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Digital Religious Authority and Institutional Mediation: Family Discourse and Violence Prevention on NU Online

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Abstract

NAHDLATUL ULAMA'S DIGITAL RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY: FAMILY DISCOURSE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN NU ONLINE. This study examines how digital religious authority operates through NU Online in shaping family discourse and violence prevention. It addresses the transformation of authority in algorithmically mediated environments and aims to analyse institutional communication beyond influencer driven visibility. Using qualitative digital discourse analysis of 36 articles (2025–2026), the study identifies themes of child protection, marital authority, digital etiquette, and divorce governance. Findings show that authority is sustained through editorial governance and ethical framing, while violence is constructed as a breakdown of communication addressed through dialogue and reciprocity. This study contributes by conceptualizing digital religious authority as communicative governance.

Keywords: digital religious authority; communicative governance; NU Online; family discourse; violence prevention

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konstruksi dan operasionalisasi otoritas keagamaan digital melalui NU Online dalam membentuk diskursus keluarga serta pencegahan

kekerasan. Kajian ini berangkat dari problem transformasi otoritas dalam ruang publik yang dimediasi algoritma, dengan menekankan peran komunikasi institusional dalam membingkai narasi etis melampaui logika visibilitas berbasis influencer. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui analisis wacana digital terhadap 36 artikel (2025–2026), yang mencakup tema perlindungan anak, otoritas perkawinan, etika digital, dan tata kelola perceraian. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa otoritas diproduksi dan dipertahankan melalui tata kelola editorial dan pemingkaian etis, sementara kekerasan direpresentasikan sebagai disrupsi relasi komunikatif yang diintervensi melalui dialog dan resiprositas. Studi ini berkontribusi dengan merekonseptualisasikan otoritas keagamaan digital sebagai tata kelola komunikatif.

Kata Kunci: otoritas keagamaan digital; tata kelola komunikatif; NU Online; diskursus keluarga; pencegahan kekerasan

A. Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital media has fundamentally transformed Islamic religious authority. Historically, within Muslim societies, authority relied on embodied transmission (*sanād*), textual scholarship, communal validation, and institutional continuity in pesantren networks. Legitimacy stemmed from doctrinal correctness, structured pedagogy, and moral accountability, making authority a relational institution rooted in social trust.

Algorithmically governed platforms have reconfigured this structure. Religious authority now circulates within networked publics driven by engagement metrics and affective visibility. Digital legitimacy is increasingly co-produced through performative credibility, aesthetic mediation, and participatory interaction alongside classical credentials (Campbell, 2022; Wahid & Abdulloh, 2026). Consequently, digital platforms restructure the validation of religious discourse within ecologies governed by algorithmic amplification (Abusharif, 2023).

This transformation creates a structural paradox. While digital media democratize religious knowledge, algorithms privilege emotionally resonant, simplified narratives over complex theology (Andok, 2024). Authority shifts toward hybrid actors such as influencer-imams whose legitimacy relies on digital performance rather than institutional embeddedness. Algorithmic visibility reorganizes symbolic hierarchies, producing fragmented authority and epistemic segmentation within Muslim communities (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020; Epafra et al., 2024; Zuhri & Pabbajah, 2026).

In Indonesia, these dynamics intersect with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Founded in 1926, NU embodies a moderate Islamic tradition grounded in pesantren scholarship. Its theological framework, *Islam Nusantara*, integrates jurisprudence with local culture and Pancasila (Basid et al., 2024; Haidar, 1994). However, digital Islam introduces actors

operating outside traditional hierarchies. Digitally adept preachers utilizing algorithmically optimized content have significantly expanded their influence (Rohmatulloh et al., 2022). Concurrently, digital literacy disparities among ulama and organizational decentralization complicate coherent institutional messaging (Akmaliah, 2022; Ichwan et al., 2024).

These shifts challenge NU to reconstitute its authority within algorithmically mediated public spheres. Communication theory conceptualizes this as communicative governance, where authority is established through discursive regulation, platform adaptation, and audience negotiation to organize interpretive boundaries. NU addresses this through NU Online. In contrast to influencer-driven models, NU Online employs editorial governance and theological continuity, aligning with Indonesia's constitutional-democratic framework. It synthesizes classical scholarship with digital strategies to foster moderation (Huda et al., 2020; Mahzumi et al., 2025). Rather than simply broadcasting fatwas, NU Online structures discourse via curated content, positioning digital religious authority as an institutional effort to harmonize theology with platform logics.

