

The Youth and the Internet: The Construction of Doctrine, Islam in Practice, and Political Identity in Indonesia

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Abstract

The role of young people in the virtual world tends to be an all-consuming one. Indeed, they play a role as actors in various aspects of the digital age. This study therefore sought to analyze the construction of religious messages related to doctrine, religious practice, and identity politics. Methodologically, this study implemented ethnomedia for young people who upload content to social media, specifically Instagram. The practice of religious deconstruction was explored through a multimodal analysis of the content these people share on Instagram. The findings of this study reveal how young people, as actors, produce items of content that are interrelated. The religious practices of these young people potentially trigger resistance to being moderate due to the seemingly infinite range of online religious sources. Online-mediated religious understanding, however, cannot be fully understood through the reductionist lens of binary opposites, such as moderates and radicals or positive and negative attitudes. This article illustrates that young people's experiences without guidance and emotional expression online are affected more than by their knowledge and abilities of the digital world, and that their attitudes and the interrelated complexities need to be considered.

Keywords: *Youth, Internet, Construction of Doctrine, Practice, and Political Identity*

Introduction

Young people are considered consumers, but they have also become knowledge producers in the digital age. Indeed, the space of social media has become filled with the various ideas and experiences of young people, including in the religious field. For example, the number of accounts managed by young people reflects the content they produce. As stated by Park & Jang (2014), the momentum for change in social networks is driven by digital information systems.

To date, previous studies have tended to view young people as hedonistic or even abusive (Hamzah et al., 2014; Hemming & Madge, 2018; Kachingwe et al., 2020). The development of young people as actors and productive workers in professional fields has also been explained in various studies (Eynon & Geniets, 2016; Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Kuss, et. al., 2021). Other trends include sexuality, games, and pleasure-related behavior, as shown in several studies (Cho et al., 2021; Kuss et al., 2021; Rahmawati, 2018). However, not much attention has been paid to the positions

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and roles of young people in the production of knowledge, especially religious knowledge. In addition, over the last ten years, young people mastered information and communication technology with a high degree of literacy (Mota & Cilento, 2020; Shatunova et al., 2021).

This paper aims to address some of the shortcomings of existing studies by examining in detail how young people are involved in the production of knowledge as part of the identity politics of youth. Three questions can be formulated to examine the process and substance of the values constructed by young people: (1) What contents do young people produce on Instagram accounts? (2) How do young people construct Islam in Practice? (3) How is identity politics constructed on Instagram accounts?

This study was based on the argument that young people's mastery of technology has led to new ways of thinking and understanding in society. The situation of these young actors may emphasize digital inequality and require responses from various parties, such as religious institutions, Islamic mass organizations, scholars, and the government (Suntana & Tresnawaty, 2021). Furthermore, this is a challenge for policymakers, who are not only concerned with education, health, and social affairs but also religion. For example, it has increased the urgency for scholars, religious leaders, and religious activists to learn how to use the internet to carry out their duties. It is therefore necessary to study the complex knowledge, skills, and religious attitudes of young people.

Literature Review

The Youth and the Internet

The era of digital technology has ushered into a new lifestyle that cannot be separated from electronic devices (Sitompul, 2017). Technology is a tool for helping to meet human needs, but it requires adaptation, and the youth more readily adapt to it (Astuti, 2019). New forms of media, internet-based information, and communication technology also allow the youth to express their ideas and find innovative ways to participate in social, political, and cultural life, both locally and globally (Tania et al., 2019). For young people, the internet is an essential part of their social life (Amalia, 2015). Social media—such as WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram—play an important role in young people's activities in cyberspace (Irawan, 2018; Waters & Hensley, 2020; White, 2020). Aside from communication, social media can also be used to exchange information (Irawan, 2018; Watson, 2020). The goals of adolescents when using social media are often to build friendships, escape from problems, form habits, support the learning process, spend free time, and relax (Amalia, 2015; Budiharso & Tarman, 2020).

On a social media platform, young people can often build relationships through collaborative methods like tagging, sharing, commenting, and liking (Amalia, 2015). Creativity, innovation, and new opportunities emerge alongside the various sophisticated applications (Sitompul, 2017). On the other hand, the highly intense nature of young people's virtual activity can have a negative impact. According to Irawan (2018), cyberspace activities affect young people's personality patterns, making them less confident and less able to communicate directly, preferring instead to play a role on social media or the internet. Young people often prefer to spend their time at home with gadgets rather than socializing with others (Prabawati, 2019). The negative impact of internet use is evidenced by the behaviors of some young people who access the internet, such as in the form of cyberbullying, fraud, and trolling (Irawan, 2018). Therefore, young people's digital literacy needs to be complimented with the etiquette to use the internet properly (Astuti, 2019).

