

# CONTESTING INFIDELITY AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY IN DIGITAL INDONESIA: The Discursive Contestation of the Hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* on Social Media

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**Abstract:** This study examines the discursive contestation surrounding the hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* (The in-law is Death) within Indonesian digital Islam. Drawing on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis approach and Campbell's theory of *Digital Religion*, the study analyzes the Instagram-based *da'wah* content produced by the account @ismaelkholilie as a site where religious meaning and authority are actively constructed and contested. It argues that the hadith is recontextualized from a classical moral injunction into a digital narrative addressing infidelity, family ethics, and *mahram* boundaries in contemporary Muslim households. The findings demonstrate that social media functions not merely as a medium of religious dissemination but as a discursive arena in religious authority negotiated and reconfigured through digital credibility, algorithmic visibility, and audience interactivity. By situating Indonesia as a critical site of digital religious practice, this article contributes to broader debates on religious authority and meaning-making in Digital Islam.

**Keywords:** Digital hadith, infidelity, *al-Hamw al-Mawt*, religious authority, digital religion.

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## Introduction

In the contemporary era, the acceleration of digitalization has transformed how people practice religion, interact, and access information. This transformation is particularly visible in the rise of religious expressions on social media, where sacred texts are no longer confined to traditional spaces but appear in visual, narrative, and interactive formats.<sup>1</sup> One moral and social issue that has gained significant traction in these spaces is the phenomenon of infidelity within the family, which is often contested through the hadith of *al-Hamw al-Mawt* (“The in-law is Death”). This hadith has evolved from a classical text into a contested digital narrative, laden with debates over moral boundaries, intimacy, and family ethics. Through platforms like Instagram, discourse on this hadith is reproduced in visual and participatory forms, turning social media into a contested arena where moral authority, family ethics, and religious meaning are actively negotiated rather than passively received.<sup>2</sup>

In Indonesia, multiple interpretations of *al-Hamw al-Mawt* hadith have emerged through *da‘wah* content, films, and popular commentaries.<sup>3</sup> Several previous studies, such as those by Salsabila and Busro, have examined discursive responses to Kholili’s Instagram posts,<sup>4</sup> while Fatmal has explored the moral and legal implications of this hadith.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, works by Kholilurrahman and Aprilia highlight how this narration functions as a warning against infidelity in marital life.<sup>6</sup> However, most of these studies approach the hadith primarily as a moral or legal text and have not sufficiently examined how religious authority itself is contested, legitimized, and reshaped through digital interaction.<sup>7</sup>

Globally, Campbell’s theory of *Digital Religion* underscores that online religious practices represent more than technological adaptation; they constitute new forms of authority negotiation and moral communication within an algorithmic media environment.<sup>8</sup>

This theoretical lens is essential for understanding how digital spaces function as arenas for discursive struggle, where religious meanings and moral authority are continuously produced, challenged, and stabilized within algorithmic media environments.

This study holds both academic and practical significance. Academically, it contributes to contemporary hadith scholarship by integrating *Digital Religion* theory with Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how hadith narratives are reinterpreted, mediated, and contested in online environments.<sup>9</sup> This integration expands the methodological horizons of Islamic studies beyond textual *isnad* analysis toward examining how authority and morality intersect in digital contexts. Practically, this research addresses the moral and social relevance of family infidelity, an issue increasingly amplified by digital interaction, by revealing how online audiences reinterpret religious teachings and ethical boundaries through participatory media.<sup>10</sup>

Against this backdrop, this article seeks to answer the central question: how discursive contestation over hadith meanings related to infidelity and family morality is mediated, reproduced, and negotiated through digital content on Instagram? The analysis focuses on the *@ismaelkholilie* account, employing CDA's three-dimensional framework: text analysis, discourse practices, and social practices.<sup>11</sup> The objectives are threefold: (1) to analyze how the *al-Hamw al-Mawt* hadith is represented in digital content; (2) to uncover how religious authority is constructed and negotiated through online interactions; and (3) to explain how audiences actively shape religious and moral meanings through participatory engagement such as comments, likes, and shares.

The originality of this study lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis. First, it situates the *al-Hamw al-Mawt* hadith within the digital negotiation of infidelity and ethical boundaries, offering insight into how classical Islamic texts evolve in contemporary

moral discourse.<sup>12</sup> Second, by employing Fairclough's CDA,<sup>13</sup> the study reveals how linguistic and visual structures encode competing claims of authority and morality. Third, by focusing on popular *da'wah* content on Instagram, it highlights the ongoing shift of religious authority from traditional institutions to digital influencers and audiences. Collectively, these dimensions enrich the field of digital hadith and religious communication studies, providing a nuanced understanding of how infidelity, authority, and piety are renegotiated in digital Indonesia.

## Method

This study examines the contestation of the dynamics of the hadith "The in-law is Death" on social media through a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach proposed by Fairclough as the main methodological framework, specifically in the Instagram account @ismaelalkholilie. According to Fairclough, critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks to critically link texts with their social, cultural, and ideological contexts, thereby enabling researchers to uncover the hidden power relations in discursive practices.<sup>14</sup> This framework focuses on three dimensions proposed by Fairclough, namely text analysis, discursive or discourse practices, and social practices. The three stages of this framework can be outlined as follows to illustrate how critical discourse analysis critically examines the meaning of the text hadith "*ipar adalah maut*" (The in-law is Death) in the digital narrative on the @ismaelalkholilie account post.

