

Fragmentation of Religious Authority, Commodification of Sanad, and the Construction of Gen Z Religious Identity on Mobile Applications in Indonesia

Roberto Arieza Martin Purba
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
robertopurba.jurnal@gmail.com

Ilim Abdul Halim
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
ilimhalim@uinsgd.ac.id

Suggested Citation:

Purba, Roberto Arieza Martin; Halim, Ilim Abdul. (2026). Fragmentation of Religious Authority, Commodification of Sanad, and the Construction of Gen Z Religious Identity on Mobile Applications in Indonesia. *Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitas*, Volume 6, Number 3: 1201–1214. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v6i3.56123>

Article's History:

Received June 2026; Revised August 2026; Accepted September 2026.
2026. journal.uinsgd.ac.id ©. All rights reserved.

Abstract:

This study examines the socio-religious transformation of Indonesian Generation Z Muslims, focusing on the tension between pragmatic digital access and the theological obligation to uphold doctrinal validity through *sanad* (chains of transmission) and *aqidah* (creed). Drawing on the concepts of Digital Bricolage, Algorithmic Authority, and the Digital Authenticity Paradox, the study explains how users assemble personalized spiritual resources while software-based validation potentially supplants the authority of spiritual teachers. Employing a critical qualitative netnography, the research combines semi-structured interviews (both offline and online) with digital participant observation of app interactions among urban and suburban Muslims aged 18–26 who are unaffiliated with mass religious organizations and utilize at least three religious apps. Findings indicate that mobile apps fragment traditional religious authority, creating a fluid digital spiritual landscape. "Developer blindness" leads users to prioritize aesthetics and utility over the developers' ideological and scholarly backgrounds, resulting in a breakdown of structural *sanad* and a decontextualized, fragmented religious understanding—yielding subjective fulfillment alongside a detachment from valid scholarly lineages. The study recommends theological standards for religious apps and urges Islamic organizations to translate *sanad* and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) methodologies into interactive infographics, AI tools, and game-based learning. It advances the field of digital religion studies by formulating the Digital Authenticity Paradox and integrating *sanad* and *aqidah* as key epistemological variables in the digital religiosity of Southeast Asian Muslims.

Keywords: algorithmic authority; digital authenticity paradox; digital bricolage; Z Generation; sanad break.

INTRODUCTION

The religious characteristics of Gen Z are undergoing a paradigm shift from an institution- and religious mass organization-based model to an individual experience mediated by digital technology (H. A. Campbell & Evolvi, 2019; Fajriyah et al., 2025; Gao et al., 2022). Gen Z tends to become religious bricoleurs (Lowery, 2021; Sánchez-Escribano et al., 2026). Bricolage is described as the creative and improvised use of available religious materials—such as beliefs, rituals, and symbols—without regard to their original contexts (Ai et al., 2021; Altglas, 2014; Yatsutsenko, 2014). This phenomenon often accompanies the de-institutionalization of religion into a personal choice, no longer a fixed package from a church, temple, or mosque (Casson, 2011; Casson & Cooling,

2019). Young people and lay spiritual seekers are framed as "spiritual bricoleurs" who select elements from various traditions to construct their own personal worldviews (Freathy et al., 2017).

They download Qur'an applications, prayer reminders, zakat trackers, and fiqh question-and-answer bots from various developers without concern for the ideological background or organizational affiliation of the creators. Social media is utilized as a space for interaction, creation, interrogation, and contestation of new religious identities (Zaid et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2025). Through digital content, Islamic ethical values are conveyed in a personal manner through daily lived experiences, such as how to build a marriage, address health issues, and live with tolerance. Religious experience has become deeply personal and based on the expression of individual choice and subjectivities. Globalization, digitalization, and individualism have produced a pluralization of authority and a "wild growth of interpretation" within Islam (Mandaville, 2007; Mohiuddin, 2020). Individuals independently assemble their own package of authority (bricolage), even as they demand rational methodological explanations from scholars, as argued by (Amin, 2019) and (Whyte, 2022).

This phenomenon engenders epistemological tensions within Islam in Indonesia. The Islamic tradition in Indonesia holds the concept of Scholarly Sanad (Sanad Keilmuan) in high regard. Sanad, as a unique mechanism of truth verification within the Islamic tradition, guarantees the authenticity of hadith and Qur'anic recitation while preventing distortion and deviation, including radicalism and violence committed in the name of religion (Febriana Ayatin L.N & Fadlillah, 2023; Masripah et al., 2024; Tamjidnor, 2025)). Sanad functions as epistemic and moral legitimation: a teacher's instruction is linked in a chain that traces back to the Prophet, who would never teach violence or deviance.

According to BNPT 2020, digital religious content is associated with radicalism issues, albeit at very low levels. The radicalism potential index is 12.3% in urban areas, 12.1% in rural areas, and 12.7% among Generation Z. Active internet users who seek religious content online have a radicalism potential index of 12.6%, higher than that of those who do not actively seek it (10.8%). Utilizing applications as a primary source of learning increases the risk of "sanad severance" and disrupts traditional religious practices and how religion is consumed or engaged (Zaid et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the religious application landscape is largely dominated by commercial motives (commodification of religion), with the theological credibility of developers being questionable (Masripah et al., 2024; Raya, 2025; Rumondor & Ticoalu, 2025). The commodification of religion in the digital sphere follows two patterns: religions such as Buddhism, Sikhism, and Christianity are commodified as "aesthetic commodities" that sell visual beauty, tranquility, and spirituality, whereas Islam is commodified to "sell" sensations of violence, destruction, or conflict in order to attract the attention of digital users (Roosvall, 2016).

The authorization and authentication of Islam have been surrendered to algorithms, giving rise to the term digital Islamic authority (Hegazy & Abdelgalil, 2025; Selby & Sayeed, 2023; Whyte, 2022). Within the Indonesian context, there exists a reality among Muslim communities—particularly in Indonesia—that possesses a strong dogmatic structure. The objective validity of religious practice remains bound to the variables of "Creed (Aqidah) and Scholarly Sanad (Sanad Keilmuan)."

Empirically, there exists a cultural gap between the characteristics of technology and local religious traditions. On one hand, mobile application technology offers practicality and ease of access. On the other hand, Islamic tradition in Indonesia (like *pesantren*) strictly requires clarity of a physical teacher, face-to-face interaction (*talaqqi*), and an unbroken scholarly chain (*sanad*) to maintain the purity of creed. This phenomenon of a shift in learning toward digital applications triggers a significant gap in the form of a genuine risk of "scholarly sanad severance" for the younger generation. Abdullah et al. (2026) argue that young people often don't have a strong theological backbone, which then leads to kind of pseudo worship methods, and also a sort of fragility in religious ideology. It's also mentioned pretty clearly that a lot of adolescents are, in a way, not fully matured yet when it comes to their understanding of *aqidah* (creed). This constitutes important evidence that the experience of learning Islam digitally does not automatically produce a mature religious validity. Digital religious exposure alone does not guarantee authoritative maturity; it may even open vulnerabilities if not framed within *sanad* and proper guidance (Muliana, 2024).

