Tribakti Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman

Journal Website:
http://www.ejournal.uit-lirboyo.ac.id/index.php/tribakti

E-ISSN 2502-3047
P-ISSN 1411-9919

Permanent link for this document (DOI): https://doi.org/10.33367/ sbrzww51

Decentering Islamic Authority in The Digital Sphere: Gus Baha's Al-Hikam and The Reconfiguration of Vernacular Sufism in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to address the lack of scholarly attention to the dominance of Western colonial knowledge and the strategies for restoring local Islamic epistemic authenticity in Indonesia's digital public sphere. Specifically, it examines the digital preaching strategies of Gus Baha in his online *Al-Hikam* studies, focusing on how local religious elites rearticulate vernacular Islamic authority through digital media while maintaining harmony with their followers. The research employs a qualitative approach using digital ethnography and interpretive content analysis of four YouTube channels that regularly disseminate Gus Baha's *Al-Hikam* lectures. The findings reveal three central strategies in Gus Baha's digital *da'wa*: re-centering pesantren authority through online *kitab kuning* recitations, emphasizing *sanad* (chain of knowledge transmission) as a marker of epistemic authenticity, and adapting Sufi teachings into accessible audiovisual formats without losing their intellectual and spiritual depth. These strategies demonstrate how pesantren-based scholarship, classical Sufi teachings, and Javanese cultural values are revitalized within the contemporary digital ecosystem, providing an alternative to dominant globalized and textualist Islamic discourses. Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on digital religion and Islamic authority by showing how vernacular Sufism, mediated through online platforms, enables local scholars to resist Western epistemic dominance. It affirms the continuity of traditional Islamic scholarship while opening possibilities for plural epistemologies in understanding Islam in the digital age.

Keywords: *Gus Baha, Al-Hikam, Islamic Authority, Vernacular Sufism, Islamic Preaching.*

Introduction

The continuous increase of internet access in Muslim communities provides excellent opportunities for religious transformation on digital media. Whether it is through social media or web pages, Muslims around the world have the chance to network and interact with a wide range of religious concepts in a multimedia format. Tradition and religious preaching have also

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Article History
Received: 19 March 2025 | Revised: 16 June 2025 | Accapted: 18 July 2025 | Available online: 31 July 2025

How to Cite this Article
Muhammad Sulthon, Mahmud Yunus Mustofa , Mishbah Khoiruddin Zuhri, (2025). Decentering Islamic Authority in The Digital Sphere: Gus Baha's Al-Hikam and The Reconfiguration of Vernacular Sufism in Indonesia. (2025). *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman*, *36*(2), 401-430. https://doi.org/10.33367/sbrzww51

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undergone this transformation by switching from conventional-analog to modern-digital religious preaching.[1] According to experts, this phenomenon is included in the change of religion in the digital era, forming a new environment called the *Cyber Islamic Environment.*[2] The internet is now flooded with digital content about proselytization and religious traditions. In addition, various "religious digital creatives" publish digital content and compete with each other for visibility and influence. [3]

However, while religious influencers draw attention to the quality of scholarly *sanads* that enhance their credibility, followers maintain diverse general religious reference sites. In the contemporary landscape of Islamic studies, the dominance of Western epistemology in understanding authority, knowledge, and interpretation of Islam has led to the marginalization of local actors and models, such as *pesantren* and *kitab kuning*. This marginalization is particularly evident in the way religious influencers and scholars engage with their audiences. While they emphasize the importance of scholarly *sanad*s to enhance their credibility, the rich traditions and localized interpretations that have historically shaped Islamic thought are often overlooked. In this article, we explore amplification as a strategy used by Religious Digital Creatives (RDC) to seek visibility and influence among Muslims who use the internet to study Islamic doctrine and proselytize. Our analysis sheds light on the distinctive features of the various media and the Islamic perspectives that are most reflected in their content. We argue that proficiency and authenticity provide certain advantages, which have hitherto received little attention in the literature on religion, authority, and cyberspace.

One of the most apparent transformations is the Islamic Preaching and the tradition of studying the yellow book in the *pesantren.*[4] However, it is crucial to emphasize the role of *pesantren* as a site of local knowledge production. *Pesantren*, with their unique pedagogical approaches and rich traditions, serve as vital institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge that is deeply rooted in local culture and context. They not only provide religious education but also foster critical thinking and community engagement among their students. Previous researchers have divided this issue into several studies, focusing on Kiai as the leading actor, YouTube and other social media as a learning medium, the Yellow Book as an authoritative religious source, or even learning methods, either offline, online, or hybrid. This study has attracted the interest of several scholars. Some of the articles focus on techniques for understanding the contents of the Yellow Book as a source of Islamic learning and information. The article focuses on the integration of the yellow book in the curriculum in schools, *Pesantren* and sources *bahstul masail;* [5] Experiment on the use of

[1] Zaenal Muttaqin, "The Ngaji Online: Transforming Islamic Learning for Moslem Communities in the Digital Age," *AICIS*, 2020, 13, https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.1-10-2019.2291734; Nurdin Nurdin, Nurliana Nurliana, dan Saepudin Mashuri, "Online islamic religious education learning during covid-19 pandemic," *International Journal of Contemporary Islamic Education* 4, no. 1 (2022): 38–53; Mustaqim Pabbajah dkk., "From the scriptural to the virtual: Indonesian engineering students responses to the digitalization of Islamic education," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 24, no. 2 (2021): 122–30.

[2] Gary R Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age;E-Jihad, Online Fatwas, and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto Press, 2003).

[3] Heidi A Campbell, *Digital creatives and the rethinking of religious authority* (Routledge, 2020).

[4] Mahmud Yunus Mustofa, Abdurrahman Mas' ud, dan Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth, "Hybrid Pesantren in Indonesia; Analyzing the Transformation of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Age," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 1 (2023): 79–104.

[5] Ah Madi dan Moh Badri, "Inovasi Strategi Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning MI. Mambauyl Ulum I Bata Bata Pamekasan," *Studia Religia : Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2023): 55–66, https://doi.org/10.30651/sr.v7i1.18196; A Murtado dan M Erihadiana, "Integrasi Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning dalam

the read-listen technique (Listening Reading Technique),[6] Eugene Nida model translation technique and the use of panel screens as a means of learning to improve the ability of students and students to read and understand the contents of the Yellow Book.[7]

In addition, it was also found that the study's focus was on expanding the audience network. Online space is a free space that is a place to store, present, and offer various information, including religious information, to be accessed by anyone. Aris Risdiana and other authors analyzed the use of online spaces to expand the reach of information recipients,[8] both the student community and the alumni of the Islamic boarding school,[9] as well as outside the *pesantren*.[10] *Pesantren* are the authority holders in the dissemination of the contents of the yellow book,[11] which factually shapes religious behavior,[12] strengthening the inclusive socio-religious values of students,[13] and community members.[14] However, the yellow book remains an unimportant factor when millennials choose YouTube over printed books as a source of information.[15] The yellow book cannot shift the popularity factor as an essential thing in increasing the appeal of the millennial generation.[16] The

Pembelajaran PAI," dalam … *Religion Teaching and Learning Journal*, preprint, core.ac.uk, 2020; Rosidin Rosidin dkk., " The Development History of the Yellow Book (Kitab Kuning) as Islamic Textbooks in Indonesia Based on the Philology Perspective ," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Religious Literature and Heritage (ISLAGE 2021)* 644, no. Islage 2021 (2022): 233–42, https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220206.030.

[6] Bambang Irawan, "Application of Listening Reading Technique in Improving the Ability to Read the 'Kitab Kuning' of Santri," *`A Jamiy : Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra Arab* 9, no. 2 (2020): 239–51, https://doi.org/10.31314/ajamiy.9.2.239-251.2020.

[7] Ahmad R.; Hastang, "Aksiologi Pembelajaran S}araf dalam Membaca Kitab Kuning," *Didaktika : Jurnal Kependidikan* (Bone) 14, no. 2 (2020): 133–46, https://doi.org/10.30863/didaktika.v14i2.1011.

[8] Aris Risdiana, Reza Bakhtiar Ramadhan, dan Imam Nawawi, "Transformasi Dakwah Berbasis 'Kitab Kuning' Ke Platform Digital," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 18, no. 1 (2020): 1–28, https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v18i1.682.

[9] Muhammad Yasin Fatchul Barry, "Pengembangan Model Literasi Digital Dalam Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning di Ma'had al-Jamiah UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang," *Dinamika : Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan dan Keislaman* 5, no. 3 (2020): 87–100, https://doi.org/10.32764/dinamika.v5i3.851.

[10] Jazilus Sakhok; Siswoyo Aris Munandar; Ibtisaamatin Ladzidzah, "Tasawuf dan Budaya Populer: Studi atas Pengajian Online Kitab al-Hikam di Facebook oleh Ulil Abshar Abdalla," *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak dan Tasawuf* 05, no. 02 (2019): 387–412, https://doi.org/10.21043/esoterik.v5i2.6446.

[11] Asep Saepul Malik, "Dakwah Melalui Pengajian Pasaran Kitab al-Hikam di Pondok Pesantren Azzainiyyah Sukabumi," *Tabligh: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 5, no. 3 (2020): 227–48, https://doi.org/10.15575/tabligh.v5i3.1989; Nurhafid Ishari; Ahmad Fauzan, "Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Kitab al-Hikam al-Atha'iyyah Karya Steikh Ibnu Atha'illah as-Sakandari," *Tarbiyatuna Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (2017): 66–79.

[12] Mahyudin Ritonga, "The Existence of Yellow Books (Kitab Kuning) as the Sources of Islamic Studies at Islamic Boarding Schools Within the Industrial Revolution Dialectics," dalam *SSRN Electronic Journal*, preprint, Elsevier BV, 2020, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3752816.

[13] Muhammad Ahsan Jauhari, "Perilaku Sosial Santri Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlah Bandar Kidul Mojoroto Kota Kediri Setelah Mengikuti Pengajian Kitab Al-Hikam," *Spiritualita* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.30762/spr.v1i1.637.

[14] H Fajrussalam, "Core Moderation Values dalam Tradisi Kitab Kuning di Pondok Pesantren," dalam … *: Islamic Religion Teaching and Learning Journal*, preprint, researchgate.net, 2020.

[15] Agus Aditoni; Zuliati Rohmah, "Campus-Based Millennials' Learning Preferences Toward Da'Wah in Urban City of Surabaya," *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM* 16, no. 1 (2022): 27–48, https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.1.27-48.

[16] Indra Silanegara; Maryono; Abdul Azis Abdillah, "Ranking of Ustaz and Ustazah Popularity Levels to Understand Online Da'wah Expansion Strategies," *Persepsi: Communication Journal* 5, no. 2 (2022): 99–112, https://doi.org///dx.doi.org/10.30596%25252Fpersepsi.v5i2.11597; Ying San Lim dkk., "Communication in the 21st Century: The Effect of Internet Celebrity as the Communication Source in Influencing Generation Z Purchase Intention," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 39, no. 4 (2023): 485–500, https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2023-3904-26.

primary aim of this article is to analyze the mediatization of the Yellow Book within the framework of reconstructing local Islamic authority based on *turāth*, serving as a decolonial practice in the digital space.

