

Exploring adolescents' digital information-seeking patterns and religious behavior

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Abstract

Generation Z adolescents' religious information-seeking behavior has undergone significant transformations in understanding and studying the patterns of searching, processing, and using religious information. Research gaps exist in local cultural variations on transforming Generation Z adolescents' religious information-seeking behavior in the digital era, which also occurs in information access patterns, social media platform preferences, and responses to religious content. This study focused on information access using the Ellis Model to analyze the behavior of information search stages: browsing, chaining, filtering, monitoring, and understanding adolescents' religious preferences. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study method involving *Rohis* activists from six high schools in three cities, Medan, Yogyakarta, and Makassar, as research samples. Data were collected through observation and FGD. Study results showed that Generation Z accessed religious information digitally through social media due to its accessibility and interactivity. However, they still referred to local and popular religious figures to clarify and validate religious information. Social media played an important role in shaping religious views despite the challenges of spreading misinformation and disinformation. Their information-seeking behavior reflected a combination of digital exploration and conventional references; adolescents actively utilized, created, and shared religious information. The Ellis Model's relevance in understanding information-seeking behavior in the digital era and cultural variations contributes to information behavior study by highlighting the dynamics of technology use in meeting the younger generation's spiritual needs. Practical implications include recommendations for improving digital literacy through technology-based education and partnerships with religious authorities to provide credible and moderate content.

Keywords: Information seeking behavior; Adolescents; Digital era; Religious information; Islam Indonesia

Mengeksplorasi pola pencarian informasi digital remaja dan perilaku keagamaan

Abstrak

Perilaku pencarian informasi keagamaan remaja, khususnya Generasi Z, telah mengalami transformasi yang signifikan dalam memahami dan mempelajari pola pencarian, pemrosesan, dan penggunaan informasi keagamaan. Kesenjangan penelitian dalam variasi budaya lokal pada transformasi perilaku pencarian informasi keagamaan remaja pada Generasi Z di era digital. Pola ketersediaan informasi, preferensi platform media sosial, dan respon terhadap konten keagamaan. Menganalisis tahapan perilaku pencarian informasi tentang pemahaman dan preferensi spiritual remaja dengan menggunakan Model Ellis, yaitu browsing, chaining, filtering, dan monitoring. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, melibatkan aktivis *Rohis* sebagai sampel dari enam SMA di masing-masing kota, yaitu Medan, Yogyakarta, dan Makassar. Teknik pengumpulan data melalui FGD dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Generasi Z mengakses informasi keagamaan secara digital melalui media sosial karena sifatnya yang mudah diakses dan interaktivitasnya. Namun, Generasi Z masih merujuk pada tokoh agama lokal dan populer untuk klarifikasi dan validasi. Media sosial memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk pandangan keagamaan, meskipun memiliki tantangan berupa risiko penyebaran informasi yang tidak kredibel. Perilaku pencarian informasi mencerminkan kombinasi eksplorasi digital dan referensi konvensional; generasi Z mengonsumsi dan secara aktif membuat dan membagikan detail keagamaan. Relevansi Model Ellis dalam memahami perilaku pencarian informasi di era digital dan variasi budaya berkontribusi pada studi perilaku informasi melalui dinamika penggunaan teknologi dalam memenuhi kebutuhan spiritual generasi muda. Implikasi pada penelitian ini untuk meningkatkan literasi digital melalui pendidikan berbasis teknologi dan kolaborasi dengan para tokoh agama untuk memberikan konten yang kredibel dan moderat.

Kata Kunci: Perilaku pencarian informasi; Remaja; Era digital; Informasi keagamaan; Islam Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z is known as the digital generation, born between 1997 and 2012, and grew up with digital technology since adolescence, aged between 12 to 18 years. They have a high propensity to utilize technology, including for spiritual needs, as an integral part of their lives. The digital age plays an important role, with social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok being the primary sources of access to religious information.

