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HADITH, IDEOLOGY, AND DIGITAL AUTHORITY: A Van Dijk Critical Discourse Analysis of @hadits_lemah's Instagram Posts

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Abstract

This study examines how discourses surrounding hadiths of *fadail al-a'mal* are employed as propagative material on the Instagram

account @hadits_lemah using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. The account utilizes hadiths to disseminate particular Islamic teachings and ideological perspectives through social media. Employing a netnographic approach, this study investigates how hadith-based content functions in constructing and transmitting Islamic discourse in digital spaces. The findings reveal three main points. First, the nine posts analyzed display a similar textual pattern in which the main discourse is communicated visually through images, supplemented by captions and illustrations. Second, the content shapes social cognition by promoting concerns over practices considered heretical and polytheistic, which are associated with the widespread circulation of weak and fabricated hadiths accompanied by biased evaluations of their authenticity. Third, the emergence and growth of @hadits_lemah are closely linked to Indonesians' increasing reliance on digital media and the transformation of social media into a contested arena for disseminating Islamic ideologies. Through its criticism of perceived deviant practices, the account seeks to maintain the relevance of its ideological position. This study contributes to the development of Van Dijk's discourse analysis in the context of social media by emphasizing visual characteristics alongside semantic structures. It also highlights the importance of digital literacy in responding to ideologically driven religious content circulating online.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, *fadail al-a'mal* Hadiths, Social Media, @hadits_lemah.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana wacana hadis-hadis *fadail al-a'mal* dimanfaatkan sebagai materi dakwah pada akun Instagram @hadits_lemah dengan menggunakan analisis wacana kritis Van Dijk. Akun tersebut memanfaatkan hadis untuk menyebarkan ajaran dan perspektif keislaman tertentu melalui media sosial. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan netnografi, penelitian ini menelaah bagaimana konten berbasis hadis berfungsi dalam membangun dan mentransmisikan wacana keislaman di ruang digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga temuan utama. Pertama, sembilan unggahan yang dianalisis memiliki pola tekstual yang serupa, di mana wacana utama disampaikan secara visual melalui gambar yang dilengkapi dengan keterangan (caption) dan ilustrasi pendukung. Kedua,

konten yang disajikan membentuk kognisi sosial dengan menumbuhkan kekhawatiran terhadap praktik-praktik yang dianggap bid'ah dan syirik, yang dikaitkan dengan maraknya penyebaran hadis lemah dan palsu disertai penilaian kualitas hadis yang bias. Ketiga, kemunculan dan perkembangan akun @hadits_lemah berkaitan erat dengan meningkatnya ketergantungan masyarakat Indonesia terhadap media digital serta menjadikan media sosial sebagai arena kontestasi penyebaran ideologi Islam. Melalui kritik terhadap praktik yang dipandang menyimpang, akun tersebut berupaya mempertahankan relevansi posisi ideologisnya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan analisis wacana Van Dijk dalam konteks media sosial dengan menekankan karakteristik visual di samping struktur semantik. Selain itu, penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya literasi digital dalam menyikapi konten keagamaan yang sarat dengan muatan ideologis di ruang digital.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Wacana, Hadis *Fadail al-a'mal*, Media Sosial, @hadits_lemah.

Introduction

Before the widespread adoption of the internet, print media served as one of the primary channels through which Islamic discourses were disseminated. Discussions on Islamic issues in newspapers, magazines, and other printed publications were often shaped by the perspectives and ideological orientations of their authors and institutions. Consequently, particular themes, including political and ideological debates, received greater emphasis, while some media outlets tended to align themselves with either moderate or conservative Islamic viewpoints (Hefner, 1997, p. 95; Muzakki, 2011, p. 233).

The rapid expansion of digital technology has transformed this media landscape. Social media platforms have increasingly replaced print media as major sources of information and religious knowledge. Through these platforms, diverse Islamic discourses are produced, circulated, and contested, allowing users to access religious content more easily than ever before (Slama & Hoesterey, 2021, p. 132). At the same time, the abundance of information has raised concerns regarding the reliability and ideological orientation of religious content, as such discourses can shape public perceptions and reinforce negative stereotypes (Asadi, 2021; Mustapha et al., 2022).

Within Islamic studies, hadith occupies a central position as the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an and serves as a fundamental reference for Islamic law, ethics, and religious practices. Despite this important status, the use of hadith as a primary instrument for constructing and disseminating religious discourse in both conventional and digital media has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. In many forms of Islamic communication, Qur'anic verses are more frequently employed to convey religious messages, whereas hadith often appears merely as complementary evidence. Nevertheless, hadith possesses considerable potential to communicate moral values, shape ethical behaviour, and influence religious understanding within society (Daffa, 2022).

The growing popularity of social media has further expanded the role of hadith in the production of religious content. Hadith quotations are increasingly employed by preachers, influencers, and Islamic communities to legitimize particular interpretations and promote specific religious viewpoints. However, existing studies have primarily focused on social media as a medium of Islamic preaching, digital religiosity, and the mediation of religious authority, while paying relatively little attention to how hadith itself functions as a discursive and ideological instrument. Moreover, research concerning hadith in digital spaces has largely concentrated on issues of authenticity and transmission, rather than on the ways in which hadith-based narratives construct social cognition and shape ideological orientations.

