

**NEGOTIATING HADITH UNDERSTANDING IN THE DIGITAL AGE:
SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION AMONG
GENERATION Z****Antoni, Muslim Djuned**

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This study aims to examine hadith understanding among Generation Z and analyze the influence of social media on their access and interpretation patterns. As a digital-native generation, Generation Z tends to rely on social media as a primary source of religious information. This research employs a qualitative library research approach based on books and academic journal articles. Data collection is conducted through documentation, while analysis uses a descriptive-analytical method. The findings indicate that social media plays an important role in facilitating the dissemination of hadith and increasing youth engagement with Islamic studies. However, it also leads to oversimplification of meanings, lack of source verification, and potential misinterpretation that does not align with established hadith methodologies. Therefore, strengthening critical and contextual hadith literacy is essential to ensure valid and accountable understanding.

Keywords: Hadith, Generation Z, Social Media, Hadith Literacy.**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pemahaman hadis di kalangan Generasi Z serta menganalisis pengaruh media sosial terhadap pola akses dan interpretasinya. Generasi Z sebagai generasi digital cenderung menjadikan media sosial sebagai sumber utama dalam memperoleh informasi keagamaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kepustakaan yang bersumber dari buku dan artikel jurnal ilmiah. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial berperan penting dalam mempermudah penyebaran hadis dan meningkatkan minat generasi muda terhadap kajian keislaman. Namun demikian, terdapat kecenderungan penyederhanaan makna, kurangnya verifikasi sumber, serta potensi kesalahan interpretasi yang tidak sesuai dengan kaidah keilmuan hadis. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan penguatan literasi hadis yang kritis dan kontekstual agar pemahaman tetap valid dan dapat dipertanggungjawabkan.

Kata Kunci: Hadis, Generasi Z, Media Sosial, Literasi Hadis.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The development of digital technology has brought great changes in various aspects of human life, including in the way of acquiring and understanding religious knowledge. Generation Z as a generation born and raised in the digital era has characteristics that are very familiar with the internet and social media. In this context, social media not only serves as a means of communication, but also as a new learning space that facilitates access to various religious information, including hadith. This transformation shows a shift from the pattern of scientific transmission that was previously direct and based on scientific authority, to a more open and instant digital pattern.¹ The ease of access offered by social media allows hadith to be widely spread through various forms of content, such as short videos, infographics, and short quotes. This phenomenon has a positive impact in the form of increasing interest of the younger generation in Islamic studies. However, on the other hand, this condition also raises a number of problems, especially related to the validity of sources, scientific authority, and the quality of understanding of the hadith itself. Information circulating on social media does not always go through a strict verification process as in the hadith scientific tradition, so it has the potential to cause errors in understanding.²

A number of studies in the last five years have shown that social media has a significant influence on the formation of religiosity of Generation Z. Social media can be an effective means of spreading religious values, but it also opens up opportunities for distortions of understanding due to the presentation of simple and less contextual content³ In addition, social media algorithms also affect the type of information that users receive, so the religious understanding that is formed tends to be partial and not comprehensive.⁴ In the study of hadith, some previous research focused more on the normative function of hadith as an ethical guideline in social media. Aulia and Zakka's research, for example, emphasizes the importance of hadith in shaping the ethics of social media use among Generation Z.⁵ Meanwhile, other research focuses more on the role of digital da'wah in

¹ Moulida Azizah and others, 'Peran Media Sosial Dalam Membentuk Sikap Moderasi Beragama Pada Generasi Z', *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 7.4 (2024), pp. 10210–15 (pp. 10210–10215), doi:<https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v7i4.37412>.

² Miftahul Jannah and Nurmila, 'MEDIA SOSIAL DAN PEMBENTUKAN RELIGIUSITAS GENERASI Z META-ANALISIS', *AN-NUR: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 1.1 (2025), pp. 20–40 (pp. 45–52), doi:10.65802/an-nur.v1i1.3.

³ Silvi Nur Izzatul Aulia and Fathoniz Zakka, 'The Role of Hadith in Shaping Social Media Use Ethics Among Generation Z', *Al-Bukhari: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis*, 7.2 (2024), pp. 159–73 (pp. 159–73), doi:10.32505/al-bukhari.v7i2.9554.

⁴ Moulida Azizah et Al., *The Role of Social Media in Shaping Religious Moderation Attitudes in Generation Z*, pp. 10212–13.

