

**NEGOTIATING IDEAL PIETY IN DIGITAL AGE:
A MIXED-METHODS STUDY ON MUSLIM CYBER ETHICS IN INDONESIA****Raudotul Jannah^{1*} & Sholahuddin Al Ayubi²**^{1,2}UIN Sultan Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia^{*}231320112.raudotul@uinbanten.ac.id**Abstract**

This study investigates the ethical dissonance between ideal Islamic piety and digital behavior among Indonesian Muslims. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research draws on quantitative data from over 100 Muslim academics and qualitative insights from 15 in-depth interviews and digital ethnography. Findings reveal a gap between ethical awareness and practice in digital spaces, particularly misinformation sharing, viral trends, and uncritical engagement with religious influencers. Furthermore, the study highlights a shift in religious authority from institutional scholars to popular digital preachers, not always grounded in scholarly credibility. The concept of adaptive piety is introduced as a context-sensitive ethical response to digital challenges. The study contributes to contemporary Islamic ethics by offering a grounded framework that bridges normative Islamic principles with the sociotechnical complexities of the Global South.

Keywords: Islam, Digital Ethics, Ideal Piety, Social Media.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi etis antara kesalehan ideal dalam Islam dan perilaku digital umat Muslim Indonesia. Dengan pendekatan metode campuran, data dikumpulkan melalui survei terhadap lebih dari 100 pengajar Muslim serta wawancara mendalam dan netnografi digital terhadap 15 informan. Hasil menunjukkan adanya ketidaksesuaian antara kesadaran etika dan praktik aktual di ruang maya, khususnya dalam hal penyebaran informasi yang belum bersifat curang, partisipasi dalam tren viral, dan keterlibatan emosional tanpa refleksi kritis. Studi ini juga mengungkap pengungkapan otoritas keagamaan dari institusi ulama ke tokoh digital populer yang belum tentu memiliki legitimasi keilmuan. Konsep kesalehan adaptif diperkenalkan sebagai respon etis kontekstual terhadap tantangan dunia maya. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan etika Islam kontemporer di wilayah Global South.

Kata Kunci: Islam, Etika Digital, Kesalehan Ideal, Media Sosial.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic religiosity is increasingly expressed through online spaces, transcending physical rituals and formal institutions. Indonesia, home to more than 230 million people 87% of them identify themselves as Muslims provides a fertile ground for exploring how normative religious values are negotiated in the digital environment. According to *We Are Social* (2024), more than 180 million Indonesians are active internet users, with more than 125 million people engaging daily on platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok¹. This creates an unprecedented interface between technology and theology, in which traditional modalities of Islamic transmission intersect with the immediacy, visuality, and virality of digital media.

This transformation has been critically analyzed by scholars such as Martin Slama, who emphasizes the emergence of “*personalized piety*” in Indonesia’s digital public sphere, where Islamic authority is no longer monopolized by traditional ulama but is increasingly shaped by charismatic individuals operating on social media platforms². Through his ethnographic work, Slama highlights how social media enables Muslims to engage in “*networked preaching*” (*dakwah jaringan*), allowing for a more horizontal, participatory religious discourse. Likewise, McQuail in Rasheed sees social media as a space for public agendas that are influenced by public issues.³

Meanwhile, Nisa offers a gendered lens, examining how digital platforms have opened new spaces for Muslim women preachers (*ustazah*) to assert religious authority and moral leadership. Nisa argues that digital dakwah not only democratizes access to religious content, but also reframes Islamic piety as something performative and affective where aesthetic presentation and emotional

¹Febby Amelia Trisakti. “Menjadi Muslim Milenial Di Media Sosial : Analisis Netnografi Pada Makna Gaya Hidup Halal Bagi Komunitas Muda Di Pekanbaru.” *Jurnal Riset Komunikasi (JURKOM)* 8 (2025): 123–38.

² Martin Slama, “A Subtle Economy of Time: Social Media and the Transformation of Indonesia’s Islamic Preacher Economy,” *Economic Anthropology* 4, no. 1 (2017): 94–106, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12075>.

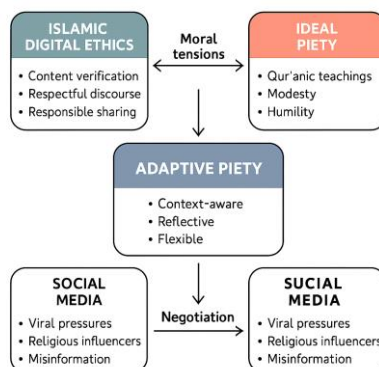
³ Rasheed, Buhari Olaoluwa. “Citizen Journalism Practice And Social Media Usage During Social Darwinism (#Endsars) Protest Among Youths In Lagos, Nigeria”. *KOMUNIKE: Jurnal Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam*, vol. 16, no. 2, Dec. 2024, pp. 229-46, doi:10.20414/jurkom.v16i2.11613.

engagement become critical to influencing audiences.⁴ Together, the works of Slama and Nisa illustrate that digital media has transformed the landscape of dakwah in Indonesia shifting it from hierarchical, institution-bound sermons to affective, visually mediated engagements that blur the line between religious devotion, identity expression, and audience appeal.

