



Moderate Islamic Influencers in Digital Communication Discourse

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explain the digital communication patterns carried out by religious influencers in transmitting and distributing Islamic values as a representation of moderate Islam, with Habib Ja'far as the central figure. The data used in this qualitative study was gathered by looking at the YouTube login account of a channel that Onadio Leonardo and Habib Ja'far lead. Research data analysis refers to the concept of digital communication developed by Caroline Tagg, which emphasizes flexibility, freedom, and dialogue in digital interactions. The research results show that, first, in the new media era, content uploaded by the login account has become a strategic medium for conveying moderate Islamic values by utilizing an inclusive approach using relaxed, humorous, and engaging language. Second, Habib Ja'far, as a religious influencer, prioritizes the spirit of freedom of communication, namely the expression of religious beliefs that not only respect differences but also avoid blaming or denigrating other beliefs. This approach shows that Islam can be presented as a friendly, tolerant religion relevant to the times' challenges. This research contributes to understanding the role of digital communication in voicing Islamic values of moderation. These findings also offer a new perspective on how digital media can be a strategic space for conveying peaceful and inclusive Islamic narratives.

Keywords: Digital Communication, Influencer, Moderate Islam

INTRODUCTION

The existence of people who significantly impact their audiences' decisions, opinions, and behavior through digital platforms—particularly social media—is known as the influencer phenomenon (Triyas et al., 2024). Influencers use their popularity and reputation to influence public opinion, create trends, and frequently advertise products and services they endorse. Influencers use platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to spread messages and promote products. Millions of followers often follow their activities on social media (Silvia & Putra, 2024).

As a cultural arena, borrowing Bourdieu's term (Desan, 2013; Jatmiko & Abdullah, 2021), the spread of influencers indicates the existence of a new digital-based sub-culture in stimulating people's habitus, especially in the macro sector, social, economic, educational, political and religious (Affan & Saefudin, 2023; F. S. Pahlevi, 2021). To put it another way, people's behavior has changed as a result of social media and the enormous rise in opinions created by influencers—a phenomenon known to Western academics as "digital habitus." (Papacharissi et al., 2013; Romele & Rodighiero, 2020; Romele, 2024).

Today's academic world also pays attention to the influencer phenomenon. Various views were expressed from various points of view, including influencers as the "new ideal" of the younger generation, especially Generation Z (Meifitri, 2020), the impact of influencers on economic development, especially consumer decisions regarding a product (Lengkawati & Saputra, 2021; Wahyudi, 2022), content and endorsements (Charis et al., 2023; Erfiana & Purnamasari, 2023), influencer alliance/community (Erfiana & Purnamasari, 2023).

Numerous scholarly reports support the notion that influencers are representative of reality. In order to affect audience perception, influencers might, therefore, minimize or commercialize reality and truth bias on the Internet. Influencers from religion are included in this as well.

Public personalities' echoing and spreading of "spiritual hype" is another factor contributing to the rise of religious influencers. Consequently, an extensive "hijrah" movement emerged on social media (Fitri & Jayanti, 2020; Syahrin & Mustika, 2020). Although spiritualism on social media often does not touch religious substance, it is only limited to celebrations and for the sake of advertising ads. In other words, there is religious monetization on social media. However, as a phenomenon of "spiritual hype," it is also interesting to investigate further.

Religious influencer or da'wah influencer is a term used to describe individuals who use social media to spread spiritual teachings, especially Islam (Nafisah, 2023; Sajida et al., 2023). They are often called "new preachers" because how they deliver their da'wah is more interactive and engaging than traditional preachers. (Y. Rahmawati et al., 2024; Wibawa, 2019).

Scholars, in Indonesia in particular, have presented several views on the issue of religious influencers on social media, for example, on aspects of the role and function of religious influencers (A. Rahmawati et al., 2023), then aspects of the media platform used (A. Salam et al., 2020; Sulaiman et al., 2020), content characteristics (Dhora et al., 2023; Muzzammil, 2021), as well as the authenticity and credibility of religious influencers (Kiptiyah, 2017).

The academic views above show that the phenomenon of religious influencers on social media is a "new religious reality" that deserves attention and criticism for its development in the digital era (new media), said Heidi Campbell in her research on *When Religion Meets New Media* (Campbell, 2010). Echoing Campbell, Bryan Turner, and Mohamed Nasir (2016) in *Religious Authority and the New Media* say that Islamic authorities will face challenges from new media.

