustan et al., "The Phenomenon of the Celebrity Preachers and the Awakening of the Religious Spirit of Millennial Generation in Indonesia," *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology* 29, no. 3 Special Issue (2020), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.1-10-2019.2291699>.

<sup>34</sup> Imron Rosidi, "Da'wah and Politics among Muslim Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Intellectual Discourse* 29, no. 1 (2021).

and disseminating the timeless messages of the Qur'an and Hadith to larger audiences. This way, they uphold the fundamental principle of da'wa, which entails a genuine effort to steer others towards righteousness amidst the evolving dynamics of the contemporary world.<sup>35</sup>

Several recitations on hadith are still focused on the digitization of hadith on software platforms such as al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, Jawāmi' al-Kalim, and Lidwa Pusaka; specific document files such as portable document format (PDF); and websites. However, there has been limited exploration of digital sanad studies, which involve the transmission of hadith chains through online media, particularly on social media platforms like Facebook. Digital sanad refers to the virtual issuance of hadith credentials or chains, without face-to-face interaction, through digital or online media, without requiring an extended period.

In addition to the continuous digitalization process, the hadith congregation is expanding its scope to scrutinize both textual content and the societal contexts these texts inhabit. The advent of online platforms, including YouTube, websites, e-books, and visual aids like images and diagrams, has significantly accelerated the advancement of hadith congregation. Online hosting has expanded the reach of these studies beyond traditional boundaries, attracting participants from diverse backgrounds worldwide. Despite the numerous advantages offered by digital and social media platforms, such as flexibility in attendance, cost-effectiveness, and direct engagement with leading scholars, it is worth noting that these sessions often lack the interactive dialogue characteristic of traditional hadith gatherings, reflecting a departure from historical practices.

### ***Unleashing Faith Through Charismatic Kyai***

Many have shifted their focus to active *kyai's* engagement due to the widespread use of social media and the declining popularity of religious preachers on television. This social phenomenon has also enticed religious scholars to participate on social media platforms, such as KH. Ahmad Mustofa Bisri and many more, who regularly deliver online lectures via Twitter. Moreover, traditional Islamic congregations, previously restricted to virtual congregations, are now expanding and multiplying on social media. Interestingly, the topics discussed by these traditional scholars on social media predominantly revolve around ethics and Sufism, focusing on moral values. The scope of preaching on social media is diverse, ranging from moral themes to worship to Islamic thought and Islamic philosophy. These intertwined themes cater to the audience's interests and preferences.

On average, active internet users have the following social media accounts: 93% have Facebook accounts, 80% have Twitter accounts, 70% have Google+ accounts, 39% have LinkedIn accounts, and 32% have Instagram

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<sup>35</sup> Samuri, Nabees Khan, and Muhamat, "Narratives of Muslim Converts and Muslim Preachers on Muslim Naming Policy."

accounts. This atmosphere encourages the creation of new patterns of preaching in both the digital and public spheres, which engage in healthy contestation. However, we must wisely handle negative aspects, such as the spread of preaching material and themes on social media.

Pesantren preachers' involvement in social media congregations reflects an effort to address the complexities of contemporary issues. Through social media platforms, traditional Islamic texts experience a resurgence in relevance. Pesantren, once secluded, now engages the public by sharing studies of traditional Islamic texts on social media. The focus that preachers place on moderation, national unity, and harmony represents a vital element introduced through the examination of traditional Islamic texts on social media. The contextualization of these texts within society is apparent in the thematic content of the studies shared.

One mosque in Yogyakarta actively and continuously conducts studies on social media, including traditional Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) and philosophical studies (*kajian filsafat*). Masjid Jenderal Sudirman (MJS) chooses study themes on social media by focusing on the study of the book *Al-Hikam*, taught by KH. Imron Jamil. Ibn Athaillah As-Sakandariy wrote the Sufi book *Al-Hikam*, which traditional pesantrens widely study. This book contains wise advice for *salik* (pengembara spiritual), providing guidance for their spiritual journey. The cultivation of morality through the study of traditional Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) has become popular among the millennial generation, as it greatly satisfies their thirst for refreshing preaching.

MJS (Masjid Jenderal Sudirman) shines brightly as a source of enlightenment within the realm of religious learning, providing a wide range of studies that delve into topics such as ethics, morality, Sufism, and love. Apart from the enduring insights present in *Al-Hikam*, MJS delves into other profound texts, such as *Ruba'iyat Rumi*, *Syarh Burdah*, and *Tarjuman Al Asywaq*. These texts, curated by *kyai* Kuswaidie Syafi'i, affectionately known as Cak Kus, resonate deeply with seekers of spiritual growth. Cak Kus, the head of Maulana Rumi pesantren, brings a wealth of knowledge and insight to the teachings, fostering a community steeped in contemplation and reverence for Islamic principles. Through live streaming sessions on platforms like Facebook and YouTube, MJS and Maulana Rumi pesantren extend their reach beyond physical boundaries, offering guidance and solace to a global audience.

