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Digital Piety and Negotiated Authority: Mediatized Islām and Family Power Shifts in Indonesia

Dijital Dindarlık ve Uzlaşımsal Otorite: Endonezya'da Medyatikleşen İslâm ve Ailede Güç Kaymaları

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Digital Piety and Negotiated Authority: Mediatized Islām and Family Power Shifts in Indonesia

Abstract

This study examines the profound transformations in religious authority that have accompanied the rise of digital Islām among urban Muslim families in Indonesia. It analyzes how media-based religious content disseminated through digital platforms such as YouTube and social media restructures the spiritual guidance role traditionally centred within parents. Theoretically, the study is grounded in Stig Hjarvard's theory of mediatisation and Michel Foucault's knowledge/power framework. The digital interactions that young Indonesian Muslims establish with charismatic figures such as Hanan Attaki, Abdul Somad, and Salāfi YouTube preachers lead to a redefinition of religious legitimacy and intra-family authority. The research draws attention to two core dynamics: First, digital platforms decentralize authority by enabling youth to access alternative religious knowledge. Second, young people form peer-based spiritual communities in digital spaces, thereby relocating religious learning outside of institutional frameworks. Families do not remain passive in the face of this transformation; at times, they integrate digital preachers into domestic religious discourses, while at other times they resist such influences. The *Pemuda Hijrah* movement (*Hijrāh* Youth) movement, founded by Hanan Attaki, presents a model that blends religious preaching with urban youth subcultures. His sincere and non-hierarchical style particularly resonates with the youth, while also raising various concerns among parents and religious institutions. On the other hand, figures such as Abdul Somad and Salāfi preachers (e.g., Khalid Basalamah), with their more traditional and textual approaches, either foster unity within families or generate ideological conflicts. This study reveals that digital Islām does not merely weaken traditional authority; it transforms it. Religious authority has become a dialogical structure negotiated through emotional and aesthetic preferences. Discussions about Islāmic practices within families are often shaped by references to digital content, thereby shifting the centre of power in knowledge production. In Foucault's conceptualization, parents' epistemic control over knowledge transitions to digital environments. Furthermore, digital media functions not merely as a carrier of information, but as an environment in which moral discipline and religious identity are shaped. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Telegram, and WhatsApp not only convey religious knowledge but also determine how that knowledge is to be presented, felt, and internalized. In this context, digital media operates on three levels: as a channel that disseminates religious content, as a language that reproduces religious meanings in visual and emotional forms, and as an environment that creates a shared atmosphere for collective religious experience. On these platforms, sermons, short clips, and quotes from the Qur'ān and Hadīth are presented adorned with visual effects and elements of popular culture. This process of aestheticization separates religiosity from traditional rituals and transforms it into a part of individual identity. In conclusion, digital religiosity does not eliminate spiritual guidance within the family; it reshapes it. Families continue their religious lives through negotiation, balancing tradition with digital innovation. In this regard, the study makes a significant contribution to understand how digital media transforms Islāmic authority and intergenerational relationships, illuminating the restructured aspects of contemporary Muslim life.

Keywords: Religion sociology, Religious authority, Meditation, Youth religiosity, Family dynamics.

Dijital Dindarlık ve Uzlaşımsal Otorite: Endonezya'da Medyatikleşen İslâm ve Ailede Güç Kaymaları

Öz

Bu çalışma, Endonezya'nın kentsel Müslüman ailelerinde dijital İslâm'ın yükselişiyle birlikte dini otoritede yaşanan köklü dönüşümleri incelemektedir. Çalışma, YouTube ve sosyal medya gibi dijital platformlar aracılığıyla yayılan medyatik dini içeriklerin, geleneksel olarak ebeveynlerde yoğunlaşan manevi rehberlik yapısını nasıl yeniden yapılandırdığını analiz etmektedir. Kuramsal olarak Stig Hjarvard'ın medyatikleşme teorisi ile Michel Foucault'nun bilgi/güç çerçevesi temel alınmıştır. Genç Endonezyalı Müslümanların, Hanan Attaki, Abdul Somad ve Selefi YouTube vaizleri gibi karizmatik figürlerle kurdukları dijital etkileşimler, dinî meşruiyetin ve aile içi otoritenin yeniden tanımlanmasına yol açmaktadır. Araştırma iki temel dinamiğe dikkat çekmektedir: Birincisi, dijital platformlar gençleri alternatif dinî bilgiye ulaştırarak

