

# Jurnal Indo-Islamika

Volume 13, No. 2, July-December 2023, (90-104)

Office : Graduate School Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta

Website OJS : [journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/indo-islamika](http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/indo-islamika)

E-mail: [indoislamika@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:indoislamika@uinjkt.ac.id)

P-ISSN: 2088-9445 | E-ISSN: 2723-1135

---

## ***New Media as an Ideological Transmission Opportunity for Religious Authorities in Indonesia***

**Abon Ronaldi <sup>1\*</sup>, Abdul Rahim Saidek <sup>2</sup>, Wiji Lestari <sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>An-Nadwah Islamic High School Kuala Tungkal, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Institute of Technology and Business Ahmad Dahlan Jakarta, Indonesia

### **ABSTRACT**

---

#### **Article:**

Accepted: October 12, 2023

Revised: July 23, 2023

Issued: December 29, 2023

© 2023 The Author(s).



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license

---

DOI: [10.15408/jii.v13i2.33440](https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v13i2.33440)

---

#### **\*Correspondence Address:**

[abonronaldi02261@gmail.com](mailto:abonronaldi02261@gmail.com)

This paper endeavors to explore the impact of New Media on the dynamics of religious authorities, with a particular focus on Indonesia. Seeking to challenge the prevailing assumption, this research adopts a qualitative method grounded in a comprehensive literature review. Drawing from diverse sources such as journal articles, proceedings, books, and online news, the study poses a pivotal question: how do religious authorities in Indonesia leverage New Media as a conduit for ideological transmission? In contrast to the commonly held belief, the proposed thesis of this article contends that New Media doesn't serve as a catalyst for the transformation of religious authorities in Indonesia. Instead, it functions as a valuable opportunity for the dissemination of religious information. Framed within the media technology perspective articulated by Gill Branston and Roy Stafford (2003), the findings of this research underscore the strategic design of platforms like the Nahdlatul Ulama Online website, the Indonesian Ulema Council Da'wah Application, and Muhammadiyah.or.id to illustrate that New Media serves as a potent tool for Indonesian Islamic authorities in fortifying the organizational identity.

**Keywords;** Religious Authority, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, New Media

## Introduction

Delving into discussions that revolve around the realm of technology unveils a captivating narrative due to the undeniable sophistication of technological advancements (Bakti, 2011, pp. 1–17). This rapid progress does not only serve as a catalyst for globalization but also introduces foreign cultural influences that sometimes diverge from the Indonesian cultural context, while vividly colours the mass media landscape (Zamroni, 2009). Simultaneously, this disruption sparks a compelling dialogue within the global community and prompt contemplation on the imperative nature of technological dominance. In essence, the pervasive nature of technological developments permeates every facet of contemporary human existence (Setiawan, 2018). Consequently, this phenomenon contributes to an information-rich society, often labeled as the "information society" (Purnomo, 2005, p. 2). These unfolding realities underscore the critical relevance of scrutinizing technological studies across all developmental dimensions, highlighting the ongoing necessity for comprehensive exploration.

The pervasive influence of technology on a global scale compels communities worldwide to adapt and integrate its advancements into their daily lives. In this contemporary era, choosing to forgo the utilization of evolving technologies risks societal stagnation, as those who embrace these innovations witness a broader and more sophisticated informational landscape. This technological progression has catalyzed profound transformations across various dimensions of life, while at the same time altered societal norms, cultures, and behaviors. Notably, it looms an anticipation that future technological capabilities, specifically high-tech intelligent machines, might eclipse traditional human labor. The prospect of automation which replaces human tasks arises from the forecasted resilience of advanced technology in high-temperature environments; an achievement that is unattainable by ordinary individuals on Earth (Branston & Stafford, 2003, pp. 433–435). In other words, this paradigm shift underscores the imperative of navigating the dynamic intersection between technology and human existence.

The impact of technological advancements extends across various facets of individual, social, political, economic, and cultural realms. This influence is particularly pronounced in the realm of media technology, commonly referred to as New Media that is characterized by its swift evolution. However, the scope of media technology's influence goes beyond conventional boundaries, permeating even toward religious contexts. Notably, developments in media technology have implications for religious aspects, including the issuance of new religious fatwas that address legal guidelines for the public. This is evident in issues such as online gambling, media ethics, and the ethical boundaries of expression. The dynamic interplay between technological progress and religious considerations necessitates a legal framework which delineates permissible actions and actions that ought to be prohibited (Patahilah, 2020). This intricate relationship underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted impact of media technology on diverse aspects of contemporary life.

The formidable influence of sophisticated media technology appears to be emerging as a potential challenger to traditional religious authorities in Indonesia. It presents a distinctive challenge for these authorities to actively contribute to technological development. The integration of modern technology fundamentally reshapes societal dynamics and creates new spaces for engagement within the context of social change (Pieterse, 1996). This transformation in religious authority is intricately tied to the evolving relationship between followers and religious figures, who traditionally served as role models in daily life. Historically, religious authority was vested in different parties such as scholars, murshids, religious teachers, and ustads (Burhanudin & Baedhowi, 1999) that are tightly regulated by the government through institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and faith-based non-governmental Islamic organizations. However, the contemporary landscape poses a new challenge for religious authorities in the form of smart technology. Above all, there is a discernible shift in how people seek religious guidance, especially with an increasing reliance on

platforms like Google for inquiries about religion (Zulkifli, 2013) This evolving phenomenon prompts religious authorities to navigate and adapt to the changing dynamics of information-seeking behavior in a technologically driven era.

