

Prophetic Journalism and Madani Multilateralism: Rebuilding Epistemic Trust in Digital Da'wah

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Abstract	The digital information ecosystem in Indonesia and Southeast Asia is increasingly defined by an erosion of epistemic trust, in which religious content, da'wah messaging, and civic discourse circulate through informal, algorithmically mediated networks whose responsibility frameworks remain under-theorized. Existing scholarship on digital journalism has documented the technical and institutional dimensions of this crisis, but has largely proceeded from secular-liberal assumptions that do not directly engage the moral-relational resources already present in Islamic communicative traditions. Using a conceptual, library-based synthesis of Indonesia's prophetic social science tradition, the author's own earlier scriptural analysis of Islamic journalism, and recent Scopus-indexed international scholarship, this article develops Prophetic Epistemic Governance (PEG), a conceptual framework which extends Kuntowijoyo's ilmu sosial profetik and Saragih's (2018) earlier scriptural analysis of Islamic journalism into the domain of digital da'wah governance. PEG integrates four prophetic heuristics, Shiddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, and Fathanah, with two sensitizing constructs, Covenant Density and Verification Latency, and situates them within a wider model of Madani Multilateralism as an alternative to state-centric and platform-centric governance. The article defines Yaumul Marhamah as the ethical horizon to which this system orients, discusses PEG's propositions in relation to recent Scopus-indexed scholarship on digital religious authority, and concludes with a concrete agenda for the empirical research needed to test PEG's propositions in Indonesian and Southeast Asian digital da'wah settings. As a conceptual contribution, this article does not report empirical findings; it offers a theoretical architecture intended to guide such research.	
Keywords	Prophetic Journalism; Islamic Da'wah; Madani Multilateralism; Prophetic Epistemic Governance; Digital Discourse; Southeast Asia	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Digital platforms have become the primary space in which religious authority, public discourse, and da'wah messaging circulate across Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Alongside this expansion has come a well-documented erosion of epistemic trust: religiously framed misinformation circulates through closed messaging networks, informal digital preachers compete with established institutions of religious authority, and community fact-checking initiatives struggle to keep pace with the scale of circulation. This is not simply a regional variant of a global "epistemic crisis" in digital journalism; it is



a distinct configuration in which questions of religious legitimacy, communal trust, and information governance are inseparable.

International scholarship on digital journalism has extensively documented the structural dimensions of this crisis. Diakopoulos (2019) shows how the automation of news production introduces new and often opaque forms of editorial judgment into the newsroom, while Van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal (2018) demonstrate how the "platformization" of public communication reorganizes the relationship between institutions, audiences, and the technical infrastructures that mediate them. These accounts are analytically valuable, yet they are built almost entirely on secular-liberal assumptions about journalism, transparency, and organizational accountability. They offer little conceptual room for the moral-relational resources that Islamic communicative traditions have long cultivated, and even less engagement with how those resources might inform digital governance in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts across Southeast Asia. This diagnosis is reinforced by recent scholarship on algorithmic mediation, which shows how automated systems reshape the practices and underlying assumptions of communication itself (Monteiro-Krebs, Zaman, Geerts, & Caregnato, 2023); the present article extends that broader concern into a specific governance proposal for religious digital discourse.

This article responds to that gap. It does not claim to resolve it through new empirical data; rather, it proposes a conceptual framework, Prophetic Epistemic Governance (PEG), that draws on the Indonesian tradition of *ilmu sosial profetik* (prophetic social science) developed by Kuntowijoyo (1991) and on the author's own earlier scriptural analysis of Islamic journalism (Saragih, 2018), extending both into the specific problem of digital *da'wah* governance. This manuscript is a substantially revised and updated version of an earlier submission; between initial submission and the present revision, the literature review was deliberately updated to incorporate scholarship published through 2024–2025 (e.g., Astor, Khir-Allah, & Martínez-Cuadros, 2024; Sonni, 2025; Tabaika, Barizi, & Arif, 2025), so that the framework engages the most current international literature available at the time of revision rather than remaining fixed to the state of the field at first submission. The objective is deliberately modest and honest about its status: to articulate a theoretically coherent architecture grounded in *Shiddiq*, *Amanah*, *Tabligh*, and *Fathanah* as prophetic communicative virtues, and organized around the constructs of Covenant Density, Verification Latency, and Madani Multilateralism that can subsequently be operationalized and tested through empirical research.

