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# Ramadhan in the Digital Era: Tradition, Technology, and SDGs in Sragen

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## Abstract

**Objective:** This study examines the influence of Ramadan in transforming religious traditions within the digital era in Sragen, Indonesia, while highlighting its relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, SDG 11, and SDG 16. The research aims to analyze how digital technology reshapes religious practices, social interaction, and spiritual expression among semi-urban Muslim communities during Ramadan. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework integrates Digital Religion theory, the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT), and sociological perspectives on religion in contemporary Muslim societies. **Literature review:** Previous studies have demonstrated that digitalization has significantly transformed religious expression in metropolitan areas; however, limited attention has been given to non-metropolitan regions with strong traditional values, such as Sragen. **Methods:** This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using hybrid ethnography methods. Data were collected through literature review, digital observation of social media platforms including TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, and online content analysis conducted during Ramadan 2024. **Results:** The findings reveal that religious traditions such as tadarus, communal iftar, and almsgiving have undergone digital transformation through live-streaming activities, online donation campaigns, and religious educational content. Digital platforms have increased youth participation and expanded access to Islamic learning, contributing to inclusive religious engagement aligned with the SDGs agenda. Nevertheless, the study also identifies challenges, including the decline of spiritual depth and the emergence of more individualized and fast-paced online religious interactions. **Implications:** The study implies the importance of strengthening value-based digital literacy and encouraging active collaboration between religious leaders, local communities, and digital platforms in guiding religious practices in cyberspace. **Novelty:** The novelty of this research lies in its hybrid ethnographic approach to digital Ramadan practices in a semi-urban region, contributing to broader discussions on the relationship between religion, technology, and sustainable social development in non-metropolitan Indonesia.

**Keywords:** ramadhan, digital religion, social media, sdgs, sragen.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed religious practices and social interaction in contemporary Muslim societies. During Ramadan, digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube increasingly function not only as communication tools but also as spaces for worship, religious learning, charity campaigns, and spiritual expression [1]. In Indonesia, the integration of

religion and technology has created new forms of religious participation that influence how Muslim communities interpret faith, tradition, and social solidarity in everyday life. This transformation is closely related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 concerning inclusive education, SDG 11 regarding sustainable communities, and SDG 16 emphasizing peaceful and inclusive social institutions [2].

Previous studies on digital religion have largely focused on metropolitan and urban communities where internet access and digital literacy are highly developed. Research has shown that digitalization encourages wider religious participation, accelerates the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, and reshapes patterns of religious authority. However, limited scholarly attention has been given to semi-urban and non-metropolitan areas such as Sragen, where local traditions and communal religious practices remain deeply rooted [3]. This condition creates an important research gap regarding how digital transformation interacts with local religious culture in smaller Indonesian communities. Therefore, this study is important because it explores the dynamics of Ramadan traditions in a semi-urban context through a hybrid ethnographic approach [4]. The research contributes to understanding how technology influences religious identity, spirituality, and community resilience while supporting the broader discourse on religion, digital culture, and sustainable social development in Indonesia.

Every time Ramadan arrives, the spiritual and social atmosphere of Muslims in Indonesia changes drastically. Accompanied by the sound of the maghrib call to prayer, the vibrancy of the takjil market, the tradition of reciting the Qur'an in mosques, and breaking the fast together in the RT environment, this holy month has long been a collective space to strengthen Islamic identity and social togetherness [5]. However, in the last two decades, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic and the acceleration of digitalization, the way people live and interpret Ramadan has begun to undergo a significant transformation. This change not only occurs in large cities, but also touches semi-urban areas such as Sragen Regency, Central Java.

Sragen Regency is known as an area that has a strong religious culture with traditional Islamic communities that uphold the values of kinship and cooperation. Traditions such as mobile recitation, village alms, and mass ngabuburit in the square have become hereditary practices. However, with the increasing penetration of the internet and the use of smartphones, the people of Sragen are now entering a phase of shifting religious culture [6]. Da'wah is no longer only delivered by local ustaz in the mosque pulpit, but also through TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Live. Alms are no longer always in the form of physical envelopes, but through QRIS transfers and digital donation applications. In fact, the Ramadan cult can also be followed from home via live broadcast on Facebook or Zoom.

This phenomenon marks a new phase in the religious life of the Muslim community: the emergence of a "digital Ramadan", in which religious practices go hand in hand with technological innovation. Social interactions that were previously physical, such as gathering and breaking the fast together, are now shifting to virtual spaces with the emergence of the trend of "virtual bukber," digital Ramadan greetings, and online alms gatherings. This transformation certainly has a complex impact. On the one hand, digitalization opens up new spaces for inclusion, participation, and easy access to religious knowledge [7]. On the other hand, there are concerns about the erosion of local values such as physical togetherness, modesty, and community cultural wisdom.

Previous studies have shown that the digital age brings challenges as well as opportunities to religious expression. Hine mentioned that the internet has established a "new religious space", where spiritual values are represented in the form of digital media that is sometimes different from the original. Meanwhile, Bunt highlights the role of social media in creating a fluid and cross-geographical religious community [8]. In the Indonesian context, research by Lim shows that Islamic digitalization is developing in

various forms, ranging from visual da'wah, halal e-commerce, to influencer-based Islamic lifestyle. However, there is still little research that specifically looks at how Muslim communities in semi-urban areas such as Sragen negotiate traditional values in this flow of digitalization, especially during the month of Ramadan.

The main problem to be studied in this study is how the people of Sragen have experienced a transformation in the practice of Ramadan due to digital technology interventions. Does this change strengthen the essence of Ramadan as a month of worship, or does it shift its spiritual and social meaning to be more symbolic and consumptive? How do young and adult age groups respond to digital trends such as online charity challenges (#ramadhanchallenge), online tadarus, and donations using e-wallets? Furthermore, how do local communities maintain traditional values amid the torrent of viral religious content?

