Digitization of Religious Tafsir: The Fading of Indonesian Ulama Authority in Post Truth Era

Digitalisasi Tafsir Agama: Pudarnya Otoritas Ulama Indonesia di Era Post Truth

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Abstract

In the current post-truth era, the traditional authority and credibility of Ulama, who have historically been regarded as the paramount source of religious knowledge, are increasingly compromised. This research investigates the diminishing role and efficacy of Indonesian Ulama in addressing religious and social challenges due to the pervasive influence of the Internet and social media, which provide rapid and seemingly authoritative solutions that overshadow traditional scholarly roles. The study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating observations, interviews, and comprehensive library research, incorporating both physical and digital sources. The findings elucidate three critical issues: first, the limited digital literacy among traditional Indonesian Ulama, which impedes their effective engagement with digital platforms; second, a notable gap in the public's comprehension of how to utilize digital media for religious discourse, despite an increasing interest in religious matters; and third, the superficial understanding and heightened biases among the public, stemming from the ease of accessing religious solutions via social media. This study makes a significant contribution to the discourse by underscoring the urgent necessity for Ulama to enhance their digital literacy, thereby reclaiming their authoritative role in the socio-religious landscape and ensuring that their insights remain relevant and accessible in the digital age.

Keywords: *digitization of religion, religious interpretation, deauthorization of Ulama, post truth, social media*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi Tafsir yang diproduksi oleh Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, dengan fokus khusus pada potensi politisasi Al-Qur'an, terutama dalam narasi hubungan antar-agama di Indonesia. Studi ini menekankan peran penting Tafsir dalam membentuk persepsi masyarakat tentang pluralisme agama di negara ini. Dalam konteks ini, muncul pertanyaan penting tentang sejauh mana interpretasi yang dihasilkan melalui mekanisme politik negara berkontribusi pada wacana tentang pluralisme agama. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan ini, pendekatan analisis wacana kritis oleh Norman Fairclough digunakan, yang mencakup tiga dimensi: analisis teks, praktik diskursif, dan praktik sosial. Analisis difokuskan pada Tafsir yang diproduksi pada tahun 1980 oleh Kementerian Agama Indonesia berjudul *"Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya."* Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa narasi tentang hubungan antar-agama di Indonesia dalam Tafsir resmi tidak semata-mata terkait dengan peran negara melalui Kementerian Agama Indonesia. Hal ini juga dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor seperti konteks sosial-agama dan peran Mufassir (mufasir). Situasi ini

tercermin melalui tiga pola afirmasi negara: Afirmatif-Akomodatif, Afirmatif-Permisif, dan Afirmatif-Disruptif. Kontribusi substansial dari penelitian ini terletak dalam meningkatkan pemahaman tentang hubungan yang rumit antara penafsiran Al-Qur'an, politik negara, dan pluralisme agama di Indonesia. Hal ini membuka jalur untuk refleksi lebih lanjut dan perdebatan dalam literatur ilmiah, khususnya mengenai dampak keterlibatan negara dalam proses interpretasi Al-Qur'an terhadap narasi hubungan antar-agama di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Digitalisasi agama, penafsiran keagamaan, deotorisasi Ulama, post truth, media sosial

Introduction

The ongoing digitization of religion or religious interpretation has resulted in the deauthorization of Ulama or Islamic scholars in the public sphere. The ready affordability and accessibility of the internet has facilitated the rapid dissemination of religious teachings and practices via social media [1], prompting individuals to embrace religious beliefs with greater alacrity [2]. Ulama who are accommodated in Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) represent the authority of truth in the field of religion [3]. The functions and roles of these strategic Ulama began to be deauthorized due to the non-implementation of their roles and functions in society [4]. Based on a survey conducted by the Alvara Research Center, the traditional Ulama such as charismatic clerics and senior kiai in "pondok pesantren" or Islamic boarding schools who have never appeared in the mass media or social media will continue to be abandoned, even though they possess depth of knowledge and religious authority [5]. This deauthorization signals a broader shift influenced by digital media, impacting traditional religious authority figures.

Traditional Ulama such as "kyai" or "ajengan" or "tengku" or "tuan guru", often found in traditional Islamic boarding schools and local communities, have long held significant religious authority [6]. These scholars or Ulama rely on deep religious knowledge and personal charisma, traditionally interacting directly with

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1   Tahmina Rashid, "Social Media, Religion and Religiosity in Pakistan in the Era of Disruption," *Hamdard Islamicus* 42, no. 1–2 (2019).

2   M Pabbajah and et al., "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Pemahaman Keagamaan Generasi Milenial," *Jurnal Studi Agama* 13, no. 2 (2021): 203–218.

3   Zainul Hakim, "Peran Fatwa MUI Sebagai Produk Hukum Islam Dalam Masyarakat," Al'Adalah 24, no. 2 (2021); Hanif Luthfi, Kajian Fatwa Mengenal Lebih Dekat Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) (Jakarta: Rumah Fiqih Publishing, 2019).

4   santrinews.com, "Otoritas Kiai Mulai Tergeser Para Pelaku Media Sosial," 2019.

5   Hasanuddin Ali, "Indonesia Muslim Report 2019," *Alvara: Beyond Insight*, https://alvara-strategic.com/indonesia-muslim-report-2019/.

6   Mastuhu, *Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren: Suatu Kajian Tentang Unsur Dan Nilai Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren* (Jakarta: INIS, 1994).

their communities to provide guidance and resolve socio-religious issues [7]. Traditional Ulama also can be identified from their total absent from political discourse because they commonly stay in villages or hinterland of rear area. However, the advent of digital media has led to a shift in how religious knowledge is disseminated and consumed [8]. Traditional Ulama often lack the digital literacy necessary to engage with modern media platforms, resulting in a loss of their influence as people turn to more accessible digital sources for religious information. This shift underscores the need to understand the implications of digital media on religious authority, which is the focus of this study.

So far, studies on the digitalization of religion tend to focus on three aspects. First, a study that looks at religious learning through online media is more effective and efficient [9]. Second, digital media is able to construct people's religious understanding[10] and can even change the culture of a society [11]. Third, the media as a representation of religion can be a commodification and politicization of religion [12]. However, these studies have not extensively examined the deauthorization of Ulama as a result of the intensity of religious digitalization. Addressing this gap is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between digital media and religious authority.