Accordingly, the article is organized around three guiding propositions rather than empirically answered research questions:

1. P1: The application of the *Shiddiq-Amanah-Tabligh-Fathanah* heuristic into the editorial and *da'wah* practices of digital communicators can plausibly be expected to reduce what this article terms Verification Latency — the time and deliberative effort required to authenticate religiously significant claims circulating online.
2. P2: Covenant Density — the density of shared moral commitment between *da'i*, journalists, and community fact-checking networks — is a beneficial conceptual mediator between prophetic heuristic integration and immunity to religiously framed disinformation, though this mediating role is still a hypothesis to be tested rather than an established finding.
3. P3: Madani Multilateralism offers a theoretically coherent alternative to state-centric and platform-centric governance models for regulating religious digital discourse in pluralistic Southeast Asian societies.

The significance of this article consists in its attempt to build a bridge that the existing literature has left unbuilt: between Indonesia's own tradition of prophetic social science and the global scholarly

conversation on digital information governance. It is offered as a conceptual foundation, not as a report of completed empirical research.

Any framework that describes itself as "prophetic journalism" must first locate itself within the scholarly tradition from which that term already derives its meaning in Indonesia. The basic reference point is Kuntowijoyo's (1991) *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi untuk Aksi*, which introduced ilmu sosial profetik — prophetic social science — as a paradigm built on three pillars: humanization (humanisasi), liberation (liberasi), and transcendence (transendensi), derived from Kuntowijoyo's reading of Qur'anic verses on the "best community" (khayra ummah) called to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong while remaining based in faith. Masduki (2017) revisits this same paradigm from a pedagogical angle, showing that humanisasi, liberasi, and transendensi continue to travel well beyond their initial disciplinary home in social science — a portability that this article extends into digital governance. This tradition has continued to develop within Indonesian communication scholarship, including work published in venues such as *Profetik: Jurnal Komunikasi*, based at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, which has hosted Indonesian scholarship at the intersection of communication theory and Islamic social thought for several decades.

The present framework's more specific scriptural grounding comes from the author's own earlier work (Saragih, 2018), which described the communicative conduct of the Prophet Muhammad — most notably his correspondence with regional rulers inviting them toward Islam — as the prototypical model from which Shiddiq (truthfulness), Amanah (trustworthiness), Tabligh (conveyance), and Fathanah (wisdom/insight) emerge as textually anchored communicative virtues rather than categories imported from secular media theory. PEG is best understood as an attempt to extend that earlier scriptural analysis into the specific governance problems posed by digital, algorithmically mediated communication — a domain that did not yet exist in the form addressed here when the 2018 study was written.

This Indonesian genealogy needs to be read alongside, not instead of, the international literature on digital journalism and platform governance. Diakopoulos (2019) documents how automation reshapes editorial judgment within newsrooms, providing a vocabulary for describing the technical infrastructures through which digital da'wah content is now produced and circulated. Van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal (2018) show how platformization restructures the relationship between institutions and publics — a dynamic clearly visible in the way informal digital preachers and community fact-checking initiatives have partially displaced older, more centralized structures of religious authority in Indonesia. PEG does not compete with these accounts; it proposes that the moral-relational vocabulary of Shiddiq-Amanah-Tabligh-Fathanah offers a complementary normative layer that this largely structural literature has not developed.

More recent scholarship sharpens the immediacy of this gap. Arifianto (2020), writing in the Cambridge-published journal *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and National Studies of Southeast Asia*, traces how the struggle for Islamic authority in post-Reformasi Indonesia has migrated onto increasingly contested associational and digital terrain — a dynamic that amplifies precisely the Verification Latency problem this article seeks to name. Sonni (2025) traces how AI-driven content automation and personalization amplify disinformation and hate speech within Indonesia's digital media ecosystem, underscoring why a purely technical or platform-centric response is insufficient. Tabaika, Barizi, and Arif (2025) describe current efforts to reconstruct Islamic religious authority for digital mediums, a project closely related to, but distinct from, Madani Multilateralism as developed in Section 3.2. Hefner (2022) provides ethnographic evidence, from Indonesian Muslim schoolgirls' online practice, that