Indeed, a natural trend has emerged where individuals increasingly turn to the internet, utilizing platforms like Google, to seek solutions for their religious queries. The internet, in its practicality, facilitates seamless access to a wealth of information with a simple gadget. It eliminates the need for physical attendance at local religious gatherings. This paradigm shift raises pertinent questions about the necessity of seeking guidance from religious leaders on answering challenges of one's day-to-day life and understanding the virtuous actions expected of Muslims. The convenience that is offered by the internet in addressing religious inquiries prompts reflection on whether this represents progress or, conversely, poses challenges and setbacks in the realm of religious engagement (Jinan, 2012).

The interplay between media and religion remains a subject of ongoing debate and contention (Bakti, 2011). This discourse is considered polemical, particularly when it is marked by a controversy surrounding the commodification of religion through its dominant portrayal in media platforms (L. R. Rustandi, 2020). The relationship between these two entities is likened to sharp blades, which possess the potential for both harm and benefit. Misguided adaptation may lead to negative consequences that can be symbolized by sin and condemnation. Conversely, when it is harnessed for virtuous purposes, the synergy can yield positive outcomes, akin to rewards and spiritual elevation. Essentially, the vast realm of media technology presents an opportunity not only for commodification but also for the dissemination of goodness, such as through preaching (Suri, 2019). This dichotomy underscores the critical need for thoughtful consideration and responsible utilization of media in the context of religious representation.

The literature provides compelling evidence suggesting that New Media exerts a predominantly negative influence on the religious authority sector in Indonesia. This adverse impact stems from the transformative nature of media technology, which reshapes the dynamics and influence of religious authorities. Notably, there is a discernible shift in people's behavior that is revealed by a growing tendency to seek solutions to religious queries through the internet. However, within this context, an alternative perspective emerges from this research. It posits that New Media presents an opportunity for ideological transmission directly from religious authorities themselves. Through strategic utilization of media platforms, these authorities can enhance their credibility and serve as authoritative sources for societal guidance and fatwas. In essence, while acknowledging the potential negative consequences, this study underscores the dual role of New Media as a challenge and an avenue for religious authorities to bolster their standing and impact in society.

## Method

This study adopts a qualitative research method that is grounded in extensive literature review. Conducted as a documentation study, the primary data source stems from the analysis of written documents that are relevant to the research, including online resources such as journal articles, news, proceedings, photographs, and images, ensuring a robust foundation for credible research. To dissect phenomena within the field, this research employs the analytical framework of media technology as delineated by Gill Branston and Roy Stafford in their work, "The Media Student's Book." The focal concepts drawn from this theory encompass "Technology: Focus of Conflict and Technological Changes" (Branston & Stafford, 2003, pp. 422–433). This theoretical perspective posits that the adaptation of media technology by a specific group is pivotal for enhancing the group's credibility, and concurrently, media technology can serve as a tool for resolving conflicts within society. The data analysis process adheres to the methodology proposed by Miles and Huberman, encompassing data reduction, data

display, and the derivation of conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1984). This comprehensive approach ensures a nuanced examination of the research subject.

## Results and Discussion

### New Media: A Transformation

The evolution of technology has traversed numerous phases and continues its progressive trajectory into the present day. In the contemporary digital landscape, the expression of creative works no longer necessitates the search for manual stationery. A historical review reveals that stationery has played a role for centuries, with its roots tracing back to the utilization of wood bars and graphite stones in early chemistry. Despite its simplicity, the enduring recognition of stationery attests to its lasting impact. This signifies that the convergence of rudimentary technology with cutting-edge advancements is a process that is laden with positive implications for the efficiency and innovation of creative endeavors (Heidegger, 1977, p. 116).

Examining the evolution of expression, one is reminded that in historical times, humans could only convey their culture, identity, or group affiliations through cave paintings. The poignant reality of those primitive expressions underscores the challenging environments that have been faced by early humans. The darkness of cave walls did not deter the primal human spirit's yearning for expression. This stands in stark contrast to the contemporary landscape, where individuals enjoy unparalleled freedom in expressing themselves through various media channels. As we navigate the 21st century, the global community finds itself compelled to adapt to the imperative of technological integration (Rahayu et al., 2015, pp. 43–44). This adaptation is emblematic of the consequences of advancements in communication science and technology that is epitomized by the phenomenon of globalization. Presently, industrialized nations are directing their focus towards the development of space transportation technology, media, weaponry, and land transportation—a testament to the ever-expanding horizons of human capability (Mustafa & Hamzah, 2011).

Media technology experienced significant growth predominantly during the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, when devices like CDs and DVDs captured public attention. The evolution of these devices unfolded in the 1980s, and by the late 1990s, CDs emerged as dominant players in the market. The noteworthy characteristics of this technology include its durability, substantial memory capacity, ability to store music for over an hour, and its compact and practical design (Hwu & Boisen, 2018). Despite these advantages, media producers faced a challenge as the relatively high prices of CDs posed a concern (Branston & Stafford, 2003, pp. 428–429). Bakti's analysis adds another layer to this discussion, emphasizing that communication technology involves diverse funding aspects critical for understanding intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, and environmental communication processes (Bakti, 2004, pp. 102–103). This multifaceted perspective enriches the comprehension of the intricate dynamics within the realm of communication technology.