This focus is increasingly urgent given the alarming escalation of domestic violence (KDRT) in Indonesia, a socio-legal crisis frequently exacerbated by patriarchal misinterpretations of marital dynamics. As household abuse reaches critical levels, authoritative religious mediation is vital. A key dimension of NU's governance involves family discourse and violence prevention. Emphasizing reconciliation (*islah*), ethical mediation, and privacy (Novita et al., 2025). NU frames violence as a disruption of communicative relations. Through *mubadalah* (reciprocity), NU promotes justice and compassion in marriage (Nurhidayah et al., 2025), challenging hierarchical interpretations that legitimize structural abuse.

Despite expanding scholarship on digital Islam, analytical gaps remain. Existing literature predominantly focuses on influencer culture (Abusharif, 2023; Wahid & Abdulloh, 2026), offering limited insight into institutional communicative governance. Furthermore, research on NU's digital presence largely emphasizes counter-radicalism (Aly & Thoyibi, 2020; Huda et al., 2020), overlooking everyday marital communication. Finally, the integration of *mubadalah* within institutional digital communication remains underexplored (Nurhidayah et al., 2025). Addressing these gaps, this study reconceptualizes digital religious authority as communicative governance. It aims to analyze how NU Online constructs digital authority to shape family discourse and violence prevention narratives within algorithmically mediated spheres.

Methodologically, this research employs an interpretive qualitative design grounded in communication theory. Utilizing qualitative digital discourse analysis, the study examines NU Online texts concerning family norms and violence (Baxter, 2011; Littlejohn et al., 2021).. The dataset is restricted to 36 articles published between 2025 and 2026 to capture a concentrated period of institutional discourse responding to contemporary family dynamics. The underlying premise is that digital authority functions as communicative governance regulating family life through institutional mediation.

The analytical procedure follows a systematic, theme-based approach. Iterative readings identify overarching narratives, followed by open coding to extract themes related to authority, gender relations, violence, and conflict resolution. Interpretive coding then delineates how ethical norms are discursively constructed. Particular attention is given to the framing of violence as a fundamental rupture in communicative relations. Ultimately, this framework elucidates how digital religious authority shapes discourse, regulates interpretation, and enacts ethical orientations online

B. Results

1. Communicative Governance Mechanisms of Digital Religious Authority in NU Online

Analyzing 36 NU Online articles (2025–2026), this article argues that digital religious authority does not function as the transmission of doctrine, but rather as a communicative governance regulating family life by way of institutional mediation. Authority is enacted in four consistent ways across the corpus: (1) stabilization of vulnerability, (2) redistribution of relational power, (3) procedure for conflict resolution and (4) discursive boundary-setting. Violence whether physical, psychological, sexual, representational or digital is systematically understood not as an act of isolated deviance but as communicative and relational failure. Family stability was built not as a morally enshrined condition but rather the product of disciplined speaking, dialogic reciprocity, and institutional oversight.

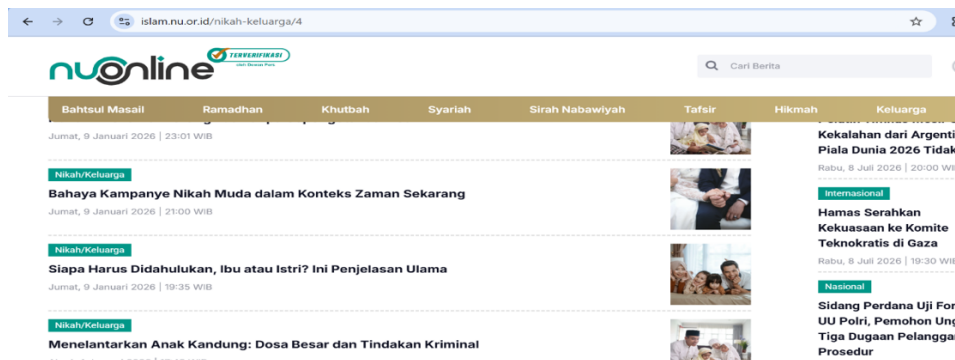
Table 1. Communicative Governance Mechanisms of Digital Religious Authority in NU Online