religious authority and moral liability are actively renegotiated at the level of everyday digital conduct rather than settled once by institutional decree, while Zaid, Fedtke, Shin, El Kadoussi, and Ibahrine (2022) show, in a study of Muslim-millennial social-media influencers, how such actors reimagine religious authority and practice through platform-native genres that circulate independently of formal religious institutions. Muttaqin (2020) further documents how social media simultaneously opens new religious-authority spaces for women and reproduces gendered biases inside them, underscoring that the fragmentation of authority this article addresses is neither uniform nor neutral. None of these studies proposes a governance vocabulary derived from prophetic communicative virtue; taken together, they describe the problem PEG is designed to address rather than giving a comparable normative response to it.

This problem also corresponds with the wider international field of digital religion studies, which offers useful comparative grounding even though it is not specific to Indonesia or to da'wah governance. Tsuria (2021) shows how digital media blur the boundary between the sacred and the profane in ways that destabilize traditional markers of religious legitimacy, a dynamic closely related to the erosion of epistemic trust this article addresses. Astor, Khir-Allah, and Martínez-Cuadros (2024) demonstrate that anonymity itself functions as a distinct axis along which digital Islamic authority is claimed or contested, carrying direct implications for how Amanah (accountability) might operate in anonymous or pseudonymous online spaces. Andok (2023) extends this concern by showing how algorithmically curated "filter bubbles" can insulate religious audiences from cross-checking and dissenting information, a mechanism directly relevant to how this article conceptualizes Verification Latency in Section 3.1. Evolvi (2022), writing on Christian rather than Muslim digital communities, proposes a theory of hypermediation that describes how platforms reshape religious discourse across material, institutional, and technological registers, regardless of confessional tradition — suggesting that PEG's heuristics may have purchase beyond the Southeast Asian Islamic context in which they were developed. Situating PEG within this international literature clarifies its contribution: whereas digital religion scholarship has been primarily descriptive and diagnostic, PEG proposes a normative vocabulary of governance grounded in prophetic communicative virtue.

To be transparent about the framework's genealogy, it is necessary to distinguish explicitly which elements of PEG are newly synthesized in the present article and which restate architecture already established in the author's own prior work. The author's own earlier work provides further, more direct genealogical grounding for PEG than the 2018 study alone. Qorib, Saragih, and Suwandi (2019), *Jurnalistik Islam*, establish the essential account of Islamic journalism from which the present framework's normative vocabulary derives — an account whose concern with ethical decision making under commercial and institutional pressure is corroborated by recent cross-national survey evidence on journalistic practice in Muslim-majority countries (Hamada, Abdel-Salam, & Bebawi, 2024), precisely the tension PEG's Amanah and Shiddiq heuristics are meant to address. Saragih (2025a), *Jurnalistik Profetik: Integrasi Nilai Akhlak Nubuwwah, Teknologi AI, Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta serta Hukum dan Etika Penyiaran Jurnalistik*, already integrates prophetic akhlaq, AI-mediated technology, the Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC), and broadcasting law and ethics — the identical elements this article organizes as PEG, Section 3.3's discussion of KBC, and Section 3.2's governance model. Specifically, the four-heuristic foundation (Shiddiq-Amanah-Tabligh-Fathanah), the KBC integration discussed in Section 3.3, and the broad normative orientation of Madani Multilateralism restate and consolidate architecture already articulated in Saragih (2025a) and Saragih (2025b); what is newly synthesized in the present article is (i) the translation of that architecture into the two sensitizing constructs of

Covenant Density and Verification Latency, which do not appear in the 2025a/2025b monographs; (ii) the explicit situating of PEG against the international, Scopus-indexed digital-journalism and digital-religion literatures engaged throughout this article, which the monographs do not undertake; and (iii) the formulation of Madani Multilateralism specifically as a governance alternative to state-centric and platform-centric models, together with the empirical research agenda outlined in Section 3.5. Readers are accordingly advised to treat claims about the STAF heuristics and KBC as resting on the author's prior monographs, and claims about Covenant Density, Verification Latency, and the state-/platform-centric governance contrast as the original contribution of this article. PEG builds directly on this earlier monograph's normative architecture, extending it into a governance framework developed for an international, peer-reviewed audience and situated explicitly within the digital-governance literature engaged throughout this article. Read together, these bodies of scholarship point toward a genuine gap rather than a fully occupied space: a conceptual framework that treats prophetic communicative virtue not as a rhetorical gloss on secular media theory, but as the organizing logic of a governance model in its own right, tested against and building upon Indonesia's own tradition of prophetic social science.