The visibility of social media in the digital communication paradigm is needed to transmit and distribute messages, content, ideology, or doctrine, including religious doctrine. Digital communication, according to Caroline Tagg in her book *Exploring Digital Communication Language in Action* (2015), is a very complex space for forming online interactions (language). In digital communication, religious influencers on social media must also become adept at communicating online using effective and widely used language since it is necessary to communicate religious doctrine comprehensibly.

The scope of digital communication is also vast, encompassing various forms of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which allow users to share content and interact in real time. Email and instant messaging are communication tools that allow the exchange of text, voice, and video messages quickly and efficiently. Video and audio conferencing technologies such as Zoom and Skype support high-quality remote communications, enabling interactive virtual meetings. Digital content, such as blogs, vlogs, and podcasts, provides a platform for delivering information and entertainment in a format that is easily accessible to users around the world (Asari et al., 2023; Fitriani, 2021).

Thus, this study aims to investigate the phenomena of religious influencers on the "Log In" YouTube account, which Deddy Corbuzier's Podcast Company runs. Habib Ja'far, who represented Islam, and Onadio Leonardo, also known as Leonardo Arya, who represents Christians, hosted this program. "Log In" is a virtual moderating space and a religious forum, hosting inclusive cross-faith conversations with speakers from various backgrounds. This phenomenon is interesting to discuss, considering the importance of creating a climate of moderation in cyberspace so that it can be echoed and gain massive social legitimacy. For instance, YouTube and other digital channels have shown themselves to be successful in spreading ideas of interfaith diversity through casual yet impactful conversations (Mughtar & Maulidawati, 2021).

For example, the episode "Log In" with the theme "Morning Temple, Afternoon Church, Eh, Told to Enter Islamic Boarding School!! Habib Ja'far is Surprised" after its premiere on March 13, 2024, until today it has reached 6,068,539 viewers and 156 thousand likes. The narrative built by "Login" is one of brotherhood between fellow human beings interspersed with "jokes on the edge of the cliff" about the religious beliefs of each source. By using the Digital Communication theory developed by Caroline Tagg, accompanied by West and Turner's views (2020) on aspects of digital communication, this research seeks to explain the characteristics of digital communication used by Habib Ja'far in interacting with sources on the YouTube program "Log In."

Digital communication has become one of the main pillars in conveying religious messages in the modern era. The presence of religious influencers on social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, has created a new dynamic in the propagation and representation of Islamic values. Various previous studies have revealed the role of digital media in disseminating religious content, both from the perspective of da'wah, community building, and influence on audience perception. However, most of this research still focuses on technical aspects or simply documents phenomena without an in-depth analysis of how moderate Islamic values are represented through the digital communication of religious influencers.

Several previous studies have shown that digital media provides an open space for various forms of da'wah, whether conservative, radical, or moderate. For example, research by Bunt (2018) explains the role of the Internet as a new space for religious ideological struggles. This research highlights how various groups use digital platforms to strengthen their respective ideologies but does not examine how moderate Islamic values are specifically articulated by religious influencers. On the other hand, research by Barendregt (2019) focuses on the phenomenon of "Islamic pop" in digital media, highlighting a more relaxed and approachable style of da'wah communication with young audiences. However, this research has not specifically discussed the communication strategies of religious influencers in voicing moderate Islamic values.

In addition, studies on Islamic moderation in digital media tend to focus on government policies or religious institutions. Research conducted by Azra (2017, 2019) shows the importance of Islamic moderation in maintaining social harmony amidst the plurality of the Indonesian nation. However, this research does not discuss the role of individuals, especially digital influencers, in representing Islamic moderation through their content. Influencers have a significant influence in shaping public opinion and becoming a bridge between religious values and the daily lives of their audiences.

Another study by Hussain and Howard (2020) was more oriented toward

digital radicalism, with an in-depth analysis of how extremist groups utilize social media. This research provides an overview of the threat of radicalism in cyberspace. However, it rarely highlights how moderate narratives can be used as effective counter-narratives, especially by religious influencers with vast influence on digital platforms.