Governance Mechanism	Institutional Modality	Discursive Function	Thematic Domains	Preventive Logic	Article Numbers
Stabilization of Vulnerability	Theological–legal alignment and normative	Constructs children as protected moral subjects;	Child protection, grooming, abandonmen, bullying, denial	Anticipatory prevention through vulnerability	1–11

	embedding within editorial framing	integrates Qur'anic accountability with state law	of lineage, early marriage critique	stabilization and layered accountability	
Redistribution of Relational Power	Ethical reinterpretation and narrative recalibration within institutional discourse	Reframes authority from unilateral control to dialogical reciprocity; limits symbolic domination	Marital rape, obedience limits, toxic marriage (<i>ila'</i>), sexism, sleep divorce, conflict ethics	Prevention through reciprocal accountability and horizontal restructuring of marital authority	12–19
Proceduralization of Conflict & Divorce	Institutional formalization and temporal regulation of relational breakdown	Converts divorce and conflict into structured processes requiring mediation and judicial oversight	Talak via WhatsApp, talak bid'ah, <i>iddah</i> , post-divorce rights, economic hardship, divorce celebration	Prevention through procedural buffering, documentation, and temporal discipline	20–26
Institutional Alignment of Legality	Administrative harmonization between theology and state regulation	Aligns religious validity with civil registration and formal recognition	Marriage registration, <i>nikah siri</i> consequence	Prevention through legal visibility and institutional protection	27–29
Digital Speech Regulation	Editorial tone control and digital <i>adab</i> enforcement	Regulates online expression, discourages humiliation and symbolic exposure	Online shaming, digital etiquette, public dispute exposure	Prevention through speech discipline and symbolic containment	30–32
Moral Boundary Preservation	Discursive containment and ethical clarification of taboo subjects	Explicitly names and frames sexual deviance and intergenerational harm	Incest, fantasy sedarah, intergenerational infidelity	Prevention through moral boundary reinforcement and discursive normalization control	33–36

2. Child Protection as Normative Stabilization of Vulnerability

Figure 1. An article exemplifying the first finding.



This section analyzes how child protection constructs the first foundational pillar of communicative governance within the NU Online corpus. Rather than treating child harm merely as isolated criminality, the platform frames vulnerability as a protected moral category demanding both theological articulation and legal codification. Children are consistently defined as *Amanah* a sacred collective trust elevating their protection from a social choice to an absolute theological responsibility (Bushiri, 2026a). Consequently, exploitation constitutes a violation of divine trust and a disruption of social order. By synthesizing Qur'anic reasoning with state legal frameworks, NU Online establishes a dual authority structure where religious sanctions and juridical accountability are mutually reinforcing.

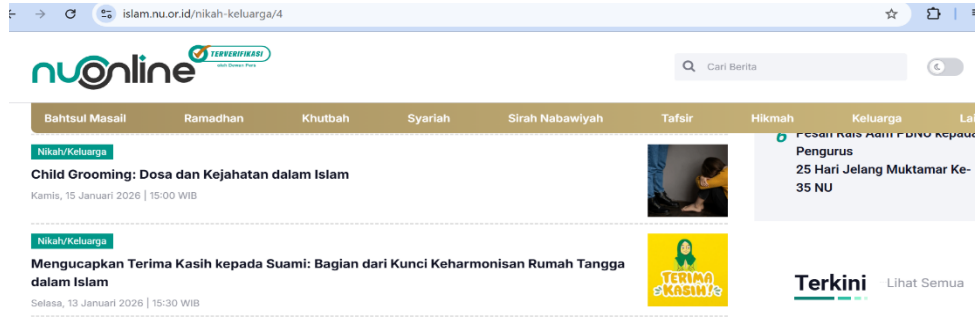
This governance model rigorously addresses systemic neglect, such as child abandonment and the denial of lineage. The platform categorizes these acts not as private moral failings, but as severe institutional breaches necessitating social accountability and legal consequences (Sunnatullah, 2026a, 2026c). Communicative governance operates here by layering spiritual warnings, communal stigma, and formal sanctions, thereby discursively criminalizing neglect across both theological and juridical registers.

Furthermore, this stabilization is consolidated through marriage registration. By framing civil documentation as a concurrent legal and moral obligation, NU Online integrates religious authority with state procedural governance (Romadhon, 2026b). Consequently, *nikah siri* (unregistered Islamic marriage) is explicitly condemned for producing legal invisibility and exacerbating child vulnerability (Sunnatullah, 2026a). Here, institutional governance equates legal transparency with ethical responsibility, mitigating structural vulnerability through procedural recognition.

Discourses on early marriage extend this governance through temporal regulation. Utilizing the concept of *istitha'ah* (readiness), the platform redefines maturity beyond biological markers to encompass holistic preparedness (Bushiri, 2026a). This anticipatory ethics transforms prevention into prospective stabilization. Ultimately, child protection operates across three dimensions: the theological sacralization of vulnerability, procedural legalization, and temporal foresight. Through these mechanisms, digital religious authority proactively institutionalizes moral boundaries that stabilize family governance against violence.