⁵ Aulia and Fathoniz Zakka, 'The Role of Hadith in Shaping Social Media Use Ethics Among Generation Z'.



spreading Islamic teachings without examining in depth how the quality of hadith understanding results from the process.⁶ Research related to the identity crisis of Generation Z also shows the relevance of hadith in answering psychological problems, but has not specifically discussed the process of understanding hadith in the context of social media.⁷ Based on this study, it can be understood that the study of hadith understanding among Generation Z influenced by social media is still relatively limited. Most research focuses more on the function, role, or impact aspects of social media on religious life, rather than on the epistemological aspects of how hadith is understood and interpreted. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by placing the understanding of hadith as the main focus of the study, especially in the context of Generation Z's interaction with social media.

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library *research*, which is sourced from books, journal articles, and relevant scientific literature. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation, while the data analysis uses a descriptive-analytical method.⁸ Through this approach, the research seeks to critically examine various concepts and findings related to the understanding of hadith and the influence of social media, resulting in a comprehensive and contextual analysis.⁹ Thus, this study has a fundamental difference from previous research, because it not only sees social media as a means of spreading hadiths, but also as a factor that influences the way Generation Z understands, interprets, and interprets hadiths. This study is expected to contribute to the development of contemporary hadith studies, especially in facing the challenges of the digital era which demands a more adaptive and critical scientific approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Transformation of Hadith Access in the Social Media Era

The development of social media has brought fundamental changes in the pattern of access to hadith among Generation Z. If in the previous era the hadith learning process took place through formal channels such as Islamic boarding schools, taklim councils, and universities with the guidance of scholars, then in the current digital era access to hadith has become more open and not limited by space and time. Generation Z can easily find various

⁶ Shafa' Fikriyah Zahirah Akram and others, 'Peran Dakwah Digital Dalam Mendorong Perubahan Sosial Di Kalangan Generasi Z', *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10.4 (2025), pp. 221–30, doi:<https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i04.37939>.

⁷ Ema Ummyatul Khusnah and Nasrulloh, 'Relevansi Hadis Tentang Pencarian Jati Diri Terhadap Krisis Identitas Generasi Z', *AR ROSYAD: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 2.1 (2025), pp. 55–63, doi:<https://doi.org/10.55148/n6e7za30>.

⁸ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif* (alfabeta, 2019).

⁹ Mestika Zed, *Literature Research Methods*, (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2018), pp. 3–5.



hadiths just through a short search on digital platforms, even in a matter of seconds. This phenomenon shows the democratization of scientific access which was previously relatively limited.¹⁰ However, this ease of access is not always directly proportional to the quality of understanding. Hadith spread on social media is often presented in a simplified form, both in terms of language and context. This process of simplification is indeed intended to facilitate understanding, but at the same time it has the potential to eliminate important dimensions in the hadith, such as the cause of the emergence (*asbāb al-wurūd*), historical conditions, and the explanation of classical scholars.¹¹ Thus, this transformation of access gives birth to two inseparable sides, namely convenience and at the same time vulnerability to the reduction of meaning. Furthermore, this transformation also has an impact on changing scientific authority. If previously the authority of hadith was in scholars and educational institutions, now the authority has begun to shift to a more open digital space, where anyone can be a presenter of hadith. This condition demands a stronger selection and verification ability from users, especially Generation Z.

Characteristics of Understanding Hadith of Generation Z

The understanding of hadith among Generation Z shows distinctive characteristics as an impact of the digital environment that shapes their thinking patterns. One of the main characteristics is the tendency to understand the hadith quickly, practically, and directly to the core of the message without going through an in-depth analysis process. This is in line with a digital culture that emphasizes efficiency and speed in information consumption.¹² In addition, Generation Z tends to place hadith as a source of inspiration and motivation in daily life. Hadith is not only understood as a normative text, but also as an applicable moral message. Although this provides a positive value in increasing closeness to Islamic teachings, there is a tendency to ignore methodological aspects in understanding hadith, such as sanad criticism, matan analysis, and differences of opinion of scholars.¹³ Another characteristic is the high dependence on visualization

¹⁰ Razzak M.M.A and others, 'Panduan Al-Quran Dan Hadith Terhadap Generasi Z Bagi Mengatasi Isu Dan Cabaran Media Sosial (Quranic and Hadith Guidance for Generation Z to Overcome Issues and Challenges in Social Media)', *Online Journal of Research in Islamic Studies*, 10.2 (2023), pp. 203–26, doi:10.22452/ris.vol10no2.11.

