HYPERSPIRITUALITY OF MUSLIM TEENS LEARNING RELIGION ON THE INTERNET ERA

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Kata Kunci:
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Abstrak

Studi ini menyelidiki tiga pertanyaan kunci, bagaimana pemuda Muslim menafsirkan agama di era Internet, bagaimana Internet mempengaruhi dan membangunnya, dan bagaimana agama dikonseptualisasikan. Melalui studi kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, pengamatan, dan dokumentasi. Studi ini melibatkan 71 remaja Muslim berusia 17 hingga 21 tahun dari Kediri Regency yang dipilih karena penggunaan internet yang luas untuk mengeksplorasi Islam. Analisis melibatkan pengurangan data, visualisasi, dan kesimpulan. Teknik analisis data termasuk pendekatan deskriptif, analitis, dan interpretatif. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa remaja Muslim yang belajar Islam secara online mengalami hiperspiritualitas karena hipersemiotik. Indikasi palsu dan pembelajaran yang tidak lengkap karena ketidaktahuan terhadap penelitian agama Islam harus mengarah pada interpretasi nihilis terhadap Islam. Remaja tertipu oleh ideologi yang mendorong informasi agama di Internet, yang menurut mereka netral. Ideologi anti-ideologi tidak diragukan lagi melayani tujuan-tujuan ideologis. Akibatnya, mereka salah merasa bahwa kurangnya dogma dalam pendidikan Islam online mencegah mereka dari mencapai tujuan utama mereka.

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Abstract

This study investigates three key questions: how Muslim youth interpret religion in the Internet era, how the Internet influences and constructs it, and how religion is conceptualized. This is a qualitative study. The data was gathered through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. This study comprised 71 Muslim teens aged 17 to 21 from Kediri Regency who were chosen for their extensive usage of the Internet to explore Islam. The analysis involved data reduction, visualization, and conclusion. Data analysis techniques included descriptive, analytical, and interpretative approaches. The study's findings revealed that Muslim teenagers who learn Islam online experience hyperspirituality due to hypersemiotics. False indications and incomplete learning due to ignorance of Islamic religious research should lead to a nihilistic interpretation of Islam. Teens are deceived by the ideology driving religious information on the Internet, which they believe is neutral. Anti-ideological ideologies undoubtedly serve ideological goals. As a result, they incorrectly feel that the lack of dogma in online Islamic education prevents them from achieving their primary purpose.

Introduction

In the digital age, religious knowledge is a realtively easy issue. Religion-related questions are now only a matter of seconds and are easily obtained. With the convenience offered by this digital era, teenagers who have a great curiosity, as if made dead in the process of searching for the essence of religion.[1] Many teenagers feel empty or lose meaning in the process of searching for truth in their religion.[2] This is because the process of searching for religion among adolescents who change from a system centred on personal religious teachers (kyai, ustadz) to the Internet system (new media) has led to the birth of a new face of adolescent religion.[3] This is supported by 2023 data of Instagram users in Indonesia from the age group of 18-24 years, which is 33.90 million. Specifically, 19.8% of the

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[1] Ronald Goldman, *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence* (Routledge, 2022).

[2] Sam A. Hardy et al., "Adolescent Religious Motivation: A Self-Determination Theory Approach," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 32, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 16–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2020.1844968.

[3] Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Muslim Televangelists in the Making: Conversion Narratives and the Construction of Religious Authority," *The Muslim World* 110, no. 2 (2020): 154–75, https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12327.

application users were women, while 17.5% were men.[4] More than 80% of Indonesia's population are Muslim.

Previously, religious teachings, doctrines, and traditions were taken for granted. At the same time, for teenagers in the digital era, religion is something that can be sought, questioned, and even created.[5] For adolescents in the digital era, religious truth is no longer singular but plural and even hybridized, and they input new meanings in religion. Some religious doctrines and traditions once considered sacred have now been desacralized. Several religious foundations, such as the hadith of the prophet and verses of the Qur'an which were once considered qath'i law, now many teenagers question and critically accept their position in their religious understanding.[6] In fact, they now believe in the interpretations presented by their favourite preachers more than scholars who have competence in this field because of the ignorance of their religious qualifications.

Teenagers' ignorance in deciding to follow scholars who have competence in this particular field of religious knowledge is because they still need to learn the mechanism of learning good and correct religious knowledge. In Islam, in studying Islamic religious knowledge, there is a tradition of *sanadan*, looking for *sanad* (continuity) of knowledge, knowledge, and religious teachings where the teacher's chain of knowledge is connected to the Prophet Muhammad.[7] The scientific *sanad*, for a Muslim, is not just to get the legitimacy of his knowledge, but also to

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[4] Cindy Mutia Annur, "Pengguna Instagram RI Tembus 100 Juta Orang per April 2023, Terbanyak ke-4 di Dunia | Databoks," accessed August 18, 2023, https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2023/09/26/pengguna-instagram-ri-tembus-100-juta-orang-per-april-2023-terbanyak-ke-4-di-dunia.

[5] Achmad Muhibbin Zuhri and Jauharoti Alfin, "Online-Offline in Religion; Observing Islamic Learning Patterns in Online Media," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 33, no. 2 (August 2, 2022): 223–38, https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v33i2.2720.

[6] Dindin Solahudin and Moch Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority," *Religions* 11, no. 1 (January 2020): 19, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010019.

[7] Ahmad Suhendra, "Transmisi Keilmuan pada Era Milenial Melalui Tradisi Sanadan di Pondok Pesantren Al-Hasaniyah," *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, Dan Tradisi)* 5, no. 2 (2019): 201–12.

subordinate all his knowledge is not merely something they have, but only as a connector of the prophetic message of the Prophet Muhammad which is connected to his teacher.[8] In other words, the scientific *sanad* that a Muslim has is not merely an argument, but to maintain the "purity" of Islamic teachings conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad and precisely to avoid heresy.