This lack of attention reveals an important academic gap. Although hadith-based content is widely circulated on social media, there remains limited research examining how hadith is strategically employed to construct, maintain, and disseminate ideological discourse through visual and textual representations. Accordingly, investigating the discursive use of hadith in digital media is essential for understanding the dynamics of contemporary Islamic communication and the formation of religious authority in the digital age.

Among contemporary social media platforms, Instagram has become particularly popular among millennials and Generation Z because of its interactive and visually appealing features (Aris & Hassan, 2016; Faisal & Rifai, 2020). Islamic content on Instagram has consequently experienced significant growth. One account that specifically

focuses on the authentication and evaluation of hadith is @hadits_lemah, which frequently discusses hadiths concerning *fadail al-a'mal*, namely traditions related to the virtues and merits of particular devotional practices. Through the lens of Teun A. Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, this study investigates how such hadiths are employed as instruments of da'wah on the @hadits_lemah account.

Previous studies have examined various aspects of Islamic preaching on social media. Beta (2019) and Nurmila (2021), for instance, explored the use of Instagram as a medium for disseminating gender-related Islamic discourses, while Nisa (2018) analysed the propagation of religious messages through creative images and textual content. Although these studies shed light on digital da'wah practices, they do not address the role of hadith as the principal basis for constructing religious messages. Other studies have examined the mediation of Islamic teachings through hadith-based content on social media (Daffa, 2022. P. 23; Mundzir et al., 2023, p. 56), yet they have not analysed how hadith functions as an instrument for producing and maintaining ideological discourse.

This article argues that the use of hadith in social media preaching constitutes a powerful mechanism for constructing and disseminating ideology. Through the visual characteristics of posts and emotionally appealing narratives, hadith-based content is capable of shaping users' perceptions and fostering ideological attachment (Febrian, 2024; Rietveld et al., 2020). Employing Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, this study seeks to uncover how textual structures, visual elements, social cognition, and socio-cultural contexts interact in the construction of discourses surrounding *fadail al-a'mal* on the @hadits_lemah account. The study contributes theoretically to the application of Van Dijk's framework to visual and digital religious content, while practically providing a critical perspective on the ideological dimensions embedded within social media posts.

Discussion

Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis of @hadits_lemah on Instagram

This study employs Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA) to uncover the ideological dimensions embedded in the Instagram posts of @hadits_lemah.

CDA seeks to examine discourse and its messages by considering both textual and contextual aspects of communication, thereby enabling a comprehensive understanding of how meaning and power relations are constructed (Mulyana & Yahya, 2005, p. 3; Ratnaningsih, 2019, p. 45). According to Van Dijk (2011, p. 618), discourse is characterized by communication, social interaction, complexity, context, power, and domination. His analytical framework comprises three interrelated dimensions: text, social cognition, and context.

The textual dimension concerns the ways ideological positions are represented within discourse. For Van Dijk, texts are not merely communicative forms but also political acts through which particular interests and values are articulated. Textual analysis encompasses macrostructure (themes), superstructure (organizational patterns), and microstructure, including diction, sentence construction, coherence, rhetorical devices, and visual elements. The second dimension, social cognition, refers to the cognitive processes underlying discourse production. It examines how beliefs, knowledge, experiences, and ideological orientations shape the perspectives of discourse producers and contribute to the formation of relations of power and domination (Ratnaningsih, 2019, p. 45). The third dimension, context, addresses the broader social, cultural, and historical conditions that influence discourse production and interpretation. Discourse, therefore, can only be fully understood in relation to the social circumstances within which it emerges (Van Dijk, 1977, p. 3).

Methodologically, this study adopts netnography, a qualitative approach that adapts ethnographic techniques to investigate the cultures, practices, and interactions of online communities (Kozinets, 2015, p. 7). Instagram posts from @hadits_lemah constitute the primary source of data. Using purposive sampling, the study focuses specifically on posts concerning *fadail al-a'mal*. Nine posts were selected because they adequately represent the repetitive patterns of content production identified in the account. To complement the textual analysis, structured interviews were conducted through Instagram direct messages with the account administrator in order to gain insights into the process of content production and the social cognition underlying the posts.

Furthermore, the study critically examines the authenticity and quality of the *fadail al-a'mal* traditions cited in the posts by utilizing the Maktabah Syamilah database. Data analysis followed an iterative process involving interpretation, thematic categorization, and conclusion drawing in accordance with Creswell's qualitative analytical procedures (Creswell, 2015, p. 51). Through the integration of critical discourse analysis and netnography, this study seeks to reveal how hadith-based content functions as a medium for constructing and disseminating ideological discourse in contemporary digital spaces.

Profile of the Instagram Account @hadits_lemah

The Instagram account @hadits_lemah is one of the digital platforms dedicated to Islamic da'wah and the dissemination of hadith-related content. As of early 2026, the account had approximately 189,000 followers, followed 85 accounts, and had published more than 3,000 posts. Its content primarily consists of reviews of hadiths related to everyday religious practices. In addition to image-based posts, the account also shares video clips featuring explanations by prominent Salafi scholars, including Syaikh Uthman al-Khamis, Syaikh Ṣāliḥ al-Fauzān, and Syaikh Saad ibn Turki al-Khotslan. The account also maintains a media partnership with @hadits_shahihh and mentions Ustadz Zulkafti as its advisor, although little information regarding his profile is publicly available.