Youth and Religion

Youth is generally seen as a period for exploring religious identity, and young people begin to make their own decisions about their religious practices (Young & Shipley, 2015). Studies of youth and religion generally deal with six themes: 1) tendencies toward religiosity and spirituality; 2) how religious identity or spirituality develops and changes; 3) how social networks, institutions, and contexts shape, and are shaped by, youth religiosity and spirituality; 4) how youths develop their religious and spiritual identities; 5) the extent to which religiosity or spirituality increases welfare and prevents risky behavior; and 6) the point at which religion has negative consequences for young people (Pearce, 2015). Studies of youth and religion in East and Southeast Asia, meanwhile, currently tend to focus on five areas: conversion, intensification, social involvement, political participation, and identity construction (Cornelio, 2015). Youths often negotiate their religious identities around media depictions and educational debates (Young & Shipley, 2015). At the same time, youths can also play a role as producers of religious knowledge, such as the activities of Hanan Attaki over YouTube (Syams, 2019). As a young preacher, Attaki made a significant contribution to increasing religious knowledge, especially for fellow young people (Syams, 2019). Indeed, the strength of a young speaker like Attaki lies in his ability to understand the needs of other young people. The theme of the study is the use of contemporary delivery styles, such as using social media as a channel for *da'wah* (Syams, 2019).

In addition to providing new Islamic religious knowledge, young people also form spiritual groups, participate in a recitation like *tabligh akbar*, or similar activities to provide more content through Instagram (Sari, 2017). When discussing the proximity between young people and God from a psychological point of view, three aspects need to be considered: the purpose of life, the personal mastery of religion, and life satisfaction (Culver, 2021). Furthermore, Hemming & Madge (2018) examined young people as citizens. When young people identify their position as part of the state, they seek to establish relationships with the broader community, including in non-religious areas, morality and values, and relationships with other religious people (Hemming & Madge, 2018). The strongest religious beliefs are found in youths who 1) reject scientific knowledge that directly contradicts their religious beliefs or 2) accommodate scientific knowledge within their religious perspective (Uecker & Longest, 2017). Beyond the scope of schooling, young people's understandings of religion are also influenced by parental influences and religious services (Krull, et. al., 2021; Solikhah & Budiharso, 2020).

Youth Psychology in Modern Society

Sociologist Kenneth Kenniston defined the youth as individuals who struggle to build an independent and socially involved identity (Puspitasari, 2016). They are not busy with themselves, but they start to participate and contribute (Puspitasari, 2016). In other words, young people are trying to build their independence and ability. Taufiq posited that there at least five roles for young people: 1) as dynamists; 2) as catalysts; 3) as motivators; 4) as evaluators, and 5) as innovators (Suhendrik & Dalimunthe, 2016). In psychology, youths have the characteristic of tending to think rationally and idealistically, leading to them often initiating reforms (Suhendrik & Dalimunthe, 2016). Using what they have, they play an active role in their social environment and benefit others (Puspitasari, 2016), but they may also experience a crisis in a transitional period (Izzati, 2016).

On examining the changing trends and behavioral patterns of the youth, Kumar (2019) suggested considering sociocultural aspects and their preferences and practices, including lifestyle choices, consumption habits, and social customs, thus negotiating between tradition and modernity. Modernization brings various phenomena, such as progress in science and technology, increasing materialism, and globalization and free competition (Amin, 2014). The era of modernization is often associated with fading moral and religious values (Komariah, 2018; Marza, 2017). The modernization movement in all aspects of human life has also caused a shift in interaction patterns,

causing people to have looser and fewer social contacts (Hadad, 2021; Hutahaean, 2020). Therefore, according to Marza (2017), the existence of Alquran Hafidz can act as a counterweight in the midst of modernization. Furthermore, anxiety and insecurity, mental health, and the experiences of adolescent social discrimination during times of change also require attention (Kumar, 2019). Meanwhile, in postmodern studies, Puspitasari (2016) suggested emphasizing aspects of democracy by requiring individuals to evaluate controversial matters critically while also tolerating different views.