These stages of analysis will be implemented systematically. *First*, researchers identify and describe the texts in posts and comments related to the hadith in order to find problematic forms of religious narrative in terms of meaning. *Second*, researchers analyze the context of discourse practices, including the identities of the actors spreading the narrative, the public's response, and

the forms of digital interaction that emerge. *Third*, the researchers interpret social practices, namely how hadith narratives on Instagram reflect or even reproduce certain social structures. Thus, this study is expected to reveal in depth how classical hadiths can be reinterpreted dynamically and sometimes narrowly in the space of social media.

## Results and Discussion

### The Digital Identity of *@ismaelalkholilie* and the Presentation of the Hadith "The in-law is Death"

One of the popular channels in the realm of contemporary digital *da'wah* in Indonesia is the Instagram account *@ismaelalkholilie*. The account belongs to the son of the late KH. Amin Kholil Yasin, whose full name is Ismail Amin Kholili and who is widely known as Ismail Kholili, is a digital *da'wah* figure from Bangkalan, Madura. He is a fifth-generation descendant of Syaikhona Muhammad Kholil Bangkalan and was born on November 17, 1992, in Bangkalan.<sup>15</sup> He utilizes Instagram as his primary platform for delivering religious messages, which are now popular with the public. He is known for his approachable *da'wah* style, both online and offline.

As indicated by his profile information and posting patterns, he presents himself as a young scholar of hadith with a communicative style that blends classical religious narratives and contemporary visual designs. His posts often include short lecture videos, discussions of viral digital media issues analyzed through hadith text, and quote slides that invite audiences to reflect on contemporary challenges. The overall character of the account's posts features light narratives that frequently incorporate religious texts, visual elements, and extended captions. This transforms his account into both a preaching platform and an interactive digital space

characterized by active comment sections and sharing features that facilitate follower discussions. As a result, his account is now verified with a blue check mark, has more than 737 thousand followers, and 646 posts.<sup>16</sup>



Figure 1. Instagram account @ismaelalkholilie

As posted on the @ismaelalkholilie account, which frequently discusses viral social media issues by examining hadiths and citing the opinions of scholars, one of his *da'wah* posts discusses the understanding and interpretation of the hadith, “The in-law is Death.” Kholili posted this content to coincide with the release of a viral film titled “Sister-in-Law is Death,” which is based on a true story that sparked public moral discourse on social media. This post presents an in-depth discussion across ten slides, each containing text written in a simple black font and an elegant visual design featuring a blue, cloudy sky background.

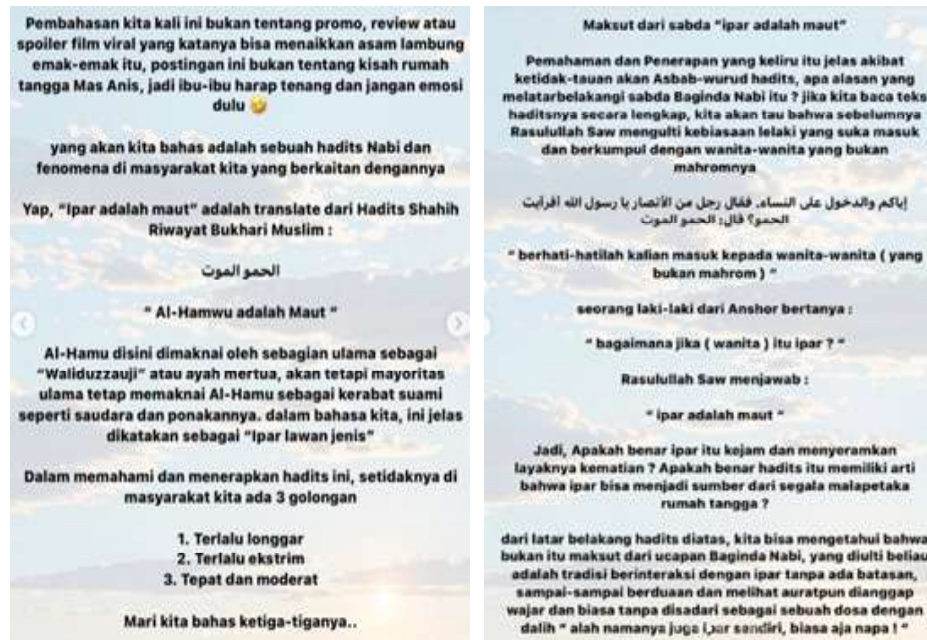


Figure 2. The second and fifth slides were uploaded from the Instagram account @ismaelalkholilie

The post presents a visual narrative that provides an interpretation of the text hadith, accompanied by contemporary social reflections on the boundaries within family relationships. Kholili explains that the community's interpretations of the hadith concerning in-laws can be categorized into three groups. *The first* group tends to be overly lenient, viewing all interactions with in-laws as normal without considering the limitations regarding non-*mahrams* relationships. *The second* group represents an extreme interpretation, sometimes referred to as "sister-in-law phobia," which assumes that sisters-in-law are the main source of household problems. This misunderstanding arises from interpreting the hadith solely on a textual basis. *Third*, the group adopts a moderate view, understanding the hadith both textually and contextually by considering the *asbâb al-wurûd* (the situational background of the Hadith) and the interpretations of classical scholars.<sup>17</sup>

The account describes how the film “*Ipar adalah Maut*” is not just a form of entertainment, but has become a reflection of society that raises awareness of the vulnerability of family relationships and the potential for infidelity in the domestic sphere, which social media has now amplified. The post invites followers to critically reflect on the moral implications behind the film’s virality. In this context, capitalizes on the film’s popularity to educate the public that infidelity is not only a moral issue but also a part of a broader religious and social problem that requires an understanding of the boundaries within Sharia law.

