The Changing Practices of Religiousity and Mediatization of Islamic Intellectual Management In Indonesian Context

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Abstract. This article presents a perspective on the widespread mediatization of religious life currently taking place in Muslim society. Religious practices that were previously never performed in virtual spaces have now become common due to rapid developments in communication technology. Online *tahlilan*, *maulid* celebrations, and major religious holidays are now frequently broadcast or held online, reflecting this shift. The use of digital Qur'ans, prayer time reminder apps, Qibla direction finders, and even discussions about performing the Hajj through the metaverse are further examples of how mediatization is reshaping religious experiences. At the same time, sermons delivered via social media or through video conferencing platforms represent new forms of Islamic intellectual engagement that can reach wider audiences and endure over time. Recorded sermons uploaded to social media are becoming new sources of religious authority. Increasingly, people no longer consult traditional figures such as *Tuan Guru* or *kyai* directly. Instead, they turn to search engines for answers to religious questions. The concept of the "prosumer" (producer and consumer) also emerges in digital spaces, where users both generate and consume religious content, shaping new cultural patterns. However, without proper filtering, these digital environments can contribute to the spread of hoaxes and misinformation. For this reason, the Qur'anic concept of *tabayyun*, or critical verification, is essential for building healthy media literacy and religious understanding.

Keywords: Mediatization; Religiousity; Medium; Message; Prosumer.

1   Introduction

If we closely examine the current context of religiosity, many aspects have become mediated through the rapid advancement of technology. Media has shortened distances and made it easier to access various forms of information, including religious practices. Tools such as digital Qur'ans, Qibla direction finders, and prayer time reminder apps exemplify how mediatization brings convenience to contemporary worship. Mediatization, as defined by [1], is a condition where media becomes an integral part of everyday life. Social practices and relationships are increasingly constructed and mediated

through media, to the point where society becomes increasingly dependent and compliant. This is clearly reflected in religious life today. When seeking religious references, many people no longer turn to traditional religious authorities such as *Tuan Guru* or *Kyai*. Instead, they rely on YouTube, search engines, and other digital platforms.

Marshall McLuhan, in [2], explains that when media becomes an extension of human faculties, everything accessed through it becomes part of that extension. Sermons, which were once distributed via cassette tapes, have now evolved into audiovisual formats spread across all forms of media thanks to convergence. [3] describes convergence as a transformation from one-way media (like print, TV, or radio) into dynamic, cross-platform formats that reach wider audiences.

In this religious context, convergence allows people to access sermons through live broadcasts on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, or video conferencing apps. McLuhan's concept of the "global village" [4] is visible here—events from around the world can be experienced together, though not physically, but through media. For instance, *tarawih* prayers during Ramadan or Hajj rituals are often broadcast live on Saudi television, enabling viewers to feel immersed in the moment.

The idea that "the medium is the message" emphasizes how media significantly reshapes social life and cultivates new dependencies. Previously, religious events were attended with solemn focus, but now, they are also spaces for sharing photos and videos on social media as part of projecting piety. When popular preachers lead events, the crowd's excitement often overshadows the substance of the religious message. The rise of commercialized, paid religious events attended by media celebrities reflects how religion has merged with entertainment and market forces.

Islam encourages critical thinking, especially in verifying information—a principle embedded in the Qur'anic concept of *tabayyun* (Surah Al-Hujurat: 6). This critical approach must be supported by media literacy, as social media is now a dominant source of religious learning. Many find studying on YouTube or Instagram more practical than attending in person. Media offers the advantage of on-demand access, even if it is one-directional. In this sense, mediatization positively supports Islamic intellectual development through media platforms.

However, mediatization also has negative consequences. One major issue is the spread of misinformation, such as fake news about violence against Muslims that is emotionally charged and politically weaponized. Religious issues are often used to attack political opponents and incite long-lasting discord. Once political goals are achieved, the public is often abandoned. This underscores the urgent need for critical media consumption and strong media literacy skills.

The ideas of [1], [2] help us understand that media has become deeply integrated into the socio-religious reality. The media's convergence traps audiences in mediated realities that benefit media platforms themselves. For example, social media may feel more intimate than face-to-face interaction, making users dependent on digital engagement.

