

# Transforming Religious Legitimacy through Digital Advocacy: The Emergence of Moral Authority in Indonesia

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Received: 20/02/2025

Revised: 11/06/2025

Accepted: 30/06/2025

## Abstract

The increasing cases of abuse of religious authority in Indonesia has given rise to a crisis of legitimacy against religious institutions and figures while opening up space for re-examination of the source of moral authority in the digital era. This study aims to explain the mechanism of legitimacy transformation in the context of *religious authority crisis* through advocacy practices based on religious values, with the Yakuza Maneges Movement as a *critical case*. The study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design and *Digital Discourse Analysis* (DDA) on 64 online news, 51 Instagram uploads, and 395 public comments analyzed during January-July 2026. Data were analyzed using *Reflexive Thematic Analysis* to identify patterns of relationships between authority crises, advocacy practices, digital visibility, public evaluation, and the formation of moral legitimacy. The results of the study showed four interrelated processes, namely *religious authority crisis*, legitimacy negotiations in the digital space, reconstruction of social piety, and the formation of *moral authority*. The findings show that religious genealogy provides initial social capital, but does not automatically guarantee moral authority. Moral legitimacy is formed when social capital is realized through ethical advocacy, victimhood, and accountable actions that are visible to the public and continuously evaluated through digital interactions. This study proposes a *Performance-Based Moral Authority* (PBMA) model that specifies a mechanism for transforming legitimacy from the initial source of authority to moral authority through ethical action, digital visibility, and real-time public evaluation.

## Keywords

Crisis of religious authority; Digital discourse analysis; Yakuza Movement Maneges; Social piety; Religious Advocacy

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Religious authority is the foundation that determines the direction of religious life because it is a source of reference in interpreting Islamic teachings as well as building public trust in religious leaders. In the Islamic tradition, this authority is not born solely from a formal position, but from the recognition of moral integrity, scientific competence, and the ability to interpret religious teachings responsibly. Fadl (2001, pp. 18–19) explains that *religious authority* persuasive, that is, authority obtained through the ability to provide interpretation that can be accounted for to the community of believers, so it is different from authoritarianism which relies on the imposition of truth. In line with that, Zaman (2007, p. 38) It



shows that the authority of the ulama is built through the mastery of religious knowledge, interpretive capacity, and public acceptance of their religious competence. Hallaq (2009, pp. 40–41) added that the sustainability of the authority is maintained through scientific traditions, Islamic legal education, and moral communities that maintain the continuity of sharia interpretation. In the Indonesian context, Bruinessen (2012, pp. 85,164) and Dhofier (2011, p. 58) shows that pesantren become the main institution that reproduces religious authority through the transmission of scientific sanad, kiai example, and social recognition that develops within the community.

Although *religious authority* Normatively built on moral integrity, scientific competence, and public trust, in recent decades various countries have faced increasing abuses of religious authority (*religious authority abuse*) that erode the foundation. Reports of sexual violence, abuse of power relations, and protective practices against perpetrators involving religious institutions and leaders show that religious authority can be used to build dominance, silence victims, and even legitimize violence in the name of religion. Lucia (2025, pp. 761,762) suggests that the rise in cases of sexual violence in religious contexts is driving a shift in the way society evaluates religious authority, which is no longer solely based on institutional status, but also on accountability, transparency, and partiality towards survivors. In line with that, Harvey (2025, pp. 1,2) explains that the abuse of charismatic authority has triggered a decline in public trust in religious institutions while strengthening the demand for more open accountability mechanisms. In subsequent developments, the digital space is accelerating this process by making various cases of abuse of authority part of the public discourse that continues to be debated. Hjarvard (2016, pp. 2,5) explains that the media has evolved into an arena for the formation as well as testing of authority, while Campbell and Tsuria (2021, p. 87) It shows that recognition of religious actors is increasingly influenced by public interaction and evaluation in the digital space.

This development is also reflected in Indonesia, where the increase in cases of sexual violence in religious educational institutions shows that the abuse of religious authority is no longer understood as an individual deviation, but rather as a structural problem related to power relations in religious institutions. Fuadi et al (2024, pp. 2,5) shows that the inequality of power relations in the pesantren environment is one of the factors that allows sexual violence to occur, while Bin Mohamad et al (2024, p. 253) explained that the manipulation of religious doctrine and the repositioning of religious authority are used to maintain dominance over the victim as well as hinder the disclosure of cases. The findings are reinforced by Mahmud et al (2025, p. 870) which confirms that the weak institutional protection system increases the vulnerability of students to sexual violence. Kholik et al (2025, p. 1831) added that prevention requires institutional cultural reform oriented towards child protection. The accumulation of these events has triggered the erosion of public trust in some religious institutions. Faishol et al (2026, p. 578) shows that the restoration of trust requires accountable moral leadership, ethical management of power relations, and institutional protection of students. The accumulation of these problems reflects *legitimacy crisis* in religious life at the same time shows a change in the way society assesses the feasibility of religious and social actors as a source of moral reference.

One of the phenomena that represents this change is the emergence of the Yakuza Manedes Movement, an advocacy movement based on religious values that consistently assists victims of sexual violence, including when cases involve religious leaders and institutions in various regions in East Java. Various media reports show that this movement provides legal assistance and psychosocial support to survivors, facilitates reporting to law enforcement officials, oversees the judicial process, and utilizes digital space to build public oversight of case handling (Admin, 2026; Aulia, 2026; Deny, 2026; Gunawan, 2026; Rohman, 2026). This movement has different characteristics from civil advocacy

organizations in general because it developed from a strong religious tradition environment. Its founder is a descendant of KH. Hamim Tohari Djazuli (Gus Miek), a charismatic scholar who has a wide influence in the Javanese Islamic tradition, so that the genealogy became part of the movement's early social capital. In its development, Yakuza Maneges not only appeared as a victim assistance organization, but also as a civil society actor who openly oversaw accountability in handling cases of abuse of religious authority.

This phenomenon presents an academic problem in the study of contemporary religious authority. Religious authority has been largely explained through scientific traditions, institutional positions, religious capacity, and genealogy that provide the basis for social acceptance. However, the case of Yakuza Maneges shows a more complex situation: a movement with genealogical roots in religious tradition uses this position to advocate for victims and correct abuses of authority from the religious environment. The problem is not simply whether religious genealogy is still a source of authority, but how it interacts with advocacy practices and public evaluation in the digital space. The mechanisms that link religious identity, advocacy actions, and the formation of moral positions have not been widely explained in contemporary religious authority studies.