The discussion of the hadith stating the brother-in-law’s death, quoting a hadith narrated by ‘Uqbah bin ‘amr in *shahîh al-Bukhârî* and citing scholars’ interpretations explaining that this hadith warns against the potential for temptation and moral harm arising from excessive familiarity between non-*mahrams* and women within family dettings. The *asbâb al-wurûd* of this hadith is rooted in the social context of early Arab society, in which companions frequently visited relatives’ homes without gender segregation. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad issued a strong admonition to safeguard family honor from potential slander.

Meanwhile, previous findings show that some people believe that living under the same roof with in-laws, who are considered *mahram mu’aqqat* (temporary) under Sharia law, without clear boundaries on interaction, increases the vulnerability to temptation and the potential for violations of family norms. Many modern families treat in-laws as direct family members without considering the limits of interaction and modesty under Sharia law, creating a particular challenge for modern households.<sup>18</sup>

### **Critical Discourse Analysis of the Hadith “The in-law is Death” on the @ismaelalkholilie Account**

This study analyzes the content of hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* posts on the Instagram account @ismaelalkholilie through the critical discourse analysis framework proposed by Fairclough. This approach serves as a methodological lens to examine how religious meanings are represented, mediated, and reproduced in digital spaces. Fairclough views discourse as a social practice comprising three dimensions of analysis: textual analysis, which focuses on linguistic structure and diction, discursive style, and intertextual relations between hadith texts and digital narratives. The discursive practice analysis examines the processes of text production and consumption. The socio-cultural practice analysis explores the situational, institutional, and social contexts. Through these stages, the research seeks to understand the dynamics of hadith representation and how the process of digital *da‘wah* (proselytizing) reflects contemporary religious authority.

The digital *da‘wah* content uploaded by the @ismaelkholilie account discusses the hadith “The in-law is Death”, presenting a series of explanatory slides aimed at correcting the public’s understanding of its meaning. Among the entire series of uploads, the fifth slide was chosen as the primary focus of analysis because it contained the core narrative of Kholili’s main explanatory text. The narrative emphasizes that the public’s misinterpretation of the hadith leads to an inadequate understanding of the Prophet’s contextual background. Kholili subsequently published the complete text of the hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt*. Using a persuasive popular style, he poses critical questions such as “*Is it true that in-laws are cruel and terrifying like death?*” to guide the audience in understanding that “death” is a symbolic moral warning against potential household destruction caused by behavior violating Sharia ethics.

## Text Analysis

The text that needs to be analyzed are the linguistic forms used to construct meaning, ideology, and relations of authority in a discourse. The use of words encompasses how a single term can convey multiple meanings and interpretations depending on the context.<sup>19</sup> The slides uploaded on June 21 include a combination of Arabic text along with rhetorical style and popular diction.<sup>20</sup> The choice of diction used by Kholili in the narrative “*The Meaning of the Brother-in-Law’s words is death*” emphasizes the effort to provide concrete information about the term “death” in its literal sense, which is often misunderstood by the public.

Terms such as “ignorance,” “*asbâb al-wurûd*” and “domestic disaster” evoke two contrasting layers of meaning ranging from moral warnings to scientific clarification. The use of the Arabic term *asbâb al-wurûd* signifies the scientific authority of hadith tradition and refers to its academic role within digital *da’wah* discourse. Meanwhile, everyday expressions, such as “*Well, they’re my own in-laws, so it’s normal, right?*” are used to depict the social realities of modern life. This pattern reveals missteps in social interaction without eliciting resistance from the audience. Thus, the combination of scientific and informal language serves to contextualize religious messages for digital audiences.

The sentence structure of the narrative content shows a predominant use of rhetorical questions, such as “*Is it true that in-laws are cruel and terrifying like death?*” This rhetorical strategy creates an imaginary dialogue between the preacher and the audience, reinforcing the authority of the message being conveyed. The use of declarative sentences such as “*We can know that this is not what the Prophet meant*” signifies the preacher’s position as an authoritative interpreter of religious texts. In Fairclough’s perspective, this type of sentence structure reflects a form of discourse hegemony, where meaning is conveyed

through linguistic structures that guide the audience's thinking, not through coercion, but through rational arguments and persuasive style.

The meaning of the hadith in the post is conveyed through scientifically grounded explanations, portraying a knowledgeable preacher who continues to use everyday language. This indicates that the linguistic style employed is a blend of didactic and conversational elements, combining academic language with popular speech. Ideologically, this text affirms the recontextualization of hadith interpretation in the digital age, marked by a shift in authority from traditional institutions to educated online preachers. Thus, this discourse reproduces the symbolic power structure within the digital sphere, with preachers acting as mediators between classical texts and the moral consciousness of society.