In religious contexts, this also manifests as competition among groups to broadcast religious events from their regions, often for visibility or popularity on social media. The notion of the "prosumer" [5], where individuals are both producers and consumers of content, reflects today's participatory media landscape. This raises the question: can these media platforms, which disseminate Islamic messages, maintain truth and integrity? This concern aligns with the vision of *prophetic journalism*, which promotes media guided by ethical and spiritual principles. Two decades ago, interactive media was rare

in Indonesia. Most TV and radio programs were recorded and broadcasted later. In McLuhan's terms, media as an "extension of man" creates a constructed reality with economic value, causing audiences to disengage from actual, lived realities (Islas, 2016).

Today, mediatization deeply influences Muslim religious life. As noted by [6], media acts as a new cultural and social environment that takes over the functions of institutionalized religion, offering spiritual guidance, moral discourse, and a sense of community. For example, TV dramas such as *Angling Darma*, *Tutur Tinular*, *Prabu Siliwangi*, and *Jaka Tarub*, which originally had Hindu-Buddhist elements, later incorporated Islamic narratives. The Islamic revival in Indonesia is also supported by Islamic-themed films, such as *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, which established a strong image of piety through its characters and actors. [7] argues that these portrayals successfully shaped a new cultural model among Muslims, influencing their everyday religious expressions.

Alongside cultural mediatization, Islamic political movements like PKS, HTI, and Salafi Tarbiyah have used media to spread their ideologies [8]. These groups build structured media centers to control narratives and facilitate ideological indoctrination [9]. Hijrah movements also capitalize on digital platforms to create and disseminate content that aligns with their worldview (Mahanani, 2016). Even before modern social media, technologies like phone calls and video conferencing allowed distant communities to connect. [10] concept of "speed space" describes how media brings different realities together into a shared moment, such as live World Cup broadcasts. However, this pales in comparison to the virtual and metaverse technologies available today, which allow for immersive participation in entirely constructed digital spaces.

In the current reality of Muslim society, religious mediatization often involves commodification. TV programs like *Islam Itu Indah*, *Curhat Bersama Mama Dedeh*, or *Ruqiyah* with Ustadz Danu commodify both the religious message and the audience. Viewers are directed to act in specific ways, despite recognizing inconsistencies in how reality is portrayed. This form of instant, constructed religiosity fosters a mindset that accepts media presentations as authoritative sources of Islamic knowledge [11]. At the same time, the visibility and engagement generated by religious content keep producers aware of Muslim audiences as a lucrative market segment. [12] concept of the "spectacle society" is visible in how Indonesian audiences participate in choreographed shows, responding to cues to laugh, clap, or chant in unison. This spectacle contributes to shaping how religiosity is performed and consumed.

In conclusion, the mediatization of religious reality in Muslim society has led to a cultural transformation that blends convenience, commodification, and ideological dissemination. However, the overwhelming flood of information makes it difficult to discern truth from fiction. Religious practices are increasingly carried out online and are often seen as equivalent to in-person rituals. Donation platforms, such as those used by ACT (Aksi Cepat Tanggap), exemplify how media is used to mobilize charity. Despite their reach, cases like ACT's 2022 scandal—where administrative profits far exceeded distribution to recipients—show the potential for abuse in mediatized charity. This convergence of media and donation collection reflects the power of digital platforms in shaping religious life.

Moreover, virtual spaces increasingly dominate religious practice, leading to concerns about the loss of sacredness. [13] concept of hyperreality captures this phenomenon, where simulated religious experiences blur the line between the real and the artificial. Ultimately, the mediatization of religious life calls for a balance: embracing the

positive potential of media while remaining critically aware of its influence. The principle of *tabayyun*, combined with robust media literacy, is essential in navigating this complex landscape.

2   Theoretical Framework and Reflections on Mediatization

This paper builds upon the concept of mediatization as proposed by several scholars, including Winfried Schulz, who conceptualizes mediatization as a process of social change associated with communication media [14]. Schulz outlines four components of mediatization: extension, which refers to the expansion of reality through media; substitution, or the replacement of one reality with another; amalgamation, the merging of media with social institutions; and accommodation, the adaptation of society to media logic. According to Schulz, these four components can be identified in societies undergoing mediatization, which often occurs without individuals being fully aware of how communication technologies are increasingly enclosing and reshaping their lived realities.