otoriteyi merkezsizleştirir. İkincisi, gençler dijital ortamda akran temelli manevi topluluklar oluşturarak dini öğrenimi kurumsal yapılar dışına taşır. Aileler bu dönüşüm karşısında pasif kalmaz; kimi zaman dijital vaizleri ev içi dini söylemlere entegre ederken, kimi zaman da bu etkilere direnir. Hanan Attaki'nin kurduğu *Pemuda Hijrah* (Hicret Gençliği) hareketi, dini tebliği şehirli genç alt kültürlerle harmanlayan bir model sunmaktadır. Onun samimi, hiyerarşik olmayan tarzı özellikle gençler arasında karşılık bulurken, ebeveynlerde ve dini kurumlarda çeşitli endişelere yol açmaktadır. Öte yandan, Abdul Somad ve Selefi figürler (örneğin Khalid Basalamah), daha gelenekçi ve metinsel yorumlarıyla ailelerde fikir birliği oluştururken bir yandan da fikirsel çatışmalar meydana getirmektedir. Bu çalışma, dijital İslam yorumlarının geleneksel otoriteyi sadece zayıflatmadığını, onu dönüştürdüğünü de ortaya koymaktadır. Dini otorite artık diyalojik, duygusal ve estetik tercihlere göre müzakere edilen bir yapıya sahiptir. Aile içindeki İslami uygulamalar hakkındaki tartışmalar sıklıkla dijital içeriklere atıfla şekillenir ve bu durum bilgi üretimindeki güç merkezini değiştirmektedir. Foucault'nun kavramsallaştırdığı şekilde, ebeveynlerin bilgi üzerindeki epistemik kontrolü dijital ortamlara kaymaktadır. Ayrıca, dijital medya sadece bilgi taşıyıcısı değil; aynı zamanda ahlaki disiplinin ve dini kimliğin oluştuğu birer çevre işlevi görmektedir. YouTube, Instagram, Telegram ve WhatsApp gibi platformlar, dini bilgiyi yaymakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda bu bilginin nasıl sunulacağını, nasıl hissedileceğini ve nasıl içselleştirileceğini de belirlemektedir. Bu bağlamda, dijital medya üç farklı düzeyde işlemektedir: Bir iletişim kanalı olarak dini içeriği yayar, bir dil olarak dini anlamları görsel ve duygusal biçimlerde yeniden üretir ve bir çevre olarak dini. deneyimin kolektif yaşandığı bir atmosfer oluşturur. Bu platformlarda vaazlar, kısa klipler, ayet ve hadis alıntıları görsel efektler ve popüler kültür öğeleriyle süslenerek sunulmaktadır. Bu estetikleşme süreci, dindarlığı geleneksel ritüellerden ayırıp bireysel kimliğin bir parçası haline getirir. Sonuç olarak, dijitalleşmiş dindarlık, aile içi dini rehberliği ortadan kaldırmaz; onu yeniden şekillendirir. Aileler, gelenekle dijital yenilik arasında denge kurarak, dini yaşamı müzakere ederek sürdürmektedir. Bu bağlamda, çalışma, dijital medyanın İslami otoriteyi ve kuşaklar arası ilişkileri nasıl dönüştürdüğünü göstererek, çağdaş Müslüman hayatının yeniden yapılandırılan yönlerine önemli bir katkı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din sosyolojisi, Dijital dindarlık, Dini otorite, Medyatikleşme, Gençlik dindarlığı, Aile dinamikleri.

Introduction

In Indonesia – the world's largest Muslim-majority nation – the proliferation of digital media is dramatically reshaping religious life. By 2022, over 210 million Indonesians (77% of the population) were internet users, and an estimated 89% of these users actively engage on social media platforms.[1] This connectivity has given rise to a vibrant online Islāmic sphere, where popular preachers garner massive followings and religious content circulates widely on YouTube, Instagram, and other platforms. For Indonesia's urban middle-class Muslim families, digital religion is now an inescapable part of everyday life. Teenagers and young adults increasingly look to online sources for religious learning, as a recent survey found 58% of Indonesian youth prefer to obtain religious education via social media rather than through traditional figures like the local *kyai*.[2] In parallel, millions of parents are also consumers of Islāmic content on their smartphones, blurring the once-clear boundaries of who imparts religious knowledge at home.

These trends raise critical questions about religious authority within the family. Traditionally, in many Muslim households, parents have served as the primary guides on matters of faith, practice, and values for their children. Respect for elders and

1 Hanadian Nurhayati-Wolff, "Number of Internet Users in Indonesia 2017-2028", *Statista* (12 December 2023).

2 Dea Alvi Soraya, "Riset: 58 Persen Milenial Belajar Agama Di Medsos", *Republika* (13 December 2020).

hierarchical transmission of religious knowledge are deeply ingrained norms.[3] However, as Indonesian youth turn to charismatic YouTube preachers, Instagram preachers, and Salāfi-influenced channels for guidance, new authority figures compete with – and sometimes undermine – the authority of parents.[4] A teenager might challenge a father's instruction by citing an online *fatwā* video, or a college student adopting stricter interpretations from a Salāfi YouTube channel might conflict with her mother's more traditionalist approach to Islām. Conversely, some parents themselves consume the same digital content and encourage their children to follow online *ustādh*, effectively outsourcing or supplementing religious mentoring with media figures.[5]

Unlike earlier studies that examined digital Islāmic preaching or youth religiosity separately, this article focuses on how digital *daʿwah*reshapes intergenerational religious authority within urban, middle-class Muslim families in Indonesia. While prior research has highlighted the role of media aesthetics and influencer logic in youth-oriented preaching,[6] few have explored its effects on intra-family dynamics. However, few have investigated how these digital expressions of piety affect intra-family religious dynamics and challenge traditional intergenerational hierarchies of authority.

This article investigates how digital religious content shapes or challenges authority structures in Indonesian urban middle-class Muslim families, especially between parents and youth. We focus on prominent examples of Indonesia's digital *daʿwah*culture: Hanan Attaki, a youthful preacher who founded the *Pemuda Hijrah* (*Hijrāh* Youth) movement;[7] Abdul Somad, an influential scholar whose lectures went viral on social media;[8] and a spectrum of Salāfi YouTube channels that propagate conservative interpretations. Through these cases, we analyze how online religious authorities gain legitimacy among youth and the resulting tensions within households.