The account was established in January 2018 and underwent several changes in username before adopting the name @hadits_lemah. An examination of its followers' interests reveals connections with several popular Indonesian Islamic accounts, such as @khalidbasalamahofficial, @shahihfiqh, @syafiqrizabasalamah_official, and @muhammadnuzuldzikri, indicating its affiliation with broader contemporary Salafi-oriented da'wah networks. Although Instagram only identifies the account as being based in Indonesia, several posts tagged with locations in Pekanbaru and Dumai (Riau) and Padang (West Sumatra) suggest that its activities are concentrated in the western part of Indonesia, particularly around Sumatra.

The primary objective of @hadits_lemah is to provide da'wah content through the evaluation of traditions considered weak or problematic as legal and devotional references in Islam. Most posts present the text of a hadith, its source, and a brief assessment of its

authenticity. The account seeks to contextualize these traditions within contemporary religious practices, particularly those associated with specific occasions such as Ramadan and other virtuous periods. A significant portion of its content focuses on traditions concerning *fadail al-a'mal*, which are frequently cited in popular religious discourse despite uncertainties regarding their origins and authenticity. Such traditions are often transmitted through the statements of preachers and Islamic scholars without clear references to their primary sources. In this context, @hadits_lemah positions itself as a corrective authority by reviewing and reassessing the authenticity of widely circulated traditions, thereby distinguishing itself from other Islamic accounts that primarily employ hadith as devotional material rather than as objects of critical examination.

Discourse Analysis of @hadits_lemah's post

The Instagram account @hadits_lemah publishes diverse forms of religious content, including short preaching videos, Islamic quotations, question-and-answer sessions, and, most prominently, evaluations of hadith authenticity. The traditions reviewed generally concern devotional practices that are widely observed by Indonesian Muslims in their everyday lives (Qudsy & Dewi, 2018, p. 8). A considerable number of these traditions relate to practices commonly associated with traditionalist Muslim communities, such as *dhikr* (Rafi'i & Qudsy, 2020), grave visitation (*ziarah*) (Mustaghfiroh, 2020), seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) from religious scholars (Huda, 2020), and the performance of virtuous acts during specific sacred times (Munirah, 2017; Sakinah, 2022). By focusing on these themes, @hadits_lemah positions itself not merely as a provider of religious information but also as a platform for scrutinizing the textual foundations of popular Islamic practices. The following posts illustrate how the account constructs and disseminates its discourse regarding *fadail al-a'mal* traditions. More importantly, they reveal how hadith criticism is employed not only to assess textual authenticity but also to construct particular understandings of religious authority and legitimate Islamic practice in contemporary digital spaces.

Figure 1: the virtue of cutting nails on particular days

MENINJAU HADITS KEUTAMAAN MEMOTONG KUKU DIHARI—HARI TERTENTU

Dari Abu Hurairah, Rasulullah ﷺ bersabda:
Shallallahu 'alaihi Wa sallam bersabda:

Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **SABTU**, maka akan keluar penyakitnya dan masuk ke dalamnya penawar. Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **AHAD**, maka akan keluar darinya kemiskinan dan masuk ke dalam kekayaan...

(Al-Maudhuat 3/53, al-Fawa'id al-Majmu'ah no.197)

Hadits Ini Maudhu', sebab di dalam sanadnya ada 2 perawi pemalsu hadits, yaitu "Abu 'Ishmah Nuh bin Maryam" dan "Hannaad bin Ibrahim". Dan diantara mereka berdua terdapat beberapa perawi yang majhul.

(Al-Laali' Al-Mashnu'ah karya imam As-Suyuthi II/227, dan al-Fawa'id al-Majmu'ah, karya imam Asy-Syaukani. I/197)

Hadits_Lemah



Dari Abu Hurairah, Rasulullah ﷺ bersabda:

•Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **SABTU**, maka akan keluar penyakitnya dan masuk ke dalamnya penawar.

•Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **AHAD**, maka akan keluar darinya kemiskinan dan masuk ke dalam kekayaan.

•Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **SENIN**, maka akan keluar darinya kecacatan dan masuk ke dalamnya kesehatan.

•Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **SELASA**, maka akan keluar penyakit sopak darinya dan akan masuk ke dalamnya penyembuhan.

•Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **RABU**, akan keluar darinya penyakit was was dan ketakutan, dan akan masuk ke dalam keamanan dan kesehatan.

•Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **KAMIS**, akan keluar darinya penyakit kusta dan akan masuk ke dalamnya Kesehatan dan Kesembuhan.

•Barang siapa yang memotong kukunya pada hari **JUMAT**, maka akan masuk kepadanya rahmat (Allah) dan keluar daripadanya dosa-dosa.

(Al-Maudhuat 3/53, al-Fawa'id al-Majmu'ah no.197)

Hadits_Lemah

The two images above present a post published by @hadits_lemah concerning the purported virtues of cutting one's nails on particular days. The post cites a hadith describing the recommended times for nail trimming and provides the name of the first transmitter (*rawi a'la*) together with references to several hadith collections. From the perspective of discourse structure, the account employs persuasive and interpretative language rather than expressive rhetoric. Its lexical choices are characterized by affirmative expressions intended to strengthen the certainty of its judgment. Visually, the discourse is reinforced through the illustration of a nail clipper and the prominent red label "*hadits palsu*" (fake hadith), which serves as a rhetorical device to emphasize the post's principal message and shape readers' perceptions.