3. Emotional Security and Preventive Parenting as Relational Governance

Figure 2. An article exemplifying the second finding.



A second pillar of governance within the NU Online corpus emerges through parenting discourse, which regulates vulnerability via emotional structuring and relational attentiveness. Rather than framing parenting merely as moral instruction, the platform conceptualizes it as a communicative practice where emotional safety functions as preventive infrastructure. Harm is thus understood as a distortion of relational normalcy. For instance, child grooming is articulated as the incremental manipulation of everyday trust (Millah, 2026c, 2026b). This perspective shifts prevention from reactive surveillance to continuous awareness of communicative signs, rendering governance a process of early detection embedded in relational vigilance.

Similarly, excessive punishment and emotional withdrawal are framed as communicative failures that erode protective familial bonds (Millah, 2026c, 2026b). Consequently, parental authority is redefined not as coercive dominance, but as a form of relational stewardship. Recognizing and validating affection serve as symbolic resources that generate protective capital (Mustajibullah, 2026). Validation is elevated from an optional affective expression to a structural safeguard against vulnerability. Therefore, governance operates by institutionalizing affective reciprocity, utilizing emotional presence as a regulatory mechanism to stabilize trust over time.

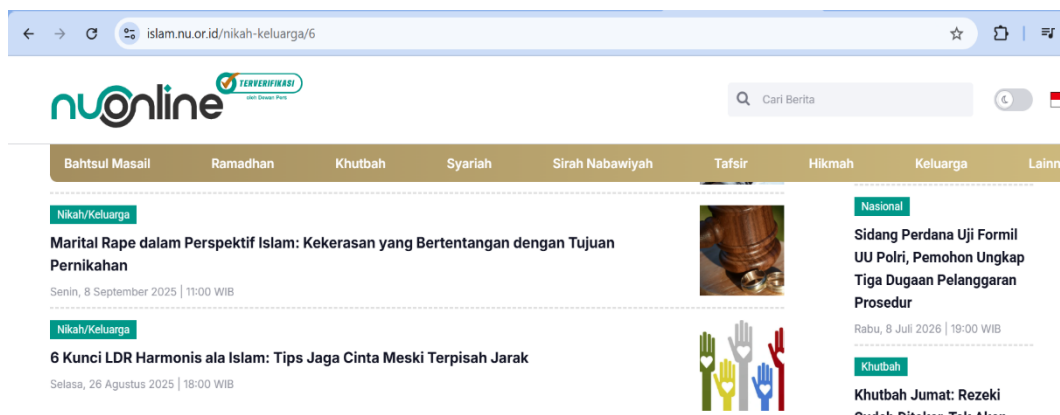
Anti-bullying narratives extend this relational logic into broader social exchanges, tracing violence back to failures in ethical speech and verbal discipline (Bushiri, 2026d). Language operates simultaneously as both a hazard and a protective shield. Furthermore, typically taboo topics, including incest and deviant fantasies, are explicitly articulated rather than suppressed in silence (Hidayah, 2025; Yasin, 2025). By confronting stigmatized risks through organized discourse, NU Online transforms concealed vulnerabilities into communicatively tractable issues. Governance thus

functions through discursive clarification, utilizing explicit denomination as preventive containment.

These narratives structure parenting as longitudinal relational governance. Emotion transcends psychological sentiment, functioning instead as an embedded communicative practice within everyday interactions. Digital religious authority stabilizes vulnerability not through external enforcement, but by integrating emotional reciprocity and rigorous speech discipline directly into the communicative architecture of family life.

4. Marital Authority as Redistribution of Power

Figure 3. An article exemplifying the third finding.



NU Online advances marital discourse by systematically redistributing relational power, establishing this as the primary mechanism of communicative governance. Diverging from rigid hierarchical structures, the corpus reframes marital authority as dialogical reciprocity anchored in *mawaddah* and *rahmah*. For instance, marital rape is conceptualized not merely as a physical transgression, but as a profound violation of relational ethics and shared consent (Abubakar, 2025). Consequently, authority shifts from unilateral dominance to relational obligation. Governance functions by redefining the normative boundaries of marital power, rendering coercion fundamentally incompatible with the communicative ethos of Islamic marriage.