In the Islamic tradition, *ideal piety* is based on the ethical teachings of the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical fiqh. emphasizing honesty, simplicity, and social responsibility. However, in today's digital ecology, religious behavior is often shaped by algorithms, viral incentives, and aesthetic expressions of belief.⁵ While previous studies have examined Islamic digital ethics, most of them are still normative-theological or statistically descriptive. There is no integrative research that captures the lived behavior and moral reasoning behind Muslim digital behavior.

This study asks: How do Indonesian Muslims negotiate their commitment to ideal piety when faced with ethically ambiguous and performative digital realities? What strategies do they develop in navigating misinformation, polarizing religious content, and the authority of religious figures online? In addressing these gaps, this study contributes to the emerging field of digital religiosity by proposing the concept of *adaptive piety*, a context-aware, reflective approach to maintaining the integrity of Islamic ethics online.

ADAPTIVE PIETY FRAMEWORK



⁴ Eva F. Nisa "Creative and lucrative Da'wa: the visual culture of Instagram amongst female Muslim youth in Indonesia." *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5.1-2 (2018): 68-99.

⁵ Febby Amelia Trisakti. "Menjadi Muslim Milenial Di Media Sosial : Analisis Netnografi Pada Makna Gaya Hidup Halal Bagi Komunitas Muda Di Pekanbaru." *Jurnal Riset Komunikasi (JURKOM)* 8 (2025): 123-38.

Figure 1: Adaptive Piety Framework – illustrates the negotiation between Islamic digital ethics, ideal piety, and digital media pressures.

The study of Islamic ethics in the digital environment has developed along several different trajectories. These include: normative theological approach, descriptive behavioral surveys, **and** critical cultural analysis. Each provides partial insights, but none fully addresses the dynamic tensions between Islamic moral ideals and the practical challenges of digital life.

Classical Islamic studies have long emphasized the importance of *adab* (ethical behavior), *tabayyun* (verification), and *ghibah* (prohibition of slander) in organizing communication. Normative literature, often in the form of MUI fatwa, continues to emphasize appropriate behavior online, warning against digital gossip, cybercrime, and political slander (Zuhayli, 2008; MUI Fatwa No. 24/2017). However, this approach is mainly prescriptive, less involving the complexity of user behavior and emotional motivation.

Studies using quantitative surveys have identified common trends among Muslim internet users, such as high religiosity, trust in religious influencers, and enthusiasm for digital da'wah⁶. These studies reveal important demographic and generational patterns. However, they often fail to capture the deeper dynamics namely the moral reasoning, reflective processes, and sociocultural negotiations that shape digital religious behavior.

More recent research⁷ adopts a critical perspective, viewing religious expression not as fixed or monolithic, but as something performed, mediated, and contested within algorithmic culture. This aligns with theoretical concepts like performative piety **and** everyday religion, which recognize that expressions of faith are increasingly influenced by platform logics where visibility, affect, and engagement metrics shape what counts as 'authentic' religiosity⁸. However, much of this critical scholarship remains anchored in Western or Middle Eastern contexts.

In the Southeast Asian context particularly Indonesia and Malaysia similar dynamics are at play, yet shaped by unique historical, theological, and social traditions. Islamic religiosity in the region has long been characterized by syncretic, plural, and dialogical traditions, where Sufi-oriented practices, communal authority structures, and localized moral frameworks coexist with more reformist or scripturalist movements. The rise of digital da'wah in Indonesia, for example, does not merely replicate Western modes of religious branding or influencer culture, but is embedded in local idioms of *dakwah bil hikmah* (da'wah through wisdom), collective memory, and the moral economy of *kebaikan* (goodness) shared in everyday interactions.

⁶ Alief Rizky, Ratih Komala Dewi, and Muhammad Sholihin. *Pengaruh Literasi Digital, Penerimaan Teknologi, Kepercayaan Dan Brand Awareness Terhadap Keputusan Infaq Shadaqah Dengan Religiusitas Sebagai Moderator*. Diss. Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup, 2024.

⁷ Difa Nuresa et al., "Ketika Like Dan Share Menjadi Mata Uang Sosial Di Era Digital," *Journal of Mandalika Social Science* 3 (2025).

⁸ Nilna Dina and Maurisa Zinira. "Ngaji on The Street (One Day One Juz) Wonosobo: Tinjauan Sosiologi Pengetahuan." *Syariat: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Hukum* 10.2 (2024): 239-252.

Scholars such as Khairudin Aljunied and Norshahril Saat have emphasized that the Southeast Asian Islamic tradition is deeply shaped by communitarian values, pedagogical hierarchies, and a strong emphasis on *adab* (etiquette). Thus, while the logic of virality and performativity influences religious expression in the region, it must be understood through the lens of Southeast Asia's historically embedded values where religiosity is not only mediated by technology, but also negotiated through cultural norms of modesty, relational ethics, and collective piety. By situating Indonesian Muslim digital behavior within this broader Southeast Asian framework, we better understand that performative piety online is not merely a product of global algorithmic pressures, but also a rearticulation of localized religious subjectivities in the face of technological mediation.