The study of changing religious authority in contemporary Muslim society develops in three main tendencies. *First*, research on *religious authority* shows that religious authority is a dynamic construction, formed through the interaction between scientific competence, social involvement, and community recognition, so that it no longer depends solely on the institutional position or genealogy of scholars. Naim and Kurniawan (2025, p. 331) explains that religious authority is an ever-changing arena of contestation, while Tabaika et al (2025, p. 371) shows that digital media reconstructs the process of authority formation through a more participatory relationship between religious actors and audiences. In line with that, Suresman and Faqihuddin (2026, p. 2) It shows that the role of the kiai has shifted from traditional religious leaders to actors of social change who contribute to community leadership, digital adaptation, and public advocacy. *Second*, research on the abuse of religious authority places power relations, doctrinal manipulation, and weak victim protection as the main factors that trigger a crisis of trust in religious institutions (Bin Mohamad et al., 2024, p. 253; Fuadi et al., 2024, p. 2).

*Third*, a study on digital activism shows that civil society organizations leverage digital spaces to build collaboration, mobilize public support, and drive institutional change through organized advocacy practices (Masduki & Wendratama, 2025, p. 3; Mindel et al., 2024, p. 2). In the context of religious organizations, Ahyar et al (2024, p. 109) shows that contemporary religious practices are increasingly realized through social actions that are educational, humanist, and *problem solving*, so that da'wah is no longer understood solely as the verbal delivery of teachings. Furthermore, Tijani and Banyal (2024, p. 33) It shows that religious organizations are repositioning through adaptation to social media and the development of digital strategies to maintain relevance and legitimacy in the midst of the emergence of new authorities in the digital space.

These three trends have explained important components of changing religious authority: the dynamics of sources of legitimacy, the impact of abuse of authority, and the ability of digital activism to build public participation and support. However, the relationship between these components still needs a more specific explanation. Research on *religious authority* shows that sources of authority acceptance can transcend institutional status and genealogy, while studies on *religious authority abuse* show how power relations and manipulation of authority can erode trust. On the other hand, studies on digital activism show that advocacy can generate solidarity, participation, and institutional change. What has not been sufficiently explained is the mechanism that brings together these three processes

when the legitimacy of a religious actor is in crisis: how inherited and genealogically rooted religious social capital interacts with ethical advocacy practices as well as public evaluations of the actor's actions.

Although previous research has shown that the digital space is an arena for the reconstruction and negotiation of religious authority, the focus is mainly directed at changing da'wah patterns, actor-audience relationships, and the repositioning of religious organizations in the face of the digital environment (Tabaika et al., 2025, p. 371; Tijani & Banyal, 2024, p. 33). Tabaika et al. show that digital audiences play an active role in negotiating and co-producing authority through *real-time interactions*, while Tijani and Banyal emphasize the adaptation and repositioning of religious organizations through digital strategies. However, the narrative of digital reconstruction and repositioning has not specifically explained how inherited and genealogically rooted religious social capital works when an actor's legitimacy is in crisis, then tested through ethical advocacy practices and real-time public evaluation. In other words, the problem is no longer just how religious authority is reconstructed in the digital space, but how genealogical legitimacy as an initial social resource can be confirmed, questioned, or transformed through a visible moral response to a crisis.

Thus, the research gap does not lie in the digitization, reconstruction, or repositioning of religious authority, but in the unexplained mechanism of transformation of genealogically inherited religious social capital into moral authority through the practice of ethical advocacy and real-time public evaluation in crisis situations of religious authority.

To fill this gap, this study aims to explain how the source of moral authority has undergone a transformation in the context of *religious authority crisis* through advocacy practices based on religious values, with the Yakuza Maneges Movement as a *critical case*. The analysis is directed at the relationship between genealogical social capital, authority crisis, ethical advocacy practices, public evaluation, and the formation of moral authority in the digital space. Based on this focus, this study answers three questions. First, how is the *religious authority crisis* represented and negotiated in the digital discourse regarding the Yakuza Maneges Movement? Second, how does the advocacy practice of the Yakuza Maneges Movement gain public recognition or evaluation through partiality towards victims of abuse of religious authority? Third, how does the interaction between genealogical social capital, advocacy practices, and public evaluation in *real-time* shape or transform *moral authority* in the digital space?

## 2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, and a cross-sectional design. While experimental manipulation was not applied at any stage of the research (Hayes, 2018), cross-sectional framework was selected to examine the extent to which interpersonal communication influences marital satisfaction, with marital self-disclosure as a mediator. A cross-sectional approach enabled data collected at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study used convenience sampling to obtain respondents who meet the criterion due to ease of access, willingness and voluntary involvement (Etikan et al., 2016). The primary criterion established for the study's respondent was that they must be married, ensuring they possess the relevant experiences required to investigate. Data collection was carried out online. Prior to completing the form, respondents were provided with an informed consent to ensure that those involved met the criteria and were willing to provide answers in accordance with the statements provided. The informed consent served to explain the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of responses, the anonymity of respondents, and the right to withdraw from the study.

Data were collected using three research instruments, namely the Interpersonal Communication

(IPC), Marital Satisfaction (MAS) and Marital Self-Disclosure (MSD) scales. All items were evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). All original research instruments were translated directly from English into Indonesian. To ensure contextual accuracy, editorial and linguistic revisions were made to item MSD5 and item MAS13. General terminology used in the IPC, MSD and MAS instruments, such as 'stranger', 'other', 'people' and 'my partner', was adapted to 'my spouse' to make it more relevant to the research context of marital relationships. Item MSD2 and Item MSD8 were reworded from negative to positive to improve respondents' understanding and prevent biased responses. Interpersonal Communication (IPC) was measured using six (6) items proposed by Campbell & ATAŞ (2016). Marital Self-Disclosure (MSD) was assessed using nine (9) items by Rosenfeld & Bowen (1991) previously adapted from the 'Personal Report of Spouse Communication Apprehension' questionnaire by Powers and Hutchinson (1979). Item MSD2 "*I am hesitant to develop a 'deep' conversation with my spouse*" became "*I don't hesitant to develop a 'deep' conversation with my spouse*". Item MSD8, "*Even in casual conversations with my spouse, I feel I must guard what I say*" was changed to "*Even in casual conversations with my spouse, I feel free to say whatever is on my mind*". Item MSD5 "*Usually I try to work out problems myself instead of talking them over with my spouse*" was adjusted to "*Usually I try to talk problems over with my spouse instead of working them out myself*".