2. METHODS

This article uses a conceptual, library-based research design rather than an empirical study design. Consistent with conceptual scholarship in communication studies, the objective is not to collect primary data but to synthesize the established body of literature into a new, internally logical theoretical architecture and to derive a set of testable propositions for future empirical work. To make the synthesis auditable, the literature search underlying this article followed an explicit, if purposive rather than systematic, strategy. International sources were identified primarily through Scopus, supplemented by Google Scholar for cross-checking citation counts and identifying closely related work not yet Scopus-indexed. The search covered publications from 2019 to 2025, using combinations of the keywords "digital journalism," "platform governance," "religious authority," "digital da'wah," "Islamic communication," "epistemic trust," and "multistakeholder governance," restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles and university-press books in English or Indonesian. From the initial pool of results, sources were retained if they met at least one of three inclusion criteria: (a) they documented a structural or technical dimension of the digital-journalism "epistemic crisis" (e.g., Diakopoulos, 2019; Van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018; Monteiro-Krebs, Zaman, Geerts, & Caregnato, 2023); (b) they addressed digital religious authority or da'wah practice specifically in Indonesian or Southeast Asian contexts (e.g., Arifianto, 2020; Hefner, 2022; Zaid, Fedtke, Shin, El Kadoussi, & Ibahrine, 2022; Muttaqin, 2020; Sonni, 2025; Tabaika, Barizi, & Arif, 2025); or (c) they contributed to the international, cross-confessional field of digital religion studies or multistakeholder platform governance that this article draws on for comparative grounding (e.g., Tsuria, 2021; Astor, Khir-Allah, & Martínez-Cuadros, 2024; Andok, 2023; Evolvi, 2022; Griffin, 2023). This is a purposive rather than a systematic or PRISMA-style review; the aim was representative coverage of the specific conceptual gap the article addresses rather than an exhaustive census of the field, and this limitation is acknowledged explicitly here rather than left implicit.

The synthesis draws on three families of sources. The first is the Indonesian tradition of ilmu sosial profetik (prophetic social science), anchored in Kuntowijoyo (1991) and its pedagogical elaboration by Masduki (2017), which supplies the humanisasi-liberasi-transendensi paradigm that PEG extends into digital governance. The second is the author's own earlier body of work on Islamic journalism ethics (Qorib, Saragih, & Suwandi, 2019; Saragih, 2018, 2025a, 2025b), which supplies the

scriptural grounding for the four prophetic heuristics — Shiddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, and Fathanah — and the integrative architecture generalized here as Madani Multilateralism. The third is recent international, predominantly Scopus-indexed scholarship (2019–2025) on digital journalism, platform governance, and digital religious authority, used both to identify the specific conceptual gap this article addresses and, in the Findings and Discussion section, to examine the plausibility and limitations of the resultant framework.

The reliance on the second source family requires an explicit methodological caveat. Two of its four components — Saragih (2025a) and Saragih (2025b) — are published by non-academic presses (CV Global Kreatif Media; CV Angkasa Media Literasi) rather than peer-reviewed venues, and neither has undergone independent peer review. This article treats those two monographs strictly as a record of the author's own prior conceptual development — that is, as evidence of what has already been articulated, not as independently corroborated theoretical claims. Wherever possible, the present article substitutes or supplements that grounding with independently peer-reviewed corroboration: the ethical-decision-making concerns underlying Qorib, Saragih, and Suwandi (2019) are cross-checked against recent peer-reviewed, cross-national survey evidence from Muslim-majority countries (Hamada, Abdel-Salam, & Bebawi, 2024), and the multi-stakeholder governance logic underlying Madani Multilateralism is developed in explicit dialogue with the peer-reviewed platform-governance literature (Griffin, 2023) rather than resting on Saragih (2025b) alone. Where no independent corroboration could be located — most notably for the specific integration of the Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta (KBC) discussed in Section 3.3 — this article flags the claim in the text as resting on the author's own unreviewed prior work, so that readers can weigh that dependency explicitly rather than encountering it as an unmarked assumption.

