UNDERSTANDING GENDER DISCOURSE IN DIGITAL ISLAMIC PREACHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

This paper investigates how Islamic social media preaching articulates gender through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Islamic short-form videos shape the understanding of gender, authority, and moral responsibility among the Muslim audience. Therefore, the role of communication in religion on social media, particularly Instagram and YouTube, is vital in the formation of audience perceptions. I examine the prevailing sermons pertaining to family ethics and relations on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts for 2024 - 2025. This type of preaching reproduces the dominant and prevailing gender moral authorities that place men in the position of moral guardians and women as subjects of moral guardianship within the discourse. There is some limited discourse that challenges the dominant gender discourse, and that is reflexive. The nature of preaching enables the authority of religion and gender to be flexible in its context. This research climbs the digital religion and gender scholarship ladder to the place where online religious preaching transcends to being a gender moral authority as well. The study does not take the religious digital preaching as purely educational, as it provides a discursive space where ideologies on gender are articulated and contested.

***Keywords**: Gender discourse; digital Islam; online preaching; religious authority; critical discourse analysis*

Abstrak

Paper ini menyelidiki bagaimana dakwah Islam di media sosial mengartikulasikan gender melalui Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA). Video pendek Islami membentuk pemahaman tentang gender, otoritas, dan tanggung jawab moral di kalangan audiens Muslim. Oleh karena itu, peran komunikasi agama di media sosial, khususnya Instagram dan YouTube, sangat penting dalam pembentukan persepsi audiens. Saya meneliti khotbah-khotbah yang berkaitan dengan etika dan hubungan keluarga di Instagram Reels dan YouTube Shorts untuk tahun 2024-2025. Jenis dakwah ini mereproduksi otoritas moral gender yang dominan dan berlaku yang menempatkan laki-laki pada posisi penjaga moral dan perempuan sebagai subjek penjaga moral dalam wacana tersebut. Terdapat beberapa wacana terbatas yang menantang wacana gender dominan, dan wacana tersebut bersifat reflektif. Sifat dakwah memungkinkan otoritas agama dan gender menjadi fleksibel dalam konteksnya. Penelitian ini menapaki tangga kajian agama dan gender digital hingga ke titik di mana dakwah agama daring melampaui batas dan menjadi otoritas moral gender juga. Studi ini tidak menganggap dakwah digital keagamaan semata-mata sebagai kegiatan pendidikan, karena dakwah tersebut menyediakan ruang diskursif di mana

ideologi tentang gender diartikulasikan dan diperdebatkan.
Kata kunci: *Wacana gender; Islam digital; dakwah daring; otoritas keagamaan; analisis wacana kritis*

Introduction

The last decade has made it a reality where the construction, dissemination, and contestation of religious knowledge and Islamic authority have been substantially changed by the advancement of digital media. Discourse of a religious nature has bypassed traditional synaptically operated religious discourse, and because of that, religious knowledge is created, and authority is formed by algorithmic visibility, audience interaction, and media presentation (Campbell, 2013; Eickelman & Anderson, 2003). Here, 'religious knowledge' means the possession of advanced degrees awarded by universities, the position of 'influencer', and the recognition of authority and legitimacy by religious institutions.

The digital natives, the Z-generation, for many Muslims, have made the online preaching of religious knowledge an everyday activity. It has become typical for many digital-natives to engage with online preaching where religious exhortation and storytelling (which is scripturally based, of course) is used for motivation and encouragement. Practice and interpretation of the religious phenomenon are reshaped within the context of religious practice. (Hjarvard, 2016) This phenomenon signifies a decentralisation of religious authority.

The digital context further challenges the communication of religion as it is based on the principles of virality, brevity, and emotional impact. Such principles tend to favor the distribution of simpler moral messages rather than more elaborate and nuanced messages. As a result, digital sermons reduce the moral messages of the teachings to short, emotionally impactful stories. It is important to consider the implications of these practices on the construction and distribution of religious meaning and moral messaging in the digital context.