We employ Stig Hjarvard's mediatisation thesis that media act as agents of religious change, to understand the macro-level shift in how religious knowledge is produced and consumed. We invoke Michel Foucault's concepts of power and knowledge to interpret the micro-level shifts in authority and discipline within the family – positing that control over religious "truth" via digital knowledge production

[3] Ahmad Buchori Muslim - Nury Firdausia, "Religious Education Curriculum in the Family: Islamic Perspective", *AJMIE: Alhikam Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Education* 2/1 (June 2021), 49–59.

[4] F. Aidulsyah, "The Rise of Urban Salafism in Indonesia: The Social-Media and Pop Culture of New Indonesian Islamic Youth", *Asian Journal of Social Science* 51/4 (December 2023), 252–259.

[5] Ulvah Nur'aeni - Arfian Hikmat Ramdan, "Ideological Contestation on Youtube Between Salafi and Nahdhatul 'Ulama in Indonesia", *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 7/1 (June 2023).

[6] Moch. Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Digital Islam: New Space for Authority and Religious Commodification among Islamic Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia", *Contemporary Islam* 19/1 (April 2025), 161–194; Eva F. Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Daʿwa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia", *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5/1–2 (February 2018), 68–99; Syamsul Haq, "Piety and Commercialization Da'wah: The Influence of Hanan Attaki's Kajian on Young Urban Muslims in Indonesia", *Al-Misbah (Journal Islamic Studies)* 12/1 (April 2024), 18–31.

[7] Inna A'thoina - Abdullah Mustafa Mohamad Al-Aboosi, "Navigating Digital Da'wah: Hanan Attaki's Approach and Nahdatul Ulama's Authority on Social Media", *Penamas* 37/2 (December 2024), 158–171.

[8] Imron Rosidi et al., "From Listening to Producing: Ustaz Abdul Somad's Active Audiences in Pekanbaru, Indonesia", *Ulumuna* 28/1 (June 2024), 1–23.

alters power relations between generations. These will help illuminate the interplay between online and offline religiosities, and between globalized Islāmic discourses and local family values. By analyzing digital-age transformations in religious authority through both global theory and local cases, this study sheds light on a crucial aspect of contemporary Muslim life: the reimagining of ritual and authority within the intimate space of the family. In doing so, it contributes to the understanding of religion's evolving role in a mediatized, networked society, and how youth-driven change can challenge as well as revitalize household religious practice in urban Indonesia.

1. Mediatized Religion and the Reconfiguration of Authority

Stig Hjarvard examines mediatisation of the society and perceives there a dual process where the society submits more and more to the media and their logic or becomes dependent on them. The digital transformation of religious life in Indonesia has profoundly restructured traditional authority, both in public religious discourse and within the family. Drawing on Hjarvard's theory of mediatisation, we observe that media no longer merely reflect religion but increasingly shape how it is practiced, communicated, and legitimized.[9] The rise of charismatic online preachers and the viral spread of religious content reflect a cultural shift wherein authority is less grounded in institutional status and more in reach and relatability. Preachers who master visual appeal, pop-culture references, and accessible language often eclipse traditionally trained ulama in influence, especially among the youth. In such a setting, Indonesian youth are no longer passive recipients of doctrine but engaged interlocutors, actively debating and reshaping religious meaning through digital platforms.

This pluralisation of religious authority has immediate implications for family dynamics. We can see that digital media have disrupted long-standing hierarchies in the household. Where knowledge once flowed top-down from elders to children, the internet now equips youth with the tools to challenge, revise, or even overturn traditional interpretations. In this way, families become microcosms of broader discursive contestation between localised custom and transnational orthodoxy. The authority to define "correct" practice is no longer monopolised but negotiated, sometimes contentiously, sometimes collaboratively. The authority once centred in embodied presence of the father, mother, or local *ustâdh* is being displaced or supplemented by the virtual presence of remote preachers who offer digital pastoral care and moral instruction. The Indonesian case reveals a gradual move from hierarchical to dialogical authority within Muslim households, where persuasion, critical exchange, and selective appropriation of digital voices redefine what it means to guide, learn, and live Islām together in the age of mediatized religion.

2. Hijrāh and Youth-Centric Reaching: The Hanan Attaki Phenomenon

One of the most illustrative cases of youth-oriented digital *daʿwah* is Hanan Attaki. Born in 1981 and educated at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Rather than pursuing a conventional career as a mosque imam, he focused on *daʿwah* tailored to Muslim youth.

[9] Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 113.

In 2015, his *Gerakan Pemuda Hijrah* (*Hijrāh* Youth Movement) in Bandung quickly grew from local meetups to a nationwide youth revival trend. By blending piety with urban youth culture, Hanan Attaki and his movement struck a chord with millennials.[10] Over a short period, Pemuda Hijrah's influence exploded on social media. By early 2025, Hanan Attaki was arguably "*the most popular Muslim preacher*" on Instagram in Indonesia, boasting 10.6 million followers. His content – short video reminders, Qurānic reflections, and event promotions – spread virally among youngsters, often under the hashtag #pemudahijrah.[11]