Published on 3 January 2023, the post presents a relatively simplified discussion of the hadith's chain of transmission (*sanad*). Only the first narrator is mentioned, while the complete chain and the original Arabic text of the tradition are omitted. The account classifies the hadith as *mawdu'* (fabricated), attributing this judgment to the presence of two fabricators and several unidentified transmitters. Additional explanations are provided in the caption, accompanied by references to classical works of hadith criticism. According to al-Shawkānī, scholars reached a consensus that the tradition is fabricated (al-Shawkānī, 1995, p. 197). Both the visual text and the accompanying caption emphasize, through capitalization, the specific days believed to be recommended for nail cutting. In doing so, the post seeks to challenge what the account perceives as a

widespread misconception and to discourage the continuation of practices founded upon unauthentic traditions.

Figure 2: the virtue of reading surah al-Wāqī'ah



The two images above discuss a hadith concerning the virtues of reciting Surat al-Waqi'ah. Similar to the previous post, the account provides the name of the first narrator, indicates the status of the tradition, and cites several reference works. The discourse is constructed through persuasive and interpretative language rather than emotive expressions, while its lexical choices convey certainty and affirmation. Visual rhetoric is also employed through an illustration of a man sitting and reciting the Qur'an, thereby directing readers' attention toward the act of Qur'anic recitation. The red label "hadits palsu" (fake hadith) further reinforces the account's principal message and functions as a visual emphasis within the overall discourse.

Published on 4 January 2023, the post presents only limited information regarding the chain of transmission (*sanad*) of the hadith. The administrators mention only the first narrator (*rawi a'la*) and omit both the complete chain and the original Arabic text. The tradition is classified as *mawdu'* (fabricated) on the grounds that some of its transmitters were deemed unreliable, although the problematic narrators themselves are not explicitly identified. Additional explanations are provided in the caption to support the visual presentation and the account's evaluation. Nevertheless, our examination reveals that another version of the same tradition transmitted from Ibn 'Abbās was regarded by al-Munāwī as weak (*da'if*) rather than fabricated (*maudu'*) (al-Munāwī, 1356, p. 201). This

discrepancy indicates that the classification adopted by @hadits_lemah reflects one particular scholarly judgment and does not necessarily represent the only assessment found within the tradition of hadith criticism.

Figure 3: the virtue of drinking leftover water



This post addresses the alleged virtue of drinking the leftover water of one's fellow Muslim. Similar to the previous posts, the presentation provides only limited information regarding the chain of transmission. Neither the complete chain of narrators nor the original Arabic text is included; instead, the post presents only the translated version of the tradition. The discourse is constructed through explanatory language and avoids emotive or rhetorical expressions. Visually, the message is reinforced through the image of a glass of water accompanied by the red label "*hadits palsu*" (fake hadith), which serves to direct readers toward the account's assessment of the tradition.

In classifying the tradition as fabricated (*maudu'*), the account refers to the existence of two problematic transmitters. One narrator was accused of dishonesty, while another was identified as a *mudallis*, namely a transmitter who claimed to have received a report directly from his teacher despite not having heard it from him. Nevertheless, other hadith critics categorized the tradition as *matruk* rather than *maudu'* (Baghdadi, 1997, p. 402). Additional explanations provided in the caption cite authentic traditions concerning the companions' practice of seeking blessings through the Prophet's leftover water. However, the administrators emphasize that such practices cannot be analogically extended to contemporary contexts because the Companions themselves did not perform similar acts toward individuals other than the Prophet. This argument reflects a tendency

to privilege the practices of the Prophet and the early generations of Muslims (*salaf*) (Ali, 2019), while giving less authority to devotional traditions developed by later generations (Baghdadi, 1997, p. 402). Consequently, the post reveals that the discourse promoted by @hadits_lemah extends beyond hadith criticism and embodies a broader Salafi orientation concerning the boundaries of legitimate religious practices.