Social media has become a means of entertainment and fulfillment of cognitive, social, and identity needs, including religious understanding. Unlike the previous generation, who relied more on books or direct lectures, today's adolescents prefer interactive and fast methods, such as watching short *da'wah* videos on TikTok, following online studies on YouTube, or discussing through virtual communities about religion in WhatsApp groups (Febriani & Ritonga, 2022; Prasojo & Yuliana, 2021). This phenomenon marks a shift from a conventional to a more interactive and accessible digital approach. The aspects that shape adolescents' religious information behavior are family, social environment, religious education, and media (Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021). Gen Z actively uses search features for information about inspirational quotes, religious figures, religious reviews, and sermons. Information behavior is not only just passive consumption. Generation Z also actively shares information and conducts discussions online, creating a digital ecosystem to deepen individual and collective religious understanding.

Adolescents' religious information seeking behavior within the uses and gratifications theory framework.

Information behavior is the act of using and fulfilling needs in adolescent spirituality. The concept of uses and gratifications explains that adolescents use social media to fulfill cognitive needs (increasing religious knowledge), social needs (a community with people who share the same interests), and identity needs (expressing their faith online) (Pelletier et al., 2020; Widjaya & Komara, 2023). Fulfillment of cognitive needs for relevant and easy-to-understand religious knowledge, such as watching short lectures, reading inspirational quotes, or seeking guidance on religious practices through social media. Fulfilling social needs by providing space to interact with communities with similar religious values can be seen from the increasing trend of adolescent participation in online religious discussions, such as following famous ustadz accounts on Instagram and interacting with interactive *da'wah* content. Adolescents articulate their religious identity through uploads, comments, or the dissemination of religious content, which fortifies their spiritual identity inwardly and socially, even generating their religious content to inspire others (Freeman et al., 2023).


Information technology facilitates internet access and social media to obtain religious knowledge; however, there are considerable issues in determining the credibility of the sources one encounters. Information and digital literacy are crucial because only a small portion of the information circulating in the digital world is reliable and accurate. The religious information behavior of adolescents can choose religious details on social media according to their interests and relevance. Ease of access is the advantage of social media, where information can be accessed

BUKTI KORESPONDENSI

Exploring teenagers' digital information seeking patterns and religious behaviors