Continuing the focus of the study on expanding the audience network, the author argues that the transformation of book recitation in the online space is an adaptation of *pesantren* to digital media. This article is based on the argument that the mediatization of *pesantren* as a necessity gives space for *pesantren* to transmit their intellectual property through online media. Some articles assert that the digital age allows *users* to negotiate various interests,[17] including the da'wa message from the yellow book. The digital public space that emerged due to the empowerment of digital platforms has become a competition in spreading ideas, religious messages, and fatwas to build social identity.[18] It has given rise to a new generation that challenges traditional religious authority, [19] by shifting the information search pattern, which was originally from traditional religious authority holders such as kyais or ulamas, to digital media.[20] Bouziane Zaid et al. found that social media influencers occupy an increasingly visible position in the digital public space. Those who come from the Muslim community rearrange their Islamic identity in a global style.[21] Departing from that thought, the digitization of the Yellow Book and its recitation mediated to the digital realm as a new challenge in developing digital da'wa should be analyzed.

One of the interesting preachers in Indonesia is Gus Baha. Gus Baha's digital da'wah strategy, as seen from his *Al-Hikam* study, shows the tension between Islamic *turāth* and digital modernity. It is essential in the end to reveal how local religious actors such as Gus Baha negotiate epistemic decolonization in Indonesia's online space. While Western-influenced Islamic discourses dominate digital spaces, Gus Baha's YouTube-based *Al-Hikam* studies reassert Sufi epistemology through authority centered on *sanad*, colloquialism, and affective engagement. This raises key questions: How does Gus Baha's tradition of *Al-Hikam* study become a form of resistance to the epistemic dominance of Western knowledge? How does his mediation of classical texts become a form of epistemic authenticity? Can the commodification of Sufism in the online platform

[17] Didid Haryadi, "Otoritas Keagamaan Baru: Habituasi dan Arena Dakwah Era Digital," *Islamic Insights Journal* 2, no. 2 (2020): 69–82, https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.iij.2020.002.02.01; Eryc, "The Impact of Tik-Tok Use on Self-Expression by Generation-Z users," *Journal of Information System, Applied, Management, Accounting and Research.* 6, no. 4 (2022): 921–27, https://doi.org/10.52362/jisamar.v6i4.956; Fathiyah Fathiyah, "TikTok dan Kebebasan Berekspresi Di Ruang Digital Bagi Generasi Z," *MEDIALOG: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 6, no. 1 (2023): 166–77, https://doi.org/10.35326/medialog.v6i1.4139; Ahmad Muttaqin, "Women's identity in the digital islam age: Social media, new religious authority, and gender bias," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2020): 353–88, https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i2.7095.

[18] Enes Abanoz, "The Reactions to Muslim Identity Building through Social Media: User Comments on YouTube Street Interview Videos," *Religions* 13, no. 6 (2022), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13060498; Stepanus Sigit Pranoto, "Strategy for Constructing Religious Authority in the Digital Pulpit: Study of Three Indonesian Preachers on YouTube," *Al-Hikmah: International Journal of Islamic Studies and Human Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2023): 29–52, https://doi.org/10.46722/hikmah.v6i1.352; Amamur Rohman Hamdani, "Fatwa in the Digital Age: Online Muftī, Social Media, and Alternative Religious Authority," *Hikmatuna: Journal for Integrative Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2023): 105–16, https://doi.org/DOI:%2520https://doi.org/10.28918/hikmatuna.v9i1.966.

[19] Mohammed Ibahrine Bouziane Zaid, Jana Fedtke, Don Donghee Shin, Abdelmalek El Kadoussi, "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials: How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices," *Religions* 13, no. 4 (2022), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13040335.

[20] Abdul Majit; Miski, "Digital Learning on The Qur'an : Shifting Isnad System and Affirmation of New Authoity," *Studi Masyarakat, Religi, dan Tradisi, SMaRT* 9, no. 1 (2023): 133–45, https://doi/10.18784/smart.v9i1.1795.

[21] Bouziane Zaid, Jana Fedtke, Don Donghee Shin, Abdelmalek El Kadoussi, "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials: How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices."

authentically preserve vernacular religious authority? It is interesting to learn more about Gus Baha and his strategies in challenging the homogenized global Islam, positioning him as a spiritual influencer and decolonial actor who reshapes Islamic discourse.

Method

This research uses digital ethnographic methods. The process of obtaining primary data used observation and in-depth interviews with 20 resource persons who participated in routine recitation from various backgrounds. In contrast, secondary data was obtained from literature studies, documentation, and YouTube videos featuring Gus Baha's virtual recitation. The data and information collected were analyzed using qualitative methods. In addition, we also used a sociological approach to identify the implications of conventional *ngaji* for Gen-X audiences. Since this research is primarily exploratory and committed to an inductive approach, data analysis requires open and reflexive engagement with some of the existing literature; this article compares the audience's response to Gus Baha's da'wah offline and online.

The research object consisted of an audience classified as gen-X who were mostly digitally illiterate or so-called "digital immigrants".[22] Gen-Xers are those born between 1965 and 1980 after the Baby Boomers generation and developed a distinctive stylistic unity. We chose this generation as the object of the study because most of Gus Baha's followers are those who fall into the Gen-X category. The rapid growth of the internet and social media platforms in this modern era, which has permeated daily life, has forced Gen-X to adapt to digitalization. However, based on our research, most of them admitted that they had no difficulty accessing social media. In summary, this article begins with an explanation of offline and online *ngaji* , followed by unintentional online *ngaji* and its relationship with the formation of religious authority. Furthermore, it discussed baraka and *sanad* culture as a motive that encourages followers to follow conventional recitation and the implications of offline da'wah for its worshippers.

This study examines the recitation of the Yellow Book in the online public space through the YouTube platform using the digital ethnographic method.[23] The data for this article is taken from a YouTube video with the content of the book recitation *Al-Hikam* Gus Baha, through online observation with the following sampling criteria:

1. The video of the book recitation was imported to the internet through a YouTube channel whose audiovisual content was the recitation of the book *Al-Hikam* by KH Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim (here in after referred to as Gus Baha) in Javanese and Indonesian.
2. The number of videos in the YouTube Channel selected as a sample is at least 40 pieces, considering that the digitization of the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* from the first chapter to the end in the form of a video, requires a minimum of 40 video recordings with a maximum duration of 120 minutes.
3. From several videos imported to the internet, the researcher chose a video of the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* on each different channel with the highest number of views.

With this criterion, the researcher chose four channels as research objects. Fourth Channel and four book study videos *Al-Hikam* with the most views on each channel, analyzed by interpretive content analysis techniques. Consider the analysis model proposed by Pérez, Pastor, & Ben, the unit of analysis is divided into manifest content (such as video titles, audiovisual formats served and message categorization) and latent

[22] Sofia Aunul dan Daniel Handoko, "Digital religion: How digital immigrants access religious content during pandemic," *Islamic Communication Journal* 7, no. 1 (2022): 77–88.

[23] Sarah Pink dkk., *Digital ethnography: Principles and practice* (Sage, 2015).

content (channel identity) as used by Caldeiro-Pedreira, Renés-Arellano, Castillo-Abdul, & Aguaded [24]. The analysis was conducted to answer the research questions by classifying the book recitation available online, the profile of the channel that stores and distributes it, and the characteristics of the four selected book recitation videos.

Result and Discussion

Amplifying the Strategy of Preaching Content on Digital Media

Content amplification is a strategy that refers to the reinforcement of specific content, which is a substitute for the silence strategy. The amplification is a social media recommendation system for Joe Whittaker, Seán Looney, Alastair Reed, and Fabio Votta. The concept refers to promoting certain types of content by ignoring other points of view through social media recommendation algorithms[25]. This differs from Andew M. Heny, who understands amplification as one of the information selection systems. For him, the publisher can select not to cover "certain incidents, issues, voices and perspectives" through a strategy of *Silence*, to avoid strengthening it in the public space. The content amplification strategy is a concept that has emerged along with the shift from a mediated information selection system to a model *Disintermediation*. [26]

Amplification as a strategy has shifted the strategy of silence that is increasingly abandoned. Content amplification has a place in the online public space that is widely opened by social media, both for strengthening constructive and destructive content. With a content amplification strategy, social media can increase the ease with which audiences can find factual information and build community networks and even allow audiences to create a space for conspiracy echoes that massively disseminate disinformation in the online space.[27] Factors such as online platforms, offline stages (such as celebrations, incidents, immoral political discussions), and moralization (the use of moral emotional words) can encourage social media to act as amplifers of certain types of content [28]. Van Bavel et al. also confirmed the urgency of content repetition as a trigger for the amplified function of social media in increasing and sharpening extremist views and affective polarization, as evidenced by Jaeho Cho et al, [29] and Yarchi et al.[30] With a large audience on social media, every independent content creator can amplify certain issues through the use of social media platforms.

Based on the criteria, it was found that channels used the video amplification technique of the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* Gus Baha as stated in the following table 1:

Table 1. Sample YouTube Channel for the Recitation of the Yellow Book of Gus Baha

Channel	Islamic Studies	Ngaji Melu Kyai	Recording of	Tafsir NU (TNU)

[24] "YouTube videos for young children: an exploratory study," *Digital Education Review*, no. 41 (2022): 32–43, https://doi.org/10.1344/DER.2022.41.32-43.

[25] Joe Whittaker dkk., "Recommender systems and the amplification of extremist content," *Internet Policy Review* 10, no. 2 (2021).

[26] Andrew M. Henry, "Religious Literacy in Social Media: A Need for Strategic Amplification," *Religion and Education* 48, no. 1 (2021): 89–101, https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2021.1876507.

[27] Henry.

[28] Jay J. Van Bavel dkk., "Social Media and Morality," *Annual Review of Psychology* 75, no. 1 (2024): 311–40, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-022123-110258.

[29] "Do Search Algorithms Endanger Democracy? An Experimental Investigation of Algorithm Effects on Political Polarization," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 64, no. 2 (Mei 2020): 150–72, https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2020.1757365.

[30] "Political Polarization on the Digital Sphere: A Cross-platform, Over-time Analysis of Interactional, Positional, and Affective Polarization on Social Media," *Political Communication* 38, no. 1–2 (Maret 2021): 98–139, https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1785067.

Name	with Gus Baha (ISGB)	(NMK)	Ngaji Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim (RNABN)	
Joined YouTube	29 Jul 2010	1 Feb 2015	June 24, 2019	4 Feb 2020
Link Home	http://surl.li/mflia	http://surl.li/mflsm	http://surl.li/mflod	http://surl.li/mfltt
Number of Subscribers	8.920	140.000	36.300	29.700

Source: Processed by the Author (accessed 9 Nov 2024)

Content creators on each channel digitize the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* Gus Baha, and store it in the playlist feature while still using the name *Al-Hikam* as the playlist title, as shown in table 2. In addition, table 2 also stores information about the title of the video recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* Gus Baha which gets the most views on each channel.

