A New Islamic Knowledge Production And Fatwa Rulings: How Indonesia's Young Muslim Scholars Interact With Online Sources

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A NEW ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND FATWA RULINGS
How Indonesia's Young Muslim Scholars Interact with Online Sources

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Abstract: This study aims to discover Indonesia's young Muslim scholars online acquisition of knowledge and use in fatwa making habits. Using a theoretical lens from knowledge acquisition theory and Islamic sociology, we conducted our study using an interpretive case study. We used the in-depth interview to understand different perspectives of 36 young Muslim scholars on knowledge acquisition and use in their daily fatwa making within a provincial level of Indonesia Ulama Council in Central Sulawesi. The findings show that Indonesia's young Muslim scholars have referred to online knowledge sources in their fatwa making quite frequently. In addition, the young Muslim scholars also construct knowledge from online social network interaction and then use the knowledge for fatwa production. Our study has implications on the simplicity of Islamic knowledge acquisition and fatwa making. Traditional Islamic education institutions and muftis might have been reduced their roles. Further study should focus on how those traditional Islamic education sources have been reduced from young Muslim scholars perspectives.

Keywords: Online knowledge acquisition, millennia *'ulamā*, online fatwa, knowledge use.

Introduction

The utilization of the Internet has introduced substantial innovations in the production and consumption of Islamic knowledge. The development of new information technology infrastructure and communication patterns has resulted in the emergence of "new media ecologies", where established traditional Muslim authorities have to

compete with internet-based charismatic preachers and muftis. Besides that, the Internet, in the long run, has also strengthened the growth of social networking culture online and, at the same time, encourages the individualization and privatization of faith. Thus, the Internet simultaneously promotes the adjustment of Islamic knowledge acquisition and compliance with established religious authorities in the online domain.[1]

The Islamic community is no less quick to adopt the Internet than other religious groups to disseminate teachings and religious knowledge. Abundant Islamic online contents from various leanings emerged in the internet since the last decade of the last century. The challenge is due to the structure of Islam itself, for example, Sunni Islam, unlike Shi'ite Islam, does not have an organized hierarchy in terms of the authority of religious teaching.[2] After the emergence of the Internet, especially internet generation 2.0, various sites and social networks emerged to share knowledge between users. Islamic Fatwa has also mushroomed in the online domain. For example, at the beginning of the internet boom only in 1999, around 10,000 fatwas appeared in the online domain. Then in 2000, the number of online edicts increased rapidly, which was about 14,000 fatwas, and the number continued to increase significantly from year to year.

The presence of online fatwa or online jurisprudence sources has become a major concern for the global community.[3] Introduction, growth, and utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have created new public spaces where various concepts of coexistence between Islam and the State are discussed. When each can proclaim himself an Islamic authority, he is eligible to make statements and issue a fatwa. In this study, a fatwa is defined as a formal legal opinion given by an expert in Islamic law[4] or a legal

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[1] Carmen Becker, "Gaining Knowledge: Salafi Activism in German and Dutch Online Forums," *Masaryk University Journal of Law and Technology* 3 (2009), 79-98; Göran Larsson, "Religious Communities on the Internet," Philip Halldén (ed), *Militant Salafism on the Internet: 'Alneda.com' and the Legacy of Yusuf Al-'Ayyiri* (Uppsala: Swedish Science, 2006), 62-85

[2] Vit Šisler, "European Courts' Authority Contested? The Case of Marriage and Divorce Fatwas online," *Masaryk University Journal of Law and Technology* 3, 1 (2014), 51-78.

[3] Mohamed Chawki, "Islam in the Digital Age: Counselling and Fatwas at the Click of a Mouse," *Journal of International Commercial Law and Technology* 5, 4 (2010), 165-80.