Defining the concept of New Media presents a nuanced challenge, particularly in its relative novelty when juxtaposed with the more established term namely 'Old Media'. The breadth of this term lends itself to various interpretations, concepts, and functions, which makes it a focal point for diverse interests. New Media is conceptualized as an outcome of mass media-based communication technology interwoven with digital computers (Ahmadi, 2020). Its scope extends to encompass the emergence of digital technology, computers, and information and communication technology networks during the late 20th century. The majority of technologies categorized as "new media" are characterized by digitization, often featuring manipulable attributes. Some of the examples include the internet, websites, social media platforms, multimedia computers, computer games, CD-ROMs, and DVDs, reflecting a dynamic array of digitized communication technologies (Manovich, 2003, pp. 13–25).

In the current media landscape, sustaining relevance requires mass media outlets to not only broaden their reach but also enhance their adaptability. Expanding networks in this competitive environment is a formidable task, compelling each medium to vie for attention by crafting a more appealing identity. What once was a domain predominantly occupied by traditional mediums like Television (TV), Newspapers, Radio, Magazines, and Tabloids has undergone a profound transformation into the realm of new media. It is necessitated by the evolving times and technological advancements, particularly the internet (O'leary, 2004, pp. 37–58). This metamorphosis, however, doesn't diminish the appeal or demand for traditional media among the current generation, effectively integrating old and new media identities (Gultom, 2018). Consequently, the accessibility of TV shows today is simplified through the use of gadgets, showcasing the seamless integration of traditional and contemporary media (Meifitri & Susanto, 2020).

The designation of "new media" encapsulates distinctive characteristics that set it apart from the traditional forms that have long been in existence. As elucidated earlier, a dichotomy exists in understanding media phenomena, wherein established mediums such as television, radio, magazines, and print media fall under the category of old media. Conversely, media rooted in internet-based digitalization technology is classified as new media (New Media) (Barnett, 1997). More importantly, the introduction of this terminology does not signify the complete replacement of old media by new media. Rather, it acknowledges the coexistence of both. The term serves as a descriptor for the evolving traits observed in the development of media technology, emphasizing the distinctive features introduced by the advent of digitalization (Watie, 2016).

New Media embodies a multifaceted approach by integrating digitization, convergence, interactivity, and network development in the creation and delivery of messages. This aligns with Bakti's perspective which asserts that contemporary new media continues to shape the global community's perception through the lens of glass screens. Looking ahead, the public is increasingly entrusted with the responsibility of judiciously navigating the media landscape. The expanding media landscape brings forth distinctiveness and diverse impacts, necessitating individuals in this era to cultivate analytical and comprehensive abilities that are crucial in the midst of the current abundant information in technological society (Faisal Bakti, 2018). The pivotal concept of interactivity, as underscored by Sundar and Limperos (2013), empowers users of New Media and grants them the autonomy to select and control the information they consume, thereby constituting a fundamental aspect of comprehending the essence of New Media (Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

The emergence of highly sophisticated mass media in contemporary times has naturally drawn considerable research attention to delve into the effects of media (Qudsy, 2019). This heightened interest is inherent in the introduction of anything novel, as well as sparking inquiries into the ramifications that stem from its presence (Dawson & Cowan, 2004, p. 145). A notable trend in existing studies is the emphasis on the adverse effects of media existence, while exploring issues such as the impact of violent shows on children's psychology and the unfiltered influx of external cultures into the dominant culture of a nation (Mayeni et al., 2019). This reflective approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of both the positive and negative dimensions surrounding the influence of modern mass media.

### **Religious Authorities in Indonesia**

Fundamentally, drawing from Weber's perspective that authority-power serves as a platform for an individual or group to shape society in alignment with their own volition. On the other hand, Eucalgus applies this notion specifically to the act of resistance undertaken by particular individuals or groups (Weber, 1946, p. 180). Authority, as a concept, manifests across diverse domains encompassing military, economic, political, legal, traditional, ideological, and diversionary power contexts. Consequently, it's only logical that each interest, authorized by a specific institution, is

inherently imbued with a hierarchical and structural level of authority. This intentional structuring ensures that the institution's functionality can operate at its optimum capacity; a central premise to the organizational dynamics elucidated by Siregar (Siregar, 2014).

Authority holds a crucial role within the realm of religion, where the sacred nature of religious beliefs necessitates careful preservation of their original essence. This underscores the rationale that religion should be endowed with a form of authorization. In simpler terms, there is a need to manage and uphold religious authority to safeguard the integrity of the faith among its followers. Failure to do so might render religion vulnerable to manipulation or even gradual obsolescence in the face of evolving times. This underscores the significant importance of religious authority within the context of a particular faith. It is noteworthy that every religion, shaped by its unique context, establishes its own system of religious authority, operating on both individual and organizational scales (Rahmayani, 2018).

Authority within a religion manifests in various roles, in which it is dedicated to uphold religious principles as dictated by the respective faith. The terminology used for religious authorities in Indonesia varies across religions and individual practices. In Christianity, leaders are referred to as pastors, while in Catholicism, titles include Priests, Monks, Nuns, and Parish Priests. Hinduism recognizes Ekajati, Pinandita, Balian, Dwijati, Pedanda, and Rishis as religious figures. Buddhism acknowledges roles such as householder, Upasaka, Pandita, Bikku, and Sangha. In Confucianism, titles encompass Xue Shi (priest), Wen Shi (religious teacher), and Jiao Sheng (propagator of religion). Within Islam, religious authorities are known as Ulama (Jinan, 2013).

