

Title: **Algorithmic Authority and the Reconfiguring of Uṣūl Al-Dīn: Digital Ontologies, Epistemic Fragmentation, and the Future of Islamic Theological Authority**

Author (s): Naila Farah¹, Didi Supandi², Asna Istya Marwantika³, Arif Dika Prasetya³, Muhamad Febrianto³, and Ummulkhairy M. Dun³

Affiliation (s): ¹UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati, Cirebon, Indonesia
²UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
³Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, Indonesia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.162.18>

History: Received: March 3, 2026, Revised: July 3, 2026, Accepted: July 20, 2026, Published: August 30, 2026

Citation: Farah, Naila, Didi Supandi, Asna Istya Marwantika, Arif Dika Prasetya, Muhamad Febrianto, and Ummulkhairy M. Dun. "Algorithmic Authority and the Reconfiguring of Uṣūl Al-Dīn: Digital Ontologies, Epistemic Fragmentation, and the Future of Islamic Theological Authority." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 16, no. 2 (2026): 334–353.
<https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.162.18>.

Copyright: © The Authors

Licensing:  This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



A publication of

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School of Social Science and Humanities
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Algorithmic Authority and the Reconfiguring of *Uṣūl al-Dīn*: Digital Ontologies, Epistemic Fragmentation, and the Future of Islamic Theological Authority

Naila Farah* 

Department of Sociology of Religion,
UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon,
Indonesia

Didi Supandi 

Department of Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy,
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung,
Indonesia

Asna Istya Marwantika 

Arif Dika Prasetya 

Muhamad Febrianto 

Ummulkhairi M. Dun 

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta,
Indonesia

Abstract

The change in the distribution pattern of religious authority in contemporary Muslim society, including in Indonesia, is influenced by the development of algorithm-based social media. This condition raises important questions about the epistemic stability of *uṣūl al-dīn* in the digital space. This study aims to analyze how algorithmic authorities become intermediaries in changes in Islamic theological authority, identifying epistemic fragmentation patterns, and formulating a conceptual model of theological legitimacy in the Indonesian context. This study uses a mixed-methods methodology with digital network analysis, engagement metrics, and qualitative discourse analysis on theological content on major social media platforms. The results indicate that there has been a shift in indicators related to religious legitimacy, from *sanad* and institutional recognition, to digital metrics that focus on audience visibility and response. In addition, segmented epistemic groups with limited interaction emerged, and new hierarchies of authority mediated by algorithms. These results indicate a link to Islamic theological authority undergoing a shift from a hierarchical transmission model to an algorithmic structure. This research has offered the framework of the Indonesian Hybrid Theological Authority Model, which combines traditional epistemic legitimacy with digital visibility. This model can strengthen theological authority in addressing the fragmentation of the *ummah* in an algorithmically mediated society while offering normative guidance to religious institutions on *da'wah* practices and digital ethics.

Keywords: algorithmic authority, digital theological legitimacy, epistemic fragmentation, mediatization of religion, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*.

Introduction

The development of digital technology has changed the way religious authorities are recognized

*Correspondence concerning this manuscript should be addressed to Naila Farah, Lecturer, Department of Sociology of Religion, UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Indonesia. at nailafarah18@uinssc.ac.id

by Muslims. If legitimacy was based more on scientific credentials, and the continuity of *sanad* previously, now the influence of religious leaders is increasingly affected by the visibility on social media and interaction with the audience. This change created an impetus with various Islamic authorities to adapt to technological developments. According to Rachman, where the digital space makes religious authorities more fragmented, preachers who are popular on social media often have greater influence than clerics with strong *sanad* traditions.

Research related to digital religion indicates that religious authority is undergoing a shift from a traditional framework that had a hierarchical and institutional nature to a more network-based form of legitimacy. Campbell and Tsuria indicate that digital audiences participate in forming, validating, and disseminating religious authority through engagement, participation, and content distribution.¹ In line with this, Hashmi indicated that the context of social media, authority, and religious credibility is more determined by audience visibility and interaction, no longer solely by legitimacy based on institutions.² Therefore, legitimacy and authority are increasingly produced with networked relationships, at a time when digital attention is becoming the primary and important form of social and symbolic capital.³

Social media algorithms with an orientation in user involvement increasingly influence the formation of religious authorities so as to give birth to a legitimacy model with a networked nature. Cinelli et al. have indicated that algorithms can form echo chambers by amplifying content that aligns with the user's views, limiting exposure to different information. In the context of religion itself, this condition also affects the content received and the religious leaders who are recognized as authorities.⁴ Dogruel indicated that algorithms also form a folk theory with a tendency for users to consider frequently recommended content more credible, thus influencing the choice of religious content and features by being considered as religious authority.⁵

These changes have to do with the future of *uṣūl al-dīn* with the classical Islamic view related to the meaning of religious truth. Traditionally, Islamic theological reasoning has been associated with disciplined processes of rational inquiry, established scholarly traditions, and forms of collective recognition among scholars possessing recognized intellectual authority. However, with the increase in digital visibility it can form a new framework of authority based on changes in the basic principles of Islamic epistemology. This is important in the analysis of Islamic thought because the problem is not only about digital communication, but also influences the authority, truth, and legitimacy built in contemporary Muslim communities.

The study of the authority of Islamic theology in the digital era is still limited by the explanation of the role of algorithmic systems on its ontological and epistemological foundations. The discussion

¹Heidi A. Campbell, and Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

²Umair Munir Hashmi, Radzuwan Ab Rashid, and Mohd Kamil Ahmad, "The Representation of Islam within Social Media: A Systematic Review," *Information, Communication and Society* 24, no. 13 (2021): 1962–1981, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1847165>.

³Arief Rachman, Theguh Saumantri, and Taufik Hidayatulloh, "Transformation of Religious Authority in the Digital Era: A Post-Normal Times Analysis by Ziauddin Sardar on the Phenomenon of Social Media Da'wah," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 45, no. 1 (2025): 107–22, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v45.1.25644>.

⁴Matteo Cinelli et al., "The Echo Chamber Effect on Social Media," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 9 (2021): e2023301118, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2023301118>.

⁵Leyla Dogruel, "Folk Theories of Algorithmic Operations during Internet Use: A Mixed Methods Study," *The Information Society* 37, no. 5 (2021): 287–298, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2021.1949768>.

of the change in legitimacy in *uṣūl al-dīn* from a scientific-based authority to recognition given by the influence of digital algorithms has also not been widely studied.⁶ As a result, the relationship between algorithmic governance, theological legitimacy, and epistemic stability is still poorly understood.⁷

To be able to indicate the change in the legitimacy of Islamic theology in the digital era, this research develops a new conceptual framework with *uṣūl al-dīn* as the basis for analysis. The framework provides a combination with Islamic theological epistemology and algorithmic authority theory so that algorithms are understood as epistemic agents that form, disseminate, and legitimize religious authority. It is through this approach that digital infrastructure is understood as a factor that reshapes the ontological foundation of Islamic theological legitimacy. Therefore, this study is different from previous studies which generally have a focus on digital *da'wah*, online religious communication, or religious activities on social media.

