



## **Social Media Convergence in Islamic Organisations: Transforming Religious Communication in Persis, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama in West Jawa**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the impact of social media convergence on the communication strategies of Islamic organizations in West Jawa, namely Persatuan Islam, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Using a qualitative approach, the research involved field observations, in-depth interviews, and content analyses of social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. Data were analyzed thematically to understand shifts in communication patterns and identity construction. The findings reveal that these organizations have actively adopted digital platforms to disseminate religious narratives, engage audiences, and construct institutional identities. Social media convergence enables decentralized communication, reshaping traditional religious authority and expanding outreach to digitally native demographics. NU and Muhammadiyah emphasize moderate and inclusive Islamic narratives, whereas Persis adopts a more doctrinal yet adaptive approach. All three demonstrate differentiated audience-targeting and platform strategies aligned with organizational values. This transformation reflects a structural shift in religious communication from hierarchical models to dialogic, participatory, and algorithm-aware strategies. Organizational success depends on media literacy, narrative adaptability, and collaborative leadership that integrates traditional and digital actors.

**Keywords:** digital da'wah; Islamic organisations; religious communication; social media convergence

### **Introduction**

The development of digital communication technology has fundamentally changed the landscape of social communication, including religious communication. One of the most striking phenomena in the last decade is the convergence of social media as the main platform for disseminating religious messages. Amidst the overwhelming flow of information, Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as Persatuan Islam (Persis), Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), have demonstrated new dynamics in their strategies for religious outreach and public communication. This phenomenon is not merely a technical change but reflects a paradigm shift in communication that demands the redefinition of authority, structure, and operational mechanisms of religious institutions in the digital age.

The convergence of social media has created a new space for Islamic organizations to shape, convey, and distribute religious narratives more quickly, widely, and participatively than before. Data from We Are Social (2023) show that social media users in Indonesia exceed 170 million, making Indonesia one of the largest digital markets in the world. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter are not only used for social and commercial purposes but have also become the primary arena for contesting religious meanings. In this context, Islamic organizations are no

longer passive entities but active actors strategically leveraging communication technology to reach their congregations and the broader public, particularly the digitally native, younger generation.

The involvement of Islamic organizations in the digital space demonstrates a complex convergence, namely, the blending of old and new communication models within a single media ecosystem. Asy'ari (2019) and Girardin et al. (2020) confirm that social media enables two-way communication, which is more inclusive and participatory than conventional media. For example, Muhammadiyah has developed an official YouTube channel and Instagram account featuring video-based religious content, while NU uses various digital platforms to disseminate the concept of Nusantara Islam. This response reflects not only adaptation to technology but also a contextual da'wah strategy that considers changes in the characteristics of the audience and information consumption patterns among Muslim communities in Indonesia.

This phenomenon raises important questions: To what extent has the convergence of social media transformed the religious communication practices of Islamic organizations? What are the implications for religious authority, religious narratives, and the construction of contemporary Muslim identity? Digital convergence brings not only opportunities but also challenges, from misinformation and polarization of discourse to changes in traditional religious authority. Therefore, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of how large Islamic organizations such as Persis, Muhammadiyah, and NU respond to these dynamics in strategic regions such as West Java, which is one of Indonesia's largest Muslim population centers. Previous studies have shown that social media has drastically changed the logic of public communication, including in the religious sphere.

Papa and Kouros (2024) reveal that digital platforms provide space for marginalized groups to voice alternative religious narratives. In the Indonesian context, several studies have explored the role of social media in the dissemination of religious preaching by individuals and religious figures (Ibda & Saifuddin, 2019; Subekti, 2022). However, the focus on institutions and organizations as the main actors has not received adequate attention. Related research on organizational communication in the Islamic context has mostly highlighted internal relations, bureaucratic structures, and theological aspects rather than explicitly digital communication strategies (Veldsman & Veldsman, 2020; Ababneh et al., 2022). The available literature also tends to view social media as a tool rather than an integral part of the institutional transformation process. This leaves a gap in understanding how Islamic organizations strategically use social media to respond to social and cultural changes.

This article contributes theoretically and empirically to the study of religious communication by focusing on organizations as strategic entities that systematically utilize social media. This approach distinguishes this research from previous studies, which have been more individualistic. As pointed out by Highfield and Miltner (2023), research tends to overlook institutional structures in studies of digital communication. Therefore, this study fills this gap by presenting a comprehensive study of three large Islamic organizations in Indonesia in the context of social media convergence. Previous studies, such as those by Murumaa-Mengel and Lott (2023) and Egliston and Padua (2022), emphasize the importance of digital communication strategies in constructing institutional narratives.

