



## **RELIGIOUS STRENGTHENING IN CYBER SPACE BETWEEN INDONESIA AND PAKISTAN**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the strengthening of religious values in cyberspace in Indonesia and Pakistan two countries with the world's largest Muslim populations and significant influence on contemporary Islamic discourse. The rapid advancement of digital technology and the widespread use of social media have created new arenas for religious transmission, especially among younger generations who are deeply engaged in online communication. In Indonesia, platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are extensively used by preachers to convey Islamic teachings in creative, simplified, and engaging formats, reflecting an approach rooted in Islamic moderation (Wasathiyah). In contrast, in Pakistan, digital preaching has also flourished but tends to adopt a more conservative tone and operates under stricter government regulation due to historical sectarian tensions and concerns about extremist influence. Employing a qualitative approach with interactive analysis techniques, this study investigates the roles of governments, religious institutions, and civil society in shaping religious narratives within digital spaces. The findings reveal that while both countries acknowledge the transformative potential of cyberspace for promoting religious education and identity formation, they also face persistent challenges such as radicalization, misinformation, and online hate speech. Consequently, the study underscores the importance of strengthening digital religious literacy and fostering collaborative regulatory frameworks to ensure that cyberspace evolves into an inclusive, constructive, and peaceful environment for reinforcing Islamic values. These insights contribute to broader academic discussions on religion, media, and the transformation of Islamic education in the digital age.*

**Keywords:** *Cyberspace; Islamic Education; Religious Moderation; Indonesia; Pakistan*

## INTRODUCTION

The advent of the digital age has profoundly transformed the ways in which individuals communicate, exchange information, and engage in religious practices (Park et al., 2021). The emergence of information technology particularly the internet and social media has established a new sphere that facilitates the dissemination of religious values and fosters cross-cultural interactions on a global scale (Aiyuda et al., 2023). This digital domain functions not merely as a medium for information sharing, but also as a platform for dialogue, critical reflection, and the reinforcement of religious values within a modern context. This aligns with the Qur'anic injunction in Surah Al-Hujurat [49]:13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

*"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Aware."*

which reminds humankind that diversity and communication are divine means to 'know one another,' emphasizing interconnection and mutual respect in a pluralistic society. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ instructed:

بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً

*"Convey from me, even if it is only one verse."* Narrated by al-Bukhārī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 3461) highlighting the moral obligation of Muslims to share knowledge wisely including through digital means in today's world.

Within this framework, Indonesia and Pakistan present compelling cases for examination. As nations with the largest Muslim populations in the world, both share the characteristic of positioning religion as a central component of national identity and social life. Religion, therefore, operates not only as a source of spiritual guidance but also as an instrument for strengthening social cohesion and promoting societal harmony (Al Ayyubi et al., 2024; Assyfa, 2023; Mawadda et al., 2023; Sabarudin et al., 2024; Suntana et al., 2023).

Through the expansion of cyberspace, the dissemination of religious values has become easier and faster. In Indonesia, many preachers make extensive use of social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to deliver religious lectures to a broad audience, particularly targeting the younger generation. The short, visually engaging, and easily accessible content format enables the effective transmission of religious messages that are relevant to contemporary social and cultural contexts (Murharyana et al., 2024). Similarly, in Pakistan, clerics and religious leaders utilise digital media to promote messages of moderate and peaceful Islam. Digital campaigns against extremism and intolerance are frequently conducted through these online platforms to reach a more diverse and extensive audience. In both countries, technology is also harnessed for religious education. A variety of applications and online learning platforms have been developed to assist individuals in studying the Qur'an, Hadith, and other Islamic texts. These digital tools serve as effective learning resources, particularly for the younger generation, who are already accustomed to and comfortable with technological engagement in their daily lives.

However, cyberspace also poses significant challenges to the strengthening of religious values. One of the major threats is the misuse of digital media for spreading extremism, misinformation, and hate speech. Certain radical groups exploit online platforms to disseminate extremist ideologies, recruit new members, and foster social polarisation (Nurhayati & Hamid, 2020). Another pressing issue is the generally low level of digital literacy among some segments of the population, which makes individuals more vulnerable to manipulation by false or provocative information. In both Indonesia and Pakistan, governments and religious organisations have implemented various strategies to address these challenges. These include collaborating with digital platforms to identify and remove harmful content, launching nationwide digital literacy initiatives, and enhancing technology-based religious education. Such efforts aim not only to curb the negative impacts of digital media but also to transform cyberspace into a constructive environment for the dissemination of authentic and moderate religious values.