By using Sragen as a case study, this study seeks to answer these questions through a descriptive-qualitative approach and a digital literature study. This research will also analyze the interaction between local traditions and spiritual modernization through social media, highlighting the sustainability of Islamic values in the ever-evolving digital space [9]. This research is important not only to look at religious dynamics at the local level, but also as a reflection of broader social changes in the religious practices of Indonesian Muslims in the digital age. To further understand this context, the following section will review several pieces of literature related to religious transformation in the digital age from both a global and local perspective.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies on digital religion explain that technological development has transformed religious communication, worship practices, and spiritual interaction in Muslim societies. Digital platforms enable broader access to Islamic knowledge, online da'wah, and virtual religious communities, particularly during Ramadan. Campbell's Digital Religion theory emphasizes that religious authority and participation increasingly operate through digital spaces [10]. In addition, studies on the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) show that technology is socially shaped by cultural values and community needs. Recent discussions also connect digital religious practices with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 on inclusive education, SDG 11 on sustainable communities, and SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive social institutions through accessible digital religious learning and strengthened social solidarity.

Ramadan has long been a spiritual space as well as a socio-cultural arena for Muslims in Indonesia. In the context of local communities, such as in Sragen Regency, traditional practices during Ramadan—such as reciting the Qur'an, collective iftar, village recitation, and alms gatherings—serve to strengthen social cohesion and reflect deep-rooted religious values. Classical studies of the sociology of religion state that Ramadan is not only a ritual, but also a cultural phenomenon that forms a collective identity [11].

However, in the last decade, there have been significant changes due to the massive use of digital technology, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Research by Rohman and Fitria shows that digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become new mediums for carrying out religious activities, ranging from live streaming da'wah to online alms programs. In fact, the younger generation is more enthusiastic about participating in online charity challenges or spreading short Islamic content than attending mosques in person [12]. This phenomenon shows that young age groups are the main drivers in the transformation of digital religious practices. They are not only passive consumers, but also content creators who represent Islamic values in a format that is more visual, fast, and easy to share on social media.

In other literature, Kurniawan highlights that semi-urban areas such as Sragen experience unique dynamics. On the one hand, tradition is still strong, but the appeal of digital media greatly influences the way the new generation of religions is expressed. Face-to-face recitation began to decrease, replaced by virtual cults, while alms were carried out through digital wallets [13]. The younger generation, in particular, seems to be active in bridging traditional values with digital forms of religious expression, making them a meeting point between social heritage and technological modernity. This study shows the negotiation between traditional values and digital modernity in the Ramadan practices of local communities.

Although technology offers ease of access and efficiency, some studies warn of the risk of disruption of social values. Harahap noted that digitalization tends to reduce physical interaction, which has been the foundation of communal solidarity [14]. This is becoming increasingly important in the context of the involvement of the younger generation, as this generation tends to build spiritual connections through online media that is personal, often replacing the communal dimension that has been inherent in traditional Ramadan practices. Against this background, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature that has not explored much about the experience of Ramadan digital transformation in semi-urban areas. Previous research has generally focused on big cities or media studies, but not many have combined local contexts, Islamic values, and the dynamics of digitalization as a whole [15], especially by highlighting how the younger generation, as agents of change, interpret Ramadan in the digital space.

The transformation of religious practices during Ramadan, especially in semi-urban Muslim societies such as Sragen, is a phenomenon that does not stand alone. These changes are taking place in a broader landscape, namely, the digitization of the religious life of Muslims, both at the local and global levels. Several international studies have addressed changes in religious practices due to digital technology from theoretical and conceptual perspectives, while local studies have explored their impact in the context of Indonesian Muslim culture and communities [16]. For this reason, the literature studied in this study includes two main categories: (1) international literature that discusses digital religious theory and the transformation of global spirituality, and (2) national/local literature that focuses on the shift in Ramadan practices in Indonesia due to technology. The following table presents a comprehensive comparison of the two types of literature as the conceptual basis for this study.

By combining international and local perspectives, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values, traditional practices, and digital technologies interact with each other and reshape the Ramadan experience in semi-urban areas. The presentation in the following table will show the common thread between the previous findings and the focus of this research, as a conceptual foundation that strengthens the analytical framework of the field study in Sragen. This perspective is also supported by Campbell through the concept of religious-social shaping of technology, which emphasizes that digital religious practices are not only the result of passive adaptation to technology, but the result of the process of social and spiritual negotiation by the religious community itself. In the context of digital Islam, Bunt also explained that the emergence of "online religious authority" has created a new dynamic in the spread of Islamic values that are more fluid and network-based, rather than institutional. These two frameworks are important theoretical foundations to understand how the Sragen people adapt, reshape Ramadan practices, and build new meanings of spirituality in the midst of massive digitalization [17]. Not many have combined the local context, Islamic values, and the dynamics of digitalization as a whole. To understand these dynamics more deeply, this research is based on a number of relevant theoretical foundations.

This research is based on two main theoretical foundations that complement each other, namely digital religion theory and the concept of cultural identity negotiation in reflective

modernity. First, the theory of digital religion, as developed by Heidi Campbell, explains that religious practices in the digital era not only undergo changes in media but also undergo significant transformations in meaning [18]. Campbell emphasized that digital technology is not a neutral entity, but rather part of a socio-cultural structure that is active in reshaping religious expression. In this context, social media not only functions as a da'wah channel but also as a space for the formation of religious identity, negotiation of spiritual authority, and reinterpretation of Islamic values in new forms such as virtual cults, viral Islamic content, and digital alms practices.

Second, the approach of cultural negotiation in modernity, as explained by Anthony Giddens in the framework of reflexive modernity, explains that modern society, including religious people, no longer lives by traditions statically. Instead, they live their lives reflectively: selecting, reinterpreting, and even creating new forms of old values. In the context of Sragen, Muslim societies are not only "adopting" digital technologies, but also creatively integrating them into the framework of their traditions [19]. This creates new practices that remain full of spiritual meaning, such as online tadarus, online alms arisan, and virtual gatherings that replace physical presence. By combining these two approaches, this research has a strong theoretical foundation to analyze the dynamics of religious transformation during Ramadan in the digital age. This approach allows for a complete understanding that the changes that occur are not only technical or external, but also touch on the dimensions of values, social structures, and the way societies negotiate spirituality in modern life [20]. This foundation is the starting point in reading the phenomenon that occurred in Sragen, as well as a framework for interpreting the field findings that emerged in this study.