The construction of the framework proceeds in three analytic steps, each corresponding to a subsection of the Findings and Discussion section below. First, the four prophetic communicative virtues are drawn from the author's earlier scriptural analysis (Saragih, 2018) and reformulated as conceptual heuristics for digital governance, alongside two sensitizing constructs — Covenant Density and Verification Latency — that are proposed to link those heuristics toward observable outcomes. Second, these heuristics and constructs are situated within a proposed institutional model, Madani Multilateralism, built through generalizing the author's integrative architecture in Saragih (2025b) from the ecological to the epistemic domain [REVISI], and cross-read against the independently peer-reviewed multistakeholder governance literature (e.g., Griffin, 2023) to ensure the resulting model is not solely dependent on that monograph. Third, the obtained framework is read against recent Scopus-indexed literature on digital religious authority, algorithmic mediation, and multi-stakeholder governance to assess where its propositions are plausible and where their assumptions remain exposed. Because this is a conceptual article, no sampling, instrumentation, primary data collection, or statistical analysis was undertaken, and no such procedures are reported. The three guiding propositions (P1–P3) stated in the Introduction are advanced as claims to be tested in future research, not as findings already established by the method described here. A concrete design for that future empirical work — comprising a quantitative, a qualitative, and a comparative content-analytic strand — is presented as part of the Findings and Discussion section (Section 3.5), where it functions as a research agenda rather than as the method of the present study.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the conceptual framework produced by the synthesis described in Section 2 — Prophetic Epistemic Governance (PEG), its constituent heuristics and constructs, the Madani

Multilateralism governance model, and the Yaumul Marhamah horizon concept — and then discusses that framework against recent Scopus-indexed scholarship on digital religious authority. A single methodological note applies to the whole of Section 3 and is stated here rather than repeated in each subsection: because this article is conceptual rather than empirical, every construct, model, and proposition presented below (PEG's heuristics, Covenant Density, Verification Latency, Madani Multilateralism, and Yaumul Marhamah) is advanced as a theoretical claim to be tested, not as a finding already established. Later subsections flag this only where a specific point genuinely requires it, rather than restating it as a general disclaimer.

3.1. Prophetic Epistemic Governance (PEG): Four Heuristics and Two Sensitizing Constructs

PEG is organized around four prophetic heuristics, each treated here as a conceptual, not yet measured, communicative virtue:

1. Shiddiq (truthfulness) denotes an internalized devotion to veracity that operates upstream of formal verification — a disposition, cultivated rather than enforced, that forms what a communicator is willing to source, repeat, or transmit in the first place.
2. Amanah (trustworthiness) denotes accountability to the community for the integrity of what is conveyed, including willingness to be corrected and to correct oneself publicly.
3. Tabligh (conveyance) denotes the responsible, non-manipulative transmission of a message — conveyance that resists distortion for the sake of engagement or virality.
4. Fathanah (wisdom/insight) denotes the interpretive discernment required to read context, anticipate consequences, and exercise sound judgment in ambiguous informational environments.

These four heuristics are elaborated at greater length in Saragih (2018), which frames the underlying ethical choice between accurate and manipulated information as a decision that every communicator and every institution ultimately makes for themselves — a choice whose contemporary stakes are corroborated by recent cross-national survey evidence on the tension between commercial pressure and journalistic integrity in Muslim-majority contexts (Hamada, Abdel-Salam, & Bebawi, 2024). This article formalizes that earlier scriptural argument into a governance vocabulary suited to networked, algorithmically mediated communication.

Building on these four heuristics, this article proposes two further constructs — Covenant Density and Verification Latency — as sensitizing concepts rather than validated metrics, intended to give researchers a shared vocabulary for future operationalization.

Covenant Density (Cd) is proposed as a conceptual description of the density of shared moral commitment within a network of da'i, journalists, editors, and community fact-checkers — for example, the extent to which such actors engage in collaborative verification, hold each other accountable to shared ethical standards, and resist engagement-driven sensationalism. Its operationalization — including item development, reliability testing, and factor analysis — is identified in Section 3.5 as an essential next step for empirical researchers.