However, this *Sanadan* tradition has faded and been neglected in the presence of the Internet, which provides various and abundant features of religious information that have influenced and changed the thinking, attitudes, and religious behaviour of adolescents.[9] Living in an era of disruption, as stated by Ulil Abshar Abdalla, is like a double-edged knife that can be a blessing for someone to access knowledge more easily, but can also be a disaster if we are not wise and wise in using it. Indeed, adolescence is a human phase that is highly curious, generally does not yet have a wise attitude, tends to be unstable, and is still easily influenced by the surrounding environment and habituation that shapes its behaviour.[10]

Regarding habituation and environmental influences, M. Abzar Duraesa and Muzayyin Ahyar's research indicates that habituation formed by social media has an impact on the attitudes and behaviour of adolescents who often ignore religious and social values.[11] More specifically, Izzuthoriqul Haq and Muhammad Labib Syauq reported that The interpretation model is quite effective and has implications for the cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of the readers. The social

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[8] Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Dreaming Saints: Exploratory Authority and Islamic Praxes of History in Central Java," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 26, no. 1 (2020): 67–85, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.13177.

[9] Sholeh Utomo, M. Fauzan, and Afif Anshori, "Pesantren's Kyai and the Fragmentation of Religious Authority in a Muslim Peripheral Territory" (1st Raden Intan International Conference on Muslim Societies and Social Sciences (RIICMuSSS 2019), Atlantis Press, 2020), 56–59, https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201113.011.

[10] Haidar Bagir and Ulil Abshar Abdalla, *Sains Religius, Agama Saintifik* (Mizan Publishing, 2020).

[11] M. Abzar Duraesa and Muzayyin Ahyar, "Islamic Popul[Ar]Ism: Religious Popularism and Activism in the Yukngaji Community," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 9, no. 2 (December 30, 2021): 503–34, https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v9i2.7795.

space of its interpretation is based on the culture of social media and digital native, which leads to popular Islamic discourse.[12] Zainudin Syarif et al. also found that the effect of Instagram social media habituation on adolescent religious behaviour reached 11.9%.[13] From a sociological perspective, the issue of adolescent religiosity is discussed about its influencing factors, as shown in some of the studies above. From a psychological perspective, adolescent religiosity is seen as an individualized religious experience; for example, adolescent religious feelings are often not constant. Sometimes, adolescents show excessive piety, and at other times, they doubt their religion.

Therefore, this research analyzes the interpretation, reading, and good understanding of the meaning of worship and its actual behaviour, in this case, 71 teenagers in the Kediri Regency area who study religion online. The 71 teenagers represent the condition of adolescents who are Muslim but infected with hyperspirituality caused by the lack of knowledge of hyperreality created by internet media. In general, these teenagers do not have an understanding of the meaning, reading and a good new understanding of Islamic religious learning on the internet in the form of worship practices that have a basis in spirituality and the behaviour that follows (post spirituality), where they lose their way in restoring the meaning of worship.

This research is a mixed method, quantitative-qualitative.[14] The data collected were as follows: (1) Religious understanding of Muslim adolescents regarding theology, ideology, and worship. (2) The intensity

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[12] Izzuthoriqul Haq and Muhammad Labib Syauqi, "Digital Native Character In Social Media Interpretation: A Study On Instagram Accounts, @Quranreview," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 18, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 45–67, https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v18i1.3491.

[13] Zainuddin Syarif, Abd Hannan, and Mubaidi Sulaeman, "New Media dan Representasi Budaya Islam Populer di Kalangan Pendakwah Muslim Milenial Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 17, no. 2 (January 9, 2023): 257–256, https://doi.org/10.14421/jsa.2023.172-07.

[14] Rob Timans, Paul Wouters, and Johan Heilbron, "Mixed Methods Research: What It Is and What It Could Be," *Theory and Society* 48, no. 2 (April 1, 2019): 193–216, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09345-5.

of Internet utilization as a source of religious information, and (3) the construction of an Internet-era youth religion (new face religion). Terms such as "triangulation," "combining methods," and "multiple methods" have been around for quite a while to designate using different methods of data analysis in empirical studies.[15] Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation.[16] The informants were 71 Muslim teenagers in Kediri District, Central Java, aged between 17-20 years old. They were purposively selected based on their intensity in utilizing the Internet as a source of information to explore Islam. The research began with identifying Muslim teenagers who use the Internet to learn about Islam and continued with in-depth interviews and observations of worship and muamalah practices in their daily lives. The stages of the collected data are data reduction, data display, and conclusion. Data analysis methods were descriptive, analytical, and interpretative.[17]

The Religious Character of Adolescent

Adolescence is a transitional period that every human individual goes through from childhood to adulthood.[18] At this time, religious indecision often arises and attacks adolescents because of their growth and intelligence that have not yet reached the level of maturity, so adolescents can criticize, accept or reject something that is conveyed to them.[19] In

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[15] Udo Kelle, "Mixed Methods," in *Handbuch Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung*, ed. Nina Baur and Jörg Blasius (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2022), 163–77, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-37985-8_9.

[16] Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (Guilford Publications, 2022).

[17] Lois Harris and Gavin Brown, "Mixing Interview and Questionnaire Methods: Practical Problems in Aligning Data," *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation* 15, no. 1 (November 23, 2019), https://doi.org/10.7275/959j-ky83.