In Indonesia, the utilisation of digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok by preachers and religious leaders has effectively expanded the reach of religious teachings, particularly among younger audiences. Short lectures, scriptural reflections, and interactive discussions on contemporary religious issues have proven to be effective mediums for bringing Islamic values closer to millennials and members of Generation Z. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, digital platforms have been strategically employed to promote moderate religious literacy through campaigns that counter extremism and intolerance. Religious scholars and clerics actively engage on social media to convey messages of peace, tolerance, and compassion within Islam. Furthermore, both the government and religious organisations in Pakistan have introduced digital services and mobile applications designed to facilitate the study of the Qur'an, hadith, and fatwas that address the complexities of modern life.

However, the use of cyberspace for religious strengthening extends beyond mere dissemination of information. It also serves as a dynamic space for interfaith dialogue, enabling individuals from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions, exchange perspectives, and foster social harmony. When utilised appropriately, cyberspace can become an effective medium for actualising religious values that align with the demands of modern society, while simultaneously cultivating an inclusive and educational environment that promotes mutual understanding and respect among different faith communities.

While the challenges posed by cyberspace are considerable, the potential of digital technology to enhance religious life remains (Aisida, 2021). Both Indonesia and Pakistan can leverage this opportunity by fostering faith-based technological innovations, such as developing digital applications for religious education and creating cross-cultural dialogue platforms. Collaborative efforts between these countries may also serve as a strategic approach for instance, through the exchange of digital scholars or the implementation of joint campaigns aimed at promoting tolerance and social harmony. Moreover, digital literacy must be prioritised as a fundamental aspect of this endeavour (De Roock, 2021; Farias-Gaytan et al., 2022;

Park et al., 2021; Setiawardani & Robandi, 2021; Yunan et al., 2022). By equipping individuals with the skills to critically evaluate information and utilise technology responsibly, cyberspace can be transformed into a constructive medium that supports the strengthening of religious understanding and practice.

This paper seeks to examine how Indonesia and Pakistan utilise cyberspace as a platform for religious empowerment, with particular attention to the roles of government institutions, religious organisations, and civil society in shaping constructive digital narratives. It further explores the challenges involved in maintaining a balance between freedom of expression and social responsibility within the digital sphere. The experiences of these two nations offer valuable insights into how a digital ecosystem can be cultivated to promote religious harmony, inclusivity, and respect for diversity.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research approach with data analysis conducted using the interactive analysis model (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research focuses on examining the dynamics of religious strengthening in cyberspace within the contexts of Indonesia and Pakistan, particularly exploring the factors influencing the reinforcement of religion in the digital sphere. Data were collected through secondary sources, including journal articles, books, and relevant online materials. The research subjects comprise two countries Indonesia and Pakistan. The collected data were analysed using an interactive data analysis technique that involves three interrelated stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Data Condensation**

Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data obtained from various empirical sources such as field notes, interview transcripts, and documents. The primary aim of this stage is to enhance the robustness and analytical strength of the data. It represents an extension of the data reduction process, in which efforts are made to summarise,

explore, integrate, and address any gaps that may have emerged during initial data processing. At this stage, all data are treated as relevant since they have been refined to align with the research focus. Furthermore, the data may be enriched with additional theoretical insights to strengthen the researcher's analytical interpretation.