Another foundational concept referenced in this paper is from Stig Hjarvard, who argues that mediatization influences cultural change, especially in societies with previously distinct cultural patterns [15]. When communication media become mass products and widely accessible, long-established cultural practices begin to shift. Media transforms social life in multiple ways, often narrowing the scope of direct interaction, even as it offers access to an unprecedented diversity of information. Moreover, mediatization blurs the boundaries between reality and the imaginary. What is presented through the media may surpass actual experience, leading individuals to feel more alive in virtual spaces than in physical reality.

The construction of self-image also finds a vast arena of expression through media platforms. Social media enables users to engage in self-branding, display curated aspects of their lives, and share private experiences in public formats. This blurring of the public and private spheres reflects a profound shift in the perception of personal boundaries [16]. These social and cultural transformations are further evidenced in the way individuals construct their identities in virtual spaces. Many users prefer to present themselves as more pious, refined, or successful online, even when these images do not align with their real-life selves [17]. Hjarvard's view highlights that virtual identities are increasingly prioritized over those rooted in physical reality.

The mediatization of reality, however, has two faces. It often creates confusion for individuals trying to maintain coherence between their digital and physical selves. For example, a worker who experiences stress and hardship in daily life may nonetheless project only happiness and positivity in their online presence. On the other hand, Schulz's component of accommodation points to the convenience offered by mediatization. In fields such as education, mediatization facilitates the rapid spread of knowledge. Audio and video tutorials, for instance, provide easier and more flexible access to learning, extending knowledge beyond the limitations of text. This will be discussed later in this paper as a form of intellectual management enabled by mediatization.

Another theoretical foundation used in this study is media convergence, as articulated by [3]. He describes how modern media consolidate various platforms to shape the dissemination of knowledge and culture, often from a particular point of view. While convergence may appear to offer democratized access, it can also produce false realities. The ideas of [18] on the cultural industry are also relevant here, particularly in relation to what is now a dominant screen culture. This refers to the omnipresence of screens in everyday life—so much so that people are rarely separated from them, from waking to sleeping. While recognizing the positive aspects of intellectual management through media, this paper also aims to critically address the potential dangers of over-exposure to mediatized life.

This paper not only reflects on contemporary religious realities but also situates itself as a media study. It examines how media plays a pivotal role in shaping public expression, functioning both as a vehicle of mediatization and as a platform for intellectual engagement. The author's observations draw upon personal reflection and memory, comparing pre-digital eras with the current flood of information—a flood that often lacks adequate filtering mechanisms. Today, filtering information is a personal responsibility; individuals must determine for themselves what is relevant and what is digital "waste" best avoided. While media was once trusted as a primary source of truth, it now frequently presents material that is unnecessary or even misleading.

The author's reflections also include religious expressions in today's context, where not only gradual shifts but radical leaps are taking place. Many religious practices that were once unthinkable in digital formats are now commonly performed online. In this context, religious reality is not limited to ritual or belief but extends to how religion is represented and mediated in digital spaces. This study also explores whether sacredness or profaneness is being emphasized in mediatized religious expression. The erasure of clear boundaries between the sacred and the profane raises critical questions: Are these developments aligned with Islamic ethical principles, or do they diverge from the legal and theological frameworks of Islam?

3   Result and Discussion

3.1   Mediated Religious Reality

Looking back to the early 1990s in the Indonesian context, we hardly found any established mediatized religious reality that could be directly accessed and followed by diverse groups across different regions. Communication technology at that time was still relatively unsophisticated, primarily used to record religious events in audio, audiovisual, or photographic formats, which were later reviewed or recounted through lengthy written narratives describing the processions of these events.

In contrast, the mediatization of religious reality discussed in this article refers to religious traditions that had never previously existed in virtual spaces but are now practiced extensively online. This shift aligns with broader socio-cultural changes within society. Mediatization not only facilitates the performance of religious traditions but also transcends the original religious reality, creating a new reality perceived as equivalent to physical experience [19]. Religious events that were once exclusively held face-

to-face are now increasingly conducted online and are often considered more accommodating in various respects. Examples include online *tahlilan*, virtual *maulid* celebrations, religious gatherings or commemorations, and the *haul* of Islamic figures in Indonesia—all of which are now widely held in virtual formats.