This study aims to address the gap in research by exploring the relationship between the digitization of religion and the deauthorization of scholars. The following research questions guide this study: 1) What is the form of deauthorization of Ulama in the digital space? 2) What are the factors that underlie the deauthorization of Ulama in the digital space? 3) What are the implications of the deauthorization of Ulama in the midst of the continuation of religious activism? These questions help provide an overview of the deauthorization of Ulama in Indonesia in the digital space.

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7   Abdullah Saeed, "The Official Ulama and Religious Legitimacy of the Modern Nation State," in *Islam and Political Legitimacy* (Routledge, 2003), 14–28.

8   Kirk A Bingaman, "Religion in the Digital Age: An Irreversible Process," Religions 14, no. 1 (2023): 108.

9   M Pabbajah et al., "Internet of Religion: Islam and New Media Construction of Religious Movements in Indonesia" (2020); Hasse Jubba et al., "Dominasi Internet Di Ruang Publik: Studi Terhadap Penyebaran Wacana Gerakan Bela Islam 212 Di Indonesia," *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian* (2020): 1.

10   Rijal Ali and Subi Nur Isnaini, "Digitising Interpretation: Transforming Tafsir Al-Mishbah in the Context of the Living Quran," Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis 25, no. 1 (2024): 1–23.

11   Irwan Abdullah et al., "From Selfism to Indifferentism: Challenges Facing Indonesian Society and Culture, 2015-2045," *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 8, no. 3 (2019): 102–112.

12   E Kartinawati et al., "Culture and Religion as the Media Political Commodification," *European Journal of Molecular and Clinical Medicine* (2020); Mohsen Ghasemi, "Religion and Media," *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* (2015); Enqi Weng and Anna Halafoff, "Media Representations of Religion, Spirituality and Non-Religion in Australia," *Religions* (2020); Andrea Rota and Oliver Krüger, "The Dynamics of Religion, Media, and Community: An Introduction.," *ONLINE – Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* (2019).

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the shifting dynamics of religious authority in the digital age.

Three main arguments underpin this research. First, the digitization of religion in the public sphere has led to a decline in the role and function of Ulama as holders of religious truth authority. Ulama, who should be trusted figures in solving socio-religious problems in the community, are no longer seen as legitimate. Second, the lack of digital literacy knowledge among traditional scholars contributes to the fading of their authority amidst a society that is "literate" in digital media. Third, the rapid development of digital media in the post-truth era has made it difficult to distinguish between true truth and pseudo-truth, leading people to believe in the "truth of digital media" more than the "truth of charismatic scholars". These arguments form the foundation of the research, directing the inquiry towards understanding these complex interactions.

The role and function of religious leaders in disseminating knowledge, especially religious science, and addressing socio-religious problems experienced by the community, serves as the unit of analysis in this study. The majority of religious people, both from Muslim and non-Muslim communities in this post-truth era, rely more on social media and the internet to increase their knowledge in various fields and solve social problems, rather than directly interacting with religious figures (Davies, 2020). Social media and the internet, such as Google, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and similar platforms, are used easily and effectively to provide quick and efficient solutions to social problems [13]. This reliance on digital solutions over direct consultation with religious leaders demonstrates the deauthorization of Ulama in dealing with social problems in real life. Consequently, understanding this shift is vital for addressing the evolving needs of religious communities.

This research is designed with a qualitative paradigm in the form of field research. Data collection methods include observations, interviews, and online literature reviews. Observations are used to see how community groups interact with religious leaders in increasing religious knowledge and solving social problems in this post-truth era. Interviews are conducted with religious leaders from Islamic community organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, and Mathla'ul Anwar. Interviews were also conducted with students as a representation of a digitally literate society. Online literature reviews examine cases that have occurred in society related to the function and role of religious leaders and how these have been consumed by the public through internet media and social

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13   Mahfidhatul Khasanah, Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, and Thoriqotul Faizah, "Contemporary Fragments in Islamic Interpretation: An Analysis of Gus Baha's Tafsir Jalalayn Recitation on YouTube in the Pesantren Tradition," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 24, no. 1 (2023): 137–160.

media. These methods aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current dynamics and challenges faced by traditional Ulama.

Post Truth Era, Digitization of Religion and Deauthorization of Ulama

The first aspect to discuss in the literature review is the post-truth era. According to the Oxford Dictionaries [14], "post-truth" refers to situations where public opinion is more influenced by personal emotions and beliefs than by objective facts [15]. Steve Tesich popularized the term [16], expressing concern about the growing trend of manipulating public opinion by disregarding objective facts and data [17]. The prefix 'post' in post-truth does not chronologically indicate something occurring 'after' the truth but signifies a state where truth is no longer paramount and has been supplanted by a new reality [18]. In line whith this opinion, Salgado argues that the post-truth situation transforms fabrications into perceived truths and exaggerates elements of reality to create confusion[19]. The post-truth era can be seen with the fading of the boundaries of right and wrong, the fusion of authenticity and falsehood, full of trickery, the increasingly convergence of honesty and lies[20]. This blurring of lines has far-reaching implications for many sectors, including religious authority in Indonesia.

Framing the post-truth phenomenon within a discourse that contrasts it with factual truth[21], highlights the transformation of social media into a platform perceived as a truth messenger, despite being frequently misused to disseminate fake news [22]. Technological advancements have facilitated the misuse of social media,

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14   Anonymous, "Shorter Oxford English Dictionay" (MobiSistems.Inc, 2018), http://www.mobisystems.com.

15   Robin Tolmach Lakoff, "The Hollow Man Donald Trump, Populism, and Post-Truth Politics," *Journal of Language and Politics* (2017).

16   Steve Tesich, "A Government of Lies," *The nation* 254, no. 1 (1992): 12–15.

17   K S Yogiswari and I Suadnyana, "HOAX DI ERA POST-TRUTH DAN PENTINGNYA LITERASI MEDIA," *Seminar Nasional Filsafat (SENAFI) I*, 2019.

18   Vittorio Bufacchi, "Truth, Lies and Tweets: A Consensus Theory of Post-Truth," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (2021).