In terms of methodology, most existing research uses a quantitative approach to measure the impact of digital communication on audiences. For example, research by Saragih et al. (Saragih et al., 2021) measured the audience acceptance of da'wah on social media. However, it did not explore the qualitative dimensions of the communication strategies used by religious influencers to convey moderate Islamic values. This creates a gap in understanding how audiences generate, communicate, and receive moderated messages in digital contexts.

This work can close several significant gaps in earlier research. First, the communication tactics religious influencers use to promote moderate Islamic principles are not mainly covered in the study. Second, there is still a dearth of research on creating and expressing moderate material in digital narratives. Third, by providing a fresh viewpoint—that is, from the viewpoint of individual actors who function as social media influencers—this study can add to the body of knowledge on Islamic moderation.

This research was carried out qualitatively (Harahap, 2020) to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of digital communication. Meanwhile, the approach used is library research and ethnography to observe the video of the "Log In" event on Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube platform. This approach allows researchers to explore various aspects of the interaction of religious influencers, namely Habib Ja'far, with sources.

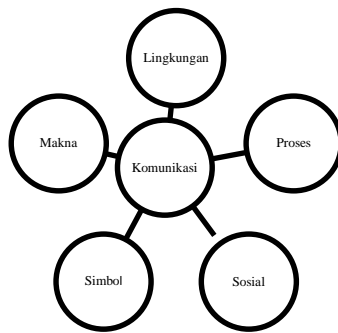
In collecting data, the method used was virtual observation of Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube channel, especially the "Log In" program, to observe and analyze several content that focused on topics such as religion and Habib Ja'far's digital communication style. This virtual observation is non-interventional. This means that researchers do not interact directly with research subjects but instead conduct in-depth observations. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The author observes several specific themes regarding moderate Islam in the "Log In" program.

Then, the analysis begins by viewing, observing, and categorizing themes about moderate Islam in the "Log In" program using tabulation. The analysis was carried out descriptively by referring to the results of observations, which were then explained theoretically. The analysis will involve categorizing relevant information to identify key patterns, themes, and findings in religious influencers' digital communications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Concepts of Digital Communication

The process of communicating ideas is a vital aspect of human existence. The English word "communication" is derived from the Latin word "communicatus," which meaning "sharing" or "belonging together." The sharing process that takes place between the participants in a communication activity is called communication. Through communication, people can exchange information with one another, including ideas, thoughts, and the substance of communications (Kartini et al., 2024; Pohan & Fitria, 2021; Sibuea & Fitriana, 2022). Let's see the concept of communication in the following thoughts of West and Turner



Source: O'sullivan et al., 1994; T. Turner et al., 2010

Figure 1. West & Turner's Communication Concept

According to West and Turner (Salam, 2020), communication is a social process in which individuals use symbols to create and interpret meaning in their environment. The definition above shows that communication takes place when five main concepts are fulfilled, namely: process (dynamic communication), social (human interaction), symbols (words, gestures, visual symbols, or tone of voice), meaning (the result of the message captured by the communicator), environment (the context in which communication occurs).

In the contemporary digital era, advanced information technology is causing a major revolution in communication. Because of this change, there are now new ways to communicate package messages in digital format, which makes them a significant part of daily life. McLuhan argued (Hana et al., 2023) that "technology has changed the way we communicate," meaning that technology has changed how we communicate. In line with McLuhan's opinion, technological developments have drastically changed the way we interact, work, and share

information. Its existence affects not only individuals but also organizations and society.

The exchange of information through electronic media and digital technology is the main characteristic of digital communication (Asari et al., 2023). It includes various platforms and tools that enable fast and efficient messaging, such as the Internet, computers, and mobile devices. In contrast to traditional communication, which relies on physical media such as letters, telephone, and face-to-face meetings, digital communication allows the exchange of information in seconds, reaches a broader audience without geographical limitations, and supports more interactive and dynamic interactions (O. D. Salam, 2020). Other advantages of digital communication include communication quality that no longer depends on distance and the use of communication tools that are more practical, stable, durable, and low-cost. (Hana et al., 2023; Hutabarat, 2023).