Early scholars such as Eickelman, Anderson, and Turner posited that the advent of new media would lead to the fragmentation of religious authority. Simultaneously, a novel form of religious authority that is grounded in smart technology would emerge. Essentially, this implies that the rise of new religious authorities would reshape the role traditionally held by established religious authorities as the custodians of Islamic discourse (Busro, 2022). In contrast, the scholarly viewpoint challenges the prevalent assumption of the era and asserts that the emergence of new religious authorities does not necessarily result in a shift in the role of traditional religious authorities. According to Eickelman and Anderson (2003), traditional religious authorities demonstrate adaptability to the evolving environment, retaining their capacity to navigate and respond effectively to emerging challenges (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003, pp. 1–18).

The predicament of religious authority poses a complex challenge for Muslims, both in its terminological definition and its practical manifestation in religious life experiences (Burhani, 2016). Addressing this complexity is particularly intricate in Indonesia, where determining the authorized entity to regulate and guide its followers becomes a formidable task. It has potentially made Indonesia as the most challenging Muslim country in this regard (Layman & Weaver, 2016). This challenge stems from Indonesia's distinctive context, setting it apart from other nations (Afalah et al., 2009). For instance, Western countries adhere to the principle of secularism, advocating for the separation of religion from governmental authority, while some Middle Eastern Islamic countries regard religion as the cornerstone of statehood. Indonesia, home to the largest Islamic majority, navigates a unique path. Despite the prevalence of Islam, it does not serve as the foundation for state law. Instead, the country upholds Pancasila and its existing laws. Amidst the complexities of a New Media-driven society, where social and intellectual landscapes are increasingly diverse, Islamic religious authority can be construed as the right to establish and enforce rules deemed in accordance with the will of Allah Swt (Gaborueau, 2010, pp. 1–4).

In the Islamic context, the practical role of religious authority involves the invitation and guidance of society to align their actions with normative guidelines, specifically ones that are derived from the Qur'an (Rumadi, 2012). Essentially, religious authority is conceived as a medium or crafted tool to transmit Islamic messages effectively for community understanding. This characteristic sets Islam apart from other religions, as it is frequently perceived as not merely a religion but also a state from its

inception. The intertwining of religious and governmental identities is deeply ingrained in the collective imagination and consciousness of Muslims, stemming from sacred texts, historical narratives, and shared experiences (Ahmatnizar, 2015).

On the other hand, the dimension of religious authority, particularly within the Islamic context, is inherently dynamic (Muzakka, 2018). In Islam, religious authority may be vested in an individual cleric or extend to clerics affiliated with associations, organizations, or institutions that hold governmental legitimacy (Ubaidillah, 2016). Traditionally, Islamic authority rested in the hands of clerics, murshids, and ustads (individuals endowed with legitimate authority to issue fatwas and provide interpretations for addressing the Ummah's issues). Fatwas, in turn, serve as the foundation for the religious conduct of Muslims. This is underscored by Azra's analysis which emphasizes the significant role of Islamic religious authorities, particularly in the historical context of Indonesia. The independence of the Indonesian state, as Azra noted, was shaped significantly by the involvement of scholars during that era (Burhanudin & Baedhowi, 1999, pp. 155–180).

In contrast to Sunni Islam in several Islamic nations like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia has no singular religious authority structure (Rahman, 2018). In this notion, religious authority in Indonesia is diverse and dispersed across various layers, encompassing religious institutions, state entities, and local figures within regions. Moreover, some Islamic institutions, such as Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, establish fatwa bodies to provide guidance on diverse religious matters to their adherents. Similarly, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issues a range of fatwas for Muslims through its regular Fatwa Commission (Triantoro, 2020).

### ***New Media for Religious Authorities: A Shift or an Opportunity?***

The fundamental tenet of secularization entails the separation of religion from the government sphere and positions it as a private matter for individual communities. In this context, the significance of religion may be diminished due to its ostensibly concealed nature. Conversely, for a nation that integrates religion within the government domain, the role of religion assumes paramount importance. However, religious authorities face challenges within this framework, particularly when conflicts arise between two authorities. A notable historical example of such a conflict occurred during the Mihnah affair, spanning the reign of al-Makmun (198-218 AH/813-833 CE) to the time of the Caliphate of Watsiq (842-847 AD). This period witnessed the dominance of the Mutazilite sect in the government. The hegemony triggered the issuance of the Mihnah decree (inquisition). The Mihnah was a policy implemented by Caliph al-Makmun, compelling the mandated acceptance that the Qur'an is a being. Intriguingly, this event transpired with the intervention of political forces at the time. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (164 AH/780 AD), a prominent scholar, became a victim of this occurrence. He endured some torture for rejecting the theology of the Muktazilah, which had become the doctrinal foundation of the caliph al-Makmun's statehood (Hitti, 1974, pp. 129–130).

Examining the Indonesian context, it's evident that the nation does not center its concept of statehood on the Islamic pillars. Despite boasting the world's largest Muslim majority population, Indonesia doesn't adopt a law-based state rooted in Islamic principles as its overarching ideology (Md, 2016). Embracing the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," the country finds its legal foundation in Pancasila and the standardized and indisputable laws of the Republic of Indonesia (Muslih, 2017). This distinctive approach sets Indonesia apart in constitutional discussions when juxtaposed with other nations (Budiyono, 2017).