[4] Muhammad Khalid Masud et.al., "Fatwā," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2018).

opinion given by a mufti in response to a question from Muslim individuals or religious court.[5]

In early times, 'ulamā issued fatwa based on the knowledge they acquired from Islamic traditional education institutions or their senior 'ulamā. However, since the emergence of information technology, millennia 'ulamā have accessed knowledge from online sources. Previous studies.[6] Reported that online religious forums are not exclusively for providing Islamic advice, but also allow Internet users to meet and interact with other people who share their beliefs and knowledge from the privacy of their homes. Similarly, a Nationwide survey conducted by the Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) of the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta concluded that the primary reference for the millennial generation in religion is the Internet.[7]

An expert and mufti of Islamic law is called in general term of 'ulamā in the Indonesia context. An 'ulamā has the authority to issue fatwa due to their education and status in the Muslim community. For many traditional Muslims queries are asked to muftis affiliated to madhhāb, Islamic school of law, who later will issue fatwas based on the doctrine of their madhhāb.[8] In addition to individual muftis, in Indonesia queries are also submitted to Islamic organizations that also play the role of fatwa issuing bodies, like MUI (Indonesian Council of Ulama), Muhammadiyah and NU (Nahdlatul Ulama).[9] The fatwa is usually released in relation to the community's request because something is not stipulated yet in *fiqh* and does not bind or force.

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[5] John L. Esposito, "The Oxford Dictionary of Islam," *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003); Nadirsyah Hosen, "Behind the Scene: Fatwas of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (1975-1998)," *al-Jamiah Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, 2 (2004), 147-79.

[6] Gwilym Beckerlegge, "Computer-Mediated Religion: Religion on the Internet at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century," Gwilym Beckerlegge, *From Sacred Text to Internet* (London: Routledge, 2017), 46; Katelyn Y. A. McKenna and Kelly J. West, "Give Me That Online-Time Religion: The Role of the Internet in Spiritual Life," *Computers in Human Behavior* 23, 2 (2007), 942-54.

[7] Jaisy Rahman Tohir, *Menteri Agama Sebut Rujukan Utama Generasi Millenial Dalam Beragama Saat Ini Adalah Internet* Jakarta: Tribun, 2018.

[8] Achmad Kemal Riza, "Contemporary Fatawa Of Nahdlatul Ulama: Between Observing the Madhhab and Adapting the Context," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 5, 1 (2011), 39

[9] M. Barry Hooker, *Indonesian Islam: Social Change Through Contemporary Fatawa* (Sydney: ASAA, 2003)

Conventionally, a fatwa is issued in response to a question related to Muslim daily practices in worship, social, politics, and education. The fatwa, then, is usually published or disseminated in some form to the broader Islamic community. In this way, a fatwa given to individual questioners can be used to educate and provide information to a broader audience.[10]

However, limited is known how digital age influences millennia *'ulamā* generation in the online acquisition of Islamic law knowledge and how they use it in daily fatwa making in the Indonesian context. Drawing from knowledge acquisition theory (Taylor[11] and Yil-Renko[12]) and studies on Islamic knowledge construction from various literature (e.g., Jouili &Amir[13] and Sisler), this study aime to alleviate the disparity in the literature regarding the influence of online Islamic knowledge acquisition and use in daily fatwa-making by young Muslim scholars in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study approaches these issues and examines how Islamic sites change the decision-making process in fatwa making and construction of Islamic knowledge among young Muslim scholars in Indonesia. The study sheds light on how knowledge acquisition among young Muslim scholars in Indonesia has shifted since the emergence of the new generation of the Internet. The result might help Islamic institutions to provide new strategies in new Islamic knowledge production and fatwa rulings.

Notable studies in online knowledge acquisition,[14] argue that knowledge is acquired from an organization's relationship with other

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[10] Nadirsyah Hosen, "Online Fatwa in Indonesia: From Fatwa Shopping to Googling a Kiai," G. Fealy & S. White (eds), *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Wollonggong: University of Wollonggong, 2008), 159-73.

[11] Arthur Taylor, "A Study of the Information Search Behaviour of the Millennial Generation," *Information Research: An International Electronic Journal* 17, 1 (2012), 20.

[12] Helena Yli-Renko, Erkko Autio, and Harry J. Sapienza, "Social Capital, Knowledge Acquisition, and Knowledge Exploitation in Young Technology-Based Firms," *Strategic Management Journal* 22, 6-7 (2001), 587-613.