The analysis of the text can be summarized systematically in the following table, which clarifies the ideology and power relations surrounding the Hadith content "*Ipar adalah Mau'*" on the *@ismaelkholilie* account. Fairclough's perspective:

Table 1. Text analysis results

Linguistic Aspects	Content Narrative	Constructed Meaning	Implied Ideology	Power Relations
Religious and Moralistic Diction	<i>"The in-law is Death", "domestic disaster", "That is not what the Prophet meant."</i>	Religious diction with moral warnings, The meaning of "death" is often symbolic or serves as a warning about social ethics.	The ideology of religious moderation aims to correct literal interpretations and replace them with contextual explanations.	The preacher (Kholili) serves as an authoritative interpreter who guides the audience.

Sentence Structure and Modality	<p><i>“Is it true that in-laws are cruel and terrifying like death?”</i></p> <p><i>“That is not what the Prophet meant.”</i></p>	Rhetorical questions followed by declarative sentences have a reflective and educational effect, leading the audience to clarify the intended meaning.	The Rational-religious approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the context of hadith scientifically rather than dogmatically.	In a digital teacher-student relationship, preachers guide their audience to “think correctly” about the text of the hadith.
Linguistic Style and Rhetoric of Preaching	<p><i>“Well, they’re my own in-laws, so it’s normal, right?”</i></p> <p>contrasted with <i>“unconsciously as a sin.”</i></p>	The use of a popular language creates emotional closeness and moral awareness.	The contextual preaching ideology combines popular social media styles with normative Islamic messages.	Religious authority is conveyed through a persuasive approach, also known as soft power.
Intertextuality (Hadith and Modern Narratives)	Translations and social context accompany quotations from hadith in Arabic.	The study bridges the gap between classical sources and today’s digital reality.	The ideology of reinterpretation: presenting hadith in digital discourse without losing the authenticity of the source.	The power of religious texts is mediated by preachers acting as “interpreters” who negotiate between tradition and modern media.

Based on the results of a textual analysis of Kholili's preaching content, the delivery of the hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* serves not only as a medium for conveying moral messages but also as a discursive strategy. Through ethically religious diction, reflective rhetorical structures, and popular linguistic styles, Kholili is able to negotiate between the hadith text and the digital cultural context. This approach demonstrates that religious authority in the digital spaces no longer relies solely on institutions but is instead mediated by public figures who employ persuasive language and soft power. Thus, this discourse represents an effort to reinterpret hadith in the new media ecosystem, as evidenced by religious messages being grounded through dialogical, contextual interactions that remain rooted in normative Islamic values.<sup>21</sup>

Findings at the textual level indicate that the use of scientific diction, such as *asbâb al-wurûd* combined with popular language, is not merely a pedagogical strategy, but as a mechanism for legitimizing religious authority in digital spaces. In this context, authority is constructed not through formal institutional positions, but through the capacity of *da'wah* actors to master two linguistic registers simultaneously: the scientific language of hadith and the everyday language of social media audiences. Consequently, religious authority is reproduced through discursive practices that are persuasive and dialogical rather than coercive or dogmatic.

Furthermore, the dominance of declarative sentences such as "that is not what the Prophet meant" indicates an epistemic claim that positions the preacher as the determiner of the valid meaning of the hadith text. However, this claim is mitigated by the use of rhetorical questions, which create an appearance of participation and epistemic equality with the audience. This pattern reflects a shift from textual-institutional authority to interpretive-participatory authority, where discursive power operates through rationalization and persuasion, rather than solely through structural legitimacy.

## Discursive Practice Analysis

Within the framework of Fairclough's framework of critical discourse analysis, the stage of discursive practice focuses on how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed within specific social contexts. This dimension connects textual structures to broader social practices by involving processes of interpretation and negotiation between text producers and audiences.<sup>22</sup> In this study, discursive practice is analyzed through two main aspects: *first*, text production, which concerns how preachers construct digital preaching discourse. *Second*, text consumption, which refers to how audiences interpret, respond to, and reproduce its meanings.

The post on the Instagram account @ismaelalkholilie on June 21, 2024, regarding the hadith "*al-Hamw al-Mawt*" ("The in-law is Death") is the primary object of analysis. This post consists of ten educational slides, packaged with contextual narratives and attractive visuals, and it received 69,400 likes, 400 comments, and more than 6,000 shares. Ideologically, the production of this discourse reflects educational, corrective, and contextual *da'wah* efforts, featuring hadith quotations along with their *asbâb al-wurûd*. The timing of the post, which coincided with the viral popularity of the film "*Ipar adalah Maut*" (The in-law is Death), demonstrates sensitivity to social momentum and popular trends. This strategy involves a process of "contextual negotiation," in which religious texts are presented in a relevant manner in relation to issues currently being discussed by the public.