However, the application of these findings in the context of Indonesian Islamic organizations has not been adequately explained. In this regard, this study seeks to reformulate a theoretical approach that can accommodate the dynamics of media convergence, religious identity, and social interaction that occur in religious organizations in the midst of a changing society.

Thus, this article seeks to present a new narrative in the literature on religious communication, namely that Islamic organizations are not merely passive users of social media, but also active actors who shape the architecture of digital communication through policies, content production, and public discourse mediation strategies. This approach is expected to enrich the field of communication studies by emphasizing the importance of structure, actors, and context in understanding the dynamics of religious communication in the digital era.

Although many studies have been conducted on religious communication on social media, most of them still focus on individuals or religious figures as the center of attention. Research that explicitly discusses the communication strategies of Islamic organizations in the face of social media convergence is still very limited. This is an important gap that needs to be bridged, given the significant role of Islamic organizations in shaping public opinion and the collective identity of Muslims.

Furthermore, most existing studies tend to be descriptive and have not critically examined how these organizations manage contestations of discourse, authority, and religious legitimacy in digital

spaces (Franks et al., 2022; Moussa et al., 2024). This is particularly important in an era where social media functions not only as a means of communication but also as an arena for contesting religious meaning. Another shortcoming of previous studies is the lack of contextual analysis of specific regions, such as West Java, which has its own sociocultural characteristics within the constellation of Islam in Indonesia.

Thus, this study not only fills conceptual and theoretical gaps but also provides contextually grounded empirical contributions to enriching our understanding of media convergence and Islamic organizational communication. This study aims to answer three main questions that are descriptive, critical, and transformative in nature:

First, how do Persis, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama utilize social media convergence to shape their religious communication strategies? Second, how do these strategies influence the internal and external communication patterns of organizations and their positions in the digital public landscape? Third, what is the impact of these changes on the construction of religious identity and religious authority among Muslim communities in West Java?

Through these questions, this study seeks to explore not only practices but also the meanings and implications of the transformation of religious communication in a broader social context. Thus, this study proposes an analytical approach that not only describes phenomena but also assesses their social and cultural implications.

Furthermore, this study seeks to develop an analytical framework that integrates organizational communication perspectives, media convergence theory, and social constructivism approaches to understand the complex dynamics between religious institutions and digital media. This is expected to contribute, both theoretically and methodologically, to the study of religious communication in the digital age.

Based on these objectives, this study argues that social media convergence has shifted religious communication practices from hierarchical and centralistic models to more open, dialogic, and participatory patterns. Islamic organizations in Indonesia, especially in West Java, no longer function solely as one-way messengers but as facilitators of religious discussion in the digital public sphere. This transformation reflects changes in the logic of religious authority, which is now more determined by social interaction, content appeal, and information distribution speed. The second argument is that social media acts as a catalyst for the redefinition of Islamic organizational identity.

In the context of increasingly complex religious narrative contestations, digital communication strategies have become vital tools for strengthening organizational legitimacy, building community solidarity, and addressing contemporary social challenges. Therefore, a deeper understanding of this process will help us understand how religious institutions respond to the pressures of modernization while maintaining the traditional roots that form the foundation of their existence.

## Literature Review

### Media Convergence and Islamic Organizations

Media convergence is an integrative process between various forms of media involving the merging of functions, content, and distribution channels into a single interconnected digital ecosystem. In the context of religious organizations, media convergence is not only interpreted as a technical innovation but also as a fundamental transformation of communication strategies. Pääkkönen et al. (2020) show that an organization's ability to understand social media analytics is crucial in determining public perceptions of an institution's credibility and reputation in the digital space. This is particularly relevant for large Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which seek to expand their outreach through ever-evolving digital platforms. The combination of various information formats—text, images, videos, and live broadcasts—has become a key tool for reaching audiences who are increasingly accustomed to multimedia content.

Furthermore, media convergence provides technical infrastructure and opens up new spaces for more personal and collaborative religious expression. Lungu (2019) emphasized that social media enables the integration of individual and collective perspectives in conveying institutional messages. Islamic organizations that can accommodate this diversity of expression through digital communication strategies tend to have broader reach, both nationally and globally. Religious narratives can be personalized but remain bound within the normative framework of the institution,

creating a connection between the center of da'wah and members at various levels.