Table 2. Characteristics of Book Recitation Videos & Videos with the Most Views Per Channel

No Q	Types of Information	ISGB (2010)	NMK (2015)	RNABN (2019)	TNU (2020)	Sum
Q1a	Playlist Name	Al-Hikam	Gus Baha Kitab Al-Hikam	Gus Baha – Al-Hikam	Membaca Kitab Terbaru Matan Al-Hikam # Gus Baha	-
Q1b	Link Playlist	http://surl.li/mpsjd	http://surl.li/mpsog	http://surl.li/mpsln	http://surl.li/mpsrx	-
Q2a	Total Al-Hikam Recitation Videos	49	106	44	43	242
Q2B	Number of Playlist Views	19.621 (16,40 %)	5.035 (4,20 %)	88.842 (74,26 %)	6.135 (5,12 %)	119.631 (100 %)
Q3a	Video Title w/ Most Views	Gus Baha Ngaji Hikam No 200 "Syukur Nikmat"	Gus Baha | Ciri Nur Ilahi Yang Mau Datang Kepadamu | Subtitle Indonesia|#44	Gus Baha – al-Hikam #Khatam	**Ngaji Kitab Syarah Al-Hikam # Khataman # Disertai Teks Kitab # Gus Baha Terbaru**	-
Q3b	Link Video	http://surl.li/mfskt	http://surl.li/mfsps	http://surl.li/mfsmc	http://surl.li/mfsra	-
Q3c	Length of Video (min)	79	20	152	151	402
Q3d	Type of Audiovisual Content on Video	Gus Baha's Silent Photo and Video Content Title Text	Visual- waves of the beach; Running Arabic & Indonesian Texts in the voice of the Gus Bahá'; Gus Baha's Silent Photos	Visual-Motion Sheet by Sheet of the Book *of Al-Hikam* according to the voice of Gus Baha	Visual-Motion Sheet by sheet & yellow pointer pointing to the text of the Arabic Book according to the sound of Gus Baha	-

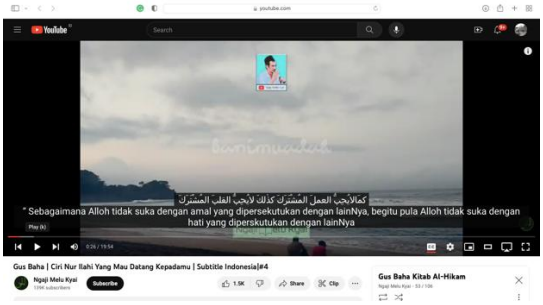
Q3e	Number of Views	247.000 (100%)	85.000 (100%)	62.000 (100%)	3.400 (100%)	397.400 (100%)
Q3F	Number of Likes	2.300 (0,93%)	1.500 (1,76%)	654 (1,05%)	52 (1.53%)	4.506 (1,13 %)

Source: processed by the author (Accessed 24 Nov 2024)

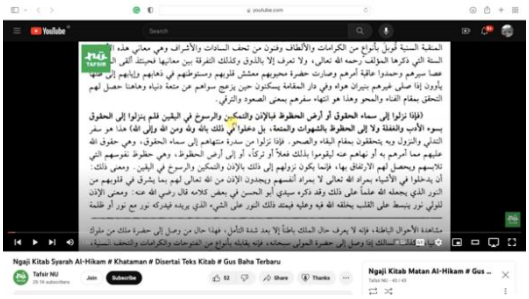
Figure 1 presents the visual aspect in the cover video of the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* with the most access. Among the videos, the *khataman* recitation video that received the most views on two channels (TNU and RNAB) featured the same cover. The *khataman* video contains, among other things, Gus Baha's explanation of the *sanad* of the teacher of the book *of Al-Hikam* which is visualized in figure 2.

Figure 1: Visual Content of the Video Cover of the Recitation of the Book *of Al-Hikam* Gus Baha with the Most Views

"Syukur Nikmat," ISGB (2010)



"Ciri-ciri Nur Ilahi yang Ingin Datang kepadamu," NMK (2015)



"Khataman," TNU (2020)

"Khatam," RNABN (2019)

Figure 1. Visual Content of the Video Cover of the Recitation of the Book of Al-Hikam

Source: Processed by the Author

Figure 2 contains information about Gus Baha's *sanad* which is mainly extracted from the audio content of *khataman* recitation videos available on two channels (RNABN and TNU).

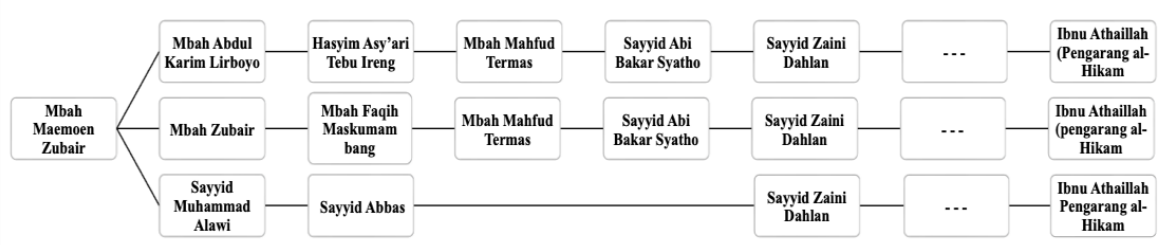


Figure 2. The Sanad of Al-Hikam Gus Baha based on Video

Source: Processed by the author from Gus Baha Video and Kitab Sanad Sheikh Mahfudz Termas

Figure 2 does not show part of the book *Kifāyatu al-Mustafiid limā Alamini al-Asāniid*, by Mbah Makhfudz Termas who mentions the completeness of the names of the teachers of the book *Al-Hikam* which continues from Makhfudz Termas to Ibn ʻAṭāʾillāh al-Sakandarī [31], author of the book *Al-Hikam*.

Availability of the Yellow Book recitation *Al-Hikam* Gus Baha in the online room proving that online spaces for producing and disseminating religious information, [32] has become part of the need and even the willingness (or compulsion) of the world of da'wah to be intervened by digital media. How religious believers use digital media as their practice in religion has been studied quite a lot.[33] Study Md. Sayeed Al-Zaman showed that over the last five years, the trend of Islamic lectures through YouTube as religious practice imported through digital media has continuously increased. [34] This reinforces Luis Mauro sa Martino's argument that, through digital behavior, media intervention has evolved to be more than just a tool within religious institutions, but also a language and environment that gives birth to what is called religious mediation. Digital behavior presents the media as a tool for the dissemination of religious information, as the language of religious leaders when speaking in public spaces and as an environment that brings together religious institutions and other institutions to be accessible online. [35]

Digital behavior pointing to the diversity of religious manifestations in the online space gives rise to the diversity of forms of religious information sources on the internet. [36] The diversity of religious manifestations itself provides religious information that can be accessed through digital media. So in the online space can be found for example Websites of certain sects, religious communities and denominations; classical religious texts (such as the Qur'an, the Yellow Book, the Yellow Book and its translations); religious images; video and audio files (e.g., recitation of the Yellow Book, sermons and religious lectures, rituals, chanting of verses of the Qur'an, practices and behaviors of religious people, etc.).[37] This study corroborates the above assertion, that the variety of forms of religious information sources on the internet appears in channel that provides videos of the recitation of the book of *Al-Hikam*.

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[31] Syyeikh Mahfudz Al-Turmusi, *Kifayatu al-Mustafid Lima Ala Mina al-Asanid* (Makkah: Dar al-Basyair al-Islamiyah, t.t.).

[32] Xiaozhong Liu, "Investigating Religious Information Searching Through Analysis of a Search Engine Log," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 64, no. July (2013): 1852–63, https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.22945.

[33] Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Mediating Authority: A Sufi Shaykh in Multiple Media," dalam *Cyber Muslims Mapping Islamic Digital Media in the Internet Age*, ed. oleh Robert Rozehnal (London & New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2022), 51; Zahra Salsabila dan Cinta Dwi Chayani, "Gaya Komunikasi Islam dan Isi Pesan Dakwah Habib Novel Alaydrus Pada Channel Youtube yang Berjudul Perbaiki Shalatmu Menjadi Baik Hidupmu," *Nosipakabelo: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam* 4, no. 01 (2023): 1–6, https://doi.org/10.24239/nosipakabelo.v4i01.1988; Muhammad Rifat dkk., "Digital Transformation in Islamic Da'wah: Uncovering the Dynamics of 21st Century Communication," *JIM: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Sejarah* 8, no. 3 (2023): 2933–41, https://doi.org/10.24815/jimps.v8i3.26243.

[34] Md Sayeed Al-Zaman, "Social mediatization of religion: islamic videos on YouTube," *Heliyon* 8, no. 3 (2022): e09083, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09083.

[35] Luis Mauro sa Martino, *The Mediatization of Religion When Faith Rocks* (London: Routledge, 2016), 13, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315555652.

[36] Heidi A Campbell dan Ruth Tsuria, "Introduction to the study of digital religion," dalam *Digital Religion Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*, 2 ed., ed. oleh Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 3, https://doi.org/DOI:%252010.4324/9780429295683-1.

[37] Randall Studstill dan Peggy Cabrera, "Online primary sources in religious studies: Active learning exercises for information literacy instruction," *Journal of Religious and Theological Information* 9, no. 3 (2010): 84–112, https://doi.org/10.1080/10477845.2010.527252.

In this study, as shown in table 1, the channels that store Islamic information are the Islamic *Studies with Gus Baha* (ISGB) channel, which joined YouTube in 2010, *Ngaji Melu Kiyai* (NMK) joined YouTube five years later (2015), four years later (2019), *Rekaman Ngaji Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim* (RNABN) recorded and joined YouTube and *Tafsir NU* (TNU) followed the following year (2020). These channels are really channels to access Islamic information, as shown by, among other things, the presence of subscribers in each channel. The number of subscribers per channel varies. The most subscribers to the NMK channel (140,000) while the least is ISGB (8,920). The number two number of subscribers is occupied by RNABN (36,300) and the third TNU (29,700), which is the channel that joined the YouTube platform the youngest of the other three channels.

By the digital creatives of the *Content Creator*, Studies of *Al-Hikam* became the part of the form of spreading religious teachings sourced from the Yellow Book. As understood, the recitation of the yellow book is a model for spreading messages that have been popular in Pesantren since the 17th century AD. Martin van Bruinessen estimates, before 1789 A.D., the book of *Al-Hikam* starting to be popular for services 'Abd Al-Shamad bin 'Abd Allah Al Jawi Al-Palembani (1116 H/1704 AD – d. 1203 H/1789 AD) who introduced it in the pesantren environment. [38] Since then, the book of *Al-Hikam* has become a routine reading for kyai and scholars in the recitation of the book at Pesantren. Until now, there are Pesantren that hold book recitations *Al-Hikam* every month of Ramadan, such as Azzayniyyah Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School, [39] and who organizes the study of the book *Al-Hikam* continuously without breaking.

Every time the book *Al-Hikam* was completed until finish, then the recitation is repeated again from the first to the last chapter. This is known as the *"wiridan"* pattern which is held by the Pesantren *al-Ishlah* Bandar Kidul, [40] and the Pesantren Lirboyo every Thursday (*Kamis Legi)*, which was attended by students and alumni. In fact, it was also found that the kyai who gave the contents of the book *Al-Hikam* in the form of recitation of the yellow book outside Islamic boarding schools, such as KH Lukman Hakim through forums of ta'lim councils in several cities.[41] Book *Al-Hikam* and his recitation, which has been popular in the offline space, has undergone a mediatization process to be accessible in the online space, among others, through channels that distribute and store video content of the recitation of the book.