Figure 4: the virtue of first day fasting in rajab month



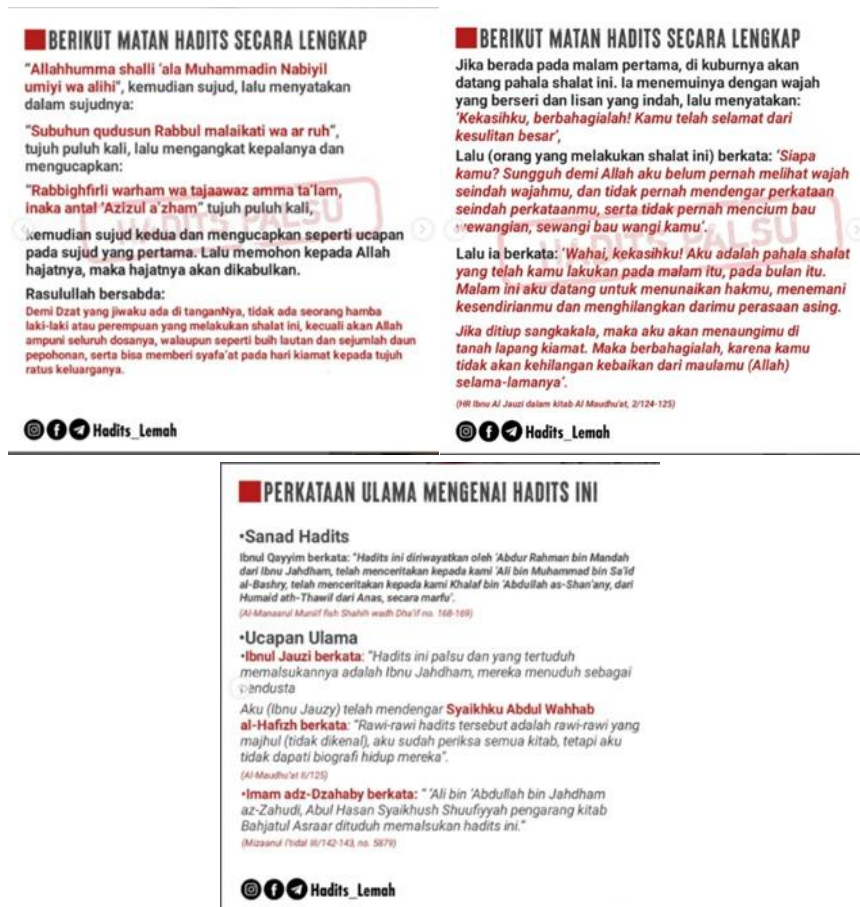
The post above discusses the alleged virtue of fasting on the first day of Rajab. Unlike most of the previous posts, this one includes the original Arabic text of the hadith along with its source and translation. Nevertheless, the visual illustration employed does not directly correspond to the theme under discussion. Another notable difference is that the label “*sangat lemah*” (very weak) is presented without an explicit explanation regarding the causes of the hadith’s weakness. Instead, the judgment relies primarily on the opinions of hadith scholars. Our verification confirms that the tradition is indeed weak (*da’if*), consistent with the assessment provided by @hadits_lemah (al-Albānī, 1988, p. 3500).

As in previous posts, the administrators mention only the first narrator (*rawi a’la*) rather than providing the complete chain of transmission. The discourse constructed in this post implicitly challenges the practice of singling out the first day of Rajab for fasting, suggesting that such observance cannot be regarded as a specific Sunnah because the tradition supporting it is weak (Rahmah & Darmalaksana, 2020, p. 171). Additional explanations in the caption further emphasize that fasting should be performed according

to the general prescriptions of the Sunnah, without attributing special merits to the month of Rajab. Consequently, the post seeks not to discourage voluntary fasting altogether, but rather to reject the notion that particular virtues are attached to fasting on specific days in Rajab. This stance reflects the account's broader tendency to scrutinize practices associated with *fadail al-a'mal* and to redefine them according to its understanding of authentic prophetic traditions.

Figure 5: the virtue of praying on the first friday night of rajab





The five images posted by @hadits_lemah on 26 January discuss the purported virtue of performing a special prayer between *maghrib* and *'isha'* at the beginning of the month of Rajab. In the first two images, the discourse is visually reinforced through an illustration of a person praying accompanied by the red label "*hadits palsu*" (fake hadith), thereby directing readers' attention to the account's principal message. By contrast, the third and fourth images rely solely on the label itself as a visual marker. At the textual level, the post employs active sentence constructions and explanatory lexical choices rather than emotive or rhetorical expressions, reflecting the account's tendency to present its judgments in an assertive and informative manner.

Compared with the previous posts, this series provides a relatively more detailed treatment of the tradition. The complete text (*matan*) of the hadith is presented, and the final image includes Ibn al-Qayyim's assessment of the chain of transmission. The classification of the tradition as *mawdu'* (fabricated) is supported not only by scholarly

opinions but also by an explanation of the underlying reason, namely the presence of a known fabricator, Ibn Juha'im, among its transmitters. To strengthen this judgment, the post cites the views of several prominent hadith critics, including Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Hāfiẓ, and al-Dhahabī. Additional supporting opinions are mentioned in the caption, although the exact references are not provided. Consequently, this post demonstrates a more elaborate argumentative structure than most of the account's other posts, relying on both textual evidence and scholarly authority to establish the fabricated status of the tradition.

Figure 6: the virtues of reciting salawat 100 times



On 29 January 2023, @hadits_lemah published a post examining a tradition concerning the virtues of reciting *salawat* one hundred times after the *maghrib* and *subh* prayers. The post states that the tradition is found on page 169 of *al-Qawl al-Badi'*, although our verification shows that it actually appears on page 348 of the same work (al-Sakhāwī, 1963, p. 348). Visually, the post features an illustration of a man reciting the Qur'an. While the image does not directly correspond to the theme under discussion, it may implicitly suggest a preference for Qur'anic recitation over the recitation of particular formulas of *salawat*. At the textual level, the discourse relies on explanatory language and avoids emotive or rhetorical expressions. Moreover, the presentation is relatively concise, as it provides the text of the hadith without mentioning the complete chain of transmission.