19   Susana Salgado, "Online Media Impact on Politics. Views on Post-Truth Politics and Post-Postmodernism," *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics* (2018).

20   Endang Fatmawati, "Tantangan Literasi Informasi Bagi Generasi Muda Pada Era Post-Truth," *Jurnal Perpustakaan Pertanian* (2019).

21   Eko Wahyono, Rizka Amalia, and Ikma Citra Ranteallo, "Menelaah Lebih Dekat 'Post Factual/Post Truth Politics, Studi Kasus Brexit' (Analsis Resensi Media)," *Nyimak (Journal of Communication)* (2017).

22   Endang Fatmawati, "Tantangan Literasi Informasi Bagi Generasi Muda Pada Era Post-Truth," *Jurnal Perpustakaan Pertanian* (2019).

significantly contributing to the rise of post-truth culture [23]. This trend was evident in events such as the Brexit referendum in 2016 and the election of Donald Trump in 2016 [24] . Post-truth emerges from declining trust in scientific authority, [25] social and economic inequalities, and diminishing social capital [26]. In line with that, Simon notes that post-truth is fueled by hate speech, irrational societal beliefs, and the strategic manipulation of emotions to spread misinformation [27]. In the post-true era, people do not seek truth based on facts; Instead, they seek evidence, confirmation, and support for their beliefs [28]. These dynamics significantly impact how religious authority is perceived and exercised.

The impact of the post-truth era on the authority of traditional Ulama in Indonesia is profound and multifaceted. In a society where personal beliefs and emotions increasingly overshadow objective facts, the role of traditional religious authorities is being challenged. Research indicates that the proliferation of misinformation and the rise of social media as a primary source of information have eroded traditional channels through which Ulama disseminate religious knowledge [29]. Indonesian Muslims are increasingly turning to social media influencers and online preachers[30], whose messages often align with popular sentiments rather than established religious doctrines [31]. This shift undermines the credibility and authority

23   K S Yogiswari and I Suadnyana, "HOAX DI ERA POST-TRUTH DAN PENTINGNYA LITERASI MEDIA," *Seminar Nasional Filsafat (SENAFI) I*, 2019.

24   Lakoff, "The Hollow Man Donald Trump, Populism, and Post-Truth Politics"; Frank Fischer, "Knowledge Politics and Post-Truth in Climate Denial: On the Social Construction of Alternative Facts," *Critical policy studies* 13, no. 2 (2019): 133–152.

25   Frank Fischer, "Knowledge Politics and Post-Truth in Climate Denial: On the Social Construction of Alternative Facts," *Critical Policy Studies* (2019).

26   Stephan Lewandowsky, Ullrich K.H. Ecker, and John Cook, "Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the 'Post-Truth' Era," *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* (2017).

27   John Christianto Simon, "Pendidikan Kristiani Di Era Post-Truth: Sebuah Perenungan Hermeneutis Paul Ricoeur," *DUNAMIS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani* (2020).

28   Ibid.

29   Piyush Vyas, Gitika Vyas, and Jun Liu, "Proliferation of Health Misinformation on Social Media Platforms: A Systematic Literature Review," *Issues In Information Systems* 22, no. 3 (2021): 73–85, http://dx.doi.org/10.48009/3_iis_2021_81-95; Raphael Noah Sule, "Ethno-Religious Conflicts, Mass Media and National Development: The Northern Nigeria Experience" (University of Jos, 2015).

30   Eva F Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Daʿwa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia," *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, no. 1–2 (2018): 68–99; Martin Slama, "Imagining Indonesian Islam as a Center: New Mediations and Old Concepts of Power," *Archiv Orientální* (2020): 273–300; Hamzah Fansuri, "Transforming Faith: Mualaf and Hijrah in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Entangled Religions* 15, no. 2 (2024).

31   Brian G Smith et al., "Social Media Conversion: Lessons from Faith-Based Social Media Influencers for Public Relations," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 33, no. 4 (2021): 231–249; Ashley Marie Hass, "Social Media Influencers: An Exploration of Aesthetic Connections and Digital Wellness," 2022; Tahmina Rashid, "Social Media, Religion and Religiosity in Pakistan in the Era of Disruption," *Hamdard Islamicus* 42, no. 1–2 (2019).

of traditional Ulama, who are seen as out of touch with contemporary issues and the digital age. The digital landscape continues to evolve, further fragmenting religious authority.

The post-truth environment exacerbates the fragmentation of religious authority. The ease of accessing diverse and often contradictory religious interpretations online leads to a situation where individuals can selectively adhere to religious opinions that resonate with their personal beliefs. This phenomenon diminishes the unifying role of traditional Ulama, who historically have provided cohesive and authoritative interpretations of Islamic teachings. The consequence is a more pluralistic but also more fragmented religious landscape in Indonesia, where the authority of the Ulama is increasingly decentralized. This fragmentation is further amplified by the digitalization of religious practices.

The second point to be discussed as literature review is digitization of religion. Examining the digitization of religion reveals profound influences on various aspects of human life [32], including religious practices [33]. Traditionally[34], religion as path of life is viewed as a personal domain that should not be publicly exposed. Traditional religious people will never show their worship or religious activity as public consumptions. Digital technology now allows individuals to access religious information and perform rituals through their smartphones, eliminating the need to visit places of worship or consult extensive scriptures and long sermons [35]. Technological advancements have made religion accessible through digital interactions, such as online religious platforms [36]. This accessibility changes the dynamics of religious engagement and authority.

New internet-based media, including social networks, have significantly shaped community religious practices. Religious activities can now be conducted via various internet-based applications, allowing access to virtual churches and

32   Eka Cahya Maulidiyah, "Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Agama Dalam Pendidikan Anak Di Era Digital," *Martabat* 2, no. 1 (2018): 71–90.

33   I Made Budiasa, "Metode Etnografi Virtual Dalam Analisis Cyber-Religion Di Era Digitalisasi," in *Prosiding Seminar Nasional: Ilmu Komunikasi Di Era Melenial Komunikasi Digitalisasi Dan Transformasi Reset Komunikasi*, 2018.

34   The concept of "traditional" can be defined as traditional based on a way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by the people in a particular group, family, society, etc., for a long time. Look Thomas Spencer Baynes, Day Otis Kellogg, and William Robertson Smith, *The Encyclopædia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and General Literature: New Maps and Many Original American Articles by Eminent Authors. With New American Supplement*, vol. 23 (Werner Company, 1898).