Mediatized Sufism: Proficiency and Authenticity in Ngaji Al-Hikam Gus Baha

Gus Baha as a reader who explains the contents of the book *Al-Hikam* in the study of the book *Al-Hikam* this is indeed a holder of religious authority. His full name Bahauddin Nur Salim, born on September 29, 1970 to KH Nur Salim and Mrs. Yuhanidz. Gus Bahamemorized the Qur'an and began to study Tafsir under the guidance of his father. Then he studied with KH Maimun Zubair at the Pesantren al-Anwar Rembang. He is recognized as an expert, especially in the field of tafsir as shown by the Islamic University of Indonesia (UII) which appointed Gus Baha as the Chairman of the UII *Lajnah Mushaf* Team, the Ministry of Religion which placed him as a member of the National Tafsir Council and the recognition of Prof. Quraisy Shihab, that Gus Baha

[38] Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat* (Yogyakarta: Gading Publishing, 2012); Zaenal Muttaqin, "Al-Hikam Mutiara Pemikiran Sufistik Ibnu Atha'illah as-Sakandari," *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 2, no. 1 (2020): 50–73, https://doi.org/10.15408/ushuluna.v2i1.15173.

[39] Malik, "Dakwah Melalui Pengajian Pasaran Kitab al-Hikam di Pondok Pesantren Azzainiyyah Sukabumi."

[40] Jauhari, "Perilaku Sosial Santri Pondok Pesantren Al-Ishlah Bandar Kidul Mojoroto Kota Kediri Setelah Mengikuti Pengajian Kitab Al-Hikam."

[41] Muttaqin, "Al-Hikam Mutiara Pemikiran Sufistik Ibnu Atha'illah as-Sakandari."

is an expert in the field of *Tafseer* and *Fiqh*.[42] Qowim Musthofa corroborated it by mentioning the scientific sanad of Gus Baha, both the sanad of tafsir and hifdzul al-Qur'an from the path of his father, KH Nur Salim al-Hafidz and the scientific *sanad* of *fiqh* and others from the path of KH Maemoen Zubair who reached the Prophet.[43]

Gus Baha who played a role in conveying the contents of the book *Al-Hikam* to others is indeed called *da'i*. Gus Baha, a religious authority holder who has a lot of knowledge to the author of the book studied (Public Relations, 2023; Musthofa, 2022). He did not just read and explain the contents of the book *Al-Hikam* so that it can be understood by the mad'u, but also try to convince that the content of the message in the recitation *book Al-Hikam* It is authoritative, and by explaining who the author of the book is as the holder of religious authority. Book author *Al-Hikam*, Ibn Atha'illah as-Sakandari (648 - 709 AH / 1250 - 1309 AD), an authoritative Sufi figure in the field of Sufism. In addition to the book *Al-Hikam*, Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī wrote books, such as *Al-Tanwir fi Isqat al-Tadbir, Lata'ifal-Minan, Al-Qasd al-Mujarrad fi Ma'rifah al-Ism al-Mufrad,* and *Miftah al-Falah wa Misbah al-Arwah.* [44]

Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī studied tareqat with Abu Abbas al-Mursi (d. 686 AH), a direct disciple of the founder of the Syadziliyah order, namely Abu al-Hasan al-Syadzili (593 – 656 AH / 1195 – 1258 AD). After the death of Abu Abbas al Mursi, Ibn Atha'illah was trusted as the leader of the Syadziliyah tareqat, replacing him. After Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī , the leadership of the Syadziliyah tareqat was replaced by Ibn Abbad al-Randi (d. 793 AH), who gave a lecture (gave additional explanations) on the book *Al-Hikam.* [45] Ibn Atha'illah's position in the Śadziliyah tareqat was quite important, so that he received the nickname of the third generation of mursyid for the Śadziliyah tarekat. This of course also places the book *Al-Hikam* as one of the important books in the field of Sufism tareqat Syadziliyah. Not only does it have Islamic authority, Ibn Athoillah also shows it through works of books that are still relevant today, such as the book *Al-Hikam*.

The Book of *Al-Hikam* contains the teachings of Sufism which are divided into three parts, namely *Wisdom, Treatise* and *Munajat*. Part *Wisdom* contains a wise saying (*wisdom*) that maintains a balance between fulfilling the need to serve God and living in the mortal world. Part *treatise* contains letters or notes to be sent to some of Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī 's companions. While the *Munajat* contains the expressions of Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī as a servant of Allah who is praying, facing and communicating with Allah. When the content of the book *Al-Hikam* It is given a sequence number, some of its lecturers (additional commentators) have different opinions about the number of *Wisdom* and *Munajat* that existed, not with *treatise*.

They are the same in counting the number *treatise* namely 4 pieces. Meanwhile, regarding the other part, some argue that the number of *Wisdom* a total of 259 and *Munajat* 38 pieces,[46] *Wisdom* 254 pieces and *Munajat* 34 pieces,[47] and there are also those who think *Wisdom* 264 pieces and

[42] Redaksi Duta Islam, “Biografi Intelektual Gus Baha’ Nursalim,” Duta Islam.com, 2019, https://www.dutaislam.com/2019/05/biografi-intelektual-gus-baha-nursalim-rembang.html.

[43] Qowim Musthofa, “Profil KH. Bahaudin Nur Salim (Gus Baha) dan Pengaruhnya pada Generasi Milenial,” *Musala : Jurnal Pesantren dan Kebudayaan Islam Nusantara* 1, no. 1 (2022): 79–90, https://doi.org/10.37252/jpkin.v1i1.144.

[44] Yuslia Styawati, “Mengenal Tarekat Di Dunia Islam,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Tasawuf* 5, no. 1 (2020): 63–86, https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v5i1.61.

[45] Abdul Wadud Kasyful Humam, *Satu Tuhan Seribu Jalan, Sejarah, Ajaran, dan Geakan Tarekat di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Forum, 2013); Muhammad Nasrullah, “Tarekat Syadziliyah dan Pengaruh Ideologi Aswaja di Indonesia,” *Jurnal Islam Nusantara* 4, no. 2 (2020): 237–45, https://doi.org/10.33852/jurnalin.v4i2.225.

[46] Ramadlan Al-Buthi, *Al-Hikam al-Ataillah, Syarh wa Tahlil, Juz V* (Damsyik: Dar al-Fikr, 2004).

[47] Ahmad ben Mohammed ibn Ajibah, *Iqaz al-Himam fi Sarh al-Hikam, The Explanation of al-Sakandari Adages*

Munajat 39 pieces.[48] Basically, the book *Al-Hikam* contains a reflection on Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī 's religious experience as a Sufi who has been at the peak of spiritual experience achievement. The infinite sufistic experience is poured in a strand *Wisdom, Treatise* and *Munajat* through the use of the power of Arabic which has limitations as a human language. Therefore, to understand the content, certain competencies are needed both in the field of language and Sufism experience. This requires the urgency of knowledge in reciting the book *Al-Hikam.*

Gus Baha mentions three paths of the book *sanad Al-Hikam*, namely (1) Lirboyo, (2) Family and (3) Makkah. Figure 2 informs sanad Gus Baha who arrived at the author of the book *Al-Hikam* (Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī al-Sakandari) starting from Maemoen Zubair's mother. For the Lirboyo route, sanad *Al-Hikam* Mbah Maemoen Zubair from Abdul Karim Liboyo, from Mbah Kyai Hasyim Asyari Tebu Ireng, from Mbah Mahfudz Termas. For the Family route, sanad *Al-Hikam* mbah Maemoen Zubair, from Mbah Zubair, from Mbah Faqih Maskumambang, from Mbah Mahfudz Termas. As for the Makkah route, Maemoen Zubair's mbah obtained sanad *Al-Hikam* from Sayyid Muhammad Alawi, from Sayyid Abbas, from Sayyid Zaini Dahlan.[49] Sheikh Makhfud Termas Obtaining sanad *Al-Hikam* from Sayyid Abu Bakar Satha, from Sayyid Zaini Dahlan. It is through this sayyid Zaini Dahlan that the sanad of Gus Bahacontinues to Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī [50]. Gus Bahawho has competence in the study of the book *Al-Hikam* It is related to knowledge up to Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh al-Sakandarī , which is shown, among other things, through his ability to understand and explain the content of the book *Al-Hikam.*

Gus Baha as a Islamic Preacher *(da'i)* in the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* is indeed clear. However, cannot the term *da'i* be pinned to *content creators* who have done digital work in the field of da'wah, so that the recitation video can be accessed through the YouTube platform? They are indeed mad'u, because they are exposed to the message of *Al-Hikam* from the recitation of Gus Baha. But their role in storing and opening access for internet visitors through the channels they create certainly also allows them to be called da'i, because of the fact that they participate in spreading the content of the recitation message. The data in this study shows that *content creators* store and distribute videos of the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* Gus Bahain varying amounts. ISGB channels store 49 videos, NMK 106 videos, RNABN 44 videos and TNU 43 videos (Table 2).

There is a series of digital work of channel owners that allows videos with content sourced from religious figures to be interesting to access and to intervene in the behavior of internet visitors. If in the offline space, religious leaders have proven to be able to make an important contribution to community empowerment and behavior change with the religious values they bring,[51] then in the online space such potential can also be expected to occur, through access to the video as a first step. Visitors are made interested in accessing, as a sign of the process of delivering and

(Lebanon: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2016).

[48] Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri, *The Hikam – The Wisdom of Ibn ` Ata ' Allah Table of Contents* (-: Zahra Publications, 2004).

[49] Gus Baha, *Sanad Keilmuan Gus Baha dan Bahanya Ngaji Tanpa Sanad Jelas | Hikmah Ulama* (Indonesia: Hikmah Ulama, 2020).

[50] Al-Turmusi, *Kifayatu al-Mustafid Lima Ala Mina al-Asanid.*

[51] Christopher Boyer dkk., “Religious leaders can motivate men to cede power and reduce intimate partner violence: Experimental evidence from Uganda,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS)* 119, no. 31 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2200262119; Luca Ozzano dan Sara Fenoglio, “Conceptions of Power and Role of Religion in Community Organising,” *Religions* 13, no. 9 (2022), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13090837.

disseminating the content of the recitation message to a wider *mad'u*. Digital-work is important to be able to make video content interesting to access. The work includes the process of digitizing the study of the book *Al-Hikam* in the form of video recordings to be saved and grouped in the playlist feature with video names and playlist names that encourage visitors to be interested and access the video. They do digital work in such a way that the video of the recitation has the attraction of visitors to access the recitation.

Figure 1 presents the results of the work of digital *content creators* in trying to make the recitation of the book, which is actually a model for spreading messages that is classified as ancient, have appeal through the power of visual content. The manifest content in figure 1 displays still image and motion-image models that increasingly show the visualization of "reciting the book" behavior as in offline activities. In a clockwise direction, the cover visualization consists of a performance of kyai who is reciting the yellow book (ISGB), *running* Arabic text and its translation in Indonesian which is motivated by rolling waves of the beach, as can be seen in the visual content (NMK), and finally in the form of a display of the pages of the book being read (RNAB) which is even equipped with a yellow pointer that points word by word that can be seen, namely the text of the words and sentences being read (TNU). This is the content of the manifest that is sought so that the YouTube video of the recitation can give visitors an experience to be able to feel as if they are in an offline atmosphere of reciting the book *of Al-Hikam* gus Baha.

Religious Digital Creatives in Ngaji Al-Hikam Gus Baha

The advent of digital technology has had a profound impact on the landscape of religious expression, giving rise to a new generation of religious digital creators who are leveraging these tools to spread spiritual teachings and interact with diverse audiences. One example is *Ngaji Al-Hikam* Gus Baha, a series of online lectures and discussions led by renowned Islamic scholar Gus Baha, which has captivated many digital followers. Gus Baha's *Ngaji Al-Hikam* series exemplifies how religious figures are adapting to the digital age, harnessing the power of social media and online platforms to reach a wider audience and reimagine traditional ways of approaching religion. These digital materials often use innovative strategies, such as the use of visual stories, interactive content, and informal but engaging delivery, to make complex theological concepts accessible to modern audiences.