[13] Jeanette S. Jouili and Schirin Amir-Moazami, "Knowledge, Empowerment, and Religious Authority among Pious Muslim Women in France and Germany," Anitta Kynsilehto (ed.), *Islamic Feminism: Current Perspectives*. (Finland: University of Tempere, 2008).

[14] Yli-Renko, "Social Capital, 587-613; Carmen Becker, "Gaining Knowledge: Salafi Activism in German and Dutch Online Forums," *Masaryk University Journal of Law and Technology* 3 (2009), 79-98.

organizations, customers, and the social interaction of the organization in the virtual world. An organization may learn new knowledge from other organizations related to a product or strategy development. In other cases, organizations may acquire knowledge from their business partners due to frequent interaction. The organizations' customers may also transfer knowledge to the organization when they purchase products.

A study conducted by Ammirat[15] suggests that social media support an individual within an organization to acquire external knowledge or to share it among the workers. Social media sites that are commonly used to acquire and share knowledge include Microblog (such as Twitter), discussion forum (such as LinkedIn), Social networking (such as Facebook), and Video sharing (such as YouTube).[16] The social web enables users to be more active on the Internet, to produce, participate, collaborate, and share knowledge or communicate with other people.[17]

Within the Islamic knowledge acquisition context, similar phenomena have also been found in which young Muslim scholars or muftis have gone online since the emergence of the new generation of the Internet. For example, prior studies found that the Internet has encouraged Muslim society to acquire Islamic knowledge and comply with established Islamic religious authorities in the online sphere.[18] The emergence of Internet 2.0 generation supports the spring of various social media sites to access and share Islamic knowledge between Muslim society. Web 2.0 opens up a dynamic space for Muslims to participate in online collaboration and forms of information gathering and exchange.[19]

It appears that a new paradigm has emerged in the construction of Islamic knowledge.[20] The new phenomenon might lure young Muslim

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[15] Salvatore Ammirato, et.al., "The Use of Social Media for Knowledge Acquisition and Dissemination in B2b Companies: An Empirical Study of Finnish Technology Industries," *Knowledge Management Research & Practice* 17, 1 (2019), 52-69.

[16] Ibid., 52-69.

[17] Sirous Panahi, Jason Watson, and Helen Partridge, "Towards Tacit Knowledge Sharing over Social Web Tools," *Journal of Knowledge Management* 17, 3 (2013), 379-97.

[18] Vit Sisler, "Cyber Counselors," *Information, Communication & Society* 14, 8 (2011), 1136-59.

[19] Gary R. Bunt, *Imuslims: Rewiring the House of Islam* (London: Hurst, 2009).

[20] Vit Sisler, "The Internet and the Construction of Islamic Knowledge in Europe," *Masaryk University Journal of Law and Technology* 1, 2 (2007), 205-17.

scholars to go online in accessing new knowledge rather than obtain knowledge from conventional sources such as traditional muftis or Islamic education institutions. A study conducted by Nisa[21] reports the increase of religious teachings uploaded on social media sites, and it has a significant effect on how Indonesian Muslim youth understand their religion and accentuate their identities and life goals. The study also argues that social media has recently become the ultimate platform for Indonesian Muslim youth to educate each other in becoming virtuous Muslims.[22]

Besides, Islamic affairs relating to law or sharia, such as fatwa, have also appeared in the online sphere. For example, at the beginning of the internet boom in 1999, there were around 10,000 fatwas appearing in the online sphere. Then in 2000, the number of online fatwa increased rapidly to around 14,000 fatwa, and that number continued to increase significantly from year to year.[23] Other than Islamic organization, Individual mufti also issues fatwa according to Muslim society need.[24] The production of Islamic legal expertise is a collective process in an Islamic organization, but for individual muftis, in particular junior muftis, might not able to master all the relevant branches of knowledge to issue fatwa requested by society. As such, they might require transferring and sharing knowledge among them. Currently, access to online knowledge fatwa has become a new trend adopted by Muslim scholars, and Islamic Institutions in response to Muslim society request. [25] Following the proliferation of new communication technologies, particularly smartphones and diverse social media platforms[26], resulting in the rise of Muslim youth involved in online knowledge acquisition.