Approach	Focus	Strength	Limitations
Normative-Theological	Fatwa, Rules of Conduct	Legal and written basis	Lack of behavioral nuance, limited context
Descriptive-Quantitative	Survey on digital habits	Statistically generalizable	Ignoring ethical subjectivity
Interpretative-Culture	Symbolic meaning, performativity	Context-rich, platform-sensitive	Often lacks a normative basis

Table 1: Comparison Table of Research Approaches

Despite this progress, little research has explored how Muslim users consciously negotiate between their Islamic values and the social norms of digital media. This study proposes *adaptive piety* as a conceptual response to this gap. Bridging the classical Islamic moral framework with ethical decision-making as it occurs in digital life. This study contributes by offering empirical data and a flexible ethical model that is relevant to Muslim societies in the global south.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a methodological approach design convergent parallel mixed methods to investigate the gap between ideal Islamic piety and digital reality among Indonesian Muslims⁹. The reason for using this design is to obtain measurable ethical behavior patterns (quantitative) and rich contextual narratives (qualitative) to understand moral negotiations in cyberspace. The target

⁹ Sudianto Sudianto and Kisno Kisno, "Potret Kesiapan Guru Sekolah Dasar Dan Manajemen Sekolah Dalam Menghadapi Asesmen Nasional," *Jurnal Akuntabilitas Manajemen Pendidikan* 9, no. 1 (2021): 85-97, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jamp.v9i1.39260>.

population in this study consists of digitally active Indonesian Muslims, particularly those embedded in academic environments, such as graduate students, university lecturers, and scholars affiliated with Islamic higher education institutions. A total of 104 valid responses were collected through an online questionnaire, using a stratified random sampling technique based on generational cohorts (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers) to ensure representational diversity within this academic subset.

It is important to clarify that this study does not claim to generalize to the entire population of Indonesian Muslims. Rather, it adopts a case study approach, focusing on a specific sociocultural stratum: digitally literate Muslims in academic settings who are likely to be both producers and critical consumers of religious content in online spaces. This purposive delimitation is methodologically intentional. It allows the research to explore nuanced ethical attitudes and behaviors within a community that is relatively reflective, exposed to plural discourse, and actively engaged in digital religiosity. As such, while the findings cannot be extrapolated to all Indonesian Muslims, they provide in-depth insight into how Islamic digital ethics are negotiated within a highly influential and opinion-forming segment of society.

Qualitative component involved 15 key informants who were purposively selected based on digital engagement, religious literacy, and gender and age diversity. Informants included Islamic educators, student activists, and social media users with an interest in religious content. Ethical approval and informed consent were obtained prior to the interviews. For research instruments, Quantitative: A 24-item Likert scale questionnaire measuring four dimensions: (1) ethical awareness, (2) content verification, (3) online religious involvement, and (4) privacy sensitivity. This instrument was adapted from previous research, for example,¹⁰ and validated by three Islamic communication experts. Reliability:

¹⁰Kornelis Nama Beni, Nursalam Nursalam, and M Hasinuddin. "Uji Validitas Dan Reliabilitas Leadership Behavior Inventory, Personal Mastery Questionnaire Dan Kuesioner Kinerja Perawat Di Rumah Sakit." *Jurnal Penelitian Kesehatan "SUARA FORIKES"* (*Journal of Health Research "Forikes Voice"*) 11, no. 3 (2020): 313. <https://doi.org/10.33846/sf11318>.

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87, indicating strong internal consistency. Qualitative: A semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore personal interpretations of digital piety, ethical dilemmas, and coping strategies. Questions asked included, for example, "How do you respond when a viral religious post conflicts with Islamic ethics?"

Quantitative data were collected via Google Forms and analyzed using **SPSS 26** for descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, frequency) and one-way ANOVA to test for differences between generational groups. Qualitative data were collected through Zoom/WhatsApp interviews and online observations (netnography) of Islamic discussion groups on platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram. Data were analyzed using NVivo 12 with thematic coding, following the model¹¹.

Survey and interview integration research findings conducted through convergent triangulation, where quantitative and qualitative results are compared and interpreted together to increase validity and depth of interpretation. Member checking and peer debriefing were used to reduce bias and increase credibility.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mixed methods design of this study uncovers significant tensions between Islamic ethical ideals and digital practices among Indonesian Muslims. The quantitative data and qualitative narratives collectively highlight three key dimensions of this moral dissonance:

Ethical Awareness versus Digital Practices

The survey results showed a high level of ethical awareness among respondents: 91% strongly agree that verifying religious content (*tabayyun*) before sharing it is mandatory (Mean = 4.55). 88% recognize the importance of online manners and responsible communication (Mean = 4.24). Despite this awareness: 41% admitted to having shared unverified or misleading religious content in the

¹¹ Widowati, Atri, Ely Yuliawan, Pendidikan Kepelatihan Olahraga, and Universitas Jambi. "Penerapan Gaya Hidup Sehat Bagi Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Al Muhajirin." *JURNAL SCORE* 4, no. 2 (2024): 217–26.

past. 23% participated in viral trends or online discussions that upon reflection, were contrary to Islamic ethical norms.

This gap exemplifies Festinger's Moral Dissonance Theory (1957) a psychological discomfort arising when belief and behavior are misaligned. In digital spaces, this dissonance is magnified by immediacy, emotional triggers, and platform incentives. From a moral flexibility perspective, these contradictions also reflect how ethical decisions online are situationally negotiated, not rigidly applied revealing the complexity of moral reasoning in algorithmic cultures.

