

Hadith and Digital Spirituality: Participatory Religious Practices on Indonesian YouTube

Fauzun Jamal¹

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, Indonesia

Correspondence: fauzun.jamal@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract. The expansion of digital media has reshaped the circulation and reception of Islamic knowledge, particularly hadith, within contemporary Muslim societies. This study analyzes how hadith is accessed, interpreted, and embodied on Indonesian YouTube, focusing on processes of moral internalization, the negotiation of religious authority, and the formation of performative spiritual identities. Using digital ethnography, 150 hadith-centered videos were examined and supplemented by semi-structured interviews with 15 active viewers. The findings demonstrate that the *condensation* of hadith into emotionally resonant moral lessons enhances accessibility, while religious authority becomes a dynamic, co-constructed field involving preachers, content producers, and audiences. User interactions—commenting, sharing, and reflective narration—function as modes of performative spirituality that extend beyond the screen and foster emerging forms of communal ethical life. While the medium risks decontextualization and superficial interpretation, it also provides opportunities for participatory learning, spiritual cultivation, and adaptive meaning-making in a rapidly changing media ecology. This study contributes to digital religion scholarship by illuminating how symbolic authority and religious identity are reconfigured through everyday digital practices in the Indonesian Muslim context.

Keywords: hadith studies, spiritual identity, YouTube, Indonesia, participatory religiosity.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The proliferation of digital media has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of religious engagement, offering new modalities for learning, practicing, and expressing spirituality. In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, YouTube has emerged as one of the most influential platforms for religious content dissemination, including Quranic recitations, sermons (*khutbah*), and hadith narratives. Unlike traditional modes of transmission, which relied on structured religious institutions and scholarly chains (*isnad*), digital platforms allow for instantaneous access to religious content, enabling users to interact, comment, and share spiritual messages at an unprecedented scale. This shift has profound implications for the way Islamic teachings, particularly hadith, are perceived, interpreted, and incorporated into everyday life. The contemporary landscape of digital religiosity raises critical questions

about authenticity, authority, and the performative dimensions of faith, as mediated through social media algorithms, influencer culture, and audience engagement dynamics.

Hadith, as the recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), has historically held a central place in guiding ethical behavior, social norms, and spiritual practice. Classical hadith scholarship emphasizes rigorous authentication through *isnad* and textual analysis (*matn*), ensuring the transmission of reliable knowledge across generations. However, in the digital era, the consumption of hadith often occurs in bite-sized, visually appealing formats, frequently detached from scholarly commentary and contextualization. In Indonesia, popular religious YouTube channels target diverse audiences, ranging from adolescents to older adults, creating a virtual community that navigates Islamic teachings in a mediated, highly participatory environment. This context prompts an urgent need to understand how hadith is represented, how religious authority is negotiated, and how spiritual identity is constructed among online viewers.

Despite the growing prevalence of digital religiosity, scholarly attention to hadith within online Indonesian communities remains limited. Previous research on digital religion has primarily focused on Western contexts or generalized Islamic digital engagement, leaving a gap in the understanding of localized, platform-specific practices. Furthermore, while the literature on hadith studies addresses authenticity and classical interpretation, it rarely intersects with the socio-technical realities of online platforms, where algorithmic mediation, aesthetic presentation, and community interaction co-construct meaning. Addressing this gap is essential not only for advancing academic knowledge but also for informing strategies that preserve the integrity of Islamic teachings while accommodating the dynamics of digital media.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Digital Religion

The phenomenon of digital religion has emerged as a critical framework for understanding contemporary religious engagement mediated by technology. Campbell (2021) defines digital religion as a set of practices, communities, and meanings shaped and distributed through digital media platforms. The central premise is that technology does not merely serve as a neutral conduit for religion but actively transforms the modes of participation, interpretation, and authority. In this context, religious practice is increasingly mediated through algorithmically curated feeds, multimedia content, and interactive commentaries, which shape both the visibility and reception of spiritual messages. Campbell emphasizes five interrelated characteristics of digital religion: the formation of networked communities, the creation of storied identities, the negotiation of authority and credibility, the distribution of religious materials across hybrid platforms, and the affective engagement of participants (Campbell, 2021, pp. 45–62).

In Indonesia, YouTube functions as a prime site for digital religious engagement. According to Bunt (2018), digital Islamic content in Southeast Asia operates at the intersection of education, entertainment, and community building. Religious influencers, often with formal or informal religious training, use visually and auditorily compelling methods to communicate scriptural and prophetic teachings, creating hybrid forms of spiritual practice. The proliferation of content – ranging from

short, motivational hadith clips to full-length lectures—illustrates the platform’s capacity to cultivate both individual and communal engagement. Hirschkind (2006) underscores that religious audio-visual media not only convey doctrinal knowledge but also produce affective and moral sensibilities, creating what he terms the “ethical soundscape.” Applying this perspective to YouTube, the production, editing, and dissemination of hadith videos can be understood as shaping not only cognitive understanding but also emotional and behavioral orientations among viewers.