Verification Latency (VL) is proposed as a conceptual description of the time and deliberative effort required to authenticate a religiously significant claim before it is conveyed further. This article advances, as a testable proposition, that higher Covenant Density plausibly corresponds to lower Verification Latency, because collective, trust-based verification distributes the cognitive burden of authentication across a network rather than concentrating it on any single actor.

3.2 Madani Multilateralism as an Alternative Governance Model

Madani Multilateralism is proposed here as a governance model situated between two dominant alternatives in the existing literature: state-centric regulation, which relies on formal legal and administrative authority, and platform-centric governance, which relies on the technical and commercial policies of platform companies (Van Dijck et al., 2018). Both models have well-documented shortcomings in religiously plural societies: state regulation risks being perceived as instrumentalizing religious authority for political ends, while platform governance is calibrated primarily to commercial engagement metrics rather than communal trust or theological nuance.

Madani Multilateralism proposes a third structure: governance distributed across networks of religious and civic institutions linked by shared covenantal commitments — invoking the historical concept of the Madinah Charter (Piagam Madinah) as a model of pluralistic civic covenant, and extending it into the digital domain. In Indonesia, community-led initiatives already illustrate elements of this model in practice, even though they were not designed with PEG's vocabulary in mind. Mafindo (Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia), for instance, has operated since 2016 as a volunteer-based, cross-institutional fact-checking network that partners with religious organizations, universities, and government bodies to counter the spread of hoaxes (Nurhadi et al., 2020). This same distributed logic is visible, in a more contested form, in the authority-reconstruction efforts described by Tabaika, Barizi, and Arif (2025), in which digital platforms turn into sites where faith-based legitimacy is actively renegotiated rather than simply transmitted. Those initiatives are discussed here only as illustrations of what a Madani-style distributed governance structure can look like in practice; they are not presented as empirical tests of PEG.

This governance model builds directly on the author's own integrative work in Saragih (2025b), *Paradigma Jurnalistik Ekoteologi Islam Nusantara*, which combines tawhid, the Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, local wisdom (kearifan lokal), and Pancasila ethics into a single normative architecture for Indonesian Islamic ecotheological journalism. Madani Multilateralism generalizes that architecture from the ecological domain to the domain of digital information governance: where the earlier work asks how tawhid, local wisdom, and Pancasila jointly ground ecological accountability, this article asks how the same three elements — communal covenant, local institutional pluralism, and civic ethical consensus — can jointly ground epistemic responsibility in digital da'wah. [REVISI, konsisten dengan revisi Methods] As noted in Section 2, this generalization is read alongside the independently peer-reviewed multistakeholder governance literature (Griffin, 2023, discussed further in Section 3.4) precisely because Saragih (2025b) alone, as a self-published monograph, cannot independently corroborate the model's institutional plausibility.

The conceptual contribution of this section is to describe Madani Multilateralism as a plausible institutional form for operationalizing Covenant Density at scale — not to claim that existing Indonesian initiatives already constitute evidence for PEG's propositions.

3.3 Yaumul Marhamah: Defining the Ethical Horizon

A recurring weakness identified in earlier drafts of this system was the use of Yaumul Marhamah as an evocative but undefined phrase. This article addresses that directly. Yaumul Marhamah (literally, "a time/state of mercy") is a term formulated by the author for this framework, used here as a normative horizon concept: it names the aspirational state of communal life toward which PEG's governance mechanisms are oriented, rather than a measurable variable or a pre-existing, fixed theological term of art.

It is grounded in, though not identical to, the Qur'anic concept of *rahmatan lil alamin* (mercy for all the worlds; QS. Al-Anbiya 21:107), which describes the universal scope of the Prophetic mission as a mercy extending to all creation. Where *rahmatan lil alamin* describes the character of the Prophetic mission itself, *Yaumul Marhamah*, as coined and used in this article, describes a projected communal condition: a digital public sphere in which covenantal trust, rather than adversarial competition, has become the dominant mode of relating across difference. It functions in this system analogously to a regulative ideal in normative theory — a horizon that orients institutional design (Madani Multilateralism) and practice (the PEG heuristics) without itself being directly measured. Because *Yaumul Marhamah* is introduced here as the author's own conceptual coinage — grounded in, but not a direct quotation or paraphrase of, an existing curricular or pedagogical source — no claim of pre-existing textual provenance beyond the Qur'anic grounding above is made or required. Any resemblance to values-based religious-education discourse in Indonesia is acknowledged as general intellectual context rather than as a specific, citable source.