Lev-On (2018) highlights the political and social dimensions of social media as a discursive space. In it, religious organizations not only convey information but also facilitate discussion and advocacy of religious values. Islamic organizations in Indonesia have begun to realize that social media can be a strategic space for creating social solidarity, strengthening internal cohesion, and mobilizing support for their social and religious agendas. Thus, media convergence not only changes the medium of communication but also redefines the function of organizations as active public actors in digital space.

### **Organizational Identity and Communication Strategies**

The identity of a religious organization is a social construct that reflects its vision, values, and institutional orientation in its interactions with followers and the wider community. With the development of digital communication technology, managing organizational identity has become a strategic challenge that requires the contextual adaptation of communication policies. Hasan and Nurhuda (2023) show that the implementation of Sharia principles in the economic system of organizations is a means to build institutional credibility and increase the trust of the Muslim community in the social role of organizations. For example, Muhammadiyah, with its progressive Islamic values approach, has been able to leverage its Islamic identity as a foundation to encourage broader public involvement in community and social welfare issues.

The da'wah strategies employed by Islamic organizations reflect efforts to maintain the relevance of religious values amid the dynamics of a digital society. Slamet and Laila (2019) argue that both Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah integrate media convergence in the formulation of their Da'wah strategies. Dakwah content is no longer delivered solely through conventional sermons but also through visual narratives, podcasts, and short social media videos. This strategy enables the creation of consistent messages that are adaptable to diverse cultural contexts and audience needs. In this context, organizational identity is transmitted simultaneously through various channels, generating stronger resonance among a mobile and digital society.

This shift in the communication landscape also impacts internal organizational interactions. Ertiö et al. (2018) showed that social media drives the transformation of organizational communication from a one-way model to a dialogic and participatory model. In Islamic organizations in Indonesia, this change has led to openness toward member contributions in shaping the organization's direction and expressing aspirations. This active participation strengthens collective identity cohesion and expands the space for deliberation, which was previously limited by traditional hierarchical structures. Thus, communication strategies that are responsive to technological and social dynamics are key to maintaining the continuity of Islamic organizational identity in the era of media convergence.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Social Media Convergence**

Changes in communication technology have had an ambivalent impact on Islamic organizations. On the one hand, media convergence presents great opportunities to expand the reach and influence of the da'wah. However, on the other hand, these changes also bring structural and ideological challenges that require strategic responses. Kennedy and Atkinson (2019) emphasize that media convergence is not only about technology adoption but also involves reformulating internal policies and adjusting institutional practices to respond to digital public expectations. Organizations that fail to adapt their communication structures will experience disruptions in terms of visibility, credibility, and social relevance.

In the context of digital dakwah, communication strategies can no longer be linear and one-way communication. Asy'ari (2019) suggests that to compete in a highly congested digital space, Islamic organizations must build adaptive, responsive, and data-driven communication systems. The strategic use of media convergence enables organizations to produce content that is in line with audience dynamics, strengthen moderate Islamic narratives, and minimize the spread of misleading religious information. A robust communication infrastructure is not only a technical tool but also a symbol of an organization's readiness to face technology-based social changes.

Additionally, the emotional and affective aspects of communication are crucial to the effectiveness of conveying religious messages. Zegarra and Abrams (2023) highlight the importance

of narratives containing affective elements in media-based social campaigns. In the context of Islamic organizations in Indonesia, the use of narratives that touch on humanity and spirituality has great potential for shaping public opinion and building emotional engagement with audiences. This presents a strategic opportunity for organizations to portray Islam as an inclusive and relevant religion capable of addressing contemporary challenges. Therefore, media convergence is not merely a technological transformation but also a substantive shift in the paradigm of religious communications.

## Method

This study explores the convergence of social media in Islamic organizations in West Java, specifically Persis, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama, and its impact on religious communication. To achieve this objective, a qualitative approach with a descriptive design was used, emphasizing an in-depth understanding of social phenomena through field research, interviews, and social media content analysis. Data collection began with a literature review to identify relevant theoretical frameworks and prior empirical findings. Observations were conducted directly at religious activity sites and organizational communication centers to understand the actual communication practices. In-depth interviews were conducted with key figures and organization members to explore their perspectives on digital communication strategies and social media use. Content analysis was performed on posts on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, focusing on themes, interaction models, and audience-engagement metrics. All data were analyzed using a thematic approach, with triangulation techniques to enhance the validity of the findings. This study adhered to research ethics, including participant consent and data confidentiality. With this methodological approach, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of media convergence in reshaping religious communication and the institutional identity of Islamic organizations in the digital age.