35   Mite Setiansah, "SMARTPHONISASI AGAMA: TRANSFORMASI PERILAKU BERAGAMA PEREMPUAN URBAN DI ERA DIGITAL," *Jurnal Komunikasi* (2015).

36   Mustaqim Pabbajah et al., "From the Scriptural to the Virtual: Indonesian Engineering Students Responses to the Digitalization of Islamic Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion* (2021).

digital Qur'an readers [37]. Da'wah (Islamic preaching) can be conducted through digital media, particularly social media, rather than traditional means [38]. The "Muslim Pro" Quran [39]app, for example, enables users to access the Qur'an conveniently on their smartphones. Integration of religious content with other profane features of smartphones can diminish the sanctity of religious texts [40]. The pervasive use of smartphones has fostered a culture where individual religious behaviors are displayed publicly rather than remaining private spiritual affairs between individuals and God [41]. Although there are some communal religious ceremonies conducted publicly, like Friday prayer, feast of day prayer of Id al-Fiṭr and Id al-Adha, or "Selametan". In the digital era, all things that are private are no longer taboo to be disclosed to the public, which means that everyone can consume and enjoy the dynamics of individual life [42]. This shift towards digital religious practices contributes to the deauthorization of traditional religious figures.

The third point to be discussed as literature review is deauthorization of Ulama. The deauthorization of Ulama (Islamic scholars) is another critical aspect. Authority encompasses influence, control, and command, leading to voluntary compliance [43]. Religious contexts signify a hierarchical relationship where religious leaders guide the moral order of society [44]. In Islam, Ulama hold significant religious authority due to their role as intermediaries between doctrine and practice, between God and the ummah (Muslim community), and between global Islamic civilization and local traditions [45]. As providers of fatwas (Islamic legal opinions), Ulama consider the context and societal impact of their rulings, thereby holding substantial influence [46].

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37   Heidi Campbell and Louise Connelly, "Religion and New Media," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Elsevier, 2015).

38   Faridhatun Nikmah, "Digitalisasi Dan Tantangan Dakwah Di Era Milenial," *Mu   arah : Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer* 1, no. 1 (2019): 44–52.

39   Marit Tolo Østebø and Terje Østebø, "Are Religious Leaders a Magic Bullet for Social/Societal Change? A Critical Look at Anti-FGM Interventions in Ethiopia," *Africa Today* 60, no. 3 (2014): 83–101.

40   Adinda Putri Sukma, Wahyu Budi Nugroho, and Nazrina Zuryani, "Digitalisasi Al-Quran: Meninjau Batasan Antara Yang Sakral Dan Yang Profan Pada Aplikasi 'Muslim Pro,'" *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi* (2019).

41   Mite Setiansah, "SMARTPHONISASI AGAMA: TRANSFORMASI PERILAKU BERAGAMA PEREMPUAN URBAN DI ERA DIGITAL," *Jurnal Komunikasi* (2015).

42   Wahyu Budiantoro, "Dakwah Di Era Digital," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* (2018).

43   Ahmatnijar Ahmatnijar, "ULAMA BERBAGI OTORITAS: Fungsi Dan Peran MUI Kota Padanmgsidimpuan Dalam Meningkatkan Kesadaran Dan Budaya Hukum Masyarakat," *TAZKIR: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-ilmu Sosial dan Keislaman* (2016).

44   Ayman K. Agbaria, "Contact Religious Authority and the Creation of Hyper-Solidarity: Reflections on Israeli Politics and Islamic Political Thought," *Ethics and Education* 14, no. 2 (2019): 227–240.

45   Aflahal Misbah, "Fashion Dalam Konstruksi Otoritas Ulama: Pandangan Kiai Shalih Darat," *Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* (2018).

46   Shiozaki Yuki and Kushimoto Hiroko, "Reconfigurations of Islamic Authority in Malaysia," *Asian Journal*

In the traditional era, Ulama have an important role in society, as recognized by Black and Watson [47], which acknowledges that religious leaders offer the public a reference source to obtain certainty of religious law such as through fatwas or religious science interpreted directly from the main religious source. However, the modern era has seen a shift in this traditional authority structure.

Historically, Ulama have been seen not only as interpreters of religious texts but also as guardians ensuring adherence to religious laws. Ulama form an Islamic postulate in society with the religious authority they hold. They are seen not only as conveyors and interpreters of religious texts to the community, but also as guardians for the community to follow religious rules, including determining whether or not religious practices carried out by the Muslim community are in accordance with religious teachings[48]. However, the modern era which characterized by strong media influence, has led to the mediatization of religion [49]. Religious practices of communities are increasingly shaped by internet-based media, such as social networks, enabling religious activities through various digital applications, such as gaining access to virtual churches or obtaining divine verses through the Qur'an Reader application[50]. This shift has resulted in the deauthorization of Ulama as people no longer solely rely on them for religious knowledge. Advanced technology allows individuals to learn about religion independently at any time and in diverse ways, reducing the traditional authority of Ulama in religious education [51]. The sociopolitical landscape in Indonesia further complicates this deauthorization process.

The erosion of traditional Ulama authority in the post-truth era is also linked to the broader socio-political context in Indonesia. The politicization of religion and the use of religious narratives in political campaigns have further complicated the landscape. Politicians and interest groups often exploit religious sentiments to garner

of Social Science (2014).

47   Østebø and Østebø, "Are Religious Leaders a Magic Bullet for Social/Societal Change? A Critical Look at Anti-FGM Interventions in Ethiopia," *Africa Today* (2014).

48   Yusron Razak and Ilham Mundzir, "OTORITAS AGAMA ULAMA PEREMPUAN:RELEVANSI PEMIKIRAN NYAI MASRIYAH AMVA TERHADAP KESETARAAN JENDER DAN PLURALISME," *PALASTREN Jurnal Studi Gender* (2019).