The digital work of content *creators* who provide recitation videos through the channels they create has indeed yielded results and attracted the interest of internet visitors. It was found that there were visitors who accessed the recitation video that they saved on the channel. Table 2 presents some information about the four channels, from the following three questions: *First,* Question (Q1) about the four channels that are the sample of this research, especially those related to (a) the name of the playlist that stores the video of the recitation of the book *Al-Hikam* Gus Baha and (b) the link address; *Second,* Question (Q2) about (a) the number of videos of the recitation of the book of Al-Hikam Gus Bahathat are stored and (b) the number of views that access the playlist on the channel; *Third*, Question (Q3) about the video of the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* Gus Baha which received the most views on each channel, which includes (a) the title of the video, (b) the address of the video link, (c) the length of the video (minutes), and (d) the type of audiovisual content in the recitation video (e) the number of views, (f) the number of likes on the video

By referring to table 2, the four videos of the recitation of the book *of Al-Hikam* from the four channels that received the most visitors on each channel are presented as follows:

1. On the ISGB Channel, the video with the most views is titled "Gus Baha Ngaji Hikam No 200 'Syukur Nikmat'" (here in after referred to as "Syukur")
2. On the NMK channel, the video with the most views is titled "Gus Baha| The Divine Nur Characteristics That Will Come To You | English subtitle|#44" (here in after referred to as "Ciri Nur Ilahi who wants to come to you")
3. On the RNABN Channel, the video with the most views "Gus Baha– Al-Hikam #Khatam" (here in after referred to as "Khatam")
4. On the TNU Channel, the video with the most views is titled "**Ngaji Kitab Syarah Al-Hikam # Khataman # Accompanied by the Text of the Book # Latest Gus Baha" (hereinafter referred to as "Khataman")**

ISGB channel with 49 videos in a playlist *Al-Hikam* has been watched by 19,621 views (16,40 %). Of the 49 videos, the video entitled "Gus BahaNgaji Hikam No 200 'Syukur'" received the most views (247,000). The video explains *Wisdom* (لاتدهشك واردات النعم عن القيام بحقوق شكرك فان ذلك مما يحط من وجود قدرك) from the book *Al-Hikam* (Ahmad ben Mohammed ibn Ajibah, 2016; Ibn Abbad al-Randi, n.d., p. 154), which means:

> "Allah's blessings that come continuously should not make you confused in fulfilling the obligation of gratitude. That actually, it's part of the thing that lowers your dignity to a low point."

According to Gus Baha, the essence *of wisdom* refers to the act of gratitude that is always too small compared to Allah's favor. But everyone must remain grateful. This inspired Gus Baha to build a *focused* argument in Islamic reform. Even though only a small part of the teachings of Islam can be renewed, Muslims still need to renew it for the sake of the survival of Islam. For example, the focus of Uthman bin Affan (i.e. preserving the Qur'an) in contrast to Abu Bakr and Umar bin Khattab (i.e. developing the generosity of the Prophet) in their leadership needs to be understood in this perspective. No matter how small each person's actions are compared to the breadth of God's grace, everyone must still do it. It marks the dignity of people as religious firm holders.

The act of gratitude which is generally triggered by the enjoyment of life, while that enjoyment can also arise from disobedience and not only from faith, then believers whose lives depend on rich people who are experts in immorality, certainly face obstacles to being grateful. This, according to Gus Baha, is the context that needs to be considered in understanding *the wisdom*. The obligation to be grateful should not be hindered by the blessings of disobedience felt by the immoral experts and witnessed by the believers. This message is claimed by Gus Bahaas an implementation of this *wisdom* which is interpreted as: blessings from Allah that are abundant for everyone, including for the experts of immorality, do not confuse (forget) believers in fulfilling their obligation to remain grateful to Allah for the faith they embrace.

For 79 minutes, viewers of this video listen to the voice of Gus Baha explained it, including its development, the stories of the generosity of the prophet, his companions and other relevant Islamic figures, and the interpretation of the Qur'an that corroborates the description. In addition, video performers can also watch illustrations of static visual content, namely a photo of themselves and the text of the video title with green and black backgrounds. The display of visual content may be boring, so it is only natural that out of 247,000 views, only 0.93% (2,300) liked the video (see table 2 and figure 1).

The NMK channel in the playlist title "Gus Baha Kitab Al-Hikam" has 106 videos and has been watched by 5,035 views (4.20%). Of the total, the video with the title "Ciri Nur Ilahi Who Wants to Come to You" received the most views and contained an explanation of *Wisdom* (1) (كما لايحب العمل المشترك كذلك لايحب القلب المشترك العمل المشترك لا يقبله) and (2) (انوار اذن لها في الوصول وا نوار اذن لها في الدخول) from the book *Al-Hikam* (Ahmad ben Mohammed ibn Ajibah, 2016; Ibn Abbad al-Randi, n.d.). Meaning *Wisdom* first:

(1) Just as God does not like allied deeds (deeds that are done 415 insincerely), God also does not like a united heart (a heart that does not focus only on Allah). Allied deeds are not accepted by Allah.

Gus Baha supports the message that good hearts and deeds that are liked and accepted by Allah are only sincere hearts and sincere deeds, which are not associated with others. However, *this wisdom* does not mean that anyone must immediately stop his good deeds, if his heart is not sincere and cannot be sincere in doing good. Because the cessation due to the fear of bad qualities that he cannot get rid of, actually traps him in the heart and the deeds *of mushtarak*, that is, the heart that focuses on other than Allah and the charity that is allied with Him. For Gus Baha, good deeds that are done continuously are better even with *riya*, *takabur* or *ujub* because the continuity in doing good deeds can eventually release the bad qualities that accompany it, so that the end becomes a sincere and sincere deed.

The first lesson in this video is complemented by the second wisdom, about light (*nur / anwar,* p).

(2) Some Divine lights are allowed by Allah to reach (*wushul*) to the heart (but not into the heart) and Divine lights (others) are allowed by Allah to enter (*dukhul*) into the heart (more than just to the heart).

For Gus Baha*Anwar*, it is the truth of science. There are two types: reaching the liver and entering the liver. The truth of science that reaches the heart is characterized by a heart that does not focus only on Allah and charity that is accompanied by other consciousness that is not Allah. Like an act of charity carried out by a person with the awareness that the property that changes hands is his property. This is understood as the truth of science that only reaches (*wushul*) to the heart. However, if the donor realizes that the property belongs to Allah, and is donated solely for the sake of Allah, then the truth of science has entered (*dukhul*) into the heart. Gus Bahaemphasized that *the anwar* that is in the heart will reflect the sincerity of the heart and the sincerity of charity, while the one that reaches the heart, displays charity that includes self-awareness (such as ownership) in addition to the presence of Allah in his consciousness.

For 20 minutes, the viewer of this video listened to Gus Baha's explanation of the two *wisdoms* with relevant arguments and examples. In addition, visitors also witnessed an illustration of visual content - the movement of the rolling beach waves and running Arabic and Indonesian texts according to the voice of Gus Baha reading the book *Al-Hikam*. The visual content also features a still photo of Gus Baha. From 85,000 views, the video with the title "Ciri Nur Ilahi Who Wants to Come to You" received 1.76% (1,500) likes.

From a number of videos stored on the following two channels, the video with the most views is the same, namely the *khataman* video of the recitation of the book *Al-Hikam*. In the RNABN channel, out of 44 videos with 88,842 views (74.76%), the *khataman* video entitled "Al-Hikam #Khatam" was watched by 62,000 views with 654 likes (1.05%). Meanwhile, of the 43 videos on the TNU channel with 6,135 views (5.12%), the khataman video with the title "Syarah

Al-Hikam # Khataman#" was watched by 3,400 with 52 likes (1.53%). Both videos are the same, which contains explanations *treatise*, *Munajat* (Ahmad ben Mohammed ibn Ajibah, 2016; Al-Buthi, 2004; Ibn Abbad al-Randi, n.d.) and sanad guru gus Baha.

In the khatam video of the book study *Al-Hikam*, Gus Baha started by reading and explaining *treatise* first (فاذا نزلوا الى سماء الحقوق او ارض الحظوظ فبالاذن و التمكين و الرسوخ في اليقين ... بل دخلوا في ذلك بالله و لله و من الله و الى الله) and ends with the reading of *Munajat* The latter (.... يا من تجلى بكمال بهائه فتحققت عظمته الاسرار كيف تخفى و انت الظاهر ام كيف تغيب و انت الرقيب الحاضر والله الموفق و به نستعين). In accordance with the category of Ramadan al-Buthi,[52] there are four *lisalah li ba'dli Ikhwan* (next *treatise*) and 38 *munajat wa do'a* (next *Munajat*) in the book *Al-Hikam*. Parts of the four *treatise* which was emphasized by Gus Bahain the khataman video *Al-Hikam* include the following. (1) Charity *Tanazul* the guardians are based on Allah, that is, Allah as the driving force (*lillahi*), helper (*billahi*), the giver of the order (*minallahi*) and goals to be achieved (*ilallahi*) in action. *Tanazul* It refers to two forms of charity, namely "descending" to obtain a share of life on earth and "descending" to fulfill the heavenly rights. This includes those identified as charities of *salik* with the highest level of fanaticism that does not leave worldly possession.[53] (2) *Ainul Qalbi* (the spy) who attains the conviction that Allah is the only giver of grace does not deny *Sharia* to thank our fellow human beings. This represents a branch of the Syadziliyah order that maintains a balance in the relationship with Allah and with fellow human beings.[54] (3) *Qurratul aini* The Prophet (the deep joy experienced by the Prophet) is not caused by prayer but lies in the prayer of the Prophet. (4) The three types of people's attitudes towards Allah and the gifts received from Allah are as follows.

Quoting the *fourth treatise* of Ibn ʻAṭāʾillāh al-Sakandarī , Gus Baha explains three types of people's attitudes towards Allah as a giver of grace. The three types of attitudes in question are: (a) Forgetting and drifting in the ocean, forgetting Allah so deeply that they are completely unaware of the true existence of the giver; (b) Remember and drift in the ocean of deep remembrance of Allah which strengthens the awareness of the true giver and hinders the awareness of existence other than Allah and (c) Remember and drift in the sea of deep remembrance of Allah which strengthens the awareness of the true giver and the existence of non-Allah. Meanwhile, people are divided into three types of attitudes towards grace from Allah: (a) liking grace because it is its preferred function, (b) liking grace because it comes from Allah who is loved and (c) liking Allah because Allah is loved. The three principles and grouping of the types of attitudes of people in responding to the grace of Allah became the content of the *treatise* of Ibn ʻAṭāʾillāh al-Sakandarī which was sent to some of his companions. The author did not mention who the friend who received the pamphlet was sent.

The recitation of the book of Gus Baha ends with the reading and explanation of the last part of the book *Al-Hikam* which contains *munajat*. Ibn ʻAṭāʾillāh al-Sakandarī , the author of the book Al-Hikam, ended the contents of his book with a series of sentences of greetings, complaints, supplications and confessions before Allah. The series of sentences is inspired by self-awareness

[52] Al-Buthi, *Al-Hikam al-Ataillah, Syarh wa Tahlil, Juz V*.