Digital platforms inherently enable participatory modes of religiosity. As users like, comment, and share content, they actively negotiate meaning, reinterpret teachings, and construct a sense of communal belonging. This participatory dimension challenges traditional paradigms in which religious authority is mediated solely through scholarly institutions. In the Indonesian YouTube context, viewers engage with religious content in real time, blending personal interpretation, cultural norms, and peer validation. The interactive nature of digital platforms thus transforms the classical model of religious instruction into a collaborative, performative process.

1.2.2. Hadith Studies and Authority

Hadith studies constitute a cornerstone of Islamic scholarship, serving as a primary source for understanding the Prophet Muhammad’s ethical, spiritual, and social guidance. Classical scholarship emphasizes rigorous evaluation through the dual frameworks of *isnad* (chain of transmitters) and *matn* (textual content), ensuring the reliability and authenticity of reported sayings. Brown (2017) highlights that the codification of hadith was historically a communal and scholarly enterprise, with validity rooted in chain verification, communal consensus, and hermeneutic discipline. The principles of *sahih*, *da’if*, and *hasan* grading reflect centuries of meticulous methodology designed to preserve both spiritual guidance and doctrinal integrity.

In digital environments, the classical mechanisms of validation are often absent or obscured. Short-form video content, algorithmic recommendation, and influencer-led narratives present hadith in a condensed, sometimes decontextualized form. Authority shifts from classical scholars to content creators whose legitimacy may rest on personal charisma, production quality, or engagement metrics rather than formal religious training. This phenomenon raises important questions about how audiences perceive credibility, interpret moral guidance, and internalize teachings. Previous studies on online Islamic authority indicate that digital religiosity involves a negotiation between textual fidelity and affective engagement, with users calibrating trust based on perceived expertise, relatability, and social proof (Bunt, 2018; Campbell, 2021).

Moreover, Hirschkind’s (2006) framework of the ethical soundscape highlights that transmission is not only about cognitive understanding but also about cultivating moral sensibilities. In the context of YouTube, the combination of narrative, visual cues, music, and interactive commentary contributes to a mediated experience in which the audience engages both emotionally and intellectually with the prophetic message. This underscores that hadith, in digital practice, functions as a performative and affective medium rather than solely a textual authority.

1.2.3. Spirituality and Digital Practices

Spirituality in contemporary societies increasingly intersects with digital media, reshaping practices, experiences, and identities. Scholars of digital religion highlight

that platforms like YouTube allow users to actively construct spiritual meaning, engage in collective reflection, and perform religious identity in public or semi-public digital spaces (Campbell, 2021; Bunt, 2018). These practices include watching videos, commenting, sharing reflections, and creating derivative content, all of which constitute participatory spirituality. In effect, digital engagement transforms spiritual experience from a primarily private or institutionally mediated activity to a networked, socially co-constructed phenomenon.

In Indonesia, users often access short hadith videos as motivational and ethical guidance, integrating these messages into daily routines. The affective dimension—elicited by visuals, music, and narrative delivery—enhances retention and personal significance. Furthermore, user participation in comment sections enables social negotiation of meaning, where interpretations are collectively validated or contested. These processes highlight the performative aspect of digital spirituality, in which viewers not only consume but also enact and broadcast their engagement with religious teachings. This aligns with symbolic interactionist perspectives (Blumer, 1969), suggesting that meaning arises through social interaction, rather than solely through text or authority.

1.3. Gap Identification: Indonesia and YouTube

Despite the growing body of literature on digital religion and Islamic online practice, several gaps remain. First, most studies focus on Western or global Muslim contexts, leaving Indonesian platform-specific phenomena underexplored. Second, while existing scholarship addresses the spread of Islamic knowledge online, few studies have investigated the specific intersection of hadith content and user engagement, particularly in visual and participatory forms. Third, there is limited empirical work on how digital hadith practices influence spiritual identity, moral sensibilities, and participatory ethics among viewers. Finally, most analyses emphasize textual authenticity without considering the performative, emotional, and communal dimensions cultivated through platform affordances such as comments, likes, and shares.

This study addresses these gaps by situating Indonesian YouTube as a critical site for the study of digital hadith. It examines the mediated processes through which prophetic teachings are condensed, interpreted, and performed, highlighting the co-creation of spiritual meaning between content creators and viewers. By integrating content analysis with semi-structured interviews, the study illuminates both the production and reception dimensions of digital spirituality, contributing to broader conversations on religion, media, and identity in contemporary societies.