Among these relations, gender is a prominent and most important category. Online preaching often deals with the roles of the family, marriage, and the gender hierarchy, shaping the construction of masculinity, femininity, authority, and subordination. Scholarship on Islam and gender shows that the religious text can both sustain and contest patriarchal society depending on the framing and interpretation of the text (Badran, 2013; Wadud, 1999). Most of this literature, however, has been concerned with legal text interpretation, leaving the everyday communicative practices and the mediated religious teaching largely unexplored.

The prominent themes in the studies of digital religion have been the strategies of online da'wah, branding, and commodification (Campbell, 2013; Hoover, 2016), while in Islamic education research, the emphasis has usually been on the articulation of the institutions, the curriculum, and the policy. There are fewer analyses that focus on the informal digital religious communication and how the discourse of gender is constructed in it. This is particularly relevant given that short video sermons often make claims about the construction of adequate gender roles and moral conduct.

This study examines digital preaching as a site of negotiation of gender norms and religious authority to examine this gap. The study asks what power relations and religious messaging are embedded and how the power relations are reproduced or contested. The study examines the moral and gender expectations and hierarchies

that are constructed by these three elements. The internal arrangements and relations of a system or a structure are the dominant elements or features of a system. Dominance and oppression of a system cause tensions that can be described as a system's internal structure.

The study will be the first to examine the digital da'wah communication of religious authority and gender norms, both empirically and analytically, and the first to add a gender framework to the Islamic digital discourse analysis. Finally, the first to analyze short religious sermons from a gender perspective within the framework of empirical Critical Discourse Analysis (eCDA) and to contribute to eCDA of gendered religious digital discourse to the study.

The author's intention is to analyze contemporary Islam and the place of religion and gender. However, the author's intention is to examine the discourse of Islam. The author is less interested in religion, gender, and Islam, or even digital Islam, in which religion and gender are entirely negligible. Therefore, the author's perspective is limited to the discourse of Islam.

Research Method

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) serves as the main methodological framework for this study. CDA focuses on the workings of discourse within relations of power and the role discourse plays in the formation of social realities (Fairclough, 2013). CDA is a discourse-as-practice approach, meaning that discourse is not seen as a neutral form of communication, but a social practice that both constructs and is constructed by social systems. This framework is well-suited for the study of gender discourse in digital Islamic preaching, where the religious content of the message is authoritative and carries social power.

The study is designed qualitatively, opting for social interpretivism and critical social scientific approaches, as opposed to the more traditionally dominant social positivist and quantitative approaches. The qualitative method is suited for the study of the social-symbolic and ideological structures, as well as the religious discourse and the communicative practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It is, therefore, the aim of this study to explore the construction and communication of gendered norms in digital sermons through the analysis of the text, the image, and the context.

The study is limited to a number of digital environments, specifically the social media sites of Instagram and YouTube, as these sites have emerged as dominant locations for Islamic preaching. These sites profoundly influence the practice of religious communication and the ways in which the public engages with Islamic discourse (Campbell, 2013). The impact of these sites is amplified by their use of short-form video content, as the short and visually oriented formats are designed to facilitate and evoke an emotional response.

For the dataset, 30 short video sermons were selected and analyzed. Each video is between 30 seconds and 90 seconds. The analyzed materials comprise oral messages, subtitles, and non-verbal messages that include speech, clothing, setting, and text. The analyzed elements are relevant and are meaningful resources in digital discourse. Purposeful sampling was used to capture the most information-dense occurrences (Patton, 2015). The selection criteria included focus on women, family, and ethics; high engagement, indicating audience reach; open access; and recent publications, between 2024 and 2025. Videos selected were 30, as discourse and depth of

interpretation were preferred and not representativeness (Fairclough, 2013). The method of data collection was a review of data that is publicly available, digital sermons. The method involved the review and systematic documentation of the videos, transcription of the speech, and description of the relevant images, texts, and other modes. Context such as audience engagement was documented, and relevant digital data was used in observance of the ethical guidelines of the digital environment.