Based on Rachel Wagner's theoretical framework as adapted to the socio-religious context of Indonesia (specifically the Gen Z and mobile application phenomenon)—connecting advances in application technology (which offer practicality) with the essential needs of the Islamic tradition (which emphasizes clarity of *sanad*, teachers, and depth of creedal understanding) in Indonesia—this study seeks to dissect the extent to which the depth of religiosity of Gen Z is affected when sacred texts and rituals undergo "appification," and how they negotiate issues of authenticity and *sanad* validity.

The research objectives are grounded in the following questions: How do Gen Z Muslims in Indonesia utilize religious mobile applications to construct their spiritual identity beyond the boundaries of traditional religious mass organizations? How does the shift from offline (teacher-based) learning to online (application-based) learning affect the depth of religiosity and Gen Z's perception of the importance of scholarly sanad? How do Gen Z Muslims assess and negotiate the credibility and theological authority of religious application developers whose creedal backgrounds are unknown to them?

Research on how religion relates to new media technology has moved a bit, from the idea that the internet is just a handy documentation tool to the view that it's actually a fresh cultural arena that reshapes religious behavior (H. A. Campbell, 2013). And honestly, one of the more disruptive shifts shows up in religious authority, like in a very clear way (Evolvi, 2022; Gao et al., 2022). Max Weber, in the classic framing, broke authority into three modes: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational (Arifin, 2015; Haeri, 2024; Helmi et al., 2026; Manurung et al., 2026). In the Indonesian Islamic landscape, these different kinds of authority often get personified through the figure of the Kiai or Ustaz (traditional charismatic) and through public civic organizations, like ormas such as Nahdlatul Ulama, or Muhammadiyah (legal-rational). Still, once digital media really takes off, scholars talk about "decentering of authority", or sometimes they phrase it as decentralization of authority (Epafras et al., 2021; Himam et al., 2025; I. H. Saputra, 2025). Authority is no longer strictly top down, and not kept neatly centralized in offline institutions either; it spreads out into cyberspace, where each individual is granted broad agency to pick and remix the references they trust for knowledge (Hjarvard, 2016; (Cheong, 2017; Masripah et al., 2024).

In Chapter 17 of the book *Digital Religion*, entitled "You are what you install: Religious authenticity and identity in mobile apps," (Wagner, 2013) conceptualizes how mobile applications have become a new arena in the formation of religious identity and authenticity. Wagner adopts the perspective of sociologist Wade Clark Roof regarding the shift from "institutionalized religion" toward "experiential religion." Wagner argues that contemporary device users act as bricoleurs—a term referring to individuals who independently assemble their spiritual understanding and practices from various fragments of available cultural material. In the smartphone era, the device screen functions as a private space reflecting the user's spirituality. The act of downloading, configuring, and arranging application menus (such as Qur'an applications, prayer time trackers, and religious question-and-answer bots) constitutes a form of independent religious identity curation. The expression "you are what you install" affirms that a person's religious character in the digital age is no longer determined by which group they join offline, but rather by the applications installed in their private technological space.

One of (Wagner, 2013) crucial findings that underpins this study is the crisis of authenticity and developer legitimacy. In the digital era, the construction of piety and religiosity has shifted from the world of ethics (classical texts) to the world of aesthetics (popular symbols of social media), in line with (Hannan, 2023). (Wagner, 2013) notes that within the mobile application ecosystem, users tend to disregard the identity or ideological background of the application's creators or developers.

As long as an application offers accessibility (convenience), an attractive user interface (UI/UX), and high functionality, users will feel that the spiritual experience they derive from it is already "authentic" (Amalia et al., 2026; Hidayatullah et al., 2026; Rachman & Saumantri, 2025). Digital media has reduced the role of conventional religious institutions as gatekeepers of theological truth for Generations Y and Z (Missier, 2025). Generation Z bases its religious validation on algorithmic metrics such as likes, engagement, and virality, as well as the practicality of psychological solutions offered, rather than on the background of official institutions (Abdurahman et al., 2026). The control of religious text interpretation has shifted entirely into the hands of users and algorithms designed by often anonymous developers (Famuji et al., 2026). The meaning-making of sacred texts is no longer controlled by official institutions but is dictated by user preferences and the algorithms of echo chambers in cyberspace (Zhang et al., 2025).

On the other hand, traditional authority often collapses before the digital generation due to issues of content "packaging" (Zaid et al., 2022). This condition fundamentally reveals an authenticity crisis, an indifference toward authority, and even a crisis of religious identity that renders the spiritual space extremely fluid and hybrid.

The manner in which Gen Z practices religion has shifted to become more personal, reflective, and heavily mediated by digital technology. The space of religious authority has expanded from that of kiai/ustadz and religious organizations to encompass figures, communities, and experiences found through social media and applications. Religious authority is undergoing a shift: millennial and young digital ustadz are becoming the primary curators of religious information for Gen Z, not merely formal institutions (Epafras et al., 2021; Virga & Rosa, 2025).

Gen Z negotiates and at times rejects certain doctrines, demonstrating independence and flexibility toward teachings inherited from family or institutions (Liu et al., 2025). Loyalty toward traditional religious civic organizations

is declining, and this generation is becoming one that is religiously devout yet unaffiliated (pious but unaffiliated) (Jamilah et al., 2024). Furthermore, online media multiplies and personalizes authority, granting users the freedom to choose when and to whom they "submit" in religious terms (Andok, 2022; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2019).

Theological tensions emerge when the application-based model of religious practice described by Wagner is applied to the context of Islam in Indonesia. The authority of Islamic knowledge is shifting from sanad to algorithms determined by popularity, engagement, and digital performativity, rather than by the traditional chain of transmission (Fakhruroji, 2018; Raya, 2025).

Within the tradition of Islam Nusantara (particularly that rooted in the pesantren), the process of religious learning must not be separated from the concept of Scholarly Sanad (Sanad Keilmuan)—the transmission from teacher to teacher in an unbroken chain reaching back to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)—and the method of Muwajahah/Talaqqi (direct face-to-face learning), in line with (Abraar, 2025) and (D. Saputra, 2025). The presence of a physical teacher is deemed crucial not merely to transfer information, but to guide character (akhlak), correct understanding, and safeguard the purity of the creed (Akidah) of adherents from erroneous or extreme interpretations.

Learning religion purely through applications risks severing this chain of sanad. The absence of a filtering process regarding the credibility of application developers raises genuine concerns. The fundamental question is whether the application's creators understand Islam correctly, are driven solely by economic motives (commodification). "Digital Islam" in Indonesia and the Arab world demonstrates a transformation of da'wah into commercial authority: the Islamic market, personal branding, and the monetization of content are becoming major determinants in the production of religious discourse (Raya, 2025; Zaid et al., 2022), or even harbor a concealed ideological agenda to distort the creedal understanding of the younger generation. As a consequence, an epistemological clash arises between the practical aspects and accessibility offered by technology and the depth of understanding (depth of religiosity) and scholarly validity required by the Islamic tradition (Barudin & Yusof, 2026; Rohmatin et al., 2025); Saputra & Fadily, 2025).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a Netnographic (Digital Ethnography) design as per, combined with a Critical Case Study in line with (Liu et al., 2025). Netnography was selected because the primary research locus resides within cyberspace, where the informants' interactions, consumption, and construction of religious identity are heavily mediated by mobile application technology. Complementing this, the Critical Case Study approach is applied to dissect in depth the "authenticity paradox"—the existential tension between the pragmatic ease of digital access and the theological obligation to maintain doctrinal validity, specifically *sanad* (chain of scholarship) and *akidah* (creed), within the Islamic tradition in Indonesia.

