

Navigating Digital Activism on Environmental Movement: Mining License Grants to Religious Organizations in Indonesia

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Abstrak

Indonesia berpotensi melanggar komitmen dalam Kesepakatan Paris apabila tidak mengontrol dan memonitor laju deforestasi dengan baik, terutama yang berasal dari sektor pertambangan sebagai faktor pendorong yang signifikan. Artikel ini menganalisis aktivisme digital masyarakat Indonesia dalam merespons sikap Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dan Muhammadiyah terhadap penawaran pengelolaan Wilayah Izin Usaha Pertambangan Khusus (WIUPK) oleh pemerintah dalam Peraturan Pemerintah No. 25 Tahun 2024. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana aktivisme digital netizen melalui platform media sosial X (sebelumnya Twitter) dan Instagram menciptakan dampak terhadap posisi NU dan Muhammadiyah pada isu penawaran pengelolaan WIUPK. Posisi NU sejak awal menyambut baik tawaran tersebut. Sementara itu, Muhammadiyah yang awalnya terlihat berhati-hati, akhirnya menyusul NU dan memiliki posisi yang sama. Aktivisme digital yang dilakukan masyarakat Indonesia secara umum menentang keterlibatan organisasi kemasyarakatan keagamaan dalam pengelolaan tambang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa level aktivisme digital masyarakat Indonesia pada isu ini hanya sampai pada level *digital spectator activities* dan belum dapat mencapai level *digital transitional activities* maupun *digital gladiatorial activities*. Pada level *digital spectator activities* seluruh bentuk aktivitas *clicktivism*, *metavoicing*, dan *assertion* dapat ditemukan. Fungsi yang muncul antara lain *affirming*, *reinforcing*, *repeating*, *commending*, *denouncing*, *communicating* dengan mekanisme *identification*, *visibilization*, dan *amplification*. Dampak dari aktivisme digital ini hanya sebatas perubahan reputasi NU dan Muhammadiyah yang memburuk. Meskipun aktivisme digital telah menciptakan dampak reputasional, mereka belum berhasil mendorong perubahan sikap dari organisasi. Aktivisme ini lebih banyak berperan dalam membentuk citra publik NU dan Muhammadiyah terkait posisi mereka dalam isu pengelolaan tambang daripada mengubah sikap kedua organisasi tersebut untuk tidak begitu saja menerima tawaran pengelolaan tambang.

Kata-kata kunci: aktivisme digital, dampak reputasional, *digital spectator activities*, Muhammadiyah, NU

Abstract

Indonesia can potentially violate its commitments in the Paris Agreement if it does not adequately control and monitor the rate of deforestation, especially from the mining sector, which is a significant driving factor. This article analyzes the digital activism of Indonesian society in responding to the stance of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah towards the government's offer to manage Special Mining Business Permit Areas (WIUPK) in Government Regulation No. 25 of 2024. Using a qualitative approach, this study explores how netizens' digital activism through social media platforms X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram impacts NU and Muhammadiyah's positions on the issue of the WIUPK management offer. NU's position from the beginning welcomed the offer. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah, who initially seemed cautious, finally followed NU and had the same position. Digital activism carried out by Indonesian society generally opposes the involvement of religious community organizations in mining management. The study results show that Indonesian society's digital activism on this issue only reaches the level of *digital spectator activities* and has not been able to reach the level of *digital transitional activities* or *digital gladiatorial activities*. All forms of *clicktivism*, *metavoicing*, and *assertion* activities can be found at the level of *digital spectator activities*. The emerging functions include *affirming*, *reinforcing*, *repeating*, *commending*, *denouncing*, and *communicating* with *identification*, *visibility*, and *amplification* mechanisms. The impact of this digital activism is limited to changes in the reputation of NU and

Muhammadiyah, which have worsened. Although digital activism has created a reputational impact, it has not encouraged a change in attitude in the organization. This activism plays a more significant role in shaping the public image of NU and Muhammadiyah regarding their positions on the issue of mining management than in changing the attitudes of the two organizations, not simply accepting the offer of mining management.

Keywords: digital activism, digital spectator activities, Muhammadiyah, NU, reputational impact

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has the second-highest deforestation rate after Brazil (World Population Review, 2024). Deforestation contributes to the worsening of global warming because it disrupts the optimum function of the greenhouse gas absorption mechanism of the forests (part of the carbon sink system). This condition affects human life quality, reduces biodiversity to extinction, increases poverty and inequality, and has other negative impacts. The mining sector is a significant driver of deforestation in Indonesia (Milko, 2024) and contributes to climate change (Werner et al., 2024: 242). Also, our reliance on carbon sinks creates various diplomatic challenges (Rohma, 2024). Mining Advocacy Network Indonesia (JATAM) has even recorded over eighty thousand mining pits left gaping without reclamation in Indonesia (JATAM, 2024). If this issue is not well-controlled and monitored, Indonesia's position could conflict with its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Near the end of his administration, President Joko Widodo issued Government Regulation Number 25 of 2024, which amends Government Regulation Number 96 of 2021 on Mineral and Coal Mining Business Activities. The changes affect Articles 22, 54, 56, and 83A (The Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). In Article 83A, a new issue arises explicitly that gives religious mass organizations priority offers for Special Mining Business License Areas or Wilayah Izin Usaha Pertambangan Khusus (WIUPK). This raises the potential for

human rights violations by state and religious mass organizations (Putera, 2024: 245–246). Issues regarding protection and settlement in mining areas also often become sources of human rights violations (Sanjaya, 2023). Transparency and accountability challenges arise for religious mass organizations as they must comply with formal and ethical standards (Patawari, 2024: 5335). This is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where environmental permits, including those for mining, are frequently issued in violation of legal regulations (Paramitha & Negara, 2018; Putra, 2017: 24). President Joko Widodo noted that granting mining licenses to community organizations is a government initiative to promote economic justice (Astinda et al., 2024: 2).