## Results and Discussion

### Transformation of Religious Communication Strategies through Social Media Convergence

This study shows that Islamic religious organizations such as Persatuan Islam, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama in West Java have undergone significant transformations in their communication strategies due to social media convergence. All three actively integrate social media as their primary medium for conveying religious messages, expanding the reach of their preaching, and building more interactive relationships with their followers, especially younger ones.

Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube are not only used to distribute traditional preaching content in a digital format but also as a space for dialogue and reflection on contemporary social issues. Persis emphasizes the visualization of Islamic messages through infographics and short video lectures, while Muhammadiyah prioritizes educational and moral content in creative and interactive formats, such as Q&A sessions, inspirational videos, and pop culture-style da'wah. NU, through NU Online Jabar, develops content based on pesantren scholarly traditions and tolerance, combined with contextual and humanistic narrative design.

The convergence of social media has also impacted the reconstruction of religious identity and the redistribution of religious authority in China. Interviews with NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis officials revealed that social media encourages openness to a role for religious preaching that is no longer centralized and hierarchical. Religious authority is no longer monopolized by structural figures but is also strengthened by young figures with high narrative and technological skills.

This phenomenon is consistent with the analysis of Eickelman and Anderson (2003), who argued that the Internet creates a leveling effect in religious discourse authority. Thus, social media has become a new arena where authority is built based on competence and interactivity, not merely on religious titles or structural positions within the church. Identity as a member of Persis, Muhammadiyah, or NU is no longer determined solely by physical affiliation but also through active involvement in the organization's digital space.

Although social media opens up a wide space for preaching, these Islamic organizations also face serious challenges, particularly related to content quality, media literacy, and professional management. These challenges arise from two sides: internal (lack of technical capacity) and external (high potential for misinformation). As acknowledged by Ustaz Ovik from Persis, not all preachers

have the technical expertise to manage digital content, leading to a dependence on external IT experts.

Additionally, social media is highly susceptible to the spread of unverified information. NU, through NU Online Jabar, actively curates content to ensure accuracy, balance, and moderation in the religious narratives it disseminates. This is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the message and preventing the polarization of views within a diverse society.

The three organizations demonstrate distinct audience segmentation, reflecting the differences in their strategic approaches. Muhammadiyah targets urban youth through content oriented toward educational and humanitarian values, while Persis focuses more on internal development and strengthening fiqh through short and concise narratives. Meanwhile, NU utilizes its deep scholarly tradition to reach traditionalist and moderate groups through media oriented towards the values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

The following table summarizes a comparison of the digital dakwah approaches of the three organizations.

Table 1. Comparison of the Digital Dakwah Strategies of Persis, Muhammadiyah, and NU in West Jawa

Strategic Aspects	Persis	Muhammadiyah	Nahdlatul Ulama
Dominant Platform	Instagram, YouTube	YouTube, Instagram	Facebook, NU Online, YouTube
Communication Style	Firm, fiqhiyah, concise narrative	Inspirational, educational, interactive visuals	Moderate, historical and contextual narrative
Target Audience	Internal cadres, Gen-Z mosque	youth, students, general public	Santri, NU members, general public
Main Content,	Legal studies, short dakwah videos	Dakwah infographics, podcasts	education Inspirational stories, Q&A, fatwas
Technical Approach	Assisted by IT experts, still limited	Internal creative content team	Professional media management (NU Online)
Interactivity	Limited comments, closed education	Live Q&A, active online community	Live streaming, interactive discussions
Key Challenges	Technical capacity and content adaptation	Message consistency and audience dynamics	Audience segmentation and narrative moderation

The convergence of social media has created a broader space for dakwah, but it has also given rise to complex social challenges such as the spread of hate speech, exclusive narratives, and religious misinformation. In this context, NU and Muhammadiyah have actively promoted Islam wasathiyah (moderate Islam) through social media in response to the trends of polarization and digital radicalism. As Tsortanidou et al. (2020) state, religious narratives on social media can function as counter-discourse to extremism if they are packaged in an inclusive and contextual manner.