Methods

This study examined social actors on the Instagram social network, which was launched over a decade ago, with it since helping to create a world without borders and enrich various ideas, especially for religious understanding. Actors can have unlimited relationships with anyone, both dominant and isolated parties (Garcia, et., al., 2009). This study was qualitative in nature, and primary data were sourced from social actors who played a role by posting messages and providing comments or feedback for the network's followers (Creswell, 2014). Followers on other accounts, meanwhile, delivered the same ideas as secondary data.

The data source comprised 17 selected Instagram accounts that were related to the focus of this research, namely doctrinal construction, Islam in practice, and identity politics. The stages of this research were as follows: 1) Collect as much content as possible from the Instagram accounts of the selected actors. 2) Identify and sort conceptual tendencies. 3) Based on the various groupings, analyze the constructions and the many comments of followers (Hallett, 2014).

The data analysis took the form of narrative analysis (Harding, 2013) over several stages: 1) Conduct thematic analysis, namely by creating codes and categories to identify similarities and differences in the data from the Instagram accounts. 2) Performing a structural analysis by taking a different form of data with a consistent focus on persuasive messages on the Instagram account (Garcia, et., al., 2009). There were four processes within this: (1) identifying thematic comments made by actors, both textually and contextually; (2) reading these comments carefully and determining the narrative presented by the Instagram account; (3) showing how this narrative is presented so that the comments will be persuasive; (4) comparing the narrative structures of at least three Instagram accounts; 5) performing interactional analysis by paying attention to the construction of messages through comments or dialogues with followers; and 6) conducting a

performative analysis by considering how a word in the message or picture (photo/image) explains the meaning of the message for followers and their comments (Garcia, et., al., 2009; Harding, 2013; Hallett, 2014).

Results

The religious understanding of young people in society on social media can be described through the following three themes: doctrinal construction, the construction of Islam in practice, and the construction of identity politics and strategies. Table 1 shows some expressions of these.

Table 1

Expression of youth in social media

Account name	Message	Description/coding
@cewehijrah	Rasulullah said, "The believers who feed the hungry believers, on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will give them food from the fruits of heaven" (Narrated by Tirmidhi) Do you know? Friday is the best day for charity. Rasulullah said, "The charity will be multiplied in reward on Friday." (HR. Abi Syaibah)	The believers are charitable.
@kumparan.com	Islamic prayers in church halls. Some flood victims in Tanjung Karang Village, Jati Subdistrict, Kudus, Central Java, occupy churches and temples as places of refuge. The Head of Jati Sub-District, Andreas Wahyu, said that the tolerance of residents was already good. It is because there have been many activities with religious communities.	Practices of Religious Tolerance
@LiantiTori	God, the news of death has often pierced my ears lately. If my turn has come, turn me off in a state of truly loving YOU.	Death
@khawla_Syifa	I never once regretted my silence, but I repeatedly regretted my speech. (Umar bin Khattab)	Speaking error
@antoniori	I heard: In a family, there must be one person who can change his family's fate, lift the degree of his parents, and make them happy. And I hope that person is the person who reads this.	Do good to your parents.
@aninnovita	If everything is not running as we expected, SMILE. Humans design with a PLAN, but Allah designs with LOVE	God's authority over humans
@MenjadiSantun	Just be the way you are Don't be humble, even if you don't have anything And don't be ashamed, even though you lack many things Because if you can appreciate it What you have is better Rather than force yourself For a compliment	Self-ability