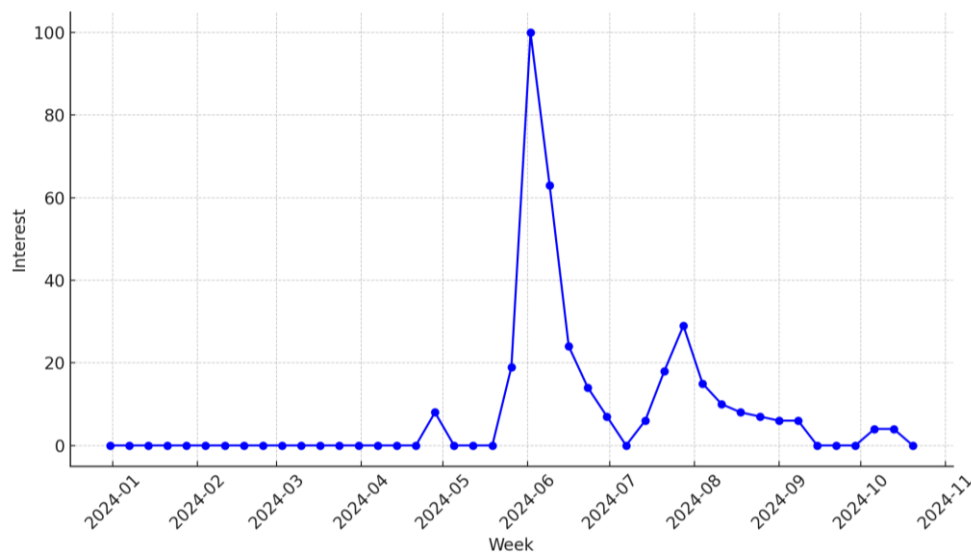
Indonesia has faced significant environmental degradation from mining activities, including deforestation, water pollution, and air quality issues (Saepudin et al., 2022: 22). Mining management can vary between local, provincial, and even central government levels (Rahayu et al., 2018; Rahayu & Faisal, 2020). This inconsistency or poor synchronization across the government levels (Raharja et al., 2023: 2517) and disharmony between centralized mineral and coal policy and regional autonomy (Utami, 2023) leads to overlapping issues.

A search for the keyword "tambang ormas" (English: mining by mass organizations) on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) from January to October 2024, resulted in approximately 50,000 tweets (Capterra, personal communication, October 14,

2024). The plan to place the mining sector, which is highly prone to corruption, under the control of religious mass organizations has sparked concerns. For instance, the alleged corruption case involving the tin commodity trade in the IUP area of PT Timah Tbk. from 2015 to 2022 resulted in total environmental damage losses of Rp271.06 trillion (Antara News, 2024). Between 2014 and 2020, there were 168 fatalities due to coal mining pit accidents in Indonesia (JATAM, 2021). In this context, the proposal to assign management of WIUPK to religious mass

organizations has elicited both support and opposition.

The figure below shows the trend for the term "tambang ormas" in Indonesia from January through October 2024, taken from Google Trends. In April, the issue of offering WIUPK management to religious mass organizations sparked the emergence of "tambang ormas" on the Internet. The enactment of Government Regulation No. 25 of 2024 on May 30, 2024, led to a peak in mentions of "tambang ormas" online in June.



Source: Google Trends (2024).

Figure 1. Interest Over Time for "tambang ormas" in Indonesia.

Since the Indonesian government introduced this Presidential Regulation on May 30, 2024, religious mass organizations have begun to position themselves. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest religious mass organization, immediately responded by enthusiastically welcoming this new government policy. The General Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU), KH Yahya Cholil Staquf (Gus Yahya), stated that the

government's granting of mining licenses to religious mass organizations is a responsibility that must be carried out with utmost care to ensure that the noble objectives of the policy are genuinely achieved (Patoni, 2024). Cited from NU Online, Gus Yahya said, "Nahdlatul Ulama is prepared with qualified human resources, a complete organizational structure, and a strong business network to carry out these duties and

responsibilities." (Patoni, 2024).

The responses from the Indonesian public were diverse, with some supporting and others opposing the issue. A supportive comment can be seen in a post by NU Online Jatim on Instagram on June 4, 2024, where user @reng_berghen201 commented, "PBNU is truly innovative 🥰" (reng_berghen201, 2024). However, Tabudin, a NU member who was also a victim of mining activities in Wadas, Central Java, expressed his disappointment, "We were shocked by recent statements from NU leaders; how can NU now contribute to environmental destruction? NU once declared environmental damage as forbidden, how is it now permissible?" (BBC News Indonesia, 2024). As of the time this writing was compiled, NU's stance remains unchanged.

Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah, the second-largest religious mass organization in Indonesia, initially stated that Muhammadiyah would not rush and would assess its capacity to ensure that managing the mining operation would not cause problems for the organization, the community, the nation, or the country (Muhammadiyah, 2024). On June 2, 2024, the General Secretary of Muhammadiyah's Central Board, Abdul Mu'ti, stated, "If there is an official offer from the Government to Muhammadiyah, it will be carefully considered" (Muhammadiyah, 2024; Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024). Muhammadiyah's response shared through its X account, received positive sentiment, with around 1,400 likes. The account @sooai2 responded, "Even without mining, Muhammadiyah is already great 🥰" (soo_ai [@sooai2], 2024), and @danukata added, "What I like about Muhammadiyah is the message they

firmly hold: 'Keep Muhammadiyah alive, don't seek a living from Muhammadiyah'" ([@danukata], 2024). However, on July 28, 2024, Muhammadiyah issued an official statement accepting the offer of a Mining Business License (IUP) (Muhammadiyah, 2024), similar to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). The negative sentiment arose in Muhammadiyah's new position. For example, @heelme_d_a said that Muhammadiyah should not contribute to polluting the environment by focusing on mining, "There is an urgency for energy transition, but why focus on mining? It should be about power plants, not mineral mining that generates pollutants. Ridiculous!" (@heelme_d_a in Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024).

Putri et al. (2024) analyze the urgency of granting mining management licenses to religious mass organizations in Indonesia from a normative legal perspective. The article's main argument is that the regulation of mining management licenses for religious mass organizations should be incorporated into the 2024 Minerba Law to avoid legal overlaps. Meanwhile, Putera (2024) suggests that the new government regulation could lead to potential human rights violations by state and religious mass organizations.

Saprii et al. (2024) argue that there is an ambiguity in the regulation of offering Special Mining Business License Areas (WIUPK), which prioritizes religious mass organizations, as stipulated in Government Regulation No. 25 of 2024. They highlight contradictions with the primary law, Law No. 3 of 2020, which only prioritizes state-owned enterprises (BUMN) and regional-owned enterprises (BUMD), thus raising concerns about legal uncertainty and potential mismanagement. Similarly, Rachman and

Tunggati (2024) argue that there are legal contradictions in offering Special Mining Business License Areas (WIUPK) to religious mass organizations in Indonesia. They argue that this policy, introduced in Government Regulation No. 25 of 2024, conflicts with the higher-ranking Law No. 3 of 2020 on Mineral and Coal Mining, which grants priority to state-owned enterprises (BUMN) and regional-owned enterprises (BUMD), leading to potential legal uncertainty and regulatory dysfunction. This statement is also supported by the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) (Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, 2024).

Fariduddin and Kusuma (2024) argue that granting mining licenses to religious mass organizations under Government Regulation No. 25 of 2024 is ideologically questionable. The fifth Pancasila principle, "Social justice for every citizen of Indonesia," cannot be fulfilled because mining will expose vulnerable communities to high safety risks at all costs. Therefore, the government's claim that the policy aligns with Pancasila is an ideological illusion, as it potentially violates environmental principles and contradicts higher legal regulations, such as the Mineral and Coal Mining Law. Sholahudin and Maksum (2024) examine the social and economic impacts of granting mining concessions to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Using Marxist theory, they highlight the potential class conflict between NU as the owner and miners as workers, raising concerns about exploitation, environmental sustainability, and social inequality. Parlan and Bahri (2024) highlight the application of Islamic principles such as tawhid, Khilafah, and maslahah in managing mining licenses granted to religious organizations. They argue that incorporating these values into environmental governance enhances

compliance with regulations and strengthens conservation efforts.

While the previous studies above have discussed the legal framework, human rights issue and ecological issues, and implementation of Islamic values around mining practices, none of them have discussed the response of Indonesian society toward the granting of the rights of mining licenses to religious organizations, especially in the form of digital activism. This article discusses the digital activism of Indonesian society on the stance of NU and Muhammadiyah in responding to the issue of offering WIUPK management to religious mass organizations.

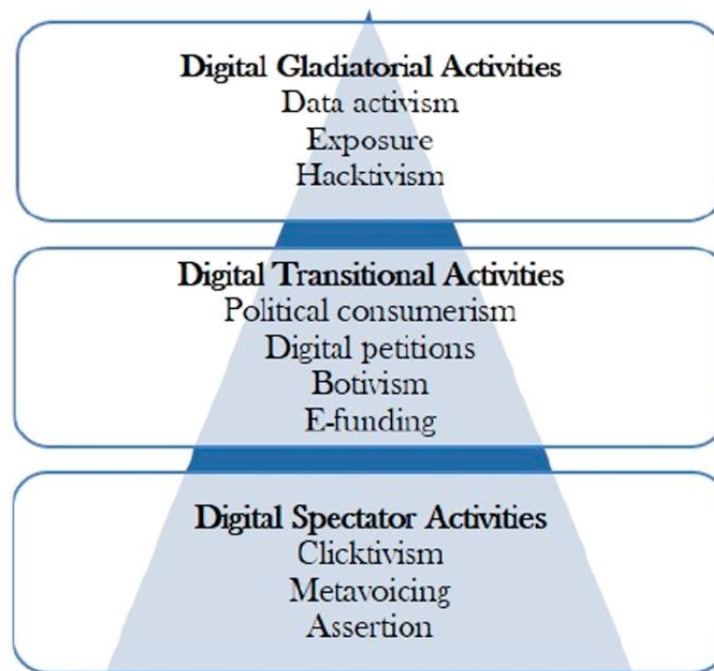
Conceptual Framework

Social activism is an action actor(s) takes to create social change (George & Leidner, 2019, p. 4). Social activism is part of the social movement in a larger domain, while digital activism is mediated by digital tools (George & Leidner, 2019, p. 4). Therefore, digital activism is an action to create social change by using digital technologies. Digital activism differs from traditional forms of activism; it often replicates offline activities in an online sphere while offering new opportunities for innovative actions (George & Leidner, 2019, p. 4). The repertoires of digital activism are also different from the traditional forms of activism. Digital activism requires a virtual toolkit of technology artifacts and activities such as social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.). Digital activism has a broader potential for greater involvement because it does not require physical attachment and needs fewer resources. However, digital activism has little real-world impact (George & Leidner, 2019, p. 4) because of the low-level action (clicking, liking, commenting, etc.).