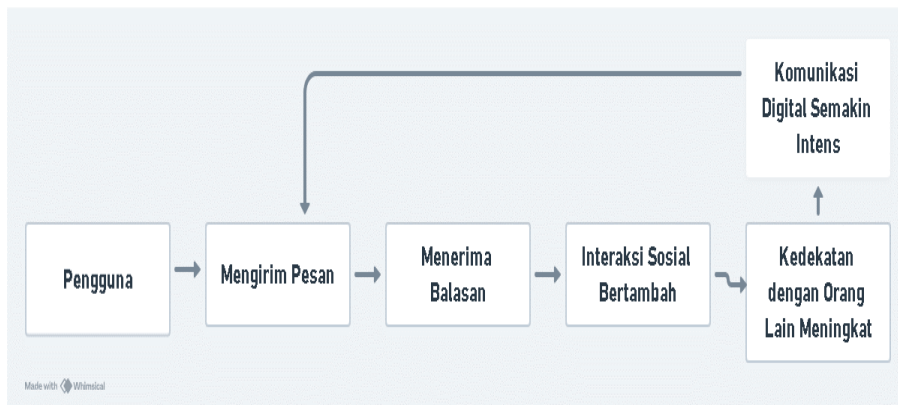
Even though conventional communication has been transformed into digital communication, the communication theory proposed by West and Turner (O. D. Salam, 2020) is closely related to digital communication theory. Even though West and Turner's theory was developed before the rapidly developing digital era, the concepts they put forward are still relevant in digital communication.

Advances greatly influence significant changes in how humans interact with information and communication technology (Andzani & Irwansyah, 2023; Azhar et al., 2018). With increasing internet access and the use of smart devices, digital communication facilitates interpersonal communication and expands human social reach globally (Boediman, 2023). The advent of the Internet and digital media has been a significant catalyst in this transformation, changing how humans communicate and interact.

Now, digital communication is the primary basis for social interaction in cyberspace; based on a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), in 2018, 18.9% of internet users in Indonesia used the Internet to communicate via social media. The most frequently accessed social media are Facebook with 50.7%, Instagram with 17.7%, and YouTube with 15.1% (APJII, 2018). Meanwhile, in the 2019 to 2020 period, social media use increased to 51.5%, with Facebook accessed by 65.8% of users, Instagram by 42.3%, and YouTube by 61% of users (APJII, 2020).

Meanwhile, the APJII survey in 2022 shows that 98.02% of Internet users in Indonesia use the Internet to access social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, and others. The most accessed social media are Facebook, 68.36%, and YouTube, 63.02% (APJII, 2022). This survey does not include data regarding Instagram, but the number of Instagram users is estimated to have increased (Arifah et al., 2022; Basit et al., 2022).

The implications of digital interactions for social dynamics are very diverse. Cahyono (2016), for example, highlighted several positive impacts of the emergence of social media. One is easy access to information, where people can quickly and easily get information from various sources worldwide. Plus, Liedfray's (2022) findings show that digital communication can facilitate social ties and strengthen ties within the family. Then Susanti's (2023) research shows that the role of TikTok media is not only influencing digital community interactions but also significantly contributing to the development of the digital identity of individuals and deepening their understanding of relevant social issues.



Source: Prabowo & Irwansyah, 2018):

Figure 2. Interaction Flow through Digital Communication

The flow of digital communication and its effects on social interactions in the digital age are depicted in Figure 2 above. A user initiates this process by delivering a text, sound, image, or video message through a digital platform. After that, the message's recipient reacts, starting a two-way conversation akin to in-person communication. Thanks to this message exchange, people can connect and interact without being limited by geography, enhancing social contact frequency. (Nugroho et al., 2024). Over time, consistent and ongoing communication through digital media can increase closeness between individuals, strengthening social relationships. This flow shows that the more frequently digital communication occurs, the more intense cyberspace interactions can deepen relationships and expand social networks (Ernawati & Suldani, 2020; Hutabarat, 2023).

Therefore, it is unsurprising that cyberspace is now the leading platform for various communication and social interaction, replacing many conventional face-to-face interactions. This transformation reflects a fundamental shift in how we communicate and build relationships, with digital technology enabling more

flexible, efficient, and inclusive communication (Wiranti & Frinaldi, 2023). This multidirectional interaction pattern makes someone enthusiastic about engaging in social media as their daily social interaction activity (Triantoro, 2019; Zis et al., 2021).

A person's involvement in social media is not just following trends but is a means of self-expression. This is in line with Andretta & Yuniati's (2024) research, which shows that TikTok social media is used as a means for them to express themselves. This is also reinforced by research conducted by Salam (2020), which found that social media is used to build personal branding and self-identity. Furthermore, research by Arifah et al. (2022) regarding the Genshin Impact game community shows that social media can help individuals find communities with the same interests.