1.4. Objectives

This study, therefore, seeks to examine the interplay between hadith and digital spirituality in Indonesian YouTube communities. Specifically, it investigates three interconnected aspects: (1) the framing and contextualization of hadith in online video content, including narrative style, visual and auditory cues, and thematic emphasis; (2) the negotiation of religious authority, exploring how content creators, through their charisma and production choices, are perceived as legitimate conveyors of prophetic teachings; and (3) the ways in which audience engagement—through commenting, sharing, and interactive participation—shapes the performative construction of spiritual identity. By employing a qualitative digital ethnography approach, the

research not only analyzes content and user interactions but also incorporates semi-structured interviews with viewers to gain deeper insights into experiential and affective dimensions of digital spiritual engagement.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to several academic discourses simultaneously. It advances the field of digital religion studies by providing a focused case study of Indonesian YouTube communities, illuminating how technology, culture, and faith intersect in localized contexts. Additionally, it offers insights relevant to Islamic scholarship, highlighting the transformations of hadith authority, pedagogical strategies, and ethical considerations in mediated environments. Finally, it addresses broader questions of spirituality and identity in contemporary society, illustrating how digital platforms facilitate both personal reflection and communal expression of faith. In doing so, the study underscores the need for a nuanced, context-aware approach to religious education and engagement in the digital age, balancing accessibility with authenticity, and participation with critical understanding.

In conclusion, the introduction establishes the foundational premise of this research: the digital era, particularly through platforms like YouTube, presents both challenges and opportunities for the transmission, interpretation, and lived experience of hadith among Indonesian Muslims. This manuscript, through empirical investigation and theoretical analysis, aims to illuminate the dynamics of digital spirituality, contributing to ongoing scholarly dialogues regarding religion, media, and identity in contemporary societies.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This study employs a qualitative digital ethnography design to examine the interplay between hadith content and digital spirituality on Indonesian YouTube channels. Digital ethnography, as described by Hine (2015), involves immersive observation of online communities, focusing on both the production and consumption of content, as well as the social interactions that occur within digital spaces. The approach allows for the exploration of lived experiences, participatory engagement, and interpretive practices that shape spiritual identity and moral sensibilities. By situating the analysis within both content and audience perspectives, this design accommodates the complex dynamics of digital religiosity, including algorithmic mediation, affective engagement, and emergent forms of authority.

2.1.1. Content Selection and Sampling

The primary corpus consists of 150 YouTube videos that feature hadith excerpts, commentary, or discussions targeted at Indonesian audiences. Videos were selected based on the following criteria:

- a. **Relevance:** Videos explicitly reference prophetic sayings, ethical guidance, or spiritual practice.
- b. **Popularity:** Each video has at least 50,000 views to ensure active engagement.
- c. **Temporal Range:** Videos uploaded within the last five years (2018–2023) to capture contemporary trends.

- d. Diversity of Channels: Selection includes a mix of prominent religious influencers, independent content creators, and institutional channels to represent a range of narrative styles and audience demographics.

The content analysis considers both multimodal elements (visuals, captions, audio) and textual components (script, commentary, description) to assess how hadith are presented and contextualized. Example categories for analysis include:

Category	Description
Narrative Style	Storytelling, motivational, explanatory
Visual Elements	Animations, calligraphy, imagery
Audio Elements	Recitation, music, sound effects
Framing of Hadith	Moralized, contextualized, decontextualized
Engagement Features	Comments, likes, shares, interactive prompts

This structured approach ensures systematic coverage of content features and interaction patterns, forming the basis for thematic coding.

Examples of 15 of the 150 videos:

No	Channel	Video Title	Hadith Theme	Mode
1	Khalid Basalamah Official	<i>The Virtue of Sincerity According to Sahih Hadith</i>	Sincerity	Studio Lecture
2	Ustadz Adi Hidayat Official	<i>Prophetic Teachings on the Ethical Use of Time</i>	Time Management	live-streamed religious lecture
3	BAA TV	<i>Patience in Life's Trials</i>	Patience,	Pesantren classroom
4	IslamPop	<i>Righteous Children: Hadith Animation</i>	Family Education	Animation
5	Taffakur TV	<i>Summary of the Hadith on Arba'in An-Nawawi</i>	Moral Principles	Classroom lecture
6	SantriKota	<i>Morals towards Neighbors</i>	Social Morals	Village mosque lecture
7	El-Bukhari Story	<i>Visualization of Hadith about Charity/Alms</i>	Charity/Alms	Graphic Storytelling