The Marital Satisfaction (MAS) scale comprises 17 statements, with 16 items drawn from the scale proposed by Lazarus (2006), and one additional item from Fowers & Olson (1993). To maintain construct validity and the universal applicability of the instrument across the sample, given that not all respondents have children, item MAS13 "*I am Pleased with the kind of parent my spouse/partner is (if you have no children, rate your level of satisfaction about this fact)*" was changed and simplified to "*I am confident and Pleased with my spouse's ability to be a good parent*".

One (1) additional item, MAS10 "*I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage*" was adapted from the Enrich Marital Satisfaction scale by Fowers & Olson (1993). The inclusion of this measurement item aims to capture the reality of marital dynamics, particularly in dual-earner marriages, which are not specifically accommodated in the original 16 items by Lazarus (2006). The division of domestic duties is one of determinants in marital satisfaction. Couples will experience a better sense of balance and stronger marital satisfaction, when responsibilities are shared in a manner that is perceived as fair and discussed openly (Carlson et al., 2020; Qian & Sayer, 2016; Tartakovsky, 2023; Wilkie et al., 1998).

A pilot study involving 15 respondents was conducted to verify the validity of the questionnaire's presentation and readability. For the purposes of reporting the manuscript, the questionnaire in Indonesian was retranslated into English by the research team using an iterative consensus approach, to ensure that the semantic equivalence, conceptual integrity and original intent of each item were fully preserved.

Table 1. Items Measurement

| Construct                   | Observed Variable | Items Measurement                                         | References             |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Interpersonal Communication | IPC1              | I encourage my spouse to tell me how he/she feels         | Campbell & ATAŞ (2016) |
|                             | IPC2              | My spouse tells me that I am easy to talk to              |                        |
|                             | IPC3              | My spouse often approaches and starts talking to me       |                        |
|                             | IPC4              | My spouse tells me I am a good listener                   |                        |
|                             | IPC5              | I am honest with my spouse about my thoughts and feelings |                        |

|                         |       |                                                                                                                                   |                                          |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                         | IPC6  | I believe that communication will be productive                                                                                   |                                          |
|                         | IPC7  | I use examples to help me explain what I am talking about                                                                         |                                          |
| Marital Self Disclosure | MSD1  | I don't hesitate to tell my spouse exactly how I feel                                                                             |                                          |
|                         | MSD2  | I don't hesitate to develop a 'deep' conversation with my spouse                                                                  |                                          |
|                         | MSD3  | I look forward to expressing my opinion to my spouse on controversial topics                                                      |                                          |
|                         | MSD4  | I look forward to evening talks with my spouse                                                                                    | Rosenfeld & Bowen (1991)                 |
|                         | MSD5  | Usually I try to talk problems over with my spouse instead of working them out myself                                             |                                          |
|                         | MSD6  | I usually come right out and tell my spouse exactly what I mean                                                                   |                                          |
|                         | MSD7  | I never hesitate to tell my spouse my needs                                                                                       |                                          |
|                         | MSD8  | Even in casual conversations with my spouse, I feel free to say whatever is on my mind                                            |                                          |
|                         | MSD9  | I feel I am an open communicator in my marriage                                                                                   |                                          |
| Marital Satisfaction    | MAS1  | I am pleased with the amount we talk to each other                                                                                |                                          |
|                         | MAS2  | I am pleased with the quality of our communication (e.g., pleasant, constructive, vs. insensitive, hostile, etc.)                 |                                          |
|                         | MAS3  | I am of the opinion that my spouse is "on my team"                                                                                |                                          |
|                         | MAS4  | I am able to trust what my spouse says and does                                                                                   |                                          |
|                         | MAS5  | I am content with degree of affection that is given and received.                                                                 |                                          |
|                         | MAS6  | I am satisfied with our sex life                                                                                                  |                                          |
|                         | MAS7  | I am satisfied with the way we are spending/managing money                                                                        |                                          |
|                         | MAS8  | I am pleased with our leisure time together (e.g., vacations, sports, outings, etc.)                                              | Fowers & Olson (1993) and Lazarus (2006) |
|                         | MAS9  | I am satisfied with the amount of time we spend together                                                                          |                                          |
|                         | MAS10 | I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage                                                          |                                          |
|                         | MAS11 | I am basically in agreement with my spouse's outlook on life (e.g., values, religious beliefs, political ideas, etc.)             |                                          |
|                         | MAS12 | I am content about my spouse's smoking, drinking, or other habits                                                                 |                                          |
|                         | MAS13 | I am confident and Pleased with my spouse's ability to be a good parent                                                           |                                          |
|                         | MAS14 | I am pleased with my relationship(s) with members of my spouse's family (e.g., his or her parents, siblings, and other relatives) |                                          |
|                         | MAS15 | I am pleased with the way my spouse relates to members of my own family (i.e., your parents, siblings, etc.)                      |                                          |
|                         | MAS16 | I am happy with our social life and friends we share in common.                                                                   |                                          |
|                         | MAS17 | I am pleased with my spouse's overall appearance                                                                                  |                                          |

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM is a comprehensive approach to multivariate statistical analysis, integrating both measurement and structural components, simultaneously examining the relationships between each variable in the conceptual model. A defining of multivariate analysis is its engagement three or more variables (Hair et al., 2019).

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design (*case study*) which places the

Yakuza Maneges Movement as a *critical case* to explain the mechanism of the legitimacy transformation of *religious authority crisis* To *moral authority* in Indonesian Islam. Analysis using *Digital Discourse Analysis* (DDA) as developed by Vásquez (2022, p. 12), who looks at *digital texts* as a unit of analysis to understand how social practices, power relations, identity, and meaning are constructed through digital communication. The research case is limited to digital discourse regarding the advocacy activities of the Yakuza Maneges Movement in responding to cases of alleged sexual violence in the Islamic boarding school environment during January–July 2026. The focus of the research is not on the organization of Yakuza Maneges as an institution, but on discursive representations formed through online media reporting, Instagram uploads, and public responses as three interrelated digital communication arenas. *Determination case boundary* based on temporal, thematic, and direct relevance to the advocacy activities that are the focus of the research (Vásquez, 2022, hlm. 68).