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[21] Eva F Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Daʿwa: The Visual Culture of Instagram Amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia," *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, 1-2 (2018), 68-99.

[22] Ibid., 68-99.

[23] Matthias Brockner, *Islamicity Creating an Islamic Cybersociety* (Leiden: Leiden University, 2001), 17.

[24] Alexandre Caeiro, "The Making of the Fatwa: The Production of Islamic Legal Expertise in Europe," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 155 (2011), 81-100.

[25] Azimaton Abdul Rahman, Nor Hazlina Hashim, and Hasrina Mustafa, "Muslims in Cyberspace: Exploring Factors Influencing Online Religious Engagements in Malaysia," *Media Asia* 42, 1-2 (2015), 61-73.

[26] Bart Barendregt, "Pop, Politics and Piety: Nasyid Boy Band Music in Muslim Southeast Asia," Andrew N. Weintraub (ed.), *Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia* (London: Routledge, 2011), 235-56.

This study employs a qualitative case stud with s special reference to new trends within Indonesian's young Muslim scholars in knowledge acquisition and fatwa-making. This study selects the Indonesia Ulama Council in Central Sulawesi province to understand how young Muslim scholars acquire knowledge from online sources and use it in their daily fatwa-making. The data are collected through an in-depth interview with 36 young Muslim scholars from twelve regencies within the provincial ulama council.

The analyses of data just follow the coding method outlined by Strauss and Corbin[27] referring to open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In coding, it uses a framework guided coding technique.[28] this study relies on theoretical constructs built from the knowledge acquisition theory and Islamic knowledge construction when the data are coded.

Accessing Islamic Knowledge from Online Source

Today, numbers of online sites that specialize in posting online Islamic knowledge have been constructed in Indonesia. The sites post issues related to Islamic law or *fiqh* relating to everyday life. For example, some websites which belong to MUI, Muhammadiyah and NU respectively contains online sources of Islamic knowledge, including fatwas, such as mui.or.id, muhammadiyah.or.id, and nu.or.id. Some other Islamic websites which contain online fatwa are not clearly affiliated to any Islamic organization, namely Islami.co, Harakah.com, hidayatullah.com, Muslim.or.id, BincangSyariah.com, and rumahfiqih.com. Interestingly, the last two mentioned websites focus only on Islamic law and fiqh.[29] The existence of the online sources of Islamic knowledge is very helpful to the community as well as young Muslim scholars who use smart technologies intensively.

Some of the young Muslim scholars suggest that they are very intense in using online knowledge sources for their references in answering daily Muslim society questions. For example, a Muslim

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[27] Anselm Strauss and Juliet M Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (California, USA: Sage Publications, 1998).

[28] Suprateek Sarker, Xiao Xiao, and Tanya Beaulieu, "Guest Editorial: Qualitative Studies in Information Systems: A Critical Review and Some Guiding Principles," *MIS Quarterly* 37, 4 (2013), iii-xviii.

[29] In addition, some websites of *pesantren* like pesantren Tebuireng (https://tebuireng.online), Lirboyo (lirboyo.net), Sidogiri (sidogiri.net), and Sukorejo (http://mahadaly-situbondo.ac.id) also contain online fatwas.

scholar who is affiliated with religious organizations intensively use the organization's website, and he expresses his loyalty to access knowledge from the nu.or.id's website by saying:

> My family and I are true Nahdatul Ulama members. I have participated in the millennia cadre ulama program. However, I have limited knowledge related to fiqh and Islamic law which I learnt during my college days. After that, I continued to study independently. I read a lot of books, but now it's better because everything is online. As the Nahdatul Ulama has an official website, I often read all posted there because I saw that the website posts various religious knowledge from NU ulama. I got a lot of insight because various contemporary fiqh themes are discussed there. Well ... it helps me a lot when I have to respond to fatwa requests or other fiqh-related questions from society. (Informant PLU1)

The participant comment is also supported by the availability of online knowledge sources published by large Islamic organizations and well-known young Muslim scholars' social media sites belong to Ustadz Abdul Somad, Felix Siauw, and Adi Hidayat. More other less popular Muslim scholars and Islamic organizations also publish Islamic teaching.