This article discusses the influence of algorithmic authority on the formation of Islamic theological legitimacy, the fragmentation of knowledge, and the future of religious authority in the digital Islamic landscape in Indonesia. This research has contributed to the analysis of simulative Islamic thought, digital religion, and Islamic religious authority by collaborating the foundations of classical Islamic epistemology with contemporary discourses related to algorithmic governance. From a pragmatic point of view, this research is expected to help scholars, the Muslim community, and policymakers to face the challenges that arise as a result of the change in Islamic religious authority in the digital age.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Mediatization of Religion and Religious Authority

According to Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, authority is formed by the procurement of systems, discourses, and mechanisms that determine the truth.⁸ In the Islamic scientific tradition, this is reflected in *the sanad, ijma'* and various scientific and theological institutions that govern the legitimate dissemination of knowledge. The development of digital technology then changes in the way religious legitimacy and authority are built so that changes not only occur in religious communication but also in the process of determining who is authorized to interpret religious teachings.

The emergence of digital media has provided a change in the system with a process commonly called mediatization. According to the theory of mediatization, it indicates that the media no longer only has a role as a space to disseminate information, but also participates in making changes to the social conditions that shape by maintaining authority. Recent research indicates that social media has the function of being a space where religious authority is negotiated with audience visibility and

⁶Muhamad Hanif Fuadi, "Islamic Algorithms: How Digital Platform Algorithms Shape Islamic Communication Strategies and Religious Authorities," *Proceedings Religion and Social Transformation in the Digital Era* 4, no. 1 (2024): 512–526, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31958/proceedingsoficresh.v4i.132>.

⁷Nibrosu Rohid et al., "Digital Activism in Contemporary Islamic Politics: A Critical Analysis of Social Media's Impact on Islamic Movements," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 1 (April 30, 2025): 208–33, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i1.10159>; Zulfa Ilma Nuriana, and Nisrina Salwa, "Digital Da'wah in the Age of Algorithm: A Narrative Review of Communication, Moderation, and Inclusion," *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 4 (2024): 242–56, <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijis.v2i4.706>.

⁸Michael Foucault, *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (London: The Harvester Press, 2010).

interaction, not just through institutional recognition.⁹ In Indonesia, digital religious activities have supported the emergence of mixed or hybrid forms of authority that legitimately collaborate institutional legitimacy with visibility-based authorities on digital platforms. This shift is changing the relationship between clerics, religious institutions, and digital religious influencers.

The development of digital networks has made religious authorities increasingly decentralized so that established religious institutions are no longer the only source of legitimacy. According to Faujar Syam, authority can now be formed with the involvement of audiences, content creators, and digital platform networks.¹⁰ In this process, the audience not only has a role as the recipient of the message but also participates in building and strengthening religious authority through sharing, commenting, and recommending content. Therefore, digital platforms are a very important space for the acquisition of recognition and visibility of religious authorities.¹¹ This condition also indicates that a more centralized structure has the potential to reduce the impact of authority fragmentation.

The formation of *uṣūl al-dīn* indicates the influence of mediatization on the way theological legitimacy is recognized. Traditionally, legitimacy is based on scientific methodology with the competent recognition of scholars. However, within the framework of mediatization, visibility with public attention is increasingly becoming an important source of authority. Therefore, the mediatization of *uṣūl al-dīn* primarily directs our attention to digital communication technologies and their impact on religious communication and the social context for recognizing theological legitimacy.¹²

2.2. Algorithmic Authority and Epistemic Shifts in Digital Religion

In the digital religious space, algorithms function as gatekeeping mechanisms that determine which religious figures, interpretations, and theological views become more accessible to the public.¹³ This condition has indicated that algorithmic authority also influences the visibility, dissemination, and ranking of content, thus shaping public perception of the relevance and reliability of information.¹⁴ In contrast to mediatization, which focuses on changing religious power, algorithmic authority emphasizes the formation of legitimacy by the procurement of digital interfaces.

The results of the study have indicated that algorithms are more trustworthy with high interaction and increased visibility of actors who are able to adapt to the existence of digital platform mechanisms. Studies on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram show that content with higher engagement is more likely to be recommended, repeatedly shown to users, and to subsequently gain greater

⁹Stig Hjarvard, "The Mediatization of Religion: Theorising Religion, Media and Social Change," *Culture and Religion* 12, no. 2 (2011): 119–135, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2011.579719>.

¹⁰Fahmi Faujar Syam, "The Polarization Effects of Media Algorithms: An Analysis of Michel Foucault's Theory of Power and Knowledge," *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business* 4, no. 2 (2025): 3424–3531, <https://doi.org/10.31004/riggs.v4i2.1070>.

¹¹Pamela Jo Brubaker, and Michel M. Haigh, "The Religious Facebook Experience: Uses and Gratifications of Faith-Based Content," *Social Media + Society* 3, no. 2 (2017) 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117703723>.

¹²Taufik Hidayatullo, "From Sanad to Algorithm: Authority, Rationality, And Participatory Interpretation of Uṣūl Al-Dīn in Cyberspace," *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 12, no. 2 (2025): 183–205, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15408/iu.vi.50233>.

¹³Tarleton Gillespie, *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media* (London: Yale University Press, 2019).

¹⁴Fazlul Rahman, and Faiqotul Mala, "'Media Life' and Islamic Da'wah: Shifts in Religious Literacy Patterns in the Digital Space," *Prosiding SENALA (Seminar Nasional Linguistik Indonesia)*, 2, no. 1 (2025): 114–21.

visibility and credibility.¹⁵ The recognition of religious authority is now increasingly influenced by the visibility on social media as well as the number of followers, user interactions, and algorithm recommendations. This shift has given birth to legitimacy based on visibility so that authority is more associated with algorithmic exposure than with scientific credentials or recognition of religious institutions.

These changes cause socio-epistemic impacts, for example the formation of echo chambers and segmented interpretive communities. Algorithmic systems can bring users into a space where their ideology is uniform, so that they continue to receive content that can strongly encourage Islamic beliefs.¹⁶ In religious contexts, the separation of interpretive communities can lead to theological divisions by weakening mutual reference. With this change, social media features increasingly influence religious legitimacy, and reduce dependence on community scientific traditions and *ulama* deliberations.¹⁷

The development of algorithmic authority provided a change in the way the legitimacy of Islamic theology was built. The increasing use of algorithms in the digital space poses challenges to the legitimacy of theological authority and the sustainability of common knowledge standards. This is because recognition in the algorithmic system is basically in terms of visibility, number of likes, and audience engagement, whereas in the tradition of *uṣūl al-dīn* legitimacy rests on *sanad*, *ijmā'*, and the role of scholars.