**Table 1. Literature Review**

Author & Year	Research Focus	Key Findings	Relevance to This Study
Bunt (2018)	Cyber-Islam & religious authority	Digital media replaces traditional religious authority	The Basis of the Theory of Shift in Da'wah & Religious Authority
Campbell (2021)	Religious practices in a digital context	Religion is actively re-practiced through digital media	The basis of analysis of digital rituals such as live da'wah & alms
Puspitasari (2022)	TikTok use by Muslim teens	Social media is effective as a means of religious education	Explaining the trend of online da'wah for Gen Z in Sragen
Misrawi (2012)	Ramadan Traditions & NU Community Identity	Ramadan strengthens social solidarity	It is important to understand the social functions of the Ramadan tradition.
Rohman & Fitria (2022)	Digital da'wah via social media	Digitalization increases access to da'wah to the wider community	Strengthening the context of religious digitalization in Sragen
Sustainable (2019)	A Cultural Transformation	The tradition of ngabuburit is starting to be replaced by online content & entertainment.	Showing the shift in the form of social interaction in Ramadan
Farid (2020)	The role of mosques in the social religion	Mosques as centers of solidarity for the people are now	Explain the decline in physical participation

The literature above shows that the transformation of Ramadan due to digitalization is a multidimensional phenomenon. On the one hand, international literature such as Echchaibi and Hojsgaard & Warburg provides an important theoretical foundation regarding the shift in religious authority and worship practices in the digital space. On the other hand, local studies such as Hidayah and Maulana show that in Indonesia, especially in semi-urban areas, these changes go hand in hand with efforts to maintain the traditional values of Ramadan. By referring to both types of literature, this study seeks to build a more complete understanding of how the Muslim community of Sragen adapted to the digital age without completely abandoning the social-spiritual heritage of Ramadan.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological orientation to deeply understand how the people of Sragen Regency experience, live, and interpret the transformation of the Ramadan tradition in the digital era. This method was chosen because it is able to capture cultural and spiritual dynamics that are contextual, subjective, and cannot be quantitatively measured [21]. In this context, researchers not only act as observers but also as interpreters of various socio-religious practices recorded through online interactions and local documentation. This study adopts a semi-field hybrid approach, as physical access is limited post-pandemic and the relevance of digital space-based data increases.

The research area is focused on Sragen Regency, Central Java, a semi-urban area characterized by a combination of strong Islamic traditions and openness to the development of digital technology. The choice of this location is based on the fact that Sragen has an active Muslim community with a high level of digital media adoption, especially in the context of worship and social activities during Ramadan. The Sragen community is an interesting representation of a community that is navigating a shift in values between traditional spirituality and technology-based religious practices. The research subjects consist of several categories, namely:

1. Muslim teens are active on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.
2. Mosque administrators or local religious leaders who have started using digital media
3. Community of women of recitation and online alms arisan
4. Local content creators with an Islamic theme. The selection of subjects was carried out purposively by considering the representation of Ramadan practices that have transformed due to digitalization.

Data collection is carried out through various techniques. Digital observation is the main method, with researchers monitoring Ramadan content uploaded by Sragen residents on social media. This includes live da'wah trends, charity challenges, online ngabuburit, and community interaction during the fasting month. In addition, online semi-structured interviews are conducted on a limited basis, with reference to narrative quotes from local media, public commentary, or individual reflective uploads. Researchers also collected data through visual documentation, such as screenshots of viral content, digital posters of communities, and graphs of online donation activity. In addition, literature studies from scientific journals, previous research reports, and books on the sociology of religion and digital culture are used to strengthen theoretical analysis.

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis method with a narrative approach, where each piece of information was encoded into themes that reflected relevant social-spiritual phenomena. These themes include a shift in the meaning of tadarus, a new form of digital

friendship, a reinterpretation of da'wah, and a change in the landscape of almsgiving. The analysis was conducted holistically by considering the local context, the character of the digital platform, and the Islamic values underlying religious practices during Ramadan. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, source triangulation is used, namely by comparing primary data (people's digital content), secondary data (local and media documentation), and academic literature as an interpretive framework. Contextual reading is also applied to understand people's responses to cultural transformations that occur, without generalizing individual experiences as a comprehensive collective representation.

Through this approach, the research is expected to be able to present a complete and reflective picture of the way the Sragen people live Ramadan as a spiritual space that is now also shaped by digital dynamics. This approach also allows researchers to capture how traditional values adapt, survive, or transform, especially through the involvement of younger generations in creating and disseminating new religious expressions based on social media. One example is the free iftar activity at the Al-Falah Mosque in Sragen, which continues to take place regularly every Ramadan. This tradition is now also promoted through digital posters and social media uploads, thereby expanding participation and increasing community solidarity both physically and digitally. This phenomenon shows that collective spirituality does not disappear, but shifts its form through the synergy between offline and online spaces.



**Figure 1. Al-Falah Sragen Mosque provides free iftar sources: Solopos (2025).  
Ramadan Fest 2025. Accessed from:**

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fsolopos.espos.id%2Framadan-fest-2025->

The image above shows that religious traditions such as breaking the fast together are not completely displaced by digitalization, but rather have experienced an expansion of meaning and reach. These activities are now not only carried out physically, but also published and documented through digital media such as promotions through WhatsApp groups, online posters, and live broadcasts on social media, marking a shift from conventional ritual practices to religious expressions that are communicative, participatory, and based on digital networks.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study found that the transformation of Ramadan traditions in Sragen Regency underwent significant changes in the dimensions of practice, medium, and socio-religious meaning. Through digital content analysis, local community documentation, and observations of social media trends, five key patterns of change were identified:

## Shift in Ramadan Tradition in Sragen

The transformation of Ramadan in the digital era does not happen in a vacuum. It takes place as an adaptive response of the community to changes in times, technology, and post-pandemic lifestyles. In Sragen, known as a semi-urban region with strong roots in Islamic traditions, these changes did not necessarily erase old practices, but changed their form into a new medium [22]. This phenomenon can be seen in how religious activities that used to be carried out physically are now starting to be carried out through online platforms. People are not abandoning traditions, but migrating them to the digital space with high creativity and flexibility. This change not only shows an openness to innovation but also a strong desire to maintain the spiritual value of Ramadan even though the medium changes.