The primary subjects of this investigation are Muslim youth belonging to Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012. Utilizing purposive sampling, the informant determination technique enforces strict inclusion criteria: individuals aged 18–26 at the time of the study, actively using at least three religious applications on their smartphones—such as digital Qur'ans, prayer trackers, AI-driven fiqh question-and-answer bots, or du'a applications—and relying on these platforms as their primary source for daily religious procedures and understanding. Furthermore, to capture an unmediated digital agency, selected informants must be "ormas-free," meaning they are not structurally or fanatically affiliated with conventional religious mass organizations, and they must reside in urban or sub-urban areas of Indonesia to ensure stable internet penetration. To strengthen the technological dimension of the analysis, this study also examines three to five of the most popular Islamic mobile applications on the Indonesian Play Store and App Store based on download metrics and user reviews—such as Muslim Pro, Umma, Kesan, or specific AI-based religious applications—focusing on their feature architecture, developer profiles, and the transparency of their scholarly references.

Data collection relies on method triangulation to ensure comprehensive depth, beginning with semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted both offline and online via Zoom or Google Meet. These interviews explore the informants' agency as digital *bricoleurs*, focusing on their curation criteria ("you are what you install"), their perception of physical teachers, their stance on the anonymous ideological backgrounds of app developers, and the perceived depth of their digital spiritual experiences. This is paired with digital participatory observation, where researchers obtain explicit consent to examine the layout and customization of religious applications on the informants' smartphone screens, thereby empirically testing the thesis from (Monk & Wagner, 2012) that screen personalization reflects religious identity, while also observing how they interact with search features and AI bots

in daily life. To secure qualitative data validity and reliability, source and method triangulation are implemented by cross-referencing Gen Z interview narratives with application feature analyses, which are then validated against the insights of religious authorities and experts.

The data analysis is conducted interactively by adopting the model of (Miles et al., 2014), modified for the netnographic context through sequential stages. It begins with data condensation, which involves transcribing interviews and executing thematic coding grounded in the conceptual pillars from (Monk & Wagner, 2012): Bricolage, Algorithmic Authority, Authenticity Crisis, and the local phenomenon of the *Sanad/Akidah Break*. Next, the data presentation stage maps the typologies of these *bricoleurs* into comparative matrices or conceptual networks that visually demonstrate how Gen Z negotiates or severs the traditional *sanad* chain in favor of device practicality. This leads to conclusion drawing, formulating theoretical propositions regarding how the essence of religious depth is sustained or undergoes superficialization within Indonesia's digital ecosystem. Finally, because this study interfaces with deeply private spaces and sensitive beliefs, research ethics are strictly maintained through mandatory prior informed consent, total anonymization of real names and account details to safeguard digital privacy, and a strict boundary ensuring no personal data is collected beyond the religious applications under investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Construction of Gen Z's Spiritual Identity Beyond the Boundaries of Traditional Religious Organizations Through Mobile Applications

1. The Device Screen as a Space for Private Identity Curation

Consistent with (Wagner, 2013) argument that the act of configuring mobile applications constitutes a form of religious identity presentation, Gen Z in Indonesia treats their smartphone screens as a personal spiritual gallery. Their religious identity is no longer attached to the attributes of a physical or cultural group (such as the cultural sarong of NU or the purification tradition of Muhammadiyah), but is instead reflected in the application ecosystem they install ("you are what you install"). Interview findings: Fikri (21 years old, university student) stated:

"I have never felt that I belong to NU or Muhammadiyah, even though my parents are active in Muhammadiyah. For me, Islam is simply Islam. If you want to see how I practice my religion, just look at the contents of the 'Spiritual' folder on my phone. There you will find a customized Quran application, an aesthetic prayer reminder, and an ibadah habit tracker. That is my Muslim identity now, reflected in what I place on my phone's home screen."

The researcher observed the device screen of the informant (Fikri). A special folder on the home screen was visible, labeled "Deen," containing a neatly curated selection of applications arranged alongside an aesthetic widget displaying a daily Qur'anic verse. Not a single visual attribute, logo, or application affiliated with any conventional religious organization was present. This arrangement demonstrates that the device space has become a private sacred space entirely self-governed by the informant.

2. The Practice of Bricolage

The findings reveal that Gen Z acts as religious bricoleurs. They independently assemble their religious menu: downloading prayer reminder content from one application, reading hadith comics from another, and using a zakat calculator from a third party. They intentionally cross the boundaries of traditional religious organizations, perceiving ormas narratives as overly rigid, politically laden, and non-adaptive to their fluid lifestyles.

Interview findings: Rania (19 years old, female university student) described her behavior in selecting religious content:

"For prayer schedules and imsakiah, I use Muslim Pro. But if I want to read articles or daily tips, I use Umma or Kesan because the content is like Instagram infographics—easy to understand. I dislike having to follow one ormas, such as a dedicated Muhammadiyah or NU application. The content is too rigid; sometimes it covers internal organizational meetings or external political issues I do not understand. With commercial applications, I am free to take whatever features I need without the burden of group affiliation."

During participatory observation, the researcher observed Rania switching between applications within the span of one hour. She opened the Kesan application to read the daily morning dhikr, then switched to Muslim Pro to check the time for the duha prayer, and finally opened an AI-based question-and-answer bot on Telegram to find the ruling on skincare products containing alcohol. This act of navigating across multiple digital platforms demonstrates the fragmentation of group authority; the subject is no longer loyal to a single institutional source (NU/Muhammadiyah), but has instead become the craftsperson of her own spiritual menu.

3. *Digital Aesthetics vs. Group Loyalty*

The rejection of ormas fanaticism is often triggered by technical factors. Applications developed by official religious organizations are perceived as having an unattractive user interface (UI/UX) and minimal personalization features. Gen Z prefers applications that offer visual comfort (aesthetic dawah) and high functionality, even if these applications are ormas-neutral or developed by private entities. Interview findings: Daffa (22 years old, graphic designer) expressed his perspective:

"I once tried downloading an application made by a local ormas because my uncle asked me to. But when I opened it—God—the interface looked like a 2010 application. Full of text, the colors were inconsistent, and it often lagged. I immediately uninstalled it. I ended up going back to the global private application with dark mode, customizable fonts, and an aesthetic widget for iOS. Practicing religion also requires visual comfort. If the application looks poor, the desire to read simply disappears."