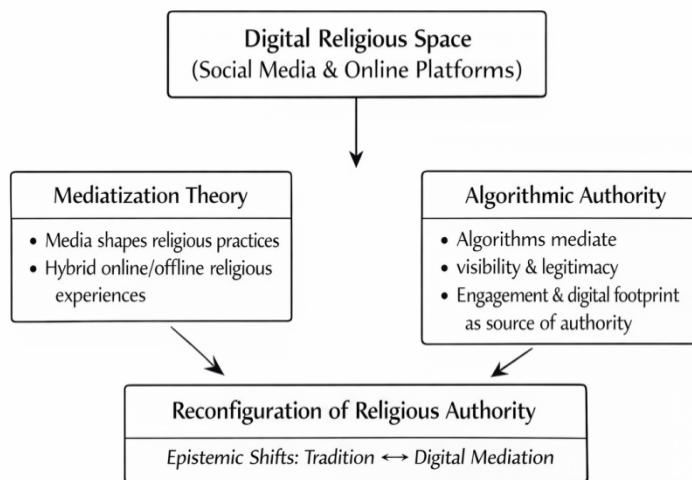


Figure 1. The Mediatization-Algorithmic Authority Model in the Transformation of Islamic Theological Legitimacy

¹⁵Guro Flinterud, "'Folk' in the Age of Algorithms: Theorizing Folklore on Social Media Platforms," *Folklore* 134, no. 4 (2023): 439–461, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.2023.2233839>.

¹⁶Tien Rohmatin et al., "Epistemological Polemics in Digital Religion," *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 11, no. 2 (2025): 437–454, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v11i2.448>.

¹⁷Fatimah, and Farid Pribadi, "The Digital Da'wah (Preachers) and Hegemony in Digital Age," *Journal of Southern Sociological Studies* 1, no. 2 (2025): 206–223, <https://doi.org/10.26740/jss.v1i2.40520>.

3. Methodology

This study applies the use of a mixed method approach with a combination of digital content analysis and discourse analysis to be able to examine the legitimacy of Islamic theology in the digital space. This approach will allow researchers to analyze content visibility, user engagement patterns, and the formation of Islamic legitimacy narratives.¹⁸ This study analyzed 3,600 uploads of Islamic religious content on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram from January 2023 to December 2024, focusing on content that addresses Islamic theological issues, including discussions of *tawhīd*, *ʿaqīdah*, *iman*, *kufir*, *shirk*, *bidʿah*, and the attributes of God (*ṣifāt Allāh*). From this dataset, 30 pieces of content with the highest engagement rates were selected for each year for further analysis. The sample was selected using purposive sampling with 120 active and relevant public accounts consisting of 40 traditional scholars, 40 formal Islamic organizations such as *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, and 40 digital daʿwah influencers. Furthermore, snowball sampling is applied to the discovery of other actors who are most often referred to in audience interaction and recommendation networks.

Quantitative data includes several engagement metrics, for example the number of impressions and likes, with comments, shares, subscriber growth, and engagement rate. Meanwhile, the data used to conduct a visibility assessment focuses on audience reach, frequency of recommendations, and interaction density. Network analysis of interactions, comments, shares, and audience mentions was used to identify patterns of epistemic fragmentation. Network patterns, visibility, and audience engagement were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS and Gephi by including modularity and assortativity coefficients for grouping identification and ideological segmentation. Data in the form of text, audio, video, and audience interaction content was analyzed through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, and focused on religious legitimacy, theological authority, audience validation, as well as narratives of orthodoxy, exclusivism, moderation, and popular religiosity. The credibility of the findings is strengthened by triangulation between platforms, content types, and actor categories.¹⁹

The interpretation stage provides a combination with quantitative and qualitative findings through a convergent mixed-methods approach. Quantitative analysis provides identification with the presence of network visibility, engagement, and fragmentation, while qualitative analysis indicates the formation of legitimacy and authority through discourse. Integration of both findings enabled an analysis of the impact of algorithmic infrastructures on the transformation of Islamic theological authority, the emergence of epistemic fragmentation, and the reshaping of legitimacy within the discipline of *uṣūl al-dīn* in contemporary Indonesia.

4. Results

4.1. Transformation of Islamic Religious Authority in Indonesia's Algorithmic Social Media Landscape

A significant transformation in the structure of religious authority in Indonesia's digital space was revealed through the analysis of 3,600 pieces of religious content originating from 120 Islamic accounts on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. The ability to adjust communication strategies with platform algorithms is an increasingly determining factor in visibility in the digital religious space. This can be seen from the dominance of independent preachers and religious influencers who obtained 58.4% of all audience interactions, while formal religious organizations only reached 24.7%

¹⁸Nancy L. Leech et al., "Evaluating Mixed Research Studies: A Mixed Methods Approach," *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 4, no. 1 (2010): 17–31, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689809345262>.

¹⁹Adele E. Clarke, *Situating Grounded Theory and Situational Analysis in Interpretive Qualitative Inquiry* (London: Routledge, 2022).

and scholars with traditional education backgrounds at 16.9%. The findings have indicated that recognition in the digital space is increasingly concentrated on actors who are able to adapt to the platform's algorithmic mechanisms.

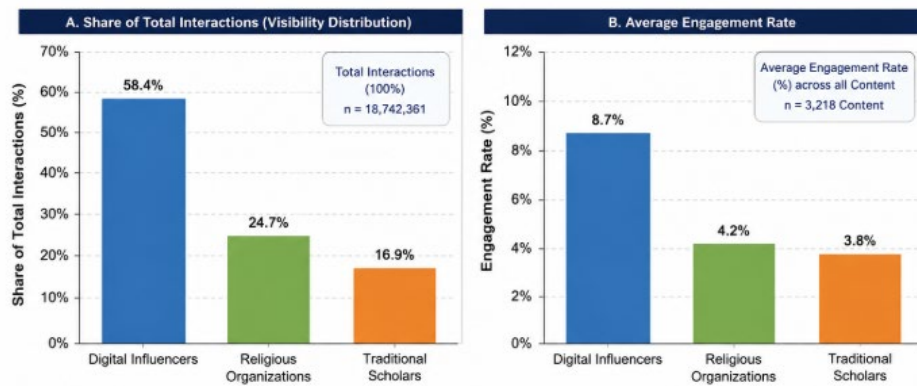


Figure 2. Distribution of Digital Visibility and Engagement Rate among Religious Actors in Indonesia's Digital Islamic Ecosystem

The algorithm mechanism also affects the distribution of visibility in Islamic discourse in the digital space. Figure 2 indicates that digital influencers have the highest engagement rate at 8.7%, while religious institutions and traditional clerics only reach 4.2% and 3.8%, respectively. In addition, the reach of influencer content is about 2.3 times greater than that of religious institutions even though it has stronger formal legitimacy.

Network analysis has indicated that the most strategic position in digital religious communication is now more occupied by digital *da'wah* influencers. This can be reflected in the average value of degree centrality of 0.74 and between-ness centrality of 0.69 which is higher than religious organizations (0.41 and 0.37) and traditional scholars (0.35 and 0.29). These findings indicate a shift in authority because digital *da'wah* influencers increasingly have a role as the main link in the dissemination of religious and theological content in communication networks.

Audience interaction data indicates a clear relationship between content types and engagement levels. Short religious videos with a duration of less than five minutes get an engagement rate of 9.1%, while long lectures of more than 20 minutes only reach 4.5%. Short content also has an average share of 1.9 times higher when compared to long talks. These results indicate that algorithmic systems tend to prioritize engagement with audience interaction when compared to complex and theologically rich content.