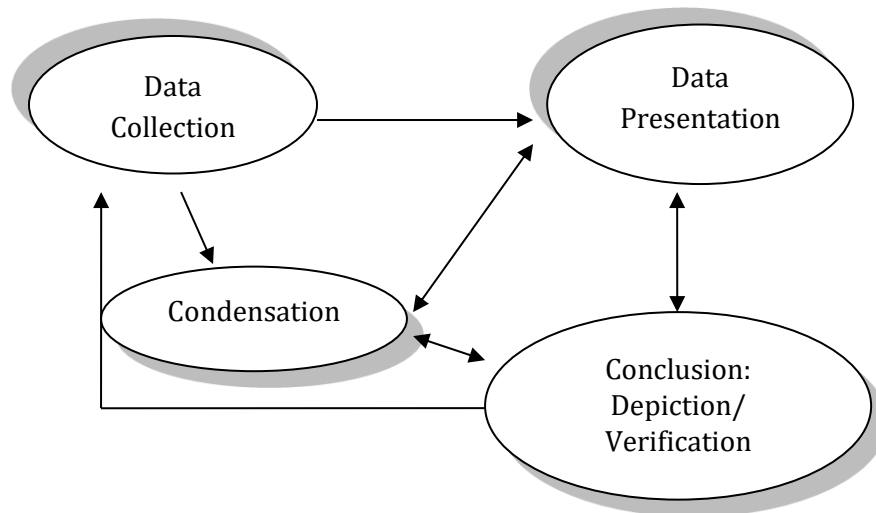
### **Data Display**

Data display aims to identify significant patterns and provide opportunities for drawing informed conclusions and taking appropriate actions. In the context of this study, data display serves to interpret the meaning of the collected data and to organise information in a systematic and coherent manner. The emphasis is on simplifying complex information into an accessible yet informative format. This may be achieved through the use of narrative texts (such as field notes), matrices, charts, networks, or diagrams that help clarify relationships and themes emerging from the data.

### **Conclusion Drawing/Verification**

In the third stage of analysis, the primary activity involves drawing and verifying conclusions. From the very beginning of data collection, the researcher attempts to interpret the meanings behind the gathered data, identify emerging patterns, provide explanations, and determine causal relationships. Initial conclusions are typically broad and tentative, serving as preliminary interpretations that are gradually refined into more specific insights as the research progresses. This process of conclusion drawing is iterative and continuous, forming an integral part of the entire research cycle. It involves constant comparison between new data and previously collected evidence to ensure consistency and validity. Verification is carried out by revisiting the researcher's notes, cross-checking data sources, and confirming interpretations against the theoretical framework. Ultimately, verified data form the foundation for drawing final conclusions. These final conclusions represent the synthesis of findings that address the formulated research questions and are expected to provide meaningful and relevant contributions to the field. The

overall process of conclusion drawing and verification can be illustrated in the following figure:



**Figure 1.** Stages in Qualitative Data Analysis Methods

Religion plays a vital role in shaping people's lives, and the advancement of digital technology has created new spaces for religious expression. Previous studies have identified a significant transformation in religious practices, including the shift from offline to online activities, indicating that the digital sphere has become an essential medium for religious reinforcement. A comparative study between Indonesia and Pakistan offers valuable insights, as both countries are characterised by strong Muslim communities Indonesia being home to the world's largest Muslim population and Pakistan being an Islamic republic. This study argues that the strengthening of religion in cyberspace is influenced by multiple factors, including cultural contexts, regulatory frameworks, and the capacity of society to utilise digital technology effectively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Religious Reinforcement

Religious empowerment refers to a comprehensive process aimed at strengthening individuals' understanding, internalisation, and practice of religious teachings in everyday life, both personally and communally. The ultimate goal of this process is to cultivate individuals and societies that embody moral and ethical values derived from religion, deepen their relationship with God, and foster harmonious relationships with others thus creating a just, peaceful, and compassionate social order. Strengthening religion, therefore, is not limited to ritual observances alone but also includes the integration of ethical and moral values into daily interactions within families, workplaces, and broader communities.

A key component in achieving effective religious reinforcement is religious education. Sound religious education provides individuals with a deeper comprehension of their faith, enabling them to observe religious principles sincerely and accurately. This process ideally begins within the family the first institution where children encounter religious values. Parents play a fundamental role in instilling spiritual and ethical foundations that will later shape a child's moral character. The Qur'an explicitly instructs believers to 'protect yourselves and your families from the Hellfire' (At-Tahrīm [66]:6):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ  
اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

*"O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allāh in what He commands them but do what they are commanded."*

implying that moral and spiritual education must begin at home. Similarly, Luqmān's advice to his son 'Establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you' (Luqmān [31]:17):

يُيَيِّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزَمِ الْأُمُورِ

*"O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve."* illustrates the intergenerational transmission of ethical values. The Prophet ﷺ also

stated, *'No father gives his child a better gift than good manners'* (Hadith narrated by at-Tirmidhī), reinforcing that moral education is the most valuable inheritance parents can offer."