Observation findings: Through tracking informants' download histories on their devices, the researcher found that the primary driving factor for Gen Z retaining an application on their device was not the credibility of the large organizational name behind it, but rather the frequency of system updates and the quality of the interface design. Informants tended to give negative reviews or immediately delete religious applications displaying an excessive amount of dense text without interactive macro visual support.

The Impact of the Learning Shift (Offline to Online) on Depth of Religiosity and the Perception of Scholarly Sanad

1. *Superficialization of Religious Understanding (Depth of Religiosity)*

The nature of mobile applications in presenting information in an instant, rapid, and fragmented manner engenders a spiritual paradox. The research findings confirm that Gen Z religiosity tends to be procedural-practical in nature, rather than contemplative-substantial. Applications are highly effective in guiding them in the realm of "procedure" (such as the text of prayers, the count of rak'ahs, and the direction of the qiblah), yet they fail to provide depth of theological understanding (depth of religiosity), the historical context of fiqh rulings, or the reasoning of *usul al-fiqh* that requires intensive guidance.

Interview findings: Aisyah (20 years old, female university student) acknowledged the limitations of her understanding:

"Applications are very helpful for technical matters, such as the sequence of wudu or the text of the prayer for riding a vehicle. You just click, and it appears immediately. But if I have a more complex question—for instance, the limits of riba in pay-later schemes or e-commerce transactions—the application only provides a brief hadith excerpt. I immediately know whether it is 'permissible' or 'impermissible,' but I do not understand the deeper arguments or the scholarly debates behind it. My understanding becomes fragmented."

In direct observation when the informant faced a practical fiqh legal problem, she utilized the "Ask Ustaz/AI" feature in an application. The researcher observed that the response provided by the application system consisted of a text summary three paragraphs in length without any comprehensive comparison of legal schools of thought (*madhabs*) or the methodology of legal derivation (*istinbath al-ahkam*). The informant immediately closed the application after reading the legal conclusion (*halal/haram/makruh*) without delving further into the explanatory text. This confirms the occurrence of a reduction in depth of religiosity in the pursuit of practicality.

2. *Skepticism toward the Urgency of Scholarly Sanad*

Within the conventional Islamic tradition, sanad constitutes the primary pillar of the validity of knowledge. However, for Gen Z raised within a digital culture, the meaning of "validity" has undergone a semantic shift (redefined authenticity). They regard traditional scholarly sanad as something anachronistic and impractical. For them, religious validity is measured by the "direct functionality" of the application in answering their everyday problems quickly.

Interview findings: Rizky (23 years old, private sector employee) articulated his skepticism:

"These days, if you want to look up a religious ruling, you have to find a teacher whose chain of scholarship goes back to the Prophet's era—that feels unrealistic and a waste of time. I need an answer this very morning before heading to work. As long as the application produces a clear Qur'anic verse with its surah number and Arabic text, for me that is already valid and authentic. I am not particularly concerned with the complicated offline chain of scholarly transmission."

Observation findings: When the researcher discussed with Rizky a hadith text he had found in an application, the researcher pointed out that the hadith was of weak (*dha'if*) status according to classical sanad

scholarship. However, observation notes indicate that the informant remained indifferent. He continued to use the cited text as a status update on social media because its meaning was considered motivating and relevant to his circumstances, regardless of the defect in the scholarly chain of transmission (sanad) of the hadith.

3. *The Subjective Sense of Religious Validity*

Wagner emphasizes that when interpretive control shifts to the hands of the user, a high sense of religious intimacy emerges. Gen Z feels their religious practice is already valid because they are aided by their device, even though epistemologically they are experiencing a severance of the valid chain of scholarly transmission due to the absence of direct interaction with a physical religious teacher (Kiai/Ustaz). Interview findings: Nabila (21 years old, female university student) expressed her conviction:

"I feel my acts of worship are valid and I am at peace, even though I learn Qur'anic recitation and tajwid through an interactive audio feature in an application, without being guided directly by an ustadz. The application has AI-based voice detection that can correct me if my pronunciation is wrong. So what is the point of going to an offline religious assembly if the technology in my hand can already validate my worship?"

Observation findings: The researcher observed Nabila using the AI-based "Makhoriul Huruf Correction" feature in a mobile tajwid application. The informant repeatedly recited a verse until the phone screen displayed a green indicator reading "Excellent/Correct." An expression of satisfaction and spiritual conviction was visible on the informant's face. This demonstrates that the mechanical validation of software has successfully replaced the authority of talaqqi (oral correction) by a physical teacher, giving rise to a sense of religious validity that is entirely subjective in nature.

Gen Z's Assessment and Negotiation of the Credibility and Theological Authority of Application Developers

1. *Developer Blindness*

Affirming Wagner's thesis on page 199, Gen Z in Indonesia demonstrates a high level of apathy toward the actors behind the applications they install. When downloading a Qur'an application or worship guide, they almost never check the developer company's profile, the school of thought (madhhab) affiliation, or the ideological background of its creators.

- a. Interview findings: Farhan (22 years old, male university student) admitted: *"Honestly, I have never checked who the developer of my Quran application or prayer reminder is. When I searched on the Play Store, I typed the keyword 'Quran Indonesia,' and whatever appeared at the top, I downloaded. I do not know and do not care whether the developers are an IT company in London, Singapore, a Wahhabi group, NU, or whoever. What matters is that the application works, is free, and does not slow down my phone."*
- b. Observation findings: The researcher conducted a direct check alongside Farhan on the About/Developer Information menu of three primary religious applications installed on his phone. The informant appeared confused and surprised upon discovering that two of the three applications were developed by foreign technology corporations based in non-Muslim countries, which possessed no Sharia supervisory board. This proves the existence of a "mass blindness" among Gen Z toward the actors controlling their religious platforms.

2. *The Shift toward Algorithmic Authority*

Gen Z negotiates credibility by shifting authority indicators toward digital industry standards. Credibility is no longer assessed based on recommendations from official ulama institutions (such as MUI), but rather from digital market parameters.

- a. Interview findings: Siti (24 years old, freelancer) described her standards of trust: *"For me, the indicator of whether an application is trustworthy is simple. First, its rating must be above 4.6. Second, it must have been downloaded more than one million times. Third, when I read the reviews, people say the application is accurate and does not have too many pop-up ads that disrupt the time for dhikr. If millions of people are already using it and are satisfied, then the application is automatically credible to me. There is no need for an official certificate from MUI to prove it."*
- b. Observation findings: The researcher observed the process as Siti searched for a sunnah fasting time-tracker application. She opened the App Store, passed by official applications from local religious institutions with low ratings (3.2), and chose to download a global private application at the top of the Top Charts with a rating of 4.8. This act demonstrates that digital market mechanisms (ratings,

downloads, and reviews) have displaced the institutional fatwas of ustadz/ulama in determining the validity of a religious medium.

3. *The Overlooked Risks of Commodification and Creedal Distortion*

Critical discussion at this point reveals a significant vulnerability. In their pursuit of convenience, Gen Z negotiates (or ignores) the risk that their applications may have been produced by foreign non-Muslim corporations seeking to commodify user data, or by certain ideological groups that deliberately insert algorithmic religious texts capable of eroding the moderate creed of Islam Nusantara without the knowledge of their users.