Thus, digital society and virtual culture have emerged due to social interaction patterns in cyberspace. A collection of people connected by the Internet and participating online is known as a "cyber society." (Rachamna & Susan, 2021). They have a distinctive cyberculture, which includes ways of communicating, norms, and values that differ from physical culture. For example, the use of emoticons, slang, and memes in everyday communication is part of a growing cyber culture (Permata et al., 2023; Susanto et al., 2023). One actual manifestation of the cyberculture phenomena that is today embraced and valued by those who use the Internet is the existence of virtual culture through advanced digital technology.

The dynamics and structure of social relationships have undergone substantial modifications with the introduction of digital technology. Social media and instant messaging apps give people a way to create their online personas and connect with like-minded others (Arifah et al., 2022; O. D. Salam, 2020). However, this phenomenon also brings challenges, including the risk of technology addiction and a decline in the quality of face-to-face interactions (Zis et al., 2021). A study conducted by Liedfray et al., (2022) shows that although digital communication can strengthen social ties and provide emotional support, it can also cause social isolation and decreased direct communication skills, as was also found in research by Fitria et al., (2023). Apart from that, there are still several other challenges, such as hate speech, radicalism, SARA, and privacy security, which must be considered when interacting in cyberspace (Rachamna & Susan, 2021; Triantoro, 2019).

Religious Reality in the *New Media Era*

Caroline Tagg (2015) said that the central digital communication paradigm is not the technological media but rather the way people choose and explore a medium's affordances to convey ideas. This, continued Tagg (2015), can be seen from academic debates when digital communication is contrasted with older

communication media such as television and radio. This means that, in fact, television and radio, which are still relatively modern, according to some audiences or users of the digital entertainment business, are less rapidly distributed than new media such as YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram.

Religion remains a phenomenon that requires deliberate communication and dissemination to the public, particularly in the new media age. Religious knowledge is now easily and quickly accessible because of new media. Online searches are available for lectures, religious texts, and other learning resources. One can access websites, Instagram, podcasts, and YouTube videos of many religions and beliefs anytime and anywhere. For instance, the Muhammadiyah Channel (@mchannel1912) has been formed, and Nu Online has 1.27 million followers. It is followed by 134 thousand subscribers and accounts managed by well-known people, like the Instagram account *ceramahgusbaba*, "Log In" by Habib Ja'far, "Pamitnya Ngantor" by Rumail Abbas, and many more.

Many scholars, including Western scholars, have researched religious realities in the new media era. Some of their findings are interesting to discuss further, including: Benjamin Kirby and Yanti Hoelzchen on "Religious Infrastructure: Establishing a Research Agenda" (2024), Ibrahim Murtala regarding Islam in the era of digital infrastructure, which marks the development of digital Islamic practices (2024), then Matteo (Teo) Benussi's research entitled "Afterword: Religious Infrastructure, or Doing Religion in The Contemporary Mode" (2024). Benussi's thesis is interesting (2024). He said that the effects of sociotechnical development seen from a religious perspective contributed to the formation of *karios* ("right time" or "shared moment") as the infrastructure of the present, togetherness, and everyday life.

The thesis of the three scholars above, thus, states that religious infrastructure transcends the myth of modern secularity and develops based on the technicalities of high modernity. So, agreeing with Vicki A. Spencer's findings (2024), the phenomenon of "respect tolerance, misrecognition, and religious diversity" will develop in the new media era.

In the new media age, religion reflects the aspiration for social freedom. Olga Breskaya stated in her study "Religious Freedom: Thinking Sociologically" that monotheism and a strong belief in confronting different realities are the fundamental foundations (2022). Still, according to Breskaya (2022):

"over the past three decades, issues related to religious freedom have become increasingly important across a global spectrum, prompting a growing interdisciplinary area of study. The discourses on religion and human rights, citizenship, and religion and state relations have become intertwined due to the shared centrality of the struggle over religious freedom."