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#58627 Review

SUMMARY REVIEW EDITING

Submission

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Editor	Muhammad Hendrawan

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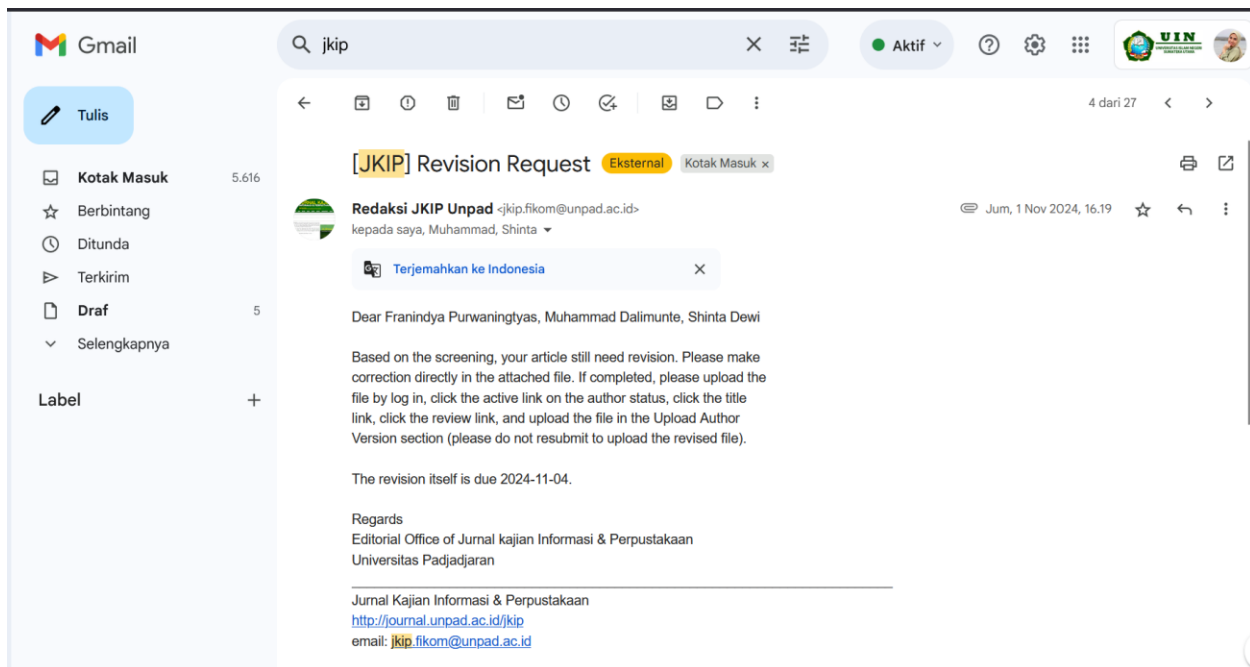
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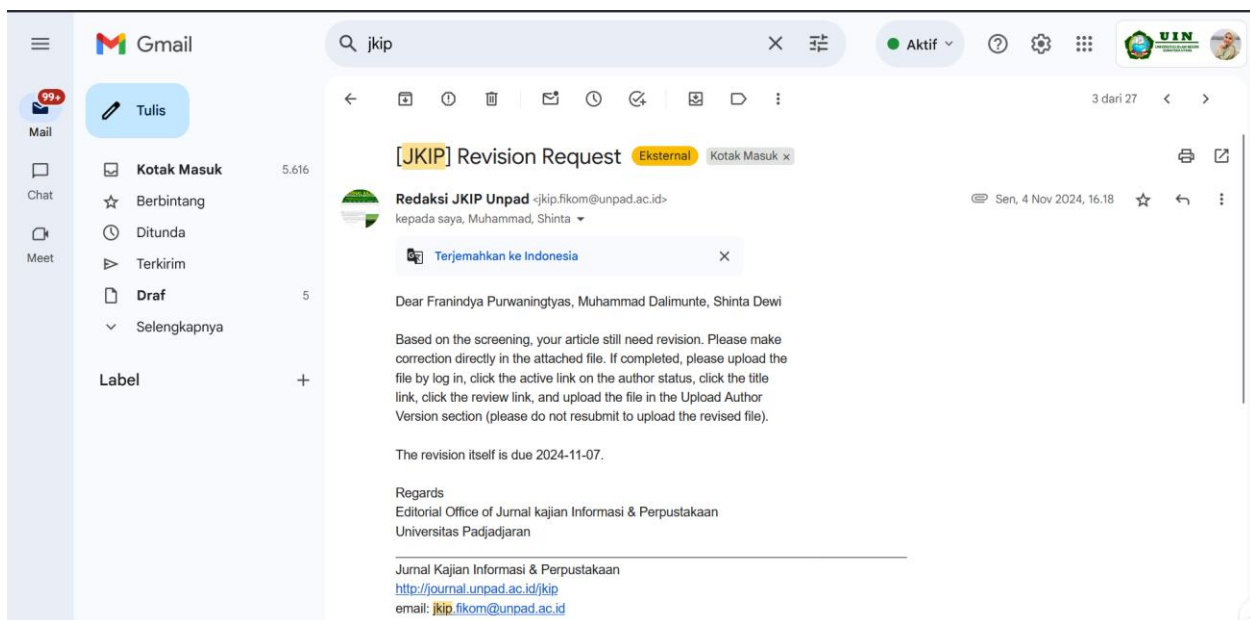
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2. Lampiran Korespondensi Via Email