The discussion of religious authorities in Indonesia reveals that the pervasive influence of media technology has become an increasing evident of interconnected challenges upon religious authorities matters, particularly in the context of global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic, also known as the Corona Virus (Surahman, 2013).

This health crisis has rippled through the international community, wreaking havoc on the global political economy with a significant plunge in economic performance. A climate of fear has permeated across the globe and marked by a surge in reported cases and fatalities.

The emergence of the Covid-19 outbreak presents a compelling phenomenon, significantly influencing life's dynamics, particularly within the context of Indonesia. However, as time progresses, there's a discernible adaptation to the outbreak's challenges, characterized by the community's concerted efforts to bolster immunity and adhere to health protocols (Yamali & Putri, 2020). Upon closer examination of the situation, the pandemic appears to propel the wings of digitalization, fostering a comprehensive impact across educational, economic, sociological, and religious dimensions. It is noteworthy that the repercussions of the outbreak extend beyond negativity, giving rise to developments. For instance, in the current educational landscape, there is a notable reliance on communication media as a solution to sustain the momentum of education during these challenging times (Sampurno et al., 2020).

Regardless of the aforementioned occurrences, numerous assumptions prevail suggesting that the aspects of religious authority have undergone transformations. A notable erosion of Indonesia's religious authority is attributed to the burgeoning competition with the ever-evolving media technology. The sophistication of media technology offers unparalleled ease and practicality of use. In a departure from traditional interactions with Ustaz and Ulama, individuals now find a new Murshid in the form of the internet which serves as an all-encompassing source of information, including solutions for religious practices. Remarkably, even though certain media technology products may originate from non-Muslim entities, technological advancements are adeptly harnessed by a handful of people within the Muslim community (Latif et al., 2020).

In the era of New Media, marked by the rapid development of information technology and the waning influence of traditional authority, religious authority has undergone a notable shift towards impersonal media channels such as online books, websites, blogs, and similar platforms. This transition introduces complexity to the landscape of media technology development. While traditional technologies, like printed books, were once considered conventional media, the evolution of the book industry into an online realm challenges this classification. Presently, individuals have the opportunity to learn about Islam through books accessible on the internet. In this regard, the credibility of the disseminated information necessitates further investigation, as this precaution is crucial to ensure the consumption of credible data (Heidegger, 1977, pp. 149–165).

From an alternative perspective, the current state of media technology development can be regarded as an opportunity to fortify the identity of religious authorities. Embracing the principle that technological advancements does not pose a threat but a prospect for *da'wah*. This approach ultimately enhances the identity of religious authorities in Indonesia. This marks a transformative shift from traditional authority to modern authority. Consequently, without adeptly navigating the progression of these media technologies, the existence of religious authorities can be left behind by the advancement of increasingly sophisticated technological platforms (Meidasari, 2014). In the present era, it is imperative for religious authorities to undergo transformation within the context of media development (Arrobi & Nadzifah, 2020).

In contemporary times, a noteworthy phenomenon unfolds among Muslim millennials, or alternatively termed young preachers, who exhibit a distinctive familiarity with Islam despite not being deeply rooted in *pesantren* or *madrassas*. Surprisingly, they possess substantial Islamic knowledge, and their audience, as followers, holds a significant sway. What sets them apart is their unconventional learning path that diverges from the direct mentorship of Ulama or Kyai. Essentially, this millennial generation delves into Islam through novel sources, departing from the traditional founts of knowledge accessed by their predecessors. This trend echoes the emergence of charismatic preachers on Indonesian television in the 2000s, including



figures such as Abdullah Gymstar (Aa Gym), Felix Siauw, Evie Effendi, and Handy Bonny, in which each of the figures infuses their unique style into preaching (Han, 2018, pp. 172–175). Intriguingly, these influential figures lack a comprehensive background in Islamic studies and gained prominence primarily through social media channels (Hew, 2018).

Over the past decade in Indonesia, intriguing manifestations have surfaced in relation to the prominence of Islamic religious authorities. A noteworthy phenomenon during this period is the Islamic Book Fair (IBF). Its execution garnered remarkable enthusiasm from the community, signaling a heightened appreciation among Muslims for books. Presently, the landscape boasts more than 500 publishers dedicated to Islamic literature. Even publishers primarily focused on school textbooks have transitioned into producing Islamic books, underscoring the positive impact of well-adapted media technology in generating valuable products for societal benefit (<https://jadwalevent.Web.Id/Islamic-Book-Fair-2020>, n.d.).

The impact of New Media is vividly seen in the proliferation of Islamic websites that have been managed both by religious institutions and individuals alike. These platforms are dedicated to conveying messages that emphasize the significance of incorporating Islamic values into daily life. To enhance user engagement, these websites often incorporate features such as dialogues, question and answer sections, and online chat facilities, facilitating easier interaction for the audience to seek clarifications. However, certain sections of these websites lack a structured feedback system and limit the interaction to one-way communication. This contemporary media phenomenon has propelled all segments of society to evolve beyond passive consumption. It has encouraged individuals to become active contributors or producers through avenues like citizen journalism, where they can create personal blogs and websites (Nugroho, 2018).