The growth of followers within the accounts of digital religious actors has indicated that algorithmic recommendations provide greater visibility gains. Ten influencer accounts recorded an average annual increase in followers of 42.6%, while institutional accounts could only reach 18.3%. This difference is influenced by audience retention because videos with retention rates above 60% can get algorithmic recommendations about 1.8 times more than videos with retention below 60%, widening their exposure.

Comparisons between conventional religious authorities and digital religious actors indicate that a new hierarchy of legitimacy is emerging. Large organizations such as *Nahdlatul Ulama* and Muhammadiyah still have a strong symbolic authority in the offline community, but with a digital presence they are lower when compared to interactive influencer accounts. These results indicate that algorithmic visibility is increasingly becoming an alternative system for gaining public recognition,

which is separate from traditional systems based on scientific accreditation.

Religious legitimacy in Indonesia's digital Islamic space is now increasingly chosen on the basis of recognition and visibility compared to *sanad*, institutional affiliations, or scientific residency. This shift can occur because the platform's algorithm not only functions as a technical tool but also forms the distribution of religious authority. As a result, the position of authority increasingly relies on indicators such as engagement rate, audience retention, number of followers, and algorithm recommendations. These findings have indicated that algorithm-based digital environments have changed the way Islamic scientific authority and traditions are constructed and recognized.

4.2. Patterns of Epistemic Fragmentation and Differentiation of Islamic Theological Discourse in Indonesia's Digital Ecosystem

Analysis of audience interaction on 3,600 religious contents from YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok indicates a high level of epistemic fragmentation in digital Islamic discourse in Indonesia. The interaction network has received a modularity score of 0.57, which indicates that religious digital communication is divided into several theological clusters. Three main clusters are indicated, namely the moderate theological cluster at 42%, the exclusive-conservative at 31%, and the populist-sensational at 27%. The clusters and their interaction patterns are indicated in Figure 3.

Moderate clusters tended to rely on contextual interpretation and religious moderation. Intergroup engagement was also more visible in the moderate clusters. The exclusive cluster focused on the certainty of doctrine, the literal interpretation of religious texts, and exclusive claims to religious truth. The populist-sensational cluster was characterized by short-form videos, emotionally based content, and highly individualized religious messages. Overall, these findings indicate that in Indonesia's fragmented Digital Islamic discourse, the different interpretive communities are dispersed rather than organized around a predominant epistemic center.

These findings have indicated a strong epistemic segregation among various views. Communication takes place more within the community by having the same ideology than with groups with different interpretations. This can be seen from the indication that only 12.4% of interactions that occur between clusters, while 67.8% of network relationships take place within the same cluster. In addition, moderate and exclusive clusters also have the lowest level of connectivity, so cross-group communication is still very limited.

Evidence of echo chambers is indicated by the interaction pattern of the audience. Users have a tendency to have interactions with content that is in accordance with their theological beliefs so that network homophilia becomes high. An assortativity coefficient of +0.48 indicates that digital actors are more often connected to the same ideological group. This results in low exposure to theological views that have differences. This condition indicates that audience interaction with platform design can maintain epistemic segregation in the context of digital religion.

The platform's design tends to favor religious content that is short, emotional, and easy to consume. This can be seen from videos that are not longer than five minutes by getting about 1.7 times more shares and recommendations than longer lectures. Exclusive and populist-sensational content also recorded an average engagement of 8.4%, which was higher than moderate content which reached only 5.1%, although moderate content still accounted for 42% of high-volume theological discourse while the remaining 58% was exclusive and populist-sensational content. These findings have indicated a divergence with the tendency of theological positions in the digital space.

The visibility trends of each cluster indicate a relationship between content formats and platform system strengthening. Of the most widely distributed content, 71% are in the form of engaging short videos with strong emotional and visual elements to convey a simple theological message. The other 29% can be lengthy theological discussions or theological analyses based on texts. These results

indicate that formats with content presentation styles are formed related to audience engagement and digital content circulation in the platform system.

Religious legitimacy in the digital space is built more through recognition from groups who have similar views than from communities with different interpretations. This pattern suggests that digital networks tend to reinforce ideological clustering rather than facilitate interaction across different theological positions. The findings are supported by a modularity value of 0.57 and a positive assortativity of +0.48 which has indicated the strengthening of the epistemic community in digital theological discourse in Indonesia.

Information on the digital Islamic ecosystem in Indonesia indicates that epistemic fragmentation comes not only from discourse, but also from measurable structural factors. Communication fragmentation has been formed by the collaboration of algorithmic recommendations, audience preferences, and theoretical discourse, so that it can form a system by conducting strong internal classifications, but limited intergroup interaction. This system became the basis for the emergence of a new theosophical public group, whose authority was formed more from digital networks, and strongly encouraged by algorithms.

4.3. The Shift in Legitimacy Indicators of Authority from *Sanad* and Institutions to Digital Metrics and Audience Validation

The legitimacy of Islamic theological authority in Indonesia is now increasingly influenced by the existence of digital indicators such as the number of followers, engagement levels, algorithm recommendations, and trending topics. In contrast to the classic framework of *uṣūl al-dīn* which rests on *sanad* where the mastery of scientific methodology and the recognition of religious institutions is controlled, recognition in the digital era is increasingly determined by the distribution of content and the level of visibility that can be measured.

In relation to digital religion, religious legitimacy today is increasingly dependent on engagement with user responses so that authority becomes increasingly decentralized.²⁰ In this phenomenon, Brantner calls it *visibility-based legitimacy*, which is the social recognition of religious actors that have been formed by disseminating and exposing content.²¹ Based on their research in Indonesia, Komarudin and Rohmana indicated that short *da'wah* has indicated a higher rate of redistribution when compared to institutional video lectures that have a longer duration. These results indicate a shift in measurable indicators of legitimacy, from institutional recognition to visibility, content circulation, and audience engagement.²²

The platform's algorithm puts more trust in the potential for user interaction than the credibility of the account source in determining content priorities. This condition is in line with the study of algorithmic authority and can be seen from a quantitative comparison that indicates that scholarly accounts with a scientific background with *sanad*-based delivery get lower engagement than popular *da'wah* figure accounts that use short and emotional videos, so that they are able to reach a larger audience.

²⁰Kirk A. Bingaman, "Religion in the Digital Age: An Irreversible Process," *Religions* 14, no. 1 (2023): 108, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010108>.

²¹Cornelia Brantner, and Helena Stehle, "Visibility in the Digital Age: Introduction," *Studies in Communication Sciences* 21, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.24434/j.scoms.2021.01.006>.

²²Muh. Asriadi AM, Edi Komarudin, and Jajang A Rohmana, "From Sanad to Algorithm: Digital Qur'anic Interpretation and the Reconfiguration of Religious Authority in Indonesia," *Al Furqan: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Tafsir* 8, no. 2 (2025): 405–429, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58518/alfurqan.v8i2.4452>.