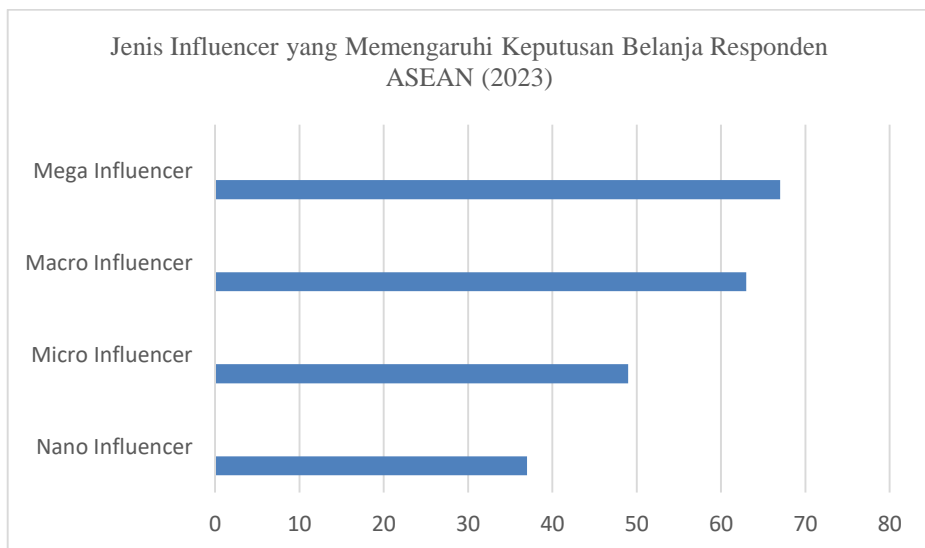
The important variables presented by Olga Breskaya (2022) in the context

of religious freedom (expression) are human rights and the rights of fellow citizens. Understanding humans (people) and their religious practices must give rise to an attitude of respect and tolerance, to borrow Vicki A. [Spencer's term for fellow humans \(2024\)](#). Therefore, the religious language presented by religious influencers and/or religious leaders must be able to touch the people's conscience.

For example, K.H. Ahmad Baha'uddin Nursalim (Gus Baha'), through his Instagram account "ceramahgusbaha" or "ngajikyaigusbaha," always conveys narratives of monotheism, faith, and brotherhood in a light and contextual manner ([Munif & Asmani, 2022](#); [Qudsy & Muzakky, 2021](#)), as well as online recitation of the book Ihya' Ulumuddin via live Facebook which was taught by K.H. Ulil Abshar Abdalla (Gus Ulil) ([Fitriana & Ridlwan, 2021](#); [Saifullah, 2022](#)) who conveyed the message to behave moderately and avoid radical attitudes, as taught by Imam al-Ghazali ([Faza, 2021](#); [Rijal & Hakim, 2021](#)).

Characteristics of Digital Communication of Religious Influencers: Habib Ja'far's Context in the "Log In" Program

Influencers on social media have a significant impact on building audience discourse. See the figure below:



Source: metadata.co.id, 2023

Figure 3. Cube Asia e-commerce influencer marketing in SEA (2023)

In 2023, Cube Asia surveyed 2,300 samples of social media users spread across six central Southeast Asian market countries, namely Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam. As a result, the majority, or 67% of respondents, admitted that their shopping decisions were influenced by mega

influencers (number of followers > 1 million) (metadata.co.id). Meanwhile, other respondents were influenced by macro-influencers (number of followers 100 thousand-1 million), micro-influencers (number of followers 10 thousand-100 thousand), and nano-influencers (number of followers 1 thousand-10 thousand).

Communication is always related to language. Language is positioned as a medium and symbol of communication that uses signs and markers at the same time (Nurdin & Labib, 2021). Language is a signifier that generates semantic knowledge by disseminating discourse to the whole population. For their listeners to receive the same frequency, social media influencers and narrators must first master this semantic understanding. On the one hand, language and semantic comprehension are crucial, but on the other, this element is equally tricky and problematic.

For example, semantic bias often occurs due to influencers' failure to understand language comprehensively. This semantic bias arises from the most common indicator, namely the use of emoticons as non-verbal language. Lawson and Leck in Nahwiyyah and Dewi (2020) positively appreciate emoticons as non-verbal language because they are used to create closer relationships in the absence of the Internet. However, online media's non-verbal messages are minimal, so they do not always represent the true meaning.