As children grow, this early education is reinforced through formal schooling, where they acquire structured and systematic instruction on religious teachings. Beyond the classroom, informal learning spaces such as recitations (pengajian), sermons, and community study circles further enrich their religious knowledge and strengthen their commitment to practicing their faith.

Furthermore, religious strengthening extends beyond intellectual understanding to the application of religious values in social life. Worship practices such as prayer, fasting, charity (zakat), and other forms of devotion are crucial manifestations of faith. However, the essence of religious adherence also lies in embodying virtues like justice, honesty, empathy, and mutual respect. These values must be reflected in social behaviour, from maintaining family harmony to engaging fairly in economic and civic activities. True religiosity, therefore, is realised when individuals translate these teachings into daily acts of kindness, tolerance, and social responsibility.

Religious institutions play a vital role in sustaining this process. Mosques, Islamic schools, and community organisations serve as centres for religious and moral education, guiding individuals to integrate faith with social life. In both Indonesia and Pakistan, these institutions have become key actors in fostering religious understanding and unity. In Indonesia, madrasah, pesantren, and community recitation groups contribute to moral formation at the grassroots level. Similarly, in Pakistan, madrassas and religious councils (ulema boards) play a significant role in shaping religious literacy and public ethics.

In the digital age, however, the role of these institutions has evolved. Religious strengthening is no longer confined to physical spaces but has expanded into cyberspace, where religious teachings are transmitted through online lectures, virtual classes, and social media interactions. This transformation allows religious values to reach broader audiences and provides new opportunities for faith-based learning and engagement. Yet, it also presents challenges, as the open nature of

digital platforms requires careful guidance to prevent misinformation, radical interpretations, and moral degradation.

These institutions such as mosques, churches, monasteries, and temples—serve not only as places of worship but also as centres of learning and moral development. Within these spaces, people receive quality religious education, gain a deeper understanding of sacred texts, and obtain spiritual guidance and counselling from religious leaders. Through sermons, study groups, and religious instruction, these institutions play a crucial role in shaping the moral character and spiritual awareness of their followers.

However, in the context of rapid social and technological change, religious institutions must continuously adapt to remain relevant and responsive to the challenges of modern life. The dynamics of globalisation, digital communication, and changing social values demand that religious teachings be conveyed in ways that are accessible, contextual, and aligned with the realities of contemporary society. This adaptation does not mean altering the core tenets of faith, but rather presenting them through innovative and inclusive approaches that resonate with modern audiences particularly the younger generation who are more digitally connected. Religious leaders such as clerics, priests, monks, and other spiritual figures hold an essential role in this transformation. They act as interpreters of sacred teachings and as role models for ethical behaviour in daily life. Their ability to communicate religious values through modern channels, such as social media and online learning platforms, determines how effectively religion can continue to guide moral and social life in the digital era. By setting examples of integrity, compassion, and open-mindedness, religious leaders can bridge traditional teachings with modern contexts, ensuring that religion remains a constructive and unifying force in society.

Strengthening religion is also closely related to the development of moral character, which serves as the foundation for social harmony and collective well-being. Religion does not merely provide rules for worship but also guides individuals to cultivate virtues such as patience, tolerance, honesty, and respect for others. These moral values form the ethical compass that directs human behaviour

in social life. When internalised, they help create individuals who are responsible, empathetic, and committed to justice qualities that are essential for sustaining peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. For instance, the value of tolerance, which is deeply embedded in many religious teachings, encourages individuals to appreciate and respect differences in faith, ethnicity, and culture. This attitude not only reduces the potential for conflict but also fosters mutual understanding and cooperation across diverse communities. Similarly, the values of honesty and integrity core principles in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and other faiths remind individuals to uphold truthfulness and accountability in every aspect of life, whether in professional duties, family relationships, or public interactions. By embodying these virtues, religion contributes not only to personal moral growth but also to the formation of a peaceful and cohesive society.