[18] Hao-Ming Dong et al., "Shifting Gradients of Macroscale Cortical Organization Mark the Transition from Childhood to Adolescence," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 28 (July 13, 2021): e2024448118, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2024448118.

[19] Taufik Achmad Dwi Putro et al., "Psychological Experiences in Facing the Early Situation of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Adolescents, Adults, and the Elderly," *Journal An-Nafs: Kajian Penelitian Psikologi* 7, no. 1 (May 31, 2022): 13–22,

addition, at this time adolescents' religious feelings are often not constant where sometimes adolescents show excessive piety and at other times adolescents show doubts about the religion they adhere to. It is in line with the opinion which emphasizes that the spirit of religion in adolescents consists of two forms, namely: (a) a positive spirit where adolescents wish to develop and improve their religion, avoid sensual images of religious concepts (images of heaven, hell, angels), and (b) the spirit of khurafi religion where their beliefs are more likely to do charity and worship only from the outside.[20] Therefore, for an adolescent, religion has a meaning that religion is a moral framework that will be used as a reference in his behaviour which will be integrated into the form of religious values that are more rational than the understanding they did as children.

In terminology, according to Elizabeth B. Hurlock, the adolescent phase in human life is a condition marked by the release of a child from childhood and the discovery of symptoms of puberty as the beginning of adolescence.[21] If we focus on the eleven life spans of Elizabeth B. Hurlock, it can be understood that about the seventh and eighth must be included in the group of adolescents. As a refinement, the sixth range can be included in determining the age of adolescence. In this case, a benchmark can be made for the probability of adolescent age ranging from 10.5 years to 21 years.[22] In this phase, adolescents experience various changes that can produce turmoil in the teenager. In general and even under normal conditions, this period is a difficult period to go through, both individually and in groups, so adolescents are often said to be a problematic age group.[23] In its development, there are marked changes in several

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https://doi.org/10.33367/psi.v7i1.1922.

[20] S. M. Ogene, "Psycho-Analysis in Fiction and a Study of D. H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers," *AFRREV LALIGENS: An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies* 2, no. 1 (2013): 95–116, https://doi.org/10.4314/laligens.v2i1.

[21] Elizabeth Bergner Hurlock, *Child Development* (Ratna Sagar, 1950).

[22] Fariza Md Sham et al., "Religiosity as Mediator in Reducing Misconduct of Adolescents-at-Risk," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59, no. 4 (August 1, 2020): 2096–2109, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-019-00951-2.

[23] Mengqian Shen, Urip Purwono, and Doran C. French, "Romance, Religion, and Problem Behavior in Indonesian Muslim Adolescents," *Journal of Adolescence* 81 (June 1,

behaviours, both positive and negative, which is because adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adolescence. Therefore, in this adolescent phase, religion, as a means of social control, plays a very important role in adolescent growth.

In addition, religion plays an important role as a guide to the lives of adolescents who are often faced with dilemmas in the search for self-identity.[24] In many literatures, there are four attitudes taken by adolescents in religion, namely (1) believing on the bandwagon where most adolescents believe in God and practice religion because they are educated in a religious environment; (2) believing with awareness followed by religious enthusiasm in adolescents; (3) believing but hesitating; (4) doubtful belief in their religion where adolescents tend not to believe or atheist.[25] The development of adolescents' understanding of religious beliefs is strongly influenced by the development of their psychological aspects, namely cognitive, emotional, ego, social, and moral. It is in line with the opinion which identifies the development of religion in adolescents which is influenced by two factors, namely (1) spiritual and physical development, such as the growth of mind and mentality, the development of feelings, social considerations, moral development and so on, and (2) external factors from themselves such as family, school, and community environment.[26]

The Ideality of Islamic Learning from a Traditional Islamic Perspective

The tradition of *Sanad* is a precious heritage firmly established within traditional Islamic circles, which remains a key pillar of Islamic

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2020): 87–95, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.04.001.

[24] Ismail Sahin and Ali Unlu, "The Effect of Muslim Religiosity on Youth Delinquency," *Criminal Justice Review* 46, no. 3 (September 1, 2021): 361–81, https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016820966038.

[25] Shen, Purwono, and French, "Romance, Religion, and Problem Behavior in Indonesian Muslim Adolescents."

[26] Benny Prasetiya, Maulid Agusti, and Heri Rifhan Halili, "Student Morality Behavior: A Contribution of Social Godliness and Religiosity," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 18, no. 2 (December 31, 2021): 375–88, https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2021.182-09.

religious education.[27] One of the traditional Islamic groups that carry out the *Sanadan* tradition is pesantren. Initially, pesantrens were established as centres for disseminating Islamic values; however, they expanded their scope over time. More than just accelerating progress in the religious dimension, pesantrens also involve themselves in contemporary issues, such as preparing curricula relevant to the needs of the world of work. Pesantren is not just a religious educational institution but a social entity responsive to societal changes and challenges. In its evolution, pesantrens not only maintain their uniqueness and distinctiveness but also adapt the tradition of *sanad* science as a living concept of "inheritance."[28] The pesantren people are known by the term *sanad*, which refers to the relationship of knowledge inheritance between teachers and students, kyai and santri.

The *Sanad* tradition has been the core of the Islamic learning system since the early days of Islam. Every pesantren teacher, when transmitting knowledge to his students, always brings with him a scientific background related to the *sanad* genealogy.[29] These teachers not only have a clear understanding of religious sciences but can also trace the lineage of their science to its source, the Prophet Muhammad. In the context of pesantren, the *sanad* is a bond of learning and a legacy that continues from generation to generation. Each *sanad* has a very important value because it creates a strong connection between the teacher and student and involves the entire intellectual and spiritual history that makes up the pesantren.[30] Therefore,

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27 Yayan Suryana, "Challenge for Sanad of Islamic Sciences in Disruption Era" (1st *Annual Internatioal Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities* (AICOSH 2019), Atlantis Press, 2019), 81–83, https://doi.org/10.2991/aicosh-19.2019.16.