Hanan Attaki's style is deliberately non-authoritarian and relatable. He often sports casual clothes and references youth hobbies. This approach demystifies religious learning; it tells young people that one can be pious without renouncing one's youthful identity. Indeed, *Pemuda Hijrah* actively recruited from subcultures: skateboarders, rock musicians, bikers, and even former gang members were welcomed into the fold. Instead of lecturing them on all their past wrongs, Hanan Attaki redefines *hijrāh* for a new generation—especially Indonesian punk and underground youth—by shifting it from a literal migration to a personal, moral transformation. His message resonates deeply with those feeling lost or disillusioned by the decline of political activism and the rise of consumerism in the underground scene.[12] Through his sermons and movements like Shift,[13] Hanan Attaki offers an alternative path that blends spiritual depth with cultural relevance, making faith accessible without demanding the abandonment of identity.[14]

For families, Hanan Attaki often represented a double-edged sword. On one hand, many parents were grateful that their wayward or nonchalant teens were suddenly interested in attending Qur'ān study circles and improving their character. A mother might have been relieved to see her son swap nightclub outings for Friday night Islāmic gatherings at Bandung's famous mosque, Masjīd Al-Lathif, where *Pemuda Hijrah* held sessions. On the other hand, Hanan Attaki's movement sometimes challenged parental authority in subtle ways. The youth involved in *Pemuda Hijrah* formed peer groups named *Pesantrend* that became quasi-family units for religious guidance. They would consult each other or their mentor *ustādh* on personal issues.[15]

One notable tension arose around the outlook on tradition vs. reform. While Hanan Attaki himself did not overtly attack traditional practices, the general *hijrāh* movement climate leaned towards a *scripturalist* mindset. Additionally, Hanan Attaki's rise itself came with institutional pushback which filtered down to families. In 2022, the East Java branch of MUI (Indonesian *Ulamāʾ* Council) banned Hanan Attaki from preaching in certain areas, fearing that his trendy style and perceived connections to

10 Hikmawan Saefullah, "'Nevermind the Jahiliyyah, Here's the Hijrahs': Punk and the Religious Turn in the Contemporary Indonesian Underground Scene", *Punk & Post-Punk* 6/2 (June 2017), 263–289.

11 Founder of Raheela Project (hanan_attaki), *Instagram*.

12 Saefullah, "'Nevermind the Jahiliyyah, Here's the Hijrahs': Punk and the Religious Turn in the Contemporary Indonesian Underground Scene".

13 Shift Media, *Instagram*

14 Saefullah, "'Nevermind the Jahiliyyah, Here's the Hijrahs': Punk and the Religious Turn in the Contemporary Indonesian Underground Scene", 277.

15 Pesan Trend, *Instagram*.

purist groups could undermine local religious traditions.[16] This episode might have given some parents pause – is this young preacher leading our kids astray or into conflict with mainstream Islām? Hanan Attaki's subsequent move to take *bayʿah* (pledge of allegiance) with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 2023, essentially a gesture of coming under the wing of Indonesia's largest traditionalist organization, was a way to ease these concerns.[17] It demonstrates how the negotiation of authority also happens at community levels: new media-born preachers may seek endorsement from old-guard institutions to gain acceptance by the older generation. For the families, seeing Hanan Attaki embraced by NU likely reassured many parents that his teachings were within acceptable bounds.

Despite occasional tensions, Hanan Attaki's impact on youth has largely been seen as revitalizing Islāmic interest. Countless anecdotes circulate of youths who, after following his content, started praying regularly, quit smoking or drinking, and mended their behaviour towards parents. In such cases, digital religious content indirectly *reinforced* parental authority in moral matters – the child's improved piety often aligns with what parents' desire. However, now the authority figure inspiring the change is the charismatic preacher on the screen, not the parent.

In summary, the Hanan Attaki case exemplifies a scenario of "harmless challenge" to family authority. The challenge comes in the form of youths shifting their locus of guidance to a peer community and a young mentor, which may introduce new ideas at odds with family custom. But it is often benign or even welcome in outcome – producing more dutiful, spiritually driven children. The potential for conflict exists, but many urban middle-class families navigated the Hijrah wave by cautiously embracing it, seeing it as a constructive outlet for youth energy.

3. Conservative Digital Authority: From Abdul Somad to Salāfist Figures

If Hanan Attaki represents the hip, youth-subculture end of digital *da`wah*, then Abdul Somad and Salāfi-linked figures exemplify a more traditional, conservative digital Islām —albeit with different modes of influence. Abdul Somad, with his strong academic credentials and humorous yet firm delivery style, bridges generational divides. His popularity—fuelled by YouTube content and viral WhatsApp circulation—has turned him into a household religious reference. It's common for families to watch his videos together, consulting him on everyday issues like Islāmic finance or child discipline. In this sense, Abdul Somad often functions as a unifying authority figure—someone both parents and youth can defer to when navigating questions of practice.[18]

Within families, especially in chat-based group like WhatsApp, Abdul Somad's videos have often become shared viewing material. Abdul Somad functions almost like a mediator of family learning – the family jointly defers to his authority on a given topic.

[16] Hilda Meilisa Rinanda, "Duduk Perkara Ustaz Hanan Attaki Ditolak Ceramah Di 7 Daerah Jatim," *Detikjatim* (February 2023).

[17] Moch Miftachur Rizki, "Kiai Marzuki Resmi Baiat NU Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Terima Sistem Negara", *NU Online Jatim* (11 May 2023).

[18] Rosidi et al., "From Listening to Producing: Ustaz Abdul Somad's Active Audiences in Pekanbaru, Indonesia".