Persis, despite being known for its rigid approach to Islamic law, has begun to adopt more contextual narratives to reach a pragmatic and mobile younger audience. This demonstrates that social media has become a tool for shaping not only religious perceptions but also social strategies to respond to the complexities of the time.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is highly relevant in the context of digital dakwah. Social media audiences are not passive recipients but active users who selectively choose religious content that aligns with their spiritual, cognitive and social needs. This study found that social media users utilize religious content to seek inspiration, moral education, and spiritual connections with like-minded communities.

Persis, Muhammadiyah, and NU fulfill these needs by providing diverse and segmented content. YouTube serves as a platform for in-depth and reflective content, whereas Instagram and

Twitter are used to convey short, inspiring moral messages. Thus, these Islamic organizations have adapted to the media behavior of contemporary digital audiences.

One important contribution of social media to contemporary da'wah is its ability to form virtual religious communities. Muhammadiyah and NU actively utilize live streaming features, digital discussion forums, and online question-and-answer spaces to strengthen their interactions with their followers. This makes social media a new space for participatory and collaborative da'wah.

Interactivity is the key to the success of digital da'wah. The three organizations demonstrate that the success of da'wah communication does not only depend on the content of the message, but also on the ability to create space for engagement, open discussion, and emotional support for the target audience. In this sense, da'wah is not only about inviting people to do good but also serves as a social mechanism to connect individuals with broader values and communities.

The convergence of social media in Islamic organizations is not merely a technological integration but also a structural transformation of religious communication strategies. As explained by Pääkkönen et al. (2020), the ability to understand digital media analytics is crucial in shaping public perception of an institution's credibility, a need that is now highly relevant for large organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. This finding is reinforced by the practices of three major Islamic organizations in West Java—Persis, Muhammadiyah, and NU—which actively utilize various content formats, such as text, video, and live broadcasts, to reach audiences increasingly familiar with digital media. This convergence is not merely a merger of media but rather a strengthening of the connectivity between the center of da'wah and its members. Lunga (2019) demonstrated that social media enables the integration of individual and collective expressions into a single, institutional narrative. The experiences of Persis, Muhammadiyah, and NU prove that da'wah has become more personal and responsive in recent years. Furthermore, as explained by Lev-On (2018), social media functions as a discursive space that allows organizations to convey messages and facilitate advocacy and social solidarity. Thus, media convergence has prompted religious organizations to reposition their roles from normative institutions to active public actors in the digital landscape. This study confirms that the success of digital da'wah depends on an organization's capacity to create participatory spaces, build inclusive narratives, and leverage social media as a tool for strengthening identity and expanding religious authority.

### **Strategies to Influence Convergence on Internal and External Communication Patterns in Religious Organizations**

This study reveals that media convergence has driven significant changes in the internal communication patterns of religious organizations in West Java, particularly Persatuan Islam, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Field findings indicate that the use of digital technology has improved the efficiency of information dissemination, accelerated coordination among members, and created a more participatory communication space for the community. The dissemination of organizational policies, activity agendas, and important instructions is no longer limited to print media or face-to-face meetings but has shifted to digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Workspace, and internal communication channels on closed social media platforms.

In this context, religious organizations have developed two-way communication mechanisms in which members can provide direct feedback, thereby strengthening the principles of inclusivity and collaboration. Hair et al. (2022) stated that the use of communication technology in religious organizations enables the creation of more dynamic and adaptive communication systems. This has a direct impact on strengthening the internal structure and increasing the sense of belonging among members of the organization.

The external communication patterns of religious organizations have also undergone substantial reformulation due to media convergence practices. NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis actively utilize various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, to shape their image as progressive, inclusive, and responsive institutions to public issues.

Media convergence allows organizations to combine message formats in various forms—text, images, videos, and live broadcasts—tailored to specific audience segments. This has direct implications for expanding the reach of da'wah and public engagement in digital spaces. Ridwanullah and Bala (2022) emphasize that a multi-platform approach can increase emotional connectedness

between organizations and digital communities.

This strategy is implemented differently by each organization: Muhammadiyah emphasizes educational and inspirational content for young urban audiences, NU integrates traditional values with humanistic narratives, and Persis focuses on strengthening fiqh and Islamic law in a concise and succinct manner. All three demonstrate flexibility in adapting their communication styles to the increasingly digital-native dynamics of their audiences.