In evaluating the tradition, the account refers to *Lisān al-Mizān*, classifying the hadith as *munkar* and consequently as *da'if jiddan* (very weak) because of the presence of a criticized narrator, Ibrāhīm b. al-Ash'ath, or because Aḥmad b. Mūsā transmitted it through a weak chain. The caption further states that a similar tradition was regarded as fabricated by Ibn Bāz, although no precise reference is supplied. Additional comments concerning the popular *Salawat Jibrīl* are also included, culminating in the emphatic statement that such practices have “*TIDAK ADA DASARNYA*” (“no basis whatsoever”), expressed in capital letters. This rhetorical emphasis indicates that the principal concern of the post is not the recitation of *salawat* itself, which is widely encouraged in Islamic sources, but rather the attribution of specific virtues and numerical formulas to particular forms of *salawat*. Thus, the discourse seeks to challenge devotional practices grounded in weak traditions while simultaneously reaffirming the legitimacy of reciting *salawat* in general.

Figure 7: the virtue of ziarah kubur on friday



On 3 February 2023, @hadits_lemah published a post concerning the alleged virtues of visiting graves (*ziarah al-qubur*) on Fridays, a practice that some Muslims associate with special spiritual benefits. The post consists of two images presenting traditions related to the issue. Similar to previous posts, the discourse is constructed through explanatory language and avoids emotive or rhetorical expressions. Visually, the message is reinforced by an image of an empty graveyard accompanied by the red label

“*hadits palsu*” (fake hadith), which functions as a rhetorical device to shape readers’ perceptions regarding the authenticity of the traditions under discussion.

The presentation itself remains relatively concise. Only the first narrator is mentioned, while the complete chain of transmission is omitted. Although the sources of both traditions are cited, the original Arabic text is provided for only one of them. In assessing the traditions, the account refers to several classical works of hadith criticism, including *al-Kāmil fī Ḍu‘afā’ al-Rijāl*, *Mizān al-Itidāl*, and *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, all of which identify problematic transmitters and serve as the basis for classifying the traditions as fabricated. Nevertheless, a discrepancy appears in the first image. While the post attributes the weakness of the tradition to the presence of the fabricator ‘Amr b. Ziyād, the narrator highlighted in the image is Abū Bakr, who merely represents the first transmitter (*rawi a’la*). This inconsistency may create confusion regarding the actual basis of the judgment.

Additional explanations are provided in the caption, which quotes several traditions concerning grave visitation in translation without reproducing their Arabic texts. The discussion concludes with the assertion that those who believe in extraordinary merits associated with visiting graves on particular days are engaging in a heretical belief. Such a conclusion suggests that the post seeks to discourage reliance on traditions attributing special virtues to Friday grave visitation. However, our examination reveals that several traditions concerning Friday visits to the Prophet’s grave and related practices have been classified by some scholars as weak (*ḍa‘īf*) rather than fabricated (*mawḍū‘*) (al-Ṭabarānī, 1995, no. 6114). Consequently, the discourse promoted by @hadits_lemah appears to extend beyond hadith criticism and reflects a broader attempt to challenge devotional practices commonly maintained within traditionalist Muslim communities.

From the perspective of Van Dijk’s critical discourse analysis, the post demonstrates that the issue at stake is not merely the authenticity of particular traditions but also the construction of religious boundaries. By repeatedly emphasizing the fabricated nature of hadiths concerning the virtues of Friday grave visitation, @hadits_lemah implicitly delegitimizes practices commonly observed among traditionalist Muslims and promotes a more scripturalist understanding of religious authority grounded in rigorously authenticated traditions.

Images 8: the virtue of istighfar and reciting salawat during Rajab



On 4 February 2023, @hadits_lemah published a post examining two traditions concerning the virtues of seeking forgiveness (*istighfar*) and reciting *salawat* during the month of Rajab. Similar to other posts, the discourse is constructed through explanatory lexical choices and avoids rhetorical or emotive expressions. The visual element features an image of a man raising his hands in supplication, which symbolically corresponds to the act of seeking forgiveness and invoking blessings upon the Prophet. Through this visual representation, the account seeks to reinforce the theme under discussion.

As in several previous posts, the presentation provides only limited details concerning the traditions. In the first image, the text of the hadith is incomplete, and no information regarding its chain of transmission is provided. Nevertheless, the tradition is directly classified as *mawdu'* (fabricated). Interestingly, this judgment appears to rely primarily on the claim that the report is found in Shi'ite sources, without further examination of its transmission or textual characteristics. Likewise, the second image presents only a partial text and attributes the fabricated status of the tradition to the presence of a problematic narrator, although the complete chain of transmission is not specified.

Additional explanations in the caption assert that no authentic traditions exist regarding the special virtues of *istighfār* or *salawat* during the month of Rajab. Accordingly, the account concludes that attributing particular merits to these practices during Rajab lacks any legitimate textual basis. However, such a position should not be understood as denying the virtues of *istighfār* and *salawat* in general, since both practices are extensively encouraged by the Qur'an and numerous authentic traditions. Rather, the

criticism is directed at assigning special merits to these acts at specific times, a tendency commonly associated with traditionalist devotional practices. In this regard, the post reflects a broader Salafi-modernist orientation that seeks to distinguish between universally prescribed acts of worship and devotional practices founded upon weak or unauthenticated traditions (Ali, 2019; Noer, 1980). Consequently, the discourse appears to target particular modes of religious practice rather than the devotional acts themselves.