This change shows that the people of Sragen are making creative and reflective adaptations in living Ramadan. Religious activities that were once carried out physically have now migrated to the digital space without completely abandoning their inherent spiritual values [23]. To clarify the concrete form of the shift, the following table presents a comparison between the traditional forms of activity that are already entrenched and the new digital practices that have developed over the past few years:

**Table 2. Shifts in Ramadan Traditions in Sragen**

Aktivitas Tradisional	Praktik Digital Baru
Tadarus di masjid	Tadarus via Zoom, IG Live
Buka puasa bersama	Buka virtual, review kuliner online
Sedekah tunai	Sedekah via aplikasi fintech (Kitabisa, dsb.)

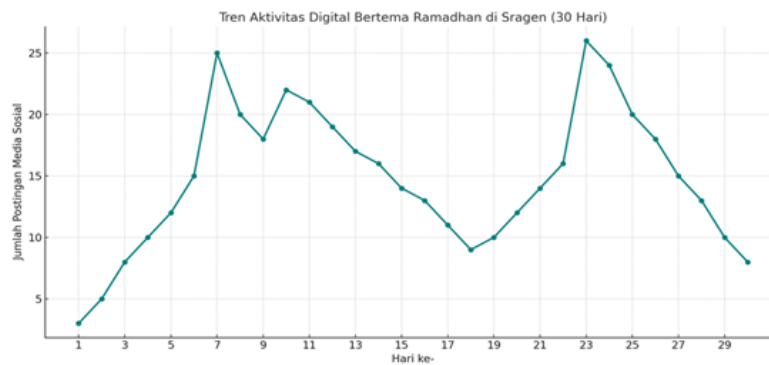
The comparison in the table shows that the digitalization of Ramadan in Sragen is not solely about the adoption of technology, but rather about how society adapts and transforms religious values in an ever-evolving social context. As explained by Campbell, digital religious practice involves an active negotiation process between religious traditions and the new medium used. In this case, tadarus via Zoom or IG Live still contains spiritual and collective meaning, even though it is carried out without a physical presence in person [24]. Similarly, the tradition of breaking the fast together that has now shifted to virtual iftar or the trend of Ramadan culinary reviews on social media expands appreciation for local culture and community solidarity.

Alms, as an expression of Muslims' social concern, has experienced significant acceleration through fintech applications such as Kitabisa. Bunt called this phenomenon part of the emergence of new network-based religious authorities, which allow worship practices to continue even outside conventional institutions. This innovation not only facilitates the distribution and transparency of zakat or infak funds, but also expands the participation of Sragen diaspora residents and urbanites [25]. For some people, this method is even considered a form of "modernization of worship" that is adaptive to the needs of the times.

This transformation proves that even though the medium changes, the substance of value is still maintained. Digital media, instead of replacing tradition, expands the space for religious expression that is more inclusive, creative, and contextual [26]. This shows that digitalization can be a partner that strengthens religious practices as long as local spiritual and cultural values remain its primary foundation. Thus, the people of Sragen not only adopted technology but also reinterpreted the rituals of Ramadan, making it a new spiritual space that remained rooted in tradition.

## Digital Interaction Statistics

The following graph shows the trend of local social media posts with the theme of Ramadan (Sragen) during the 30 days of fasting:



**Figure 2. Digital Interaction Statistics**

Description: Displays the trend in the number of social media posts during the 30 days of Ramadan. There are two peaks of activity on the 7th and 23rd days that reflect the important moments of Ramadan. Clean and informative visuals, suitable for presentation in academic journals. Figure 2 shows the dynamics of digital engagement of the Sragen community during the month of Ramadan. The two peaks of interaction seen on the 7th and 23rd days indicate that the community responded to the spiritual momentum with intense online activities, such as sharing cult content, online tadarus, and virtual charity activities. This trend shows that the religious spirit and nuances of Ramadan are maintained, albeit through a new format [27].

Social media has become an alternative space to express spiritual values in a more flexible, interactive, and wider reach. This emphasizes that digitalization is not a form of weakening tradition, but a new bridge for the young generation and the Sragen community in maintaining the meaning of Ramadan in a contextual and relevant way to the times. Before entering into the discussion of the role of social media and digital applications in supporting Ramadan worship and social activities, it is important to pay attention to the ethical dimension of this transformation [28]. The following image represents the irony behind the practice of digital philanthropy that sometimes emphasizes the imagery aspect more than the substance of its spiritual value. In the context of Sragen, a similar phenomenon arises when alms or takjil sharing activities are recorded and widely spread on social media without considering the dignity of the recipients.



**Figure 3. Illustration of the Representation of Social Criticism of Digital Philanthropic Practices in the Digital Era. sources:**

<https://cdn.ngopibareng.id/uploads/2021/2021-11-17/pamer-sedekah-di-medsos-termasuk-sombong-dan-membanggakan-diri-thumbnail-911.webp>

The illustration illustrates a paradox that began to emerge in digital religious practice in the Ramadan era: solidarity that is documented, but sometimes loses substance. In the midst of the spirit of sharing and increasing concern, some people are also starting to experience a dilemma between sincerity and digital existence. In the context of Sragen, several informants said that charity activities are now often juxtaposed with the need to be immortalized and disseminated through social media [29]. This phenomenon is an important part of seeing how the role of social media and digital applications reshapes the landscape of worship and social activities during Ramadan. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are widely used by the younger generation to share inspirational content about daily worship, takjil recipes, and religious quotes [30]. Meanwhile, local communities use Facebook groups as a coordination space for online studies and collective fundraising, as well as applications such as Kitabisa and BAZNAS to distribute zakat and alms online.