Table 2. External Communication Strategies through Media Convergence

Organization	Dominant Platform	Communication Style	Audience Segmentation
Muhammadiyah	YouTube, Instagram	Inspirational, educational	Students, urban Gen-Z
NU	Facebook, NU Online	Historical, contextual	Santri, moderate public
Persis	Instagram, YouTube	Firm, fiqhiah	Mosque youth, cadres

Convergence strategies also encourage organizations to open public dialogue spaces. Social media is no longer merely a one-way broadcasting tool but has become an interactive discursive arena enabling the direct exchange of ideas, criticism, and clarification with the community. Lev-On (2018) states that in the digital media era, organizations are required to manage communication in a participatory manner to remain relevant in an increasingly fluid, public sphere.

The success of convergence strategies depends heavily on the quality of organizational leadership that can understand technological developments and contemporary communication needs. Leaders with high digital literacy are better equipped to formulate effective, innovative, and collaborative policies.

Hair et al. (2022) emphasized that transformative leadership that supports organizational learning and member empowerment plays an important role in creating cultural change that supports the media convergence process. In this context, Muhammadiyah has demonstrated more systematic communication management through the formation of an internal content team comprising journalists, content creators, and technologists.

On the other hand, NU relies on the professionalism of NU Online as a media unit with the capacity to produce and distribute content based on journalistic and pesantren scholarly traditions. Meanwhile, Persis, although still limited in technical capacity, has begun collaborating with external IT experts to strengthen its digital communication channels.

Convergence practices are also seen as a responsive strategy to the socio-religious challenges emerging in society. Mimar and Seva (2024) indicate that religious organizations need to use digital media strategically to counter disinformation, strengthen moderate Islamic messages, and assert their position in an increasingly pluralistic and competitive public discourse.

In this regard, NU and Muhammadiyah have taken the initiative to mainstream the wasathiyah narrative of Islam through digital campaigns based on education and values of tolerance. However, convergence also presents challenges, particularly in terms of content quality control and misinformation risk management.

Field data indicate that although the three organizations have been active in producing digital religious content, media literacy among contributors and users remains uneven. Wulan et al. (2024) highlights the need for internal training and digital literacy curricula as part of religious organizations' long-term strategies for managing communication in the era of convergence.

Media convergence impacts external transformation and creates complexity in the internal communication structures and systems of organizations. As noted by Siddiqi and Fernandy (2022), the integration of digital communication systems often requires the reorganization of information governance, including the distribution of authority, responsibilities, and roles of communication actors. NU and Muhammadiyah have responded to this condition by forming special communication units that coordinate content production and information distribution, while Persis is still in the early stages of developing its digital coordination systems. Organizational cultural values continue to play an important role in guiding media convergence implementation.

In this context, NU, with its traditional roots in pesantren education, continues to uphold a religious narrative based on sanad and moderation, while Muhammadiyah integrates rationalism and

reform. Syahnan (2019) notes that religious organizations that can manage the tension between tradition and innovation will be better equipped to survive the dynamics of social change.

The discussion results show that the communication strategies of Islamic organizations in West Java, particularly NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis, have not only undergone technical transformations but also led to the reconstruction of their institutional identities in the digital landscape. As emphasized by Hasan and Nurhuda (2023), the identity of religious organizations is a social construct that reflects institutional values and orientations. In this context, social media-based da'wah strategies aim not only to convey religious messages but also to strengthen credibility and public engagement with the social role of the organization.

Muhammadiyah's progressive approach and NU's integration of wasathiyah values demonstrate how institutional identity is maintained through da'wah content that is relevant to the dynamics of digital society. As noted by Slamet and Laila (2019), media convergence allows da'wah to no longer be monolithic but responsive to the diversity of audiences and cultures. Additionally, these changes have shifted internal organizational communication patterns toward more dialogic and participatory approaches, as highlighted by Ertiö et al. (2018). Through member involvement in content production and digital discourse, a more inclusive and adaptive collective identity emerges among the group members. Therefore, responsiveness to the dynamics of communication technology is the key to the sustainability of Islamic organizational identity in the era of media convergence.

In general, the results of this study confirm that media convergence profoundly influences the internal and external communication patterns of religious organizations. Convergence not only facilitates the dissemination of information more widely and efficiently but also creates new spaces for participation, discussion, and the construction of a more open, collective identity.

The main challenge lies in the capacity to manage content and digital competencies within the organization. Therefore, future communication strategies must focus on strengthening internal digital literacy systems, adaptive leadership, and integrating spiritual values into digital communication practices to maintain the substance of religious outreach amid the overwhelming flow of digital information.