For instance, when Prof. Azyumardi Azra passed away, people across the archipelago participated in an online *tahlilan* via Zoom, led by his students and attended by respected religious figures offering prayers. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, *maulid* celebrations continued virtually, with no loss of religious enthusiasm despite restrictions on physical gatherings. In fact, virtual celebrations extended their reach by eliminating geographical limitations, enabling broader participation. These events preserved the essence of religious observance while offering economic advantages—removing the need for venue preparation, catering, or transportation.

In this regard, mediatization deeply penetrates religious practices, forming new beliefs that the medium itself becomes an integral component of religious expression [20]. Religion itself can be understood as a medium, facilitating doctrinal dissemination and ideological expression. The popularization of religious practices in media spaces has also influenced the emergence of new intellectual authorities. Religious figures who gain prominence through media exposure often become recognized as legitimate religious authorities, with growing audiences and followings [21].

Figures such as Zainuddin MZ, Aa Gym, Cak Nun, Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS), Ustadz Adi Hidayat (UAH), Hanan Attaki, Das'ad Latif, Gus Baha', Husein Ja'far, and Ustadz Solmed exemplify religious personalities who have successfully harnessed technological platforms to disseminate their religious teachings. Our screens are now filled with various forms of mediatized religious content that mirror, and in many ways replace, their offline counterparts. The forms of mediatization are diverse. One prominent development is the rise of religious practices that were never before conducted in virtual spaces, gaining momentum particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another emerging form is the discourse on performing the Hajj pilgrimage via the metaverse [22]. The metaverse—a virtual environment developed by Meta, the parent company of Facebook and other major platforms—offers immersive experiences using virtual reality technology. It claims to simulate Hajj visits closely resembling physical reality.

This idea, sparked by the postponement of the Hajj in 2020 and 2021, led to considerable debate among scholars. Developers clarified that the intention was not to replace the Hajj with a virtual version but to offer a simulated experience of the pilgrimage [23]. Nevertheless, the controversy persisted. Scholars from several OIC countries issued fatwas declaring that a virtual pilgrimage does not fulfill the legal requirements of Hajj [24]. In this case, mediatization appears to have exceeded the bounds of religious practice. On the one hand, it accommodates social needs; on the other, if left unaddressed, it risks legitimizing religious practices that might not align with established doctrine.

This phenomenon is not exclusive to Islam. Many Christian churches have also adopted virtual worship services, treating them as equivalent to in-person gatherings [25]. However, this article focuses specifically on Islamic contexts due to limited observation of other religions. During the pandemic, other religious communities also leveraged media convergence to ease the process of worship. In Hindu and Buddhist

communities, however, worship remains more place-dependent and less adaptable to virtual formats [26]. In the Muslim context, online religious practices typically do not involve obligatory rituals but are more often commemorative events. The shift to online platforms during the pandemic was a necessity in light of public gathering restrictions. While some still prefer offline gatherings for their perceived spiritual focus and interpersonal interaction, online and offline spaces themselves are products of mediatization—defining dichotomous community spaces. Online interaction may be synchronous and multi-directional or asynchronous with limited interactivity (e.g., through comments or live chats).

Interestingly, simpler forms of mediatization have long been practiced. Grand *pengajian* or public sermons delivered by national religious figures were previously broadcast live on radio. An elder in the author's village recounted listening to Friday sermons from Istiqlal Mosque on the radio after prayers—a tradition that still exists today, albeit via television. Mediatization undeniably eases access to critical religious information. A notable example is the public announcement of 1 Ramadan or 1 Syawal through live radio or TV broadcasts of the *isbat* session. Previously, differing interpretations based on local religious authorities often caused confusion. The mediatized *isbat* session provides a shared platform that facilitates broader consensus and preparation for religious observance.

3.2   Mediatization and Cultural Change

Stig Hjarvard refers to mediatization as a process of cultural transformation within society, including in the context of American society, which he observed [15]. We cannot deny that mediatization, which bridges various aspects of modern life, has significantly impacted the socio-cultural dynamics of Indonesian society. As the pioneers of cultural studies in the UK have argued, culture encompasses everyday life, and mediatization functions as a catalyst that accelerates the consumption and production of various aspects of daily living. This includes the consumption of personal or private experiences, which, through the mediatization of private spaces, become part of public discourse [27].

Mediatization is also closely tied to identity formation in digital spaces. These spaces facilitate the construction of social images and pious personas that often appear more coherent or idealized than in offline reality. For instance, individuals participating in religious gatherings (*majelis taklim* or *pengajian*) often prioritize livestreaming the event via social media over actively engaging with the religious discourse itself. This phenomenon has become widespread in today's virtual social environments.