While it facilitates distribution and expands the reach of charities, this situation also underscores the importance of digital literacy based on spiritual values. The goal is not just to limit expression in cyberspace, but to ensure that this transformation does not shift the essence of worship itself [31]. Because in the end, digitalization is not only about technology, but also about how values and intentions are brought and brought into these virtual spaces.

### **The Role of Social Media & Apps**

The role of social media and digital applications has become vital in supporting worship practices and social activities during Ramadan in Sragen. Some of the most dominant platforms used include:

1. Instagram & TikTok: Used by students and the younger generation to share daily worship tips, takjil recipes, and inspirational religious quotes. This content is often visually packaged and engaging, thus reaching a wider audience.
2. Local community Facebook groups: Serves as a collective space that brings community members together to host online studies, reflective discussions, and community-based fundraisers.
3. Digital zakat/alms applications, Such as Kitabisa, BAZNAS, and other digital wallets, are used to distribute donations without the need for physical contact. According to local online community data, there was a 20% increase in the use of this service compared to Ramadan the previous year.

The combination of social media and apps not only facilitates access but also allows people to continue to practice spiritual values and social solidarity even though physical limitations are still felt. This shows that the digital space is able to bridge religious practices inclusively and adaptively, especially for the young generation who are digitally active [32].

### **Community Response to Digitalization**

The transformation of Ramadan into a digital space has elicited a variety of responses from the Muslim community in Sragen. The findings show three key patterns:

#### **Selective Adaptive**

Communities that uphold local values tend to opt for a hybrid approach. They continue to hold small-scale physical activities, such as open houses between neighbors or limited iftar, while still utilizing digital platforms for publication and coordination purposes.

#### **Spiritual Individualization**

Some individuals choose to carry out Ramadan worship more independently through digital media, without direct involvement in community networks. This phenomenon

marks the emergence of a new form of personal piety that is more flexible, but risks weakening the communal dimension of worship.

#### The Growth of Digital Literacy Awareness

People are beginning to realize the importance of ethics in worship in the digital space. This includes understanding media manners when participating in online cultures, maintaining solemnity during online tadarus, and efforts to create virtual assemblies that remain interactive, polite, and reflective.

### Interpretation: A Balance of Tradition & Modernity

The results show that digitalization is not a deterrent to tradition, but a new tool that expands the reach of Ramadan rituals. However, there is a potential erosion of spiritual value if physical interaction is not replaced with digital alternatives that are community-based and reflective [33]. By following the principle of "maintaining the good and taking the new that is beneficial", the people of Sragen can navigate this transformation. However, local value-based digital literacy assistance is needed so that technology reinforces, not shakes, traditions.

**Table 3. Key Findings of Digital Ramadan Field Research in Sragen**

Main Theme	Key Findings
A Shift in Tradition	There is an adaptation of old traditions to digital platforms.
Peak of Online Activity	Day 7 (initial prayer) and day 23 (halalbihalal staff)
App Support	Increasing online zakat/alms
Digital Challenges	Risk of spiritual individualization & potential loss of physical togetherness
Strategic Solutions	Digital literacy based on local and spiritual values

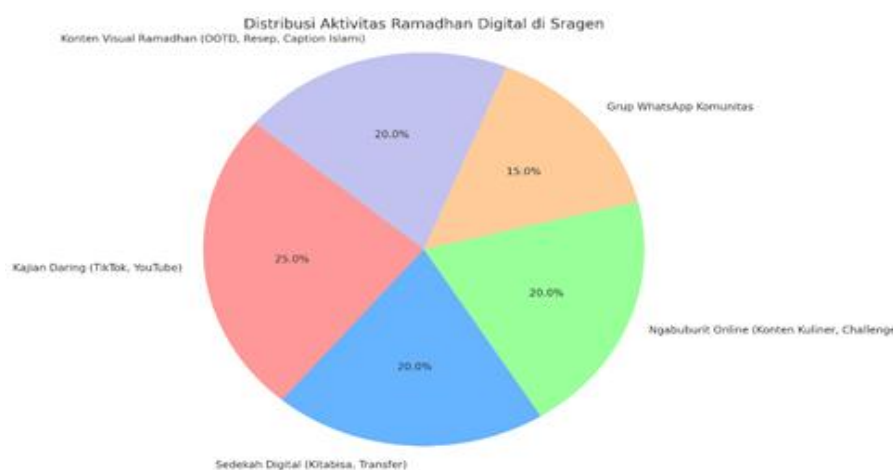
The table above summarizes five key findings that represent the dynamics of digital Ramadan in Sragen Regency. Each finding is not just a phenomenological record, but also shows the existence of an ongoing pattern of adaptation and value negotiation at the community level. First, in the aspect of shifting traditions, it was found that the Sragen people did not drastically abandon old practices, but adapted them into digital forms. For example, tadarus that used to be done collectively in mosques has now been turned into live broadcasts on TikTok, or family WhatsApp groups are used as virtual spaces for tausiyah and prayer together. This shows that technology is not the opposite of spirituality, but rather a new medium for maintaining old values in a different form.

Second, the data shows a striking peak in online activity on the 7th and 23rd days of Ramadan. Day 7 was marked by a surge in participation in online studies and the early fasting cult, while day 23 was filled with virtual halal bihalal activities and reflective content towards the end of the month. This shows the existence of an emotional and spiritual pattern that goes up and down during the month of Ramadan, where people seek religious momentum more intensely in certain phases [34]. Third, in terms of application support, online zakat and alms have increased significantly, especially through digital platforms that facilitate the transfer and reporting process. This not only shows a change in the way of giving, but also the emergence of new trust in digital systems in the practice of social worship. Applications such as Kitabisa, digital wallets, and special Ramadan features in e-wallets have become a bridge between goodwill and technology.