Fragmentation of Religious Authority

As many as 66% of respondents trust traditional clerics to provide ethical guidance for the digital space. However: only 33.3% reported that their Islamic study groups *regularly* discussed digital ethics issues. 51% follow religious influencers on social media, but only half of them consider those influencers to have credible scientific credentials.

Qualitative interviews revealed that authority in digital spaces is increasingly performative, shaped by accessibility, charisma, and emotional resonance rather than formal religious training. Informants expressed both admiration and skepticism toward these new figures. These patterns reveal the ongoing fragmentation of symbolic religious authority (Bourdieu, 1991), where legitimacy shifts from formal institutions to performative charisma. Structuration Theory (Giddens) helps explain this transition: digital platforms enable new religious agents to redefine structures of authority, often privileging emotional appeal and accessibility over epistemic rigor¹². Informants' mixed feelings (admiration vs. skepticism) reflect this tension between traditional hierarchies and emerging influencer-based legitimacy.

Adaptive Strategy and Aspiration

As many as 83% of respondents support initiatives to improve Islamic digital literacy. From qualitative interviews, several adaptive strategies emerged: Delaying digital reactions to allow for reflection. Cross-verify information before

¹² Ilhamiyatul Hidayah, "Digitalisasi Hadits : Perkembangan Dan Tantangan Di Era Modern," *Al-Amsal Al-Qur'an: Jurnal Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits* 2, no. 2 (2025): 184-204.

disseminating it. Implementation of Maqashid Syariah principles as filters for content evaluation. Seek guidance from credible scholars, although this is often supplemented by online resources.

These behaviors embody the proposed framework of Adaptive Piety, where Muslims enact reflective religious agency within a digital ecosystem. From the lens of Structuration Theory, these adaptive practices illustrate how individuals negotiate their piety by both drawing from and reshaping ethical-religious structures in new media environments. Meanwhile, Moral Flexibility Theory provides insight into how these behaviors function as pragmatic, context-sensitive applications of ethical standards, allowing Muslims to balance ideal values with real-world digital complexities.

Respondents demonstrated an aspirational commitment to integrating Islamic ethics into their digital lives but acknowledged structural barriers, including algorithmic pressures, viral culture, and limited religious literacy programs.

Theme	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Insights	Interpretation
Ethical Awareness	91% emphasize <i>tabayyun</i> , but 41% share unverified content	"We knew it was wrong, but the desire to share was strong."	Knowledge and practice gap
Shifting Religious Authority	66% trust clerics, 51% follow influencers	"Online clerics feel closer, but their credibility varies."	Fragmentation of legitimacy
Digital Literacy Aspirations	83% support ethics training	"Campuses and religious groups must guide us practically."	Demand for adaptive and fundamental interventions

Table 2: Summary of Key Findings

These findings suggest that Indonesian Muslims are navigating a complex ethical terrain online, characterized by the interplay of normative values, emotional drives, and fragmented authority structures. This reality underscores

the need for a more context-sensitive ethical framework, such as the *adaptive piety model* proposed in this study.

The findings of this study reveal a significant tension between the idealism of piety in Islamic teachings and the reality of Indonesian Muslim behavior in the digital realm. Although most respondents showed a high level of understanding of Islamic ethics, their behavior in cyberspace was often not in line with these moral principles. This phenomenon shows that the construction of people's ethics is not only determined by cognitive aspects (knowledge), but is also greatly influenced by psychological, social factors, and the design of the technology itself.

Moral Dissonance in the Digital Age

Respondents' awareness of Islamic communication ethics, such as the prohibition on spreading news without verification (*tabayyun*) or maintaining politeness in communication, is relatively high. However, quite a few of them admitted to having engaged in digital behavior that is not in accordance with these values, such as spreading religious content that has not been confirmed as true or reacting emotionally to viral issues on social media.

This phenomenon is in line with Festinger's (1957) *cognitive dissonance theory*, which explains the psychological discomfort that arises when a person's beliefs are not in line with his actions¹³. In the digital context, this moral dissonance does not always arise from ignorance, but rather from: The speed of interaction in bold communication, the emotional impact of viral trends, and incentives from digital platforms that prioritize visibility and speed over deep reflection.

This condition erodes the space for Muslims to carry out *tadabbur* (critical reflection) and *tabayyun*, two core ethical principles rooted in Islamic tradition and elaborated extensively in the classical and modern tafsir literature. These concepts are not merely spiritual ideals, but active moral obligations that sustain the credibility of religious discourse and the dignity of Muslim communication, especially in the face of the emotional and impulsive culture of digital media.

¹³ Esti Regina Boiliu, Dirk Roy Kolibu, and Universitas Kristen Indonesia, "Mengatasi Disonansi Kognitif Dalam Pendidikan Agama Kristen Di Era Artificial Intelligence," *EDULEAD: Journal of Christian Education and Leadership* 5, no. 2 (2024): 153–65.