Lastly, religious strengthening also emphasises the importance of tolerance and peace in fostering harmonious coexistence. In an increasingly pluralistic and interconnected world, religion should serve as a unifying force that strengthens interfaith relations rather than a source of division. True religious understanding encourages empathy, dialogue, and mutual respect among people of different faiths. One effective approach to achieving this is through interfaith dialogue, which provides a platform for individuals to share perspectives, clarify misconceptions, and build mutual understanding. Such dialogues not only reduce prejudice and misunderstanding but also cultivate respect for diversity as a divine gift. Furthermore, religious strengthening can also be manifested through collaborative social action, where individuals from various religious backgrounds work together to address social challenges, such as poverty, education, and humanitarian crises. By engaging in joint community service, people learn to see beyond doctrinal differences and focus instead on shared human values such as compassion, justice, and solidarity. These collective efforts embody the true spirit of religion promoting peace, empathy, and social cohesion in the midst of diversity.

Overall, religious strengthening is not merely about understanding religious doctrines, but about living out religious values in every dimension of life. It is a

continuous and dynamic process that involves individuals, families, educational institutions, religious organisations, and society as a whole. Through comprehensive religious education, the consistent application of faith-based values in daily activities, and the cultivation of noble character aligned with spiritual teachings, individuals can grow into morally grounded and socially responsible citizens. Strengthening religion in this holistic sense contributes not only to personal piety but also to collective well-being. It nurtures peace, reinforces social cohesion, and promotes justice, compassion, and harmony within society. In the long run, such efforts become the moral foundation for building a more inclusive and ethical civilisation one that upholds humanity and ensures a better future for the coming generations.

### **Cyberspace**

Advances in information technology and the ongoing process of globalisation have given rise to the **internet** as a transformative medium that connects people across vast distances in an instant. The internet facilitates the rapid and borderless exchange of information, breaking through the geographical and political boundaries that traditionally separated nations. However, the very openness and decentralised nature of cyberspace also present new challenges for governments in managing and responding to its development. The role of the state in cyberspace has become a major topic of debate among scholars of international relations, particularly regarding issues of sovereignty, regulation, and digital governance. This challenge is further complicated by the fact that **cyberspace is a relatively new domain**, one that possesses characteristics fundamentally different from physical or territorial space. Moreover, the concept of “cyberspace” itself still lacks a single, universally accepted definition, reflecting its fluid and evolving nature as technology continues to advance.

In general, cyberspace can be understood as a new domain of human interaction that is centred on the internet and various interconnected computer systems (Van Puyvelde & Brantly, 2024). It has become one of the defining characteristics of modern society, creating a new social reality that influences how

individuals communicate, learn, and interact in everyday life (Whyte, 2023). Structurally, the internet that forms the backbone of cyberspace can be divided into four interrelated layers. The first is the physical layer, which consists of tangible infrastructures such as fibre optic cables, cellular towers, electrical grids, and computing devices. The second is the logical layer, encompassing internet protocols, the World Wide Web, browsers, and websites that enable digital communication. The third is the information layer, which contains data in the form of code, videos, images, and text that are stored, transmitted, and processed in cyberspace. Finally, the fourth is the user layer, which represents the human element users who interact with digital systems and shape the lived experience and culture within cyberspace (Smith & Miller, 2025).

The term “cyberspace”, often translated into Indonesian as *ruang siber* or more commonly referred to as the digital world, has become deeply embedded in everyday discourse. In contemporary society, the internet is not merely a medium for communication but also a vital tool in various political and democratic processes across the world. One significant outcome of this widespread utilisation is the emergence of digital activism a form of activism that employs social media and other digital platforms to drive social and political change (Lievrouw, 2023). Digital activism manifests in diverse forms, ranging from online petitions and awareness campaigns to large-scale social movements that influence government accountability. It has become an effective instrument for monitoring, criticising, and pressuring governments to act transparently and in accordance with democratic principles. A well-known example is the Wikileaks case in 2010, when a cyber-based non-profit organisation released thousands of classified United States government documents. These files covered sensitive topics such as the Iraq War and confidential diplomatic communications. The incident triggered strong global reactions its founder, Julian Assange, faced legal threats and sought asylum in several countries. This digital event inspired numerous popular movements advocating transparency in government policies and demanding the withdrawal of

U.S. military forces from several regions (Allen et al., 2023; Diamond, 2024; Pape & Feldman, 2024).