This analysis applies Fairclough's (2013) three-dimensional model. Textually, the analysis looks at vocabulary, metaphoric constructions, syntax, and visuals pertaining to masculinity and femininity. Within discursive practice, the analysis looks at the production, distribution, and consumption of sermons in the context of platforms. Socially, the analysis of practice locates the discourses in the pervasive systems of gender, religious authority, and the regimenting of morality. Analytical rigor was achieved through multiple close readings, as well as thematic analysis of gendered narratives. Inter-video analysis was performed to assess the persistence of the phenomena. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) noted that the authorial voice of reflexivity was the most notable aspect of the interpretive process. No personal data was processed, and the research focused on publicly accessible data. Accordingly, the research adhered to the ethical prescriptions of research on the internet. The study extends Critical Discourse Analysis to digital Islamic preaching for the first time and focuses on the construction of gendered discourse and religious authority in short sermons. The integration of the textual, the visual, and the contextual will enhance the methodology in the study of digital religion and gendered discourse.

Results And Discussion

Results

This account is based on the first qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis of 30 short video sermons on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts (2024–2025). It argues that digital Islamic preaching functions as a site of everyday religious teaching where gendered constructions and regulative practices are both created and normalised. By providing religious teaching, these lectures shape moral subjectivities and social imaginaries. This reinforces the digital religion scholarship claims that online religious discourses are, and increasingly, serve teaching and formative functions (Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2016; Hoover, 2016).

The sermons I have analysed mainly combine verbal advice, scripture quotations, and subtitles, in addition to the use of background music and visual symbolism. This combination is a case of what Kress and van Leeuwen describe as a Multimodal Discourse where meaning is produced through the combination of language, sound and visual images (Leeuwen, 2001). In the case of digital preaching, these elements create an effective pedagogical environment that renders moral guidance as both individual and authoritative. Within the gendered discourse of the sermons, three predominant themes can be identified. By far the most salient is the representation of men as moral heads of the family. 1. Moral Responsibility of Men as Heads of Families.

This research will analyze, qualitatively, Critical Discourse Analysis in 30 video sermons on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts for the years 2024-2025. Results show how the digital Islamic sermons preach everyday religious communication.

They show how the everyday communication of religion, digital Islamic sermons preach, behave, and use gender conventions, moral expectations, and other community norms. They also show and highlight the normalization of casual religious interaction. Instead of formalizing the sermons as teaching, they will be studied as practices that shape moral subjects as well as the social collective imaginations. This also supports the digital religion scholarship, where online religious discourse integrates and also shapes the community (Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2016; Hoover, 2016).

The sermons analyzed combine verbal advice, references to scripture, subtitles, music as a background, and imagery. Using the theory of multimodal discourse, all these elements of sound, language, and imagery create meaning (Leeuwen, 2001). In digital preaching, all these elements create a moral message that is both persuasive and authoritative. In the gendered discourse of the sermons, three themes emerged, and the most dominant was the male construction as the moral head of the family.

Multiple sermons describe men as moral and spiritual leaders by using repetitive expressions like "imam of the family," "leader," "protector," and "decision-maker." Such phrases are usually presented in a form that leads to absolute certainty regarding the male leadership of a household, and the reasoning is religiously based, rather than being open to various interpretations. From a structural grammatical perspective, the use of the modals "must," "should," and "is obliged to," grants legitimacy to the male's position of authority. From a discursive perspective, male preachers often consider themselves as the primary exponents of religious discourse, and thus, constitute themselves as the final dominant figure in the hierarchy of authority. Socially, these sermons align with the traditional patriarchal family systems that prevail in many Islamic societies.

Wadud (1999) argues that the daily religious discourse reproduces the social order's gender hierarchy in the absence of a legal system. Ahmed (2021) reinforces the assertion that the legal and social aspects of a system intersect in gender stratification in Muslim societies. The sermons analyzed in this research appear to describe the gender hierarchy as constant and settled in moral terms, thus providing almost no opportunity for ethical reasoning.