For example, a question about whether a certain financial practice is halal, or how to deal with a rebellious child, might be answered by pulling up an Abdul Somad's video on that topic.[19] In these cases, rather than youth alone challenging parents, both generations are looking to this external authority. It can reinforce harmony if both accept his verdicts. In fact, because Abdul Somad is older and more traditionally credentialed than someone like Hanan Attaki, many parents trust him.

However, Abdul Somad is not without controversy, and these controversies can reverberate in family discussions. Some of his statements have been criticized as intolerant or provocative. In 2019, for example, a video of him explaining an Islāmic view about the cross in Christianity went viral and offended some Christian groups; this became national news.[20] Such incidents can lead to debates among the more pluralistically minded urban families. Thus, intra-family debates over the suitability of Abdul Somad's views can occur, reflecting a microcosm of Indonesia's broader debate on religious tolerance. It's also worth noting that Abdul Somad's rise prompted institutional responses as well, highlighting a tension between new media popularity and established authority.[21] His massive popularity, which started online, translated into him being invited to speak at large events and even considered for political endorsements.[22] Such narratives can deepen a young person's identification with the online *ustādh* in opposition to "the establishment," potentially including their own parents if they perceive the parents as aligned with establishment views.

A stricter form of conservatism emerges from Salāfi YouTube channels such as Yufid TV, Rodja TV, or the sermons of preachers like Khalid Basalamah and Firanda Andirja.[23] In contrast to Abdul Somad's performative and accessible style, Salāfi content is methodical, text-heavy, and didactic. These preachers offer highly structured lessons grounded in Qurānic and Hadīth citations, which appeal to youth seeking clarity and consistency in their religious lives.[24]

In some households, Salāfi teachings reinforce parental authority, particularly when both generations align with scripturalist values. Parents may even encourage their children to engage with these channels as a means of instilling religious discipline.[25] However, Salāfi influence often enters the home asymmetrically[26] —discovered by university students or young professionals through campus networks or online

19 Rosidi et al., "From Listening to Producing: Ustaz Abdul Somad's Active Audiences in Pekanbaru, Indonesia".

20 *Tempo*, "Abdul Somad Tersandung Penistaan Agama, Ini Kontroversi Lainnya" (20 August 2019).

21 Setyo Aji, "NU Minta Abdul Somad Klarifikasi Soal Ancaman Berdakwah", *CNN Indonesia* (3 September 2018).

22 Raden Putri, "UAS Resmi Dukung Anies Di Pilpres 2024, Isi Pertemuan Singgung Ada Yang Takut Bilang AMIN", *Tempo* (16 December 2023).

23 For more on Salafism associated Instagram accounts, see yufid.tv (username), *Instagram;* rodjatv (username), *Instagram*; Khalid Z.A Basalamah, *Instagram*; Firanda Andirja, *Instagram.*

24 Chris Chaplin, "Communal Salafi Learning and Islamic Selfhood: Examining Religious Boundaries through Ethnographic Encounters in Indonesia", *Ethnography* 21/1 (March 2020), 113–132.

25 Fatimah Husein, "Negotiating Salafism: Women Prayer Groups and Their Preachers in Indonesia's Islamic Digital Mediascapes", *CyberOrient* 15/1 (June 2021), 119–145.

26 Chaplin, "Communal Salafi Learning and Islamic Selfhood: Examining Religious Boundaries through Ethnographic Encounters in Indonesia".

searches.[27] This can trigger tension when the child begins rejecting family traditions—like *mawlīd* celebrations—as religiously invalid. Such disagreements are rarely voiced with hostility—since Salāfi ethics also stress obedience to parents—but they nonetheless create emotional and cultural distance within the household.

Both Abdul Somad and Salāfi channels illustrate that conservative digital Islām is not monolithic. Abdul Somad embodies a more populist-traditional style, while Salāfi figures push a purist and systematized form of religiosity. Interestingly, the two can co-exist within a single household. One parent might follow Abdul Somad, while the child gravitates toward Abdul Somad scholars. This produces a conservative pluralism at home, which can lead to harmony or friction depending on how families navigate differences in ritual, interpretation, and authority.

Ultimately, the rise of conservative *daʿwah* in digital spaces signals a shift in how Islāmic authority operates: not only as cross-generational validation but also as a new site of fragmentation. Media now function as spaces where both parents and youth seek religious grounding yet often end up aligning with different figures or movements. The result is an increasingly interactive field of domestic authority—where institutional, personal, and digital voices intersect in complex and unpredictable ways.

4. Digital Piety and Youth Religious Culture

The phenomenon of digital piety among urban Muslim youth in Indonesia does not merely reflect the infiltration of technology into religious life—it signals a deeper structural transformation shaped by the dynamics of mediatisation. In Stig Hjarvard's framework, mediatisation is not simply the mediation of religion via media platforms. It marks a shift where media themselves actively shape, redefine, and even reconstitute the conditions through which religion is practiced, understood, and circulated. This shift becomes most visible when we observe how youth-oriented religious cultures unfold across digital spaces.[28] Hjarvard proposes that media operate in three mutually reinforcing modes: as conduit, as language, and as environment—each one altering how religious meanings are communicated and experienced.[29]

As a conduit, platforms like YouTube and Instagram now serve as key channels for distributing religious knowledge and authority—but not in neutral ways. Algorithms shape visibility through engagement metrics, favouring figures like Hanan Attaki or Khalid Basalamah not for credentials but digital appeal. Rather than transmitting doctrine in institutional form, media repackage fragments of piety—testimony, moral cues, lifestyle—optimized for virality. What circulates is often not theological depth, but emotional and visual resonance.[30]

[27] Aksan Amadi, *Salafi Movement Among Students of Makassar State University* (Makassar: Hasanuddin University, 2020).