3.4 Discussion

Read together, the propositions and constructs developed in Sections 3.1–3.3 raise interpretive questions that recent Scopus-indexed scholarship on digital religious authority helps to sharpen, even though none of that scholarship constitutes a direct empirical test of PEG. This section discusses PEG's plausibility in light of that literature and identifies where the framework's assumptions are most exposed. A first point concerns the terrain in which *Amanah* would have to operate. Ethnographic and platform-based studies show that religious authority online is no longer anchored primarily in formal institutions: Hefner (2022) documents how Indonesian Muslim schoolgirls negotiate moral authority and correction in everyday online interaction rather than through institutional adjudication, while Zaid, Fedtke, Shin, El Kadoussi, and Ibahrine (2022) show that Muslim-millennial social media influencers construct religious legitimacy through platform-native genres that operate independently of, and sometimes in tension with, established religious bodies. Muttaqin (2020) adds that this diffusion of authority is not gender-neutral, opening new interpretive space for women while simultaneously reproducing older biases in new digital forms. Taken together, this literature suggests that *Amanah*'s demand for public correctability is harder to institutionalize than P1 and P2 imply, since the diffuse, platform-native actors who now shape religious discourse commonly lack the formal responsibility frameworks — editors, ombudspersons, professional codes — that anchor *Amanah* in more centralized *da'wah* settings. PEG's contribution, read against this literature, is to propose that covenantal accountability can be cultivated informally within Covenant Density networks even where formal organizational accountability is absent; whether such informal accountability is sufficient to reduce Verification Latency in practice remains, as Section 3.5 details, an open empirical question.

A second point concerns the mechanism proposed for Verification Latency itself. Andok (2023) shows that algorithmically curated religious filter bubbles can insulate audiences from cross-checking and dissenting information, reinforcing rather than correcting unsubstantiated claims within homogeneous networks. This finding lends additional theoretical plausibility to P1 and P2: if filter bubbles are a structural driver of high Verification Latency, then Covenant Density's proposed mechanism — distributing the cognitive burden of authentication across a trust-based network — offers a substantively different remedy than platform-level interventions such as algorithmic re-ranking, because it targets the relational infrastructure of verification rather than the recommendation system that delivers content. At the same time, this comparison exposes a limitation PEG does not yet resolve:

a covenant network that is itself religiously or ideologically homogeneous could function as a Covenant-Density analog of a filter bubble, raising Verification Latency's twin risk of insular consensus in place of genuine cross-checking. Distinguishing high-Cd verification from bubble-reinforced consensus is therefore a conceptual boundary condition that future operationalization of Cd, discussed in Section 3.5, would need to build into any measurement instrument.

A third point concerns Madani Multilateralism's positioning relative to the wider governance literature on multi-stakeholder models. Griffin (2023) gives a cautionary account of multistakeholderism in social media governance, arguing that distributing authority across public and private actors does not automatically produce democratic accountability when power among those actors remains unequal. This argument applies with particular force to Madani Multilateralism: describing governance as "distributed across networks of religious and civic institutions" (Section 3.2) does not by itself specify how power asymmetries among da'i, established religious bodies, fact-checking organizations, and platform companies would be adjudicated within that network. Read alongside Griffin (2023), Madani Multilateralism's covenantal framing should be understood as a normative aspiration for how such actors ought to relate to one another, not as a guarantee that distributed governance structures will, in practice, prevent reproducing the accountability gaps documented in secular multistakeholder settings.

Read as a whole, this discussion suggests that PEG's four heuristics and its two sensitizing constructs are plausible extensions of, rather than corrections to, the empirical literature on digital religious authority: that literature documents precisely the fragmented, algorithmically mediated, and power-asymmetric conditions under which Shiddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, and Fathanah would need to be cultivated for Covenant Density to meaningfully reduce Verification Latency. The discussion also clarifies what the empirical agenda in Section 3.5 must focus on: tools able to differentiate genuine covenantal verification from insular consensus, and a specification of accountability mechanisms inside Madani Multilateralism robust enough to withstand the critique already leveled by the multistakeholder governance literature against comparable models elsewhere.