Data collection was carried out through *screen-based digital data collection* with sampling techniques tailored to the characteristics of each source. The research methodologically differentiated the data collection and archiving stage from the analytical corpus formation stage. At the collection stage, all digital data within the case limits were identified, documented, and archived. The initial corpus consisted of 64 news from 18 online media, 117 Instagram posts from 18 accounts, and 14,993 public comments recorded on Instagram upload engagement metadata in the research corpus. News data was collected using *purposive sampling*, while Instagram posts used *purposive criterion sampling* with a target of 40–60 uploads. Of the 117 uploads identified, 51 uploads met the case criteria and were used as an analytical corpus. For public comments, *criterion-based purposive sampling* was used with a target of 300–500 substantive comments and the selection process was continued until *thematic saturation* was achieved. Thus, the number 14,993 indicates the availability of comments at the collection and archiving stage, not the number of comments which are entirely units of analysis.

The formation of the analytical corpus is carried out based on substantive criteria and relevance to the focus of the research. Comments are maintained if they can be read and interpreted in their entirety, have clear meaning, and are related to cases, victims, religious authorities, Yakuza Maneges' advocacy practices, public legitimacy, justice, or the formation of *moral authority*. A rigid limit on the number of words is not used because short comments can still have relevant discursive meanings. On the other hand, comments in the form of emojis or symbols without substantive textual content, *spam*, promotion, technical duplication, *tags/mentions* without substantive content, irrelevant comments, and comments that cannot be accessed in their entirety are not included in the analysis. The documented coding data contained 397 comment entries. Two entries could not be used as *meaning units*: one simply noted that the content of the Facebook comment was not displayed, while the other stated that the comment was not available because the comments were restricted. Thus, the *criterion-based purposive sampling process* resulted in 395 substantive comments as the final analytical corpus.

Data analysis integrates principles *Digital Discourse Analysis* and *Reflexive Thematic Analysis* (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 34). The entire corpus is analyzed through the stages *familiarisation*, i.e. repeated reading of the news, *Caption*, and commentary to understand context, intertextual relationships, and discourse patterns. The relevant units of meaning are then encoded through *open coding* and grouped into conceptual categories through a process *axial coding*. The categories are then reflexively reviewed through the process of developing, reviewing, defining, and naming themes. Cross-source analysis is used to look at the relationships and differences between media construction, Instagram communication, and public response. The validity of the interpretation is strengthened through triangulation of sources and documentation *audit trail* from collection, selection, coding, to

theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 259). The process resulted in four main themes: (1) the crisis of religious authority, (2) the reconstruction of social piety, (3) the digital space as an arena of legitimacy, and (4) the Yakuza Maneges as the new moral authority.

Tabel 1. Data Sources, Sampling, and Analytical Corpus

| Category Data                     | Source                                                                           | Number of Resources | Data Available/ Identified | Technology Sampling                                                  | Target Data                  | Data Analyzed                   | Unit of Analysis               |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Media discourse</b>            | National and local online news portals                                           | 18 Media            | 64 News                    | <i>Purposive sampling</i>                                            | 64 News                      | 64 News                         | News narrative / meaning units |
| <b>Official digital discourse</b> | Instagram uploads of the official account of Yakuza Maneges and related accounts | 18 accounts         | <b>117 posts</b>           | <i>Purposive criterion sampling</i>                                  | 40–60 posts                  | 51 posts                        | <i>Caption/ meaning units</i>  |
| <b>Public digital discourse</b>   | Public comments on Instagram posts analyzed                                      | 18 accounts         | <b>14,993 comments*</b>    | <i>Criterion-based purposive sampling hingga thematic saturation</i> | 300–500 substantive comments | <b>395 substantive comments</b> | Public comment / meaning units |

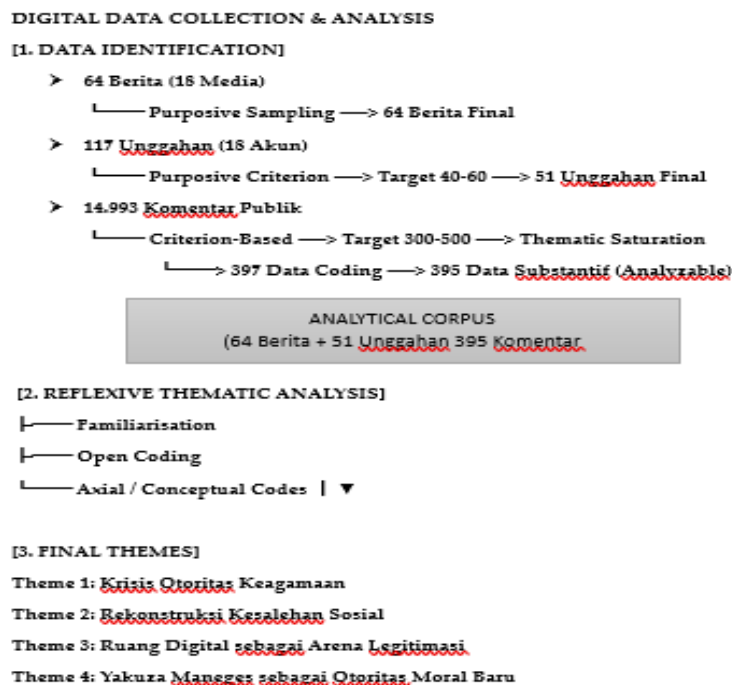
Source: Author's elaboration (2026).

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the digital corpus shows that the transformation of the legitimacy of the Yakuza Maneges Movement takes place through the interaction of three arenas of discourse, namely *media discourse*, *official digital discourse*, and *public digital discourse*. The analytical corpus consists of 64 news, 51 Instagram posts, and 395 substantive comments. The three sources are not treated as identical data, but rather as discursive arenas that have different functions in the formation of meaning: online media constructs narratives about cases and actors, Instagram posts shape communication and articulation of organizational positions, while public comments show responses, negotiations, acceptance, and rejection of the legitimacy that is built. At the collection stage, 117 Instagram posts and 14,993 public comments were first identified and archived, while the *purposive criterion sampling* and *criterion-based purposive sampling processes* were used to form an analytical corpus. Specifically, 395 substantive comments were obtained from a target of 300–500 comments through a selection process to achieve *thematic saturation*. The analysis then produced four main themes that explain the transformation of

legitimacy from the crisis of religious authority to the formation of new moral authority, namely (1) the crisis of religious authority, (2) the reconstruction of social piety, (3) the digital space as the arena of legitimacy, and (4) the Yakuza Maneges as the new moral authority.

Figure 1. Digital Data Collection, Sampling, and Analytical Process



Source: Author's elaboration (2026).