The Qur'anic concept of tadabbur, derived from the root meaning "to consider consequences" or "to reflect deeply," is not merely an act of intellectual contemplation, but a moral engagement with divine guidance. As emphasized in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 82 *"Do they not reflect deeply upon the Qur'an?"* the verse calls for a depth of engagement that moves beyond surface reading. Classical exegetes such as al-Raghib al-Asfahani in *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an* describe tadabbur as the process of connecting verses with their underlying maqasid (higher objectives) and ahkam (rulings), approached with humility and a commitment to act upon the meanings revealed¹⁴. Similarly, al-Qurtubi, in *Tafsir al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, categorizes tadabbur as a form of ethical responsibility both rational and spiritual geared toward internalizing the Qur'an's teachings¹⁵. In today's digital communication landscape, this reflective ethic becomes even more critical. Tadabbur must be extended to how Muslims engage with religious messages online, requiring deliberate pause, discernment, and the ethical question: "Does this content resonate with the Qur'an's moral spirit?"

This Qur'anic moral framework is further reinforced by the principle of tabayyun the duty to verify information before accepting or transmitting it. Rooted in (clarity), the injunction appears clearly in QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 6: *"O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with news, verify it..."* According to Imam al-Tabari, this command is not limited to theological disputes but applies broadly to all social interactions, especially when the source is questionable. He emphasizes that tabayyun constitutes both a collective duty (fard kifayah) and an individual moral imperative¹⁶. Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, in *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, expands this understanding by linking tabayyun to the protection of social harmony and amanah (trust), warning that unverified speech may lead to fitnah and societal

¹⁴ Munadiah Aftab, "Financial Fitrah: Re-Evaluating Spirituality in the Methodology of Islamic Finance and Consumer Behaviour of Muslims," *Manara: Qatar Research Repository*, 2023.

¹⁵ Kawiriyani, Ma'ruf Wahyu, Ade Nailul Huda, and Samsul Ariyadi. "The Metaverse dan Tantangan Spiritual: Perspektif Tadabbur Al-Qur'an terhadap Nilai Moral dalam Dunia Virtual." *Al-Manar: Jurnal Kajian Alquran dan Hadis* 11.1 (2025): 21-47.

¹⁶ Sukardi, "Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Kemanusiaan," *Tabayyun : Journal Of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2018): 45.

breakdown¹⁷. In the digital era where information is weaponized, emotions are amplified, and truth is often secondary to virality the neglect of *tadabbur* and *tabayyun* risks not only misinformation but also the erosion of spiritual and communal integrity. Reinvigorating these principles is essential to cultivating a responsible, Qur'anically rooted Muslim presence in digital spaces. The Qur'an has emphasized the urgency of *tabayyun* as stated in:

"O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you bringing news, then examine it carefully so that you do not cause a disaster to a people without knowing the circumstances that will cause you to regret your actions. " (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 6)

This verse emphasizes that verifying information is a primary principle in maintaining the dignity of communication, including in the digital space. Despite the awareness of Indonesian Muslims towards the principle of *tabayyun* namely the obligation to verify information before disseminating it. is relatively high, the phenomenon of moral dissonance in digital space continues to occur frequently¹⁸. This inconsistency between ethical knowledge and factual behavior cannot be fully explained only through *Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance framework*, but is also closely related to other psychological and structural factors that influence courageous behavior.

One of them is *the Theory of Planned Behavior* from Ajzen (1991) who stated that a person's behavior is influenced by personal attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived control over the action¹⁹. In this context, even though a Muslim has a positive attitude towards media ethics according to Islamic teachings, social pressure from the digital environment, the desire to gain social validation, and low perceptions of self-control often keep them trapped in the

¹⁷ Riyan Terna Kuswanto and Muhammad Agung Kurniawan, "Fenomena Anonim Media Sosial Ditinjau Dalam Perspektif Islam The Phenomenon of Social Media Anonymity Reviewed from an Islamic Perspective," *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial, Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* Vol 5, no. 2 (2025): 225–38.

¹⁸ Shenti Agustini; Winsherly Tan; Grace Geovanni, "Analisis Hukum Terhadap Penyampaian Informasi Elektronik Yang Melanggar Norma Moral," *AJUDIKASI: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 7, no. 2 (2023): 349–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1686094>.

¹⁹ Agustini, Shenti, Winsherly Tan, and Grace Geovanni. "Analisis Hukum Terhadap Penyampaian Informasi Elektronik yang Melanggar Norma Moral." *Ajudikasi: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 7.2 (2023): 349-374.

behavior of spreading unverified information. This condition is exacerbated by the *Information Overload* phenomenon as explained by Eppler and Mengis (2004), where the massive flood of information in the digital space exceeds the individual's cognitive capacity to sort and process each piece of information critically²⁰.

As a result, the process of *tadabbur* (deep reflection) and *tabayyun* which are the basis of Islamic communication ethics are often neglected due to time constraints, mental capacity, and the architectural design of social media which prioritizes speed and visibility²¹. Therefore, maintaining the dignity of communication in digital space cannot be entirely burdened on the aspect of individual awareness, but must also be supported by digital literacy based on Islamic values, strengthening self-control, and critical evaluation of the information systems and cultures that are developing in the digital era²². This principle is in line with the Al-Qur'an's command in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6, which emphasizes that every information received must be checked carefully so that it does not cause harm to society. Thus, implementing *tabayyun* in the digital era is not only a religious moral requirement, but also part of efforts to build a digital ecosystem that is healthy, responsible and in line with the noble values of Islam.