The internet plays a pivotal role in strengthening democracy by providing free and open access to information, enabling citizens to engage more actively in political processes and express their opinions publicly. As a platform for the rapid and widespread dissemination of news and ideas, the internet supports transparency and government accountability. Moreover, social media and digital platforms have become essential spaces for communication, organisation, and collective mobilisation in various social and political movements. However, while the internet has the potential to enhance democratic participation, it also presents significant challenges. The proliferation of disinformation, hate speech, and racially charged provocations can deepen social divisions and foster political polarisation. Therefore, the wise management and ethical use of digital technology are crucial to ensure that cyberspace remains a tool for fostering an inclusive, participatory, and resilient democracy, rather than a medium that undermines it.

Cyberspace is a virtual world formed through interconnected computer networks, the internet, and digital technologies, where various data exchanges and technology-based activities occur without physical boundaries. The term was first introduced by William Gibson in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer* (Mitra, 2025), and is now widely used to describe a global digital ecosystem that enables interaction, communication, transactions, and data storage across borders.

Firstly, the virtual nature of cyberspace means that it has no tangible physical form, yet the activities that take place within it produce real-world effects, such as in e-commerce transactions, online education, or digital communication. Secondly, cyberspace connects devices globally through the internet, creating a high level of connectivity that transcends geographical boundaries and national borders. Thirdly, data serves as the core element within cyberspace it is generated, processed, stored, and shared in various forms, including text, images, video, audio, and software code. Fourthly, cyberspace offers a degree of anonymity, which can provide users with privacy and freedom of expression but also opens opportunities for misuse, such as

cybercrime, misinformation, or identity theft. In addition, cyberspace emerges from the integration of information, communication, and electronic technologies, all of which enable digital activities to operate efficiently and interactively in real time..

In everyday life, cyberspace encompasses a wide range of activities, from the use of social media and communication applications to online banking transactions and cloud-based data storage. Advanced technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and virtual reality (VR) also thrive within this ecosystem. With such an extensive role, cyberspace has evolved into a digital environment where people, technology, and data are deeply interconnected, making it an integral component of modern life. Consequently, information technology has become a key driver of innovation and a crucial factor in improving the quality of human life, including in the field of education. According to Seels and Richey (1994), learning technology has intellectual roots in various disciplines, one of which is computer science and information technology. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has, therefore, opened up wide opportunities for the development of web-based learning systems, such as online learning portals and digital classrooms, which provide flexible and accessible educational experiences for learners across diverse contexts.

### **Strengthening Religion in Cyberspace Between Indonesia and Pakistan**

Strengthening religion in cyberspace within Indonesia and Pakistan has become an increasingly relevant discourse amid the rapid development of digital technology and the growing dependence on the internet in daily life. Both countries, despite their distinct socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts, share a number of similar challenges and opportunities in embedding and promoting religious values in the digital sphere. The rise of digital platforms, social media, and online religious communities has transformed the way Muslims in these nations learn, interpret, and practise their faith. At the same time, it has raised critical issues regarding authority, authenticity, and the potential misuse of religion online. This comparative perspective provides a deeper understanding of how each country navigates the digital space in relation to religion how religious institutions, clerics,

and lay communities adapt to technological change, and how governments and society seek to ensure that cyberspace remains a medium for spiritual growth, tolerance, and moral education, rather than misinformation or polarisation.

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, has become a prominent centre for the development of digital da'wah in the modern era. The nation's cultural richness and long tradition of religious tolerance serve as a strong foundation for spreading Islamic values through cyberspace in a moderate and inclusive manner. In recent years, social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have become crucial tools for disseminating religious messages. Many preachers and religious educators actively utilise these platforms to reach wider audiences, particularly the younger generation who are highly engaged with digital content. This digital transformation has encouraged a more creative approach to da'wah, where short video lectures and visually engaging content are produced to communicate religious values in a way that is both accessible and practical for everyday life. Such approaches help bridge the gap between traditional religious instruction and modern lifestyles, allowing religious teachings to appear more relevant, contextual, and appealing to contemporary society.