[28] Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, 6.

[29] Stig Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the Public Face of Religion", *State Religion and Church in Russia and Worldwide* 38/2 (2020), 41–75.

[30] Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the Public Face of Religion", 27.

Media do not merely convey religious content; they actively shape its form and grammar, establishing templates for how faith is expressed, felt, and visualized.[31] In digital spaces, Islāmic messages are re-articulated through affective, stylized formats—sermon clips become story times, Qurānic reflections appear as Instagram-ready quotes paired with moody visuals, and moral teachings are delivered in short, emotionally charged reels. This aestheticization of piety transforms religion into a lifestyle narrative: something to be curated and performed for audiences, not just practiced privately. As Hjarvard argues, the commercial and emotional logic of media favours resonance over rigor, popularity over precision.[32] The result is a piety that blends sincerity with spectacle, shaped as much by algorithms and visual culture as by theology.

Perhaps the most transformative role of media in youth religiosity lies in its function as environment—a space where religious identity is shaped collectively. Digital platforms are not just content hosts; they serve as new arenas of spiritual life. Through group chats and comment threads, young Muslims access not only instruction but also companionship and moral support, often supplanting traditional authorities like family or local mosques. Hjarvard calls this the environmental dimension of media, where the social functions once occupied by religious institutions—ritual, consolation, guidance—are now distributed across networked platforms.[33] Within these mediated environments, authority becomes decentralized and horizontal. Young people curate their religious ecosystems through selective following, content sharing, and peer-to-peer dialogue—often with little involvement from formal institutions.

Taken together, these three modes—conduit, language, environment—reveal how digital media reshape not just how religion is accessed, but what it becomes. Religious identity now emerges within fluid, sometimes fragile online spaces, marked by both creative potential and risks of fragmentation. Aesthetic appeal may eclipse ethical depth, and authority can shift from grounded formation to mere follower counts.

5. Negotiating Religious Authority in the Indonesian Family

In Indonesian families, religious authority has long followed a vertical structure grounded in generational and institutional legitimacy, with parents—especially fathers—guiding their children's faith. Today, this hierarchy faces a lateral challenge: the pervasive influence of digital media. Across urban households, youth increasingly question parental guidance—not through defiance, but by invoking content from platforms like YouTube or WhatsApp. These negotiations are not merely personal but deeply mediatized.

What we are witnessing here is not simply a generational gap, but a disembedding of religious practices from their original familial and communal contexts. Religious learning and guidance, which once took place within the intimate spaces of home or mosque, are increasingly outsourced to digital environments. David Lyon describes how religion has become disembedded in postmodern society: it is no longer

31 Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the Public Face of Religion", 27.
32 Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the Public Face of Religion", 27.
33 Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, 82.

embedded in religious organisations or in a particular country or culture and beliefs are not embedded in their original contexts. This allows people to pick and mix lots of bits of lots of belief systems: take what they like and reject what they don't.[34] Teenagers now attend sermons on YouTube, follow influencers who provide daily reminders about morality, and consult popular preachers via livestreams or anonymous Telegram channels. In doing so, they are not abandoning religion—they are relocating it. This is the essence of disembedding: the detachment of religious knowledge and ritual from its original social context. But the process does not end there. These practices are then reembedded—not in a vacuum, but into algorithmically structured digital spaces that reshape how religion is experienced and what counts as authoritative.

This reembedding takes place within platformized spiritual ecologies, where content creators, audiences, and platform algorithms collectively produce new forms of moral and theological authority. In many families, the authority of the parent is not rejected out of disrespect but displaced by a parallel system of credibility—one governed by digital logic. Here, the media platform itself functions not merely as a neutral intermediary but increasingly takes on the role of a semi-religious institution. These platforms offer more than access to religious knowledge; they provide structure, repetition, rituality, and most crucially, moral legitimacy.

For many youths, online platforms offer a sense of belonging more attuned to their emotional and cultural realities than the home. Group chats and comment sections form tight-knit digital publics, where shared norms—not seniority—define orthodoxy. When a daughter corrects her mother's prayer based on an online tutorial, she isn't just asserting knowledge; she's participating in a new, media-enabled regime of authority that challenges traditional family hierarchies.

Urban religious life now bleeds into family chat threads in very literal ways: announcements to join WhatsApp groups or channels for sermon updates and study notes circulate through city-level "info kajian"[35] pages and mosque feeds, then reappear inside households as links that structure who learns from whom, and when. In Semarang, for instance, *Info Kajian* explicitly invites followers to "*Gabung aja di Grup WhatsApp Info Kajian Semarang*,"[36] providing a join link; similar invitations are routine in Yogyakarta and Bandung, where *Info Kajian Jogjakarta* and *Info Kajian Bandung* pin WhatsApp group links as the default pathway to guidance circulation. Mosques themselves now publish WhatsApp Channels as the first point of contact—see Masjid Al-Firdaus Kadipaten's "Ikuti Saluran WhatsApp Resmi" post—while individual preachers (e.g., Ustadz Muhammad Nuzul Dzikri) or study circles advertise registration via WhatsApp for ongoing lessons. The empirical upshot is simple: the infrastructural "front door" to da'wa and fiqh learning is a join-able link, and the family room becomes

[34] David Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press in Association with Blackwell Publishers, 2005).