From a linguistic perspective, the communication style employed is semi-formal and argumentative, combining religious terminology with popular diction such as "what is viral and hot right now." This approach broadens the reach of the *da'wah* message while creating space for dialogue between normative

texts and the community's social experiences. The inclusive and communicative linguistic form reflects the hybrid nature of digital *da'wah*, which combines the simplicity of delivery with scholarly authority.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the text's production illustrates a *da'wah* practice that negotiates between traditional authority and participatory digital culture.

Meanwhile, text consumption was analyzed through audience interaction patterns in the comment section, reflecting processes of meaning reception and reproduction. Audience responses to the posts showed complex interpretive dynamics, ranging from reinforcement of authority and moral reflection to social testimony. Based on observations of the comment section, discourse consumption patterns can be classified into the following four categories:

Table 2. Classification of comments from posts by the @ismaelalkholilie

Response Categories	General Characteristic	Representative Audience Comments	Discursive Meaning and Implications
Appreciative	There are expressions of gratitude, praise, and recognition toward the preaching authority.	<b>@panggilajatata25:</b> <i>"Oh my goodness, this is what I've been waiting for. After watching the movie, I understand it better now with Lora's explanation 🙏👑"</i>	This statement reaffirms Kholili's scientific authority and religious credibility as an authoritative figure in digital spaces.
Intentional Reflective	Responses demonstrate new understanding or moral	<b>@indahfamalia:</b> <i>"The key is to know your boundaries, not just with in-laws but also with close relatives who are not</i>	By indicating the internalization of values and reproduction of religious

	awareness after viewing the content.	<i>mahram. Very inspiring, Lora 🙏🙏</i> ”	consciousness, digital preaching serves as a bridge between entertainment and moral education.
Testimonial	Personal experiences, one’s own or those of others, are relevant to the message of the hadith.	<i>@firdausaizqa: “It reminds me of when I just gave birth to my first child. There were my husband’s uncle and aunt. When I was in the room trying to breastfeed, his uncle came in, and I covered all my body parts. Then his aunt said, ‘Oh, it’s okay, it’s just your uncle.’ But I still covered all my body parts while thinking to myself, ‘He’s not my mahram’ 🙏”</i>	By providing empirical confirmation that the message of the hadith has social relevance, personal experience reinforces the validity of religious discourse.
Dialogic Argumentative	Questions or clarifications about religious concepts are typically addressed directly by religious leaders or preachers.	<i>@syifak_abmad15: “If a sister-in-law (wife’s sister) is not a mahram who is permanently forbidden to marry, then it is permissible to see her outer aurat if there is no fitnah. Please respond, Lora 🙏”</i>  <i>@ismaelalkbolilie: “No, mahram here means that they cannot be married, not related to the aurat that can be seen.”</i>	By demonstrating the formation of an interactive discursive space, religious authority is negotiated through rational argumentation and the use of scientific literacy.

The above classification shows that the discursive practices of digital preaching operate through dynamic two-way communication patterns. *First*, appreciative comments serve to strengthen the symbolic power of preachers in the digital space, where formal religious institutions establish scientific authority through the recognition of online communities. *Second*, comments on intentionality illustrate the success of contextual preaching strategies in transforming popular discourse into a space for the internalization of Islamic moral values. *Third*, personal testimonies expand the function of preaching into an arena of social reproduction, where individual experiences serve as empirical evidence that confirms religious values in a modern context. *Fourth*, dialogic interactions between audiences and preachers mark the emergence of participatory authority in digital *da'wah* practices. Discussions accompanied by quotations from classical texts and normative arguments demonstrate how scholarly authority is reproduced through the logic of interaction and open argumentation. Thus, the comment section is not merely a vessel for emotional reactions but also serves as a dialectical arena where the negotiation of religious meanings takes place on an equal footing.

Interactions in the comments section not only reflect the audience's response to the preaching message but also function as an arena for the collective construction of religious authority. Kholili's authority does not preexist as a fixed entity, but is formed and strengthened through recognition, testimony, and rational dialogue from the audience. From Fairclough's theoretical perspective, this practice demonstrates that discursive power in digital preaching is fundamentally relational and depends on forms of public legitimacy that are continuously reproduced through interaction.

In addition, the emergence of argumentative dialogue patterns between preachers and audiences marks an important transformation in the study of digital religious authority. These findings indicate

that religious authority on social media is no longer unidirectional, but is negotiated through open interactions that require scientific literacy. Thus, digital preaching operates as a deliberative public space in which religious authority is tested, maintained, and reproduced through processes of discursive rationality, rather than simply personal charisma.

Overall, discursive practices surrounding the posting of the hadith “*al-Hamw al-Mawt*” demonstrate that digital *da‘wah* functions as an ecosystem for the production and reproduction of religious knowledge, combining the dimensions of text, context, and public participation. This process reflects a shift in authority from a hierarchical structure to a more communicative and dialogical model. Thus, digital *da‘wah* conveys moral messages and constructs a discursive space that enables the community to play an active role in interpreting religious teachings in accordance with the contemporary social context and challenges.

### **Socio-cultural Practice Analysis**

The third dimension that needs to be analyzed focuses on examining a topic based on the paradigm that every discourse never stands alone, but is always influenced by the social and ideological context that surrounds it, which is divided into three levels of socio-cultural practice analysis: situational, institutional, and social systems.<sup>24</sup> At the first level, situational analysis focuses on the specific conditions and contexts that underlie the emergence of the discourse. This post appeared on June 21, 2024, which coincided with an increase in public discussion due to the film “*Ipar adalah Maut*”, which went viral on social media as it was based on real-life events. Situational analysis reveals that this religious content serves as a response to the public’s misunderstanding of the meaning of “death” in the hadith. It repositions the meaning of religious texts so that they are not understood literally.