The characteristics of digital

activism can be seen from the connection of people, mostly youth, in social media, websites, texting, digital platforms, or miscellaneous information and communications technology (George and Leidner, 2019: 7–8). The level of digital activism is analyzed based on the level of participation in the hierarchy of digital activism. According to George and Leidner (2019), the hierarchy of activism is reflected in a triangle where the lowest level shows the highest number of participants. Meanwhile, the higher the level, the fewer the participants.

Digital spectator activities engage the most participants (George and Leidner, 2019: 7). This level of activities consists of clicktivism, metavoicing, and assertion. Clicktivism, or slacktivism, refers to showing support for an activist cause by "liking," upvoting, or "following" a social media post or blog related to activism. Doing clicktivism means that the participants endorse or support the existing post or point of view of the activist. Clicktivism is noncommittal and impersonal; therefore, it is considered one of the lowest engagement forms (George and Leidner, 2019: 7).



Source: George & Leidner (2019, p. 7).

Figure 2. Hierarchy of Digital Activism.

Meta-voicing involves sharing, retweeting, reposting, or commenting on a social media post that was originally created by someone else (George and Leidner, 2019: 7). Meta-voicing strengthens ideas, values, and information by responding to and engaging with others' content. Sharing, retweeting, and

reposting are considered higher than liking because they require more effort and a slightly higher commitment. Commenting is original content that can enrich a post through insightful or engaging remarks. However, it can also reflect negatively on the post if it is poorly crafted, critical, or used to push a cause or

beliefs that diverge from the original intent.

Assertion is an action to create social media content (George and Leidner, 2019: 8), such as video, audio, image, or text media. Most people with digital media access can perform assertion, which is a level higher than clicktivism or meta voicing. George and Leidner (2019) argue that social movement organizations rarely use assertion as they consider it a potential tool for creating social change.

Digital transitional activities lie between the spectator and gladiatorial activities. These activities demand more resources and usually have a more significant impact than spectator activities, albeit less than gladiatorial activities. Transitional activities include political consumerism, digital petitions, botivism, and e-funding.

Political consumerists express their views through their purchasing choices, supporting businesses that align with their beliefs while avoiding or boycotting companies with opposing views (George and Leidner, 2019: 8). The digital petition, introduced by the US Obama Administration in 2011, is an online government petition model that later spread to other democracies like the United Kingdom (www.petitions.whitehouse.gov, 2017; www.petition.parliament.uk, 2018 in George and Leidner, 2019: 8). These petitions require an official response once a specified minimum number of signatures is reached. However, the resources needed are greater than anticipated due to the required number of signatures.

A botivist, a compound word made of "bot" and "activist," refers to a virtual activist who uses automated digital actions or bots for social movement organization communications (George and Leidner, 2019: 9). One major concern

about bots is that people often mistake bot-generated posts and retweets for ones created by actual people. In digital activism, e-funding refers to using technology to generate revenue for a cause, encompassing various methods, from simple donation buttons on websites for direct monetary contributions to more complex options (George and Leidner, 2019: 9). E-funding requires moderate resources because donors need the financial capability to participate, but it is not considered direct action since the funds are spent on action to influence others.

Digital gladiatorial activities represent direct action, where participants do not aim to influence change but actively create it (George and Leidner, 2019: 9). In digital activism, gladiatorial activities encompass data activism, exposure, and hacktivism.

Data activism broadly refers to various forms of political and social activism, ranging from passive to active. One aspect of data activism involves advocating for increased individual control over big data, including Facebook, Google, Amazon, and governments (George and Leidner, 2019: 9–10). Exposure involves the unauthorized release of confidential information, often called a leak (George and Leidner, 2019: 10), and is carried out through platforms like WikiLeaks, the press, or social media. It is typically limited to individuals with access to sensitive data and is frequently linked to hacktivism.

Hacktivism involves hacking to pursue social or political goals (George and Leidner, 2019: 10), with targets including governments, organizations, and individuals. It is often triggered by events, policies, or perceived imbalances between groups and is carried out through computer code that exposes information,

destroys data, or disrupts operations. It can significantly impact governments, citizens, and industries on various levels. Unlike other forms of digital activism, hacktivism represents direct actions rather than hypotheses to influence

change.

Digital activism has six mechanisms associated with six impacts (see Table 1 and Table 2)

Function	Description	Mechanisms
Affirming	Affirming one's relationship to the cause	Identification
Legitimizing	Validating the cause or SMO	
Creating	Building new systems or data	Construction
Donating	Gifting funds or other assets	
Designing	Designing structure and operations	Aggression
Protecting	Defending against adverse actions	
Destroying	Destroying or removing targeted assets such as systems or data	
Disrupting	Stopping or modifying target operations	
Appropriating	Taking targeted assets such as systems or data	
Attacking	Attacking with intent to harm	Deception
Coercing	Forcing compliance	
Deceiving	Being misled or misleading others	
Concealing	Hiding information	Visibilization
Commending	Communicating positively	
Denouncing	Communicating negatively	Amplification
Exposing	Revealing information	
Reinforcing	Bolstering existing values	
Repeating	Making the cause heard through repetition	
Communicating	Informing people or groups	
Educating	Explaining to increase understanding	

Table 1. Functions and Mechanisms of Digital Activism.

Source: George & Leidner (2019: 11).

Table 2. Impacts of Digital Activism.