Figure 9: the virtue of giving charity toward the deceased



The final post examined concerns the alleged virtues of performing charitable acts on behalf of deceased persons. As in the preceding examples, the discourse is constructed through several recurring elements, including the citation of the hadith source and the first narrator (*rawi a'la*), the use of explanatory lexical expressions, the avoidance of rhetorical language, visual representations, and additional explanations in the caption. However, the presentation remains relatively limited, as only the translated text of the hadith is provided, while the original Arabic text and the complete chain of transmission are omitted.

The visual component depicts a hand giving a coin above a heart symbol. The image of the coin signifies the act of charity, whereas the heart appears to symbolize affection toward a deceased loved one. Similar to many other posts, the visual message is reinforced by a red label reading "*hadits palsu*" (fake hadith), which immediately frames the issue for readers. The tradition itself is classified as *mawdu'* (fabricated) due to the presence of an unreliable transmitter, Abū Muḥammad al-Shāmī, although this

problematic narrator is not explicitly identified within the post. Additional remarks in the caption cite several related traditions that are likewise considered fabricated in order to strengthen the conclusion that attributing particular virtues to charitable acts performed for the deceased has “*TIDAK ADA DASARNYA*” (“no basis whatsoever”), a phrase emphasized through capitalization.

From a discursive perspective, the post seeks to challenge popular beliefs concerning the special merits of charity on behalf of the deceased. Nevertheless, such a position should not be interpreted as denying the permissibility of charitable acts for deceased relatives in general, since the issue itself remains a matter of scholarly debate. Rather, the account directs its criticism toward traditions that attribute specific virtues to such practices without what it considers an adequate textual foundation. Consequently, the post illustrates how hadith criticism is employed not only to assess authenticity but also to define the boundaries of legitimate devotional practices within contemporary Islamic discourse.

Social Cognition Analysis of the Term Fadail al-a'mal

Social cognition in Van Dijk's framework can be examined through the ideological networks and motivations that shape the production of discourse. In the case of @hadits_lemah, this dimension is reflected in the account's affiliations with several prominent Islamic accounts, including @khalidbasalamahofficial, @shahihfiqih, @syafiqrizabasalamah_official, and @muhammadnuzuldzikri. These accounts may be regarded as closely related to @hadits_lemah, as a substantial proportion of its followers also follow them. Approximately 61% of @hadits_lemah's followers subscribe to @khalidbasalamahofficial, 58% to @shahihfiqih, 56% to @syafiqrizabasalamah_official, and 50% to @muhammadnuzuldzikri. Such patterns suggest the existence of an interconnected digital ecosystem sharing similar religious orientations.

To further investigate the social cognition underlying the account, we conducted structured interviews with its administrators via Instagram direct messages. When asked about the sources from which they derive Islamic knowledge, the administrators recommended several accounts that provide religious and sharia-related content, including @hsi.abdullahroy, @dzulqarnainms, @khalidbasalamahofficial, @syafiqrizabasalamah_official, and @muhammadnuzuldzikri. These recommendations

indicate the intellectual environment within which the account operates and reveal the ideological references informing its discourse.

Our interviews also sought to understand why @hadits_lemah devotes considerable attention to traditions concerning *fadail al-a'mal*. According to the administrators, the account was established to respond to the widespread circulation of weak and fabricated hadiths, both online and offline, which are often disseminated without any indication of their authenticity. They argued that the unchecked acceptance of such traditions could lead to religious innovations (*bid'ah*) and even polytheistic tendencies (*shirk*). Consequently, many devotional practices performed on the basis of presumed virtues are viewed as requiring clarification and, where necessary, elimination. These concerns constitute an important aspect of the account's social cognition and strongly influence the selection and framing of its content.

The textual analysis presented above demonstrates that @hadits_lemah generally bases its judgments on recognized sources of hadith criticism. Nevertheless, the account tends to omit alternative scholarly assessments and higher-quality traditions that convey similar virtues. As a result, its discourse frequently emphasizes the problematic nature of traditions associated with devotional practices performed during particular occasions, without adequately acknowledging that many of these practices possess broader legal foundations within Islamic tradition. In this respect, the criticism appears to be directed less at the acts themselves than at the religious practices commonly associated with traditionalist Muslim communities, whose understanding differs from that of Salafi-oriented groups (Ali, 2019, p. 125). Such ideological contestation between modernist-Salafi and traditionalist interpretations has characterized Islamic discourse in Indonesia since the early twentieth century (Noer, 1980) and continues to manifest itself in the digital era (Hidayatullah, 2021; Khisbiyah et al., 2018, p. 23).

Another notable feature of @hadits_lemah's discourse is its reliance on visual communication. Unlike traditional print media, which tends to emphasize semantic and stylistic structures (Van Dijk, 1977, 2011, p. 4), the account prioritizes visual elements and emotional appeal to advance its project of religious purification. Through illustrations, color schemes, and labels such as "hadits palsu," the account seeks to evoke emotional responses rather than provide detailed discussions of hadith criticism. The absence of comprehensive analyses of the chains of transmission in many posts supports this observation. Such a strategy is consistent with the logic of digital culture, where

emotionally charged content often attracts greater public engagement than highly technical discussions. However, while effective in mobilizing audiences, this approach also risks intensifying religious fragmentation and exacerbating tensions among Muslim communities, thereby transforming social media into a contested arena for ideological competition (Slama & Hoesterey, 2021, p. 132).