A synthesis of the entire digital corpus shows that the four research themes do not stand separately, but are intertwined in the process of transforming religious legitimacy in the digital space. The process departs from a crisis of religious authority characterized by abuse of authority, a crisis of trust in institutions, and demands for accountability. The crisis then becomes the object of legitimacy negotiation in the digital space through media reporting, narratives on the movement's official accounts, and public responses in comments. In this process, the Yakuza Maneges Movement's advocacy practice for victims not only serves as a response to cases of violence, but also forms a construction of social piety through victimization, demands for justice, prevention, and accountability. At the same time, the consistency of action, public recognition, and mobilization of digital support contribute to the emergence of new moral authorities whose public legitimacy is shaped more through the performance of moral actions than solely institutional positions or religious genealogy. Thus, the transformation of legitimacy takes place through the dynamic relationship between authority crises, digital negotiations, advocacy practices, and the recognition of new moral authority. The relationships between themes and conceptual categories that shape the process are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Synthesis of Research Thematic Findings

Main theme: Reconstruction of Digital Moral Authority

| Subtopic      | Category Conceptual | Axial Code Dominan  | Coding Frequency (n) | New s | Capt ion | Comm ents |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------|----------|-----------|
| The Crisis of | Abuse of            | Crisis of Religious | 84                   | 36    | 14       | 34        |

|                                 |                             |                                                                                                                                  |            |    |    |     |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|----|-----|
| Religious Authority             | <b>Authority</b>            | <i>Authority; Religious Authority Crisis; Abuse of Authority; Religious Authority Abuse</i>                                      |            |    |    |     |
| Institutional Crisis            | <b>Institutional Crisis</b> | <i>Crisis of Institutional Trust; Institutional Failure; Institutional Crisis; Institutional Distrust</i>                        | <b>39</b>  | 15 | 9  | 15  |
| Accountability                  | <b>Accountability</b>       | <i>Institutional Accountability; Accountability and Legal Justice; Public Justice; Legal Accountability; Justice Enforcement</i> | <b>102</b> | 31 | 46 | 25  |
| Digital Space                   | <b>Moral Legitimacy</b>     | <i>Moral Legitimacy; Legal Legitimacy; Charismatic Legitimacy; Digital Legitimacy; Community Recognition</i>                     | <b>178</b> | 35 | 28 | 115 |
| Digital Contests                | <b>Digital Contests</b>     | <i>Digital Contestation; Digital Moral Movement; Contested Legitimacy; Jurisdiction Contestation</i>                             | <b>54</b>  | 10 | 9  | 35  |
| Digital Identity                | <b>Digital Identity</b>     | <i>Identity Construction; Collective Identity; Organizational Identity Construction</i>                                          | <b>10</b>  | 5  | 3  | 2   |
| Reconstruction of Righteousness | <b>Victim Advocacy</b>      | <i>Victim Advocacy; Civic Advocacy; Ethical Advocacy; Victim-centered Advocacy</i>                                               | <b>35</b>  | 27 | 5  | 3   |
| Social Righteousness            | <b>Social Righteousness</b> | <i>Victim-centered Justice; Moral Leadership; Victim Empowerment; Victim Recovery</i>                                            | <b>91</b>  | 37 | 42 | 12  |
| Prevention                      | <b>Prevention</b>           | <i>Public Awareness; Preventive Awareness; Responsible Public Communication</i>                                                  | <b>43</b>  | 1  | 11 | 31  |
| A New Moral Authority           | <b>Moral Leadership</b>     | <i>Delegated Moral Authority; Emergence of New Moral Authority; Moral Reform Movement; Moral</i>                                 | <b>104</b> | 7  | 20 | 77  |

|                     |                            |                                                                                                                      |            |            |            |            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                     |                            | <i>Reconstruction</i>                                                                                                |            |            |            |            |
| Social Mobilization | <b>Social Mobilization</b> | <i>Collective Mobilization;<br/>Collaborative Justice;<br/>Institutional Reform;<br/>Institutional Collaboration</i> | <b>99</b>  | <b>12</b>  | <b>41</b>  | <b>46</b>  |
|                     |                            |                                                                                                                      | <b>839</b> | <b>216</b> | <b>228</b> | <b>395</b> |

Source: Author's elaboration (2026).

### 3. 1. The Crisis of Religious Authority

The crisis of religious authority in the corpus of research is particularly visible when the abuse of religious authority is confronted with demands for protection, accountability, and justice. The five conceptual categories identified—Abuse of Religious Authority, Institutional Crisis of Religious Authority, Accountability and Law Enforcement, Power Relations and Silent Culture, and Escalation of Systemic Violence—suggest that the problem is not only related to individual actions, but also to the structural conditions that allow abuse to take place. The media frames it as a structural problem, the official account of Yakuza Maneges articulates it as a moral critique, while public commentary shows a difference in acceptance of religious figures and institutions. Thus, the crisis of authority in this case shows a disturbed relationship between authority, legitimacy, and public recognition.

In *the media discourse*, the root of the problem is mainly associated with power relations and weak institutional governance. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' announcement that "the case in Pati is not a single event but part of the structural problem of Islamic education", accompanied by criticism of *the sami'na wa atha'na culture* and the dominance of the kiai, shifts attention from the individual perpetrator to the conditions that allow violence to occur. In the perspective of the DDA, *the framing* becomes the starting point for the formation of meanings that are then reproduced and debated in the digital space. This shift is important because it shows that the crisis of authority does not stop at the issue of personal behavior, but develops into a question of how authority is formed, maintained, and supervised in religious institutions.

Meanwhile, *the official digital discourse* translates these structural issues into moral criticism and demands for accountability. The dominance of the categories of Accountability and Law Enforcement, Institutional Crisis of Religious Authority, and Institutional Response and Legitimacy can be seen in the narratives "Religion should not be used as a cover for committing crimes" and "Cases of sexual violence again tarnish the environment of Islamic boarding schools". The narrative separates the abuse of religious authority from religion and Islamic boarding schools as institutions, while directing attention to victim protection and institutional responsibility. These findings show a fundamental shift in assessment: authority is no longer enough to be judged from the status of its holders, but from how it is used and accounted for.

The public response shows that the shift is taking place in a contextual manner. The comment "I no longer believe that religious people must be good people" shows an erosion of trust in religious authority, while "Against kyai is the same as disobedience" shows that some people still maintain obedience to traditional authority. This contrast shows the meeting between the old norms of obedience and the new moral demands. Therefore, the crisis found is not a total loss of authority, but a contestation on the basis of the legitimacy of religious authority.