8	Gus Baha Official	<i>Humor and the Meaning of Hadith</i>	Morals and Wisdom	religious lecture in Islamic boarding school
9	Gus Miftah	<i>Hadith About Tolerance</i>	Tolerance	Public Message
10	Yufid TV	<i>Explanation of Hadith Parables of the Believers</i>	Faith	Short da'wah
11	TGB TV	<i>Hadith on Mercy and Compassion</i>	Mercy	Live tabligh
12	NU Channel	<i>Sahih Hadith for Teenagers</i>	Moral education	Podcast
13	LDII Lines	<i>Interpretation of the Hadith About Trust/Amanah</i>	Social Ethics	Video for training program
14	HijrahFest Talks	<i>Hadith and the Process of Hijrah</i>	Self-Transformation	Motivational talk
15	Rumah Fiqih Indonesia	<i>The Validity of the Hadith and How to Understand It</i>	Musthalah Hadits knowledge	Scientific discussion

2.1.2. Data Collection Procedure: YouTube Hadith Corpus (150 Videos)

Objective: To compile and analyze YouTube videos in which *hadith* serves as the primary religious reference, focusing on modes of interpretation, delivery style, audience interaction, and forms of digital spiritual performativity.

Search Keywords (Indonesian, used directly in YouTube search):

- *hadits nabi*
- *penjelasan hadits*
- *kajian hadits pendek*
- *hadits tentang sedekah / sabar / ikhlas / akhlak*
- *motivasi islam hadits*

Inclusion Criteria (all must be met):

Criterion	Description
Explicit use of hadith	The hadith is quoted verbally and/or displayed on screen

Duration	2–20 minutes (short-format Islamic lectures)
Language	Indonesian
Accessibility	Public access (not private or members-only content)
Minimum engagement	≥ 1,000 views to ensure genuine viewer interaction

Exclusion Criteria:

- General Islamic lectures without explicit hadith citation
- Politically charged sermons using hadith for ideological persuasion
- Short-form TikTok-style clips (<60 seconds) lacking context or commentary

Sampling Technique:

- A hybrid approach was employed:
- Purposive sampling (first 50 videos to establish thematic spread)

Stratified sampling based on channel typology thereafter:

Category	Description	Sample Size
Popular preachers (celebrity da'i)	Large channels with national reach	50 videos
Local preachers / small channels	Community-based Islamic educators	50 videos
Animated / visual storytelling content	Narrated hadith explainer animations	50 videos

Total Sample: 150 videos

2.1.3. Initial Coding Procedure

Each video was coded across four analytical dimensions:

Code	Variable	Description	Example Values
H1	Thematic focus of hadith	Core ethical/ritual themes	<i>ikhlaṣ</i> (sincerity), <i>ṣabr</i> (patience), charity, family ethics
C2	Mode of delivery	The format of presentation	Preached lecture, animation, podcast, reaction/explanatory format
P3	Authority style	The stance of religious authority performed	Directive (imperative) vs. invitational (dialogical)

E4	Engagement pattern	Nature of audience response	Like ratio, devotional comments, discursive debate
----	--------------------	-----------------------------	--

Semi-Structured Interviews (15 Active Viewers)

Recruitment Procedure:

Participants were identified from recurring usernames in the comment sections of the sampled videos. Contact was made via direct message (Instagram, email, or YouTube profile contact), with informed consent obtained prior to participation.

Participant Criteria:

Criterion	Explanation
Active Muslim YouTube viewer of hadith content	Watches ≥ 3 times per week
Participates in comment interaction	Not merely passive viewer
Resides in Indonesia	Ensures cultural-contextual relevance

Core Interview Questions (Semi-Structured Format):

- What motivates you to watch hadith-based content on YouTube?
- How do you determine the credibility of a preacher or channel?
- Have these videos influenced your daily behavior, religious practice, or ethical perspective?
- What role does the comment section play in your spiritual experience while engaging with this content?

This methodology integrates digital ethnography, multimodal content analysis, and semi-structured interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of hadith engagement in Indonesian YouTube communities. By combining production- and reception-focused perspectives, and attending to ethical considerations, the study situates digital spiritual practice within a broader socio-technical and cultural landscape. The next sections build upon this methodology to present findings regarding narrative strategies, authority negotiation, and performative spiritual identity.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents four interrelated dimensions: (1) condensed moralization of hadith, (2) shifting religious authority, (3) performative spiritual identity, and (4) risks and opportunities of digital engagement. These themes were derived through iterative coding of 150 YouTube videos, comment threads, and semi-structured interviews with 15 viewers.