It is noteworthy to observe the contemporary preference for internet usage over traditional book reading. This inclination towards the internet is primarily fueled by its practicality and the flexibility it offers in accessing information. An illustrative example is the growing trend among students who opt to explore literature sources online, including accessing journal articles, proceedings, and digital books. Furthermore, educational institutions now mandate students to utilize online literature sources, particularly from reputable journals listed in Scopus. This shift implies that individuals with easy access to cyberspace are empowered to efficiently address various challenges without the immediate need for direct teacher consultation. This intriguing phenomenon gains further depth when considered in light of Bunt's perspective, conceptualizing it as "*Islamic Authority Online*" (Bunt, 2003).

This article posits that the proliferation of New Media doesn't inherently lead to negative impacts. Rather, its active development presents an opportunity when harnessed appropriately. New media technology, if adeptly utilized, can serve as a means to fortify the identity of religious authorities. This perspective is grounded in the vast possibilities within the realm of new media, which appears to open a new window in various facets of life. Notably, this article emphasizes the importance of da'wah as a key aspect to be fostered within this New Media landscape. The widespread use of digital-based technological media in contemporary society is virtually inevitable because these platforms are continually evolving to meet diverse societal needs. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that the ongoing development of media technology provides an opportunity to spearhead da'wah movements that are aimed at fostering a morally conscious society (R. Rustandi, 2019).

Examining major Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as Nahdatul Ulama, a prominent religious authority, reveals their adeptness in navigating media disruption and the perceived impact on the shifting landscape of religious authority. A notable illustration of this adaptability is NU Online, a digital initiative aimed at facilitating the transmission of Islamic messages. The establishment of NU Online reflects a strategic move towards digitization to enhance accessibility to information and assert a technological presence in religious discourse (Sefriyono, 2020). Similarly, Muhammadiyah has embraced this digital shift by launching the website

Muhammadiyah.or.id. Additionally, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), founded during the New Order period on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 28 1975, has actively engaged with technological advancements (Wibowo et al., 2018). Demonstrating commitment to its identity, MUI introduced a Da'wah application, unveiled online on April 27, 2021, and inaugurated by MUI Chairman Miftachul Akhyar. This strategic move aligns with the contemporary media technology landscape, contributing to the ever-evolving digital era (<https://M.Republika.Co.Id/Amp/Qs80pb313>, n.d.).

The proliferation of various fatwa institutions, packaged in an online format, serves as tangible evidence of the integration of media technology within the landscape of religious authorities in Indonesia. The aforementioned institutions, for example, present their perspectives and coexist without negating one another. The divergence of opinions among fatwa institutions reflects not only a variety of legal viewpoints but also offers the public a freedom to make choices. The validity of a legal edict extends beyond its mere alignment with the postulates of nash (manqul) to its ability to impart just moral guidance for society in addressing the challenges it encounters (Nasih, 2013).

## Conclusion

This article concludes that New Media has a multifaceted impact on people's lives, extending to various dimensions of social reality, including its influence on religious authorities in Indonesia. Contrary to a purely negative impact, the author emphasizes that the presence of new media introduces both challenges and opportunities for Islamic religious authorities in Indonesia. In the evolving landscape of media technology, the author underscores the necessity for religious authorities to embrace creativity and innovation to effectively utilize these platforms. It is time for various religious authorities in Indonesia to adapt to the ongoing developments in media technology. Urgent collaboration between media and religious authorities is emphasized due to the pervasive influence of media technology in all community activities. Media adaptation does not only facilitates the transmission of religious information, but also enables the community to access Islamic knowledge for addressing religious concerns. This is particularly relevant for the current millennial generation that is highly reliant on gadgets and social media for entertainment rather than traditional religious lectures.

In the realm of social media and the millennial generation's dependence, the author identifies this as an opportunity for religious authorities to effectively convey their information. Recognizing the literacy of Islamic religious authorities in Indonesia in understanding significant developments in media technology, this article highlights efforts such as the online-based application from the Indonesian Ulema Council, designed attractively and simplistically. Additionally, Islamic organizations in Indonesia, exemplified by Nahdatul Ulama creating NU Online pages on various social media platforms, serve as evidence that media technology does not shift religious authority but rather provides an avenue for effective proselytizing.

## References

- Afalah, L. O. M., Tamar, M., & Murfhi, A. (2009). Pengaruh Agama dalam Sistem Pemerintahan Negara (Studi Kasus Sistem Pemerintahan Republik Islam Iran). *Government : Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 145–154. <https://doi.org/10.31947/jgov.v2i2.1598>
- Ahmadi, M. (2020). Dampak Perkembangan New Media Pada Pola Komunikasi Masyarakat. *Alamtara: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 4(1), Article 1.
- Ahmatnihar, A. (2015). Ulama Berbagi Otoritas: Fungsi dan Peran MUI Kota Padangsidimpuan dalam meningkatkan kesadaran dan budaya hukum masyarakat.