Social Context Analysis

From Van Dijk's perspective, social context refers to the broader social and historical circumstances within which discourse is produced and consumed. In the Indonesian context, the rapid expansion of social media has transformed the way religious knowledge is disseminated. According to recent surveys, Indonesia ranks among the countries with the largest number of social media users, with Instagram being one of the most popular platforms (We Are Social, 2025). Between early 2023 and 2025, the number of Indonesian Instagram users increased substantially, making the platform an important source of information and a strategic medium for the dissemination of Islamic teachings and ideological narratives (Monavia Ayu Rizaty, 2023). Consequently, social media has become a contested arena in which different Islamic groups compete to shape public understanding of religion (Slama & Barendregt, 2018, p. 15).

Following the collapse of the New Order regime, Indonesia witnessed the emergence of various Islamic movements and ideological currents. Among them, Salafi groups have been particularly active in promoting their doctrines through religious gatherings, educational institutions, mosques, and, more recently, digital platforms (Azra et al., 2010, xvii). In the contemporary period, Salafi preachers have successfully utilized social media, especially YouTube and Instagram, to disseminate their understanding of *tawhīd* and the Sunnah and to respond to practices they regard as innovations (*bid'ah*) (Rijal, 2025; Sunarwoto, 2021). Prominent figures such as Firanda Andirja, Khalid Basalamah, Syafiq Riza Basalamah, and Subhan Bawazier actively engage with contemporary religious issues and frequently address practices perceived as lacking scriptural foundations (Hidayatullah, 2021, p. 8).

However, the digital sphere is not monopolized by Salafi groups alone. Other Islamic communities, including Shi'a, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, and Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, also employ social media to articulate and reinforce their respective identities

(Hidayatullah, 2021, p. 19). Shi'ite communities emphasize devotion to the *ahl al-bayt*, Hizbut Tahrir promotes the restoration of the *khilafah*, while Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah -commonly associated with pesantren traditions and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)- highlights the authority of classical scholarship and local religious traditions (Hasan, 2009, 2012). Through digital media, each group seeks to legitimize its interpretations by appealing to authoritative scholars, texts, and religious arguments (Akmaliah, 2020, p. 19).

One of the issues that has become a subject of ideological contestation concerns the concept of *fadail al-a'mal*. Practices associated with the virtues of particular deeds have long been embedded in Indonesian Muslim traditions. However, Salafi-oriented groups frequently question their textual basis and scrutinize the authenticity of the traditions supporting them. Since many Muslims perform these practices as inherited customs without examining the status of the underlying hadiths, debates over whether such traditions are based on authentic, weak, or fabricated reports continue to emerge. Rituals associated with the month of Rajab provide a notable example of this phenomenon.

Within this context, the discourse promoted by @hadits_lemah can be understood as part of a broader ideological contest between Salafi-oriented and traditionalist interpretations of Islam. Many of the practices criticized by the account are closely associated with Nahdlatul Ulama, whose scholars generally permit the use of weak hadiths in matters of *fadail al-a'mal*, provided that they do not contradict fundamental principles of Islamic law and encourage believers to draw nearer to God. Consequently, the activities of @hadits_lemah should not be viewed merely as efforts to evaluate hadith authenticity. Rather, they represent an attempt to challenge the religious legitimacy of certain traditional practices and to promote an alternative understanding of orthodoxy. In this sense, the account functions as a vehicle for ideological dissemination, employing the language of hadith criticism to reinforce a particular vision of authentic Islam while simultaneously contesting interpretations associated with Indonesia's traditionalist Muslim majority.

Conclusion

This study applies Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis to examine how *faḍīlah al-a'māl* traditions are constructed and contested in the Instagram account @hadits_lemah. The findings show that, at the textual level, the nine analysed posts

exhibit a consistent discursive pattern, including the presentation of hadith translations (and occasionally Arabic texts), classification of hadith status with references to classical sources, explanatory captions, and the strategic use of visual illustrations to reinforce interpretive claims. At the level of social cognition, the production of discourse is shaped by the administrators' concern over the widespread circulation of weak and fabricated hadiths, which they perceive as contributing to misguided devotional practices and potential theological deviations. Meanwhile, the contextual dimension demonstrates that the rapid expansion of social media in Indonesia has transformed Instagram into a contested space where various Islamic groups disseminate and negotiate religious authority, including debates surrounding *fadail a'mal*. Within this environment, @hadits_lemah operates as part of a broader Salafi-oriented response that seeks to critique and reframe traditional devotional practices through hadith authentication discourse. This study contributes theoretically to the development of van Dijk's critical discourse analysis by demonstrating that in digital religious communication, ideological meaning is increasingly constructed not only through semantic and structural textual features but also through visual and affective strategies that shape audience perception. Practically, the study highlights that social media functions not merely as an informational platform but also as an arena of ideological contestation in which religious interpretations are actively negotiated. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy is essential to ensure that the consumption of hadith-related content is guided by sound principles of hadith scholarship and critical awareness of ideological framing.

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