Amidst a landscape where provocative and abusive preaching often dominates social media platforms, the presence of MJS and Cak Kus serves as a refreshing antidote. Their emphasis on compassion, tolerance, and the transformative power of love stands in stark contrast to the divisive rhetoric that pervades many online spaces. By leveraging technology to disseminate their teachings, MJS and Maulana Rumi pesantren exemplify a modern approach to preserving and sharing the spiritual heritage of Islam. Through their efforts, they not only nurture individuals on their spiritual journey but also contribute to



fostering a more harmonious and understanding society, rooted in the universal values of kindness and empathy.

### ***The Inclusiveness of Theological Pedagogy in Qur'anic Exegesis***

In the contemporary digital era, *Dakwah Islam* encounters a multitude of complexities as it addresses the challenges of human life. Islam, as a comprehensive faith, provides solutions to these multifaceted issues, offering guidance and direction to individuals and communities. Preachers are critical to the effectiveness of da'wah efforts. These individuals serve as conduits between religious learnings and societal realities, tasked with understanding and addressing the diverse problems, cultures, and characteristics present within Muslim communities.

By gaining insight into the social fabric and historical context of their surroundings, preachers can navigate the da'wah landscape more effectively, offering relevant and impactful guidance. Preachers play an important role in *dakwah*, also known as *dakwah bil-lisan*, which encompasses a wide range of activities aimed at spreading Islamic principles. Millie argues that da'wah bil-lisan is the epitome of da'wah, serving as a foundation in multiple Islamic pursuits.<sup>36</sup> *Tabligh akbar*, *pengajian*, *tausiyah*, and numerous other activities are essential elements of *dakwah Islam*, with the preacher serving as a key figure in engaging and educating individuals about Islam's principles. Preachers have the ability to inspire, educate, and energize audiences through articulate and compelling oration, fostering a deeper understanding and reverence for Islamic principles.

A significant feature of Islamic preaching in the modern digital landscape involves leveraging social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram to disseminate sermons, lectures, and inspirational speeches. These platforms enable preachers to connect with a wide-ranging audience, transcending geographical, cultural, and linguistic barriers. This fosters a global sense of community among believers and facilitates connections with religious figures and scholars irrespective of physical distance.

By drawing parallels between Qur'anic narratives and current events, preachers can address pressing issues such as social justice, environmental stewardship, and interfaith dialogue. This contextualization not only makes religious learnings more relevant and relatable to contemporary audiences but also empowers believers to enact positive change in their communities based on Islamic principles.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Julian Millie, *Splashed by the Saint: Ritual Reading and Islamic Sanctity in West Java*, *Splashed by the Saint: Ritual Reading and Islamic Sanctity in West Java*, vol. 262, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004253810>.

<sup>37</sup> "Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis," *Choice Reviews Online* 40, no. 06 (2003), <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.40-3355>.

Digital technologies have revolutionized the dissemination, reception, and application of religious knowledge in contemporary society through their integration into Islamic preaching. By leveraging social media, multimedia communication, and narrative pedagogy, Islamic preachers have expanded their reach, engaged diverse audiences, and addressed pressing societal issues while remaining rooted in the timeless wisdom of the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition. The term *qasas* holds significant weight within this context, as it encompasses the essence of storytelling and narrative pedagogy, serving as a foundational element in religious learning.<sup>38</sup> Through the exploration of *qasas*, preachers aim to convey profound moral lessons, ethical learnings, and spiritual insights to their audiences, utilizing a rich tapestry of narratives drawn from the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions.<sup>39</sup>

Within the semantic field of narrative, numerous Arabic terms such as ḥadīth, sīrah, khabar, and hikayah are employed, each carrying its own connotations and nuances. These terms collectively contribute to the multifaceted nature of Islamic storytelling, encompassing a wide array of genres, styles, and themes. In the virtual congregation setting, Islamic preachers leverage these diverse narrative forms to engage audiences in critical reflection, intellectual inquiry, and spiritual contemplation.

One of the primary functions of narrative pedagogy in virtual congregation is to contextualize religious learnings within the lived experiences of audiences, making them relevant and applicable to contemporary challenges and issues. Through the retelling of Qur'anic stories, prophetic anecdotes, and historical accounts, preachers provide audiences with practical guidance on navigating moral dilemmas, fostering interpersonal relationships, and upholding ethical principles in their daily lives.<sup>40</sup>

Through online forums, webinars, and social media platforms, preachers can engage with a global audience, fostering a sense of community and belonging among audiences regardless of physical distance. This inclusivity ensures that religious learnings remain accessible to all who seek knowledge and spiritual guidance, embodying the principles of equity and social justice espoused by Islam.

In Indonesia, online preachers utilize visual storytelling and multimedia formats to share religious narratives and moral lessons with a broad audience. They employ platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to connect with followers nationwide and even globally, taking advantage of digital media's

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<sup>38</sup> Dr. Mohsin Khan Abbasi and Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, "The Word of Thinking in Intellectual Verses of Quran: Exegeses Analysis," *Al-Ajza Research Journal of Islamic Studies & Humanities* 5, no. 4 (2021), [https://doi.org/10.53575/u11.v5.04\(21\)122-139](https://doi.org/10.53575/u11.v5.04(21)122-139).