28 Alfi Qonita Badi'ati and Ahmad Shofi Muhyiddin, "Pesantren and Islamic Transmission (Sanad) of Science," *Proceeding International Conference on Islam and Education* (ICONIE) 1, no. 1 (July 31, 2021): 1–10.

29 Muhammad iqbal Alhabsy et al., "Scientific Geneology and the Concepts of Sanad in Islamic Boarding School: A Study at Roudhotur Ridwan Islamic Boarding School East Lampung," *Journal of Research in Islamic Education*, June 30, 2021, 41–50, https://doi.org/10.25217/jrie.v3i1.1605.

30 Zainul Milal Bizawie, "Sanad and Ulama Network of the Quranic Studies in Nusantara," *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 4, no. 1 (July 8, 2015): 23–44, https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v4i1.60.

the tradition of *sanad* science is not only the foundation of religious education in pesantren but also a symbol of the sustainability and spiritual continuity of the heirs of Islamic knowledge.

In Islamic education, religious knowledge cannot be automatically obtained. Individuals must receive guidance and direction from a teacher whit special expertise in religious matters.[31] Therefore, when choosing a teacher, it is important to pay attention to certain criteria, especially for traditional Muslims. The prospective teacher must thoroughly examine of their 'aqidah. This aspect of faith must be tested to see if it is in line with the 'aqidah of Muslims or if it is not. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that the teachings conveyed by the teacher are closely related to the principles of faith, as this has a major impact on character building and religious understanding of students.[32] Furthermore, the moral aspect of teachers should not be overlooked. Ensuring teacher's behaviour is consistent with their teaching values is important. The harmony between what is taught and the daily behaviour of the teacher is a critical factor in instilling religious values in students.

Therefore, there should not be a discrepancy between spoken words and actual actions, as this can undermine teachers' integrity and authority. Finally, attention must be paid to the level of knowledge teachers possess. It includes the clarity of their knowledge chain, whether or not their knowledge was acquired through direct learning, and how long the teacher had practised religion. Teachers' knowledge needs to be measured to ensure that they have sufficient capacity to impart correct and deep understanding to students. All these criteria are reflected in the views outlined in the book "*Ta'limul Muta'allim*" by Sheikh Zarnuji.[33] Considering

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31 Suhendra, "Transmisi Keilmuan pada Era Milenial Melalui Tradisi Sanadan di Pondok Pesantren Al-Hasaniyah."

32 Muhammad Hamid and Syamsul Bakri, "Urgensi Sanad Keilmuan dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalitas Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI)," *Piwulang: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 6, no. 1 (September 17, 2023): 45–54, https://doi.org/10.32478/piwulang.v6i1.1814.

33 Syekh Az-Zarnuji, "Ta'limul Muta'allim," Penerjemah: Ahmad Sunarto, Jakarta: Pedoman Ilmu, 2012.

these criteria, it is hoped that the selection of teachers in the field of Islamic science can be done wisely to support the formation of a strong character and correct religious understanding among the next generation of Muslims. Therefore, traditional Muslims need to look for scholarly lineage in the study of Islam.

The concept of *sanad*, especially in learning or studying religious sciences, is of great importance, especially when applied to Hadith Science with the term *ittishalus-Sanad*. This continuity is an important requirement in assessing the integrity of news or hadith, which *sanad* means continuous and survives the potential for miscarriage.[34] In other words, this concept suggests that a teacher and student can be in direct contact and receive teachings directly from the teacher who imparts them, creating a strong knowledge inheritance relationship. By linking the concept of *sanad* in learning religious knowledge with the role of education as a cultural product, it can be understood that the *sanad* tradition is not only the foundation of truth in conveying religious teachings but also an integral part of the cultural process that shapes humans and society as a whole. The concept of *sanad* has become a strong foundation for passing on and enriching religious knowledge from one generation to the next, making it an inseparable part of human culture and civilization development.

Hyperreality of Religious Learning on the Internet

Malik Bennabi in his book entitled *Syuruth Al-Nahdlah* said, religion is a "catalyst" that is always present behind the birth of a civilization in human history, so there is not a single human civilization born without "revelation" - be it from saints, prophets, guardians or supernatural humans and people given more intelligence (genius) - who inspire it. Currently, we are - to borrow a term used by Cak Nur - living in the age of technical civilization built by the rise of science and giving birth to

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[34] Umar Muhammad Noor, "Preserving Hadith Tradition in the Modern Times: Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani's Thought on Sanad in His al-'Ujalah fi al-Ahadith al-Musalsalah," *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 4, no. 1 (October 20, 2020): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.30821/jcims.v4i1.6904.

technology as its biological child.[35] Where digital and scientific religious spaces are slowly being worshiped and trusted more to be able to erase "metaphysical" formal religious beliefs. Thus, it gives birth to what Yasraf Amir Piliang calls a hypersemiotic space or hyperreality, which then gives birth to hyper spirituality.[36]

On the internet, religions - old or new, mainstream or fringe - race to harness the power of cyberspace to transform worship, religious organizations, religious communities, and even core religious organizations.[37] Theologians, spiritual teachers, and religious leaders strive to understand and utilize the radical effects of cyberspace on religion. The phenomenon of the cyberspace revolution has occurred massively in various parts of the world, including among religious people; the phenomenon of cyberspace has persuaded them to move from real space to virtual space.[38] The phenomenon of the cyberspace revolution also invites exploring electronic religions - from sites built by religious people from figures to virtual congregations, internet priests, virtual da'wah, and virtual places of worship.