@akademipranikah.id	“Looking for a partner does not have to be settled. The important thing is you know what his plans are for the future, and his profession does not need to be this and that. Indeed, love needs food, but there is a feeling when you want to struggle together, it feels more enjoyable”. -Buya Hamka-	Confidence
@yusuffilsafa	“If you miss someone, pray for him. Pray for his health, pray for his safety, and let God take care of him.” Yes, this is true romance.	Prayer of salvation
@ArifKazima	Shame on us Think we are good people, for real? Just a great sinner. But Allah is kind, He covers our disgrace.	Positive thinking
@kisah.para.muallaf	The story of a woman who before converting to Islam in 2007, was a hater of Islam. Alhamdulillah, Allah subhanahu wa ta’ala shows His guidance to this woman.	Hidayah religious conversion
@steven.indra.wibowo	Alhamdulillah Rolf, a convert to Islam from Switzerland, took a <i>shahadat</i> after going through a six-month process to get to know Islam and what Islam is, starting with his stopover in Dubai, then planning trips to Bali, before finally ending up in Jakarta to find the final goal of his life, which has been 58 years. Allah is all good.	God’s search
catatanhijrah.id	The hijab is the obligation of Muslim women who have reached the age. If you find her bad, then don’t blame her scarf. Maybe wearing a hijab is a process of getting closer to Allah. It’s not easy to leave bad habits in the past. When you encounter something like that, don’t judge but advise him, guide him in kindness.	Obligation to wear hijab
@DIARTY.TINTA	Stay patient, even if your whole world feels like a mess. God knows how tired you are.	Order to be patient
@tugumalangid.	Salawat at the Temple	Practice religious tolerance
@daeng_indonesia	Study of sunnah	Daily practice like Prophet Muhammad SAW.
@salafigarislucu	I’m lucky to have neighbors who are all NU. Even though I am <i>Muhammadiyah</i> , every Friday night I always get a shipment like this (food photos). Of course, my neighbors feel lost, I never sent them anything. Thank you, NU.	Practices of Tolerance and Flexibility in Relationships among Muslims

Doctrinal construction

In doctrinal construction, religion is positioned as a doctrine that is practiced literally. The understandings tend to directly refer to the Quran and Hadith without considering Muslim scholars’ opinions. The accounts contained eight examples of doctrinal concepts. As expressed by @cewehijrah, the concept of giving alms was part of his life. The upload directly quoted the Hadith for the history of Tirmidhi and Abi Syaibah in inviting followers to give alms. There was a post

about the black and white concept with the eerie shroud and the calming black Kaaba fabric. Another example by @khawla_Syifa was about speech errors, with it referring to a quote of Umar Bin Khattab. The post was intended to convince followers to not talk too much for fear of saying something wrong. Another doctrinal example expressed how women's religious identity was related to the obligation to wear the hijab, as posted by the @atathijrah.id account. In addition, the post of @menjadisantun related to self-confidence.

Construction of Islam in Practice (Social Relations with non-Muslims)

The construction of Islam in practice was positioned as an experience to practice in everyday life. Religious practice tends to be simple in the social sphere, both among Muslims and non-Muslims. The account of @Cerita.para.muallaf talks about religious conversion, with it conveying a hatred for Muslims before a long process of converting to Islam. The @yusuffilsafa account, meanwhile, talked about the prayer of salvation, explaining that it was enough to pray for it as a remedy for longing when missing someone. The @DIARTY.TINTA account mentioned the command to be patient, which reflects the need for patience and serious effort in life to fulfil individual and group interests. The @steven.indra.wibowo account talked about the search for God, explaining the long process for obtaining religious truth. The @academipranikah.id account, meanwhile, talked about being confident when getting married, portraying plans for marriage as a family commitment.

Construction of Islam as Identity Politics and Strategy

Religion for Muslims as identity politics and strategies is positioned as thinking about and shaping ones' representation continuously in life, with this tending to lead to a sort of power struggle. The @note-hijrah.id account's post talks about the obligation to wear the hijab, explaining that a Muslim woman is obliged to wear a hijab to maintain better behavior. Other accounts, such as kumparan.com, talk about the preaching of young people, the members of a motorcycle gang, under the guidance of Hanan Attaki. In addition, the tirta.id account conveyed the message "being a Muslim is not enough..." Likewise, @salafigarislucu uploaded images of tolerance being practiced among Muslims by presenting the *tahlilan* tradition as a religious relationship. The practice of diversity is used to produce identity in life, such as by the @daeng_indonesia account, with the content recommending daily practice like the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Why Are Young People Involved in the Production of Religious Knowledge?

In terms of religious affiliation, young people rarely participate in formal religious activities, which raises questions about faith and community involvement. Although they may be less likely to become directly involved in organizing traditional religious activities, the spiritual dimension of life still touches the enthusiasm of young people at the crossroads of maturity, and this also affects their intellectual abilities and instinctual vitality (Lefebvre, 2010). The involvement of young people in producing religious knowledge in the virtual world was influenced by three motives: individual interests, the interests of the youth community, and social media interests.

Individual Interests

Individual interests and needs are determined based on stimuli in specific situations. An interest in, and need for, religious learning is usually met by a *kyai* or a Quran teacher through guidance, but the digital age provides opportunities for young people to learn independently and produce useful and exciting religious content. In this modern era, young people have easy access to all the information they need, including religious information. The interest of young people in producing religious messages reflects their preferences, because these determine their enthusiasm for producing religious messages. In addition, young people feel a need to self-actualize and demonstrate their potential to the world (Tania et al., 2019).