The mediatization process has produced a space that is highly accessible and efficient for content creation. With rapid advancements in information and communication technologies, individuals are simultaneously consumers and producers of content—embodying the concept of the prosumer (producer and consumer). This concept reflects the emergence of user-generated content on social media as a broader effect of mediatizing public life [28]. However, mediatization also brings significant risks. The overwhelming volume of information, if not critically filtered, can lead to disinformation and social discord. Mediatized communication shapes public opinion, often reinforcing

ideological preferences or political leanings. For example, certain militant religious groups may only consume media that aligns with their worldview. Opportunistic content creators may exploit this tendency by producing clickbait material that reinforces specific biases. This phenomenon underlines the urgency of promoting critical media literacy. The spread of misinformation or hoaxes often results from the uncritical sharing of content. In this context, the Islamic concept of *tabayyun*—verifying the truth before disseminating information, as taught in the Qur'an—becomes essential.

Numerous examples illustrate how mediatization permeates the religious lives of Muslim communities. Mobile applications that include prayer time reminders, Qibla direction finders, digital Qur'ans, digital tasbih (prayer beads), and daily *wirid* (remembrance) practices are all manifestations of this phenomenon. These tools are helpful for religious observance. For instance, automated adhan (call to prayer) reminders can encourage timely worship, though users may still delay prayer or ignore notifications. While such tools do not inherently increase religiosity, they represent efforts to integrate faith into daily routines and time management.

Similarly, smartphone-based Qibla finders offer convenience, especially in regions lacking mosques or where Muslims are a minority. The digital Qur'an provides accessibility and ease for recitation. Although some debate its equivalence to the traditional printed *mushaf*, contemporary Islamic scholars generally consider digital recitation valid and permissible. Questions have arisen, such as whether one may carry a phone with a Qur'an app into the bathroom. Religious scholar Dr. Abdul Aziz Sukarnawadi from Lombok has clarified that doing so is permissible, provided the application is not opened. These discussions highlight the need to critically assess not merely the legality (*halal or haram*) of mediatized practices, but their broader impact on religious development and engagement.

When addressed constructively, the mediatization of religious practices can strengthen the Islamic spirit within society. Application developers are increasingly aware of the religious and social impact of their products. While such tools facilitate worship and learning, they may also reduce engagement with printed texts and traditional study methods. Many would argue that reciting from a printed Qur'an carries a different emotional and spiritual weight than using a digital device.

Nevertheless, the growth of mediatized religious expressions should be welcomed by the Muslim community, as long as they align with *sharia* principles. The tradition of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) emphasizes the preservation of beneficial past practices while embracing innovations that offer clear improvements—*al-muḥāfazatu ʿala al-qadīmi aṣ-ṣāliḥ, wa al-akhdhu bil-jadīdi al-aṣlaḥ* (preserving the good from the past, and adopting the better from the present).

3.3   Islamic Intellectual Management Through Media

In the 1990s, when audiovisual media was not as widespread as it is today, the lectures of K.H. Zainuddin MZ were played on tape recorders to accompany communities working together in mosques. These cassette recordings represent an early form of mediatization within an Islamic context, reflecting a model of intellectual management that still persists today. The emergence of the prosumer concept, which allows individuals

to become content producers with ease, has been made possible through the availability of cameras and internet connections that support real-time recording and broadcasting [29].

In the past, recordings of religious lectures or studies were predominantly audio-based. Over the last three decades, however, the use of audiovisual formats has become more widespread, ranging from VCD and DVD recordings to digital files stored in shared online repositories. These recordings, often of religious events, serve as intellectual references from the past that continue to be consumed today. Mediatization in this context facilitates Islamic intellectual management by enabling religious knowledge to be preserved and accessed over time. This practice is also viewed as an effort to promote Islamic values and knowledge in a way that positively impacts Muslim communities.

Today, media offerings are fundamentally driven by the production of information. The intellectual management of Islam, as emphasized in this article, is reflected in the extensive digitalization of religious lectures from various figures, many of which are shared widely, often without copyright protection. For instance, audio recordings of Aa Gym's sermons represent a meaningful form of intellectual mediation. Despite their simplicity, many listeners report feeling deeply moved by the content. These recordings also hold economic value, especially for vendors who sell speakers or memory cards pre-loaded with Qur'anic recitations and sermons by well-known religious figures.