Spirituality in metaphysical religion, which initially shaped religious emotions so abstractly, in the space of digital religion, spirituality is so concrete and rational. Religious emotions or religious experiences are better known as religious mysticism.[39] In every religion, each religious believer has a religious experience or religious emotion. Religious emotion

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[35] Sujiat Zubaidi, Muttaqin Muttaqin, and M. Kharis Majid, "Relasi Agama Dan Ilmu Dengan Peradaban Dalam Perspektif Malik Bennabi," *TSAQAFAH* 16, no. 2 (August 7, 2021), https://ejournal.unida.gontor.ac.id/index.php/tsaqafah/article/view/4999.

[36] Yasraf Amir Piliang, *Semiotika Dan Hipersemiotika: Kode, Gaya & Matinya Makna* (Bandung: Matahari, 2012).

[37] Yasraf Amir Piliang, "Cyberspace Dan Perubahan Sosial: Eksistensi, Identitas, Dan Makna," *Jurnal Balairung Edisi* 38 (2005).

[38] Habibi Malik, "Cyber Religion Dan Real Religion Di Tengah Masyarakat Digital," *KOMUNIKA* 4, no. 1 (June 21, 2021): 63–78, https://doi.org/10.24042/komunika.v4i1.8615.

[39] Mubaidi Sulaeman, "Mistisisme Jalal Al-Din Al-Rumi Dalam Perspektif Annemarie Schimmel," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Tasawuf* 5, no. 2 (2019): 153–81, https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v5i2.66.

is a feeling that is a manifestation of closeness to supernatural powers.[40] Mysticism is not a supernatural and paranormal phenomenon, such as the ability to read minds, telepathy, or rapture to the highest level. Many true mystics from different religions have these abilities, but they are not the main element of mysticism.

To summarize all types of mysticism, the mystical experience is a direct observation of something eternal, whether it is understood in personal terms or simply as a state of consciousness. This is what is called a supra-rational, meta-empirical, intuitive, and unitive experience of something that is spaceless, eternal, and immortal.[41] Whether that something is perceived as a personal God, or an absolute supreme being, or just a particular state of consciousness. It is the manifestation of oneness with or in or from something that transcends empirical identity to have this oneness experienced as total identity or intimate communion. The mark of this experience common to all religions is the loss of consciousness of the ego (human nature) within a greater whole (merging into the divine nature).

Spirituality in religion using digital platforms has become familiar to humans in the digital era. It keeps spirituality ascetic to get religious emotions as religious people before the digital era. Digital platforms used in learning are social media, including YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook), which cannot deliver a real experience of spirituality in religion as previous religious people.[42] This shows that social media as an alternative mobile technology that facilitates its users to create an authentic learning environment is only able to touch the outward aspects of religious components. Indeed, social media helps maximize participation at a lower

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[40] Harold G. Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *International Scholarly Research Notices* 2012 (December 16, 2012): e278730, https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730.

[41] Heinz 1951- Streib, "Modeling the Religious Field: Religion, Spirituality, Mysticism, and Related World Views," *Implicit Religion* 16, no. 2 (2013): 137.

[42] Sophie Gilliat-Ray, "Learning about Islam and Muslims Online: Reflections on the Design and Delivery of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) 2014–2019," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 23, no. 4 (2020): 252–64, https://doi.org/10.1111/teth.12568.

cost and is more impactful than traditional media. It shows that online learning can occur in unlimited time and space, allowing people to engage more easily and choose the online learning model they want. However, such learning has yet to touch the essentials of real religious learning because religion becomes dry of meaning and poor in the experience of mysticism.

Mystical religious experience can be divided into ekstasis, enstasis and theistic. The ecstatic experience is when the soul feels united with the life of everything not assembled by death. In this experience, the boundaries between me and non-me, the experiencing subject and the objective world disappear (hulul), and everything appears as one and one as all. The essence of this experience is that the ego (individuality) itself seems to dissolve and blur, bringing joy and peace.[43] Learning religious spirituality in the digital space enlarges the ego in search of religious experiences to get religious emotions. To get a religious ecstatic experience in digital space is so difficult, let alone getting an ecstatic and theistic spirituality characterized by a feeling of absorption of the soul into the depths of its essence, from which all phenomenal, temporary, conditioned things disappear and the soul sees itself as one whole and overcomes all dualities of worldly life (*fana', baqa' and ittihad*).[44]

This experience manifests the absolute unity or the most basic spiritual essence in the depths of its being (monistic). Meanwhile, the theistic experience is an experience that manifests itself in an incomparable love for God, even defeating everything worldly, and ukhrawi, or the ultimate goal, is the love of God. It is intuitive; God feels inside and is known very closely as in himself. The deepest self is beyond the experience that still says "I want," "I love," or "I know." It has its way of knowing,

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[43] Mubaidi Sulaeman, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Falsafi Awal: Rabi'ah Al-'Adawiyyah, Al-Bustami, dan Al-Hallaj," *Refleksi Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam* 20, no. 1 (September 6, 2020): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.v20i1.2235.