However, Indonesia also faces serious challenges in strengthening religion in cyberspace, particularly the risk of radicalisation. Certain groups with extreme or exclusive ideologies have exploited online platforms to disseminate misleading or divisive narratives under the guise of religious teaching. The interactive nature of social media facilitates the rapid spread of such content, posing a threat to social harmony and interfaith relations in a nation celebrated for its pluralism. Recognising these risks, the Indonesian government has introduced various policies and initiatives to monitor and counter the dissemination of radical content online. Agencies such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) collaborate with digital platforms and religious organisations to promote moderate and peaceful interpretations of Islam. At the same time, moderate Islamic education initiatives have expanded through online

platforms, fostering digital literacy and encouraging the public to engage critically and wisely with online religious content. Through these efforts, Indonesia continues to strive for a balanced, safe, and inclusive digital religious ecosystem that reflects the nation's commitment to tolerance and harmony.

Pakistan, while sharing similarities with Indonesia as a Muslim-majority nation, faces a distinct set of challenges in strengthening religion within cyberspace. The country's historical sectarian tensions, particularly between Sunni and Shia communities, have shaped the dynamics of religious discourse both offline and online. As in Indonesia, many preachers in Pakistan actively utilise social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (now X) to disseminate Islamic teachings. However, religious content circulating in Pakistan's digital sphere tends to reflect a more conservative interpretation of Islam, often emphasising strict adherence to Sharia-based moral codes and daily behavioural norms. This approach influences the way religion is understood and practised among younger generations, who form a significant portion of the country's online population.

Despite these developments, Pakistan faces a serious challenge in the form of online radicalisation and sectarian propaganda. Extremist groups have effectively exploited social media platforms to recruit followers, promote intolerance, and incite hostility among religious communities. Digital spaces have, at times, become arenas for sectarian confrontation, amplifying longstanding divides and threatening social stability. The spread of hate speech, misinformation, and inflammatory content targeting particular sects or minorities further complicates efforts to foster unity in the digital public sphere.

In response, the Pakistani government has adopted a strict regulatory stance toward cyberspace. Authorities routinely monitor and, when necessary, block websites or accounts accused of promoting radical ideologies, anti-state narratives, or sectarian hatred. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) plays a central role in implementing these policies by coordinating with internet service providers and social media companies to remove harmful content. While these measures are aimed at maintaining national security and social harmony, they have

also sparked controversies regarding freedom of expression and the state's authority in defining acceptable religious discourse. Nonetheless, the government and several religious organisations have begun promoting moderate digital literacy initiatives to counter online extremism. Educational institutions and NGOs have collaborated to encourage critical engagement with online religious material, aiming to cultivate a generation of digital citizens who are informed, tolerant, and capable of distinguishing between credible and misleading content. Thus, Pakistan's experience illustrates both the potential and the complexity of using cyberspace as a medium for religious strengthening in a context marked by deep sectarian and ideological diversity.

Although Indonesia and Pakistan share similar opportunities and challenges in utilising cyberspace for religious strengthening, the two countries differ significantly in their approaches and orientations. Indonesia tends to promote moderation and inclusivity in its digital religious engagement. Preachers and religious educators in Indonesia frequently use platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to spread messages of tolerance, pluralism, and interfaith harmony. This approach reflects Indonesia's diverse social structure and its commitment to maintaining religious moderation within a multicultural society. Digital da'wah content in Indonesia is often creative and contextual, making Islamic teachings more relatable to the younger generation and relevant to modern life. In contrast, Pakistan's digital religious landscape is characterised by a stronger conservative tone. While there are moderate voices, many online preachers emphasise strict adherence to Islamic law and traditional religious values. This conservatism reflects Pakistan's historical and theological background, where sectarian dynamics and political influences shape the interpretation of religious teachings.