2.1. The revision itself is due 2024-11-04

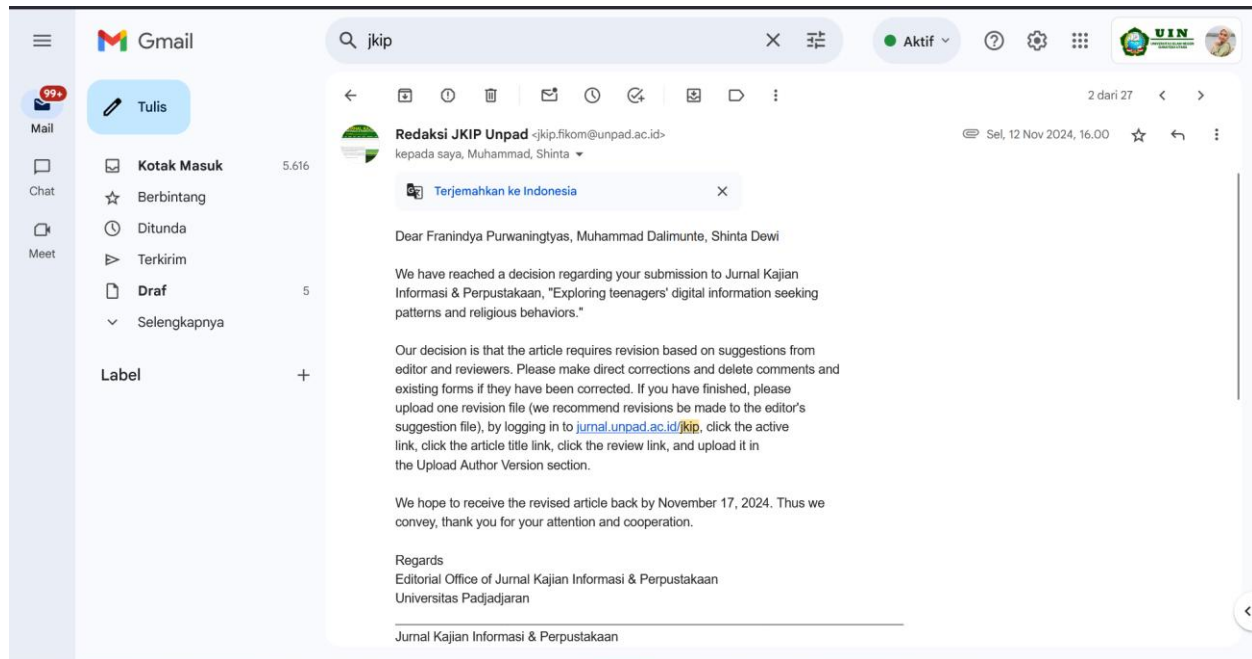


2.2. The revision itself is due 2024-11-07



2.3. November 17, 2024

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3. Link Korespondensi Lengkap

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4. Lampiran Komentar dari Reviewer

No.	Tanggal	Review	Revisi
1	12 Nov 2024	<p>Authors are expected to be able to create abstract content more systematically, apart from consisting of background of problems, research objectives, research methods, results, and conclusions, it should also implicitly include: Research limitations/implications, practical implications, and originality/value.</p> <p>The abstract could be improved for clarity and impact. Begin by clearly stating the primary research aim to immediately inform readers about the focus on Generation Z's religious information-seeking behavior in the digital age. Briefly specify the sample type to clarify the data collection context. For the findings, add specific details, such as the role of local religious leaders, to make the results more concrete. In discussing implications, suggest actionable steps, like promoting digital literacy or partnerships with religious authorities, to increase the abstract's practical significance. Finally, streamline the language to be more concise, removing any redundant phrases.</p>	<p>The behavior of religious information seeking among Generation Z (adolescents) in the digital era has undergone significant changes alongside the development of technology and social media. Generation Z, as a group highly familiar with technology, utilizes digital platforms such as social media as their primary source of religious information. Social factors, access to technology, and the role of local religious figures are key elements that influence how Generation Z seeks and processes information. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and direct observations to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their information-seeking behavior. Although access to religious information has become easier, the main challenges that arise include the spread of inaccurate information and the potential infiltration of radicalism through digital media. Generation Z tends to be critical and selective in choosing valid and relevant information. Religious figures play a central role in providing guidance and clarification regarding correct religious teachings, helping Generation Z understand and apply religious principles appropriately. This dynamic emphasizes the importance of religious authorities in guiding the younger generation to navigate the challenges of misinformation in the digital era. Efforts to meet information needs are facilitated by various digital accesses, with information-seeking behavior utilizing digital media such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, which are considered engaging and interactive in fulfilling religious information needs.</p>
2	12 Nov 2024	<p>While this paper gives a clear background, explicitly stating the research questions or hypotheses in the introduction would strengthen the study's focus. It would guide readers more directly through the study's purpose and intended findings.</p> <p>While this paper gives a clear background, explicitly stating the research questions or hypotheses in the introduction would strengthen the study's focus. It would guide readers more directly through the study's purpose and intended findings.</p>	<p>According to research by the Maarif Institute, high school students are considered the most vulnerable to being influenced by radical ideology. One factor that supports this vulnerability is the history of these cities being known as the place of origin of several terrorists. In addition, radicalism also enters adolescents through religious activities of Islamic religious schools or Rohis which are often a means of spreading this ideology (BBC News Indonesia, 2018). Radical ideas can seep into the school environment through various factors such as teacher teaching methods in the classroom,</p>