[44] Leila Chamankhah, "Dialogue with the Master: Early Shi'a Encounters with Akbarian Mysticism," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, no. 1 (June 1, 2020): 50–73, https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2020.10.1.155-178.

loving, and experiencing, which is a divine way and not a human way, a way of communion, oneness, and support, where there is no more separation of psychological individuality, which draws all goodness and all truth into itself so that it loves and understands for its own sake.[45]

Therefore, the above experience of spirituality is difficult to achieve by religious learning in the digital space, so what is obtained is imitative practices of the above spiritual and religious experiences. The religious learners in the digital space get the experience of spirituality, but what happens is that the feeling is only imitative. There is a falsification of signs and markers using the sophistication of technology invented by human civilization in the digital era. Religious studies are made as interesting as possible, not merely for proselytizing but also to attract greater capital from followers. The attitude of religious followers becomes paradoxical and difficult to understand; they are critical of old religious patterns but very passionate about religious figures they know in the digital space.[46] This is what makes the ego and individuality of religious people even greater so that they are no longer able to feel the spirituality of religion in the digital space as religious spirituality before the digital era.

The metaphysical spirituality of religion itself, in the view of Rudolf Otto, argues about human attachment that cannot be separated from "religion" (read: formal) even though science and technology try to tear it down. It is due to the nominus feeling that humans have. This ominous feeling is both rational and irrational. The irrational ominous has hidden characteristics and forms the most basic psychological state in the human soul.[47] This ominous feeling is different from confusing feelings; it is calming because this is commonly called religious "spirituality." The

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45 Meis Al-Kaisi, "Rethinking Conceptual Sufism: A Synthesis of Islamic Spirituality, Asceticism, and Mysticism," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 11, no. 2 (December 1, 2021): 169–93, https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2021.11.2.169-193.

46 Muhammad Lutfi and Suhermanto Ja'far, "Islam, Cyberspace And Post-Truth: Epistemological Problems In The Digital Age," *Al-A'raf : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 20, no. 2 (2023), https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v20i2.7937.

47 Rudolf Otto, Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016).

rational ominous feeling suggests that every religious experience cannot be conceptualized - not in terms of rationality - but can be understood and meaningful just like that.[48] According to Otto, there are two aspects to the feeling of ominous: first, tremendous, which is the fear of "god" (the deified); second, fascinating, which is the feeling of being fascinated by something deified. It is what is missing from religion in the digital-internet era.[49] God for them and their teachings have too much concrete knowledge. The revealed mystery often makes people in the digital era poor in spirituality.

Religious spirituality in the digital era is no longer obtained through patterns of interaction in real life (kyai, ustadz, religious teachers as the main source of information). Still, their spirituality is obtained through patterns of interaction with certain mediums, especially the development of technology that gives access to every individual to internet-based mediums that are filled with false signs (hyper semiotics).[50] The emergence of the internet, in turn, leads to the rise of the ability to practice religion (online), and automatically its sacredness shifts from sacredness in real space to digital space. Digital space on the internet allows an event in the public sphere to be reported through social media, including mentioning religion, symbols, and language. Internet-based new media has affected people's religious practices, and the internet has influenced many aspects of religious culture through virtual channels such as social networks. Online religious forums for religious applications and religious activities can be facilitated by various internet technology-based applications such as access to virtual recitations, virtual prayers, and divine verses through the Qur'an Reader. Even some time ago, the government of Saudi Arabia

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[48] Stuart Sarbacker, "Rudolf Otto and the Concept of the Numinous," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2016, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.88.

[49] Todd A. Gooch, *The Numinous and Modernity: An Interpretation of Rudolf Otto's Philosophy of Religion* (Walter de Gruyter, 2000).

[50] Imron Mustofa, "Scientia Sacra In Sufism As Weltanschauung Contemporary Muslim Spirituality," *Al-A'raf : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 18, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 68–88, https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v18i1.3143.

had an offer of Hajj or Umrah in the virtual reality world.

Hyperspirituality of Adolescents Learning Religion Online

Theology and Meaning of Worship

The basic paradigm in building loyalty and being the entrance to indoctrination from a person's or group's religious understanding -or before constructing the teachings of worship and muamalah-, is the theological aspect.[51] In the history of humankind, theological understanding has always been the main trigger for social revolutions in society. For example, the Renaissance and several major revolutions in Europe were the results of different interpretations of theology (modern scientists and theologians) with the understanding of theology that became the status quo (Catholicism) at that time.[52] The theological revolution brought by the Prophet Muhammad, in the form of monotheistic teaching called Islam, also led the Arab civilization, which was originally far behind the civilization of the surrounding communities, to become an influential civilization in the world for more than 900 years. Malik Bennabi said that not a single great civilization in the world was born and became great without the intervention of "religion", especially theology.[53]

Therefore, theology becomes important to be used as the main parameter in understanding adolescents who study on the Internet, in shaping how they interact with Islam, and in implementing it in their social life in the real world. Of the 71 respondents interviewed by the researcher, it was found that 97% of 69 respondents, they had studied religion without the help of teachers and pesantren, but used the internet in the form of social media such as YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Tiktok as their

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[51] Klaus von Stosch, "Comparative Theology as an Alternative to the Theology of Religions," in *Naming and Thinking God in Europe Today* (Brill, 2007), 507–12, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004358225_033.

[52] Johannes Janse Van Rensburg, "An Assessment of the Theology of Religions," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 73, no. 6 (December 1, 2017): 91–152.

[53] Zubaidi, Muttaqin, and Majid, "Relasi Agama Dan Ilmu Dengan Peradaban Dalam Perspektif Malik Bennabi."

learning resources.[54] The content they choose is not based on of adequate knowledge from credible religious sources, but based on their likes or dislikes, interesting or uninteresting content, or appropriate or inappropriate conditions that they are feeling. As many as 87.3%, or 62 respondents, did not care about the sect or differences between the firqah, preachers, and the social religious conditions that became the social reality of the respondents.[55]

Finally, the social-religious reality they understand in cyberspace differs from the social-religious reality in the real world. This clash between social reality in real life and social reality in cyberspace has made these respondents experience several religious delusions that lead to a hypersemiotic understanding of monotheism (theology). This hyper semiotic understanding, for example, when respondents described their understanding of faith in Allah, most respondents could not answer correctly or hesitated to express it. They only understand it piecemeal based on video footage of their idol preachers, such as Gus Baha', Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Ustadz Abdul Shomad, and KH. Anwar Zahid.[56] They put their trust in the concept of faith in Allah based on their knowledge obtained from the internet or their imagination, not on arguments or books written by scholars of monotheism. Therefore, a holistic and correct understanding of monotheism according to Islamic religious rules is no longer an urgent issue when interpreting their religious expressions in worship and morals when living in the community.