At the institutional level, social media platforms such as Instagram serve as informal religious institutions that shape new forms of religious authority in the digital space. As explained by Campbell, digital media has given rise to new forms of religious authority outside formal institutions, commonly referred to as networked religious authority.<sup>25</sup> The *@ismaelkholilie* account functions as a *da'wah* institution operating outside the conventional framework of religious institutions, utilizing personal interaction and audience participation on social media. Kholili's *da'wah* style, which responds to viral issues and is presented in a popular visual form, reflects a type of algorithm-based institutionalization of *da'wah*, namely religious practices rooted in traditional scholarship but disseminated through the logic of contemporary digital culture.

Table 3. Results of socio-cultural analysis

Levels of Analysis	Focus of Analysis	Key Findings	Socio-Cultural Involvement
Situational	The context of discourse emerges in response to current issues.	The content was uploaded concurrently with the viral spread of the film <i>Ipar adalah Mant</i> , as a response to misunderstandings regarding the hadith's meaning about "death".	Digital <i>da'wah</i> functions to clarify the meanings of religious texts and reposition the public understanding of hadith within its contextual framework.

Institutional	The role of social media as a non-formal institution of <i>da'wah</i> .	The @ismaelkholilie account has established a networked religious authority through its engaging preaching style and visually appealing content.	This marks the emergence of algorithm-based institutionalization of <i>da'wah</i> that combines traditional authority with digital cultural logic.
Social System	The relationship between discourse, cultural values, and social dynamics	The content reflects the tension between traditional religiosity and modern rationality in maintaining boundaries with in-laws.	This study aims to improve religious literacy and strengthen social cohesion through contextual and communicative digital education.

At the sociocultural level, these findings suggest that digital *da'wah* functions as a mechanism for moral regulation within contemporary Muslim societies, particularly in responding to ethical uncertainties generated by the popularization of digital entertainment narratives. The Hadith *al-Hamwal-Mawt* is recontextualized not only to clarify textual meaning but also to renegotiate the moral boundaries of Muslim family life in urban and digital societies.

More broadly, this practice demonstrates that social media functions as a space of mediation between classical religious norms and popular cultural dynamics, which often generate

moral tensions. Thus, digital *da'wah* not only reproduces religious teachings but also contributes to the formation of new social values that seek to maintain social cohesion through contextualized, educational, and dialogical approaches. These findings contribute to the study of global digital Islam by showing how hadith authority is negotiated in non-Arab contexts through algorithmic logic and modes of public participation.

Meanwhile, at the societal level, this content is closely intertwined with the religious culture of Indonesian society, while also being shaped by the rapid dynamics of digital media. Through the content titled “A Sister-in-law is Death”, Kholili attempts to mediate this pattern of consumption by presenting a contextual and educational approach. This illustrates the social tension between traditional religiosity and modern rationality,<sup>26</sup> where issues such as a husband’s affair with his sister-in-law or a wife’s sister have become increasingly common in modern society. Sometimes, people who are already in a relationship do not strictly maintain boundaries with their in-laws or family members who are considered *mahram*, particularly regarding physical contact or modesty boundaries. Thus, this content not only educates but also serves to maintain social cohesion and religious literacy in a pluralistic and complex digital society.

### **Digital Religion Analysis of the Hadith “The In-Law is Death” on the @ismaelkholilie Account**

The digital *da'wah* content posted on @ismaelkholilie’s account regarding the hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* or “*Ipar adalah Maut*” clearly represents how religion is being transformed and mediated in the digital space.<sup>27</sup> Through the Instagram platform, Kholili contextually negotiates religious meanings while constructing new forms of authority beyond traditional structures. Campbell explains that digital religion represents an integration of religious

practice and digital life, blurring the boundaries between the online and offline worlds.<sup>28</sup> The application of Campbell's theory in this case can be observed through three main aspects: *Religious Social Shaping of Technology* (RSST), *Digital Religion*, and *Digital Religious Authority*. All three show that digital *da'wah* is not only a means of spreading religious messages, but also an arena for producing meaning and negotiating religious authority in cyberspace.<sup>29</sup>

The first aspect, *Religious Social Shaping of Technology* (RSST), emphasizes that technology is not neutral but is always shaped by the social and religious values that underlie it.<sup>30</sup> The post by @ismaelalkholilie on June 21, 2024, which appeared alongside the increasing public discussion of the film "*Ipar adalah Maut*", shows how social context is a driving factor in the formation of digital *da'wah* content. He employs an attractive visual format with communicative language, while still adhering to the norms and ethics of *da'wah*. Within the RSST framework, this demonstrates that the use of Instagram is not only technological but also theological, as it adapts the medium's function to the moral mission and values of Islam. As emphasized by Campbell, the use of digital technology in a religious context is shaped by the norms of the religious community and directed toward strengthening collective spiritual goals.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, in terms of digital religion, the phenomenon of audience interaction in the comments section shows how religious practices are now expanding into the digital realm.<sup>32</sup> Responses in the form of comments, likes, and shares are both social acts and new forms of religious expression. The audience is not merely a recipient of religious messages, but also participates in building a shared understanding of the hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt*, especially when there is public misunderstanding of the meaning of "death" in the context of *mahram*. Campbell refers

to this phenomenon as digitally mediated religion, where religious activities are produced and negotiated through digital media as part of everyday spiritual life.<sup>33</sup> In the context of the *@ismaelkholilie* account, the comment section becomes a dialogical arena that reflects the integration of religious consciousness and the digital culture of contemporary Muslim society.