[53] Rosi Islamiyati, "Tarekat Syadziliyah dalam Dimensi Kesalehan Individual dan Kesalehan Sosial serta Pengaruh Modernisasi dan Globalisasi," *Refleksi Jurnal Filsafat dan Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 1 (2022): 137–56, https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.v22i1.3256.

[54] Saliyo; Saefudin, "Actualization of Tarekat Teachings on Social Behaviour from a Psychological Perspective (A Case Study on the Sadziliyah Tarekat in Kudus, Indonesia)," *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental* … 6, no. 1 (2023): 92–103.

as a servant of Allah, the recognition of Allah's omnipotence and the names of Allah in the Qur'an. Like, inspired by the asthma of Allah *adl-Dlahir*, Ibn ʻAṭāʾillāh al-Sakandarī *munajat* with the closing *text of munajat*, which means:

> "… O Substance that has been incarnated in His perfect beauty, so that His greatness is evident in heart and feeling. How will You be hidden, when You are the Most Beborn. How You Will Be Lost (*Supernatural*), even though You are the Most Overseer, the Most Present... " (Ibn Abbad al-Randi, n.d.).

Such sentences are categorized into *munajat*. This seems to be part of the expression of Ibn 'Athai who imagined himself communicating, facing and prostrate before Allah, while greeting, complaining, pleading and confessing his presence before Allah. It is placed at the end of the book *Al-Hikam*. Therefore, when the reading and explanation of the book *of Al-Hikam* reached the end, Gus Bahaadvised the participants (including visitors to the YouTube platform) to *read* the reading, because the series of sentences contains prayers.

Although the duration of the *khataman* video is longer (150 minutes) compared to other videos and the visual content is only pages of books (see Table 2), but this recitation video also received the most views through two channels, namely the Channel RNABN (2019) and TNU (2020). Actually, the combination of visual content display and language text on the screen can be effective in promoting ideas or products to the public,[55] but in the context of the recitation of the Yellow Book, it has not been optimally pursued. Judging from the visual content, the video of the khataman recitation visualizes the book read by the Bahá'í Gus, which contains Arabic texts without the hope (see Figure 1). For internet visitors in general, the visual content may be boring, although for views from students who really intend to follow the "yellow book reading", it is necessary. If in RNABN, the visual content only displays the sheets of the book, then on the TNU channel, the visual of the sheets is equipped with a yellow light display (pointer) that highlights word for word in the sheet read by Gus Baha, which can help the views of students in participating in the "ngaji kitab-kuning" activity as they experience in the Islamic Boarding School offline. In addition to such visual content, the prayer content offered by Gus Baha as a kyai figure who has a teacher of the book *Al-Hikam*, is also a factor that attracts the interest of students so that they get the most views on each of the two channels.

Discussion

Mediatization of Pengajian: Navigating Epistemic Authenticity and Visibility

Stig Hjarvard's framework of the *mediatization of religion* explains how media actively reshape religious practices, including *pengajian* (Islamic study circles).[56] Media influence the content, delivery format, and social interaction patterns of *pengajian*, transforming its traditional dynamics to fit the demands and opportunities of modern platforms. This transformation is particularly relevant to texts like Ibn Ataillah al-Sakandari's *Al-Hikam*, a cornerstone of Sufi literature celebrated for its profound aphorisms and guidance on the spiritual path. Media have amplified the accessibility of *Al-Hikam*, but they also present challenges in preserving the depth and authenticity of its teachings in a digital context.

[55] Khairulwafi Mamat Abdul Majid dkk., "Visual Syntax: How Visual and Verbal Approach Promote Social Unity Through Thematic Television Commercials," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 39, no. 4 (2023): 404, https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2023-3904-21.

[56] Stig Hjarvard, "The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of The Media as Agents of Religious Change," *Northern Lights: Film & Media Studies Yearbook* 6, no. 1 (Juni 2008): 9–26, https://doi.org/10.1386/nl.6.1.9_1; Stig Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion: Changing the Public Face of Religion," *State Religion and Church in Russia and Worldwide* 38, no. 2 (2020): 41–75, https://doi.org/10.22394/2073-7203-2020-38-2-41-75.

The *mediatization of Al-Hikam* demonstrates how modern media amplify its visibility while introducing the challenge of maintaining its authenticity. Known for its concise style likened to a "necklace of precious jewels," *Al-Hikam* adapts well to formats such as social media posts and video clips. This aligns with the *media as conduits* approach, where platforms like YouTube and Instagram enable global dissemination.[57] However, the brevity of digital content often risks reducing the reflective depth of its aphorisms, potentially limiting their transformative spiritual insights.[58] Through the *media as languages* approach, the presentation of *Al-Hikam* adjusts to the demands of digital platforms.[59] Unlike Ibn Arabi's metaphysical expositions in *Fusus Al-Hikam* or Al-Ghazali's structured methodologies in *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, the aphoristic nature of *Al-Hikam* allows its teachings to be shared in short, impactful formats. This adaptation attracts younger audiences and increases engagement but requires careful contextualization to maintain the integrity and depth of the text's original meanings. Without this effort, *Al-Hikam* risks being reduced to mere inspirational content detached from its spiritual roots.[60]

The *media as environments* perspective highlights how digital dissemination creates virtual communities of spiritual seekers.[61] These communities connect participants from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds but lack the intimate interpersonal interactions inherent to traditional *pengajian*. This shift reflects the broader impact of mediatization, where spiritual teachings adapt to the norms of digital engagement while losing some elements of mentorship and communal bonding. Figures like Gus Baha, as religious authorities, have mitigated this by incorporating traditional elements such as sanad (chains of transmission), which reinforce authenticity even within digital settings.[62]

In contrast whit Gus Baha said in the video, it turns out that Gus *Baha's Al- Hikam sanad* path has 4 chains. The *Sanad Al-Hikam* includes four distinct transmission chains that emphasize the authenticity and continuity of its teachings from Ibn Ataillah al-Sakandari.[63] The first chain

[57] Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion," 27.

[58] Ibn 'Ata'illah, Victor Danner, dan Martin Lings, *Sufi Aphorisms: [*Kitāb al-ḥikam*]* (BRILL, 1984), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004661431.

[59] Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion," 27.

[60] Binyamin Abrahamov, *Ibn Al-Arabi's Fusus Al-Hikam: An Annotated Translation of "The Bezels of Wisdom,"* 1 ed. (Routledge, 2015), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736655; Mukhtar H. Ali, *The Horizons of Being: The Metaphysics of Ibn Al-ʿArabi in the Muqaddimat Al-Qayṣari* (Boston: BRILL, 2020).

[61] Hjarvard, "Three Forms of Mediatized Religion," 27.

[62] Carole Hillenbrand, "Al-Ghazālī," dalam *Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, 1 ed., ed. oleh Lloyd Ridgeon (New York: Routledge, 2020.: Routledge, 2020), 63–74, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315175348-6.

[63] The *Sanad Al-Hikam* consists of four detailed transmission chains. The first chain begins with Ma'mūn Zubair and passes through Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Fadānī, Muḥammad 'Alī bin Ḥusain bin Ibrāhīm al-Mālikī al-Makkī, Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad Syāṭā al-Makkī, Aḥmad bin Zainī Daḥlān al-Makkī, 'Utsmān bin Ḥasan ad-Dimyāṭī, Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin 'Abd al-Qādir al-Amīr al-Kabīr, Muḥammad bin Sālim al-Hifnī, al-Badīrī, al-Mula Ibrāhīm, al-Shofi al-Qusyāsyī, al-Syams ar-Ramlī, Syaikh al-Islām Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, Al-'Izz bin al-Furāt, Tāj ad-Dīn al-Subkī, and 'Alī bin 'Abd al-Kāfī as-Subkī before culminating with Ibn Ataillah al-Sakandari(Al-Razi, 2022, pp. 463–464). The second chain also begins with Ma'mūn Zubair and includes Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Fadānī, 'Umar Ḥamdān al-Maḥrasī, al-Syihāb Aḥmad bin 'Abdullāh al-Mikhlatī al-Syāmī, al-Kiyāhī al-Mutafannin Muḥammad Bāqir bin Nūr al-Jugjawī, al-Kiyāhī al-Muḥīṭ bin Ya'qūb al-Sidarajī, al-Kiyāhī Biḍhowi bin 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Lasamī, al-Kiyāhī Ma'ṣūm bin Aḥmad al-Lasamī, al-Kiyāhī 'Abd al-Wahhāb bin Ḥasb Allāh al-Jumbānī, al-'Allāmah Maḥfūẓ bin 'Abdullāh al-Tarmasī al-Jāwī, Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad Syāṭā al-Makkī, Aḥmad bin Zainī Daḥlān al-Makkī, 'Utsmān bin Ḥasan ad-Dimyāṭī, Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin 'Abd al-Qādir al-Amīr al-Kabīr, Muḥammad bin Sālim al-Hifnī, al-Badīrī, al-Mula Ibrāhīm, al-Shofi al-Qusyāsyī, al-Syams ar-Ramlī, Syaikh al-Islām Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, Al-'Izz bin al-Furāt, Tāj ad-Dīn al-Subkī, and 'Alī bin 'Abd al-Kāfī as-Subkī, concluding with Ibn Ataillah al-Sakandari

begins with Ma'mūn Zubair and continues through figures like Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Fadānī, Aḥmad bin Zainī Daḥlān, and Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī. This chain highlights the rigorous intellectual lineage that ensures the authenticity of *Al-Hikam*. The second chain follows a similar route but includes variations in its early transmitters, such as 'Umar Ḥamdān al-Maḥrasī, adding diversity to the preservation of the text.[64] The third chain underscores the contributions of Southeast Asian scholars, particularly Maḥfūẓ bin 'Abdullāh al-Tarmasī, a prominent Javanese scholar. This chain integrates scholars like Zubair bin Daḥlān and 'Abdullāh al-Syarqāwī, bridging the Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian traditions. The fourth chain further emphasizes Southeast Asian contributions, featuring Nawawi al-Bantani and Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani. These chains demonstrate the global reach of *Al-Hikam*, connecting its teachings across regions and generations while maintaining their authenticity and spiritual depth.[65]

(Al-Razi, 2022, p. 464). The third chain incorporates figures such as Ma'mūn Zubair, Zubair bin Daḥlān, Faqīh bin 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Maksūmbāni al-Qursī'ī, Maḥfūẓ bin 'Abdullāh al-Tarmasī al-Jāwī, Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad Syāṭā al-Makkī, Aḥmad bin Zainī Daḥlān, 'Utsmān bin Ḥasan al-Dimyāṭī, 'Abdullāh al-Syarqāwī, Muḥammad bin Sālim al-Ḥifnī, al-Syaikh 'Abd al-Nimrasī, 'Abdullāh bin Sālim al-Baṣrī, Muḥammad bin 'Alā' al-Bābilī, Abū al-Najā Sālim bin Muḥammad al-Sanhūrī, al-Najm Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Ghayṭī, Syaikh al-Islām Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, al-'Izz 'Abd al-Raḥīm bin al-Furāt, Tāj 'Abd al-Wahhāb bin 'Alī bin 'Abd al-Kāfī, and al-Taqī 'Alī bin 'Abd al-Kāfī al-Subkī, finally connecting to Ibn Ataillah al-Sakandari (Al-Razi, 2022, p. 465). The fourth chain also begins with Ma'mūn Zubair and includes Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Fadānī, 'Alī bin 'Abd Allāh bin Banjar al-Makkī, Khālid bin 'Uthmān al-Mukhallafī, Zayn al-Dīn bin Badawī al-Ṣūmbāwī al-Makkī al-Shāfi'ī, Mu'ammmar Nawawi bin 'Umar al-Bantānī, Mu'ammar 'Abd al-Ṣamad bin 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Abd al-Jalīl al-Falambānī, Aḥmad bin Sulaymān al-Muhājim al-Ḥusaynī al-Zubaydī, Aḥmad bin Idrīs bin 'Abd Allāh bin 'Alī al-Idrīsī, Ḥasan bin 'Abd al-Shukūr al-Ṭā'ifī, Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr al-Shaylī al-Makkī, al-Shams Muḥammad bin al-Najm al-Bābilī, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Munāwī, al-Najm Muḥammad bin Aḥmad, Zakariyyā bin Muḥammad, Al-'Izz Abd al-Rahim bin Muhammad bin al-Furāt, Al-Tāj 'Abd al-Wahhāb bin 'Alī al-Subkī, and al-Taqī 'Alī bin 'Abd al-Kāfī al-Subkī, ultimately reaching Ibn Ataillah al-Sakandari (Al-Razi, 2022, pp. 465–466).These chains collectively represent a meticulous and credible transmission of *Al-Hikam*, underscoring the authenticity and global reach of its teachings.