The Crisis of Religious Authority and Symbolic Capital in Digital Islam

This study also found a shift in religious authority, where popular figures on social media are increasingly becoming the main reference, even though their scientific credibility varies. On the one hand, their presence brings preaching closer and more accessible. But on the other hand, the lack of scientific authenticity

²⁰ Fakhirah Inayaturobbani et al., "Pengaruh Kelebihan Informasi Inkonsisten Terhadap Ketidakpedulian Dengan Pembeneran Sistem Sebagai Kovariabel," *Jurnal Psikologi Teori Dan Terapan* 12, no. 1 (2021): 92-102.

²¹ Alfian Hakiki, Khomsahrial Romli, and M Apun Syaripudin, *Persepsi Mahasiswa Kpi Terhadap Berita Online Infogeh Sebagai Media Informasi Lampung*, 2023.

²² Sugiarto and Ahmad Farid, "Literasi Digital Sebagai Jalan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Di Era Society 5.0," *Cetta: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 3 (2023): 580-97, <https://doi.org/10.37329/cetta.v6i3.2603>.

of some of them has the potential to trigger the spread of shallow, even erroneous, religious understanding.

This is in line with Bourdieu's (1991) theory of *symbolic authority*, which states that legitimacy is not only determined by scientific authority, but also by social capital, popularity and emotional appeal²³. The algorithmic logic of digital platforms further strengthens this phenomenon by providing a bigger stage for viral content, not content based on Islamic law²⁴.

The shift in religious authority in the digital landscape cannot be separated from modern logical media which increasingly influences the way Islamic teachings are packaged and disseminated. The *Media Logic Theory* proposed by Hjarvard (2008) explains that media, especially social media, is not just a channel for information, but also determines the structure, format, and even content of religious messages²⁵. In this process, known as *the mediatization of religion*, religion tends to be compromised to conform to media demands, such as short messages, attractive visuals, and high emotional appeal²⁶.

This reality is evident in the increasing phenomenon of popular religious figures on social media who deliver their preaching in a communicative and easily digestible style, but often minimize scientific depth or distort substantive Islamic teachings²⁷. Although on the one hand this phenomenon facilitates public access to da'wah, on the other hand, the limited authenticity of the knowledge of these figures has the potential to give rise to an understanding of religion that is thought out, even wrong.

²³ Suci Indah Ratna Pratiwi, "Modal Sosial Anggota Legislatif Muda Dprd Kabupaten Pasaman Barat Pada Pemilu Legislatif Tahun 2019," 2020, 1-141, <http://scholar.unand.ac.id/65990/>.

²⁴ (Son, 2021)

²⁵ Nurhayati; Suci Ramadhani Siregar; Nita Susana; Saidatin Niswa; Zulfirman Manik, "Hadith Content About Women Itu , Transformasi Konten Media Sosial Sebagai Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Dalam Selanjutnya , Penelitian Transformasi Dakwah Pesantren Di Era Digital Dan Transformasi Dakwah Islam Melalui Strategi Dan Implementasi Di Era Digi," *Jurnal Syiar-Syiar* 5 (2025): 43-56.

²⁶ Ravhil Agustini Mahardika, "Komodifikasi Agama Dan Maskulinitas Dalam Brand Kahf (Studi Analisis Semiotik Atas Iklan Youtube Kahfeveryday)," *PTIQ Jakarta*, 2024.

²⁷ Cecep Suryana; et al., *Ustadz Dan Politik: Perspektif Ustadz Nashrudin Syarief, Sustainability (Switzerland)*, vol. 11 (Gunung Djati Publishing, 2019),

Furthermore, this phenomenon is reinforced by the concept of *Parasocial Interaction* which was first put forward by Horton and Wohl (1956). They explained that the relationship between audiences and public figures in the media is often parasocial, namely a one-way pseudo relationship that creates the illusion of emotional closeness, trust, and even a sense of belonging, even though there is no authentic direct interaction²⁸. In the context of digital Islam, many Muslims feel close and emotionally trust religious figures on social media, even though they have never verified the credibility of the figure's knowledge²⁹. This parasocial relationship facilitates the spread of viral religious messages, without going through the critical process and scientific verification that should be the standard in accepting religious teachings.

The combination of algorithmic logic media that prioritizes popularity and the existence of emotional parasocial creates a space where religious authority can be built not on scientific competence, but through visual appeal, emotional narratives, and viral communication strategies. In fact, the Qur'an has emphasized the importance of caution in following information or religious figures without a valid scientific basis³⁰, as stated in the word of Allah:

"Do not follow what you have no knowledge of. Indeed, hearing, sight and heart will all be held accountable" (QS. Al-Isra [17]: 36).

This verse serves as a reminder for every Muslim not to get caught up in the flow of information or preaching from figures whose credibility has not been tested. Therefore, building a culture of critical digital religious literacy is a must, so that people can distinguish between authentic, scientific-based preaching and

²⁸ Pulung Setiosuci Perbawani and Almara Jati Nuralin, "Hubungan Parasosial Dan Perilaku Loyalitas Fans Dalam Fandom KPop Di Indonesia," *LONTAR: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 9, no. 1 (2021): 42–54, <https://doi.org/10.30656/lontar.v9i1.3056>.

²⁹ Hapni Laila Siregar et al., "Analisis Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Nilai Keislaman Mahasiswa Universitas Negeri Medan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Terpadu* 8, no. 6 (2024): 2246–6111.