This redistribution encompasses emotional and representational harm. Discourses on *ila'* and toxic marriages categorize prolonged emotional withdrawal and symbolic humiliation as distinct forms of relational violence (Sunnatullah, 2026b; Ulwan, 2026). Harm is thus understood as communicative hostility perpetuating relational asymmetry. Furthermore, judicial recourse is repositioned as institutional

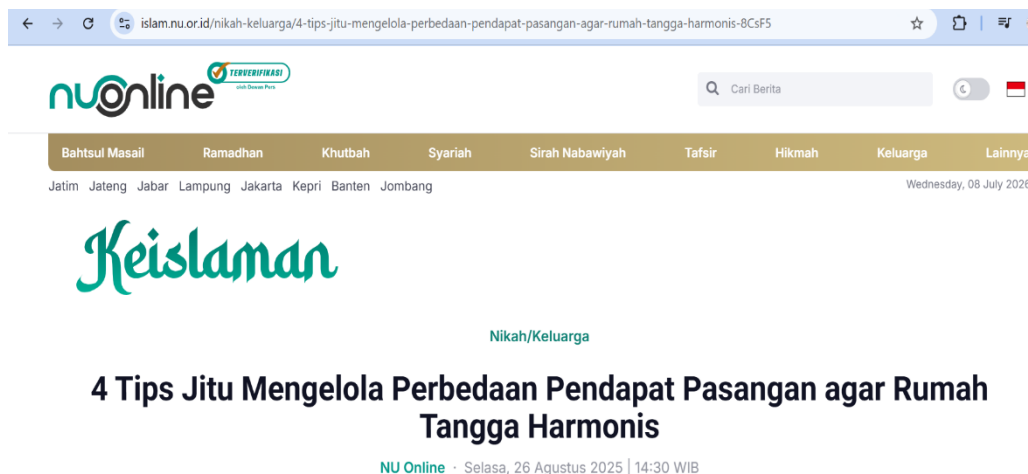
communicative oversight when dialogical repair collapses, moving authority from private domination toward accountable relational governance.

Additionally, narratives surrounding domestic violence dismantle rigid gender hierarchies by recognizing the potential for mutual harm (Muqoffi, 2026b; Muqoffi, 2026a). The theological concept of *sabr* (patience) is critically recontextualized; it is no longer an absolute obligation to endure abuse, making separation justifiable when dignity is compromised (Millah, 2026a; Millah, 2026c). Furthermore, the classification of sexist sermons as symbolic violence demonstrates that gender justice involves rigorous speech regulation (Abror, 2026).

Ultimately, obedience is strictly bounded by reciprocal ethics (Bushiri, 2026b). Redefined as a conditional exchange grounded in justice and consultation, authority becomes horizontal rather than vertical. Through these discursive shifts, digital religious authority operates as an internal regulatory infrastructure, transforming structural domination into mutual deliberation and embedding communicative equality as a preemptive moral architecture.

5. Conflict as Proceduralized Communication

Figure 4. An article exemplifying the fourth finding



Within the NU Online corpus, the discourse of obedience is strictly bounded by reciprocal ethics, prioritizing justice, consultation, and shared moral responsibility over absolute submission (Bushiri, 2026b). This paradigm shifts marital authority from vertical domination to horizontal, dialogical exchange, embedding communicative equality as a preemptive moral architecture. Furthermore, conflict is not stigmatized as a relational aberration but normalized as an inevitable component of marital dynamics requiring procedural containment (Romadhon, 2026a). By

regulating rather than denying relational instability, communicative governance transforms volatile emotional disputes into organized dialogical processes.

The primary regulatory mechanism in this framework is *musyawarah* (deliberation), which dismantles unilateral coercion by mandating reciprocal meaning-making. The corpus explicitly warns against prematurely labeling marital disagreements as *nusyuz* (disobedience), recognizing that the theological mischaracterization of conflict can weaponize religious language to justify coercive asymmetry (Kurniawan, 2026). Through such semantic discipline, the platform inhibits the monopolization of religious discourse, preserving communicative equilibrium and preventing symbolic escalation.

This semantic regulation is inherently coupled with tone governance. Modulated speech, emotional restraint, and orderly pacing are institutionalized as essential de-escalation strategies, embedding ethical discipline directly into mundane interactions to prevent aggressive verbal behavior (Romadhon, 2026a). Crucially, this governance architecture extends into digital environments. The public shaming of a spouse or the performative broadcasting of marital conflict on social media is condemned as a severe breach of Islamic *adab* (etiquette), which exacerbates emotional harm and obstructs reconciliation (Abidin, 2026). By regulating online expression, NU Online successfully projects procedural governance onto algorithmic spaces. Ultimately, digital religious authority is sustained through a comprehensive matrix of structured deliberation, semantic precision, tone modulation, and platform-aware speech regulation, effectively institutionalizing communication discipline as a preemptive defense across both physical and digital realms.