Impacts	Definition	Social movement		Target	
		Participant	SMO	Individual	Organization
Cognitive	Influences perspective	Convinces an individual through logic & facts.	NA	Makes the target rethink their stance on an issue.	NA
Emotional	Elicits an emotional response	Impacts an individual's feelings	NA	Impacts an individual's feelings	NA
Financial	Changes revenues & costs	Individuals gain, lose, or give money	The SMO gains or loses money	Individuals gain or lose money	The target gains or loses money
Operational	Changes the functionality of the entity	How the participant goes about daily life	How the SMO conducts business	How the targeted individual goes about daily life	How the target org conducts business
Reputational	Influences public view & awareness	Impacts personal reputation	Impacts the reputation of the SMO & the cause	Impacts personal reputation	Impacts the reputation of the target
Power	Changes the level of control	Individuals gain or lose control over their actions	SMOs gain or lose control over participants	Targets gain or lose control over their actions	Targets gain or lose control over their domain

Source: George & Leidner (2019: 12).

Research Methods

This article was based on qualitative research, utilizing quantitative and qualitative data for analysis and focusing on Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's two largest religious mass organizations. The digital

activism analyzed in this study focuses on Instagram users' responses to NU's stance and X (formerly Twitter) users' responses to Muhammadiyah's stance. NU's responses are limited to Instagram because NU is inactive on the X platform. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah's stance is

analyzed using X because Muhammadiyah is an active user there, and the author has access to primary data from Drone Emprit Academic, a social media monitoring and analytics tool.

Secondary data from journal articles, official reports, websites, e-mails, and similar sources will be used to support the analysis in this paper. The time range is in 2024, from when this issue was brought to the public before it was enacted, to the latest developments in October 2024.

Based on UNESCO's Guidelines for Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education and Research, using Generative AI is not prohibited, provided that ethical standards and academic integrity are upheld. Researchers must possess a solid foundational understanding of their investigating topic(s) (UNESCO, 2023, p. 30). They should develop skills in verifying information and be particularly adept at identifying citations of non-existent research papers. Additionally, researchers must have a firm grasp of methodologies and techniques for effective data analysis.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia has adopted this method since October 2024 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024).

According to these guidelines, the researcher used ChatGPT to assist with translation, paraphrasing, identifying key findings for the literature review, generating figures and charts, and retrieving databases for academic articles and other relevant sources. The role of AI was limited to supporting these research processes, ensuring accuracy and efficiency in handling language-related tasks, and visualizing data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section explains the analysis of digital activism by netizens in response to the stances of NU and Muhammadiyah regarding the offer to manage WIUPK. Table 3 presents the event timeline.

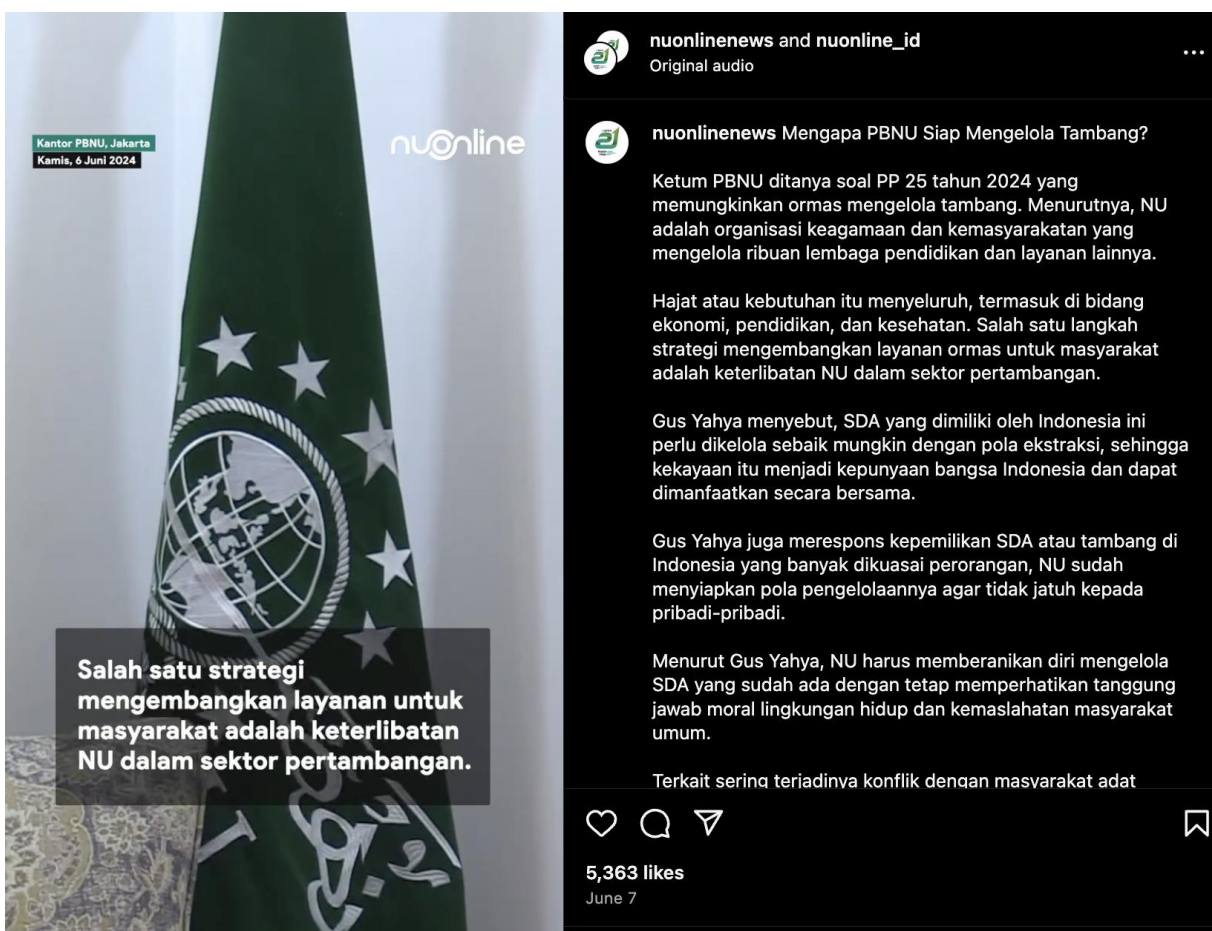
Table 3. Timeline of the Event.