The data show that young Muslim scholars in Indonesia have relied on the online sphere to access knowledge. In a virtual context, they have strongly connected and integrated with information technology in the acquisition and the production of new knowledge. In other words, they are not only playing roles in the virtual world, but they also become the part of the roles[30]. In other words, they are not only the users of knowledge in the online sphere, but they are also the producer of knowledge.[31] For example, well-known scholars such as Ustadz Abdul Somad and Adi Hidayat are the most productive Islamic content producers in which their personal social media sites have become major references for other yiung Muslim scholars in making fatwa.[32]

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[30] Alycia de Mesa, "The Emer gence and Characteristics of Virtual Worlds," *Brand Avatar: Translating Virtual World Branding into Real World Success* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), 7-18.

[31] Moira Burke, Cameron Marlow, and Thomas Lento, "Social Network Activity and Social Well-Being," *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Atlanta, Georgia, USA: ACM, 2010), 1909-12.

[32] Other individual muftis posting their fatwas online include Buya Yahya, Muhammad

The findings might create new opportunities for the emergence of more online Islamic knowledge sources, and they may become primary references in studying Islam. Our arguments are based on studies conducted by Tohir[33] and Scharank,[34] who fing that majority of the young generation of Muslims have used online sources for their religious references. As such, our findings may contribute to the emergence of a formal online Islamic education institution or the transformation of traditional knowledge sources such as Islamic boarding schools into the virtual model. Ratcliff, McCarty, and Ritter[35] said that such phenomena as the attitudes toward technology and the use of social media create people view religion as a mechanism for meeting online space needs. In this study, information technology facilitates young Muslim scholars to fulfill their religious needs within the online sphere.

Given young Muslim scholars have gone online to access Islamic knowledge, it potentially reduces bureaucracy in accessing Islamic knowledge in which the role of traditional ulama or Islamic education institutions might be replaced. Becke[36] uses the term "decentralization of knowledge production" to describe the roles of online knowledge sources in providing Islamic teachings. Online knowledge sources grant young Muslim scholars access to the religious teachings and enable them to search with the help of information technology tools or simple search functions within the Quran and Sunnah for the pieces they need.

A Trust in Online Islamic Knowledge Sites

Some of young Muslim scholars have put their trust on online Islamic knowledge sources in their daily knowledge possession and fatwa making. For example, the millennia *'ulamā* have put their trust on online knowledge sources if the online knowledge sources belong to well-informed sites such as nu.or.id and MUI. Online sources are potentially new sources of knowledge apart from the growing of

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Abduh Tuasikal, and Syafiq Riza Basalamah.

[33] Jaisy Rahman Tohir, "Menteri Agama Sebut Rujukan Utama Generasi Milenial Dalam Beragama Saat Ini Adalah Internet," (Jakarta: Tribun, 2018).

[34] Peter Scharank, "The Online Ummah," https://www.economist.com/international/2012/08/18/the-online-ummah.

[35] Amanda Jo Ratcliff, Josh McCarty, and Matt Ritter, "Religion and New Media: A Uses and Gratifications Approach," *Journal of Media and Religion* 16, 1 (2017), 15-26.

[36] Becker, "Gaining Knowledge, 79 - 98.

conventional knowledge institutions that require face-to-face interaction. Several informants we interviewed also admitted that they used the online sources of confirmed knowledge to answer various problems asked by people. A participant expressed his experience regarding online knowledge source access as follows:

> I usually ask a question on the Rumahfiqh.com website about various fiqh issues. I just prepare myself just in case anyone asks me about fiqh or a fatwa. They always respond swiftly. If I want to answer the request of the members of my WhatApps group, I just search online. When I got a new fiqh issue, I also post on the WhatsApp group, so that everyone can read. (Participant BOL2)

The participant comment reflects young Muslim scholars' reliance on online knowledge sources. There is also a tendency young Muslim scholars have put their trust on the online knowledge source due to well-known Muslim scholar name on the web, or the website's owner is a notable Islamic organization such as NU or Muhammadiyah. Such online Islamic knowledge sources usually post up to date issues such as politics, economics, family affairs, and social, which then they discussed with Islamic fiqh or sharia context.