Figure 1. Ethical Designation and Gender Normativity in Digital Islamic Discourse



Source: Instagram documentation by the researcher from @sukma_4a and @syafiqrirzabasalamah_official (2025).

Many sermons employ what CDA calls an 'us vs them' binary by labeling behaviors as 'durhaka' or 'shalih/shalihah.' This type of binary framing loses relational complexity and encourages moral judgements. While acknowledging the

responsibility of men, the framing of preserving the harmony of the household is often placed as the responsibility of women. This is what Badran (2013) calls the subtle reproduction of religious moral discourse gender asymmetry.

Many sermons illustrate the normalisation of certain gender arrangements through repetition and modality. Many sermons do not stimulate reflection, and instead present moral claims as established truths. This phenomenon often perpetuates gendered expectations and is an illustration of the everyday moral regulation of religious discourse. Islam and gender studies have largely interpreted texts, practiced jurisprudence, and applied feminist hermeneutics to understand the phenomenon (Ahmed, 2021; Badran, 2013; Wadud, 1999), while the studies of digital religion have focused on the mediation and diffusion of authority (Campbell, 2013; Hoover, 2016; Hjarvard, 2016). Very few studies have empirically examined the construction of gendered norms in short-form digital sermons. This study examines gender discourse at the micro level of everyday digital preaching, where moral prescriptions are habitually circulated.

The novelty of this research concerns the framing of digital Islamic preaching as a discursive space where the production of real-time gendered meanings and moral expectations occurs. This approach reveals how routine digital religious communication influences the construction of gender norms.

2. Controlling Female Behaviour

The sermons being analyzed pay a considerable amount of attention to religiously legitimated control of female morality and comportment on the regulation of female morality and comportment. Numerous sermons revolve around the themes of women's modesty, control of one's feelings, marital peace, and subservience. Ideal womanhood is repeatedly characterized by the attributes of sabr (patience), submission, and encouragement of one's husband. There is a considerable amount of religious legitimacy and authority to the sermons' messages.

The actual texts of the sermons employ a limited number of words, such as taat, sabar, and menjaga kehormatan, to feminize and moralize the behaviors they seek to elicit. The words "A wife must...", "A righteous woman is..." are examples of prescriptive constructions that reflect a high degree of certainty and suggest that the expectations of women are mere suggestions. Such statements are said to create moral certainty and limit the audience's ability to make their own interpretations of the statements (Fairclough, 2013).

The way this is said is also important, with many sermons accompanied by soft, calm music, which, as Hoover (2016) notes, the right music may elicit moral persuasion. The sermons, in social practice, produce the same associations with women, domesticity, and moral regulation. Consistently, with Kress and van Leeuwen's social role encoding in the visual field (Leeuwen, 2001), diagraming female domesticity captures the visual attention of the audience.

The sermons do not provide space for ethical reasoning and reflection; instead, virtue is always claimed through obedience and compliance. A more stable and permanent non-negotiable framing of gender norms and roles closes down the opportunity for flexible contextualization. This exemplifies the tendency of discourse through repetition and certain modalities, such as the framing of the hierarchy as a natural part of the social order.

Badran work is complemented by the findings of the Islamic gender studies

field, as exemplified in the works of Ahmed (2021), which show how radical interpretations of Quran relate to the control of the female body and idealize/ justify the control of the female body. The sermons also present an identical digital environment discourse that Ahmed observed to be present in the sermons.

Figure 2. Gendered Ethical Guidance Addressed to Wives in Digital Islamic Sermons



Source: Instagram evidence collected by the researcher from @sukma_4a (2025).

The language of correction depicted in Figure 2 is largely aimed at women. It is not difficult to discern the patronizing tone of "istri tidak tahu" (wives do not know). These constructions position the preacher as morally superior and women as dependents in need of correction. This is also a reflection of the discourse and power relations between the different roles of speakers and the different roles of listeners. The discourse creates a repetition through exposure, and this is mostly how the discourse is internalized.