The findings can be explained through the perspective of Weber and Tribe (2019, p. 338), in his reading of Weber, explains that *Domination* persist when authority gains recognition of the legitimacy

of its authority. In the context of this study, abuse of authority disrupts the relationship because the actions of authority holders are perceived to be contrary to the values on which they are accepted. Weber's perspective thus confirms the importance of legitimacy as the basis for the sustainability of authority, but the digital findings expand that reading: recognition of authority is not fixed, but can be questioned when authoritative actions enter the public sphere and are open to judgment.

From a Gramscian perspective, the contestation can be understood as a question of hegemony and social approval. Comments that defend obedience to the kiai suggest that traditional authority still has hegemonic power, while comments that question the relationship between piety and moral goodness point to the emergence of a counter-narrative to the notion that religious status in itself guarantees moral worthiness. The digital space is therefore not merely a place for the spread of criticism, but an arena for the fight for definitions of who is worthy of trust, obedience, and morality. If Weber helps explain the dependence of authority on legitimacy, Gramsci shows how that legitimacy is maintained or challenged through consent and the battle of meaning in social space.

Upper View (2023, p. 116) that religious authority rests on social recognition as well as Rosidi et al (2024, pp. 53–54) That authority is constantly negotiated and opposed in social relations is increasingly evident in the public response to religious figures and institutions. Hanan (2023, pp. 337–338) and Sagir (2024, pp. 534, 535), place tradition, charisma and scientific capacity as sources of authority. The findings of this study do not negate these sources, but point to their limitations in crisis situations: sources of legitimacy derived from tradition, genealogy, charisma, or scientific capacity can be initial resources, but do not in themselves guarantee the sustainability of recognition when the actions of actors are seen as contrary to the principles of protection and justice.

In line with Dian et al (2026, p. 339), the digital space becomes an arena for the production and negotiation of religious authority, moral discourse, identity, and institutional representation. However, the case of Yakuza Maneges shows that the negotiation also concerns the moral criteria that the public uses to assess the feasibility of an authority. Thus, Theme 1 shows that the crisis of authority becomes a condition that opens up a change in the basis of legitimacy: when religious status is no longer enough to guarantee acceptance, actual action and moral accountability become increasingly important in determining whether an authority is maintained, questioned, or rejected. These findings are a starting point for understanding how Yakuza Maneges' advocacy on the next theme acquires legitimacy and moral meaning in the digital space.

### 3.2. Negotiating Legitimacy in the Digital Space

The negotiation of the legitimacy of the Yakuza Maneges Movement takes place through the relationship between issue visibility, advocacy practices, and community responses in the digital space. The five categories identified—Digital Visibility and Virality, Digital Legitimacy and Public Recognition, Digital Narrative Contestation, Organizational Identity Construction, and Moral Mobilization in Digital Spaces—indicate that organizational standing is formed through interactions between the media, organizations, and the public. The process evolves as information, organizational actions, and public responses emerge. Thus, legitimacy in this case is procedural, as it is not only inherent in the organization's identity, but continues to be shaped through visible actions and public responses to it.

In *media discourse*, the process begins with increased attention to issues through digital reporting. The dominance of the Digital Visibility and Virality as well as Digital Legitimacy and Public Recognition categories shows that the media not only conveys information, but also opens up a space for attention

to cases that previously received less attention. The news that "the media plays a role in opening up public spaces for victims to gain access to justice" and that "public pressure and evidence make the legal process run again" shows the relationship between reporting, accountability demands, and advocacy support. In the perspective of DDA, media *framing* is an initial mechanism in shaping public attention and meaning. However, visibility does not automatically generate legitimacy; it creates conditions for organizational actions to be known, discussed, and then assessed.

In *official digital discourse*, this attention is translated into organizational actions. The dominance of the categories of Organizational Legitimacy in the Digital Space, Public Mobilization through Social Media, and Media as an Arena of Moral Advocacy shows that Instagram is used to receive reports, conduct verification, and coordinate actions. The statement "We are here because there is a report from the victim through Instagram DMs. After we validate, we immediately move" shows the organization's response that can be observed by the public. In the *public digital discourse*, the comments "How did I join?" show the development of support into participation, while "The name of the cottage?" and "Why is it blurred?" show the demand for openness. The pattern shows that the public not only receives messages, but also supports, asks for information, questions decisions, and assesses the organization's response.

The pattern can be explained through the concept *public sphere* Habermas (1991, p. 56), which places public communication as an arena for the formation of opinion and legitimacy. In a digital environment, the process takes place through the exchange of information, observable actions, and user responses. Perspective *network society* Castles (2006, pp. 4–5) complement this explanation by showing how communication networks allow interaction and coordination to take place continuously between actors. In the case of Yakuza Maneges, this connectedness makes information about cases, organizational responses, and community responses in a single communication chain so that the organization's position can be continuously assessed. These findings reinforce Habermas and Castells' perspective while showing that in digital networks, legitimacy is closely related to the visibility of actions and responses to them.

These findings are also in line with Campbell dan Tsuria (2021, p. 87) who see digital interaction as part of the formation of religious practices and recognition. In the case of Yakuza Maneges, the interaction develops into a process of evaluation of the moral actions of the organization, so that recognition is not only formed through digital engagement, but also through public judgment of the actions taken.

These findings confirm Hjarvard's thesis (2016, pp. 2,5) that the media is not merely a channel of religious communication, but also shapes the social conditions in which religious authority and practices are produced and negotiated. However, the case of Yakuza Maneges at the same time expands this emphasis by showing that mediatization not only changes the way religious authority is presented and perceived, but also makes the moral performance of actors openly and sustainably evaluated by the public. Thus, the digital space in this case serves not only as an environment for religious mediatization, but also as an evaluative arena where advocacy actions can gain public recognition, oppose, or rejection.

This finding needs to be distinguished from Juliansyahzen (2023, pp. 157,161), Rohid et al (2025, pp. 209,211), dan Tabaika et al (2025, pp. 373,375) which places digital media as a space for da'wah, identity formation, and authority contestation. The difference is not that previous research ignores the role of the public, but rather in the configuration of objects and mechanisms of legitimacy. In the case of Yakuza Maneges, advocacy for victims became a practice that allowed organizations to gain legitimacy through moral actions that can be openly observed and evaluated. These findings are

consistent with Amirudin et al (2025, p. 442) on the formation of authoritative spaces through digital narratives and visibility and Euchner et al (2026, p. 3) regarding the emergence of new forms of authority through communication networks. However, this study shows that visibility and network are supporting conditions, not the sole determinants of legitimacy. Both gain significance when connected to advocacy actions that are open to public judgment.