[64] Ahmad Fakhr Al-Razi, *Al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī fi Thabat al-Maimunī*, Second Edition (Rembang: Maktabah Tabassam Farhan, 2022), 463–64.

[65] Al-Razi, 464–66.

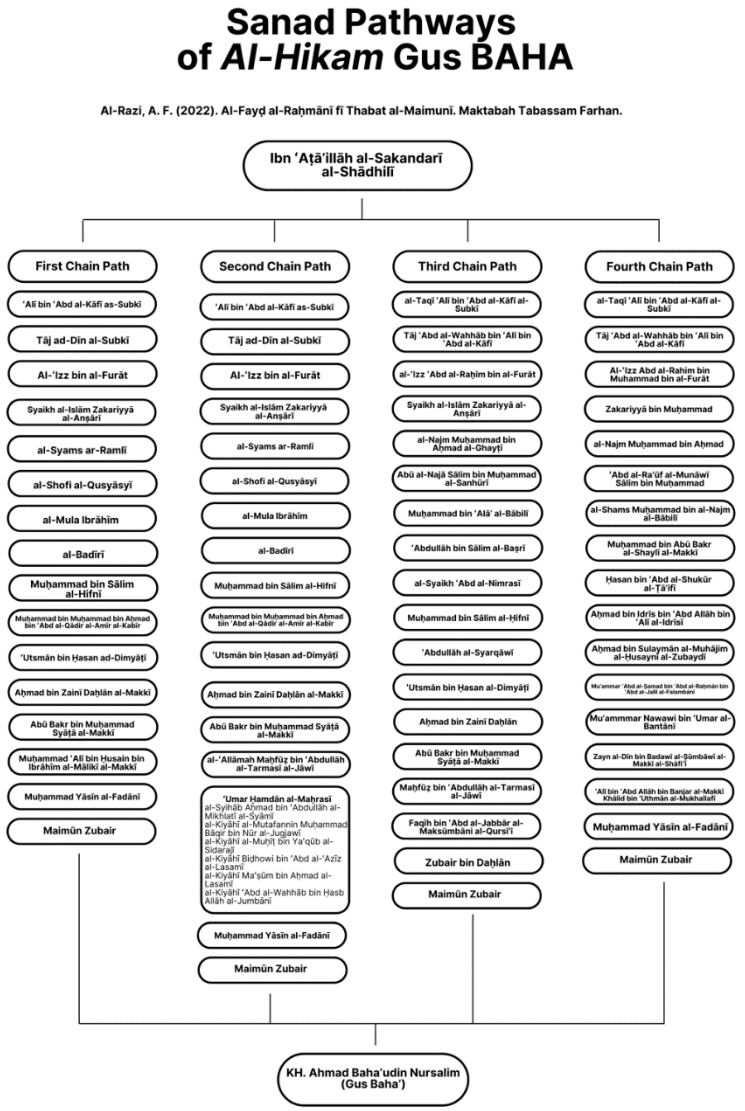

Figure 3. The Fourth Path of Sanad of Al-Hikam Gus Baha
Source: Al-Razi, A. F. (2022). Al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī fī Thabat al-Maimunī. Maktabah Tabassam Farhan

Gus Baha frequently mentions these *sanad* in his *pengajian* of *Al-Hikam*. By referencing the chains of transmission, he reinforces the text's authenticity and connects contemporary audiences with the rich intellectual and spiritual traditions of Islamic scholarship. This strategy not only establishes the credibility of *Al-Hikam* but also ensures its teachings are presented faithfully amidst the challenges of modern mediatization.

In the digital context of his *pengajian*, Gus Bahanot only emphasizes the importance of *sanad* but also preserves experiential authenticity by addressing the needs and concerns of his followers. One such interaction occurred when a follower's question was conveyed to Gus Bahathrough Rumanto, his close assistant. The follower expressed their inability to attend Gus Baha's *majlis* in person due to certain limitations and sought permission to follow the *pengajian* via YouTube. Rumanto relayed the question, and Gus Baharesponded with a thoughtful reply:

> "Yes, I permit it, but I advise you to make sure that even though you are attending the *pengajian* through YouTube, you remain in a state of purity (having *wudhu*), because every

time I begin a session, I also ensure that I am in a state of purity and have performed the prayer of need (*sholat hajat*) beforehand."[66]

This exchange exemplifies how Gus Bahaintegrates the principles of traditional Islamic learning into a digital setting while safeguarding its spiritual integrity. By emphasizing the need for *wudhu* and *sholat hajat*, he maintains the *adab* (etiquette) of religious learning, ensuring that the act of seeking knowledge remains an act of devotion, even in a virtual context. Through Rumanto's mediation, Gus Bahademonstrates his attentiveness to the spiritual and practical needs of his followers, adapting traditional values to meet the challenges of modern mediatization.

This approach resonates with the concept of experiential authenticity, which describes how individuals determine the validity of religious practices through personal and communal engagement, both online and offline. According to Campbell and Bellar (2023), experiential authenticity is especially significant in digital religion as it allows participants to judge the realness and meaning of religious practices based on their own experiences, often transcending the boundaries of physical spaces. By advising participants to maintain *wudhu* and perform *sholat hajat* before attending an online *pengajian*, Gus Bahabridges the gap between traditional and digital practices. This not only preserves the spiritual depth of the *pengajian* but also aligns with findings that incorporating traditional rituals into digital spaces fosters a sense of realness and connection among participants. Gus Baha's ability to integrate timeless values into modern platforms demonstrates how Islamic teachings, including *Al-Hikam*, remain relevant and transformative in contemporary settings, ensuring their enduring impact across generations.

The mediatization of pengajian illustrates a dynamic interplay of shifting authority and experiential authenticity within the digital realm. As religious practices transition to online platforms, traditional hierarchies of authority are increasingly complemented, or even challenged, by the participatory and decentralized nature of digital media.[67] Gus Bahanavigates this shift by leveraging the digital platform's potential for global reach while anchoring his teachings in established traditions such as *sanad*. His emphasis on *adab* (ritual etiquette) and personal preparation, like *wudhu* and *sholat hajat*, demonstrates how religious actors can assert authority in digital spaces without undermining the participatory nature of these platforms. This reflects the theoretical insight that digital spaces create multi-site realities, where the physical and virtual intersect, enabling religious experiences that are both mediated and embodied [68]. By fostering continuity between offline and online religious practices, Gus Baha ensures that the mediatization of *pengajian* does not dilute its spiritual essence but rather adapts it for a pluralistic and technologically interconnected audience.

By mediating between *turāth* (classical Islamic scholarship), Sufi epistemology, and digital media, he challenges dominant frameworks that either rigidly adhere to textual traditionalism or uncritically adopt Western-influenced Islamic modernism. His approach—particularly in interpreting *Al-Hikam* through a Javanese Sufi lens—demonstrates how local epistemologies can

[66] Rumanto, "Interview with Rumanto, Director, Pesantren Izzati Nuril Qur'an, Bedukan, Yogyakarta," 5 Mei 2024.

[67] Heidi Campbell, "Challenges Created by Online Religious Networks," *Journal of Media and Religion* 3, no. 2 (Mei 2004): 81–99, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328415jmr0302_1; Heidi Campbell, "Spiritualising the Internet: Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage," *Online - Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, advance online publication, University Library Heidelberg, 2005, https://doi.org/10.11588/REL.2005.1.381.

[68] Heidi Campbell dan Wendi Bellar, "Experiential Authenticity," dalam *Digital Religion: The Basics*, Routledge the basics, book 184 (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2023), 116–37.

reclaim space in digital Islam, which is often dominated by neoliberal individualism or scripturalist reformism. Gus Baha's case illustrates that decolonization in digital Islam is not about rejecting globalization but reasserting agency within it. His synthesis of *sanad*, Sufism, and social media offers a model for how Muslim scholars can navigate digital modernity without sacrificing epistemic rootedness a crucial intervention in an era where religious authority is increasingly destabilized by algorithmic and ideological pressures

Unlike mainstream digital preachers who prioritize viral content over scholarly depth, Gus Baha reinforces the authority of *sanad* (scholarly lineage) while adapting to social media's affective dynamics. This dual engagement counters the erosion of traditional knowledge under digital capitalism, where religious discourse is often reduced to commodified soundbites. By transmitting *kitab kuning* (classical texts) via YouTube, he not only preserves but also revitalizes vernacular Islamic authority, ensuring that Sufi teachings remain accessible yet epistemologically grounded. Gus Baha's digital Sufism operates as a decolonial praxis—neither rejecting modernity nor surrendering to its homogenizing forces. His teachings reassert the agency of local Islamic actors in defining religious authenticity, resisting the marginalization of indigenous epistemologies in globalized discourse. For instance, his emphasis on Javanese Sufi concepts like *rasa* (mystical intuition) challenges universalist interpretations of Islam, offering an alternative to both Salafi textualism and Western-centric spirituality.

Decentering Islamic Authority: Reasserting Vernacular Legitimacy through Gus Baha's Al-Hikam

Islamic religious authority has traditionally been concentrated in Arabophone institutions. Notable institutions include Al-Azhar University, the Islamic University of Medina, and the Saudi religious establishment. These institutions have shaped global understandings of *'aqīda* (creed), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and *akhlāq* (ethics), and have positioned themselves as authoritative sources of Islamic knowledge (Zaman, 2002; Eickelman & Piscatori, 2004). Through transnational networks, publishing systems, and state support, they have maintained dominance in defining Islamic orthodoxy. This centralization has created a center–periphery structure that privileges Arab-Islamic perspectives and sidelines Islamic expressions from other regions, especially Southeast Asia. Indonesian Islam, in particular, has often been viewed as vernacular—regarded as culturally mixed and less authoritative. Hasan (2022) calls for a reorientation of Islamic studies that moves beyond East–West and center–periphery binaries. He urges scholars to examine local Islamic traditions using critical and historical methods to uncover epistemologies shaped by local contexts. This approach highlights the role of Southeast Asian scholars as active contributors to global Islamic thought. Rather than imitating Arab models, Indonesian institutions offer alternative forms of religious legitimacy grounded in pesantren tradition, local ethics, and contextual interpretation.