The Interests of the Youth Community on social media

The youth community represents a limited interest group based on the aggregation and articulation of their interests. These tend to be underserved in the public space, however, so they have started publishing their ideas in the virtual space with their digital skills. This group of young people previously had no ties, but they now communicate and socially interact. They articulate themselves based on the relationships between the components of youth, both politically and culturally. To serve their interests, the youth community acts collectively and socially to produce political and cultural capital.

Social media is considered a medium that can be useful for self-discovery and self-identification, and online communities often interact socially. However, there is a tendency for young people to have a great opportunity to produce guidelines independently and shape their own concepts, so social media acts as a space to experiment and freely explore the process of forming an identity.

Thus, young people use social media to explore various ideas and form a virtual identity, both for themselves individually and as a group.

Implications for Young People Involved in the Production of Religious Knowledge

The involvement of youth groups in producing religious knowledge for social media represents a new awareness of diversity. However, there has been a tendency to hastily understand the process of forming self-identities and group identities. Indeed, the process of forming a self-identity involves young people developing an understanding of their tendencies. This process tends to involve two important aspects for the individual, namely exploration and commitment. The aspect of exploration is a special characteristic in the process of searching for an identity, and it comes with an attitude for questioning new and unique things. Commitment, meanwhile, reflects how the aspirations of young people develop continuously. Thus, young people build themselves up based on aspects of exploration and commitment to determine their identity.

Personal Awareness

Personal awareness is people's ability to recognize themselves and their emotional intelligence through self-discovery. It affects how young people perceive, communicate, and interact with the social environment, and there is a tendency for young people to engage with religious websites get information without the guidance of teachers, *kyai*, or mentors. Thus, the personal awareness of young people is determined by their processes for perception, communication, and social interaction combined with virtual resources.

Radical Understandings of Young People

Radical understandings reflect attitudes that expect social reform in a much deeper way, with a focus on the root of the problem, but there is a strong tendency among young people to have a drastic attitude toward reform. The reflective ability of young people makes them curious about a problem based on its root causes. In addition, this is also motivated by a desire to develop themselves, in terms of both knowledge and skills, and bring changes to their environment. Thus, the radical understandings of young people derive from a tendency toward self-development and self-verification, so they can find their identity in the public sphere.

Establishment of Virtual Collective Identity Politics

The youth can basically be defined as a group with an inherent way of life and its own behavioral style, cultural norms, and values (Abdiraiymova & Bukhanova, 2016). Under this understanding, youths basically develop their own values and norms to support their existence. The formation of collective identity politics is an effort to fight for the interests of the group due to similarities in ethnicity, race, gender, and religion, but there is also a tendency for a political articulation to attack other parties. Thus, the formation of identity politics is a political articulation based on ethnicity, race, gender, and differences in religious understandings and perspectives on the world.

Discussion

Social Media and Doctrinal Construction

This research reveals the value of Islamic teachings on social media as a way to explore and understand the content on the Instagram network. This study assesses the doctrinal understandings and simplifications of social agents and illustrates how some young people use social networking through Instagram accounts to form a self-identity and social groups. This happens based on interests, including individual interests, the community interests of young people, and interests in using social media, so identity politics are formed through different political articulations in the virtual world. Social media creates dependence in young people, especially for the fulfillment of needs, the satisfaction of seekers, and the articulation of social agents, thus leading to the domination of social forces.

At the network level, several findings reveal contextual insights that support the notion that social relationships allow for the initiation of radical thoughts for Instagram account followers. It is very interesting that the messages conveyed through social networks spread without borders, indicating that social media networks are open and independent to many individuals as an unprotected mechanism. Furthermore, movements and changes that are observed have an impact on these social networks.

At the level of individual activity awareness for the core actors in the network, they in this case actively upload content to network accounts. The use of a mapping matrix shows that the strategic position of actors is very visible and influential. This approach can reveal people who play a central role. For example, @hannan_attaki is one of the young figures preaching to the famous “Brigez” motorcycle gang, which used to disturb people and make them riotous. This gang later became

religious and renamed itself “Brigez Road to Jannah.” Hannan’s statements, such as “Hanging out with Genk and Tarawih, praying and doing *dhikr* together, listening to knowledge together, laughing together, and the crowd’s atmosphere certainly makes worship feel more colossal” and “Anyway, let’s go Kemon...join the noble month with our kind of friendship & nationalism.”