They emphasize knowledge of "religion" and issues of worship in religion simply rather than messing around with theological issues that are complicated and considered counter-productive to the life of the digital world, which demands pragmatic and instant aspects. This aspect makes them reluctant to delve into the complexities of theology taught by scholars of monotheism and Islamic thinkers struggling in the field of

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54 Fajar Alfian, Interview, Desember 2022.
55 Abdul Halim, Interview, November 18, 2022.
56 Wisnu Pratama, Interview, Desember 2022.

theology. The majority of respondents tend to like pragmatic things in theological matters; they choose to follow the scholars or their idol figures who are their role models.[57] However, nine respondents had a different opinion about this theological issue; they did *taklid* to scholars of monotheism who had a tradition from the kyai-kyai of the Islamic boarding school where they studied.[58] This is because having the basis of faith obtained from Islamic boarding schools is more important than from cyberspace, in other words, related to theological issues they taklid to Kyai from Islamic boarding schools and knowledge from cyberspace is only limited to additions.

When Muslim teenagers focus their understanding of religion only on the issue of ubudiyah, what happens is the formation of an extreme religious attitude that loses meaning (spirituality) in religion. For them, it is no longer important to get religious emotions to get closer to Allah, but the most important thing is that they have fulfilled their obligations as Muslims in dealing with Allah. Worship for them is a means of communicating with Allah, but it is no longer important - tending to ignore - whether the communication is quality or not. It is what Ahmad Syafi'i Mufid[59] and Bertrand Rusell[60] mentioned: they are religious but godless, while the purpose of religion is to know God as well as possible by finding the real meaning in carrying out God's commandments through religion.

Nihilism of Religious Ideology among Adolescents

The presence of religion in the digital space provides an effective alternative media for religious activists, clerics, academics, or da'wah activists to convey da'wah messages. They can present a different religious

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[57] Riska Wulandari, Interview, November 9, 2022.
[58] Nahdliyah Mukarommah, Interview, December 12, 2022.
[59] Ahmad Syafii Mufid, *Tangklukan, Abangan, Dan Tarekat: Kebangkitan Agama Di Jawa* (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2006).
[60] Bertrand Russell, *Bertrand Russell on God and Religion*, ed. Al Seckel (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1986).

social reality for the object of their da'wah. The social reality that is constructed in such a way makes the object of their da'wah more passionate about the knowledge taught.[61] However, sometimes in the reality built by preachers in this digital space, some go beyond the limits or make the imagination of the object of preaching interpret it excessively. It was experienced by most of the teenage respondents in Kediri, who captured da'wah messages on social media with excessive reactions or understanding.

For example, 23 respondents interpret "enjoyment in the land of the hereafter" by equating the enjoyment with the enjoyment in the world.[62] Such as the satisfaction of sexual desires, the fulfillment of all kinds of luxury goods, and the fulfillment of various desires that are coveted in the world. Indeed, most scholars do not reject such interpretations, even many books of interpretation that explain this, but this is only part of the cheerfulness intended by the Qur'an regarding pleasure in the Hereafter. It becomes dangerous when such explanations are not balanced with references and knowledge related to these interpretations that will be easily deflected for the indoctrination of radical religious views. Where there have been many victims among teenagers whose "understanding of religion" has been deflected, they are willing to become "suicide bombing brides" by offering utopian afterlife pleasures in the name of dying as a sahid and being rewarded by Allah with 72 angels.[63]

This deflection of faith can occur because online religious teaching has a blank space to provide an ideological basis for religion. The ideological aspect of religion is important for determining religious attitudes and emotions. If this gap is filled by radical religious ideology or understanding, it will certainly be very dangerous.[64] In addition, according to Muhaimin, the religious attitude of a person or group will be determined

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[61] Malik, "Cyber Religion Dan Real Religion di Tengah Masyarakat Digital."

[62] Ruhil Amani, Interview, October 27, 2022.

[63] Asma Afsaruddin, "Views of Jihad Throughout History," in *International Law and Islamic Law* (Routledge, 2008).

[64] Sahin and Unlu, "The Effect of Muslim Religiosity on Youth Delinquency."

at least by first, the theological view of religion and the doctrine of its teachings; second, the attitudes and behavior of adherents in understanding and living their religion; third, the socio-cultural environment that surrounds them; and fourth, the role and influence of religious leaders, including religious teachers in directing their followers.