Another challenge is the threat of being displaced by regional languages. Through Kaharuddin and Nemin Kaharuddin's research (2024), it can be seen that the Bugis Regional Language has been displaced and is rarely spoken by local speakers, replaced by foreign elements that have penetrated. This happens because of the mixing of language-speaking groups and the heterogeneity of society in the same area, continued Kaharuddin and Nemin Kaharuddin (2024)

Apart from that, the cause of the decline in regional languages in new media is that the development of Broadcast Video on Demand (BVOD) and Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) in new media studies has had a significant impact on the screen landscape, audience experience, and screen culture. Wider (Monaghan, 2024). This indicates that screen culture has spread throughout the world, making the use of gadgets and other screen devices seem increasingly exclusive. Because the screen culture "ummah" is so diverse, regional languages are viewed as biased and restricted to historical artifacts not considered in the digital world. Not only Javanese and Bugis but also the entire Indonesian population. As a result, while not all of Gus Baha's lectures posted on social media are translated, there are always some. Because Gus Baha frequently combined regional languages (Javanese) with Indonesian.

Even though language bias often occurs in digital media, this does not mean that communication is not working. Language bias is a challenge that influencers, including religious influencers, must overcome. Before discussing the

communication characteristics of religious influencers, we will first discuss the influencer phenomenon and its various dynamics (Enjang & Irfan, 2019).

Influencers can also be good language agents to erase the image of digital media, which is often filled with foul language, agitation, and propaganda (Lange, 2024). Influencers have become an industry (Arriagada & Siles, 2024). The Instagram industry, for example, has become a place for many content creators. The main issue for Instagram influencers today is negotiating user expectations with the platform environment to determine the commercial success of influencers (Richter & Ye, 2024).

Influencers are also often partnered with political entities to gain electoral numbers (Arnesson & Grandien, 2024). The general indicator is an influencer who is also a celebrity. Automatically, social media will create algorithms for influencers to highlight how media is produced and distributed through new forms of intermediation. Hutchinson (2020) calls it "automation and influence within media ecologies." The relationship between the public, politics, and media in America also influences the national economic agenda. One of those who play a role is influencers (Tabor et al., 2024).

Religious influencers are also part of what Benussi calls (2024) contemporary infrastructure, togetherness, and everyday life. Why is that? Because religion will always be a spiritual need for humanity. Religious issues always involve broad public attention. It is a religion that can massively mobilize the spirit of divinity, both individuals and groups. Kristi Wilkum and MacGeorge (2010) that quite a few people use religious beliefs and practices to cope with stress.

Through their research findings, Kristi Wilkum and MacGeorge (2010) added that religious content's influence using entertaining messages or communication is rarely used by religious leaders/religious influencers in understanding different beliefs. A communicative ecology must be needed (Bernhold et al., 2023) to develop a personal relationship with God, especially on social media.

The face of religion as a substance of appreciation certainly differs from religion as social media content. As a form of appreciation (faith), religion is simultaneously considered a rational and transcendental entity. Meanwhile, religion as content on social media prioritizes rationality. The rationalism of religious content on social media must create what Thomas Hove (2022) means by global media ethics, the good life, and justice, or, in Nina W. Syam's terms, a transcendent rationalist (Syam, 2015).

Therefore, religion in the digital space (social media) requires spokespeople capable of creating communicative and rational-transcendental ecologies. This communicative ecology is a marker of the character of communication in digital media (Rohimah & Hakim, 2021). One influencer who has such abilities is Habib

Ja'far. Habib Ja'far, together with Onad, through the online platform "Log In" demonstrated a democratic communicative ecology. By borrowing the concepts of Kristi Wilkum and MacGeorge (2010), they can create a sense of humor and entertainment when discussing religious content with sources of different beliefs.

Habib Ja'far strives to create freedom of communication (Karppinen, 2018) regarding religion in the digital space. See the screenshot below:



Source: Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube account

Figure 4. One of the "Log In" Episodes.

The episode "Log In" is entitled "You see, log in!! This is Indonesia bro!! 6 Religious Leaders Become One on Eid!!-Jafar". The video, broadcast to coincide with Eid al-Fitr 1445 H, has been watched 6.5 million times, accompanied by 16,409 back comments and 213 thousand likes from viewers. What is interesting about the video is their conversation. For example, Habib Ja'far said to the five religious figures: "You are indeed religious figures, but you do not understand the industry, do you?" Then there were other intriguing words that emerged from a Hindu Bante: "Catholics and Christians often exchange people, right?"