[35] In Indonesian Muslim usage, kajian refers to public Islamic study gatherings—ranging from short lectures to recurring study circles, offline or online. Info kajian pages are social-media feeds that aggregate and distribute announcements for these events.

[36] This passage means "Join the Info Kajian Semarang WhatsApp group."

downstream of these links as schedules, PDFs, and reminders arrive in shared chats—rearranging who can initiate religious talk at home and with what external backing.[37]

A second stream of posts documents how online kajian has normalized remote, on-demand arbitration of everyday questions. Community organizers and campus units routinely publish Zoom flyers or IGTV notices—e.g., BIA's "Kajian Online Via Zoom Meeting," Universitas Al-Hikmah's "Kajian Online 'Aktual' Seri Kolak Kurma," KPMI's "Kajian Online Ramadhan," and UIN Malang's "Kajian Online part 7." For families, these are not merely events; they are portable authorities that can be summoned mid-discussion ("Let's join tonight's tafsir" or "Watch this 7-minute clip before we decide"), shifting the settlement path from parental fiat to shared viewing of a linked lesson. The post format—time, speaker, theme, access link—makes deference contingent on verifyable content rather than on embodied seniority alone.[38]

Finally, the texture of upward admonition inside households is traceable in the genre of "quotes by Hanan Attaki," which is massively circulated in reels and tiles and explicitly addresses parent–child obligations. Posts and reels such as "*Orang tua wajib denger ini… Orang tua juga bisa durhaka pada anak,*" "*3 Hal yang Membuat Orang Tua Bisa Durhaka kepada Anak*,"[39] and parallel edits reiterate that failure to provide, to restrain verbal harm, or to listen conscientiously is religiously blameworthy. Whatever one's juristic evaluation, the circulation fact is undeniable: these clips give adolescents and young adults a ready-made, Islamic lexicon for correcting upward—not as insolence but as piety. In practice, a daughter can paste one of these posts into the family WhatsApp and shift the burden of proof from "my preference" to "here is a preacher's public admonition," prompting counter-citations (often from parents) and leading to dialogical settlements rather than unilateral orders. The authority doing the work here is not charisma in the room; it is the archived, shareable post that both sides can watch, replay, and weigh.[40]

In many middle-class apartments and multigenerational household across Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya, the question of "who gets to say what counts as correct Islam" no longer rests securely upon seniority or the quiet gravitas of embodied presence; it is progressively arbitrated through circulating references that are summoned into the living room via phones and family group chats.[41] The older architecture of deference—father as epistemic gatekeeper, mother as curator of embodied ritual know-how, local ustādz as proximate authority—does not disappear; it becomes one voice

[37] For further examples and announcements referenced here, see Muhammad Nuzul Dzikri, *Instagram*;Info Kajian Jogjakarta,*Instagram*; Info Kajian Semarang, Instagram.

[38] See also the national listing aggregator Indra Setia Lesmana, *Instagram*. for broader schedules and event posters.

[39] Orang tua wajib denger ini… Orang tua juga bisa durhaka pada anak," — Indonesian for "Parents need to hear this… Parents too can wrong their children." Here *durhaka* connotes a religiously blameworthy failure of parental duty (for example neglect or hurtful conduct), not simple disagreement.

[40] See also storyberdakwah (username), *Instagram*. for short-form da'wah quotes, reels, and visual sermon by Hanan Attaki snippets commonly circulated in family chats.

[41] Wahyudi Akmaliah - Ahmad Najib Burhani, *Digital Islam in Indonesia: The Shift of Ritual and Religiosity during Covid-19* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak, 2021).

among several, now sharing the stage with institutional articles, short explainer clips, and the algorithmically elevated counsel of parasocial teachers.[42] In this sense the family ceases to be a sovereign site of unidirectional transmission and is re-situated within a wider, platformed ecology where truth-claims must be verified in public(ish) arenas: the comment thread, the shareable snippet, the linkable fatwā. Your own argument about mediatization and micro-power is precisely at stake here: control over the production and verification of "religious truth" has slipped from bodies and rooms to platforms and archives, and with that slippage the vectors of authority inside the home are re-drawn.

This also raises broader sociological implications. If media have become semi-religious institutions and are reembedding practices in new environments, then the very nature of Islāmic transmission is changing. No longer bound by geographical communities or institutional gatekeepers, religious knowledge circulates as part of a flexible, user-driven ecosystem. Authority becomes more about affective resonance and digital presence than about credentials or age. In this context, the family is not sidelined but re-situated within a broader media-religious matrix. Children are not just learning from their parents; they are curating spiritual worldviews alongside them—sometimes in tension, often in tandem.

The shifting dynamics of religious authority within Indonesian families cannot be fully understood without addressing the deeper, micro-level operations of power that structure relationships between generations. While on the surface, the emergence of new media and the popularity of digital *daʿwah* among youth may appear as a technological trend, the changes they provoke within the household are symptomatic of a broader epistemic reconfiguration—a restructuring of how religious truth is produced, circulated, and authorized. In this context, Foucault's conceptualization of power and knowledge offers a critical lens through which to interpret the evolving landscape of authority. For Foucault, power is not simply exercised through coercion or institutional authority; it operates through the production of knowledge and the construction of discourses that define what counts as truth.[43] This means that control over religious knowledge production becomes a key site of power struggle between generations.