Interview findings: Bintang (20 years old, male university student) disclosed his indifference to data privacy: *"I am aware that there were news reports about a popular Muslim application selling its users' location data to a foreign military or advertising company. But what can I do? I am already too comfortable with its very complete features. Besides, I figure my data as an ordinary person is not valuable to them. What matters is that I can still use its features for free for my daily worship."*

Observation findings: When the researcher examined the permission settings of the religious application on Bintang's phone, it was found that the application had been granted full access to "Precise Location at All Times," "Photo Gallery," and "Contacts." The informant had approved all these permissions instantly without reading the privacy policy. These findings reveal that Gen Z is willing to exchange their personal data privacy and to ignore the potential for concealed ideological or creedal distortion in exchange for the commodity of daily digital spiritual access practicality.

Summary of Dialectical Discussion

Research Question (RQ)	Empirical Field Findings	Critical Analysis Based on Wagner's Theory & Islam Nusantara
RQ 1: Identity Construction (Ormas-Free)	Gen Z independently curates religious applications based on visual preferences and functionality, disregarding official ormas applications.	Confirms the concept of Bricolage and "You are what you install." Religious identity shifts from communal-group to individual-digital.
RQ 2: Learning Shift & Sanad	Gen Z transitions to applications for their instantaneous nature; they regard physical sanad as less important than ease of access.	A superficialization of understanding (depth of religiosity) occurs. The "Authenticity Paradox" emerges: a subjective sense of religious validity despite an objective severance of sanad.
RQ 3: Developer Credibility	Gen Z is indifferent to the creedal background of developers; suitability is assessed based on rating and application performance.	Confirms Developer Blindness (p. 199). Religious authority is delegated to code systems or "Algorithmic Authority," which opens avenues for religious commodification and private creedal distortion.

The research results reveal a profound socio-religious transformation among Muslim Generation Z in Indonesia, highlighting a fundamental tension between digital convenience and traditional theological preservation. The discussion focuses on three interrelated theoretical aspects: the deconstruction of Weberian authority through digital bricolage, the emergence of algorithmic governance, and the formulation of the "Digital Authenticity Paradox" within the epistemological boundaries of Sanad and Creed (Akidah).

Digital Bricolage and the Liquefaction of Weberian Religious Authority

The socio-religious landscape of Muslim Generation Z in Indonesia marks a radical departure from institutionalized faith, signaling a structural transformation that mirrors broader global shifts in digital religion. Historically, religious authority within the Indonesian Islamic context has been deeply embedded in legal-rational and traditional structures, primarily championed by mass civil organizations (*ormas*) like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, alongside localized traditional institutions like *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) led by charismatic *Kiai* or *Ustaz*. This localized matrix perfectly illustrated the classical Weberian triad of power, wherein authority is neatly distributed among traditional reverence, charismatic exceptionalism, and legal-rational institutionalism (Weber, 1978). However, the ubiquity of mobile application technology has triggered a profound decentering and liquefaction of this classical paradigm. This phenomenon is not unique to Southeast Asia; it resonates with global trends observed across the Middle East, Europe, and North America, where digital networks are actively dismantling top-down denominational monopolies in favor of individualized, decentralized spiritualities (H. Campbell, 2010). By treating their smartphone screens as a personalized canvas of faith, Indonesian Gen Z youth act as sophisticated digital *bricoleurs*. They dismantle historical institutional monoliths

and replace them with a hyper-individualized, fluid collage of religious consumption. This structural shift embodies the seminal thesis that "you are what you install," wherein the physical layout of a smartphone screen becomes an intimate reflection and active articulation of a user's fractured religious identity (Monk & Wagner, 2012).

Consequently, traditional boundaries that once neatly segregated theological schools of thought, political alignments, and organizational loyalties are systematically dissolved. For Gen Z, the long-standing socio-political rivalries or ideological rigidities of conventional organizations are rendered obsolete by the immediate demands of technical functionality and visual appeal. This generation prioritizes what can be termed "aesthetic dawah"—sleek user interfaces, minimalist graphic designs, and immediate interactive feedback—over the historical credibility accumulated by religious institutions over decades. This preference for aestheticized, fragmented knowledge reflects a broader international shift toward the consumption of "snackable" religious content, a trend that is equally prevalent among Muslim youth in the diaspora and across the Arab Gulf states (Bunt, 2018). In this context, religious authority is no longer perceived as an external, vertical force emanating from an institutional center; instead, it is flattened into a horizontal, user-centric marketplace. This democratization of consumption, however, simultaneously induces a profound sense of disorientation, as the traditional gatekeepers of faith lose their capacity to regulate orthodoxy. Borrowing from critical social theory, this transformation represents the transition from solid to "liquid modernity," where stable structures of religious belonging melt under the heat of hyper-consumption and digital immediacy (Bauman, 2000). The smartphone screen functions as a digital hyper-space where the sacred is detached from its physical geography—the mosque, the *pesantren*, or the communal gathering—and is re-embedded within the fluid, fleeting flows of global network capitalism (Castells, 2010). Ultimately, the Weberian model of authority is subverted not by intellectual rebellion, but by the mundane, everyday practice of digital curation, where the sovereign user reigns supreme over a customized ecosystem of belief.

Algorithmic Governance and the Epistemic Blind Spots of Digital Devotion

As religious authority flattens into a horizontal digital marketplace, it becomes subordinate to a new form of systemic control: algorithmic governance (Jensen, 2020). A critical vulnerability identified among Indonesian Gen Z digital practitioners is an pervasive "developer blindness," a conceptual framework which notes that within the mobile application ecosystem, users systematically disregard the ideological, geopolitical, or theological backgrounds of software developers as long as the platform delivers high utility, seamless convenience, and instant gratification (Monk & Wagner, 2012). In Indonesia, a society characterized by a deeply entrenched and historically sensitive dogmatic structure, this developer blindness exposes a glaring epistemic apathy. Empirical evidence reveals that Gen Z users frequently download top-ranked Qur'an or prayer applications based purely on App Store or Play Store search engine optimization (SEO), completely unaware that the underlying software may be developed by foreign, non-Muslim technology corporations that operate without any form of Sharia supervisory board or traditional oversight. This uncritical acceptance of digital tools represents a massive transfer of validation criteria from sacred lineage (*sanad*) to cybernetic market metrics. Traditional criteria for spiritual truth—such as the character of the scholar, the historical consensus of the community, and the transparency of textual transmission—are discarded in favor of industrial algorithmic metrics, including application store ratings above 4.6, download volumes exceeding one million, and the absence of intrusive pop-up advertisements.