49   D Morgan, "Mediating Religion: Studies in Media, Religion, and Culture," *Journal of Religion and Media* 5, no. 1 (2013): 45–62; S Hjarvard, "The Mediatisation of Religion: Theorising Religion, Media and Social Change," *Culture and Religion* 12, no. 2 (2011): 119–135; M Pabbajah and et al., "Digitalisasi Dan Mediatisasi Agama: Studi Kasus Di Kalangan Masyarakat Muslim," *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam* 8, no. 1 (2020): 78–92; Prima Ayu Rizqi Mahanani, "Mediatisasi Pada Aktivitas Dakwah Perempuan Salafi," *Mediatisasi Pada Aktivitas Dakwah Perempuan Salafi* (2016).

50   Heidi A. Campbell and Louise Connelly, *Religion and New Media*, *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences: Second Edition*, Second Edi., vol. 20 (Elsevier, 2015).

51   Abdul Basit, "Dakwah Cerdas Di Era Modern" 03, no. 01 (2013): 2088–6314.

support, bypassing the traditional religious authorities and directly influencing public opinion. This politicization of religion contributes to the diminishing role of Ulama as the primary interpreters of Islamic law and ethics. These dynamics challenge the traditional role of Ulama, necessitating a reevaluation of how religious authority is maintained and exercised in the digital age.

Deauthorization of Ulama in the Digital Space

The development of virtual space and digital media has changed the paradigm of people's behavior in various areas of life [52]. According to the Digital Literacy Status survey report in 2021 compiled by the Katadata Insight Center (KIC) with the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo), the majority of Indonesians prefer to search for information on social media rather than other media [53]. KIC's survey of 10 thousand respondents aged 13-70 years old randomly selected throughout Indonesia showed that 73% of respondents searched for the most information on social media. The most accessed social media are WhatsApp (95.9%), Facebook (80.4%), YouTube (72.2%), Instagram (46.4%), Tiktok (29.8%), Telegram (15.9%), Twitter (8.9%) and Line (4.5%). The presence of digital space has made scholars who scientifically have the authority of religious truth no longer be a reference for the public in studying the religious field [54]. Currently, people prefer digital media to get religious information compared to conventional learning from Ulama and/or ustadz [55]. Therefore, the current Ulama is no longer a representative figure to answer the socio-religious problems of the community that demand quick

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52   Anang Sugeng Cahyono, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat Di Indonesia," *Publiciana* 9, no. 1 (2016): 140–157; Sohana Abdul Hamid, "Pengaruh Media Massa Terhadap Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat (Mass Media Effect on Changes in Social Community)," *Special Issue* 1 (2016); Ahmad Rafiq, "Dampak Media Sosial Terhadap Perubahan Sosial Suatu Masyarakat," *Global Komunika: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 3, no. 1 (2020): 18–29.

53   Imas Damayanti and Muhammad Hafil, "50 Persen Lebih Orang Search Keagamaan Melalui Internet, Apa Yang Ditanya? ," *Republika.Co.Id.*

54   Tinumeren Ozukum, "The Impact of Social Media on Religious Tolerance in India: A Case Study on the Digital Discourse in Religious Conflicts" (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU), 2021); Arnis Rachmadhani, "Otoritas Keagamaan Di Era Media Baru," *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat* 5, no. 2 (2021): 150–169, http://dx.doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.v5i2.2636; Wiwik Setiyani Setiyani and Citra Orwela, "Otoritas Keagamaan Kiai Kampung Dan Peran Media Sosial Di Jawa Timur: Kasus Ngawi, Magetan, Dan Madiun," *Kontekstualita* 37, no. 1 (2023): 1–16, http://dx.doi.org/10.30631/37.1.1-16; Azyumardi Azra, "The Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaah in Southeast Asia: The Literature of Malay-Indonesian 'Ulama' and Reforms," *Heritage of Nusantara: The International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 2, no. 1 (2013): 1–21.

55   Haekal Fajri Amrullah, Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali, and Mohd Fauzi Sukimi, "Information-Seeking Behavior of College Students on Religious Tolerance through Social Media," *Islamiyyat* 41, no. 2 (2019): 9–15; Hiru Muhammad and Didi Purwadi, "Internet Lebih Disukai Sebagai Sarana Belajar Islam," *REPUBLIKA. CO.ID*, https://khazanah.republika.co.id/berita/pvgjz9257/internet-lebih-disukai-sebagai-sarana-belajar-islam; Julia Müller and Thomas N Friemel, "Dynamics of Digital Media Use in Religious Communities—A Theoretical Model," *Religions* 15, no. 7 (2024): 762.

and practical solutions. The manifestation of the deauthorization of Ulama in the digital space can be seen in three forms:

First, Muslim society today uses Islamic websites or portals more as a means to obtain information on religious issues [56]. When people need religious information, either in the context of finding answers to people's problems or adding insight into knowledge in the religious field, they use more virtual and/or digital media facilities than asking directly to a Ulama or ustadz who has a deep understanding in the religious field. Based on a survey conducted by the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta, more than 58% of respondents use internet media as a reference source to learn about Islam [57]. There are more than 5 trusted sites that are often used by the public as a medium for learning Islam [58].

Furthermore, interviews were conducted with students, reflecting the perspective of an educated and technologically adept society. A student in State Islam Institute of Pontianak named Siti Amanah, for example, said that it was easier for her to get information about the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith through the internet compared to asking the ustaz which is a representation from scholars. Just by typing or recording his voice in google.com browser, any information he wants can be obtained effectively and efficiently. What's more, with the development of artificial intelligence technology, Siti Amanah can not only get information about legal postulates about something, but also can "communicate" with ChatGPT such as asking questions and answers with a resource person.

Second, audio-visual media is also the most effective means for the community to learn Islam. The rise of Islamic studies channels and podcasts through audio-visual media, such as YouTube [59], Spotify[60], and the like make it easier for people to learn Islam than having to come directly to charismatic scholars. This media is not only better able to answer people's religious problems but also faster, easier and more efficient. Based on a survey conducted by Jayani, it was found that 88% of people

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56 I Damayanti and S Hafil, "Literasi Digital Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2023): 203–216.

57 Reactor.co.id, "Mayoritas Anak Muda Belajar Islam Melalui Internet," last modified 2019, https://reaktor.co.id/mayoritas-anak-muda-belajar-islam-melalui-internet/.