Traditionally, parents—especially fathers—occupied the position of epistemic authority within the household. However, as digital media open access to alternative religious discourses, this monopoly over "truth" is being fractured. Youth now gain religious knowledge not just from their elders, but from decentralized digital networks—algorithmically curated feeds of sermons, *fatwā*, quotes, and visual reminders that exist outside the authority of the familial structure. These new flows of knowledge, which Foucault might describe as regimes of truth,[44] destabilize the taken-for-granted legitimacy of parental control. Power is no longer derived solely from age,

[42] Ad Hannan, "Rethinking the Indonesian Muslim Identity Endorsed by Hanan Attaki's Popular Preaching on Social Media", *Al'Adalah* 27/1 (November 2024), 31–49.

[43] Michel Foucault, "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison", *On Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1977), 27.

[44] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings,* 1972-79, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 131.

lineage, or institutional endorsement. It is exercised through discursive credibility: the ability to cite the "right" *ustādh*, or the most viral religious video. Charismatic preachers are not merely expressing theological preference—they are reconfiguring the very grammar of authority in the home. They deploy digital religious discourse to contest and negotiate power, often in subtle yet decisive ways. In Foucauldian terms, we might say that these youths engage in counter-conduct: not a wholesale rejection of religious discipline, but the attempt to redefine its content, sources, and orientation.

The shift is not merely in what is believed, but in how belief is validated. Discipline becomes entangled with knowledge authentication practices, as family members debate which source is legitimate, which preacher is reliable, and whose version of Islām is more "correct". In this way, religious truth becomes a contested terrain, and with it, so does power. The home, once the site of unilateral moral instruction, now resembles what Foucault would call a capillary site of power[45]—a distributed network where authority is continuously renegotiated through micro-interactions.

Moreover, digital piety introduces new disciplinary techniques that are not imposed from above but self-enforced through internalized norms. Young people track their *ʿibādah* through apps, join WhatsApp groups that set religious targets, and engage in peer-based moral surveillance.[46] These technologies foster a self-regulating subjectivity, in which power operates through voluntary participation in religious self-monitoring. The family, in turn, becomes a site where multiple disciplinary logics intersect: the traditional logic of parental instruction, the communal ethos of local Islām, and the algorithmic cues of digital religion. Authority is no longer singular or top-down; it is plural, layered, and often conflicting.

This does not mean the collapse of familial authority, but rather its mutation. Some parents accommodate these shifts by repositioning themselves—not as unquestionable instructors, but as co-learners or curators of religious content. Others react defensively, asserting traditional practices with renewed urgency, even as they are increasingly challenged by digital literacy and alternative references. Foucault reminds us that where there is power, there is resistance—but also that resistance is itself a form of power.[47] Youthful rejection of traditional rituals may not be an escape from authority, but the enactment of a new disciplinary rationality mediated by screens, networks, and personalized ideologies of faith.

In sum, the evolving structure of religious authority in Indonesian families should not be reduced to generational conflict or cultural decline. It is better understood as a reorganization of epistemic power, shaped by the availability of new regimes of

[45] Foucault would describe the family as a capillary site of power—a micro-level domain where power circulates subtly but persistently through everyday practices, language, and norms. Unlike top-down conceptions of power, Foucault emphasized its diffuse and decentralized nature, operating through "net-like" structures that both constrain and enable individuals. See Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, 1972-79.

[46] Unesa "Teknologi Canggih, Ibadah Lancar: Ramadhan Di Era Digital", (7 May 2025).

[47] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 95.

religious knowledge and new technologies of self-discipline. Foucault's framework allows us to see how truth-production is a battleground, and how the intimate spaces of the family are infused with larger shifts in power relations. As young Muslims gain access to diversified and democratized sources of religious meaning, the family's role is not eclipsed but redefined—no longer as the sovereign site of instruction, but as a node within a broader, more fragmented ecology of spiritual governance.

Conclusion

This article shows that the Indonesian Muslim household has become a mediated forum where religious guidance is negotiated and provisionally settled through circulated proof such as links and short videos rather than age alone. Key figures illustrate distinct authority grammars. Hanan Attaki normalizes upward admonition by giving young people a religious vocabulary for challenging parents while keeping respect intact. Abdul Somad often works as a shared arbiter who's wide recognizability helps close disagreements, especially on money and everyday conduct. Salafi channels supply rule focused clarity that sharpens boundary work around customary practices and invites counter explanations from more tradition minded voices. None of these figures replaces the family. Together they refashion how authority is earned and defended inside the home.

Across ritual practice, household finance, and ethics and lifestyle, settlements follow a common pattern that involves shared viewing, counter citation, and bounded compromise. Four indicators make the shift visible. Who initiates a moral discussion. Which sources are cited. How the interaction unfolds, whether deference, debate, or co learning. Where closure is located, whether parental decision, an external clip by a trusted scholar, or a pragmatic house rule. Conceptually, authority now accrues to what is credible, accessible, and easy to circulate within family networks. Practically, unity is sustained by procedures of disagreement that include media literacy, agreed arbiters, and time boxed trials of practice. Families are not losing authority to the internet. They are rearticulating it in forms workable for contemporary urban life.

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