³⁰ Dedi Prayitno, "Bentuk-Bentuk Deotorisasi Hadis Di Internet Analisis Kontemporer Terhadap Distorsi Otoritas Keilmuan Dalam Ruang Digital," *Al-Furqan : Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 4, no. 2 (2025): 426–50.

viral content that has the potential to circulate, in order to maintain the integrity of Islam in the digital era.

Adaptive Piety: An Attempt to Negotiate Islamic Ethics in the Digital Age

In facing the complexity of digital ethics, this study offers the concept of *adaptive piety*, namely a form of religiosity that is reflective, contextual, and remains firmly rooted in Islamic moral principles³¹. This concept is inspired by Ammerman's (2007) idea of everyday religion, which views religious expression as part of dynamic and situational daily activities.

Adaptive fit includes: Awareness to maintain ethical integrity in digital interactions. The use of the principle of *maqasid sharia* (the noble goals of sharia) as an instrument for evaluating bold content. Practical strategies such as withholding emotional reactions, verifying information, and focusing attention in courageous engagement. This model is not a form of compromise with religion, but rather part of the *social ijtiḥad process*, namely the contextual adaptation of Islamic teachings according to the challenges of the times, without reducing the essence of divine values³².

Amidst the complexity of a fast-paced, open, and value-disturbing digital ecosystem, the concept of adaptive piety is an important agreement in maintaining the relevance and integrity of Muslim religious practices. Adaptive piety is not a form of compromise to divine principles, but rather a form of religiosity that is reflective, contextual, and remains firmly rooted in Islamic moral norms. This concept is in line with Ammerman's (2007) idea of *everyday religion*, which views religious expression as a dynamic part of social routines that always interact with concrete situations, including in digital space³³.

³¹ Muhammad Muhson, "Pengembangan Kesalehan Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam: Studi Fenomenologi Anggota Komunitas Pengusaha Muslim Indonesia Di Kota Malang, Dissertation," 2024, 1–23.

³² Sofwan Karim Elhusein, Ahmad Lahmi, and Desi Asmaret, "Islam Berkemajuan Perspektif Najib Burhani," *Jurnal Al – Mau'izhoh* 6, no. 2 (2024): 1061–71.

³³ A Zuhri, *Beragama Di Ruang Digital; Konfigurasi Ideologi Dan Ekspresi Keberagamaan Masyarakat Virtual*, Nawa Litera Publishing., vol. 1, 2021.

To understand how people can adapt ideal values into digital practices, it is important to borrow the perspective of Giddens' *Structuration Theory* (1984). This theory asserts that social structures, including religious norms, are not rigid entities that only limit behavior, but are also the result of reproduction and negotiation carried out by individuals in everyday life.³⁴ In this context, Indonesian Muslims are not merely passive recipients of Islamic teachings, but also active agents who negotiate and translate Islamic ethical values such as *tabayyun*, media etiquette, and maqasid sharia into the dynamics of the ever-changing digital space. Practices such as conveying emotional emotions towards provocative content, verifying information before sharing, or streaming in following bold religious narratives, are real manifestations of the process of reproducing religious values in the contemporary digital social order³⁵.

Furthermore, this adaptive religiosity can be enriched through the lens of Reynolds' (2006) *Moral Flexibility Framework*, which views that individuals tend to apply moral principles flexibly, adjusting to the social, emotional, and cognitive contexts they face, without losing their basic value footing. In the digital era, where information flows quickly, emotions are easily triggered, and social pressures often influence decision-making, Muslims need a directed ethic. This means that adaptive piety is not just following the flow or blind tolerance of change, but rather a reflective ability to maintain the integrity of Islamic principles in a relevant, applicable, and realistic way.³⁶ This principle finds a strong foothold in the word of Allah SWT:

"Allah does not keep a soul silent except to the extent of its capacity. He is rewarded for what he has earned and punished for what he has done. (They pray): "Our Lord, do not punish us if we forget or err. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden like that which you laid on those before us. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden which we

³⁴ Ubaidillah, Ishaq, and Pujiono, "Komunikasi Politik Kiai NU Dalam Kontestasi Pilkada Perspektif Teori Strukturasi Giddens," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication* 4, no. 2 (2021): 106–23.

³⁵ Astrida Nuryani and Mondry Mondry, "Kemandirian Pangan Berbasis Kebhinekaan : Studi Atas Fungsi Dan Peran Media Massa Di Kota Malang Astrida Fitri Nuryani 1 ,," *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Sosiologi VII*, no. December 2020 (2018).

³⁶ Jihan Rahmi Nabila et al., "Prosiding Konferensi Integrasi Interkoneksi Islam Dan Sains," *E-Jurnal EP Unud*, 3 [10]: 467-475 ISSN: 2303-0178 5 (2023): 86–88, <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/saintek/kiiis/issue/view/287/2469>.

cannot bear. Forgive us; pardon us; and have mercy on us. You are our Helper, so help us against the disbelieving people." (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286)

This verse emphasizes that Islamic law recognizes human limitations, including the limitations of the people in facing new pressures and challenges such as the digital world. Therefore, adaptive, flexible, and contextual religious practices, as long as they do not deviate from the corridor of divine values, are actually a form of implementing social *ijtihad* that is in accordance with the *maqasid* of sharia.