6. Divorce Governance as Institutionalized Harm Reduction

Figure 5. An article exemplifying the fifth finding

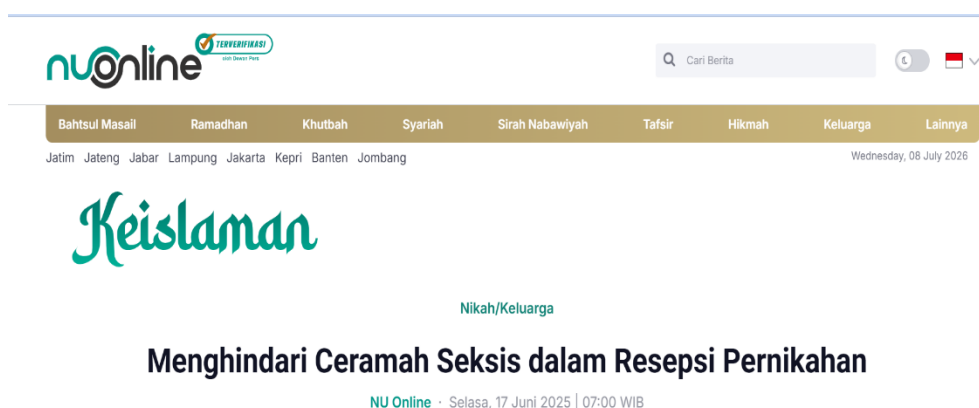


Within the NU Online corpus, divorce is conceptualized not as a sudden relational rupture, but rather as a highly regulated communicative event designed to mitigate damage. The discourse systematically dismantles *talak* as a unilateral male prerogative, subordinating impulsive private speech such as digital divorce declarations via WhatsApp to formal judicial adjudication to establish legal validity (Nafis, 2025). This procedural formalization is intricately reinforced by temporal regulation. Specifically, prohibitions against initiating divorce during menstruation and the mandatory enforcement of the *iddah* (waiting period) function as critical emotional buffers. These temporal constraints create structured communicative spaces for mediation, reflection, and conflict de-escalation (Nafis, 2025a).

Furthermore, the platform mitigates post-separation vulnerability through the legal redistribution of risk. Financial maintenance and child custody are reframed as legally binding institutional guarantees rather than discretionary acts of patriarchal benevolence, thereby actively preventing post-divorce economic abandonment (Romadhon, 2025). Similarly, material hardship is repositioned as a collaborative relational challenge rather than an immediate justification for dissolution, situating divorce strictly as a last resort following absolute dialogical exhaustion (Amin, 2025). Digital religious authority operates as a robust preventive infrastructure, institutionalizing harm reduction through formal documentation, temporal buffering, legal redistribution, and dialogical prioritization to systematically curtail impulsivity and structural asymmetry.

7. Counter Discourse and Moral Boundary Preservation

Figure 6. An article exemplifying the fifth finding



The digital religious authority is performing not only doctrinal guidance but also regulation of circulating narratives and symbolic meanings on the digital public spheres within this communicative governance. NU Online as a Reformist Alternative

and Counter-Public In this context, NU Online operates as a reformist counter-public that contributes to contests over moral discourses in the broader media ecology. Instead of limiting authority to private moral instruction, the platform exceeds ethical controversies in terms of relational and communicative consequences. Infidelity, for example, is understood not just as a moral failing on the part of an individual but as a communicative betrayal that shatters relational trust and induces psychological injuries that affect generations (Nabila, 2025). By integrating transgression with relational disruption, NU Online expands accountability ethical and otherwise from individual intent to social consequence.

Integrated narratives based on theology, psychology and health provide a balanced approach to sensitive topics like incest and deviant sexual fantasies (Hidayah, 2025; Yasin, 2025). NU Online does not shun taboo issues but rather frames these risks in formalized ethical discourse. This strategy turns silence into a regulated visibility: stigmatized harms are named, plotted in context, and embedded within normative frameworks that hinge on liability and prevention. The exercise of authority is thus not through censorship, but through discursive clarification, enabling taboo subjects to be governed in and through the ethical articulation and communicative transparency of its own governing processes.

In addition to negative depictions, NU Online also critically engages with cultural narratives that circulate in sermons, media content, and popular religious discourse. Perpetuating representations that reproduce gender hierarchy or normalize symbolic domination are condemned as incompatible with the Islamic principles of justice and reciprocity (Abror, 2026; Nurhakim, 2025). Understood in this way, talks of obedience are resituated within mutual ethical parameters, so as to ensure that theological language cannot be employed to sanction asymmetrical power (Bushiri, 2026b). Via these interventions the platform self-polices the symbolic meanings that are available in a digital religious public sphere and re-normalizes which narratives are acceptable within this boundary.