The author has personally purchased a speaker branded "Smart Hafidz," which contains a memory card filled with recordings of the full 30 Juz of the Qur'an by various popular Indonesian reciters. Many of these audio recordings feature the grand imams of Saudi Arabia who lead prayers at the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Additionally, the device includes audio lectures from a range of prominent Indonesian preachers, such as Aa Gym, Syafiq Riza Basalamah, Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Hanan Attaki, and others well-known at the national level.

The use of audio recordings for intellectual management was aligned with the technological capacity of their respective eras. Today, audiovisual formats are more dominant. Before the era of mass recordings, intellectual management primarily took the form of written media, including books, journals, and essays, which documented past intellectual production. With the exponential growth of communication technology, however, mediatization has enabled a more enduring and accessible form of intellectual preservation. Religious lecture videos shared via social media platforms are examples of how knowledge production now extends beyond the immediate audience to anyone with internet access.

Multimedia spaces, defined as multi-functional environments offered through various media, also serve as platforms for intellectual management [30]. Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, which feature live broadcast capabilities, are commonly used to disseminate Islamic teachings. For example, Ulil Abshar Abdalla hosts a weekly live-streamed "Ngaji Ihya' Ulumuddin" session every Thursday evening via his Facebook account. This initiative is a contemporary form of intellectual management. Many religious institutions now have official social media accounts to share religious content. The Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, for example, not only operates

its own television channel but also utilizes social media for live broadcasts during significant events.

Massive mediatization through media has amplified the availability and reach of religious lectures for Muslim communities. It has also increased the number of social media users and data contributors, effectively turning platforms into centers of data mining. Many mosques actively use social media to broadcast their activities. The Islamic Center Hubbul Wathan in Mataram, Lombok, for instance, regularly uses its Facebook account "Islamic Center Hubbul Wathan TV" to live-stream religious sessions after Maghrib and Subuh prayers, Friday sermons, and Qur'anic tafsir studies led by Dr. TGH. Zainul Majdi. These broadcasts have proven helpful for individuals seeking religious knowledge without leaving their homes.

The intellectual management undertaken by the administrators of the Hubbul Wathan Mosque's social media is also part of the broader mediatization of religious life. In many cases, more people engage with religious content through virtual spaces than by attending in person. This shift has implications for community interaction, as face-to-face engagement decreases while the reach of knowledge increases across geographical boundaries [31]. The Tafaqquh YouTube account, which serves as the official channel for Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS), exemplifies mediatization in action. UAS himself has acknowledged that his lectures, shared through social media, have inspired many people to become more devout. These sessions, often streamed live, are automatically archived and made accessible to a wide audience. Other religious figures, such as Ustadz Adi Hidayat, also manage official social media accounts—his lectures are broadcast through the UAH Official YouTube channel, reaching both Muhammadiyah members and the general public.

Similarly, Prof. Quraish Shihab, a leading Qur'anic scholar in Indonesia, uses media to preserve and disseminate his intellectual contributions. His numerous books and the 15-volume *Tafsir Al-Misbah* serve as lasting records of his scholarship. The MQS Podcast provides a platform for him to deliver thematic lectures from the comfort of his home, an important consideration given his age. Nonetheless, he continues to participate in live events, which are often recorded or streamed via Zoom or social media platforms. Mediatization has contributed to the emergence of new cultural practices within society, including the pervasive screen culture that shapes how we access and engage with information [32]. In terms of intellectual management, this screen-based culture is highly adaptive to technological progress. Although mediatized spaces present a wealth of religious references, they also demand discernment to avoid falling into manipulative or profit-driven narratives disguised as religious content. Another prominent figure in Indonesia is K.H. Ahmad Bahaudin Nursalim, or Gus Baha', who is well-known for his contextual interpretation of the Qur'an. His lectures are disseminated through the Santri Gayeng YouTube channel, which also operates Facebook and Instagram accounts. While YouTube features longer lecture videos, the other platforms offer concise clips, allowing for broader engagement. These social media channels serve not only as tools for intellectual management but also as effective platforms for Islamic preaching.