58 "7 Situs (Website) Terpercaya Untuk Belajar Agama Islam Lebih Dalam," *Indozone.Id*, last modified 2020, https://www.indozone.id/tech/ersqEm/7-situs-website-terpercaya-untuk-belajar-agama-islam-lebih-dalam/read-all.

59 hopes.id, "Belajar Agama Dari Internet Dan Youtube Tabrak Hukum Islam? Ini Kata Ustaz Nasih," last modified 2020, https://www.hops.id/fit/pr-2942092457/belajar-agama-dari-internet-dan-youtube-tabrak-hukum-islam-ini-kata-ustaz-nasih.

60 Asep Shodiqin Mutmainnah, Chatib Saefullah, "Religiusitas Media Dakwah Podcast Islam Spotify," *Tabligh: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 6, no. 2 (2021).

in Indonesia most often access Youtube media [61]. Apart from whether or not it is permissible to learn Islam through audio-visual media, it is clear that people get the information they need faster related to Islam. In fact, based on a survey conducted by the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta (UMJ), it shows that as many as 31.94% of respondents use YouTube, 17.02% access Muslim pages, 10.21% access Muslim era, 6.81% access NU pages and the rest are diverse [62].
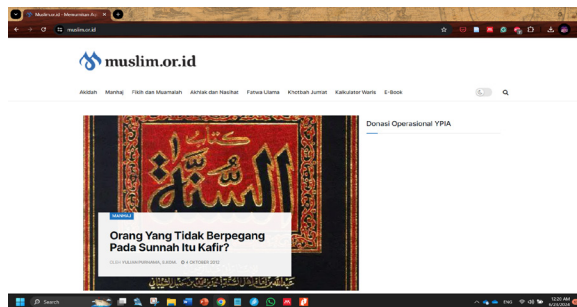
Gambar: Dashboard Muslim.or.id
Sumber: https://muslim.or.id/

The dashboard Muslim.or.id managed by the young muslim community in Yayasan Pendidikan Islam al-Atsari (YPIA) in Yogyakarta. YPIA has many media partners such as Muslimah.or.id, Radio Muslim, FKIM Buletin At Tauhid, MUBK, Mahad Ilmi, FKKA Tahfidz Campus, Wisma Muslim, SDIT Yaa Bunayya Wisma Muslimah, and Rumah Tahfidz Ashabul Kahfi.

Third, in addition to the two media mentioned above, people also use social media more as a means to learn Islam. The number of Indonesian people who have smartphones makes it easier for them to learn various scientific fields, especially in the field of Islam through their gaway. Based on a survey conducted by Kominfo in 2017, it shows that more than 65% (half) of Indonesian people from elementary school (SD) to doctoral (S3) levels have never been separated from gaway and/or smartphones Third, in addition to the two media mentioned above, people also use social media more as a means to learn Islam. The number of Indonesian people who have smartphones makes it easier for them to learn various scientific fields, especially in the field of Islam through their gaway. Based on a survey conducted by Kominfo in 2017, it shows that more than 65% (half) of Indonesian people from elementary school (SD) to doctoral (S3) levels have never been separated from gaway and/or smartphones[63]. They use it every day to access social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Whatsup, and so on. The survey shows that the social

media that is often accessed by people other than youtube (88%) are whatsup (84%), facebook (82%), Instagram (79%), twitter (56%), line (50%), FB Mesenger (50%), linkedin (35%), pinterst (34), wechat (32%) [64].

The Popularity of Digital Ulama Outperformance the Traditional Ones

Islam puts the Ulama in a very central position in the issue of religious regulation of society [65], and also as a pillar of the foundation of civilization [66]. As the heirs of the prophets, Ulama are always used by the community as a reference in solving social problems, not only related to problems in the religious field, but also in the economic, social, and even political fields. In some places, if there are community members who have problems in the religious field, they will go to Ulama who have competence in their fields [67]. In fact, Muslims in America when facing problems in the religious field, they also need the presence of Ulama [68]. This data shows that Ulama are still needed in the context of answering community problems even though the quantity is not much.

The existence of this very strategic Ulama seems to be currently beginning to be forgotten and abandoned by the community. Public trust in Ulama began to fade and was no longer reliable to answer community problems quickly and efficiently. Traditional Ulama are typically regarded as charismatic figures, esteemed by the general citizenry for their personal qualities and leadership within the Muslim community. However, this charismatic traditional authority has been increasingly supplanted by the ascendancy of digital Ulama, whose influence is largely contingent upon the number of social media followers they command. Makruf Amin emphasized that various fatwa products of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) regarding religious issues are no longer followed and obeyed, and even ignored. Some MUI fatwa products have actually triggered religious community groups to take actions to divide the Indonesian nation.

The misrepresentation of scholars is increasingly visible when the digital world

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64 Jayani, "10 Media Sosial Yang Paling Sering Digunakan Di Indonesia."

65 Risa Herdahita Putri, "Peran Ulama Dalam Kerajaan Islam Di Nusantara" (2018).

66 Agung Sasongko, "Peran Ulama Dalam Peradaban Islam," last modified 2010, https://www.republika.co.id/berita/121644/peran-ulama-dalam-peradaban-islam.

67 Dea Alvi Soraya and M Hafil, "Riset: 58 Persen Milenial Belajar Agama Di Medsos," *Republika Online* 13 (2020).

68 Kiki Sakinah, "Umat Islam Di Amerika Butuh Kehadiran Ulama," last modified 2019, https://www.republika.co.id/berita/q0sx8z313/umat-islam-di-amerika-butuh-kehadiran-ulama.

is experiencing very rapid development and is difficult to contain [69]. The presence of virtual and digital spaces has resulted in the authority of the truth of the Ulama being increasingly abandoned by the community. People prefer social media to get answers to their religious problems. People prefer to learn through ustdaz google rather than asking directly to Ulama and/or ustadz who cannot answer their problems quickly. More than 58% of millennial children who do not have the opportunity to learn religion in Islamic boarding schools use social media more to learn the field of religion [70]. The five most influential scholars according to the LSI survey are under 60 years old and none are from NU or Muhammadiyah. The results of the survey placed five names in the top order, namely Abdul Somad, Arifin Ilham, Yusuf Mansur, Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym), and Rizieq Shihab [71].