Fourth, there are also digital challenges that cannot be ignored. Although the digital space expands access to worship, it also holds the potential for spiritual individualization,

where a person worships more often alone with a device rather than interacting directly. This concern arises from several local religious leaders who consider that the value of physical togetherness, such as greeting each other at the mosque or breaking the fast with neighbors, is starting to diminish its essence [35]. As a strategic solution, a digital literacy approach is needed that not only teaches the use of technology but also instills Islamic values and local culture as a foundation in media. With this approach, people are expected to be able to become wise, active users, not just passive consumers who are swayed by trends.

Thus, the table of findings not only presents a statistical portrait or a list of phenomena, but also offers sociological and cultural reflections that show that digital Ramadan is not just a technical change, but a rich and meaningful field of value struggle. As part of the hybrid approach used in this study, data analysis was also carried out through observation of people's digital trends and habits during Ramadan. To obtain a more concrete picture of the new forms of spiritual and social interaction, the main activities carried out by the Sragen people during the holy month were carried out in the digital space [36]. Based on observations of social media content, local online forums, and community documentation, the five most dominant categories of digital activity were identified. This activity not only moves traditions into the digital space but also shows the creative and dynamic adaptation of society.



**Figure 3. Distribution of Digital Ramadan Activities in Sragen**

The pie graph above illustrates the five main categories of digital activity during Ramadan that are most dominant in Sragen Regency, based on social media content mapping, online forums, and community documentation. This distribution represents how people are not only moving religious practices into the digital space, but also adapting and adapting them to the platform's culture. Online studies through TikTok and YouTube occupy the highest proportion (25%), indicating a shift in preference for short, light, and interactive visual da'wah. Da'wah is now a spiritual expression that is closer to the digital daily life of the younger generation. Social activities such as digital alms and online ngabuburit each account for 20%, indicating that aspects of togetherness and care are still sustainable, even though they are no longer carried out physically. The community has successfully adopted technology as a bridge of charity and interaction.

Meanwhile, communal interaction through WhatsApp groups (15%) and Ramadan-themed visual content (20%) shows how friendship, religious expression, and Islamic culture continue to be present in online spaces—both in the form of Ramadan OOTD, recipe sharing, and charity challenges. This trend confirms that digitalization does not erase the essence of the Ramadan tradition, but forms a new, broader, and more inclusive spiritual ecosystem. Digital spaces have become an integral part of the contemporary religious landscape that is reflective, communicative, and participatory. Thus, these

findings reinforce the narrative in the literature that digital transformation in religious practice is part of a dynamic value negotiation, not an absolute shift. In line with the principle of "al-muhafazatu 'ala al-qadimi as-shalih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah", the Sragen people showed that technology can be a partner in preserving values, not a threat to spirituality.

### **Analysis of the Impact of Ramadan Digital Transformation in Sragen**

The pie chart shown earlier shows that the people of Sragen have not only become passive users of digital media, but have also actively created new spaces for spiritual expression during the month of Ramadan. This in-depth analysis of the distribution of digital activities reveals a number of important impacts that deserve to be examined academically and socially. Reconstruction of Religious Spaces. The highest proportion in online studies (25%) shows that da'wah spaces are no longer limited to physical pulpits in mosques, but have moved to platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. It forms a new religious space that is inclusive, fast, and crosses geographical boundaries. However, there are also challenges related to religious authority, the validity of content, and the potential for commercialization of da'wah.

Digitization of Social Charities. The high number of digital alms (20%) indicates a shift from the cash-in-hand system to a more practical and transparent method. The efficiency of fundraising and the participation of the younger generation have increased significantly. However, the dependence on commercial fintech platforms and the lack of supervision from local zakat institutions remain a concern. Changes in Social Interaction Patterns Online (20%) and Ramadan visual content (20%) reflect a culture of interaction that is more aesthetic, instant, and based on personal narratives. Although it encourages creativity, this has the potential to lead to individualization of worship and the weakening of the social dimension in religious practice.

Virtual Communal Cohesion Interaction through community WhatsApp groups (15%) reflects efforts to maintain friendship in digital form. This is important, especially for the community of mothers, adolescents, and diaspora families. However, the exclusivity of digital groups can also create a "spiritual echo chamber" that narrows the dialogue between groups. Inclusivity vs. Exclusivity Access Digitization expands the reach of worship and accelerates the distribution of information. However, the digital literacy gap and limited access to devices remain serious challenges, especially for economically and age-vulnerable groups [37].

### **Critical Reflection**

The digital transformation of Ramadan in Sragen cannot be read solely as a technological phenomenon, but as a shift in spiritual and social paradigms. The community is now undergoing a value negotiation process between maintaining traditions and reinterpreting worship in virtual spaces. Therefore, the impact of digitalization needs to be understood as a complex socio-religious dynamic, not just a technical adaptation [38]. To provide a more structured understanding of the implications of digital activities on the socio-religious life of the Sragen community, an analysis was carried out on the five most dominant forms of digital engagement. Each activity is seen not only as a technological phenomenon, but also as part of a new construction of Islamic values and identities.

This analysis highlights the positive side in the form of efficiency, creativity, and spiritual inclusivity, while also revealing important challenges such as the potential for social fragmentation, shifts in religious authority, and the tendency to individualize in worship practices. To conclude this section, the following table presents a systematic comparison between the positive and negative impacts of various digital activities during

Ramadan. This table is intended to help readers see the balance and complexity of the ongoing process of cultural transformation:

**Table 4. Analysis of the Impact of Ramadan Digital Activities in Sragen**

Aspects of Digital Activity	Positive Impact	Negative Impacts/Challenges
Online Studies (TikTok, YouTube)	Broad, flexible, cross-age, and regional access.	The potential for content dissemination is not validated; Religious authorities have been swept away.
Sedekah Digital	Efficient, transparent, and easy to access at any time.	Reliance on third-party platforms; Not everyone is familiar with financial technology.
Online Shopping / Culinary Content	Creativity increases, enriching digital cultural expressions.	Spiritual individualization, consumptive, and risk losing the nuances of physical togetherness.
Community WhatsApp Groups	Maintain social connections and distance from community gatherings.	Often limited to a specific group (exclusive), prone to hoaxes, or perceived bias.
Ramadan Visual Content (OOTD, Captions, Charity Challenge)	Motivate positive participation and increase the spiritual engagement of young people.	It can trigger a culture of showmanship or performative worship if it is not criticized wisely.