*Tazkir: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Keislaman*, 1(2), Article 2.  
<https://doi.org/10.24952/tazkir.v1i2.368>

- Arrobi, M. Z., & Nadzifah, A. (2020). Otoritas Agama di Era Korona: Dari Fragmentasi ke Konvergensi? *Maarif*, 15(1), 197–215. <https://doi.org/10.47651/mrf.v15i1.85>
- Bakti, A. F. (2004). *Communication and Family Planning in Islam in Indonesia: South Sulawesi Muslim Perceptions of a Global Development Program*. INIS.
- Bakti, A. F. (2011). *The Role of Islamic Media in the Globalization Era: Between Religious Principles and Values of Globalization, The Challenges and the Opportunities*. 1–17. <https://www.acamedia.edu/32933846>
- Barnett, S. (1997). New Media, Old Problems: New Technology and the Political Process. *European Journal of Communication*, 12(2), 193–218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323197012002003>
- Branston, G., & Stafford, R. (2003). *The Media Student's Book*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Budiyono, B. (2017). Memperkokoh Ideologi Negara Pancasila melalui Bela Negara. *Citizenship Jurnal Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*, 5(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.25273/citizenship.v5i1.1148>
- Bunt, G. R. (2003). *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments*. Pluto Press.
- Burhani, A. N. (2016). Aksi Bela Islam: Konservatisme dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan. *Ma'arif Institute: For Culture and Humanities*, 11(2), 15–29.
- Burhanudin, J., & Baedhowi, A. (1999). *Konteks Berideologi di Indonesia: Pengalaman Islam*. Paramadina.
- Busro, B. (2022). Hubungan Agama dan Internet: Perusak sekaligus pelengkap Otoritas Agama. *Khazanah Multidisiplin*, 3(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.15575/kl.v3i2.25205>
- Dawson, L. L., & Cowan, D. E. (2004). *Religion Online: Finding Faith of the Internet*. Routledge.
- Eickelman, D. F., & Anderson, J. W. (2003). *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*. Indian University Press.
- Faisal Bakti, A. (2018). Media and Religion: Rodja TV's Involvement in The Civil Society Discourse for Community Development. *Jurnal Komunikasi, Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 34(3), 226–244. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2018-3403-13>
- Gaborueau, M. (2010). Redefining Religious Authority in South Asian Muslims. In *Varieties of Religious Authority: Changes and Challenges in 20th Century Indonesian Islam*. ISEAS.

- Gultom, A. D. (2018). Digitalisasi Penyiaran Televisi di Indonesia. *Buletin Pos Dan Telekomunikasi*, 16(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.17933/bpostel.2018.160202>
- Han, M. I. (2018). Ustadz Hits, Bahasa Gaul dan Social Media Effect. In *Islam antara Teks, Kuasa dan Identitas*. Arti Bumi Intaran.
- Heidegger, M. (1977). *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper and Row.
- Hew, W. W. (2018). The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siau. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46(134), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416757>
- Hitti, P. K. (1974). *History of the Arabs*. Mcmillan Press.
- <https://jadwalevent.web.id/islamic-book-fair-2020>. (n.d.).
- <https://m.republika.co.id/amp/qs80pb313>. (n.d.).
- Hwu, E. E.-T., & Boisen, A. (2018). Hacking CD/DVD/Blu-ray for Biosensing. *ACS Sensors*, 3(7), 1222–1232. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acssensors.8b00340>
- Jinan, M. (2012). New Media dan Pergeseran Otoritas Keagamaan Islam di Indonesia. *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v10i1.178>
- Jinan, M. (2013). Intervensi New Media dan Impersonalisasi Otoritas Keagamaan di Indonesia. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam (Journal of Islamic Communication)*, 3(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jki.2013.3.2.321-348>
- Latif, N., Huda, N., & Saifudin, S. (2020). Respons Muhammadiyah terhadap Salafisme: Studi atas Pergeseran Otoritas Gerakan Puritanisme. *Tajdida: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Gerakan Muhammadiyah*, 18(1), Article 1.
- Layman, G. C., & Weaver, C. L. (2016). Religion and Secularism among American Party Activists. *Politics and Religion*, 9(2), 271–295. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048316000079>
- Manovich, L. (2003). New Media From Borges to HTML. In *The New Media Reader*. Cambridge & Massachusetts.
- Mayeni, R., Syafti, O., & Sefrinal, S. (2019). Dampak Perkembangan Teknologi Dikalangan Remaja Dilihat dari Nilai-Nilai Karakter. *Turast: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian*, 7(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.15548/turast.v7i2.1298>
- Md, M. M. (2016). Islam, Lingkungan Budaya, dan Hukum dalam Perspektif Ketatanegaraan Indonesia. *Karsa: Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya Keislaman*, 24(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v24i1.992>
- Meidasari, A. F. B. dan V. E. (2014). Trendsetter Komunikasi di Era Digital: Tantangan dan Peluang Pendidikan Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam (Journal of Islamic Communication)*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jki.2014.4.1.20-44>