Thus, Theme 2 shows that the digital space serves as an arena for negotiation and evaluation of legitimacy, rather than simply an arena for message distribution. Visibility makes an organization's actions known, advocacy practices provide an object of judgment, and public responses determine whether those actions gain recognition or are questionable. These findings suggest that digital legitimacy is formed through the interconnectedness between the visibility of actions and public evaluation, which is an important mechanism in shifting the legitimacy base of religious authority.

### 3.3. Social Righteousness Reconstruction

The findings of the study show that social piety in the case of the Yakuza Maneges Movement undergoes a shift in orientation, from symbolic expressions of religiosity to moral practices oriented towards protection and justice. The five categories identified — Advocacy and Victim Protection, Victim Empowerment and Courage to Report, Accountability and Justice Enforcement, Institutional Reform, and Social Concern-Based Moral Reconstruction — indicate that religiosity is understood through actions that provide social benefits, especially victim-partisanship, mentoring, and demands for institutional responsibility. Thus, social piety in this case is not primarily determined by the intensity of symbolic expression, but by the ability to translate religious values into acts of protection and justice for vulnerable groups.

In the *media discourse*, this orientation can be seen from the news that links religious responsibility with victim protection and institutional reform. The dominance of the categories of Advocacy and Victim Protection, Accountability and Enforcement of Justice, and Institutional Reform is reflected in the narrative that "Victims must receive comprehensive assistance, both psychological, medical, and legal" and that "Reform of SOP for student protection, sexuality education, and reinterpretation of the culture of compliance is needed." In the *official digital discourse*, the orientation is manifested through the practice of mentoring, as seen in the statements "Four victims have given power of attorney for legal assistance" and "Every victim has the right to be heard, protected...". These findings show that religious values take practical form through advocacy, mentoring, and justice escort.

In the *public digital discourse*, these actions gain meaning through support for victim advocacy. The comments "Yakuza protect students, defend the oppressed", "Victims please speak up", and "Continue the struggle for citizens who need justice" show that religion is associated with partiality for vulnerable groups and the struggle to bring justice. These responses show that the meaning of piety is not only produced by organizations, but is also strengthened through public interpretations that link victim protection actions with religious values such as defending the oppressed. Social piety therefore appears as a practice that has both moral and social meaning.

Perspective Hoesterey (2016, p. 158) help explain the findings through the concept *public piety*, which puts the *moral compartment (Manners)* as an important aspect in the expression of religion in the public space. Bellah (1980, p. 17) complements this perspective by placing religion and morality as a source of shared value in public life. The research findings confirm and expand both perspectives. In line with Hoesterey, public piety is seen through moral practices in social spaces; however, in the case of Yakuza Maneges, these practices are also the object of public evaluation in the digital environment.

Meanwhile, Bellah's ideas are seen in the way society connects victim protection with norms of justice and partiality towards the oppressed. Thus, social piety moves from individual qualities to moral practices that acquire meaning through social actions and recognition.

These findings differ from Alam et al (2023, p. 235), Fauzi and Pribadi (Fauzi & Pribadi, 2024, p. 804) and Naim and Kurniawan (2025, p. 335) which discusses piety in the context of da'wah, philanthropy, and social activities. The difference lies in the function of advocacy in the process of forming moral meaning. In the case of Yakuza Maneges, social action is not only a consequence of piety, but becomes a medium to show the moral qualities of the organization through the protection and assistance of victims. These findings are in line with AlMazaedh et al (2026, p. 1) on religious communication on the community platform in building solidarity and a sense of belonging, as well as Črnič and Jurekovič (2026, p. 83) about the importance of participation and social practices in giving meaning to religion. However, this study shows more specifically that victim advocacy is a form of religious praxis that connects religious values with protection and justice.

These findings also shed light on the relationship between the reconstruction of social piety and the formation of moral authority. Advocacy can be understood as *moral performance* because organizations not only express partiality for religious values, but manifest them through observable actions. When such actions are consistently perceived as protection, justice, and concern for the victim, piety acquires a stronger public dimension. Thus, the reconstruction of social piety provides a praxis basis for legitimacy change: religious values become meaningful when they are embodied in actions that impact the lives of vulnerable groups.

### 3.4. The Establishment of Moral Authority in the Yakuza Maneges Movement

The findings show that the *moral authority* of the Maneges Yakuza Movement develops through the interaction between religious genealogical backgrounds, advocacy practices, and public evaluation in the digital space. The five categories identified—Civil Advocacy and Victim Assistance, Moral Leadership and Public Legitimacy, Charismatic Legitimacy and Organizational Identity, Social Mobilization and Collective Identity, and *Performance-Based Moral Authority*—indicate that religious settings provide an initial basis for identity and social capital, while advocacy consistency is the basis for public assessments of an organization's moral capacity. Thus, *moral authority* is not formed from a single source of legitimacy, but through the encounter between an initial source of legitimacy and a moral action that gains public recognition.

In the *media discourse*, Yakuza Maneges is represented as a civil advocacy actor who provides access to justice for victims. The dominance of the categories of Civil Advocacy and Victim Assistance as well as Moral Leadership can be seen in the news that "Yakuza Maneges is the legal representative of the victim" and the organization's identity as the "*Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar, Humanity and Social Justice*" movement. The representation connects advocacy practices with the values of humanity and justice. The official digital discourse then reinforces this identity through the narratives "Yakuza Maneges as a Fairness Control Mechanism" and "Yakuza Maneges can be understood as a social alarm". However, media representation and claims of organizational identity have not in themselves proven the formation of *moral authority*; both are sources of visibility and claims of legitimacy that still have to be tested through public response.

In the *public digital discourse*, these positions received responses through an evaluation of the organization's actions. The comments "God created the Yakuza in its time", "The Yakuza are more functional", and "If I open a branch in my city, I will register" indicate the giving of trust, the attribution

of moral functions, and the desire to participate. These responses indicate that religious identity is part of the initial acceptance, while advocacy, victimization, and the pursuit of justice are the basis for assessing the moral feasibility of the organization. Thus, public recognition is not only in the form of approval of the message, but also in the form of trust and willingness to provide support or join.

The series of findings show the mechanisms of religious genealogy → advocacy practices → digital visibility → public evaluation → moral recognition. Genealogy provides initial social capital, but does not automatically generate *moral authority*. Recognition develops when the identity is accompanied by observable actions, especially victim assistance, justice escort, and accountability demands. Thus, what changes is not only the popularity of the organization, but the basis of legitimacy used by the public to assess its moral feasibility. Early social capital becomes meaningful when it is embodied in action and then gained recognition through public evaluation.