The difference between the two countries is also evident in how they regulate online religious content. Indonesia relies on a softer approach, prioritising education, digital literacy, and the promotion of moderate values to counter radicalisation. The government collaborates with religious organisations and civil

society to strengthen digital ethics and encourage positive online engagement. Meanwhile, Pakistan adopts a stricter and more security-oriented strategy. The Pakistani government actively monitors cyberspace, blocks websites, and removes social media accounts that are considered to spread extremist or anti-state ideologies. This method reflects the state's effort to maintain stability amid recurring sectarian conflicts, although it often raises concerns about freedom of expression and access to information.

Despite these differences, both Indonesia and Pakistan face comparable challenges in managing cyberspace as a medium for religious discourse. Radicalisation and the spread of hate speech remain serious issues in both countries, yet the responses vary according to their sociopolitical contexts. In Indonesia, cyberspace is increasingly used for interfaith dialogue and peace campaigns that promote understanding and tolerance among diverse religious groups. By contrast, Pakistan's digital sphere is more vulnerable to sectarian polarisation, where tensions between Sunni and Shia groups frequently surface online. The Pakistani government's strong control over cyberspace reflects its effort to prevent these tensions from escalating into violence. Overall, while Indonesia demonstrates how moderation and education can become effective tools for digital religious strengthening, Pakistan's experience highlights the importance of firm regulation in maintaining security and social order. Together, both countries illustrate how cyberspace can be both an opportunity and a challenge in reinforcing religious life in the digital era.

Religious proselytizing in cyberspace in both Indonesia and Pakistan plays a vital role in promoting and spreading religious values, yet it also encounters significant challenges that require careful management. In Indonesia, the digital sphere provides ample space for moderate and inclusive forms of da'wah, allowing preachers to creatively engage younger audiences through platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. However, alongside this positive development, the issue of online radicalization continues to pose a threat. Certain groups exploit the openness of social media to disseminate extremist narratives that can undermine social

harmony and Indonesia's long-standing culture of religious tolerance. Conversely, in Pakistan, despite the government's strict surveillance and regulation of online religious content aimed at curbing extremism, tensions between different religious sects particularly between Sunni and Shia communities persist in the digital realm. These tensions often manifest in hate speech, misinformation, and divisive rhetoric that further complicate efforts to build unity. Therefore, in both Indonesia and Pakistan, the effective management of cyberspace becomes crucial not only to prevent the spread of radical ideologies but also to encourage the dissemination of peaceful, educational, and inclusive religious messages. When used wisely, cyberspace can serve as a powerful medium for strengthening faith, fostering interreligious understanding, and nurturing a spirit of tolerance in increasingly digital societies.

## **CONCLUSION**

The strengthening of religion in cyberspace between Indonesia and Pakistan illustrates how digital technology has transformed into a crucial medium for shaping religious understanding, education, and practice in contemporary Muslim societies. In Indonesia, the advancement of digital da'wah reflects the nation's emphasis on Islam Wasathiyah a moderate and balanced interpretation of faith that aligns with the spirit of tolerance and pluralism. Through platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, Indonesian preachers creatively deliver religious messages in forms that are engaging, concise, and relatable to the younger generation. This innovative approach not only revitalizes Islamic education but also bridges the gap between traditional religious scholarship and modern digital culture. Conversely, in Pakistan, cyberspace serves as an influential arena for religious discourse, yet it is often characterized by more conservative interpretations and the firm intervention of government authorities to curb sectarian tensions and counter extremist propaganda.

Despite the significant potential of digital platforms for spreading Islamic teachings, both countries face similar challenges including the proliferation of

radical ideologies, misinformation, and online hate speech. These issues highlight the urgent need for comprehensive digital religious literacy, where Islamic education plays a central role in cultivating critical thinking, promoting tabayyun (verification of information), and fostering ethical online engagement. Educators, scholars, and policymakers must collaborate to ensure that cyberspace becomes a domain for constructive dialogue, spiritual growth, and peaceful coexistence. Future research may therefore focus on understanding how younger generations interpret and respond to online religious content, evaluating the role of Islamic educational institutions in fostering digital literacy, and comparing the effectiveness of different da'wah platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and podcasts in conveying moderate Islamic values. By doing so, cyberspace can evolve into a more inclusive, ethical, and sustainable ecosystem for Islamic education and interreligious harmony.

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