This change also affects the change in the meaning of consensus or *ijmā'*. Normatively, *ijmā'* is analyzed as the collective agreement of scholars in determining normative truth. However, in the digital space, the collection of public responses, such as the number of comments, likes, and content shares, can serve as a form of pseudo-consensus based on popularity. Studies related to echo chamber dynamics indicate that virality metrics can improve the perception of legitimacy with high repetition and visibility, rather than through in-depth and substantial argumentative evaluations.²³

Epistemic collectivity in Islamic theology is no longer limited to the concept of *ijmā'* but is also influenced by the accumulation of reactions in the digital space. This change is in line with Habermas' view that communication in the digital public space is more attention-oriented than a deliberative exchange of arguments.²⁴ Gandini et al.²⁵ adding that in an algorithm-based environment, public agreement is formed more through repeated exposure than a rational reasoning process.

Comments to the audience indicate that popular stores are considered legitimate not because of scientific authority, but because of emotional closeness, communication style, and consistent presence in the digital space. In contrast, institutionally legitimate figures are valued for their depth of explanation, but they do not generate audience participation. This phenomenon indicates two forms of legitimacy, namely substantive legitimacy that has been determined from the depth of knowledge, and performative legitimacy formed from the socio-digital context.

Figure 2 has indicated a change in the hierarchy of Islamic theological authority in the digital space where legitimacy is increasingly influenced by the existence of algorithmic mechanisms. This process takes place in a circular manner because visibility creates increased interaction, interaction multiplies algorithm recommendations, and recommendations reinforce the perception of authority. As a result, the number of followers is increasingly an indicator of social credibility, regardless of scientific education background.

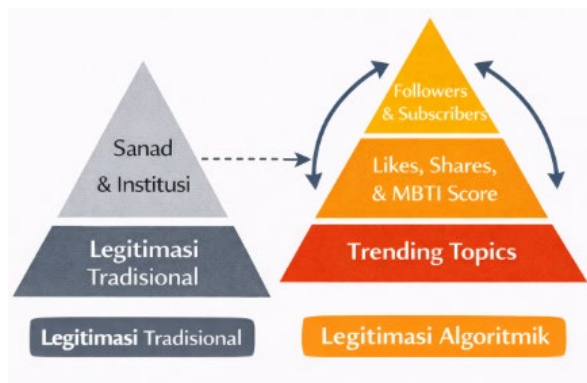


Figure 3. Hierarchical Transformation of Islamic Religious Authority in the Digital Sphere

²³ Carlos Diaz Ruiz, and Tomas Nilsson, "Disinformation and Echo Chambers: How Disinformation Circulates on Social Media Through Identity-Driven Controversies," *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 42, no. 1 (2023): 18–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/07439156221103852>.

²⁴Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018).

²⁵Alessandro Gandini, Silvia Keeling, and Urbano Reviglio, "Conceptualising the 'Algorithmic Public Opinion': Public Opinion Formation in the Digital Age," *Dialogues on Digital Society* 2, no. 1 (2025): 46–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/29768640251323147>.

This image indicates a change from traditional legitimacy based on sanad and institutions, to algorithmic legitimacy that has been determined by digital metrics, such as followers, likes, shares, and trending visibility. The pyramid structure indicates that the visibility and response of the audience is now a major factor in the formation of contemporary religious authorities.

In the digital space, religious legitimacy is increasingly influenced by a combination of quantitative metrics and the emotional response of the audience. Users often assume that more recommended content is more correct or based in quality information.²⁶ This condition is in line with the concept of algorithmic governance from Coşgun Solak by explaining that the platform's technical system regulates the dissemination of public discourse based on the level of interaction.²⁷

5. Discussion

5.1. Ontological Reconfiguration of Islamic Theological Authority in the Indonesian Digital Context

This research indicates that the shift in Islamic theological authority in Indonesia not only indicates a change in the implementation of communication, but also a rearrangement of the ontological basis that constitutes authority. Traditionally, within the framework of *classical uşûl al-dîn*, authority comes from theology and is authorized through sanad and recognition of the scientific community or *ijmā'*. This authority exists in a hierarchy of theological and scientific credibility, with a certain methodology and chain of testimony as the basis for legitimacy. Instead, the digital space has presented a new form of legitimacy that is increasingly shaped by platform algorithms, audience engagement, and content circulation.

In the digital era, the recognition of authority no longer rests solely on mastery of knowledge; it is increasingly shaped by an individual's visibility, discoverability, and prominence within algorithmically mediated platforms. This condition is different from classical authority which rests on theological competence. Therefore, these findings have indicated that the changes that occur are not the loss of conventional authority but the emergence of new ontological forms that provide a combination of epistemic and performative dimensions.

This pattern builds on previous research on *networked religion* and mediated authority, which indicates that digital media can democratize religious authority through broader participation.²⁸ This research offers a new perspective that algorithmic systems not only bridge the existing authority structure, but also form a new framework for theological recognition. Unlike the concept of networked religion, which emphasizes participation, communal interaction, and decentralized forms of legitimacy, these findings demonstrate that algorithmic recommendation systems function as non-

²⁶Michael Ridley, "Informing Algorithmic Literacy Through User Folk Theories," *College and Research Libraries* 85, no. 7 (2024): 966–977, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.7.966>.

²⁷Melek Coşgun Solak, "The Societal Epistemology of Artificial Intelligence: The Rise of Algorithmic Authority in the Production of Knowledge in the Social Sciences," *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* 14, no. 4 (2025): 144–1460, <https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.1730658>.

²⁸Lisfa Sentosa Aisyah, Rahmat Hidayatullah, and Muria Khusnun Nisa, "Religion Studies in the Digital Age: Mapping Theories, Methodologies, and Approaches in Digital Religion Studies," *Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 11, no. 2 (2025): 131–55, <https://doi.org/10.15408/iu.v11i2.44876>; Giulia Evolvi Knut Lundby, *Theoretical Frameworks for Approaching Religion and New Media* (London: Routledge, 2021).

human mediators that shape and normalize religious authority.²⁹ This difference became a theoretical innovation as the focus of the study shifted from audience- and community-based legitimacy to the relationship between communities, technology platforms, and algorithmic infrastructure.

Audiences' perceptions of religious authority are now increasingly influenced by algorithms, although the authority of classical theology persists in contemporary Muslim society. The data indicates that actors who are able to adjust their content to audience retention, upload frequency, and visual appeal are more likely to gain recognition even if they do not come from traditional religious authorities. This finding marks a shift from authority based on scientific transmission, to authority based on digital visibility.

This dynamic is particularly evident in contemporary theological discourse in Indonesia. Debates concerning *tawhīd*, *bid'ah*, *takfīr*, and *ṣifāt Allāh* have migrated to multiple digital platforms, where competing interpretations vie for legitimacy, authority, and audience attention. Consequently, religious institutions no longer exercise exclusive control over the public sphere in which theological discourse is produced, disseminated, and interpreted.³⁰ In the digital space, theological ideas compete for recognition visibility, content circulation, with audience preferences. Digital media and social media now have a big role in shaping theological ideas and public perceptions of theological truth.