The above concepts are the basic concepts of an Islamic society based on the foundation of spiritual logic that directs the principles of social relations to the scope of religion and establishes a clear relationship between the individual's heart and society and between spiritual replies and the journey of existence (systemic Tawheed). So, if the Muslim community loses these values, what happens is a void of meaning in religion. Of the 47 respondents, it was said that they had never experienced pleasure (ascetic experience) in practicing the teachings of Islam. In other words, on average, they have yet to find the meaning of embracing Islam deeply. Religion, for them, is just an identity imposed by the environment around them, including their families.[65]

There were 61 respondents whose families directed them to be Muslim, but their parents never assisted them in learning Islam. So they use the Internet to learn more about Islam because of limited access to learning in their social environment.[66] In contrast to the 16 respondents whose parents or families have a boarding school background and are active in religious organizations in the surrounding environment. On average, they have an awareness of the importance of experiencing the learning process in credible religious institutions, although they also have not found meaning in Islam.[67]

This nihilism in religion on the Internet among teenagers cannot be separated from the ideology behind the creation of these lessons. Although explicitly most Islamic religious learning on the Internet appears to be ideologically and politically passive, they unknowingly have some

[65] Anjani Putri Yasnu, Interview, January 13, 2023.
[66] Fikri Alfi, Interview, January 31, 2023.
[67] Alfino Nuril Syamsu, Interview, January 14, 2023.

ideologies infiltrated into the learning, or even the learning on the internet is anti-certain ideologies so that it makes poor meaning in religion for teenagers who learn through the Internet. To understand the ideology behind Islamic religious learning on the internet, it is very important to link the reality of this virtual world with the thoughts of ideologues or visionaries, who become ideological reference models in the creation of the internet as an egalitarian world; they are commonly referred to as cyberpunk.[68]

Through science fiction, these cyberpunks develop ideas about ideological fantasies that are dense with the color of "denial." including freedom of information, distrust of authority, denial of (all forms of) power, and freedom of exploration beyond every (forbidden) border. They are fascinated by the concept of uncertainty and instability. They are also very fond of dismantling every establishment, every authority, every (absolute) power, every convention, and every social code.[69] Therefore, the virtual world created by the internet makes its audience dislike dogmatic religious authorities and teachings.

It is because of this passionate spirit of opposition to authority that the majority of respondents, 63 people, are reluctant to study at boarding schools and in certain religious institutions in depth. For them, studying religion in Islamic boarding schools or certain religious institutions limits their creativity and comfort in living their lives. This is because, for them, the authority of religious institutions in learning Islam in the real world only makes them fanatical towards certain Islamic groups.[70] Thus, this proves that the ideology underlying the creation of learning on the internet, which looks neutral and anti-certain ideologies, has succeeded in co-opting Islamic religious learning on the internet which originally

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[68] Malte Frey, "Cyber-Transcendence and Immanence as a Religio-Spiritual Phenomenon in Cyberpunk Anime," *Journal for Religion, Film and Media (JRFM)* 9, no. 2 (November 15, 2023), https://doi.org/10.25364/05.9:2023.2.3.

[69] Christopher D. Kilgore, "Post-Cyberpunk," in *The Routledge Companion to Cyberpunk Culture* (Routledge, 2019).

[70] Muhammad David Fikri, Interview, February 12, 2023.

wanted to spread its ideology, in other words, Islamic religious learning on the internet failed to spread its ideology. Related to this, in the view of scientific criticism, post-technology, there are not a few who look cynically at this new trend. Herbert Marcuse, a figure of the Frankfurt Madhab, in his book One Dimentional Man, states that individuals in modern society as it is today have been integrated into a system that produces single-dimensional humans, namely ideologies that are anti to other ideologies, and the creation of imitative symbols (meanings) of these ostensibly diverse basic ideologies. The system of Islamic religious instruction on the internet, in essence, only helps to foster the homogeneity hiding behind the myriad diversities demonstrated by the mass media revolution.[71]

Regarding this deflection of ideological meaning, Jean Baudrillard states that in the world of learning on the internet, which he calls simulation, society basically develops towards the extreme point of going beyond (beyond) towards the hyper point, which he calls Hyperreality (false reality). Baudrillaard also said in his book Consumer Society that as a result of the simulations created by mass media (in the form of the internet), a culture of consumerism emerges in society, a culture that is not based on needs (need) but on desires (want).[72] This means that the learning of Islam undertaken by respondents who study Islam on the internet, is not caused by the realization that learning Islam is their need in the world and the hereafter, but is more likely to be based on their desire to just know about the teachings of Islam, not to find the real meaning in carrying out the teachings of Islam.

Conclusion

This research found that the religious understanding of Kediri Muslim teenagers who learn Islam on the internet experiences what is called hyper spirituality, which is caused by the hyper semiotics of learning Islam on the internet. The falsity of signs and learning that has not been

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[71] H. Marcuse, "One-Dimensional Man," *Persona y Derecho* 3 (1976): 690.
[72] Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (SAGE, 2016).

completed due to their ignorance in understanding the mechanism of Islamic religious learning that should be, making them experience nihilism in interpreting Islam. In addition, these teenagers experience distorted knowledge related to the ideology that hides behind the neutrality of religious content on the internet, which they think has no ideological and political interests; it turns out that the ideological interests are very clear in creating anti-ideological ideologies. So they misunderstand that the absence of ideology in Islamic religious learning on the internet actually makes them stay away from the main purpose of Islamic education. In fact, the ideology behind radical Islamic learning content easily enters their interpretation and understanding.

Therefore, this research implies that it is important that before carrying out Islamic religious learning on the internet, these teenagers have a strong scientific foundation by looking for clear scientific *sanad* from scholars or religious teachers in the real world. Even parents are obliged to equip and direct their teenage children to find teachers who have a clear scientific *sanad* of Islamic religion. This is a strong spiritual provision for teenagers who learn Islam on the internet so that they can filter the strong flow of information related to learning Islam on the internet and avoid distortion of science and religious spirituality. In addition, with the conditions of an era full of information that is full of false symbols, the foundation of religiosity and strong spirituality for Muslim adolescents becomes urgent position because the science of religion seems to have no meaning anymore, so teachers and parents are obliged to restore the position of religious knowledge as it was, or even better than the era before the arrival of the internet which became a teacher for Muslim adolescents.

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