3.5 Implications regarding Future Empirical Research

What follows is a proposed design for the empirical research program needed to test P1–P3, offered as an agenda for future work by the author or other researchers rather than as a completed study. Quantitative strand (proposed). A future study could develop and validate a multi-item scale operationalizing Shiddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, and Fathanah as measurable dimensions of newsroom or da'wah-network practice, following standard scale-development procedures (item generation, expert review, pilot testing, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and reliability testing) before any structural model is estimated. Only once such an instrument exists and has been validated would it be appropriate to test the proposed relationship between Covenant Density and Verification Latency using structural equation modeling or an equivalent technique, with full reporting of model fit indices, factor loadings, and confidence intervals.

Qualitative strand (proposed). Semi-structured interviews with editors, da'i active on digital channels, and community fact-checkers across Indonesia and, prospectively, Malaysia, Brunei, and Muslim-minority communities in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand, would allow the heuristics proposed here to be examined against lived professional experience, with transparent thematic coding and full reporting of the variety of perspectives encountered.

Comparative and content-analytic strand (proposed). Systematic content analysis of verified and debunked religious content circulating on Indonesian and Southeast Asian digital channels — potentially in partnership with existing fact-checking networks such as Mafindo — could provide an observational basis for testing whether Covenant Density, once operationalized, actually predicts faster or more accurate resolution of contested religious claims.

These three strands, and particularly the qualitative strand's four-jurisdiction scope, carry non-trivial feasibility constraints that should be acknowledged rather than left implicit. Cross-national access to da'i and community fact-checkers in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Muslim-minority communities in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand would require separate institutional ethics clearance in each jurisdiction, local research partnerships or gatekeepers able to broker trust with da'wah practitioners who may be wary of being formally studied, and translation/back-translation of interview instruments across at least Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Melayu, and relevant local languages. Resource constraints are also material: a four-jurisdiction qualitative strand of this kind would typically require multi-year funding and a distributed research team with in-country members, rather than being feasible as a single-investigator project. Consequently, this article recommends that future researchers treat the design outlined above as a long-term, likely multi-institutional research program — potentially phased, beginning with the Indonesian case before extending cross-nationally — rather than as a single study to be undertaken as originally presented. Framing this subsection explicitly as a research agenda, rather than folding it into a fabricated methods section, is a deliberate choice: it allows PEG's propositions to be evaluated on their conceptual merits now, while recognizing that their empirical status remains open.

4. CONCLUSION

This article has developed Prophetic Epistemic Governance (PEG) as a conceptual framework for rebuilding epistemic trust within Southeast Asian digital *da'wah* ecosystems. By extending Kuntowijoyo's *ilmu sosial profetik* and scriptural analysis of Islamic journalism into the digital sphere, PEG integrates four prophetic communicative heuristics (Shiddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, Fathanah) with Covenant Density and Verification Latency within a Madani Multilateralism model oriented toward *Yaumul Marhamah*. Serving as an integrative foundation for future research rather than a statement of empirical facts, this framework can be empirically tested and operationalized through partnerships with established Indonesian hubs, such as *Profetik: Jurnal Komunikasi* (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta) for academic scale development and Mafindo (*Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia*) for real-world verification research. To remain scientifically robust and falsifiable, future empirical testing must account for potential disconfirming evidence across three key propositions: P1 would be disconfirmed if high adoption of STAF heuristics fails to reduce Verification Latency or if algorithmic virality systematically overrides editorial checks; P2 would be disconfirmed if high Covenant Density increases vulnerability to disinformation by creating insular echo chambers; and P3 would be disconfirmed if Madani Multilateralism reproduces secular power asymmetries or fails to operate independently of state coercion and commercial platform policies. Finally, acknowledging its genealogical limitations — specifically that core normative constructs rely heavily on the author's prior monographs — the ultimate validity of PEG depends on independent scholarly validation. External researchers unattached to its initial formulation must now test, refine, or challenge these constructs across diverse Indonesian and broader Southeast Asian contexts.

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