There is a perception of young Muslim scholars that online learning is as blessing as knowledge acquired from traditional education institutions if the source is valid and verified. For example, the online knowledge sources are managed and supervised by recognized figures of expertise. The findings indicate that there is a tendency in the emergence of trust towards the use of online Islamic knowledge sources among the young Muslim scholars. Their trust in the online Islamic knowledge sources might take over the roles of conventional knowledge sources such as boarding schools and traditional ulama or mufti, as argued by Sisler[37] and Becker.[38] The findings reflect similar phenomena in other fields, such as in information technology, [39] businesses, [40] small and medium

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[37] Sisler, "The Internet and the Construction of Islamic Knowledge, 205-17.

[38] Becker, "Gaining Knowledge, 79-98.

[39] Weronika T. Adrian, *Web-Based Knowledge Acquisition and Management System Supporting Collaboration for Improving Safety in Urban Environment* (Berlin, Heidelberg: n.p., 2012); Iris Reychav, and Miguel Ignacio Aguirre-Urreta, "Adoption of the Internet for Knowledge Acquisition in R&D Processes," *Behaviour & Information Technology* 33, 5 (2014), 452-69.

[40] Ammirato, "The Use of Social Media, 52-69.

enterprise,[41] education,[42] that is today's society has put their trust on the acquisition of knowledge from online sources.

In case some young Muslim scholars express their concern that online knowledge sources (such as websites and social media) should be credible, the phenomena show their quest for the validity of knowledge sources. Previous studies (e.g. Chryssochoidis[43] also high-lights that online knowledge source users tend to believe credible and verified online knowledge sources due to a concern about the validity of knowledge when it is used in decision making. Similarly, this study finds that young Muslim scholars have relied on the credibility of online knowledge sources for their fatwa making. Their credibility as an 'ulamā might be at risk if the Muslim society recognizes that their knowledge sources are not clear when answering questions relating to Islamic law or issuing fatwa.

A trust in a credible online knowledge source is not only a major concern in the Islam knowledge, but also in many fields.[44] Knowledge sources that lack accuracy, incompleteness and unclear authority of the providers are common indicators that reduce users' trustworthiness.[45] The young Muslim scholars' trust might have an implication on the need to provide credible online Islamic knowledge sources. For any Islamic content to be accepted and adopted, it should be supported by evidence from the Quran and Sunnah and/or credible scholars' views.[46]

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[41] Charmaine Glavas, Shane Mathews, and Rebekah Russell-Bennett, "Knowledge Acquisition Via Internet-Enabled Platforms: Examining Incrementally and Non-Incrementally Internationalizing Smes," *International Marketing Review* 36, 1 (2019), 74-107.

[42] Mostafa Al-Emran, and Timothy Teo, "Do Knowledge Acquisition and Knowledge Sharing Really Affect E-Learning Adoption? An Empirical Study," *Education and Information Technologies* (2019).

[43] George Chryssochoidis et.al., "Public Trust in Institutions and Information Sources Regarding Risk Management and Communication: Towards Integrating Extant Knowledge," *Journal of Risk Research* 12, 2 (2009), 137-85.

[44] Miriam J. Metzger and Andrew J. Flanagin, "Credibility and Trust of Information in Online Environments: The Use of Cognitive Heuristics," *Journal of Pragmatics* 59 (2013), 210-20.

[45] Rienco Muilwijk, Trust in Online Information: Comparison among High School Students, College Students and Phd Students with Regard to Trust in Wikipedia (Twente: University of Twente, 2012).

[46] Mansur Aliyu et.al., "A Preliminary Investigation of Islamic Websites' Design Features That Influence Use: A Proposed Model," *EJISDC* 58, 5 (2013), 1-21.