The table above illustrates that digital transformation during Ramadan is not a linear process, but a dynamic process that is full of value negotiations between the old form and the new form. Every digital activity has a dual consequence: it expands access while challenging meaning. For example, online studies do open up a wider and more flexible scientific space, but it also shifts the role of the local ustaz as a central figure. Digital alms increase the efficiency and reach of social participation, but at the same time keep away the aspect of empathy that has been growing through direct face-to-face interaction [39].

Thus, digital transformation cannot be separated from the social and cultural context of society. It must be addressed critically and reflectively, not just accepted as a technical innovation. Therefore, a value-based digital literacy strategy is needed so that people are not only users of technology but also managers of meaning. In this context, Sragen Regency appears as a representation of a semi-urban area that is struggling to navigate the intersection between modernity and spiritual tradition. The digitalization of Ramadan in Sragen is proof that innovation and religiosity do not have to affirm each other, but can strengthen each other if accompanied by mature cultural and spiritual awareness.

One of the most significant impacts of the digitalization of Ramadan in Sragen is the sustainability of religious learning activities in the midst of limited physical space. The public, especially children and adolescents, can still take tadarus, learn to recite, and follow studies from home through digital media. This phenomenon shows that digital transformation is not only technical, but also changes the way people experience and carry out worship more flexibly and sustainably. The following example illustrates this form of adaptation symbolically:



**Figure 4. Illustration of Da'wah Content on Social Media in the Interest of the Young Generation**

**Sources:** <https://mediadakwah.id/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Dakwah-Digital.jpg>

The illustration represents the positive impact of digitalization, namely the formation of new hybrid spiritual spaces. The learning of the Qur'an carried out through online platforms is proof that technology does not remove the value of religiosity, but rather accommodates new ways of maintaining and inheriting religious traditions. In the context of Sragen, several local teachers and ustaz admitted that they started using WhatsApp groups or video calls to continue guiding children during Ramadan. This practice reinforces the idea that modernization can go hand in hand with tradition, provided there is value awareness and contextual adaptation [40]. According to Giddens, this reflects reflexive modernity, where society does not surrender to change, but rather chooses and adjusts the relevant form of worship without abandoning its substance. However, it should be noted that this adaptation also requires increased access to technology and digital literacy assistance so as not to create disparities, especially for people who are not yet equally digitally literate.

## Discussion

The transformation of religious practices during the month of Ramadan in Sragen Regency shows a significant cultural shift due to the influence of digital technology. This discussion will elaborate on the results of the research in depth, relate it to previous theories and studies, and explain the social significance and implications of the findings.

### Relationship of Findings and Theory

The findings of the study show that the religious activities of the Sragen people are no longer focused on physical spaces such as mosques or conventional taklim assemblies. On the contrary, the public, especially the younger generation, is increasingly active in the digital space [41]. This is in line with Campbell's view regarding the re-formulation of religious practices in digital media, where rituals not only change mediums but also undergo changes in meaning and form. The use of TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube as a means of da'wah and religious communication shows that people are actively reconstructing Ramadan rituals in a digital framework. Similarly, the theory of digital religious authority by Bunt is relevant to the results of this observation. Social media has created new figures that become spiritual references, such as da'wah influencers or digital young ustaz, who are now more popular than traditional religious figures in the surrounding environment [42]. This indicates a shift of religious authority into the digital arena. After looking at the relationship between results and theory, it's important to take a closer look at the reflective side of this digital transformation.

### Critical Analysis of Findings

This transformation brings two paradoxical sides. On the one hand, digitalization expands access to information and democratizes religious practices. Anyone can now

access studies, donate, and preach from home. But on the other hand, there is a risk of spiritual individualization and a decrease in social-physical interaction. Activities such as congregational tadarus, collective iftar, and village recitation began to be displaced by the online version. This situation raises a new social challenge: how to maintain communal values in an increasingly personal and private structure of worship? This finding reflects the concerns also expressed by Farid about the shift in the role of mosques as a center of social solidarity for the people.

#### Comparison with Previous Studies

This research reinforces the findings of Puspitasari, which highlights the effectiveness of social media as a means of religious education, especially for the younger generation. In Sragen, this phenomenon is evident in the use of TikTok for short da'wah, online charity challenges, and #RamadhanChallenge-based content. This shows that Islamic values are maintained even in a new format that is more visual and interactive. On the other hand, the decline in physical involvement in community activities supports the findings of Farid, who stated that religious social spaces are now shifting a lot to online platforms. This condition requires adjustments to da'wah strategies and strengthening the values of friendship in a digital context.

#### Sragen's Local Context

The uniqueness of this transformation can be seen from how the people of Sragen—who culturally have communal ties and high religiosity—face digitalization. The younger age group appears to be more adaptive to digital trends, while the older age group prefers traditional practices. This creates a generational gap in the adoption of digital religious practices, where the younger generation is the pioneer of adaptation, while the elderly group still relies on traditional approaches. However, there are also forms of cross-generational adaptation, such as families who together participate in online studies or women of the taklim council who have started to actively share da'wah information through WhatsApp. This shows that transformation does not completely negate tradition, but packages it in a new form. Digital transformation in the practice of Ramadan in Sragen does not always lead to the disconnection of traditions. In fact, in some cases, the digital space has become a connecting tool between generations. The phenomenon of families participating in online studies together or sharing moments of breaking their fast while connecting with relatives via video call is proof that traditions can be revived in a new form.