May 30, 2024	Government Regulation (PP) Number 25 of 2024 concerns the Amendment to Government Regulation Number 96 of 2021 regarding the Implementation of Mineral and Coal Mining Business Activities was issued.
June 2, 2024	Muhammadiyah wanted to make an observation first and not released public statement yet.
June 3, 2024	PBNU released public statement to accept the offer of WIUPK management in Government Regulation (PP) Number 25 of 2024.
July 28, 2024	Following NU, Muhammadiyah accepted the offer as well.
August 22, 2024	PBNU has officially received a mining business license (IUP) for 26,000 hectares.

Digital Activism towards Nahdlatul Ulama's Stance

After NU issued an official statement regarding its position on the offer to manage WIUPK, it published content on NU's official Instagram account on June 7, 2024, highlighting PBNU's activities in a dialogue with civil society about the WIUPK management issue. The content drew public concerns about the management of WIUPK, which were directly addressed by the General

Chairman of NU, Gus Yahya. (NU Online News, 2024). According to Gus Yahya, NU must have the courage to manage the available natural resources. NU is a religious and social organization that oversees thousands of institutions, including those in the education, economic, and health sectors. Therefore, according to Gus Yahya, NU's involvement in the mining sector is perceived as an extension of its services to the wider community.



Source: NU Online News (2024).

Picture 1. NU's stance on Government Regulation (PP) Number 25 of 2024.

The content received over 5,300 likes, 630 comments, and shared 117 times (NU Online News, 2024).

"Since when has NU taught greed? Aren't there still

many other alternatives if we want to advance in various fields? My deepest apologies, Gus, but no matter how much we need it, we should not

sacrifice nature and our own brothers who suffer as victims of mining! This is truly heartbreaking; I feel sorrow and shame.”

The text above is a response by the account @chusnul_rubiya, left in the comment section. It expresses a critique by stating,

“The practices of NU are good, but when it comes to organization, I have to admit, NU needs to learn management and administration from Muhammadiyah. Honestly, NU lags behind. A small example is that in NU, decisions are often made in a one-way direction, centralized among the upper leadership and the *priyayi* (elites), so growth isn't evenly distributed.”

Meanwhile, @yuniskameis stated that the Islamic values and their implementation in NU's religious practices are commendable. However, both Instagram users believe that NU still needs to learn organizational management from Muhammadiyah because NU is perceived to have a centralized leadership focusing on its top leaders and *priyayi* (the elites).

“Only NU seems to be losing its dignity as a religious mass organization. I actually respect MUHAMMADIYAH and even other religious organizations that rejected managing mining because they understand it's not their responsibility or within their scope.”

A user @ulinnuhaisme compared NU with Muhammadiyah, expressing disappointment with NU's decision to accept the offer to manage WIUPK. This

sentiment tends to be negative and reflects dissatisfaction with NU's stance. Indonesia's environmental management still neglects the pre-emptive and preventive aspects (Azhar et al., 2018: 2), making the concerns reflected in various comments quite justified. The negative impacts of this permit include violations of the Mineral and Coal Mining Law (BBC News Indonesia, 2024a; Tempo, 2024b), the inexperience of religious mass organizations in the mining sector, the substantial capital required for mining operations, and increasingly severe environmental damage (Hermawan & Pramono, 2024). The nature of mining operations, which involve extracting resources from the earth, has environmental, social, and economic consequences (Satriawan, 2021 in Cakranegara et al., 2023: 89; Walhi, 2024).

The three accounts mentioned above (@chusnul_rubiya, @yuniskameis, and @ulinnuhaisme) fall into the category of meta-voicing digital activism. According to George and Leidner (2019), meta-voicing involves actions like sharing, retweeting, reposting, or commenting on a social media post. These users engaged in commenting and sharing their views on NU's stance. Although these users leaned towards negative sentiments, some positive responses still supported NU's decision, albeit not dominant in the discussion within the comment section.

The comments made by the three users do not align with the goal of reinforcing existing ideas, values, and information. According to George & Leidner (2019), meta-voicing can also reflect negative responses aimed at pressuring content creators or targeted actors to take actions different from their original intentions. @chusnul_rubiya, @yuniskameis, and @ulinnuhaisme shared a similar stance in criticizing NU's

decision to accept the offer to manage WIUPK. This opposing stance is not due to poorly crafted content, but rather, stems from differing views on the values NU originally sought to uphold versus its practices. For example, @chusnul_rubiya even suggested that NU should learn from Muhammadiyah in managing its organization, implicitly expressing disagreement with NU's position. This type of communication, known as denouncing, involves negative interaction through disapproval or shaming (George & Leidner, 2019: 11). Denouncing is part of the visibilization mechanism employed by users @chusnul_rubiya, @yuniskameis, and @ulinnuhaisme. All three accounts expressed negative sentiments towards NU's stance and the information shared in the content produced by NU Online.