Thus, adaptive piety becomes an actual representation of religiosity that is responsive to the times without losing the essence of the transcendental values of Islam. It encourages people to be active, critical, and reflective in integrating religious principles into digital social reality, while ensuring that brave interactions are not merely technical rituals, but rather a means of actualizing civilized spiritual values.

Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

This research not only provides a practical contribution to the digital ethics literacy of Muslims, but also offers an expansion of perspectives in the study of Social Interpretation, especially regarding how sacred texts and religious principles are reconstructed, negotiated, and applied in the context of an ever-evolving digital society.

Traditionally, Social Tafsir focuses on how the messages of the Qur'an are interpreted within the framework of socio-political or cultural issues in real (physical) space.³⁷ However, the digital era has given birth to a new social reality that is hybrid in nature. the combination of physical space and virtual space which has not been fully integrated into the classical Social Interpretation tradition. Through the integration theory of Adaptive Piety, Giddens' *Structuration Theory* (1984), and *the Moral Flexibility Framework*, this study expands the scope of Social Interpretation into the cyber-space dimension, where norms, religious authority, and even religious practices are no longer statistical, but are continuously

³⁷ Habiburrahman, "Islam Dan Kapitalisme; Titik Temu Dan Kritik Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society* 1, no. 1 (2019): 38–50, <https://doi.org/10.36256/ijrs.v1i1.23>.

negotiated under the influence of algorithms, virtual interactions, and digital social pressures.

The concept of Adaptive Piety shows that the verses of the Qur'an, such as QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286 and QS. At-Taghabun [64]: 16, which emphasize *contextual ijtilah* and *piety according to capacity*, must be read dynamically, including in facing ethical challenges in the digital space. The interpretation of these verses, within the framework of contemporary Social Interpretation, is no longer sufficient to stop at the legal dimension or formal rituals, but must include aspects of courageous behavior, communication patterns, and the distribution of religious authority in cyberspace.

This approach opens up new opportunities in the study of Social Interpretation, including: How are Qur'anic texts related to communication ethics, *tabayyun*, *adab*, and religious authority reinterpreted in algorithmic digital spaces?. What is the relationship between sacred texts, religious authority, and the reconstruction of Muslim society by parasocial phenomena and the mediatization of logic?. To what extent can the adaptation of digital ethics by Indonesian Muslims be categorized as valid social *ijtilah* within the *maqashid sharia* framework?. These questions indicate the need to develop Social Interpretation towards Cyber Interpretation, namely the study of interpretation that is responsive to the dynamics of *the* virtual life of Muslims.

However, the Adaptive Wellness approach and the social theories used are not without criticism. Some people think that the basic concept of morality is prone to being drawn towards ethical relativism, where the boundaries between religious principles and social adaptation become blurred. In the context of Islam, this can trigger concerns about the 'weakening' of religious norms which are actually contrary to the principles of *sharia*.³⁸ Some social researchers consider Giddens' theory to overemphasize individual agency in producing structures, thus ignoring rigid structural forces, such as the hegemony of digital platforms or the

³⁸ Habiburrahman, "Islam Dan Kapitalisme..."

monopoly of certain religious authorities that are difficult to negotiate in real practice.

This study responds to this criticism with two approaches: *First*, Adaptive Piety is positioned not as relativism, but as part of the *ijtihad* process that has firm guidelines, namely adhering to the *maqasid* of sharia, the principle of *tabayyun*, and submission to the norms of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Flexibility here is methodological, not substantive. *Second*, in using Structuration Theory, this study still acknowledges the existence of large structural forces such as algorithmic logic, platform bias, and influencer dominance. Therefore, the adaptation of piety is not just an individual action, but needs to be carried out by structural changes, such as Islamic digital literacy education, strengthening the authority of religious credibility in cyberspace, and reformulating contextual preaching narratives.

Thus, this research provides a double contribution, both at the conceptual level (development of Social Interpretation to be more relevant in the digital era), and at the practical level (formulation of ethical strategies for Muslims in using media). All of this aims so that Indonesian Muslims can negotiate ideal piety with digital reality responsibly, as commanded by Allah in QS. At-Taghabun [64]: 16 to be pious according to capacity, including capacity in understanding and managing the challenges of complex digital space.³⁹

D. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the gap between the idealism of piety in Islam and the factual practices of Indonesian Muslims in the digital space. On the one hand, awareness of religious ethics such as *tabayyun*, media etiquette, and the prohibition of spreading hoaxes is quite high. However, in practice, behavior in cyberspace is still often trapped in an instant, emotional culture, and viral trends that are contrary to Islamic values.

This phenomenon shows that the challenges of digital ethics for Muslims are not only caused by a lack of knowledge, but also by technological design that

³⁹ Munadiyah Aftab, "Financial Fitrah: Re-Evaluating Spirituality..."

triggers moral dissonance, fragmented shifts in religious authority, and weak religious literacy that is applicable in the digital context. To answer these problems, the concept of adaptive piety offered in this study is relevant. Adaptive piety is a form of religiosity that is not rigid, but remains strongly rooted in the values of monotheism, morals, and maqasid sharia. This model encourages people to practice Islam that is contextual, critical, and responsible amidst the dynamics of the digital era. The Qur'an reminds us of the importance of contextual and reflective piety, the conclusion of this article also contains the meaning that readiness to face challenges, including the ethics of digital challenges, is an integral part of mature religiosity.

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