In the perspective of *uṣūl al-dīn*, this development has indicated that the recognition of theological legitimacy is now taking place through a different mechanism. *Sanad* and *ijmā'* remain the normative cornerstones of authority but their influence in the public sphere is increasingly affected by the visibility of digital platforms. These findings indicate that there are two forms of legitimacy that go hand in hand, namely epistemic legitimacy based on scientific tradition and algorithmic legitimacy based on digital visibility. The two do not replace each other but continue to interact in a hybrid space that brings together theological competence and digital performance.

This analysis has an important difference from the previous analysis of digital da'wah. Previous analyses have focused more on digital media, audience engagement, and communication strategies. Meanwhile, this study argues that algorithmic systems have become part of the structure of contemporary religious authority.³¹ Digital communication alone is no longer enough to increase authority. In Indonesia, the transmission of religious authority has shifted from a predominantly hierarchical pattern toward a networked structure mediated by algorithms.³² In this context, legitimacy is formed through the relationship between scientific tradition, audience validation, and platform governance.

5.2. Implications of Epistemic Fragmentation on Consensus (*Ijmā'*), Truth Production, and the Stability of *Uṣūl al-Dīn* in Indonesian Muslim Society

Communication strategies increasingly influence the formation of theological authority,

²⁹Sonny Eli Zaluchu, "Digital Religion, Modern Society and the Construction of Digital Theology," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 41, no. 4 (2024): 285–295, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02653788231223929>.

³⁰Theguh Saumantri, Taufik Hidayatullo, Sumanta, and Ahmad Asmuni, "Tolerance in the Theology of Islamic Reform: A Hermeneutic Reading of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Thought," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 27 (2025): 160–170, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.27.2025.326>.

³¹Harry Febrian, "Visualizing Authority: Rise of the Religious Influencers on the Instagram," *Social Media + Society* 10, no. 4 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241286850>.

³²Bouziane Zaid et al., "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials: How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices," *Religions* 13, no. 4 (2022): article 335, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13040335>.

consensus, and religious truth in Indonesia's digital Islamic space. This condition is related to fragmentation which makes religious knowledge more widely circulated within the same interpretive community. This is supported by a modularity value of 0.57 and an assortativity coefficient of +0.48 which shows that the network is more organized on the basis of ideological similarities than epistemic similarities. As a result, the validation of authority and legitimacy of truth is more often formed within individual clusters than through the broader scientific community.

These results indicate a change in the meaning of *ijmā'* in the digital space. In the classical tradition of *uṣūl al-dīn*, *ijmā'* is understood to be the consensus of scholars, which has been formed by directed reasoning, methodological agreement, and mutual recognition from competent scholars. The validity of *ijmā'* comes not only from public approval, but also from the collective recognition of the recognized scientific community. This research indicates that in the digital paradigm, the form of *ijmā'* only begins to emerge at a time when visibility, repetition, and audience engagement are considered *ijmā'*, even though it is not based on scholarly consensus. In this context, strengthening narratives with digital media can produce pseudo-consensus that is seen as a collective agreement, but lacks a substantial theological discourse.

Research findings have indicated that algorithmic systems not only influence recognition of religious authority but also shape social constructs of theological "truth." This result can expand the study of digital religion and algorithmic authority with the previous one focusing more on audience engagement and networked legitimacy. In discussions of digital religion, the main concern has been the articulation of authority.³³ This analysis argues that algorithmic infrastructures increasingly participate in determining which theological interpretations are publicly accepted, repeatedly encountered, and socially legitimized. Thus, the concern is no longer who holds authority, but how authority is formed within the context of digital mediation.

The impact becomes clearer in the theological discussions on *tawhīd*, *bid'ah*, *takfīr*, and differing degrees of religious moderation and position on the divine attributes, *ṣifāt Allāh*. In many fragmented digital networks, these issues circulate within cluster-specific frameworks of interpretation, solidifying users preconceived theological arguments. The narratives are so repetitive and so largely unchanging that the chances for cross-traditional theological discourse are severely restricted.³⁴ This has resulted in the formation of parallel epistemic communities, in which competing truth claims are advanced in a context of mutual non-interaction and non-evaluation. The result is a weakening of shared means of discerning theological legitimacy, rather than doctrinal diversity.

At the same time, the results show that fragmentation should not be exclusively understood as a cause of epistemic instability. Digital environments encourage broader participation in theological discussions and provide previously marginalized users in public religious discourse with opportunities to engage in these debates. The issue is not managing plurality but creating a system that enables the continuous, functional engagement of plural epistemic systems. The current observation implies that, in the future, the stability of *uṣūl al-dīn* will depend on the ability of Islamic institutions and scholars to adapt constructively to the digital environment and infrastructure, rather than viewing them exclusively as external threats.

Based on the results of the research, the Indonesian Hybrid Theological Authority Model is proposed to be a potential form of Islamic authority in the future, in the digital era. This innovative

³³ Ibrahim N. Abusharif, "Religious Authority, Digitality, and Islam: The Stakes and Background," *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 8, no. 1 (2023): 109–119, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jims.00010>.

³⁴ Dedi Supriadi et al., "Religious Traditions and Cultural Integration: Pathways to Harmonization and the Promotion of Moderation in Contemporary Muslim Societies," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 16, no. 1 (2026): 110–126, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jite.161.07>.

model specifically collaborates two different types of legitimacy, namely epistemic legitimacy and algorithmic legitimacy, which in the current research framework are generally discussed separately. If existing research on *networked religion* more often focuses on relational authority with mediatization theory analyzing changes in communication methods, then the Hybrid Theological Authority Model indicates how traditional theological validation mechanisms and algorithmic visibility can be collaborated into a single unified authority structure.

Theological authority in this model remains based on traditional epistemic legitimacy by building on *sanad*, methodological mastery, institutional recognition, and scientific accountability as the normative basis.³⁵ The results of this study do not support the claim that authority, as defined by the classical paradigm, is displaced by algorithmic visibility. On the contrary, the results indicate that traditional legitimacy increasingly requires digital mediation to remain publicly relevant. Authority becomes effective when epistemic credibility is accompanied by communicative adaptability within algorithmically structured environments

A weakening of institutional legitimacy accompanies the legitimacy layer of Digital Visibility and Audience Resonance. The disruptive potential of algorithmic content recommendation systems can be observed at a theological level, as they promote the creation of contexts that engage and hold audiences. The data indicate that visibility, even when produced by an algorithmic system, is perceived as a form of symbolic capital in the context of public credibility. This helps explain why non-institutional religious actors can sometimes gain influence equal to, or greater than, that of established religious institutions.

The Hybrid Theological Authority Model offers a third dimension that moves away from the traditional-digital authority dichotomy and toward an integrative, deliberative mechanism comprising cross-cluster dialogue, theological digital literacy, moderation of religious discourse, and institutional engagement in the governance of digital platforms. This model prevents legitimacy from being narrowed down to just a measure of virality, while increasing the reach of traditional theological knowledge in the contemporary digital space. Therefore, this model is different because it offers a normative path to bridge epistemic authority and digital visibility. Meanwhile, other models have a tendency to see the two as separate and difficult to meet.