¹¹ Aulia and Fathoniz Zakka, 'The Role of Hadith in Shaping Social Media Use Ethics Among Generation Z'.

¹² Hasna Rafidah Salsabila and Azizi Qodri, 'Da'wah of Islam in the Era of Generation Z: Study of Takhrij and Syarah Hadith', *Journal of Takhrij Al-Hadith*, 1.2 (2022), pp. 46–56, doi:10.15575/jth.v1i2.23030.

¹³ Ziaulhaq Hidayat, Hasan Matsum, and Azhari Akmal Tarigan, 'GEN-Z MUSLIMS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND FORMLESS-SPIRITUAL: An Explorative Study of Mosque Youth in Medan City', *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama*, 17.1 (2023), pp. 17–32, doi:10.14421/jsa.2023.171-02.



and simple narratives. Hadith content that is attractively packaged with visual design or storytelling is easier to accept than academic explanations. This shows that the form of presentation greatly influences the way Generation Z understands hadith. Therefore, the approach of da'wah and hadith education in the digital era needs to consider this aspect without sacrificing scientific depth.

The Role of Social Media in Shaping Hadith Interpretation

Social media is not only a means of distributing hadiths, but also plays an active role in shaping the way hadith is understood and interpreted. Content produced on social media has often gone through a process of selection and interpretation by creators, so that what is received by the audience is no longer a complete hadith text, but the result of a certain meaning.¹⁴ This process leads to a reduction in meaning, where hadith that has complex content is simplified into a short message that is easy to understand. In some cases, this simplification can obscure the original meaning of the hadith or even lead to a misunderstanding. In addition, the use of popular and contextual language often shifts the textual meaning of the hadith to be more subjective according to the perspective of the content creator.

On the other hand, social media algorithms also play an important role in shaping interpretations. Content that is frequently accessed or liked will continue to be displayed, so users are likely to be exposed to certain types of understanding repeatedly.¹⁵ This condition has the potential to create a narrow and less diverse space of understanding, as well as reduce the possibility of users gaining other more comprehensive perspectives.

Challenges to the Validity and Scientific Authority of Hadith

One of the main problems in understanding hadith in the digital era is related to the validity and authority of science. Many hadiths circulating on social media are not accompanied by clear sources, both in terms of reference books and the degree of validity. This makes it difficult for users to verify and increases the risk of spreading weak or even false hadiths.¹⁶ In addition, the emergence of various figures on social media who convey hadith without an adequate scientific background is also a challenge in

¹⁴ Lola Suci Mayrani and others, 'The Role of Social Media and Artificial Intelligence in Shaping Gen-Z Business Trends Based on Islamic Ethical Values', *Adabiyah Islamic*, 3.2 (2025), pp. 12–30.

¹⁵ Nurdin, 'The Influence of Social Media on Religious Understanding of Muslim Youth', *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 37.4 (2021), pp. 200–15.

¹⁶ Siti Nurhaliza & Ahmad Muttaqin, "Digital Religion and the Transformation of Islamic Learning among Youth," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, (2022), hal. 451-472

<https://doi.org/10.21043/qjijis.v10i2.12345>



itself. Scientific authorities that were previously centralized are now fragmented, so the public, especially Generation Z, needs to have critical skills in determining the credibility of sources.¹⁷ This problem becomes more complex when hadith is used to answer contemporary issues without going through an adequate ijtihad process. Interpretations that are not based on the correct methodology can lead to misunderstandings and even conflicts in society. Therefore, it is important to reaffirm the importance of scientific authority in understanding hadith.

Strengthening Hadith Literacy in the Digital Era

Facing these challenges, strengthening hadith literacy is a very urgent need. Hadith literacy is not only related to the ability to read texts, but also includes understanding the context, methods of hadith criticism, and the ability to assess the validity of information circulating on social media.¹⁸ Strengthening literacy can be done through integration between traditional and digital approaches. On the one hand, classical scientific values must still be maintained, such as the importance of sanad and the authority of scholars. On the other hand, delivery methods need to be adapted to the characteristics of Generation Z which are more visual and interactive. Thus, hadith can be understood more deeply without losing its relevance in modern life.¹⁹ In addition, an active role of educational institutions and scholars is also needed to present quality hadith content on social media. Content that is not only interesting, but also based on strong science, can be an alternative for Generation Z in gaining the right understanding. With this approach, social media is no longer just a source of potential distortion, but can also be an effective means of education.