Communicating is providing information to other people or groups, which falls under the amplification mechanism (George and Leidner, 2019: 11). The account @ahmaddrijal communicated by highlighting PBNU's opposition to the exploitation of natural resources in 2015, as shown in the comment from the exact account, "@nuonline_id how about your past statement, bro <https://nu.or.id/nasional/pbnu-haramkan-eksploitasi-sumber-daya-alam-di-indonesia-CyKqd>."

Additionally, with the same tone, user @nayfaszha_official also communicated by pointing out that PBNU's stance does not reflect the goal of benefiting NU members. This is because only those sitting at PBNU structural leadership enjoyed most of PBNU's activities, while NU members were merely political objects.

"Where is the social responsibility? Nahdliyin members who are not part of the structural leadership

have never benefited from PBNU activities, as they face barriers due to structural recommendations from the lower to the upper levels. During elections, Nahdliyin members are merely used as objects. It is time for an Extraordinary Mukhtar (Congress)."

Reputational impacts can affect individuals and organizations, resulting in fame or infamy and public scrutiny (George & Leidner, 2019: 13). The digital activism aimed at NU, in the form of denouncing and communicating, primarily produces reputational impacts. While NU remains popular, public perception is skewed toward negative due to NU's potential role in environmental destruction and its association with elite interests. However, this activism has not been successful in changing NU's stance. PBNU officially received a mining business license (IUP) for 26,000 hectares from President Joko Widodo on August 22, 2024 (iNews.id, 2024).

Digital Activism towards Muhammadiyah's Stance

After the enactment of Government Regulation Number 25 of 2024, Muhammadiyah did not immediately decide whether to accept or reject the substance of the regulation. On June 2, 2024, Muhammadiyah, through the General Secretary of Muhammadiyah's Central Board, Abdul Mu'ti, stated that Muhammadiyah would not rush into making a decision. "If there is an official offer from the Government to Muhammadiyah, it will be carefully considered" (Muhammadiyah, 2024; Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024).

The stance of Muhammadiyah on the issue of religious mass organizations managing mining operations was shared through their official X account, as shown in the image above. This content reflects Muhammadiyah's cautious approach, emphasizing their careful consideration before making any decision regarding the management of mining activities by religious organizations.

“Regarding the possibility of managing the mine, until now there has been no discussion between the Government and Muhammadiyah. The organization is quite careful and if there is an official offer from the Government, it will certainly be discussed carefully.” (Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024)



Source: Muhammadiyah (2024).

Picture 2. Muhammadiyah's first stance on Government Regulation (PP) Number 25 of 2024.

Muhammadiyah emphasized that the possibility of a religious mass organization managing mining operations is not automatic; it must comply with various requirements outlined in Government Regulation Number 25 of 2024. Therefore, Muhammadiyah has not released an official statement about its position. This more cautious approach compared to NU has garnered positive responses from netizens.

The sentiment of this issue and Muhammadiyah from May 29 to June 5, 2024, was mostly positive (Fahmi, 2024; Muhammadiyah Software Labs, 2024) as reflected by 88.43% positive sentiment, 11.35% negative sentiment, and 0.22% neutral comments in the social media. Meanwhile, sentiment on social media was 79% positive, 13% negative, and 7% neutral. While the positive sentiment targeted Muhammadiyah, most of the negative sentiment targeted the government.

According to George and Leidner (2019), affirming is a way of reaffirming one's relationship to a cause. This is evident from a user @N4G707, who said, "Muhammadiyah is already well-established and independent with its assets and social enterprises. If entrusted with this responsibility, Muhammadiyah would likely run a cleaner and more accountable governance than the current political parties and rulers." (@N4G707 in Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024). User @N4G707 believes Muhammadiyah is already a superior and independent organization with well-established assets and businesses. Even without managing mining operations, Muhammadiyah can maintain its existence. This act of affirming reflects the mechanism of identification, where individuals reinforce their connection to the organization and its values by

expressing confidence in its ability to thrive independently of external ventures such as mining.

In addition, the concept of reinforcing involves strengthening existing values (George and Leidner, 2019, p. 11). It is demonstrated by user @kikols, who said, "Personally, I think Muhammadiyah shouldn't get involved in managing mining. It would be better to focus on what they already do (education, health, and welfare) and work on improving those even more." (@kikols in Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024). The comment implies that Muhammadiyah has historically viewed its role in society as a provider of education, healthcare, and welfare services. It suggests that Muhammadiyah should continue to focus on these sectors rather than getting involved in managing mining operations. This idea falls under reinforcing as a part of the amplification mechanism, where existing values are strengthened (George and Leidner, 2019).

Repeating involves consistently restating a message to ensure that it gains visibility and resonance among the audience (George & Leidner, 2019: 11). The act of *repeating* was demonstrated by user @andridsaid, who stated, "Assalamualaikum, Madam/Sir at PP @muhammadiyah, this morning #Muhammadiyah is trending on X with around 15k tweets. If you look through them, most are suggestions not to get involved in mining management. Hopefully, it draws the attention and serious consideration of the leadership." (@andridsaid in Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024). The tweet aims to highlight that Muhammadiyah is under social media scrutiny, as evidenced by repeated mentions in conversations on X, causing it to trend. By continuously voicing this concern, @andridsaid hopes

that Muhammadiyah will choose a different stance from NU. This *repeating* behavior is part of the amplification mechanism, where a message is consistently restated to ensure greater visibility and influence.

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social media scrutiny, as evidenced by repeated mentions in conversations on X, causing it to trend. By continuously voicing this concern, @andridsaid hopes that Muhammadiyah will choose a different stance from NU. This repeating behavior is part of the amplification mechanism, where a message is consistently restated to ensure greater visibility and influence.