At the level of radical understanding, actors direct their efforts in their social networks more at the construction of religious messages as they relate to the life experiences of young people, and arguments are always based on the Quran and Hadith. This tendency is very strong, and it has become a new habit for young beginners according to their orientation and identities. This is exemplified by the Salafi network group on the @daeng_indonesia account, with their studies being doctrinal and textual in nature, and any issues that have no basis in the Quran and Hadith are considered *bid’ah* and are ignored. Still, there is an assumption that *kaffah* is not yet perfect.

At the level of forming virtual group identity politics, this is based on a different understanding. Religious symbols are unnecessary, as the @tugumalangid account exemplifies. The activities of the “Gubuk Tulis” community in Wihara are considered excessively tolerant, crazy, and a sign of doomsday. It practices tolerance in Islam, but many do not agree with such tolerance. On the other hand, the @salafigarislucu account highlights social phenomena through comedy and the language of satire. For example, when discussing the diversity of people’s everyday ways of life, based on Muslim community organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah, they are relaxed and do not put people into boxes. This is also a practice of tolerance, because such differences are also a blessing. The delivery is also funny and relaxed, so various social groups, including young people, can easily digest such messages. Aside from the “Gubuk Tulis,” other groups always use religious symbols in their socio-religious practices, such as ¾-length trousers, beards, large headscarves, hijabs, short hair, and black foreheads, like on the account @rumah peradaban. These two opposing groups seem to confront and criticize each other in the virtual world.

The Internet as a New Social Space

In this era of digitalization, social media has become a part of most people’s lives, and the younger generations have grown up with the rapid development of media and technology (Evans-Amalu & Claravall, 2021; Subedi & Subedi, 2020). Indeed, digital social media has proliferated alongside the availability of communication devices like smartphones and other electronic devices. The growth in popularity among the community has also made it easier for people to buy smartphones

and other devices from various brands at different levels of affordability. Indeed, cellphone shops are everywhere, internet packages are becoming increasingly more affordable, and network access is slowly getting more consistent. All of these conditions have led to social media, which was originally intended as a medium for communication, slowly turning into a way of life.

Social media has also slowly transformed into a medium for actualizing and promoting the identities of individuals and groups. Indeed, the virtual world has become a seemingly infinite space for individuals and social groups to express themselves freely, compared to in the real world where actualization is limited both geographically and socially. Values and norms in the society of the “real world” have long been established, thus limiting each individual or group to established norms that cannot be violated, such as what is good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable, and so on. In contrast, social media is a virtual space where there are no agreed values and norms, so each individual and group is free to self-actualize without any restrictions. The internet, social media, and virtual spaces were initially foreign concepts to society, but they have slowly assumed an important role for many individuals and social groups. The various self-actualizations, both for individuals and groups, are also reflected in uploads to the Instagram social media network.

Many of these uploads are informational, because it cannot be denied that Instagram is a conveyer of information. In addition to information, however, many uploads serve to reconstruct an individual’s identity, such as the uploads of several accounts considered in this study. Some uploads, for example, convey interpretations of texts from the Quran or Hadith, or possibly social facts, and this is used to legitimize the position or identity of an individual or group. It can therefore be said the position of a group can be understood from its social media uploads to Instagram. On the other hand, some uploads adopt a serious tone and are full of warnings and urges for action. Some accounts, in contrast, convey messages filled with humor and jokes, and this can also act as a marker for groups and individuals to build their image in a wider community.

Social media platforms, such as Instagram, act as a means for actualizing and legitimizing the identities of both individuals and groups. In addition, Instagram can also be used to promote religious understanding. In recent years, many accounts promoting Islamic understandings have tended to get straight to the point or explain things clearly, although Instagram is used as a medium by individuals and groups with various sorts of Islamic understandings. Of course, Islamic ideas in society have always varied, but it was never so obvious due to the limitations of the traditional media. The existence of social media therefore makes it easy for people to actualize their identities.