This research makes two main contributions by explaining the influence of algorithms on religious practices and developing a theoretical framework for understanding the reconstruction of the legitimacy of Islamic theology through digital mediation. Figure 4 has indicated that traditional epistemic legitimacy, digital visibility, and deliberative integration are complementary in building authority in the future. Therefore, the future of Islamic authority in Indonesia depends on the ability to integrate epistemic authority and digital visibility in a single complete epistemic framework with more than just a hierarchical structure or relying on algorithmic visibility.³⁶

In the end, the results of the study indicate that the stability of *uṣūl al-dīn* in the digital age depends on the ability of the Muslim scientific community to maintain methodological rigor while adapting to changes in the dissemination of knowledge. Algorithms need not only be seen as a threat to religious authorities.³⁷ With the Hybrid Theological Authority Model, algorithms can be

³⁵Mohammad 'Ulyan, "Digital Da'wah and Religious Authority: A Narrative Review of Islamic Preaching in the Social Media Era," *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 3 (2023): 100–113, <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijis.v1i3.591>.

³⁶Rokibullah Rokibullah, and Medika Oga Laksana, "Social Media Utilization by Preachers to Shape Religious Perceptions among Indonesian Youth," *Islamic Journal of Communication and Public Discourse* 2, no. 1 (2025): 11–22, <https://doi.org/10.59784/ijcpd.v2i1.7>.

³⁷Mónika Andok, "The Impact of Online Media on Religious Authority," *Religions* 15, no. 9 (2024): 1103, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15091103>.

understood as a socio-technical environment whose impact depends on the way religious actors negotiate, organize, and connect within a broader theological and ethical framework.

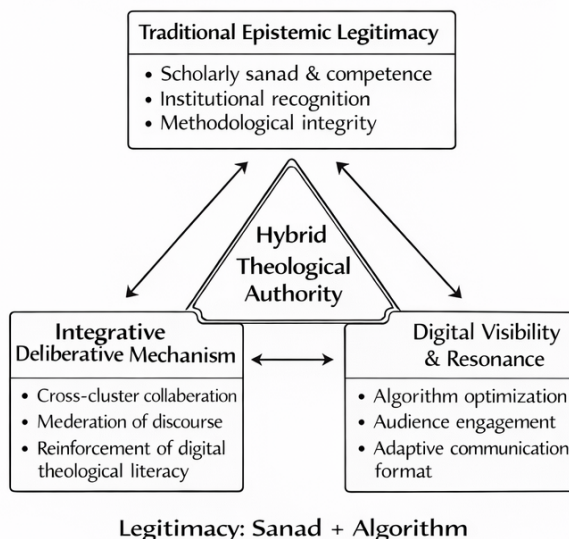


Figure 4. Indonesian Hybrid Theological Authority Model

5.3. Conclusion

This research reconstructs a framework of Islamic theological legitimacy in the digital era by integrating Islamic epistemology and algorithmic authority theory into the discourse of *uṣūl al-dīn* so that it differs from previous research on digital Islamic communication. The results of the study have indicated that the authority of Islamic theology in Indonesia has changed with the way legitimacy is established and recognized. Visibility, spread, and recognition of authority are increasingly influenced by engagement, audience interaction, algorithmic recommendations, and follower growth. Network analysis is also an indication of epistemic fragmentation through separate theological communities, limitations of intergroup communication, and the emergence of authority by gaining legitimacy from one's own community. In platform capitalism, algorithms are no longer just a medium of communication but also a socio-technical system that forms theological authority.

Empirical results with theoretical synthesis indicate that the Indonesian Hybrid Theological Authority Model was formed using the interaction between epistemic legitimacy, algorithmic visibility, and deliberative integration. The main challenge for Islamic theological authorities today is to be able to rebuild legitimacy while maintaining methodological integrity in the midst of the development of digital infrastructure. Therefore, the digital transformation of *uṣūl al-dīn* needs to be balanced with the strengthening of education, institutions, and ethics so that digital visibility remains in harmony with epistemic responsibility. Although *sanad* and *ijmā'* remain the basis of theological legitimacy, their influence is now increasingly affected by digital networks that regulate the dissemination and validation of knowledge. This research is still limited to the main social media platforms in Indonesia and has not examined peoples experiences in an ethnographic way. Further research needs to be able to examine the influence of algorithms on doctrinal authorities such as *tawhīd*, *bid'ah*, *takfīr*, religious moderation, and *ṣifāt Allāh*, as well as to extend the study to Muslim-majority countries.

Author Contribution

Naila Farah: conceptualization, supervision, writing – review & editing. **Didi Supandi:** methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, data curation. **Asna Istya Marwantika:** investigation, data curation, writing – review & editing. **Arif Dika Prasetya:** Formal Analysis; validation, visualization. **Muhamad Febrianto:** investigation, validation. **Ummulkhairy M. Dun:** investigation, resources, writing – review & editing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of this study will be made available by the corresponding author upon request.

Funding Details

This research was conducted as part of a collaborative academic initiative involving Ph.D. students in Islamic Studies. The research activities were financially supported by the Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP), Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, through the LPDP Doctoral Scholarship Program awarded to the participating Ph.D. researchers.

Generative AI Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (AI) ChatGPT tools were used solely to assist with language refinement, grammar correction, and improvement of manuscript readability during the preparation of this article. All conceptual development, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and scholarly conclusions were conducted entirely by the authors. The authors carefully reviewed and verified all AI-assisted outputs and assume full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content presented in this manuscript.

Bibliography

- Abusharif, Ibrahim N. “Religious Authority, Digitality, and Islam: The Stakes and Background.” *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 8, no. 1 (2023): 109–119. <https://doi.org/10.2979/jims.00010>
- Aisyah, Lisfa Sentosa., Rahmat Hidayatullah, and Muria Khusnun Nisa. “Religion Studies in the Digital Age: Mapping Theories, Methodologies, and Approaches in Digital Religion Studies.” *Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 11, no. 2 (2025): 131–155. <https://doi.org/10.15408/iu.v11i2.44876>
- AM, Muh. Asriadi., Edi Komarudin, and Jajang A. Rohmana. “From Sanad to Algorithm: Digital Qur’ānic Interpretation and the Reconfiguration of Religious Authority in Indonesia.” *Al Furqan: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran dan Tafsir* 8, no. 2 (2025): 405–419. <https://doi.org/10.58518/alfurqan.v8i2.4452>
- Andok, Mónika. “The Impact of Online Media on Religious Authority.” *Religions* 15, no. 9 (2024): 1103. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15091103>
- Bingaman, Kirk A. “Religion in the Digital Age: An Irreversible Process.” *Religions* 14, no. 1 (2023): 108. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010108>
- Brantner, Cornelia., and Helena Stehle. “Visibility in the Digital Age: Introduction.” *Studies in Communication Sciences* 21, no. 1 (2021): 93–98. <https://doi.org/10.24434/j.scoms.2021.01.006>
- Brubaker, Pamela Jo., and Michel M. Haigh. “The Religious Facebook Experience: Uses and Gratifications of Faith-Based Content.” *Social Media + Society* 3, no. 2 (2017): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117703723>