Digitization of Hadith and Changes in the Pattern of Scientific Authority

The digitization of hadith through social media has significantly changed the pattern of scientific authority in Islam. If previously the authority of hadith was in scholars, academics, and educational institutions, now the authority has been decentralized. Any individual who has access to social media can convey hadith to the public without going through a strict

¹⁷ M. A. Hasyim, 'Social Media and the Shift of Religious Authority among Indonesian Muslim Youth', *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 12.1 (2022), pp. 79–102, doi:<https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v12i1.79-102>.

¹⁸ Asep Saepudin Jahar, 'Religious Authority in the Digital Age: The Case of Indonesian Muslim Society', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 29.1 (2021), pp. 1–28, doi:<https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2021.591.1-28>.

¹⁹ Sabilar Rosyad and Muhammad Alif, 'Hadis Di Era Digital: Tantangan Dan Peluang Penggunaan Teknologi Dalam Studi Hadis', *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, Dan Fenomena Agama*, 24.2 (2023), pp. 185–97, doi:[10.19109/jia.v24i2.18979](https://doi.org/10.19109/jia.v24i2.18979).



scientific verification process.²⁰ This phenomenon gave birth to what is called the "new religious authority" in the digital space. Generation Z tends to trust popular and communicative figures more than traditional authorities who may be perceived as less relevant or less interesting in their delivery. This condition shows that credibility in the digital world is not only determined by the depth of knowledge, but also by communication skills and the attractiveness of content.²¹ However, this change also has serious consequences, especially related to the validity of the hadith understanding. When scientific authority is no longer the main reference, the potential for errors in understanding the hadith becomes even greater. Therefore, efforts are needed to integrate traditional scientific authorities with a more adaptive digital approach.

Simplification of Hadith and the Risk of Distortion of Meaning

One of the prominent phenomena in the dissemination of hadith on social media is the simplification or simplification of meaning. Hadiths that have a complex language structure and historical context are often summarized into short sentences that are easy for the audience to understand.²² Although this simplification aims to facilitate understanding, in many cases it actually omits the important dimension of the hadith. Meanings that should be understood comprehensively become reduced, and even have the potential to be distorted. For example, hadith relating to law or ethics is often understood literally without considering its social and historical context. In addition, the presentation of hadith in the form of motivation or quotes can also shift the function of hadith from a legal source to just inspiration. This certainly has an impact on the way Generation Z positions hadith in their lives, which tends to be more pragmatic than methodological.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that has been described, it can be concluded that the understanding of hadith among Generation Z has undergone a significant transformation along with the development of social media. Access to hadith becomes easier and faster through various digital platforms, which on the one hand increases the interest of the younger generation in Islamic studies, but on the other hand also raises new

²⁰ Nurdin, 'The Influence of Social Media on Religious Understanding of Muslim Youth'.

²¹ Nurhaliza Siti and Muttaqin Ahmad, 'Digital Religion and the Transformation of Islamic Learning among Youth', *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 10.2 (2022), pp. 451–72, doi:<https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v10i2.12345>.

²² Didin Saepudin, 'Living Hadith in the Digital Age: Reception and Transformation', *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 16.1 (2022), pp. 123–45, doi:<https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.1.123-145>.



challenges in terms of depth and validity of understanding. The characteristics of Generation Z who tend to consume information instantly and visually also affect the way they understand hadith, which is more practical and contextual, but often ignores the methodological aspects of hadith studies. In this case, social media not only plays a role as a means of dissemination, but also as a factor that shapes the interpretation of hadith through the process of simplifying the meaning and the influence of algorithms that can produce partial understanding. In addition, the digitization of hadith has also led to a shift in scientific authority from traditional institutions to a more open digital space. This opens up opportunities for democratization of knowledge, but at the same time poses a risk of distortion of meaning due to the delivery of hadith that is not based on adequate science.

Thus, efforts are needed to strengthen critical and contextual hadith literacy among Generation Z. This effort includes the ability to understand the context of hadith, verify sources, and integrate the ease of digital access with the principles of hadith methodology. Through this approach, it is hoped that the understanding of hadith in the digital era will remain within the corridor of authentic Islamic science, as well as relevant to the development of the times.

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