Most research regarding Islam and gender focuses on the interpretation of texts and the reform of the laws (Ahmed, 2021; Badran, 2013; Wadud, 1999). Studies on digital religion focus on mediation and the location of power (Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2016; Hoover, 2016). There are fewer studies that take short-form sermons as examples where gender norms are articulated. This study shows that gendered morality is debated in scholarly texts and is also reproduced in digital everyday religious communication. The contribution of this research is in illustrating the way digital Islamic preaching works as a discursive space in which the gendered moral expectations are framed through repetition and multimodality. Thus, digital da'wah works as a discursive space in which the ideas of gender are reinforced and, in some cases, may also be contested.

3. Construction of Inclusive Narratives

The analysis has revealed a smaller subset of narratives that promote relational and more inclusive forms of marriage. These sermons define family life as a collaboration rather than as a single-authority domain. They focus on supportive, collaborative, and spiritually growing family members. Phrases like saling menasihati (mutual counsel), kerja sama dalam kebaikan (cooperation in goodness), and perjalanan spiritual bersama (shared spiritual journey) dominate these videos. The sermons are relational in that they focus on why, and why, a command and control

structure is not emphasized. They describe a more negotiated social order than the hierarchy of sermons that describes a structure in the system. There is a less prescriptive social order in reference to control, and here, a means of reducing control is evident.

Conversational discursive frames of everyday marriage stories, question and answer, and discursive stories of the marriage domain are the frames of discursive practice. Grace's (2013) networked religion concept is evident here, as religious authority is mediated by interaction, rather than imposed. At the level of social practice, these narratives capture the ongoing changes within the reinterpretation of gender roles in Muslim communities undergoing social transformation, educational progress, and changes in family roles. These narratives highlight the fact that digital Islamic preaching is a multiple ideological field and a site for the coexistence and the contestation of various gender discourses.

Even in sermons that are considered inclusive, the interpretive authority is often still gendered in that regard. Male presenters continue to dominate as speakers and as moral interpreters. Authority, in this situation, is reinforced through the use of assertive utterances, confident deliveries, and specific types of body movement and gestures. This logic pattern is in line with Wadud's (1999) theory that even in situations where a speaker is advocating for a partnership, or a call for reciprocity, the claim to religious authority still predominantly rests with men. Inclusive discourse, therefore, does not automatically erase a hierarchy. Rather, inclusive discourse reframes a hierarchy in more relational ways. The coexistence of hierarchical and inclusive narratives reflects the range of gender discourses in digital Islamic preaching. Digital da'wah is a contested space where gender norms are affirmed and renegotiated.

Figure 3. The Construction of Male Moral Authority in Digital Da'wah Content



Source: Instagram evidence retrieved by the author from @sukma_4a (2025).

The findings are consistent with Hjarvard (2016) and his position that mediatized religion encourages interpretive pluralism, particularly through the dissemination of religion online. In the case of this study, the online space of religion enables the circulation of competing moral frameworks, including the circulation of diverse interpretations of religion and gender. While much of the existing scholarship on Islam and gender critique (Ahmed, 2021; Badran, 2013; Wadud, 1999) tends to focus on the feminist critique, and while digital religion studies tend to focus on

mediation and authority (Campbell, 2013; Hoover, 2016), there is less scholarship on everyday digital sermons and how they may incorporate gender ethics in an everyday inclusive manner. Inclusive narratives offer counter-discourses to digital preaching, and this study demonstrates this. Digital preachers use short sermons, personal anecdotes, and relational framing to reinforce and renegotiate social constructions of gender. Digital Islamic preaching, therefore, is a progressive discourse on the social construction of gender, where different and ethical interpretations are created and contested.

Discussion

The results show that the sermons impact the understanding of the general public regarding the oppressive nature of gender-differentiated relations. Instead, these sermons act as reminders of the imposition of certain moral values and the imposition of certain gender roles. Being exposed to the same themes from sermons on the same religious topic leads to the reinforcement of the same oppressive gender roles that already exist in the religious discourse of the society.