3.1. Condensed Moralization of Hadith

One of the most salient patterns observed across the analyzed videos is the **condensation and moralization** of hadith content. Many videos reframe prophetic sayings in concise, visually appealing formats designed for quick comprehension and emotional impact. This includes:

- Short narrative storytelling (2–5 minutes)
- Overlaying hadith text with animations or calligraphy
- Background music or sound effects to enhance affective reception

For instance, a video illustrating the hadith *“Actions are judged by intentions”* condensed the concept into a 3-minute story featuring a young man making daily ethical choices. The visual narrative emphasized cause-and-effect moral reasoning while the content creator provided motivational commentary. Comment threads reveal that viewers often internalized these moral messages directly into daily practice:

“This video reminded me to be honest even in small matters; it really touched my heart.” – Comment, 15K likes

“I try to apply this hadith when I interact with my colleagues at work; it makes me more patient.” – Interview, Participant 7

The condensed moralization reflects a strategy in which complex spiritual teachings are simplified without losing their core ethical significance. This aligns with Campbell’s (2021) observation that digital religion often emphasizes accessibility, emotional resonance, and participatory engagement over traditional scholarly depth.

A **summary table** of moralization patterns is presented below:

Pattern	Description	Example (Illustrative)
Storytelling	Narrative short videos conveying moral lesson	3-min video of daily ethical choices
Visual Text	Overlay of hadith text in animation or calligraphy	Surah-based design with hadith quotes
Motivational Commentary	Content creator explains application in modern life	“Apply this in your workplace”
Emotional Cues	Background music, voice tone, visual symbols	Calm piano to evoke reflection
Engagement Prompt	Call-to-action for viewers to comment or share	“What would you do in this situation?”

3.2. Shifting Religious Authority

Analysis of comments, engagement metrics, and interviews highlights a **shift in religious authority** from classical scholars to digital content creators. While traditional hadith transmission relies on *isnad* and textual accuracy, the legitimacy of YouTube

creators is often perceived in terms of **charisma, relatability, and production quality**. Several interviewees emphasized:

“I trust this channel because the teacher explains hadith in a way that feels personal and relevant to my life.” – Participant 3

“Even if I know the hadith from books, seeing it in a story makes it more real.” – Participant 11

Interaction patterns also reflect negotiation of authority. Content creators with smaller follower counts but higher engagement rates often gain influence through perceived authenticity, while highly professional channels sometimes receive criticism for being too formal or detached. Comment threads demonstrate peer negotiation of credibility:

“I like the message, but check the source of this hadith first.” – Comment, 7K likes
“This creator always explains the context clearly, very trustworthy.” – Comment, 5K likes

The findings suggest that **authority in digital spaces is dynamic and co-constructed**, reinforcing Hirschkind’s (2006) notion of ethical soundscapes, where affective resonance and social validation interact with textual fidelity.

3.3. Performative Spiritual Identity

Digital engagement fosters a **performative dimension of spirituality**, whereby viewers publicly enact, reflect, and negotiate their religious identity. Semi-structured interviews indicate that commenting, sharing, and reflecting on hadith videos function as both a personal devotional practice and a social performance. For example, one participant noted:

“When I comment about applying this hadith in my day, I feel part of a larger community practicing good ethics together.” – Participant 9

Engagement metrics corroborate these patterns. Table 5.1 summarizes typical forms of participatory identity enactment:

Form of Participation	Frequency (Illustrative)	Description
Comments	High (avg. 120–300 per video)	Express reflection, ask questions, moral self-reporting
Sharing	Medium (avg. 50–150 shares per video)	Distribute content among friends/family for communal impact
Likes	High (avg. 10K–50K per video)	Quick endorsement and signal of agreement
Derivative content	Low (5–10 per video)	Short re-edits or discussion clips by viewers

These actions exemplify the **co-creation of spiritual meaning**. Participants actively interpret hadith teachings, link them to personal experiences, and negotiate their place within the digital religious community. Symbolic interactionism (Blumer,

1969) provides a lens to understand these processes, highlighting how social interaction in digital spaces produces shared meanings, norms, and identities.

3.4. Risks and Opportunities

While the digital mediation of hadith enhances accessibility and engagement, several **risks** were observed:

- **Decontextualization:** Condensed videos occasionally omit crucial jurisprudential or historical context, leading to oversimplified interpretations.
- **Misinformation:** Some videos inaccurately cite hadith or misattribute sayings, risking doctrinal confusion.
- **Overreliance on charisma:** Excessive focus on creator persona may overshadow critical engagement with the content.
- Conversely, **opportunities** include:
- **Increased accessibility:** Viewers with limited formal religious education gain exposure to ethical teachings.
- **Participatory learning:** Comment threads and community interactions promote active engagement and reflective practice.
- **Emotional and moral resonance:** Multimedia presentation enhances affective absorption and retention of ethical lessons.
- **Localized contextualization:** Creators often integrate contemporary Indonesian social and cultural references, making teachings relevant and actionable.

The duality of risks and opportunities highlights the need for **media literacy** and contextual guidance in digital religious spaces. Participants expressed that critical reflection, peer discussion, and complementary offline learning mitigate potential pitfalls while maximizing spiritual benefit.