- Meifitri, M., & Susanto, E. (2020). Perubahan dari Media Lama ke Media Baru: Telaah Transformasi Platform Multimedia. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi (JKMS)*, 9(1), Article 1.
- Miles, A. M., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative Data Analysis a Source Book of New Methods*. Sage Publications.
- Muslih, M. (2017). Negara Hukum Indonesia dalam Perspektif Teori Hukum Gustav Radbruch (Tiga Nilai Dasar Hukum). *Legalitas: Jurnal Hukum*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.33087/legalitas.v4i1.117>
- Mustafa, S. E., & Hamzah, A. (2011). Media Baru yang Baru: Trend Penggunaan Jaringan Sosial dalam Kalangan Pengguna di Malaysia: New new media: Trends in the use of social networks among consumers in Malaysia. *Jurnal Pengajian Media Malaysia*, 13(2), Article 2.
- Muzakka, A. K. (2018). Otoritas Keagamaan dan Fatwa Personal di Indonesia. *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman*, 13(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2018.13.1.63-88>
- Nasih, A. M. (2013). Lembaga Fatwa Keagamaan di Indonesia (Telaah Atas Lembaga Majelis Tarjih dan Lajnah Bathsul Masail). *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syar'iah*, 5(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v5i1.2997>
- Nugroho, Y. A. (2018). Pemanfaatan dan Pengembangan Blog sebagai Media dan Sumber Belajar pada Mata Pelajaran Fiqih Tingkat Madrasah Tsanawiyah. *Paramurobi: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 1(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.32699/paramurobi.v1i1.175>
- O'leary, S. D. (2004). Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computer Networks. In *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*. Routledge.
- Patahilah, H. F. (2020). Instagram Fatwa: Analisis terhadap Pesan Fatwa dalam Akun Instagram @dakwahquransunnah. *El Madani : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi Islam*, 1(02), Article 02. <https://doi.org/10.53678/elmadani.v1i02.127>
- Pieterse, J. N. (1996). Globalization and Culture Three Paradigms. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(23), 1389–1393.
- Purnomo, T. Z. (2005). *Pengenalan Informatika Perspektif Teknik dan Lingkungan*. ANDI.
- Qudsy, S. Z. (2019). Pesantren Online: Pergeseran Otoritas Keagamaan di Dunia Maya. *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses*, 2(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v2i2.2010>
- Rahayu, Wahyono, B., Rianto, P., Kurnia, N., Wendratama, & Effendi, A. (2015). *Menegakkan Kedaulatan Telekomunikasi dan Penyiaran di Indonesia*. Media Yayasan Tifa.

- Rahman, F. (2018). Otoritas Keagamaan Nyai Pandalungan. *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars, Series 2, Article Series 2*. <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v0iSeries>
- Rahmayani, T. (2018). Pergeseran Otoritas Agama dalam Pembelajaran Al-Qur'an. *Maghza: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir, 3(2)*, 189–201. <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v3i2.2133>
- Rumadi, R. (2012). Islam dan Otoritas Keagamaan. *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan, 20(1)*, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.20.1.183>
- Rustandi, L. R. (2020). Disrupsi Nilai Keagamaan dalam Dakwah Virtual di Media Sosial Sebagai Komodifikasi Agama di Era Digital. *SANGKÉP: Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan, 3(1)*, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.20414/sangkep.v3i1.1036>
- Rustandi, R. (2019). Cyberdakwah: Internet sebagai Media Baru dalam Sistem Komunikasi Dakwah Islam. *Nalar: Jurnal Peradaban dan Pemikiran Islam, 3(2)*, Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.23971/njppi.v3i2.1678>
- Sampurno, M. B. T., Kusumandyoko, T. C., & Islam, M. A. (2020). Budaya Media Sosial, Edukasi Masyarakat, dan Pandemi COVID-19. *Salam: Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya Syar-i, 7(5)*, 529–542. <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v7i5.15210>
- Sefriyono, S. (2020). Jihad Digital: Pembingkai Narasi Kontra Radikalisasi NU Online di Dunia Maya. *FIKRAH, 8(1)*, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21043/fikrah.v8i1.7214>
- Setiawan, D. (2018). Dampak Perkembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi Terhadap Budaya. *Jurnal Simbolika: Research and Learning in Communication Study, 4(1)*, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.31289/simbollika.v4i1.1474>
- Siregar, M. H. (2014). Otoritas Hierarki Kutub Al-Sittah dan Kemandegan Kajian Fikih. *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman, 38(1)*, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v38i1.54>
- Sundar, S. S., & Limperos, A. M. (2013). Uses and Grats 2.0: New Gratifications for New Media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 57(4)*, 504–525. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2013.845827>
- Surahman, S. (2013). Dampak Globalisasi Media terhadap Seni dan Budaya Indonesia. *Lontar: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, 2(1)*, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.30656/lontar.v2i1.334>
- Suri, D. (2019). Pemanfaatan Media Komunikasi dan Informasi dalam Perwujudan Pembangunan Nasional. *Jurnal Komunikasi Pembangunan, 17(2)*, Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.46937/17201926848>
- Triantoro, D. A. (2020). Ustaz Youtube: Ustaz Abdul Somad and the Dynamics of Changing Religious Authorities. *Penamas, 33(2)*, Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v33i2.405>

- Ubaidillah, K. (2016). Otoritas Keagamaan Guru Ngaji Qudsiyyah. *Syamil: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v4i1.541>
- Watie, E. D. S. (2016). Periklanan dalam Media Baru (Advertising In The New Media ). *Jurnal The Messenger*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.26623/themessenger.v4i1.275>
- Weber, M. (1946). *Essay in Sociology*. Oxford University Press.
- Wibowo, S., Joebagio, H., & Bachri, S. (2018). Peran Majelis Ulama Indonesia Pada Masa Orde Baru 1975-1998 dan Relevansinya Dalam Pembelajaran Sejarah. *Candi*, 17(1), Article 1.
- Yamali, F. R., & Putri, R. N. (2020). Dampak Covid-19 Terhadap Ekonomi Indonesia. *Ekonomis: Journal of Economics and Business*, 4(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.33087/ekonomis.v4i2.179>
- Zamroni, M. (2009). Perkembangan Teknologi Komunikasi dan Dampaknya Terhadap Kehidupan. *Jurnal Dakwah*, 10(2), 195–211. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jd.2009.10205>.
- Zulkifli, Z. (2013). The Ulama in Indonesia: Between Religious Authority and Symbolic Power. *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 37(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v37i1.79>