**Figure 5. The Celebration of Family Togetherness in the Moment of Breaking the Fast**

#### Sources:

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fms.pngtree.com%2Ffreebackground%2Fmuslim-family-gathering-for-iftar-in-amadan\\_15323295.html&psig=AOvVaw31U8-PoP2EMpDtuRSjQu\\_k&ust=1750492540391000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBQQjRxqGAoTCLjAzYTD\\_40DFQAAAAAdAAAAABDIA](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fms.pngtree.com%2Ffreebackground%2Fmuslim-family-gathering-for-iftar-in-amadan_15323295.html&psig=AOvVaw31U8-PoP2EMpDtuRSjQu_k&ust=1750492540391000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBQQjRxqGAoTCLjAzYTD_40DFQAAAAAdAAAAABDIA)

This image illustrates how the meaning of togetherness remains at the heart of the month of Ramadan, even as people face changes in their medium and way of interacting. In the Sragen family, the values of cooperation, togetherness, and religion are still closely held, even when part of the process takes place through digital intermediaries. This transformation shows that digitalization does not necessarily replace local values, but provides a new space to revive the spirit of kinship and religiosity in a more adaptive context. This is proof that even though the medium changes, the substance of value remains, as seen in the practice of breaking the fast together, both in person and virtually.

### **Reflections and Social Implications**

This change has major implications for the da'wah model and the social solidarity of the people. Digitalization should not only be seen as a technical change, but also as a new arena that needs to be managed strategically. Digital literacy based on local values and Islam needs to be strengthened so that the online space remains a spiritually and socially meaningful space. The transformation of Ramadan in Sragen reminds us that technology is not the opponent of tradition, but a new medium to take care of it. If managed wisely, digitalization can be a bridge between generations, expanding access to religion, while maintaining long-standing religious cultural roots.

### **Implications of Local Policies and Strategies**

The findings of this study have high practical significance, especially for local governments, religious leaders, and religious digital communities. The Sragen Regency Government, for example, can use the results of this research as a basis for designing a locally-based religious digital literacy program, especially for the younger generation and digitally vulnerable groups such as the elderly or traditional Islamic boarding school communities. Governments and religious institutions can also facilitate digital da'wah training that is not only technically oriented (such as content creation) but also based on Islamic ethics, religious moderation, and local cultural values. In addition, digital platforms for zakat and alms can be developed on a local scale—managed by regional Islamic financial institutions—to avoid the dominance of large platforms centered in big cities. Thus, strengthening the religious digital ecosystem is not only about technological adaptation, but also about managing the values and direction of the development of the spirituality of the people in the faster flow of digitalization.

### **Contextual Comparative Studies**

When compared to urban areas such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, or Bandung, the digital adaptation of the Sragen community in the context of Ramadan tends to be more selective and moderate. In big cities, practices such as live streaming studies, digital alms, and the use of AI for da'wah have become a common phenomenon and are even facilitated directly by large institutions. Meanwhile, in Sragen, the adoption of technology still goes hand in hand with the power of oral traditions and physical communities. Activities such as tadarus together in langgar, village recitation, and iftar around the prayer room are still important practices, even though they are starting to go hand in hand with digital content shared on WhatsApp or TikTok by the younger generation.

This comparison shows that digital transformation is contextual and non-uniform, depending on the social structure, cultural values, and readiness of the region's infrastructure. By understanding these dynamics, a technology-based community development approach can be carried out more inclusively, fairly, and adaptively to local wisdom. In the rapid vortex of digitalization, the people of Sragen have taught an important lesson that spirituality is timeless, as long as local values are maintained.

Therefore, digital transformation must be understood not as a threat, but as a new space to sow a more inclusive, reflective, and contextual religiosity."

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Ramadan traditions in Sragen Regency have experienced significant transformation in the digital era, demonstrating the dynamic relationship between religion, technology, and social change in semi-urban Muslim communities. The penetration of digital technology has reshaped religious practices such as tadarus, communal iftar, religious lectures, and almsgiving through live streaming, social media interaction, and online charity platforms. These changes indicate that digitalization is not merely a technological shift, but also a cultural and spiritual transformation influencing social interaction, collective identity, and patterns of religious expression during Ramadan. The findings reveal that digital media has expanded access to Islamic knowledge and strengthened participation among younger generations, enabling broader engagement in religious activities beyond geographical limitations. In this context, digital Ramadan practices contribute to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on Quality Education through accessible digital religious learning, SDG 11 on Sustainable Communities by strengthening social solidarity and community participation, and SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions through the promotion of moderate and inclusive Islamic narratives in digital spaces. Furthermore, the development of digital charity and zakat initiatives reflects the potential of technology to support more inclusive and sustainable social welfare systems. However, the study also identifies important challenges arising from the digitalization of religion. The increasing dominance of online interaction may reduce the depth of spirituality, weaken face-to-face social bonds, and encourage more individualized religious experiences. In addition, the rapid circulation of religious content on social media raises concerns regarding the preservation of local cultural values and the authenticity of religious understanding. Therefore, digital transformation must be accompanied by ethical guidance, religious digital literacy, and community-based cultural preservation efforts. This research emphasizes the importance of collaboration among local governments, religious leaders, academics, and digital communities in creating adaptive and value-oriented religious strategies. The novelty of this study lies in its hybrid ethnographic analysis of digital Ramadan practices in a non-metropolitan Indonesian context, contributing to broader discussions on digital religion, Islamic social transformation, and sustainable development in contemporary society.

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## Author Contributions

The author was fully responsible for the preparation, analysis, writing, revision, and publication of this journal article. The author actively participated in developing the research concept, collecting and interpreting data, and reviewing the manuscript critically for important intellectual content. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication. Furthermore, the author agrees to be fully responsible for the

accuracy, integrity, and originality of this research work comprehensively and independently throughout.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declares that this research was conducted without any commercial, financial, institutional, or personal relationships that could be interpreted as potential conflicts of interest. All stages of the study, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out objectively and independently. The author affirms that there were no external pressures or competing interests influencing the findings, conclusions, or publication process of this journal article in any form whatsoever within this academic research study conducted.

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