This study extends this theoretical understanding by illustrating how the traditional gatekeeping role of the *ulama* (religious scholars) is effectively supplanted by search algorithms, user reviews, and download metrics, thereby establishing a regime of Algorithmic Authority (Wahid & Abdulloh, 2026). This shift introduces severe risks of commodification and concealed ideological distortion, as the curation of Islamic knowledge becomes subject to the opaque, profit-driven logic of global tech conglomerates. Globally, this mirrors the anxieties surrounding algorithmic radicalization, echo chambers, and the subtle commodification of spirituality observed across various world religions, from digital Christianity to online Buddhism (H. A. Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). Even when informants in this study are explicitly aware of severe data privacy violations—such as the unauthorized harvesting and monetization of their prayer locations and behavioral data by international developers—they routinely display a willingness to sacrifice their privacy. They actively rationalize this ethical and theological ambiguity in exchange for the immediate commodity of daily spiritual access. Within this techno-capitalist ecosystem, technical efficiency systematically overrides doctrinal transparency, transforming religious devotion into a data point optimized for algorithmic surveillance (Zuboff, 2019). The sacred text and the daily prayer tracker are stripped of their historical, contemplative contexts and transformed into what critical theorists call *simulacra*—signs and images that simulate religious reality while being entirely disconnected from their traditional ontological

foundations (Baudrillard, 1994). Under the smooth surface of user-friendly interfaces lies an invisible web of algorithmic control that shapes, filters, and monitors the boundaries of modern Muslim piety on a global scale.

The Digital Authenticity Paradox and the Decontextualization of Islamic Epistemology

The most critical and innovative contribution of this study lies in its direct critique of Western-centric digital religion theories when confronted with a society built upon a rigorous, dogmatic epistemological foundation—specifically the dual Islamic concepts of *Sanad* (the continuous, unbroken chain of scholarly transmission) and *Akidah* (the orthodox creed). In mainstream Western sociology of religion, it is generally posited that if a digital practitioner subjectively "feels" that their online ritual or space is authentic, then the negotiation of spiritual validity is considered successful and completed (Dawson & Cowan, 2004). However, within the rich tradition of Indonesian Islam—particularly that rooted in the *pesantren* and the conceptual framework of *Islam Nusantara*—the process of religious learning is deemed fundamentally invalid without *talaqqi*, which is the direct, physical, face-to-face interaction between a student and a qualified teacher whose own lineage of scholarship links back, generation by generation, to the Prophet Muhammad (Azra, 2017). The rapid transition from offline, teacher-guided mentorship to online, application-mediated consumption therefore triggers a profound epistemological crisis: the total structural severance of this scholarly chain, or a "Sanad Break."

Empirical data from this study demonstrate that this *Sanad* break has an immediate, degenerative impact on the depth of religiosity among Gen Z, culminating in a severe superficialization of religious understanding. While mobile software proves highly efficient in guiding the procedural, mechanical, and practical dimensions of worship—such as pinpointing the precise *qiblah* direction, generating automated prayer times, and displaying step-by-step *wudu* (ablution) graphics—it is inherently incapable of transmitting theological depth, the subtle historical contexts of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) rulings, or the complex methodology of *istinbath al-ahkam* (the derivation of legal rulings from primary texts). Gen Z users are routinely fed instant, highly fragmented, and decontextualized answers (categorized simply as *halal*, *haram*, or *makruh*) via brief text snippets or AI-driven chat responses. In this process, the vibrant intellectual dialectic, the respect for divergent opinions (*ikhtilaf*), and the rigorous textual criticism characteristic of classical Islamic comparative jurisprudence are completely lost. This dynamic operates on a global scale, where the rise of "Instant Islam" via automated bots and social media soundbites is replacing the deep, multi-layered traditions of classical scholarship in historic centers of learning across the Muslim world (Mandaville, 2007).

Furthermore, the convenience of this digital practicality fosters a insidious skepticism toward traditional epistemic verification. Gen Z practitioners increasingly view the pursuit of a traditional, offline scholarly lineage as an anachronistic, inefficient waste of time. They perform instant textual validation directly on their screens, blissfully ignoring the reality that the religious texts, rulings, or *hadith* narrations provided by the application may be of weak (*dha'if*) or even fabricated status according to classical standards of *hadith* criticism. The mechanical validation of software code successfully masquerades as, and supplants, the spiritual and intellectual authority of a living mentor.

Synthesizing the Paradox within the Global Network Society

This intricate dynamic culminates in what this study conceptualizes as the Digital Authenticity Paradox. This paradox manifests when digital users experience an extraordinarily high subjective sense of intimacy, spiritual satisfaction, and self-perceived religious validity, while objectively, structurally, and epistemologically, they are simultaneously experiencing a radical severance of their scholarly lineage and a profound weakening of their creedal foundation due to the absence of living, physical teacher guidance. The user feels closer to God through the app, yet they are structurally detached from the very epistemic chain that guarantees the historical validity of that closeness (Papakostas, 2026). This paradox exposes the deep limitations of evaluating digital religion through purely subjective or psychological lenses, demanding instead an analytical framework that accounts for theological epistemology and structural technology simultaneously (Papakostas, 2025).

On an international scale, this Indonesian case study serves as a critical micro-level reflection of a global macro-level phenomenon: the rise of a technocentric global network society where speed, efficiency, and automated code replace human relationships, historical memory, and institutional trust (Bhanye, 2026). By looking at how Gen Z navigates this digital ecosystem, we observe the ultimate tension of modern religious life—the desire for sacred authenticity caught within the iron cage of algorithmic efficiency. The mechanical certainty of an algorithm provides a comforting, yet superficial, illusion of absolute truth in an increasingly complex world, leaving the modern digital believer spiritually fulfilled yet epistemologically adrift (Koska, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This netnographic study concludes that the utilization of religious mobile applications by Generation Z in Indonesia has triggered a fragmentation of traditional religious authority and given rise to a new spiritual landscape that is autonomous, fluid, and liberated from the confines of civic religious organizations (ormas-free). Through the practice of digital bricolage, the device is no longer merely a documentation tool; it has transformed into a private sacred space in which young people independently curate, configure, and assemble their own piety menu based on technical utility and visual comfort (aesthetic dawah). The study formulates a conceptual novelty referred to as the "Digital Authenticity Paradox." This paradox dissects the profound epistemological tension within Indonesian Muslim society: on one hand, application technology stimulates an extremely high subjective sense of religious intimacy, satisfaction, and validity through mechanical validation (such as AI-based indicators or industry ratings). Yet, on the other hand, objectively and epistemologically, dependence on this digital medium triggers the phenomenon of "Sanad Break" (Pemutusan Sanad) and theological superficialization (shallow religiosity). Islamic legal information is consumed in an instant and fragmented manner, bypassing classical legal reasoning methodologies, and engendering a "mass blindness" toward the creedal background of application developers (developer blindness). Religious authority has not merely been decentralized; it has undergone radical automation under the control of Algorithmic Authority.