The sociopolitical conditions of Indonesia have also affected various social and religious strata, but this does not imply that every user follows the flow of politics and Islamic understanding, which tend to have a short axis. Over the past few years, various accounts have started promoting the notions of moderation, pluralism, and multiculturalism. In the midst of tensions among various groups, this has helped strengthened groups with moderate Islamic ideologies. Media coverage is also very affected by this. For example, the Instagram account @kumparancom promotes plurality practices in society, such as reporting about Muslim flood victims praying in Christian churches. Practices like this would normally be taboo, but they are understandable in an emergency situation, and they help develop a stronger understanding of plurality. In addition, many accounts convey tolerant practices in society, such as the @salafigarislucu account, which posts about tolerance in several Islamic views and organizations.

Social agents can also use social media to mobilize the masses through networks, so they can collect social knowledge and practices from various real-world communities. The internet can also be used by social agents to spread radical religious ideologies, which are normally outside the beliefs of mainstream Indonesian society. Religious thinking produced by social agents in a social space can comprise various points of views to actualize individual and group identities. On the other hand, Instagram has also become a new medium for the delivery of religious *da'wah*, which used to employ more conventional preaching methods like in-person sermons.

Experts have conducted various studies into the role of youth and religious groups, and they agree that young people in the internet world play a very advanced and dominant role in providing limitless content, especially for exploring religious identity and conveying the religious practices they believe in (Young & Shipley, 2015). For example, Cornelio (2015) states that young people's negotiations about religious identity are associated with media construction and education debates. Through the hijrah.id account, for example, the uploaded content relates to the hijab, which this group believes in fighting for as a self-righteous symbol of female identity. The hijab as part of the formal identity of the Muslim religion is therefore made the dominant construction by this group. In addition, most of the economic activity communications always use the term *syar'i*. Efforts to minimize common terms that are considered secular are avoided, and constructions in the world of education often use "pious" terminology, such as the following phrase: "comfortable gathering without cigarette smoke and music." This group has entered into various social, economic, and cultural spheres in a gentle manner and continues to do so consistently. However,

it is still unclear what kind of conditions might cause this socio-religious identity production mechanism to intensify. For this reason, various studies have been conducted, such as those of Pearce (2015), Cornelio (2015), Young & Shipley (2015), Sari (2017), Uecker & Longest (2017), Hemming & Madge (2018), Syams (2019), Krull, et. al., (2021), and Culver (2021).

The study of Uecker & Longest (2017) showed that scientific knowledge that directly contradicted religious beliefs was rejected by some, while others accommodated scientific knowledge into their religious perspectives. This deviates from the strengthening of the religious-moderation movement over the last five years that has been led by the Ministry of Religion for the Republic of Indonesia. Such efforts can be supported by the activities of young people, such as is the case with the account @kumparan.com posting, “prayers in church halls, and temples and churches are used as refugee camps for flood victims.” Relationships between different religions are therefore transformed into a humanitarian construction of tolerance. In addition, the account @tugumalang.id uploaded content about “salawat Wihara.” Both of these accounts promote social practices in interreligious relations. As Suhendrik & Dalimunthe (2016) stated, young people are dynamists, motivators, catalysts, evaluators, and innovators. Both accounts connected with socio-religious practices are influenced by the environment of religious education, which tends to moderate religious understandings and nurture open attitudes toward scientific development. The modalities and tendencies of young people as social agents therefore play an active and beneficial role for others (Puspitasari, 2016).

Over the last ten years in Indonesia, such cases have increased, especially for religious aspects, which have tended to increase as political identities became more exclusive. Thus, this study has proposed a new perspective for the role of young people in the virtual world in terms of the phenomenon of identity politics that exists in Indonesia. With this perspective, we can better understand the increase in identity politics within the context of young people’s relationships with society and religion. In this case, religious leaders and young people need to play roles as agents and guides for strengthening religious moderation and helping government interventions to eliminate content that could be considered intolerant. In addition, there is wide scope for young Indonesians to rethink the concept of moderate diversity. This study has limitations, however, in that it does not pay attention to the relationships of subjects who upload their contents based on involvement in an existing religious organization. For a more comprehensive picture, further studies therefore need to pay attention to agents involved in religious organizations.

Conclusion

The discussion in this article reveals that the knowledge of, and competence with, digital communication technology for young people in Indonesia is very strong, and this openly influences religious thoughts, attitudes, and practices that tend to be radical, as shown by the more doctrinal Instagram content. On the other hand, there also appears to be a small group of young people who tend to be more liberal and tolerant of other religious groups. Both groups lie outside mainstream religious groups, perhaps because of a lack of attention by religious leaders and Islamic religious thinkers in playing active roles in social media by guiding discussions and providing a source of religious literacy.

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