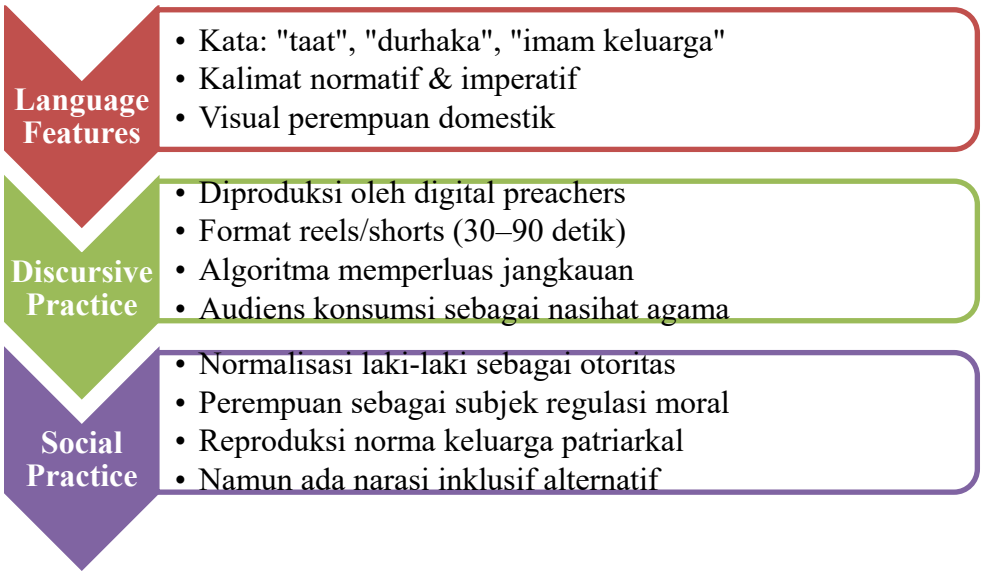
Table 1. Gender Discourse Patterns in Digital Islamic Preaching

No	Discourse Pattern	Example Indicators	Frequency
1	Male leadership	"Imam keluarga", "pemimpin rumah tangga"	12
2	Female morality	Narasi kesabaran & ketaatan	10
3	Inclusive partnership	"Saling menasihati"	8

Source: Research Data (2025)

Element 1 of Table 1 demonstrates that themes of male dominance and the morality of women are very common, even if stories of partnerships that are inclusive of both sexes are present. This kind of analysis of the field of digital Islamic sermons shows that the duality of gender roles is both criticized and reinforced. Therefore, the discourse regarding gender roles is fluid and can be defined differently. Most of the research that focuses on Islam and gender has concentrated on the same subjects, either the theological, legal, or feminist hermeneutics (Ahmed, 2021; Badran, 2013; Wadud, 1999), and digital religion has concentrated on the mediation and the displacement of the religious authority (Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2016; Hoover, 2016). The research that focuses on the digital sermons and the articulation of gender roles in them is scarce. This study opens the discourse on the articulation of gender roles in everyday digital preaching.

Figure 4. CDA Coding Framework for Analyzing Gender Discourse



Developed by researcher based on Fairclough (2025)

Repetitive trends provide an affordance for shaping visibility. Certain gender narratives are expanded because of platform logics. This is because dominant narratives produce greater engagement. Messages legitimized by repetition are even absorbed as truth. This resonates with Hjarvard's (2016) mediatization, whereby the logic of media permeates the influence of authority and meaning of the religious. Gilbert's sermons are sources of gendered norms, though he is rarely explicit and is more often likely to employ storytelling, emotional appeal, or advice from the everyday as opposed to the doctrinally prescribed. Such tactics often soften the imposition of moral expectations or may make them seem to be self-evident. In this case, CDA illustrates how discourse, through the circularity of the repetition and the discourse, acts to establish the social hierarchy.