From a linguistic perspective, the sentences spoken by Habib Ja'far and Bante Hindu can be semantically biased and potentially offend other religious leaders who are in the same frame. However, Pastor Bryan responded with laughter. Apart from that, Habib Ja'far also used the question-and-answer method (*al-war*) (Husna, 2023) with other religious leaders to obtain feedback. This pattern echoes what West & Turner (O. D. Salam, 2020) call a dynamic form of communication.

Husna (2023) Husna codified Habib Ja'far's "Login" themes, which often discuss sensitive issues but are often questioned by millennials or Gen-Z, as follows:

Tabel 1. Habib Ja'far's "Log In" themes

No	Title	Upload Time
1	Islam Does Not Worship the Kaaba (Kaaba Is Not an Idol)	March 25, 2023
2	Heaven Only for Muslims! Non-Muslims: How are you?	March 26, 2023
3	God's plan for interfaith marriage?	March 27, 2023
4	Dangerous Talk! The Apocalypse is Getting Real!	March 28, 2023
5	Pretending to be pious on social media, God doesn't need it!	March 30, 2023
6	Alcohol is Haram, Marriage to 4 wives is Permissible	April 1, 2023
7	Embrace Two Religions at Once! Chaotic!	April 2, 2023
8	Is Comedy Haram in Islam?	April 10, 2023

Source table: (Husna, 2023)

The eight "Log In" themes recorded by Husna (2023) in the table above show that the "Log In" event led by Habib Ja'far and Onad was very democratic and plural. Several studies have discussed the Habib Ja'far phenomenon from the perspective of his preaching style (Firmansyah & Nasvian, 2022), his preaching strategy (R. Pahlevi, 2023), his content (Fajrussalam et al., 2023), his communication style (Iskandar & Habibi, 2023), also shows that as an academic subject, the Habib Jafar phenomenon creates space for freedom theology and freedom communication.

Habib Ja'far also communicated moderate Islamic values. Symbolically, he communicates the spirit of *wasatiyah* and brotherhood among fellow humans. The philosophical reference is the teachings of love of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. (Arum, 2018; Maskur, 2012; Muhlis & Musliadi, 2022). Quraish Shihab, citing a statement from Sayyidina Ali RA., also said, "If you meet someone if he is not your brother in religion, then he is your brother in humanity" (Shihab, 2002; Shihab, 2021). Habib Ja'far also creatively modified the symbol of the dzuriyyatunnabi. He always wears casual clothes and a contextual language style instead of Muslim clothes or robes, like a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

CONCLUSION

Religious issues, Islam in particular, on social media are always sexy. The phenomenon of urban religion hype in the mass media is a concrete sign. The emergence of the hijrah movement, online Qur'an reading, and other virtual religious communities has increasingly confirmed the pervasiveness of religion in cyberspace. Of course, religion "needs" spokespeople who have authority over related issues, one of which is Habib Ja'far. As a religious influencer, Habib Ja'far,

who hosted the "Log In" event on Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube channel, symbolically conveyed that religious substance takes precedence over costumes and other imagery rites.

The results of the analysis show that Habib Ja'far utilizes various digital platforms, especially YouTube and Instagram, to convey Islamic messages that are inclusive, tolerant, and relevant to modern life. The resulting content has a relaxed, humorous, but still substantive approach so that it is able to attract the attention of cross-generational audiences, especially young people.

Habib Ja'far uses a unique communication strategy: packaging moderate Islamic values in personal stories, interactive dialogue, and attractive visual narratives. This approach not only increases the attractiveness of the content but also strengthens the messages of Islamic moderation, such as the importance of respecting differences, maintaining social harmony, and rejecting radicalism. The response from audiences actively involved in the comments space shows that Habib Ja'far's content encourages constructive discussions about religious values in the context of daily life.

Through this approach, Habib Ja'far not only becomes a bridge between Islamic traditions and the younger generation but also acts as an agent of change who promotes Islam as a friendly, inclusive, and relevant to the challenges of the times. From a digital communication perspective, Habib Ja'far strives to create freedom of communication, an expression resulting from his belief in religion, without feeling uncomfortable or blaming other beliefs. So, Muslims can mingle and fill civilization with a calm face.

This research contributes to the digital communication literature, especially in understanding the role of religious influencers in voicing Islamic moderation. These findings are also relevant for developing more effective digital da'wah strategies.

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