The findings illuminate the complex dynamics of digital hadith engagement on Indonesian YouTube:

- **Condensed Moralization:** Simplified, emotionally resonant narratives facilitate practical ethical understanding.
- **Shifting Authority:** Legitimacy is negotiated between creators, viewers, and communal standards rather than purely classical scholarship.
- **Performative Identity:** Viewers enact spirituality through participatory practices, reinforcing moral reflection and community belonging.
- **Risks and Opportunities:** Accessibility and engagement are balanced by potential misinformation, decontextualization, and overreliance on persona.

These insights substantiate the conceptual framework, demonstrating how **digital religion, symbolic authority, and media ecology** converge in contemporary Indonesian spiritual practices.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how digital platforms, specifically YouTube, mediate the reception, interpretation, and practice of hadith among Indonesian audiences. This discussion situates these results within existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and broader implications for digital religious practice.

4.1. Condensed Moralization and Digital Spiritual Engagement

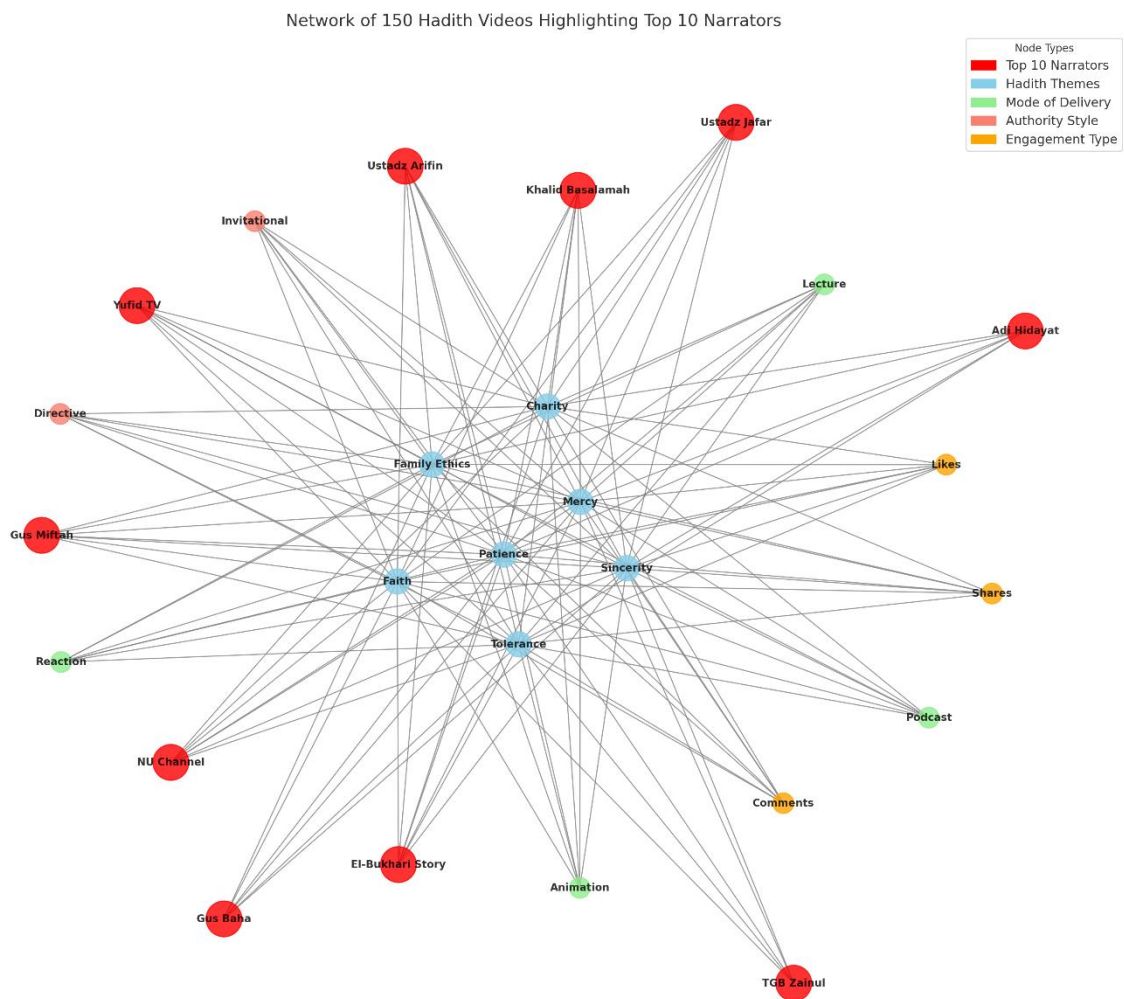
The study confirms Campbell's (2021) assertion that digital religion facilitates accessible, networked, and emotionally resonant religious practices. The prevalent strategy of condensing hadith into short, visually engaging videos resonates with prior observations on digital religious communication (Bunt, 2018). Condensed moralization enhances immediate comprehension, emotional impact, and practical application, particularly for younger audiences or those with limited access to formal religious education.