### **The Impact of Media Convergence on the Construction of Religious Identity and Religious Authority**

Media convergence significantly impacts how religious organizations shape, maintain, and represent their collective identities. This study found that Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Persatuan Islam actively use digital platforms as a strategic means to articulate the Islamic values they adhere to. Social media, such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, are not only a medium for spreading religious teachings but also a tool for constructing adaptive and contextual identities.

Religious identity, previously shaped through authoritative structures such as majelis taklim and mosque sermons, is now also constructed through more dialogic and participatory digital interactions. As Cossu (2018) noted, users' involvement in sharing religious experiences online encourages the formation of new collective narratives that reflect the diversity of interpretations within a community of belief. In this context, NU and Muhammadiyah show a tendency to emphasize the values of inclusivity, diversity, and Islam wasathiyah (moderation), while Persis emphasizes firmness in fiqh and textual authority, although it adapts its communication approach to digital audiences.

One of the crucial findings of this study is the shift in religious authority from a hierarchical and centralized model to a more decentralized and digitally competent model. With the opening of digital public spaces, individuals with rhetorical, visualization, and religious content understanding capacities can quickly gain widespread influence, even if they do not come from formal ulama institutions. This phenomenon is reinforced by Wu and Martín's (2023) analysis, who state that social media facilitates the horizontal distribution of authority, creating an "open authority space" where credibility is determined by public response rather than formal titles.

NU and Muhammadiyah, in this case, have responded to these dynamics with a collaborative approach between traditional figures and young digital preachers. These preachers typically have a background in information technology and the ability to produce content that is adaptive to platform algorithms, such as TikTok. Persis has shown caution in this regard, although it is slowly opening space for young figures to emerge as the face of the organization's digital da'wah.

Media convergence also affects the formation of collective identities in digital communities.

Through online forums, live streams, and open discussions on social media platforms, followers are no longer passive recipients of communication but active participants in the religious discourse. This indicates a shift from an authoritative to a more deliberative communication model.

This study found that Muhammadiyah, with its educational and popular approach, tends to build digital communities that are active in asking questions, sharing, and discussing issues. NU, through NU Online, also demonstrates a high ability to manage virtual communities, especially through the use of interactive features, such as live streaming and moderate comment sections. Persis, although relatively more selective in opening up discourse, is beginning to show progress by providing more focused and structured discussion space. The plurality of voices in digital spaces also brings challenges in the form of cognitive dissonance and fragmentation of authoritative identities. Interpretive confusion can occur when social media users receive religious information from various sources with unverified authority.

As explained by Khaola and Rambe (2020), the inability of organizations to provide a clear frame of reference in the digital space can lead to the displacement of traditional authority into the hands of nonformal actors who do not always have theological legitimacy.

This phenomenon is evident in the spread of extremist preaching or teachings that are not aligned with the principles of moderate Islam. NU and Muhammadiyah, as organizations that promote inclusiveness, have taken preventive measures by activating curative content units to verify, edit, and moderate digital sermons. This is done to avoid social polarization and restore religious authority to the valid scientific principles.

In addition to being a communication tool, digital media function as a vehicle for religious literacy. NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis demonstrate a collective awareness that social media can be used to build a more reflective and contextual understanding of religion. The use of infographics, educational podcasts, and short lecture videos has become a key strategy for enhancing religious understanding in an accessible format tailored to the learning style of the millennial generation.

In this context, religious literacy is not merely doctrinal knowledge but also the ability to distinguish valid information from hoaxes or intolerant narratives. In this regard, digital media acts as a catalyst for transforming the relationship between authoritative sources and the public.

The Islamic organizations studied demonstrate a high level of adaptability in responding to social dynamics through the media. For example, issues such as interfaith tolerance, environmental sustainability, and social justice are increasingly being incorporated into digital da'wah content using a more contextual approach. This aligns with Tran's (2024) findings, which emphasize the importance of a communicative approach to fostering social solidarity through the media.

Muhammadiyah has progressively developed content oriented toward educating urban communities, whereas NU places greater emphasis on preserving traditional pesantren values in digital formats. Despite its strict fiqhiyah approach, Persis has begun to address social issues from the perspective of contemporary Islamic law. All three demonstrate that the media can be used as a strategic tool to bridge religious values with contemporary challenges. The findings of this study show that media convergence has transformed how religious organizations in Indonesia shape collective identity and redefine religious authority.

NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis have significantly adapted their da'wah strategies by utilizing digital media for two-way communication, education, and community cohesion. Religious identity is now constructed not only through physical and symbolic affiliations but also through active engagement in participatory digital spaces. Social media convergence has created new dynamics in religious communication practices, particularly for Indonesian Islamic organizations.

This transformation is not merely about adopting digital technology but also requires reformulating internal policies and adjusting institutional practices to meet the increasingly complex expectations of the digital public (Kennedy & Atkinson, 2019). Organizations that fail to adapt their communication structures risk losing their visibility, legitimacy, and social relevance amid the competitive flow of information.

In the context of digital da'wah, conventional one-way communication strategies are inadequate. As stated by Asy'ari (2019), religious organizations must develop adaptive, responsive, and data-driven communication systems. This not only enables the production of content that aligns with audience dynamics but also strengthens moderate Islamic narratives and reduces the potential spread of misleading information.

A strong communication infrastructure reflects institutional readiness to face technology-based social changes. Furthermore, the effectiveness of religious communication in digital spaces is greatly influenced by the emotional and affective aspects of the narrative used. Zegarra and Abrams (2023) emphasized the importance of building emotional connections through narrative campaigns that touch on the humanity and spirituality of the audience.

In this context, Islamic organizations have a strategic opportunity to position Islam as an inclusive and humanistic religion that is relevant to contemporary challenges. Therefore, the convergence of social media must be understood as a paradigmatic shift in religious communication, from mere message transmission to collaborative, reflective, and socially transformative meaning construction.

The shift in religious authority during the media convergence era reflects significant structural transformations in the contemporary religious communication landscape. Authority, which was previously hierarchical and based on formal positions, is now increasingly open to new forms determined by narrative competence, technological literacy, and intensity of engagement in digital spaces. This marks a transition from legitimacy based on religious titles to legitimacy based on expertise and performativity in conveying religious messages contextually. In this context, young figures who master digital platforms and respond to religious issues with a reflective, inclusive approach are gaining a more central role in shaping religious public opinion.

Although the plurality of voices in the digital space poses the risk of discourse fragmentation, religious organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis demonstrate an adaptive capacity to manage diverse views. Through content curation, online discourse moderation, and the application of wasathiyah principles, these organizations ensure that religious narratives remain consistent with a moderate value framework. This strategy not only strengthens the credibility of these organizations in the eyes of the digital public but also enriches the understanding of the people towards Islam as a dynamic religion that offers solutions to contemporary realities.

As a practical implication, it is necessary to strengthen digital literacy among both administrators and preachers. This includes understanding social media algorithms, content production ethics, and skills for building constructive digital interactions. In addition, the development of an integrated and accountable information management system is urgently needed to ensure the accuracy of da'wah messages and to minimize the potential for disinformation. Collaboration between traditional scholars and digital preachers should be facilitated through intergenerational forums, cross-media training, and institutional synergy to ensure a healthy and sustainable transfer of values.

With the rapid pace of social change and the penetration of technology into daily life, the success of da'wah is no longer determined solely by the strength of the message but by the capacity to package the message in a relevant, accessible, and contextual manner. Media literacy, managerial skills in managing digital audiences, and narrative accuracy are key elements in shaping the effectiveness of religious communication in the era of disruption.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the convergence of social media has fundamentally altered the religious communication landscape of Islamic organizations in West Java. NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis have demonstrated strategic adaptability by integrating digital platforms to reformulate their da'wah approaches, engage with broader audiences, and reinforce their organizational identities. This transformation signifies a shift from authoritative, top-down religious messaging to participatory, interactive, and audience-responsive communication. Authority is increasingly constructed through digital competence, narrative resonance, and interactivity rather than solely through traditional hierarchical roles.

The organizations studied have also shown awareness of the need for content moderation, audience segmentation, and ethical message dissemination, especially in response to misinformation, religious intolerance, and algorithmic bias. However, the effectiveness of these efforts varies depending on internal capacity, technical expertise, and leadership. The study is limited by its geographical focus on West Java, which, while socially and culturally diverse, may not fully represent broader national patterns. Furthermore, reliance on qualitative data means generalizability is

constrained. Future research should include comparative cross-regional analyses and mixed-method approaches to enrich the empirical depth and analytical scope. Institutional longitudinal studies may also reveal the sustainability of digital convergence strategies within organizations.

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