Netizens affirmed, reinforced, repeated, and commended in hopes that Muhammadiyah would reject the offer to manage WIUPK. These actions positively impacted the reputation of Muhammadiyah, contributing to a favorable public image in a process known as reputation. These hopes were shattered when Haedar Nashir, the Central Leadership (PP) of Muhammadiyah, released an official statement on July 28, 2024, that they had decided to accept the offer (Muhammadiyah, 2024).



Source: Muhammadiyah (2024).

Picture 3. Muhammadiyah's final stance on Government Regulation Number 25 of 2024.

Muhammadiyah, through its official X account, stated that the management of the mining operations had considered various aspects and complied with strict requirements. "The following are considerations and requirements in mine management that need to be of shared concern, based on the results of the UNISA Yogyakarta National Consolidation decision, (28/07)." (Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024). However, the disappointment from netizens could no longer be contained. User @heelme_d_a expressed frustration by saying, "Urgency for energy transition, but why focus on mining? It should be about power plants, not mineral mining that generates pollutants. Ridiculous!" (@heelme_d_a in Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024). Meanwhile, user @frans_natadi expressed disappointment by saying, "I am disappointed because it is clearly stated in the Qur'an that we are forbidden from destroying Earth, and religious organizations should be at the forefront of upholding these principles, but now 🙄" (@frans_natadi in Muhammadiyah [@muhammadiyah], 2024). The involvement of religious mass

organizations in the mining sector potentially encourages them to prioritize their own interests over the common good (Putri et al., 2024, p. 222). The Minister of Investment, Bahlil Lahadalia, and former Vice President Jusuf Kalla approached Muhammadiyah leaders, encouraging them to accept the WIUPK offer (Tempo, 2024a).

User @gumpnhell produced content with the caption, "A child watches the sunset." #MU #wanttomineyes #carefulwhenyoustartthinking. PT Maunambangyah is associated with the Muhammadiyah organization because the pronunciation of "Maunambangyah" sounds similar to "Muhammadiyah." The phrase "Mau nambang yah" is a sarcastic sentence in Indonesian, meaning "Thinking about mining, huh?" The phrase "Podho wae," which translates to "It's the same," is used to criticize Muhammadiyah's decision to accept the offer to manage WIUPK, implying that it has taken the same stance as NU. The white circular light and straight lines resemble the Muhammadiyah logo, further emphasizing the association.



Source: @gumpnhell (2024).
Picture 4. Satirical content regarding Muhammadiyah's change in stance.



Source: Muhammadiyah (2024).

Picture 5. The logo of Muhammadiyah.

Creating an image content that mocks or satirize Muhammadiyah changing side falls under the category of assertion. According to George & Leidner, social media content creation can be video, audio, image, or text. Although assertion requires higher skills and more effort, it does not necessarily lead to social change or even a shift in Muhammadiyah's position. In this case, the function of denouncing or communicating negatively is used in digital activism, with the mechanism being *visibilization*, which highlights that Muhammadiyah's position is no better or essentially the same as NU's.

Muhammadiyah eventually accepted the government's offer to manage WIUPK despite public sentiment shifting from positive to negative on the Internet. The digital activism performed by netizens, which mostly consisted of digital spectator activities like clicktivism, meta voicing, and assertion, has not been able to achieve the desired social change. The resulting impact has been limited to a *reputational impact*, transforming Muhammadiyah's image from an organization that was previously cautious in decision-making and upheld environmental harmony to one now seen as driven by business interests and aligned with the mainstream

approach, similar to NU.

CONCLUSION

This article analyzes the digital activism of Indonesian citizens toward Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah's involvement in managing Special Mining Business License Areas (WIUPK). The research has gathered some valuable insights. First, the role of digital platforms, such as X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram, in shaping public discourse is evident, particularly when examining the responses to NU and Muhammadiyah's stance. These platforms have provided a space for netizens to express their opinions, create content, and engage in activism, particularly through actions like clicktivism, meta-voicing, and assertion. This digital engagement has significantly shaped the public perception of NU and Muhammadiyah, though its ability to change the organization's decision-making processes substantially remains limited.

The case of NU and Muhammadiyah illustrates the limitations of digital spectator activities, such as clicktivism and meta-voicing, which often have insignificant impacts. In the context of WIUPK management, the netizen

responses were vocal and widely shared but did not translate into tangible changes in the positions of NU and Muhammadiyah. The focus of the activism remained on expressing discontent through sharing posts, commenting, and affirming or denouncing the organizations' decisions without progressing to more active forms of protest or engagement that could have exerted more significant pressure on these institutions.

The mechanisms of affirming, reinforcing, repeating, commending, denouncing, and communicating played a crucial role in how digital activism manifested during the event. The primary analysis in this research is the positive, negative, and neutral sentiments. Furthermore, the most dominant sentiment becomes the focus to show how public opinion, in general, can affect the mass organization's decision-making. The discourse of mining permission for religious mass organizations in social media is quite progressive but fails to


guarantee that the organizations share the same perspective.

In conclusion, in the case of NU and Muhammadiyah's involvement in WIUPK management, digital activism has primarily resulted in reputational impact rather than influencing the decision-making process of these organizations. To push for more significant outcomes, future activism must evolve beyond clicktivism and meta-voicing into more proactive forms of engagement, such as petitions or on-the-ground protests. This shift could pressure organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah more, encouraging them to reevaluate their positions in response to sustained public pressure.

This research is limited to digital activism analysis and does not reflect the perspective of society in general because it only portrays social media activities on the Internet. It also lacks an explanation of traditional activism, which requires on-site activities. Further research is essential to fill this gap.

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