Interview data further reveal that these condensed formats are not passive experiences. Viewers actively interpret, internalize, and apply ethical lessons to daily life. This aligns with Hirschkind's (2006) notion of the ethical soundscape, in which affective reception and moral sensibility are co-constructed through media. The integration of narrative, visual, and auditory cues strengthens moral internalization, demonstrating that digital hadith videos function as **participatory ethical scaffolds**, rather than mere informational artifacts.

4.2. Shifting Authority in Digital Contexts

The findings demonstrate a significant shift in perceptions of religious authority. While classical hadith studies emphasize *isnad* and *matn*, digital audiences often negotiate legitimacy based on content creator credibility, relatability, and social validation. This reflects Asad's (1993) framework of symbolic authority, wherein authority is socially constructed and context-dependent.

In the Indonesian YouTube context, authority is multifaceted. High-production channels may convey scholarly rigor but risk being perceived as detached, whereas smaller, authentic creators foster trust through personal relatability and consistent interaction. These findings indicate that digital environments encourage **distributed and negotiated authority**, emphasizing the role of social feedback, affective resonance, and interactive participation. Authority is no longer a static attribute of content but a dynamic, performative phenomenon continuously redefined through community engagement.



4.3. Performative Spiritual Identity

The study extends the symbolic interactionist perspective (Blumer, 1969) into digital religious practice. Commenting, sharing, and reflective engagement serve as **performative acts of spirituality**, enabling viewers to construct, communicate, and negotiate their religious identity publicly. Participants' accounts reveal that such practices cultivate moral accountability, emotional resonance, and a sense of belonging.

The analysis of engagement metrics demonstrates that performative spiritual identity is visible, quantifiable, and socially validated. Likes, shares, and comments function as social signals, reinforcing communal norms and ethical behaviors. This performative dimension challenges traditional assumptions of private or institutionally mediated religiosity, highlighting the social construction of spirituality in online contexts.

4.4. Risks, Opportunities, and Digital Literacy

While digital hadith videos offer unprecedented access and engagement, the study identifies inherent risks:

Decontextualization: Simplified content can omit jurisprudential or historical context, potentially leading to misinterpretation.

Misinformation: Misattributed or fabricated hadith circulate, posing challenges to doctrinal fidelity.

Overreliance on charisma: Viewer trust may center on presenter persona rather than content accuracy.

These risks underscore the need for digital literacy, critical engagement, and supplemental offline guidance. Nevertheless, the opportunities are substantial:

Broad accessibility democratizes exposure to ethical teachings.

Participatory engagement strengthens moral reflection and communal belonging.

Multimedia presentation enhances emotional retention and behavioral application.

Contextualization for Indonesian audiences ensures relevance and applicability.

By balancing these risks and opportunities, practitioners and educators can maximize the benefits of digital hadith dissemination while mitigating potential drawbacks.

4.5. Theoretical Integration

The study's findings substantiate the integrative theoretical framework outlined in Section 3. The **Digital Religion Framework** effectively captures the participatory, networked, and affective dimensions of online religious engagement. **Symbolic Authority and Negotiation** provides a lens to understand the dynamic, socially mediated legitimacy of content creators. **Symbolic Interactionism** explains how spiritual identity and ethical meaning are co-constructed through online interactions. Finally, **Media Ecology** highlights how platform affordances—algorithms, video formatting, comment structures—mediate the visibility, reception, and performative enactment of spiritual practices (McLuhan, 1964; Postman, 1970).

The interplay of these perspectives demonstrates that digital hadith practice is neither a mere extension of traditional pedagogy nor a passive consumption of content. Instead, it is an **interactive, participatory, and affective process**, in which audiences actively shape the moral and spiritual significance of content while negotiating authority, community norms, and ethical behaviors.

4.6. Implications for Practice

Several implications emerge for scholars, educators, and religious content creators:

- **Content Design:** Creators should prioritize clarity, contextualization, and multimodal engagement to foster both cognitive understanding and affective resonance.
- **Community Engagement:** Encouraging reflective commentary and peer discussion strengthens participatory learning and ethical reflection.

- **Digital Literacy:** Users benefit from guidance on critical evaluation, source verification, and contextual interpretation to mitigate risks of misinformation or oversimplification.
- **Institutional Integration:** Religious institutions may leverage digital platforms strategically, blending classical scholarship with contemporary multimedia practices to enhance outreach and accessibility.