C. Discussion

To move beyond a descriptive account of the findings and address the complexities of digital religious authority, this study contextualizes the results within communicative governance theory. In digital sociology, communicative governance posits that institutional authority is sustained not through algorithmic visibility, but via the deliberate structuring of discursive norms, relational interactions, and ethical

boundaries. While algorithmic communication theories emphasize virality and personalization as drivers of digital influence, this framework argues for the resilience of institutional mediation through structurally regulated discourse. To systematically evaluate the findings, this analysis utilizes four indicators derived from communicative governance: procedural coherence, relational calibration, theological continuity, and discursive boundary setting. Employing these metrics, the discussion demonstrates how NU Online operationalizes institutional digital authority, contrasting its strategies with broader academic debates concerning digital fragmentation.

The first indicator, procedural coherence, illustrates how NU Online actively resists theoretical trends toward digital fragmentation. Dominant literature characterizes digital platforms as environments where institutional legitimacy becomes decentralized, relying on aesthetic signaling, individual personalization, and emotional proximity (Campbell, 2020; Ichwan et al., 2024; Wahid & Abdulloh, 2026). Authority is thus reconstructed through micro-celebrity dynamics and audience engagement metrics (Aggarwal & Shah, 2025; AlFarraj et al., 2021; Gammarano & Arruda Filho, 2025), rendering digital legitimacy highly volatile. Viewed through communicative governance, however, the NU Online corpus reveals a distinct divergence. Anchored in theological continuity and procedural coherence, institutional authority remains remarkably stable across algorithmically mediated publics. Rather than competing for the affective immediacy of influencer models, NU Online channels discourse through institutionalized sorting and ethical framing. Authority thrives by governing the epistemological construction of meaning and relational norms, rather than merely controlling algorithmic visibility. Digital adaptation, therefore, does not inherently equate to institutional erosion; rather, it reinforces institutional governance through the strategic communicative structuring of technology.

Building upon this stability, relational calibration reconfigures how academic discourses approach violence prevention in digital Islamic studies. Previous scholarship predominantly grounds prevention in macro-ideological frameworks, emphasizing political extremism and inter-religious conflict (Basid et al., 2024; Hamdi, 2021; Huda et al., 2020). While valuable, these approaches risk restricting the definition of violence exclusively to ideological antagonism, obscuring deeply embedded forms of quotidian relational harm. This study expands this theoretical scope by revealing that NU Online frames violence primarily as a communicative and relational fracture. Emotional neglect, domestic coercion, and digital shaming are contextualized not merely as formal legal violations, but as profound distortions of human dignity and reciprocity. This aligns strongly with advancements in Islamic gender studies, particularly the *mubadalah*

framework, which positions relationality and systemic justice as indispensable normative foundations for (Kodir et al., 2024; Nurhidayah et al., 2025). Furthermore, it resonates with restorative communication traditions like *sulh* (reconciliation), prioritizing relational wholeness over punitive adjudication (Novita et al., 2025). Within this framework, prevention is enacted through semantic strictness, calibrated tones, and guided discussion, rather than reactive anti-narrative campaigns. Consequently, relational violence is mitigated at the micro-level before escalating into formal juridical conflict.

This proactive approach to relational harmony is reinforced by theological and normative continuity, which stabilizes vulnerability regarding child protection and emotional safety. Dependent spouses and children are theoretically framed as moral subjects entitled to robust ethical protection under Islamic jurisprudence, rather than mere legal dependents. Institutional mechanisms such as mandatory marriage registration and procedural oversight function as theological safeguards designed to prevent future relational harm. This echoes wider theoretical themes regarding NU's constitutionalism, which historically endorses legal practices prioritizing public welfare over illegal normative (Basid et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2020). Within this digital context, vulnerability is reframed as a normative category meriting active institutional protection. Preventive infrastructures, including emotional validation and the social recognition of domestic labor, are discursively integrated to stabilize relational trust prior to the emergence of abusive dynamics. Communicative governance thus initiates crisis intervention through anticipatory ethical structuring rather than post-facto legal punishment.