- Campbell, Heidi A., and Ruth Tsuria, eds. *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*. 2nd ed. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429295683>
- Cinelli, Matteo., Gianmarco De Francisci Morales, Alessandro Galeazzi, Walter Quattrociocchi, and Michele Starnini. "The Echo Chamber Effect on Social Media." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 9 (2021): e2023301118. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2023301118>
- Clarke, Adele E. "Situating Grounded Theory and Situational Analysis in Interpretive Qualitative Inquiry." In *Situational Analysis in Practice: Mapping Relationalities Across Disciplines*, 2nd ed., edited by Adele E. Clarke, Rachel Washburn, and Carrie Friese, 47–96. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003035923-6>
- Coşgun Solak, Melek. "The Societal Epistemology of Artificial Intelligence: The Rise of Algorithmic Authority in the Production of Knowledge in the Social Sciences." *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* 14, no. 4 (2025): 144–160. <https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.1730658>
- Diaz Ruiz, Carlos., and Tomas Nilsson. "Disinformation and Echo Chambers: How Disinformation Circulates on Social Media through Identity-Driven Controversies." *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 42, no. 1 (2023): 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07439156221103852>
- Dogruel, Leyla. "Folk Theories of Algorithmic Operations during Internet Use: A Mixed Methods Study." *The Information Society* 37, no. 5 (2021): 287–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2021.1949768>
- Fatimah, and Farid Pribadi. "The Digital Da'wah (Preachers) and Hegemony in Digital Age." *Journal of Southern Sociological Studies* 1, no. 2 (2025): 206–223. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jsss.v1i2.40520>
- Febrian, Harry. "Visualizing Authority: Rise of the Religious Influencers on Instagram." *Social Media + Society* 10, no. 4 (2024): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241286850>
- Flinterud, Guro. "'Folk' in the Age of Algorithms: Theorizing Folklore on Social Media Platforms." *Folklore* 134, no. 4 (2023): 439–461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.2023.2233839>
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon et al. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980. <https://search.worldcat.org/title/221019471>
- Fuadi, Muhamad Hanif. "Islamic Algorithms: How Digital Platform Algorithms Shape Islamic Communication Strategies and Religious Authorities." *Proceedings of International Conference on Religion, Social and Humanities* 4, no. 1 (2024): 512–526. <https://doi.org/10.31958/proceedingsoficresh.v4i.132>
- Gandini, Alessandro, Silvia Keeling, and Urbano Reviglio. "Conceptualising the 'Algorithmic Public Opinion': Public Opinion Formation in the Digital Age." *Dialogues on Digital Society* 2, no. 1 (2025): 46–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/29768640251323147>
- Gillespie, Tarleton. *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300235029>
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger, with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262581080/the-structural->

[transformation-of-the-public-sphere/](#)

- Hashmi, Umair Munir, Radzuwan Ab Rashid, and Mohd Kamil Ahmad. "The Representation of Islam within Social Media: A Systematic Review." *Information, Communication and Society* 24, no. 13 (2021): 1962–1981. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1847165>
- Hidayatulloh, Taufik. "From Sanad to Algorithm: Authority, Rationality, and Participatory Interpretation of Uṣūl al-Dīn in Cyberspace." *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 12, no. 2 (2025): 183–205. <https://doi.org/10.15408/iu.vi.50233>
- Hjarvard, Stig. "The Mediatization of Religion: Theorising Religion, Media and Social Change." *Culture and Religion* 12, no. 2 (2011): 119–135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2011.579719>
- Leech, Nancy L., Amy B. Dellinger, Kim B. Brannagan, and Hideyuki Tanaka. "Evaluating Mixed Research Studies: A Mixed Methods Approach." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 4, no. 1 (2010): 17–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689809345262>
- Lundby, Knut., and Giulia Evolvi. "Theoretical Frameworks for Approaching Religion and New Media." In *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*, 2nd ed., edited by Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, 233–249. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429295683-23>
- Nuriana, Zulfa Ilma., and Nisrina Salwa. "Digital Da'wah in the Age of Algorithm: A Narrative Review of Communication, Moderation, and Inclusion." *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 4 (2024): 242–256. <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijis.v2i4.706>
- Rachman, Arief., Theguh Saumantri, and Taufik Hidayatulloh. "Transformation of Religious Authority in the Digital Era: A Post-Normal Times Analysis by Ziauddin Sardar on the Phenomenon of Social Media Da'wah." *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 45, no. 1 (2025): 107–122. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v45.1.25644>
- Rahman, Fazlul., and Faiqotul Mala. "'Media Life' and Islamic Da'wah: Shifts in Religious Literacy Patterns in the Digital Space." *Prosiding SENALA (Seminar Nasional Linguistik Indonesia)* 2, no. 1 (2025): 114–121. <https://senala.upnjatim.ac.id/index.php/senala/article/view/21>
- Ridley, Michael. "Informing Algorithmic Literacy through User Folk Theories." *College and Research Libraries* 85, no. 7 (2024): 966–977. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.7.966>
- Rohid, Nibrosu., Rahma Sugihartati, Bagong Suyanto, Daniel Susilo, and Afriul Zikri. "Digital Activism in Contemporary Islamic Politics: A Critical Analysis of Social Media's Impact on Islamic Movements." *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 1 (2025): 208–233. <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i1.10159>
- Rohmatin, Tien., Banun Binaningrum, Bambang Irawan, Muhamad Tamamul Iman, and Firda Devi Rahmawati. "Epistemological Polemics in Digital Religion." *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 11, no. 2 (2025): 437–454. <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v11i2.448>
- Rokibullah, Rokibullah., and Medika Oga Laksana. "Social Media Utilization by Preachers to Shape Religious Perceptions among Indonesian Youth." *Islamic Journal of Communication and Public Discourse* 2, no. 1 (2025): 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.59784/ijcpd.v2i1.7>
- Saumantri, Theguh., Taufik Hidayatulloh, Sumanta, and Ahmad Asmuni. "Tolerance in the Theology of Islamic Reform: A Hermeneutic Reading of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Thought." *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 27 (2025): 160–170.

<https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.27.2025.326>

- Supriadi, Dedi., Anwar Sanusi, Reslawati, Dede Burhanudin, and Masmedia Pinem. "Religious Traditions and Cultural Integration: Pathways to Harmonization and the Promotion of Moderation in Contemporary Muslim Societies." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 16, no. 1 (2026): 110–126. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.161.07>
- Syam, Fahmi Faujar. "The Polarization Effects of Media Algorithms: An Analysis of Michel Foucault's Theory of Power and Knowledge." *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business* 4, no. 2 (2025): 3424–3531. <https://doi.org/10.31004/riggs.v4i2.1070>
- Ulyan, Mohammad. "Digital Da'wah and Religious Authority: A Narrative Review of Islamic Preaching in the Social Media Era." *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 3 (2023): 100–113. <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijis.v1i3.591>
- Zaid, Bouziane., Jana Fedtke, Don Donghee Shin, Abdelmalek El Kadoussi, and Mohammed Ibahrine. "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials: How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices." *Religions* 13, no. 4 (2022): 335. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13040335>
- Zaluchu, Sonny Eli. "Digital Religion, Modern Society and the Construction of Digital Theology." *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 41, no. 4 (2024): 285–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02653788231223929>