This study extends existing theory by introducing the concept of "Algorithmic Authority." Authority is no longer centered on human subjects, but on systems of artificial intelligence, UI/UX, and ratings on the Google Play Store or App Store. In the Gen Z era, religious authority has undergone radical decentralization, wherein a software code (application) can mediate or even supplant the role of traditional religious censorship institutions. In cyberspace, an epistemological collision occurs: ease of access (convenience) is perceived by Gen Z as a form of authentic spiritual experience, even though theologically a severance of the chain of scholarly transmission (sanad) is taking place. This challenges Western sociological theories of religion that tend to hold that if an individual feels an experience is authentic, the matter is resolved. In Indonesia, the variables of "Creed (Aqidah) and Scholarly Sanad" necessitate a development of Wagner's theory. Gen Z is not merely a passive consumer; they act like museum curators for their spiritual gallery—the device. They select applications not based on "ormas ideology," but based on "aesthetics, functionality, and lifestyle compatibility." This alters the way sociological theory views the agency (freedom of choice) of young people in practicing religion—from one based on the group, it is now purely based on digital utility. Theoretically, this study deepens understanding of religious authority in the digital era by examining the limitations of this theory when confronted with Indonesian Muslim society, which possesses a strong dogmatic structure encompassing the concepts of Sanad and Creed. This study proposes a new theoretical model regarding the 'Digital Authenticity Paradox.'

In practical terms, this study is expected to provide concrete recommendations for the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in formulating regulations or theological standardization for religious applications circulating in Indonesia. This policy is essential to ensure that applications widely distributed on the Indonesian Play Store/App Store have undergone a process of theological authority verification, thereby protecting the public (particularly Gen Z) from the distortion of religious information, concealed radical interpretations, or content that misleads creed.

Furthermore, for religious organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, this study provides a strategic blueprint for transforming the conventional da'wah model into a technology-based da'wah (app-based dawah) that is adaptive to the characteristics of Gen Z without sacrificing essential Islamic principles such as clarity of scholarly sanad and the purity of creed. Religious organizations kind of need to repackaging the delivery of important ideas like sanad, creed, and fiqh into more practical application pieces, sort of like turning them into things people can actually use. That could mean interactive infographics, or algorithmic question-and-answer bots. Or even the gamification of rituals, I mean making them feel like doable steps instead of abstract text. The goal is that the depth of religiosity stays intact, even if it's mainly received through a phone screen.

References

- Abdurahman, I., Pranoto, R., Salim, A., & Alpiansyah, R. (2026). *Crisis Of Authority In Islamic Educational Institutions : Strategic Response Of Islamic Education Management To The Shift In Generation Z ' s Trust In The Digital Era*. 1, 94–111.
- Abraar, M. (2025). *Digitalisasi Kitab Kuning : Analisis Dampak Aplikasi Fikih Digital Terhadap Otoritas Keilmuan*

- Pesantren [Digitization of the Kitab Kuning: An Analysis of the Impact of Digital Fiqh Applications on Scholarly Authority]*. 1(2), 182–196. <https://doi.org/10.65802/an-nur.v1i2.44> [in Indonesian]
- Ai, A. L., Wink, P., Paloutzian, R. F., & Harris, K. A. (2021). *Assessing spirituality in a diverse world*. Springer.
- Altglas, V. (2014). *Culture and Religion: An 'Bricolage': reclaiming a conceptual tool*. December, 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2014.984235>
- Amalia, I., Makolo, J. G., Sukmana, O., Sulistyaningsih, T., & Efendi, T. D. (2026). *Authority Fragmentation In The Digital Age: A Social Network Analysis Of Islamic Scholars And Influencers' Networks In Indonesia*. 6(1), 1–12.
- Amin, H. (2019). *British Muslims Navigating between Individualism and Traditional Authority*.
- Andok, M. (2022). *Digitális vallás: Az új információs technológiák hatása a vallásokra, vallási közösségekre Magyarországon*. Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó.
- Arifin, A. Z. (2015). *TRANSMITTING CHARISMA: Re-reading Weber through the Traditional Islamic Leader in Modern Java*.
- Azra, A. (2017). *Islam Nusantara: Islam Berkemajuan dan Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. Mizan.
- Barudin, M. A., & Yusof, M. H. M. (2026). *an epistemological analysis of the new age from the perspective of islamic epistemology: a study of the work inside the new age by randall baer: analisis epistemologi new age berdasarkan perspektif epistemologi islam: kajian terhadap karya inside the new*. *Al-Qanatr: International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 35(04), 1–21.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. University of Michigan press.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press.
- Bhanye, J. (2026). Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the Intersection of Urban Flooding Adaptation. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems* (pp. 1–39). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68127-2_881-1
- Bunt, G. R. (2018). *Hashtag Islam: How cyber-Islamic environments are transforming religious authority*. UNC Press Books.
- Campbell, H. (2010). *When religion meets new media*. Routledge.
- Campbell, H. A. (2013). *Digital Religion*.
- Campbell, H. A., & Evolvi, G. (2019). *Contextualizing current digital religion research on emerging technologies*. January, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.149>
- Campbell, H. A., & Tsuria, R. (2021). *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Casson, A. (2011). *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion & Education The right to 'bricolage': Catholic pupils' perception of their religious identity and the implications for Catholic schools in England*. October 2014, 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2011.600819>
- Casson, A., & Cooling, T. (2019). *Religious education for spiritual bricoleurs? the perceptions of students in ten Christian-ethos secondary schools in England and Wales*. 7672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2019.1632596>
- Castells, M. (2010). *The Rise of the Network Society* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Cheong, P. H. (2017). The vitality of new media and religion: Communicative perspectives, practices, and changing authority in spiritual organization. *New Media & Society*, 19(1), 25–33.
- Dawson, L. L., & Cowan, D. E. (2004). *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*.
- Epafras, L. C., Kaunang, H. P., Jemali, M., & Setyono, V. S. (2021). *Transitional Religiosity: The Religion of Generation Z*. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.2-11-2020.2305063>
- Evolvi, G. (2022). Religion and the internet: digital religion, (hyper)mediated spaces, and materiality. *Zeitschrift Für Religion, Gesellschaft Und Politik*, 6(1), 9–25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41682-021-00087-9>
- Fajriyah, A. R., Sari, F. P., Salsabilla, R., Ginting, M. N. M., Herdiansyah, R. N., & Noor, A. M. (2025). *Trend Beragama Kaum Gen-Z Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Moral*. 2, 114–125.
- Fakhruroji, M. (2018). *Digitalizing Islamic lectures: Islamic apps and religious engagement in contemporary Indonesia*.