This dominant configuration of Islamic authority is now facing critical reassessment. Slama (2020) shows that Indonesian religious actors—through *pesantren* education, public scholarship, and digital *da'wa* are actively repositioning Indonesia as a significant center of Islamic knowledge production. This shift is not merely geopolitical; it is epistemic. It challenges long-standing hierarchies by asserting the legitimacy of local epistemologies rooted in *sanad* (scholarly lineage), *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts), and Sufi spirituality. Rather than replicating Middle Eastern norms, Indonesian scholars reinterpret these sources in contextually meaningful ways,

framing them as independent and normatively valid. This process reflects a broader reframing of religious authority—one grounded in indigenous pedagogical traditions, local ethics, and spiritual idioms that resonate with contemporary Muslim realities.

Digital media has accelerated this transformation. Platforms like YouTube have enabled broader access to *pengajian* and classical text recitations, extending their reach beyond traditional *pesantren* circles. One prominent example is Kiai Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim, known as Gus Baha. His digital teachings on *Al-Hikam* illustrate how local scholars reinterpret classical Sufi wisdom through Javanese cultural frameworks, humor, and accessible language. Rather than presenting knowledge as fixed, Gus Baha embodies a dynamic mode of transmission—one that blends textual fidelity with ethical relevance. His authority does not depend on institutional or state recognition but emerges from public trust, interpretive integrity, and his ability to address everyday moral concerns. In doing so, he exemplifies how vernacular Islamic authority functions as a performative and relational practice—one that offers a meaningful alternative to the centralized, formalized models of Arab-centric institutions (Slama, 2020; Hasan, 2022).

This paradigm shift aligns with Talal Asad's (2009) concept of Islam as a *discursive tradition*, where religious authority is shaped through ongoing interpretation, ethical conduct, and social context. Authority, in this view, is not fixed in institutions but emerges from a scholar's ability to relate inherited texts to contemporary moral concerns. Tradition is sustained not just through textual transmission but through embodied practices that make it meaningful over time. Building on this, Anjum (2007) introduces the idea of *moral epistemology*, arguing that religious legitimacy depends not only on textual mastery (*'ilm*) or credentials, but also on ethical integrity (*akhlaq*), rootedness in the classical tradition (*turāth*), and the ability to respond to present realities. Authority is thus dialogical and performative—shaped by trust and contextual relevance rather than institutional hierarchy. This framework is highly relevant in the Indonesian context, where figures like Gus Baha derive authority from public trust, sincerity, and interpretive depth. His reading of *Al-Hikam* reflects this vernacular model: he draws on classical sources but communicates them in accessible language, using Javanese cultural references and everyday ethics. Instead of relying on formal power, Gus Baha builds religious legitimacy through relational connection and cultural resonance, embodying an authority rooted in tradition and responsive to lived realities.

Gus Baha's digital *pengajian* of *Al-Hikam* reflects a vernacular reconfiguration of Islamic authority through three key strategies: (1) re-centering *pesantren*-based pedagogy as a foundation of religious learning, (2) asserting *sanad* (scholarly lineage) to establish epistemic legitimacy, and (3) translating complex Sufi teachings into accessible, culturally resonant discourse. Each of these strategies will be discussed in detail to show how they collectively decenter orthodox models of authority and affirm the relevance of Indonesian Islamic tradition in the digital age. By emphasizing *tafaqquh*, Gus Baha encourages a holistic approach to knowledge that integrates spiritual insight with practical application, allowing for a deeper engagement with Islamic teachings. In doing so, Gus Baha challenges the dominance of Western epistemological frameworks and reaffirms the validity of indigenous methods of knowing, thereby enriching the discourse on Islamic authority and knowledge production in the contemporary digital landscape

a. Localized Interpretation of Islamic Principles

Gus Baha's localized interpretation of Islamic principles is evident in how he recontextualizes classical Islamic teachings, such as *husnul adab* (excellent etiquette) and reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), to resonate with the socio-cultural realities of Indonesian Muslims. This

approach aligns with the principle of decentering Indonesian Islam by demonstrating that Islamic principles are not bound to rigid interpretations from Middle Eastern centers but are adaptable to local contexts.

In *Aphorism 127*, Gus Baha emphasizes *husnul adab* as the hallmark of true servitude to Allah. He explains that the essence of prayer and supplication lies not in whether one's requests are granted but in the act of submitting humbly to Allah's will: *"What matters is that you are granted husnul adab. That is the highest spiritual station."* This reframing shifts the focus from transactional notions of prayer to the spiritual fulfillment of acknowledging one's role as a servant (*kawula*) entirely dependent on Allah. By integrating the concept of *kemawula* (humble servanthood) into his teaching, Gus Bahaconnects classical Sufi concepts with the deeply ingrained Indonesian cultural values of humility and reverence.

Similarly, in *Aphorisms 237–242*, Gus Baha discusses the dual roles of *nafsu* (desires) and *setan* (Satan) as divine tests that guide individuals toward reliance on Allah. He illustrates this with relatable examples, such as how resisting immoral desires becomes an act of spiritual growth: *"The blessing of fearing adultery, fearing theft... is that you end up praying daily: 'O Allah, control me.'"* Gus Bahaframes *nafsu* not as an absolute obstacle but as a means of achieving spiritual refinement. This teaching highlights how universal Islamic principles like self-restraint and *tawakkul* are made accessible and actionable for ordinary Muslims by grounding them in daily experiences.

b. Practical and Accessible Spirituality

Gus Baha's *pengajian* exemplifies a spirituality that is both practical and accessible, bridging complex theological concepts with the everyday experiences of his audience. By using relatable examples, humor, and culturally resonant language, Gus Bahaensures that his interpretations of *Al-Hikam* aphorisms are not only understood but also applicable to the lives of ordinary Muslims. This approach reflects a commitment to making Islamic teachings actionable, emphasizing their relevance to contemporary challenges while maintaining their spiritual depth.

In *Aphorisms 237–242*, Gus Baha highlights the dual roles of *nafsu* (desires) and *setan* (Satan) as divine mechanisms designed to guide individuals toward reliance on Allah. He provides a practical example of how resisting immoral desires, such as adultery, becomes an act of spiritual growth: *"The blessing of fearing adultery, fearing theft... is that you end up praying daily: 'O Allah, control me.'"* This interpretation reframes *nafsu* not as an insurmountable obstacle but as a means for achieving spiritual refinement through reliance on Allah. By presenting the struggle with *nafsu* as a natural and inevitable part of life, Gus Bahademystifies the concept, making it relevant and actionable for his audience.

Gus Baha's use of humor is a hallmark of his practical approach to spirituality. For instance, he describes the human tendency to rely on societal norms (*adat*) and contrasts it with the spiritual discipline required to achieve *keramat* (spiritual miracles). In *Aphorism 127*, he humorously critiques the expectation for miraculous achievements while maintaining indulgent habits: *"We eat until we're full, sleep until satisfied, chat until we've had enough. Yet we still want miracles!"* This light-hearted critique encourages self-reflection without alienating his audience, making spiritual growth a relatable and attainable goal.

In *Aphorism 128*, Gus Baha redefines the idea of answered prayers, emphasizing the act of praying itself as a spiritual achievement: *"Who says my prayer wasn't answered? My prayer was answered when I was given the gift to pray."* This reinterpretation shifts the focus from the tangible

outcomes of prayer to its intrinsic value as an act of servanthood. By reframing prayer in this way, Gus Bahadismantles transactional notions of spirituality, making the practice of worship more meaningful and accessible to ordinary Muslims.

Gus Baha's language is imbued with Javanese cultural norms, such as humility (*andhap asor*) and gratitude (*syukur*), which resonate deeply with his Indonesian audience. For example, he integrates the Javanese concept of *kemawula* (servanthood) into his teachings, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling one's role as a servant of Allah. This culturally sensitive approach ensures that his interpretations are not only theologically sound but also accessible and relatable to a wide range of listeners.

c. Integration of Local Wisdom into Global Discourses

Gus Baha's approach to *Al-Hikam* emphasizes the seamless integration of localized values and experiences into broader Islamic discourses, positioning Indonesian Islamic traditions as vibrant contributors to the global evolution of Islamic thought. By using Javanese cultural paradigms as interpretive tools, Gus Bahademonstrates that Islamic teachings are dynamic and enriched through engagement with diverse cultural contexts. One notable example is Gus Baha's emphasis on *waktu ikhtiyar* (flexibility in religious practices) as a reflection of divine wisdom. Citing practices at *pesantren* like Lirboyo and Sarang, where prayers are often performed at the end of their allocated time, Gus Baha highlights the balance between textual adherence and contextual adaptation. He explains that Allah's flexibility in assigning specific prayer times encourages Muslims to integrate worship into their daily lives without unnecessary hardship. This practical approach critiques rigid literalism while preserving spiritual commitment, showcasing a uniquely Indonesian way of navigating Islamic law and practice.

Furthermore, Gus Baha's use of relational spirituality—framing Allah as the ultimate companion—resonates with Indonesian cultural expressions of relational harmony. In his commentary on *Aphorism 135*, he explains that Allah's mercy is unparalleled because, unlike human relationships, Allah's companionship remains constant despite human flaws. This idea aligns with Indonesia's communal and relational ethos, where maintaining harmony and showing unconditional regard are core values. By presenting this universal Islamic principle through a culturally familiar lens, Gus Baha enriches global understandings of Sufi spirituality with insights from Indonesian relational norms.

Conclusion

The main findings in this article include (1) The recitation of *the book of Al-Hikam* Gus Bahaon the YouTube platform is one of the book recitations that can be accessed on social media, which spreads the content of the message of Sufism, (2) The YouTube recitation *of the book of Al-Hikam* marks the presence of traditional religious authority that is still accepted by some internet users who are still limited, (3) The minimum time span is 20 minutes, Monotonous visual appearance, less eye-catching video titles and random video message content are challenges for digital da'wah in YouTube videos.

Gus Baha's *Al-Hikam* highlights the decentering of Indonesian Islam by emphasizing its cultural richness and global significance through three unique approaches. His localized interpretations of Islamic principles reframe classical teachings like *husnul adab* (excellent etiquette) and tawakkul (reliance on Allah) to resonate with the socio-cultural realities of Indonesian Muslims.

By making complex theological concepts accessible and relatable, Gus Baha bridges spirituality with everyday life, employing humor, straightforward language, and culturally relevant examples. This methodology not only integrates localized values into broader Islamic discourses but also positions Indonesian Islamic traditions as vital contributors to the global evolution of Islamic thought. Furthermore, Gus Baha's study of Sufism stands out from that of other Islamic scholars due to its ability to foster emotional engagement, adapt to digital platforms, and relate to social realities. Through the strength of his scientific *sanad*, Gus Baha effectively constructs a sense of digital religious authenticity, solidifying his unique role in contemporary Islamic scholarship

This article has limitations, especially in the option to study the video recitation of the book Al-Hikam Gus Baha, which has the most views, and is available on each channel, which is a sample of research. The recitation of the yellow book with a title other than *Al-Hikam* with other readers other than Gus Baha has been available not only on the YouTube platform. There are a number of kyai, our titles and platforms that can be accessed in cyberspace, available and accessible. A more complete study of this in several platforms will be able to contribute more to the improvement of the implementation of digital.

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