The Fading Factors of Indonesian Ulama Authority

The existence of Ulama as the holder of religious truth authority in the mulism society is currently being questioned for its existence. The role of Ulama which is scientifically clear and dominates various fields of religious disciplines has undergone a shift due to the rapid development of media technology . Muslim people who initially learned Islam from Ulama, ustadz, and teachers face-to-face, both in Islamic boarding schools and madrasas, now they learn more about Islam through digital media or social media [72]. This has resulted in a shift in the role of Ulama along with the process of digitizing religion. The research that analyzes the deauthorization of Ulama as a result of the digitization of religion in the post-truth era finds three important things.

First, digital media has changed the paradigm of people's thinking towards the role and function of Ulama. In the trajectory of history, Ulama is the only figure who occupies an important position, not only are they a problem solving for the problems of the ummah, they are also highly respected, and used as a role model for people's lives. Religious texts also affirm that Ulama is the heir of the Prophets (QS. Fatir/35:32), so hurting Ulama is hurting the Prophet. In fact, the flesh of the Ulama is poisonous.

However, currently the role and function of Ulama in the eyes of the public

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69 Lukman Afandi, "Scientific Quranic Exegesis via Internet: A Comparative Analysis of Abdul Daem Al-Kaheel and Zaghloul El-Naggar Approaches in Their Websites" (University of Malaya (Malaysia), 2020).

70 Soraya, "Riset: 58 Persen Milenial Belajar Agama Di Medsos"; pendis.kemenag.go.id, "Ustaz Google Dalam Genggaman Anak-Anak Kita: Media Baru Pendidikan Agama Islam?," last modified 2018, http://www.pendis.kemenag.go.id/read/ustaz-google-dalam-genggaman-anak-anak-kita-media-baru-pendidikan-agama-islam.

71 Irfan Teguh, "NU Dan Muhammadiyah Yang Terpuruk Dalam Popularitas Dakwah," *Tirto.Id*.

72 Göran Larsson, *Muslims and the New Media: Historical and Contemporary Debates* (Routledge, 2016).

has shifted due to the development of digital technology. Some MUI fatwa products related to religious issues, for example, are no longer heeded and even ignored. Studying religion which originally had to be directly to religious authority holders, now people prefer to learn through online media and/or the internet. Apparently, people no longer think about whether or not it is permissible to learn religion through "shaykh google"[73]. Currently, many people prefer and use internet or digital media to add insight into various scientific disciplines, including in the religious field.

Second, religious problems can be answered more easily and quickly through digital media. Ulama is actually the most authoritative figure to answer the religious problems of the community. Religious problems faced by the community must be solved through Ulama that scientifically has comprehensive knowledge. However, many religious problems faced by the community do not get quick and easy solutions from the Ulamas. Thus, the community eventually shifted from the Ulama of being slow to respond to people's problems to internet media that is easier, faster, and more efficient [74].

For some Muslims living in cities, all they need is to attend ordinary recitations that are easy to understand and digest. This is a little different from Muhammadiyah and NU which in their studies tend to offer more complex materials including inviting the congregation to think critically and reflectively. They regularly attend communal studies with themes related to Islamic sharia being the subject of discussion. Most of the preachers involved in this ritual are not affiliated with Muhammadiyah or NU but they have millions of followers on social media platforms, especially YouTube and Instagram. Preacher Oki Setiana Dewi, convert preacher Felix Siauw, and slang preacher Hanan Attaki are some examples.

Third, the lack of digital literacy of charismatic traditional Ulamas. Ulama which scientifically has a comprehensive understanding of religion, if it is not accompanied by digital literacy, it will slowly be abandoned by the internet community. If traditional Ulamas refuse to use social media in Islamic research, they will be eroded by the progress of the times. They will experience the loss of authority, which used to be a reference for the community to learn religion. However, with the ease and sophistication of modern technology, their authority will turn to the internet of things. The Ulama who remain in existence today are those who utilise digital media as a conduit for their preaching. This category of Ulama is subsequently designated as the 'ustaz selebitis' or 'celebrity ustadz', who continue to serve as a point of reference

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73   "Google.Com," https://www.google.com/.

74   M. Arskal Salim et al., *Outlook Kementrian Agama 2024: Makin Digital Kian Menjangkau Umat*, ed. Abdul Jamil Wahab et al. (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kemenag RI, 2024).

for the community. Frequently referenced names include ustadz Abdul Somad. (53,14 %), Hanan Attaki (6,28 %), Adi Hidayat (4,97 %), M. Ainun Najib (4,45 %), Abdullah Gymnastiar alias Aa Gym (3,93 %), dan sisanya beragam (27,23 %).

The results of this study show that the deauthorization of Ulama is more due to the rapid flow of religious digitalization. The development of the internet world, which is marked by the birth of various types of social media, requires the public to always follow these developments. Delays in responding to the development of digital media will have an impact on people's life activities, including in the context of da'wah. The importance of using social media in preaching was stated by religious authorities, such as the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and religious organizations, both Nahdhotul Ulama and Muhammadiyah who emphasized the importance of Ulama to use social media as a means of influencing society [75]. In this context, there is PT Digital Agama Indonesia (DAI) which is a digital platform provider to integrate religious services in Indonesia based on digitalization and identity verification [76].

Digitization of Religion: Its Implications for the Role and Function of Ulama as Reference and Authority Holder of Religious Truth

The ease of accessing online media, both through the internet and social media, makes it easier for people to get information and knowledge. Armed with smartphones, people can obtain various fields of scientific disciplines, both general science and religious science. When people need solutions to the various problems they face, they can immediately get answers easily and quickly. Religious problems can also be solved instantly. The birth of social media has also made people's behavior patterns shift both social, cultural, and religious [77]. The impact of religious digitalization has implications for several aspects of religion.

First, Ulama is no longer the main source of reference in religious understanding. The presence of Ulama that is not able to answer the problems of the people directly causes people to find their own solutions. People who are religiously weak and shallow really need the presence of Ulama in their midst as a center for problem solving for the problems of the people. This strategic position of Ulama seems to be not well utilized [78]. Based on a survey conducted by the Publication of the Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) UIN Jakarta shows that more than 50% of students

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75   Wachidah Handasah, "Gencarkan Dakwah Melalui Media Sosial," *REPUBLIKA.CO.ID*, https://republika. co.id/berita/nforg59/gencarkan-dakwah-melalui-media-sosial.