- Famuji, U., Malik, A. A., Nurhaidah, S. N., & Fahrany, S. (2026). *Research Article Famuji et al . Shifting Religious Authority in the AI Era : A Comparative Study of Gen Z Trust in AI Guidance and Traditional Ulama*. 9(1), 82–92.
- Febriana Ayatin L.N, & Fadlillah. (2023). *Pesantren and the transmission of sanad al- qur ' an : tracking sanad tahfiz connections in indonesia*. 3(2), 139–159. <https://doi.org/10.33650/mushaf.v3i2.7244>
- Freathy, R., Doneya, J., Freathyb, G., Walshea, K., & Teece, G. (2017). *Pedagogical bricoleurs and bricolage researchers: The case of Religious Education*.
- Gao, Q., Woods, O., Kong, L., & Shee, S. Y. (2022). *Lived religion in a digital age: Technology, affect and the pervasive space-times of "new" religious praxis*. 29–48.
- Haeri, R. (2024). *Integrasi Etika Agama, Otoritas, dan Birokrasi: Pendekatan Weberian dalam Penguatan Program Mawar Emas*. 2(03), 7–18.
- Hannan, A. (2023). *Social Media and the Fragmentation of Religious Authority among Muslims in Contemporary Indonesia*.
- Hegazy, W., & Abdelgalil, R. (2025). Digital Islamic authority and Muslim identity within the Western context. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 27, 171–179.
- Helmi, Affan, M., Somad, A., Basuni, A., & Sahidah, A. (2026). *Epistemologi Pesantren sebagai Tradisi Pengetahuan Praksis : Otoritas, Habitus, dan Produksi Ilmu*. 11(36), 81–104.
- Hidayatullah, M. S., Sukmana, O., & Efendi, T. D. (2026). *International Journal of Economics , Management and Social Science The Crisis of Religious Identity Among Indonesian Gen Z Muslims in the Flow of Global Digital Culture : A Sociological Analysis Based on Tajfel and Turner ' s Social Identity Theory*. 9(1).
- Himam, M. M., Mujib, A. N. A., Dina, & Irfani, M. (2025). *Shifting Authority , Shaping Spirituality : A Qualitative Digital Survey of Religious Practices among the Indonesian Muslim Students*. 11, 243–256.
- Jamilah, J., Pramitha, D., Ubaidilah, A., & Sayeed, M. M. Bin. (2024). Gen z's religiosity level: A comparative study between Indonesia and the United Kingdom. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 21(2), 307–318.
- Jensen, J. L. (2020). Structures of Internet Power – Algorithms and Platforms. In *The Medieval Internet: Power, Politics and Participation in the Digital Age* (pp. 81–94). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83909-412-520201007>
- Koska, C. (2025). *Ethics of Algorithms*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-71518-5>
- Liu, Z., Ghouri, A. M., Wang, J., & Lin, C. (2025). Digital religion and Generation Z: an empirical study in the context of China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1536644.
- Lowery, T. E. (2021). *Bricoleurs Religieux: Suburban Lived Religion in Sacred/Secular Modes*.
- Mandaville, P. (2007). *Culture & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407074998>
- Manurung, M., Doloksaribu, T. I., & Sari, A. P. (2026). *Konsep Kekuasaan Dan Legitimasi Dalam Perspektif Antropologi*. 970–985.
- Masripah, Anisah, A. S., & Irvani, A. I. (2024). *Navigating Faith in the Digital Age: The Role of Technology in Shaping Gen-Z's Religious Perspectives*. 4, 230–243.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: a Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Missier, A. (2025). *Extreme Beliefs in a Digital Age: Influence of digital media on social imaginaries, epistemic authorities and fundamentalist beliefs of Gen Y and Gen Z in Amsterdam and Mumbai*.
- Mohiuddin, A. (2020). Islam and the discursive landscape of globalisation: Knowledge and disjunctures of authority. *Religion and Theology*, 27(1–2), 74–113.
- Monk, E., & Wagner, B. (2012). *Concepts in Enterprise Resource Planning*. Cengage Learning.
- Muliana, S. (2024). *The Scientific Sanad Tradition of Islamic Boarding Schools as a Basis for Strengthening Moderate Religion in the Post-Truth Era*. 2(1), 1–12.
- Papakostas, C. (2025). Artificial Intelligence in Religious Education: Ethical, Pedagogical, and Theological Perspectives. *Religions*, 16(5), 563. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16050563>
- Papakostas, C. (2026). *Mediating the Sacred in the Digital Age: Computational Approaches to Religious Practice*,

- Ethics, and Discourse* (pp. 237–250). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-10827-2_19
- Rachman, A., & Saumantri, T. (2025). *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah Transformation of religious authority in the digital era : A post-normal times analysis by Ziauddin Sardar on the phenomenon of social media da ' wah*.
- Raya, M. K. F. (2025). Digital Islam: new space for authority and religious commodification among Islamic preachers in contemporary Indonesia. *Contemporary Islam*, 19(1), 161–194. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-024-00570-z>
- Rohmatin, T., Binaningrum, B., Irawan, B., Iman, T., & Rahmawati, F. D. (2025). *Epistemological Polemics In Digital Religion : Mapping Approaches In The Digital Sphere*. 11(2), 403–418.
- Roosvall, A. (2016). *Religion , globalization and commodification in online world news slideshows : the dis / connection of images and texts*. 0330(February). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2015.1059581>
- Rumondor, G. A., & Ticoalu, D. J. (2025). *Spiritualitas Gen-Z di Era Digital : Antara Peluang dan Tantangan*.
- Sánchez-Escribano, J. V., Albaladejo, J. T., & Torró, L. O. (2026). What have Teenagers to Do with Theology? Exploring Gen Z Theological Views. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 1(aop), 1–25.
- Saputra, D. (2025). *Hybrid Religious Engagement : Generation Z ' S Negotiation Of Faith Across Digital And Physical*. 9(1).
- Saputra, I. H. (2025). *Epistemological Challenges of Hadith Authentication in the Digital Era : A Philosophy of Science Perspective*. 14(2), 190–201. <https://doi.org/10.15548/ju.v13i1.11555>
- Selby, J. A., & Sayeed, R. (2023). *Religious authorities in the digital age : the case of Muslims in Canada*. 0123456789.
- Solahudin, D., & Fakhruroji, M. (2019). Internet and Islamic learning practices in Indonesia: Social media, religious populism, and religious authority. *Religions*, 11(1), 19.
- Tamjidnor, T. (2025). Kontribusi Ulama Hadis Dalam Pengembangan Ilmu Hadis: Sebuah Tinjauan Historis Dan Literatur [The Contribution of Hadith Scholars to the Development of Hadith Studies: A Historical and Literature Review]. *JUTEQ: JURNAL TEOLOGI & TAFSIR*, 2(3), 584–597.
- Virga, R. L., & Rosa, N. (2025). *Yuk Ngaji : Digitalization Of Generation Z ' S Religious Activities On Instagram Account*. 10(1), 149–184.
- Wagner, R. (2013). God in the game: Cosmopolitanism and religious conflict in videogames. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 81(1), 249–261.
- Wahid, S. H., & Abdulloh, S. (2026). Digital Islamic authority: a revolutionary shift or mere hype? a systematic review. *SN Social Sciences*, 6(2), 62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-026-01328-5>
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*. University of California Press.
- Whyte, S. A. (2022). Islamic Religious Authority in Cyberspace: A Qualitative Study of Muslim Religious Actors in Australia. *Religions*, 13(1), 69. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010069>
- Yatsutsenko, Y. V. (2014). An attempt to define contemporary religious representations and practices: Danièle Hervieu-Léger. *RUDN Journal of Sociology*, 4, 18–32.
- Zaid, B., Fedtke, J., Shin, D. D., El Kadoussi, A., & Ibahrine, M. (2022). Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials: How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices. *Religions*, 13(4), 335. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13040335>
- Zhang, L., Zhang, L., Communication, R., Religion, D., & Identity, R. (2025). *The Digital Age of Religious Communication : The Shaping and Challenges of Religious Beliefs through Social Media*. 25–41.
- Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs.