In the third aspect, digital religious authority clearly shows how religious authority is reconstructed in the digital space. Kholili gained legitimacy not only from his title as a young cleric but also from his active interaction and public recognition on digital platforms. He answers his followers' questions, clarifies the meaning of hadith, and negotiates Islamic moral values with a rational and communicative approach. This indicates that religious authority develops through a form of soft authority, specifically recognition based on scientific expertise, personal credibility, and interactive relationships with the audience. This shift reflects Campbell's view that religious authority in the digital age is no longer the exclusive domain of formal institutions, but is increasingly mediated by public participation and social media algorithms that influence the visibility of religious messages.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the application of Campbell's Digital Religion theory to hadith content concerning the brother-in-law is significant, confirming that digital *da'wah* represents a complex religious practice reflective of social change. Through the Religious Social Shaping of Technology, Islamic values influence the way technology is utilized. Through Digital Religion, religious practices are brought to life in interactive and participatory forms. Meanwhile, through the *Digital Religious Authority*, a new form of authority emerges based on digital legitimacy.<sup>35</sup> The phenomenon of Kholili's preaching illustrates how religion is perceived in the social media era as both a belief system and a social practice continuously negotiated through narratives, participation, and technology.

## Ethical Implications of the Hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt*

Infidelity among family members, such as between a husband and his wife's sibling or a non-*mahram*, is a critical issue in moral, social, and religious contexts. The hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* provides an ethical warning about the potential destruction of households resulting from unrestricted interactions between brothers-in-law and other family members who are not *mahrams*. In the digital age, social media has expanded the realm of privacy and created new avenues of access among families, making the application of this hadith increasingly relevant as a moral framework that connects traditional texts and digital narratives. The wording of the hadith about "sibling in-laws is death" from *shahîh al-Bukhârî* No. 5232, narrated by 'Uqbah bin 'amr, is as follows:

*Haddatsanâ Qutaybah bin Sa'îd haddatsanâ Layts, 'an Yazîd bin Abî Habîb, 'an Abî al-Khayr, 'an 'Uqbah bin 'amir anna Rasûlullâh shallallâhu 'alaihi wa sallama qâla: iyyâkum wa al-dukhûl 'ala al-nisâ'. Faqâla rajulun min al-Anshâr: Yâ Rasûlallâh, ara'ayta al-hamw? Qâla: al-hamw al-mawt.*

Qutaybah bin Sa'îd told us, Layts told us from Yazîd bin Abî Habîb from Abî al-Khayr from 'Uqbah bin 'amir that Rasûlullâh said, "Do not enter a place where women are present." Then a man from the Ansar said, "O Rasûlullâh, what about one's sister-in-law?" He replied, "A sister-in-law is death".<sup>36</sup>

*Sharh hadîts* (the explanation or commentary of a hadith) explains a warning against negligence in maintaining boundaries during interactions and in covering the aurat, as well as the prohibition of *khalwah*, especially between family members such as the siblings of one's spouse. Al-Thabari states that the meaning of *khalwah* between a man and his brother's wife or between a man and his sister in-law is likened to death, as Arabs describe something undesirable as being like death. The

meaning here is that ‘death’ symbolizes something to be avoided, just as one would avoid death itself. The term ‘death’ is equated with a person engaging in *khalwah*, which is considered a morally undesirable act, so *al-hamw* becomes like death for him. With that, this hadith serves as a stern warning of the potential dangers in the household and a warning to maintain the boundaries of modesty and interaction between the opposite sexes, especially among family members who are not *mahram*.<sup>37</sup>

The authenticity of the hadith can be maintained and the *dhâbith* (accurately memorizes) of its *sanad*, which refers to the level of honesty and accuracy in the narrators in transmitting the hadith.<sup>38</sup> In the *sanad* of the hadith recorded in *shahîh al-Bukhârî* no.5232, Qutaibah bin Sa’îd is considered *tsiqah* (trustworthy), while Layts and Yazîd bin Abî *Habîb* are classified as *tsiqah tsabt* (highly trustworthy and extremely reliable). Likewise, Abî al-Khayr from ‘Uqbah bin ‘amr is also regarded as *tsiqah* and ‘Uqbah bin ‘amr, a companion of the Prophet who is recognized as possessing high credibility and ‘*âdil* status (moral reliability and trustworthiness) in hadith transmission. Based on the chain of transmission and the reliability of its narrators, this hadith is classified as *shahîh* (valid evidence or *hujjah*), since all of its transmitters are trustworthy.