76   PT DAI, "PT Digital Agama Indonesia (DAI)," *Digital Agama Indonesia (DAI)*.

77   Cahyono, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat Di Indonesia."

78   "Republika.Co.Id," https://www.republika.co.id/.

seek religious knowledge through the Internet and/or social media [79]. In fact, based on APJII surveys, the penetration of Indonesia internet user in 2024 up to 79,5% [80]. A survey conducted by Convey PPIM (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat) UIN Jakarta, more than 54.37% of college and university student use the internet as a reference source to learn about Islam and 80% of them tend to radicalism [81]. Thus, the Ulama that literacy does not follow the trend of digital media development will gradually be abandoned by the people.

Second, religious activity is increasing but not accompanied by a good understanding. Internet media and/or digital media in addition to having a negative impact also has a positive impact. The rapid development of internet technology has a great influence on various aspects of human life, especially during the ongoing Covid 19-Pandemic and its subsequent transition to the "New Normal" of 2023 and beyond. Currently, community activities are mostly carried out through virtual media, including religious studies. Muhammad Zainut Tauhid Sa'adi, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, highlighted the growing enthusiasm among religious individuals to engage in religious studies. However, the Deputy Minister urged that this enthusiasm should not be solely based on online and social media learning, which presents challenges in evaluating the efficacy of learning methods, the scientific foundation, and the competence of religious instructors [82]. Learning religion through internet media or social media has weaknesses, in addition to unclear scientific sanad, religious exclusivism, intolerance, and failure to understand religion. The failure of religious understanding is seen in certain concepts in Islam, such as jihad, for example, which results in acts of radicalism [83].

Third, people's understanding of religion is partial and not comprehensive. Learning Islam must be done gradually and continuously through Ulamas, kiyai, or ustadz who are scientifically clear in their sanad [84]. Learning this model will make

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79 "PPIM UIN Jakarta," https://ppim.uinjkt.ac.id/; "Kementrian Agama RI," https://kemenag.go.id/; "Dirjen Pendidikan Islam," https://pendis.kemenag.go.id/; "Convey Indonesia," https://conveyindonesia.com/ppim-uin-jakarta-survey-there-are-80-of-students-exposed-to-radicalism/.

80 APJI, "Survei Internet Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (APJI) 2024," *Survei APJI: Profesional, Independen, Transparan*, last modified 2024, https://survei.apjii.or.id/home.

81 Tim Convey PPIM UIN Jakarta, *Gen Z: Kegalauan Identitas Keagamaan* (Jakarta: PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2018); "Convey Indonesia," https://conveyindonesia.com/ppim-uin-jakarta-survey-there-are-80-of-students-exposed-to-radicalism/.

82 Mohammad Khoeron, "Wamenag: Pesantren Jawaban Meningkatnya Ghirah Belajar Agama Umat," *Kemenag.Go.Id*, last modified 2021, https://kemenag.go.id/daerah/wamenag-pesantren-jawaban-meningkatnya-ghirah-belajar-agama-umat-sxsn3d.

83 Jamileh Kadivar, "Propaganda and Radicalization: The Case of Daesh in Iran," *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 9, no. 1 (2022): 70–98.

84 "Republika.Co.Id"; Muhammad Said, "Virtual Preaching Activism In Indonesia: Social Media, Politic of

the community's religious understanding better and more comprehensive. Studying religion without a teacher will have an impact on his imperfect understanding and misleading, because the teacher is Satan[85]. Learning Islam through digital media or social media will have an impact on: feeling '*alim*' or religious, not needing Ulama, difficulty distinguishing between right and wrong, partial understanding [86].

Conclusion

It turns out that the lack of functioning of Ulama and charismatic religious figures, besides being caused by their lack of digital literacy, is also caused by the rapid development of digital media which ultimately changes the paradigm of people's thinking towards the role and function of Ulama. Ulama as the holder of the authority of truth in the field of religion has now begun to be abandoned by many community groups due to the ease of finding access to science, both in the field of general science and religion and the ease of finding solutions to the problems of the people quickly and efficiently by just looking for them on the internet and social media. People, from children to adults, have massively used internet and social media, such as YouTube, websites, WhatsApp, Instagram, twitter, and others to get the information they need. Thus, the fading of Ulama authority and religious leaders in the public sphere is not caused by their lack of scientific experience, but rather because knowledge is currently very easy to obtain through virtual media.

This study has provided a new perspective that a religious figure and/or Ulama besides having to learn a lot in his scientific field that is his interest factually speaking, they must also be able to keep up with the development of technology that is currently developing rapidly. Ulama that only focuses on the traditional da'wah system and is reluctant to follow the current trend, in time will create an increasingly sharp gap between community groups and religious leaders and/or Ulama. If Ulama wants to exist and be recognized by society in this digital and post-truth era, like it or not, then they must follow the current developing trend by taking part in the development of technology itself. This paper again wants to emphasize that the deauthorization of Ulama is not only caused by the increasingly massive technological development that takes the form of religious digitization, but also due to the lack of traditional Ulama knowledge of digital literacy.

Future research could explore how traditional Ulama might integrate digital

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Piety, New Ulama, and Democracy," *Jurnal Penelitian* 17, no. 1 (2020): 1–14.

85   Admin, "Islami.Co," https://islami.co/.

86   Ali M Rahman, "Digital Rhetoric and Gatekeepers of Knowledge: Islamic Authority in America" (University of California, Santa Barbara, 2020).

tools without compromising the integrity of their religious scholarship. Additional studies could also investigate the long-term implications of digital religious consumption on the quality of religious understanding and practices. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to examine the role of social media in shaping not only religious authority but also religious identity, particularly among younger generations. Such research could offer valuable insights into the evolving relationship between religion and technology in a post-truth era.

Supplementary Materials

The data presented in this study are available in [insert article or supplementary material here] (Usually the datasets were analyzed from library research can be found in the whole data references).

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Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Moh. Nor Ichwan, Mustaqim Pabbajah and Faizal Amin. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Moh Nor Ichwan and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Conflicts of Interest

None of the authors of this study has a financial or personal relationship with other people that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the study.

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