Even national religious events like the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ), an annual Qur'anic recitation competition organized by the Indonesian government, are now

available on YouTube through the official MTQ Nasional account. These broadcasts are stored on the platform and feature live coverage of Qur'anic recitation, interpretation, and memorization contests involving participants from all provinces. The widespread production of religious content has also shifted public perception of social media, which is no longer viewed solely as a platform for entertainment, self-promotion, or commerce. Instead, social media now functions as a new cultural space for engaging with Islamic studies, accessible at any time and from anywhere with an internet connection [33]. The mediatization of religious reality thus intersects with long-term intellectual management, making religious knowledge more widely available and easier to preserve.

Several websites have also emerged to meet public demand for Islamic legal guidance. Although still text-based, these platforms allow users to ask and receive written responses to religious questions. Sites such as *cariustadz.id* and *rumahfiqh.com* function similarly to health platforms like Alodokter or Halodoc. *Cariustadz.id* also provides speaker profiles for those seeking religious lecturers, while *rumahfiqh.com* focuses more on fiqh explanations and interactive Q&A services. The mediatization surrounding us today stems from the rapid advancement of communication technologies, which have transformed how we interact and convey messages [15]. Where communication was once primarily face-to-face and complex in delivery, modern platforms now offer diverse methods, including video calls, messaging apps, and virtual meeting rooms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and others. These tools represent effective uses of technology shaped by the forces of mediatization.

In essence, mediatization creates new cultural norms that define how we live and communicate. It is a direct response to technological progress and is increasingly used in managing religious knowledge. While it offers positive opportunities for broader dissemination, its potential negative impacts should also be acknowledged. This does not imply complete rejection of mediatization, nor should its benefits be idolized to the point of total dependence. A similar debate applies to the rise of artificial intelligence, which, although highly capable, may lead to reduced human critical thinking as reliance on machines increases.

4   Conclusion

Studies on mediatization are indeed more dominant in media and communication research. However, in the context of religious reality, mediatization also plays a significant role in shaping the daily lives of Muslims, which are increasingly influenced by various forms of media. The accommodation of religious content in virtual spaces has led to the emergence of a new cultural phenomenon known as screen culture. This has become a common choice for individuals seeking Islamic references and religious guidance. Today, social media offers vast access to a wide range of Islamic sources. Instead of consulting religious authorities directly, people often type keywords into search engines to find diverse responses, both textual and audiovisual, to their questions.

One of the most notable forms of mediatized religion is the shift of traditional religious practices from offline to online platforms. Rituals and religious events that were once exclusively carried out in physical spaces are now frequently conducted virtually through platforms such as Zoom, Facebook Live, Instagram, and YouTube. These platforms enable real-time participation, recordings, and broader dissemination. This phenomenon reflects a new form of intellectual management, where knowledge is archived, distributed, and accessed repeatedly, regardless of time and location, as long as there is internet connectivity.

Despite the positive aspects of reach and accessibility, mediatization may reduce direct interpersonal engagement and weaken the communal dimension of religious life. While intellectual products such as sermons and lectures from decades ago can now be accessed through digital files—replacing outdated physical cassettes—there is growing concern that many people choose not to attend live religious gatherings. Instead, they rely on the availability of recordings. This has implications for the continuity of traditional religious communities and practices.

Nonetheless, mediatized intellectual management has successfully amplified the presence of Islamic knowledge. It has enabled the dissemination of ideas across broader audiences, extending beyond Muslim communities to include anyone interested in listening and learning. This reach is facilitated through various media channels that maintain religious content in accessible and enduring formats.

The concept of the "prosumer" is also relevant in this context. It refers to individuals who simultaneously consume and produce content. In practice, a person attending a religious event might spontaneously record or livestream the proceedings using a smartphone. In more complex forms, the prosumer engages in both enjoying certain content and actively creating or curating other types of information. The rapid reproduction and dissemination of such content further contribute to an overwhelming information landscape, where the value of shared material is often determined by personal perception. While one person may find a piece of content informative, another may view it as mere clickbait or digital clutter designed solely to attract views.

Mediatization of religious reality is intricately tied to the development of communication technologies that have shaped contemporary screen culture and spatial experiences. Alongside this transformation, new forms of religious intellectual management have emerged, heavily reliant on evolving social media platforms. To maximize the benefits of mediatization, religious discourse must continue to adapt to technological advancements. By doing so, it can foster a more inclusive and expansive dissemination of religious knowledge that reaches wider and more diverse audiences.

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