<sup>39</sup> Khumairah, Sabariah, and Effendy, "Modeling the Digital Al-Quran User Experience as Tahfidzul Quran Media Using the Task-Centered System Design."

<sup>40</sup> Mohammed Zakariah et al., "Digital Quran Computing: Review, Classification, and Trend Analysis," *Arabian Journal for Science and Engineering*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13369-017-2415-4>.

accessibility and expansive reach to communicate enduring messages grounded in religious learnings.

Drawing from *qasas* found within Qur'anic exegeses, Indonesian preachers craft narratives that resonate with the cultural and social context of their audience.<sup>41</sup> By weaving together compelling stories and relatable characters, they effectively communicate complex theological concepts and ethical principles in ways that are accessible and engaging. Whether through animated videos, graphic illustrations, or live-action dramas, these visual storytelling techniques captivate viewers' attention and leave a lasting impact.<sup>42</sup>

These narratives serve as powerful tools for moral instruction in the Indonesian online preaching landscape, inspiring audiences to reflect on their behavior and cultivate virtuous qualities such as compassion, humility, and justice.<sup>43</sup> By illustrating the consequences of actions through storytelling, preachers encourage viewers to consider the ethical implications of their choices and strive for personal growth and spiritual development.

Indonesian Muslim preachers often incorporate local traditions, folklore, and cultural references into their narratives, making religious learnings more relatable and relevant to their audience. By contextualizing Islamic principles within the lived experiences of Indonesians, preachers foster a deeper connection between religious learnings and everyday life, encouraging viewers to apply moral lessons in their own communities and interactions. Moreover, aside from imparting moral guidance, visual storytelling in the digital realm functions as a tool for enhancing social harmony and collective identity among Indonesians. Through narratives that emphasize common values and aspirations, online preachers cultivate a sense of camaraderie and empathy among varied audiences, bridging cultural, linguistic, and geographical disparities.

In the digital age, Muslim preachers in Indonesia leverage online platforms to reach a broad audience, transcending geographical barriers and connecting with believers from diverse backgrounds. They create a space for audiences to engage in intellectual discourse, critical analysis, and spiritual reflection through virtual congregation. This fosters a culture of tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect, where individuals from different walks of life come together to explore the profound wisdom of the Qur'an. Qur'anic exegeses embrace narrative and truth-seeking,<sup>44</sup> Indonesian Muslim preachers empower their audiences to navigate the complexities of modern society while remaining

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<sup>41</sup> Nasrin Nasir, "View of the Other in Modern Malay Exegesis of the Quran," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 4 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v6i4.415>.

<sup>42</sup> A Purwanto, *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Menjadikan Al-Quran Sebagai Basis Konstruksi Ilmu Pengetahuan* (Mizan, 2015), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=w8QqCQAAQBAJ>.

<sup>43</sup> Fajrie et al., "Al-Quran Digitalization: Adolescent View on the Value of the Digital Al-Quran Application."

<sup>44</sup> Fajrie et al.

grounded in Islamic principles.<sup>45</sup> Through their guidance, audiences cultivate a deep sense of belonging to the global Muslim community, enriched by the diversity of perspectives and experiences shared within the virtual congregation. Preachers play a crucial role in fostering a society that is more inclusive and harmonious, uniting individuals through their shared faith and dedication to pursuing knowledge and truth.

## Conclusion

The emergence of digital media platforms has indeed revolutionized the landscape of religious authority and knowledge dissemination in Indonesia. *Kyai* and *ustadz* have effectively utilized platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, transcending traditional boundaries despite their non-traditional educational backgrounds. Their skillful use of new media technologies has not only broadened the reach of religious learnings, but has also revitalized the relevance of traditional Islamic texts and encouraged collaboration among preachers, thereby strengthening unity and support within the Islamic community. This shift towards digital platforms has expanded the scope of preaching activities and facilitated the promotion of tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect, fostering inclusivity and harmony in Indonesian society.

Furthermore, oratory continues to be a powerful tool for spreading Islamic principles globally, bridging geographical divides, and connecting believers worldwide. Indonesian Muslim preachers, through their engagement with virtual congregation, have fostered a culture of knowledge-seeking and truth-seeking, empowering believers to navigate the complexities of modern society while adhering to Islamic principles. The use of digital media has not only strengthened *kyai* and *ustadz*'s religious authority but has also enriched the spiritual lives of believers, contributing to the development of a more inclusive and harmonious society in Indonesia, united by their shared commitment to Islamic values.

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<sup>45</sup> Aam Abdussalam, Mohammad Rindu Fajar Islamy, and Muhamad Parhan, "Al-Quran Digital Vs Al-Quran Cetak: Menjelajahi Perspektif Mahasiswa Terhadap Pemanfaatannya Dalam Dimensi Globalisasi," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 7, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v7i1.236>.

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