Constructing Knowledge through Online Interaction

The existence of various online platforms that allow people to form groups virtually has enabled young scholars to interact with each other in the online sphere as practiced by previous scholars in the form of face-to-face study groups or face-to-face lectures. Many young Muslim scholars form an online group to share Islamic knowledge such as WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Islamic sharia knowledge is often posted and discussed to increased knowledge regarding specific issues surrounding fatwa as said by the following participant:

> I have several WhatApps groups and Facebook. We exchange knowledge regarding various religious issues. In fact, friends who are connected with other groups also forward religious information from other groups to our group. I joined with hundreds of other members. Some groups specifically discuss Islamic teaching, some groups prefer to discuss politics, but it is also associated with religion. (Participant TLI 2)

The participant comment shows that they prefer to share knowledge through online interactions to access their colleagues' knowledge. Young Muslim scholars might not possess mature knowledge about various Islamic law, which requires frequent knowledge sharing. However, in this study, millennia scholars chose to use online facilities instead of offline facilities such as conventional face-to-face study groups with traditional clerics. This could be due to the ease of use and usefulness of online facilities.

The availability of various online platforms enables young Muslim scholars to create online groups to interact, create content, and share it among them. In some cases, they also hold online *halaqah* (discussion) where they can share knowledge through online groups. Online *halaqah* has been found effective in sharing knowledge as it carried out in conventional mode[47]. The use of WhatsApp groups, for example, reflects online forums grant activists access to the religious sources and enable them to search with the help of the new media or simple search functions within the Quran and Sunnah for the pieces they need.[48]

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[47] Anna Piela, *Muslim Women Online: Faith and Identity in Virtual Space* (London: Routledge, 2012).

[48] Becker, "Gaining Knowledge, 79-98.

Online interaction becomes a vital instrument in transferring and sharing knowledge.[49] Young Muslim scholars who strongly bond to a gadget, such as smartphones and tablets, can easily use the tools to fill the knowledge gap among them. Studies such as Caeiro[50] find that online knowledge sharing and transferring are practiced due to the gap in knowledge ownership among young Muslim scholars. The knowledge gap shows systematic differences in knowledge between better informed and less-informed segments[51] among young Muslim scholars in Indonesia. Some of them are university graduates, while others are Islamic boarding school graduates.

Young Muslim scholars who are yet to possess comprehensive Islamic knowledge to serve community request of a fatwa requires interaction with other young Muslim scholars to transfer and share it. The phenomenon is called knowledge co-created and shared through the social media network, which takes place in the online sphere.[52] During online interaction, young Muslim scholars contribute to new knowledge development in various aspect of Islamic teaching. At the same time, their reliance on conventional knowledge sources might have slowly been reduced. For these phenomena, some young Muslim scholars feel confident that they no longer need to go to boarding schools to access knowledge. Our findings might require religious institutions to utilize new media for knowledge creation.

Furthermore, their interaction in social media sites to produce and share Islamic knowledge can be considered as a new jihad (hard work) in the emergence of a new paradigm for Islamic knowledge production. Variety of Fatwa related to up to date issues such as e-commerce,[53] consumer products,[54] and science and technology.[55]

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[49] Laila Naif Marouf, "Social Networks and Knowledge Sharing in Organizations: A Case Study," *Journal of Knowledge Management* 11, 6 (2007), 110-25; Slaiman Nasrollah, "Knowledge Sharing Behavior in Islam and Technology Enabler," Unpublished Master Thesis, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 2018.

[50] Alexandre Caeiro, "The Making of the Fatwa: The Production of Islamic Legal Expertise in Europe," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 155 (2011), 81-100.

[51] Stanley J. Baran and Dennis K. Davis, *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future (Wadsworth Series in Mass Communication and Journalism)* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012).

[52] Adam Klein, *Fanaticism, Racism, and Rage Online: Corrupting the Digital Sphere* (New York: Palgrage Macmilan, 2017).

[53] Hosen, "Online Fatwa in Indonesia, 159-73.

Since a fatwa declaration is a product of *'ulamā* interpreting and adapting Quranic verses and hadith in respect to contemporary issues, this process allows new rulings paradigm to be introduced into sharia law, rather than explicit doctrines from the Quran or Hadith.