			textbooks that may contain intolerant views that obscure understanding of the material, intervention and influence of alumni in extracurricular activities, and weak school policies (Rahmawati et al., 2023).
3	17 Nov 2024	<p>Exploring teenagers' digital information seeking patterns and religious behaviors</p> <p>Interesting topic, but the writing is less systematic. Ellis's concept of information search patterns needs to be clarified in his/her analysis.</p>	<p>Topik "Exploring Teenagers' Digital Information Seeking Patterns and Religious Behaviors" memang menarik, namun benar bahwa penulisan perlu lebih sistematis agar analisis lebih kuat. Salah satu aspek penting yang perlu diperjelas adalah pemetaan konsep information seeking patterns menurut Ellis.</p> <p>Dalam analisis sebaiknya dijelaskan bahwa Ellis (1989, 1993) mengidentifikasi beberapa tahapan atau ciri pola pencarian informasi, di antaranya:</p> <p>Starting (memulai pencarian, biasanya dari sumber yang dianggap terpercaya).</p> <p>Chaining (mengikuti rujukan atau tautan dari satu sumber ke sumber lain).</p> <p>Browsing (menjelajahi informasi secara lebih luas atau acak).</p> <p>Differentiating (membandingkan dan memilah kualitas serta relevansi informasi).</p> <p>Monitoring (memantau secara berkala sumber tertentu untuk pembaruan).</p> <p>Extracting (mengambil bagian informasi yang spesifik dan relevan).</p> <p>Dengan menjelaskan keenam elemen ini, penulis bisa menunjukkan bagaimana pola remaja dalam mencari informasi digital berkaitan dengan perilaku keagamaan mereka. Misalnya:</p> <p>Apakah remaja lebih banyak melakukan starting dari media sosial atau situs keagamaan resmi?</p> <p>Bagaimana praktik chaining melalui tautan video dakwah YouTube atau artikel islami?</p> <p>Sejauh mana mereka browsing konten keagamaan dibandingkan konten hiburan?</p> <p>Apakah mereka melakukan differentiating antara sumber otoritatif (misalnya ulama, lembaga resmi) dengan sumber tidak jelas?</p> <p>Apakah ada kebiasaan monitoring akun atau kanal dakwah tertentu?</p>

			Bagaimana proses extracting ajaran atau nilai yang kemudian diterapkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari?
4	17 Nov 2024	The author needs to mention the time period. There is no conclusion yet. Findings and conclusions are two different parts, both must be present.	The paper should clearly indicate the time period of the study to give context to the findings. In addition, the conclusion section is still missing. Findings and conclusions are not the same; both should be presented separately to ensure clarity and completeness.
5	17 Nov 2024	In the introduction, the author needs to explain the age limits of Gen Z and Millennials.	Generation Z is known as the digital generation, born between 1997 and 2012, and grew up with digital technology as teenagers, ranging from 12 to 18 years old. They have a high propensity to utilize technology, including spiritual needs, as an integral part of their lives.
6	17 Nov 2024	The explanation in the methodology chapter needs to be sharpened. The number and profile of informants, whether only students or including teachers, and the technique of conducting FGDs in three cities.	This case study analyzes the Rohis activities of public high schools in three major cities in Indonesia, namely Medan, Yogyakarta, and Makassar. The cities were chosen based on demographic and cultural geographic factors, with characteristics namely: 1) The age range of the informants is between 15 and 17 years old; 2) The informants are Muslim and are active members of Rohis; 3) Schools with Indonesian curriculum, religious education as a compulsory subject; 4) A relatively high level of urbanization and greater mobility of young people in accessing religious information; 5) The presence of a significant educated middle class, which provides access to educational and technological resources; and 6) Adolescents are actively involved in formal and informal religious activities. The research involved informants from six schools representing each city, with five participants per school: three Rohis students, one Rohis coach, and one Islamic religious education teacher
7	17 Nov 2024	In the result section, instead of writing the findings, the writing describes too much theory. The writing should be reversed, you state the findings first, following by providing theoretical support. The systematic analysis should follow Ellis' information search pattern. The concluding sentence also needs to formulate the relationship between the findings and Ellis' information search pattern, so that the report remains focused.	Adolescents seeking religious information in the digital era tend to be increasingly independent, critical, and interactive in seeking, processing, and disseminating information. Adolescents are increasingly critical in assessing the religious information they find, with a reflective and independent pattern that combines digital technology with references from religious figures as authoritative sources. This behavior reflects that a more open and diverse information landscape makes adolescents adaptive. Implies that the information accessed remains accurate and by the true teachings of religion.
8	17 Nov 2024	Artikel bagus, layak untuk diterbitkan	-
9	17 Nov 2024	Dalam teks, untuk nama dalam Bahasa Indonesia ditulis dalam Bahasa Indonesia diikuti terjemahannya dalam Bahasa Inggris dan selanjutnya menggunakan nama dalam Bahasa Indonesia ATAU Bahasa Inggris.	-