Kholili’s post on his *@ismaelkholilie* account was a response to the public’s misunderstanding of the meaning of this hadith. In one of the slides in his post, he emphasized that the Prophet did not intend to portray in-laws as dangerous figures, but rather sought to rebuke social traditions that were overly lax in family interactions.

He stated, “From the background of the above hadith, we can understand that this is not the intention of the Prophet’s words. What he was referring to was the tradition of interacting with in-laws without any boundaries, to the extent that being alone together and seeing each other’s private parts was considered

normal and commonplace, without realizing that it was a sin, with the excuse, ‘Well, they’re my own in-laws, so it’s normal, right?’.

This statement emphasizes the importance of moral awareness in maintaining modesty and social ethics. Challenges in the digital age also arise from media culture that normalizes physical and emotional intimacy, thereby increasing the risk of infidelity within families. Therefore, this hadith serves as a normative reference, emphasizing that slander often arises from closeness perceived as normal.

In his post, Kholili reinforced the understanding of this hadith by citing Imam Nawawi and Imam Qâdhi ‘Iyâdh, who emphasized that “death” in the hadith warns against the serious temptation that may result from unrestricted interactions with in-laws of the opposite sex. Imam Nawawi explained that the in-laws referred to are relatives of the husband, such as brothers, uncles, or nephews, who are not *mahrams* in the legal sense but whose boundaries are often ignored because they are considered part of the family. The Prophet likened in-laws to “death” because the potential for slander and temptation is greater than with strangers, due to their proximity and access to the household. Meanwhile, Imam Qâdhi ‘Iyadh emphasized that seclusion with an in-law can endanger one’s faith, as such situations may lead to moral corruption and collapse of the household, similar to how death ends life.

The implications of this hadith for the issue of infidelity within families arise in the realm of moral and educational prevention. The content posted by the *@ismaelkholilie* account highlights how “brother-in-law” is interpreted as “death,” not only as a metaphor for physical death, but also as a symbol of great danger that can trigger the collapse of ethics and household stability.<sup>39</sup> This warning emphasizes that unclear boundaries in interactions between in-laws can still lead to slander or unintended infidelity. In this

case, the implications of the hadith extend to both the micro level of family relationships and the macro level through digital culture, so that the application of this hadith in digital *da'wah* can serve as an educational medium to strengthen public awareness of moral risks within the family.

Empirically, interactions between families have become increasingly complex in the digital age, increasing the likelihood of domestic conflict caused by uncontrolled relationships between in-laws or close family members.<sup>40</sup> The hadith refers to in-laws as death in the context of social media as a rhetorical expression emphasizing that the relationship between a husband and his in-laws or other family members is not a trivial matter. Digital preaching content that highlights “death” as a symbolic warning against potential household slander not only cautions but also encourages reflection on the issue of infidelity. Thus, this hadith emerges as a relevant preaching reference to curb the phenomenon of infidelity within extended family relationships, particularly in digital space, where interactions are freer, less controlled, and often lack traditional boundaries of modesty.

Through this perspective, it can be concluded that Kholili's approach to preaching reproduces the text of the hadith while also providing a contextual reinterpretation of contemporary social issues. He positions the hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* as a moral guideline for maintaining family integrity amid a digital culture that is increasingly permissive of intimacy between opposite-sex relationships. This post serves as a reminder that Sharia values remain relevant in preventing moral degradation and crises of trust in modern family relationships. But this hadith is not merely a religious text, but a source of social ethics that emphasizes the importance of caution in maintaining honor and boundaries of interaction in both domestic and virtual spaces.

In conclusion, the implications of the hadith regarding in-laws are that death in the realm of inter-family infidelity presents an important dimension: *first*, religious narratives that are responsive to modern family socio-cultural practices (as seen in hadith analysis). *Second*, it involves reinforcing old moral norms through online interactions. Kholili's digital *da'wah* content is an example of how classical religious texts are updated to be relevant to contemporary digital families and societies. Thus, this study reinforces the argument that religiosity in the new media era emphasizes certain rituals or dogmas, but also addresses real social issues such as inter-family infidelity, which is increasingly prevalent in digital media.

## Conclusion

This article shows that the discursive contestation and subsequent transformation of the hadith *al-Hamw al-Mawt* within Indonesian digital Islam reflects a global shift in the way Islamic texts are produced, interpreted, and given authority in the era of social media. Hadith no longer functions solely as a normative reference in classical scholarly tradition, but rather as a public discourse negotiated participatively through digital *da'wah* practices. Drawing on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, this study demonstrates that hadith in the digital space serves as a forum for contesting meaning, power relations, and family ethics, particularly in relation to infidelity, *mahram* boundaries, and contemporary Muslim domestic morality.

Theoretically, this study contributes to digital Islam and global religious studies by demonstrating how religious authority in the non-Arab Muslim world is reconfigured through digital credibility, audience interaction, and the algorithmic logic of social media platforms, as articulated in Campbell's theory of *Digital Religion*. The Indonesian case illustrates that religious

authority is no longer exclusively Arab-centric or institutionally grounded, but is instead formed contextually within digitally mediated Islamic discourses. These findings enrich contemporary hadith studies by positioning hadith as a dynamic source of social ethics adaptable to global digital culture, while underscoring digital *da‘wah* as a strategic arena for reshaping authority, morality, and Muslim practices in the modern era.

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