These findings relate to Weber's concept of charismatic authority gaining acceptance through recognition of the exceptional qualities of a leader (Adair-Totef, 2021, p. 7). The case of Yakuza Maneges confirms and modifies this reading. It confirms the importance of social recognition for the enforceability of authority, but modifies it because the object of recognition in this case is not primarily the extraordinary qualities of an individual leader, but rather the collective performance of the organization in demonstrating partiality and advocacy capacity. Gramsci's Ideas (1971, p. 445) about moral leadership through *Agree* is also relevant. The support, participation, evaluation, and trust that emerge in digital interactions show that *Agree* It is not passive, but is formed through the appraisal of organizational actions. Thus, Weber explains the importance of recognition as the basis for the enforceability of authority, while Gramsci helps explain how it is formed through social consent and acceptance.

The findings of this study differ from those of Muniron et al (2025, p. 269), Ardiansyah et al (2025, p. 371), Rohid et al (2025, p. 225), Lubis et al (2025, p. 300), and Marwantika and Dauda (2025, p. 3) which discusses the transformation of religious authority through digital da'wah, media perperitvity, or identity contestation. In the case of Yakuza Maneges, the formation of *moral authority* takes place through the relationship between religious identity, victim-based advocacy, and public evaluation of organizational actions. These findings also relate to Rosana et al (2025, p. 179) which suggests that social capital and belief can be a source of influence for religious figures. The difference lies in the mechanism: in the case of the Yakuza Maneges, early social capital did not stop as a source of influence, but was manifested through advocacy and tested through public response before evolving into moral legitimacy.

Thus, the formation of *moral authority* in Yakuza Maneges shows that moral legitimacy is not synonymous with digital popularity, media visibility, or religious identity alone. Advocacy actions are an important point because they allow the public to assess the compatibility between the organization's identity, values, and practices. When these actions are perceived to be consistent with victim protection, justice, and accountability, recognition is formed that strengthens the moral position of the organization. These findings are the basis for the formulation of *Performance-Based Moral Authority* (PBMA) as a conceptual model that explains the mechanism of legitimacy transformation.

### 3.5. A Conceptual Model of Performance-Based Moral Authority

This study formulates *Performance-Based Moral Authority* (PBMA) as a model that explains the change in the legitimacy base of authority from a status inherent in an actor to a legitimacy obtained through publicly observable and assessed moral actions. This model does not place ethical performance

as a mere form of expression of identity or a strategy of gaining trust, but as a mechanism that links moral action with the recognition of authority. Within this framework, the initial legitimacy that comes from religious social capital is not removed, but is no longer seen as an automatic guarantee for moral authority. Such legitimacy must be realized through actions that are consistent, open to observation, and accountable to the public.

The PBMA's contribution lies in the specification of such legitimacy transformation mechanisms. This model places public evaluation as a selection mechanism that determines whether ethical performance results in recognition, contestation, or rejection of moral authority. Thus, the visibility of actions is not synonymous with legitimacy; visible actions must still go through a process of social judgment. In the digital context, the process takes place in a more open, sustainable, and responsive manner because the actors' actions, responses, and consistency can be continuously observed and evaluated by the public. The PBMA thus expands the reading of religious authority by explaining how moral legitimacy is converted through ethical performance and public evaluation, rather than simply how authorities adapt to changes in the media.

Conceptually, these relationships can be formulated as: Initial Legitimacy → Ethical Performance → Public Visibility → Public Evaluation → Recognition/Contestation/Rejection → Moral Authority. These relationships are procedural and non-deterministic: initial legitimacy does not guarantee the formation of moral authority, ethical performance does not automatically result in recognition, and digital visibility does not automatically generate legitimacy. Therefore, PBMA is positioned not as a theory that replaces the established concepts of authority and legitimacy, but as an integrative model that formulates a mechanism for the formation of moral authority through ethical performance in conditions of legitimacy that are open to public evaluation.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study's key findings suggest that the crisis of religious authority can open up a change in the legitimacy base of religious status and identity toward moral actions that can be observed and evaluated by the public. In the case of the Yakuza Manedes Movement, religious genealogy serves as the initial social capital, but *moral authority* develops when it is embodied through consistent victim advocacy practices, gaining visibility in the digital space, and then being evaluated through public responses. Thus, authority crises not only result in an erosion of trust, but also open up the possibility of reconstructing legitimacy through the practice of protection, justice, and accountability.

The contribution of this research is Performance-Based Moral Authority (PBMA) as a model that specifies the mechanisms of legitimacy transformation in the study of religious authority. PBMA shows that inherited sources of legitimacy—such as genealogy, institutional position, or charisma—can be a starting point, but the sustainability of moral authority depends on ethical performance and public evaluation. This model expands the study of religious authority beyond the Indonesian context by offering a framework for analyzing how religious actors and civil society organizations can gain, maintain, or lose legitimacy as their actions are increasingly visible and continuously evaluated in the digital media environment. Thus, PBMA's contribution lies not in the creation of an entirely new concept of perperitivity, but in the specification of the relationship between legitimacy crises, ethical actions, digital visibility, and public evaluation as a mechanism for the formation of moral authority.

Concrete implications for Islamic civil society organizations facing a crisis of institutional trust are the need to establish action-based public accountability mechanisms, not just strengthen communication or organizational image. Organizations can, for example, implement open procedures

for the receipt and verification of victim reports, documented mentoring, and public updates on case follow-up while protecting victims' identities and safety. Such mechanisms allow a commitment to protection and justice to be translated into accountable actions while strengthening public trust. Within the framework of the PBMA, consistency between the values claimed, actions taken, and accountability to the public is an important basis for the restoration of moral legitimacy.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in reading the findings and applying the PBMA model. First, the use of a single case study limits the ability to generalize findings to other organizations or religious contexts. Second, the cases studied are contemporary and still evolving, so the form of legitimacy and public response identified cannot be ascertained as a stable pattern in the long term. Third, the study does not use primary field data or interviews, so the interpretation is mainly based on media discourse, organizational digital communication, and public responses available in the research corpus. Fourth, the analysis of public comments is analytically selective, so the comments used represent the corpus that has been selected and coded based on their relevance to the focus of the study, not the overall public opinion. Therefore, further research needs to test PBMA through comparative and longitudinal studies and combine digital analysis with interviews or primary field data to assess the applicability and limits of the model.

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