		Layak diterbitkan	
10	21 Nov 2024	Please add details about participant demographics (age range, religious affiliation, and educational background), and explaining the rationale for selecting the three cities would add credibility to the methodology. This could clarify how well the findings might generalize to other areas or groups.	Data collection on religious information access, both digitally and conventionally, among Rohis youth in the three cities Medan, Makassar, and Yogyakarta was conducted following a preliminary study. This study justified why these cities could represent others across Indonesia.
11	21 Nov 2024	<p>The author could broaden the discussion of social media platforms. Since social media usage is central to this study, a more detailed comparison of how different platforms shape religious behavior uniquely among teenagers could deepen insights. For instance, discussing why certain platforms may encourage more engagement or why they pose higher risks of misinformation could add richness to the findings.</p> <p>Please explain the limitations section. It would help readers contextualize the findings. The limitations of this study would demonstrate transparency and scholarly rigor.</p>	<p>The Ellis Model as an approach used in the study of information-seeking behavior. In the conventional approach, in the spatial and particular scope, the information-seeking process tends to be done locally through social networks such as religious communities, religious leaders, or group discussions. This reflects the browsing stage in the Ellis Model, where individuals search for information from nearby and familiar sources. In the filtering stage, information that is appropriate to the local context and specific religious teachings is selected and filtered, while information that is considered irrelevant or foreign may be ignored. In the digital approach in the plural and egalitarian scope, information-seeking behavior is broader and more inclusive.</p>
		<p>Findings: The findings are thorough and present an insightful blend of digital and conventional methods of seeking religious information. The discussion around digital platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram is particularly well-articulated. However, the section could benefit from more explicit linkage to the theoretical models mentioned in the introduction, such as Ellis's Model. Explicitly mapping each stage of Ellis's Model to the observed behaviors would add more rigor to the discussion.</p> <p>Cultural Variations: The mention of cultural differences in religious information behavior is interesting but underexplored. Including specific examples of how cultural backgrounds influence the choice of religious content platforms would enhance the depth of the analysis.</p>	<p>Religious information-seeking behavior in the conventional approach is often characterized by localized practices that rely on social networks, such as religious communities, religious leaders, or group discussions. This approach emphasizes using traditional, structured, and locally available sources as the primary medium for acquiring religious knowledge. In the context of the Rohis community, this conventional method is evident in direct interactions with religious figures, such as local ustadz, or through community-based activities, such as group studies conducted in mosques.</p> <p>The behavior of accessing religious information in a pluralistic and egalitarian digital approach provides broad opportunities for individuals, especially Rohis members, to access religious information globally and diversely. Allowing access to broader and more pluralistic sources of information through online platforms and various religious perspectives available globally. Local figures such as ustadz are often considered authorities with in-depth knowledge of religious teachings. Because their positions are respected, they become the main reference for people seeking answers to religious questions, including matters of worship, morals, and Sharia law. People usually trust religious information conveyed by local figures more because they understand the local cultural and customary context, making it easier for them to</p>

			convey religious teachings according to the community's needs
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