The use of online knowledge in daily fatwa making

The impact of online access to Islamic knowledge is that young Muslim scholars use the knowledge to make fatwa in their daily religious services. Using online knowledge as the main reference to produce a fatwa requested by an individual or a group of Muslim society has become a usual activity. For example, a participant said:

> I often respond to a fatwa requested by a Muslim or group of Muslims through WhatsApp, and if I cannot respond at that time, I will search on Google and answer it soon when I can. People often ask me a variety of fiqh issues, for example, ustadz whether may prayer is valid if I forget to take a shower after I had sexual intercourse with my wife, or if I travel not so far, can I shorten my prayers? I just answer their questions through WhatsApp and sent them a Koran verse or hadith. I think that the availability of online facilities has helped us to solve various fiqh issues quickly. So it's not like we used to have to study in Islamic schools or Islamic boarding schools to be able to answer such things. (Participant TUN1)

The participant opinion reflects the changing of the method in issuing a fatwa. Young Muslim scholars are no longer concerned with the source of Islamic knowledge that should be obtained from traditional clerics or *'ulamā*. The online source of knowledge is viewed as valid as knowledge accessed directly from a senior *'ulamā* or traditional Islamic education institutions such as Madrasah or boarding schools. Direct quotes of Islamic knowledge from online sources support them in responding to a fatwa requested by their community. The opinion of the informant above also clearly shows how the process of making fatwa requested by the Muslim community has changed. Their Islamic legal opinions are given in more efficiently and

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[54] Muhamad Hashim, Nazlida, and Dick Mizerski, "Exploring Muslim Consumers' Information Sources for Fatwa Rulings on Products and Behaviors," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 1, 1 (2010), 37-50.

[55] Mohd Aliff Mohd Nawi and Mohd Isa Hamzah, "Mobile Fatwa (M-Fatwa): The Integration of Islamic Fatwa through Mobile Technology," *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* 15, 2 (2014), 108-16.

quickly. The young Muslim scholars access the answers from online sources and then transfer it to their community.

Our findings highlight that Indonesia's young Muslim scholars use the knowledge they acquire from online sources to produce fatwa requested by Muslim society. Our findings are consistent with a study conducted by Becker[56] in Germany who argue that some 'ulamā refer to online sources in making fatwa.

The finding highlights a valuable lesson that online fatwa making might replace the conventional approach in fatwa making among young Indonesia Muslim scholars. Traditional Islamic legal construction methods, such as conventional ḥalaqah or madrasah discussion, might be taken over by online legal knowledge production sources. Traditional senior 'ulamā opinions regarding legal (fiqh) might also be replaced by online young Muslim scholars' legal opinion available across Internet platforms.

Some scholars (e.g. Fleischman[57]) strongly suggest developing online discussion facilities in an organization's web-based knowledge sources. Therefore, Indonesia's well-known online Islamic knowledge websites such as nu.or.id and muslim.or.id might become potential knowledge sources for young Muslim scholars. The sites are managed by credible young Muslim scholars and provide rich knowledge sources, which include e-books and fatwa on various Islamic issues. Certainly, Indonesia nowadays is a home of many Muslim groups which have different perspectives and opinions on every single case. The aspect of fiqh or Islamic law is the very aspect that many Muslim groups prone to differ. The discussion on this aspect and the repercussion on online fatwa and its utilization will require further investigation.

Conclusion

We conclude our findings that many Indonesia's young Muslim scholars have gone online to access new knowledge. Prior to access the online knowledge sources, Indonesia's young Muslim scholars built trust in the online knowledge sources. The knowledge acquired from

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[56] Becker, "Gaining Knowledge, 79-98.

[57] Michael Fleischman, Eduard Hovy, and Abdessamad Echihabi, "Offline Strategies for Online Question Answering: Answering Questions before They Are Asked," *Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting on Association for Computational Linguistics - Volume 1*, (Japan: Association for Computational Linguistics, 2003), 1-7.

online source is used to make fatwa in daily Muslim society services. We predict that Indonesia's young Muslim scholars trust to access knowledge from online sources and online social interaction has the potential to the emergence of online knowledge providers. At the same time, conventional education institutions, such as *pesantren* and traditional muftis, might be reduced as major Islamic knowledge providers if not following the suit. More importantly, this study's finding may reduce the bureaucracy in Islamic knowledge acquisition because the knowledge is available online, which is not hindered by time, geography, and culture. Meanwhile, the fatwa production might also be eased due to information technology support, and it reaches wider Indonesia Muslim society. []

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