Relating directly to theories of power dynamics, the theological reallocation of marital authority further distinguishes the institutional mediation of NU Online. Instead of outright dismantling classical Islamic terminology, the platform profoundly rethinks concepts like obedience and *nusyuz* (disobedience) within a reciprocal ethical framework. Marital rape and coercive silence are explicitly defined as severe violations of *mawaddah* (affection) and *rahmah* (compassion), indicating that exercising authority without mutual consent constitutes relational harm. This interpretive reassessment successfully integrates *maqasid* (purposes of Islamic law) with contemporary *mubadalah* ethics (Kodir et al., 2024). The governance of divorce consolidates this theoretical logic. While digital *talak* (divorce declarations) might be recognized via classical discursive practices, NU Online dictates they lack legal weight without formal state court involvement (Fauzi et al., 2026). Unlike influencer cultures reliant on algorithmic immediacy and emotional escalation (Aggarwal & Shah, 2025), NU Online purposely institutionalizes temporal

delay and documented accountability. Consequently, procedural rigidity acts as an antidote to the dramatic ruptures favored by platform algorithms, distributing authority more equitably.

Moving from the private sphere to public engagement, discursive boundary setting reveals how NU Online extends communicative governance directly into highly visible digital public spaces. Issues such as structurally sexist digital sermons, public shaming, and the joyful sharing of divorce vignettes on social media are overtly redressed. In stark contrast to influencer-centered authority, which flourishes through affective escalation to drive user engagement (Mahzumi et al., 2025; Rohmatulloh et al., 2022), NU Online actively disciplines digital discourse by reinstating classical standards of *adab* (Islamic etiquette). The platform approaches online communication as a direct extension of physical relational life, carrying identical theological and moral consequences. Through symbolic containment and consistent narrative correction, the institution maintains ethical coherence within chaotic algorithmic publics. By aligning classical theological reasoning with rigid communicative ethics and procedural legality, NU Online exemplifies how legacy institutions can adapt digitally without sacrificing normative coherence. This challenges academic discourses positing inevitable institutional fragmentation within digital Islam (Wahid & Abdulloh, 2026), advancing communicative governance as a robust explanatory framework for institutional resilience.

Despite these significant contributions, this study acknowledges specific methodological limitations. The analysis is strictly confined to text-based institutional discourse, precluding the empirical measurement of individual interpretive variation, active audience reception, or tangible behavioral impacts on platform users. The opaque proprietary logics of digital platforms make it exceedingly difficult to empirically track normative influence beyond initial discursive production (Campbell, 2020). Additionally, the study deliberately refrains from systematic comparative analysis with competing institutional actors or influencer platforms, impeding assertions of wider cross-denominational generalizability. While the application of *mubadalah* ethics is robustly constructed within this corpus, the internal power dynamics of content curation and the institutional negotiations determining content production remain beyond the scope of the present study. Therefore, future research must empirically investigate how communicative governance principles translate into everyday lived relational practices. Scholars should explore how aesthetic flexibility is negotiated within emerging hybrid authority models and measure the long-term gender justice outcomes shaped by *mubadalah*-based digital pedagogy (Kodir et al., 2024; Pabbajah et al., 2021). Finally,

strengthening digital literacy within such religious institutions remains a critical area of study, paramount for sustaining normative coherence against algorithmic fragmentation across dispersed global publics (Ichwan et al., 2024).

D. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that NU Online constructs digital religious authority not through algorithmic prominence or charismatic personalization, but via a highly structured communicative governance system. By integrating editorial uniformity, interpretive discipline, and procedural alignment between theological reasoning and state apparatuses, the platform systemically regulates family relations. Authority is operationalized by protecting vulnerable subjects, renegotiating relational asymmetries, and establishing rigorous normative boundaries for digital speech. Crucially, NU Online reframes violence not as an external anomaly, but as a fundamental rupture in communicative balance and reciprocal ethics. Consequently, violence prevention is institutionalized proactively through anticipatory ethics and dialogical structuring, effectively shifting the locus of religious moderation from macro-political contestation to everyday domestic realities.

Theoretically, this research advances communicative governance as a robust framework for understanding institutional resilience in digital ecosystems. It proves that digital authority can remain coherent when anchored in procedural clarity rather than affective polarization, directly challenging the assumption that technological mediation inevitably fragments institutional legitimacy. Instead, when navigated through structured communicative ethics, digital adaptation can actively reinforce long-term stability and normative continuity within contemporary Muslim family life.

To build upon these findings, future research must extend beyond institutional texts to empirically examine lived relational practices, audience interpretations, and tangible household conflict resolution outcomes. Comparative studies between institutional and influencer-driven platforms are also vital to illuminate how competing algorithmic pressures shape hybrid authority models across diverse socio-cultural contexts. Practically, religious organizations must prioritize internal digital literacy and editorial coherence. By promoting structured dialogical engagement over performative immediacy, legacy institutions can transform digital platforms from arenas of fractured symbolic contestation into resilient spaces for ethical endurance, effectively mitigating relational harm while fostering enduring social trust.

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