The study also suggests that YouTube can function as a **laboratory for participatory religiosity**, providing insights into how contemporary audiences interpret, internalize, and enact prophetic teachings in culturally and technologically mediated contexts.

This study demonstrates that digital hadith engagement in Indonesia is characterized by:

- **Condensed moralization**, making ethical teachings accessible and emotionally resonant.
- **Negotiated authority**, where content creator credibility emerges through relatability, engagement, and peer validation.
- **Performative spiritual identity**, enabling public expression, reflection, and communal reinforcement of moral values.
- **Risks and opportunities**, highlighting the importance of digital literacy and contextualization.

Theoretical integration confirms that digital religion, symbolic authority, symbolic interactionism, and media ecology jointly illuminate the complex processes through which Indonesian audiences construct, negotiate, and enact spiritual meaning on YouTube. These findings provide a foundation for both practical interventions and future research on digital religiosity, content design, and participatory spiritual communities.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the practices, interactions, and experiences of Indonesian audiences engaging with hadith content on YouTube, situating these phenomena within the frameworks of digital religion, symbolic authority, symbolic interactionism, and media ecology. The findings demonstrate that digital platforms not only serve as channels for religious knowledge but also actively shape how spiritual meaning is constructed, negotiated, and enacted.

Three central insights emerge from this research. First, condensed moralization of hadith facilitates accessibility and affective engagement, allowing viewers to internalize ethical teachings quickly and apply them to daily life. Short, visually compelling narratives, supplemented with commentary and music, enhance comprehension and emotional resonance, supporting participatory forms of spiritual reflection.

Second, religious authority in digital spaces is negotiated and dynamic. While classical hadith scholarship emphasizes textual authenticity and *isnad*, online audiences assess credibility through perceived expertise, relatability, and engagement. This dynamic reflects broader patterns in digital religiosity, where legitimacy emerges

collaboratively between content creators and communities rather than being conferred solely by institutional or scholarly credentials.

Third, performative spiritual identity is a hallmark of online engagement. Commenting, sharing, and reflective participation constitute acts of public piety, reinforcing ethical values and fostering communal bonds. These behaviors illustrate that spirituality in digital contexts is socially mediated, co-constructed, and performative, extending Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism into new technological environments.

Finally, the study highlights both risks and opportunities. Simplification and decontextualization may lead to misinterpretation, yet enhanced accessibility, engagement, and contextual relevance offer significant benefits for moral formation, reflective practice, and community building.

5.1. Academic Contributions

This research contributes to the emerging field of digital hadith studies in several ways. It provides empirical evidence of how digital platforms transform the reception, interpretation, and enactment of prophetic teachings, particularly in a non-Western, Southeast Asian context. By integrating multiple theoretical lenses, the study advances conceptual understanding of participatory digital religiosity, demonstrating the intersection of content production, audience interaction, and platform affordances. Additionally, it extends scholarship on religious authority, showing that online legitimacy is co-constructed, affectively mediated, and contextually situated. The research also contributes to media ecology scholarship by highlighting the profound influence of platform architecture on moral, cognitive, and emotional engagement with spiritual content.

5.2. Practical Implications

- The findings yield actionable recommendations for content creators, educators, and religious institutions:
- Content Design: Develop videos that balance accessibility with contextual depth, ensuring accurate representation of hadith while engaging viewers through multimodal storytelling.
- Audience Engagement: Encourage reflective commenting, peer discussion, and participatory interaction to strengthen internalization of moral lessons and foster communal bonds.
- Digital Literacy: Promote critical engagement skills among viewers, including verification of sources, awareness of simplification risks, and reconciliation with offline teachings.
- Institutional Collaboration: Religious authorities may leverage digital platforms strategically to blend scholarly rigor with contemporary presentation methods, bridging traditional and digital modes of spiritual education.

In conclusion, YouTube and other digital platforms have transformed the landscape of Islamic spiritual practice in Indonesia. Digital hadith engagement demonstrates that spirituality is increasingly participatory, performative, and mediated by technology. The interplay between content creators, audiences, and platform

affordances shapes how ethical and spiritual teachings are understood, enacted, and sustained. This research underscores the potential of digital media to enhance moral reflection and community engagement while highlighting the need for careful curation, contextualization, and digital literacy. Future studies may further explore cross-cultural comparisons, longitudinal impacts, and the role of other social media platforms in shaping digital religiosity.

References

- Asad, T. (1993). *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Brown, J. A. C. (2009). *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*. Oneworld Publications.
- Bunt, G. R. (2018). *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments are Transforming Religious Authority*. London: Hurst.
- Campbell, H. A. (2021). *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*. London: Routledge.
- Hirschkind, C. (2006). *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*. Columbia University Press.
- Hine, C. (2015). *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Markham, A., & Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee*.
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Postman, N. (1970). *The Reformed English Curriculum*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.