Inclusive narratives, when contrasted with the dominant, also tell us that the digital Islamic sermons are not monolithically ideological; there is ongoing contestation of gendered discourses that reflects the contestation taking place within Muslim societies. This is consistent with Campbell's (2013) networked religion, where authority is no longer singular and is diffused through agency and circulation. Asad's (1993) observation of the discursive tradition of Islam may also be used to understand the simultaneous existence of both hierarchical and inclusive narratives. In this tradition, meanings are produced through social practice and are subject to constant reinterpretation. Digital preaching is one of the contemporary contexts in which these practices are constantly negotiated.

It is essential to understand how multiple discourses shift the interpretive frameworks, even if it is not plausible to assume the audience will blindly accept the messages. Hoover (2016) highlights how religious knowledge is processed and apprised in varied ways depending on the media context. Therefore, the digital context also influences the frameworks within which religious significance is understood. Aside from issues of authority and repetition, the data also shows that digital sermons emotionally construct the normative roles of genders. Sermons are

also a source of emotional storytelling and gender discourse, and they are rarely presented as abstract doctrine. Sermons emotionally tell stories about family harmony, conflict, and personal piety. Sermons use emotional framing so that people are compelled to listen. Digital publics that are organized using a range of emotional intensities are harnessed around emotional framing as a means to increase visibility and engagement. Emotionally framed stories about marriage and gender in sermons make it easier to feel moral claims, rather than having to make them feel ideologically imposed.

The affective component is also important in how the perception of authority is shaped. Authority of digital religious spaces is built on more than just scholarly authority, but also through the use of conversational tone, relatability, and emotional tone. In this study, a number of sermons show this through the preacher's use of a soft and intimate tone, and sometimes even share personal stories about family or marriage. This narrative is a blend of religious instruction and peer advice. This fosters closeness to the audience and the preacher, and also increases the interpretive authority of the preacher. Lim (2017) refers to these phenomena as algorithmic enclaves, where users are inundated with content aligned with their previous interactions. Sermons that promote certain ideologies about gender, when algorithmically sensitive, are part of an echo chamber. In these enclaves, certain aspects of gender theology are liberalized because of the absence of theological debate about gender. The technological infrastructure of these platforms does not mean that there is a passive audience, but instead that there are very limited examples of what can be considered within an ideology.

Findings demonstrate the ways in which the visual elements of the presentation influence the discourse on gender. The images of the different preachers, their clothing, and the arrangement of the camera all reinforce the existence of a gendered discourse. Male preachers are predominantly filmed in spaces that resemble male study rooms and mosques, thus associating them with academic religious authority. In the clips being illustrated, female figures are frequently shown in household settings. We have an example of an image of a social role codified visually as opposed to verbally in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar. In this sense, visual framing functions as a separate discourse that reinforces the text about social norms, mainly those that pertain to gender.

Berger and Luckmann (1966), when the same picture is shown repeatedly, it is said to have become social and should be ignored, which is what the digital sermon is trying to achieve, and end the circulation of the same unequal gender roles that have a cultural and religious justification. However, the presence of inclusive narratives raises the complexity of advancing an argument for a uniform patriarchy. Some sermons promote respect, responsibility, and emotional support. Such narratives emerge in response to divorce rates, women's education, and dual breadwinner households. This shows that digital religious discourse is rather responsive to social change (Hefner, 2023).

This is in line with Asad (1993), whose definition of Islamic tradition is discursively and historically situated. When confronted with change, Muslims will reinterpret the tradition. Until the emergence of digital discourses, this process was slow and limited in scope. The presence of both hierarchical and inclusive messages in the same discourse is a sign of negotiation rather than a lack of coherence. Another

aspect is the commodification of religious content. Some sermons with high engagement are monetized via advertising or sponsored sections. While this study does not focus on political economy, the data points to monetization and visibility as potential motivators for messages that are emotionally manipulative or morally unambiguous. Hasan (2009) points out that in the case of public Islam, there is a confluence of contemporary public Islam and marketing, where religious and commercial interests are not mutually exclusive. In digital preaching, messages that are overly simplistic around gender issues are likely to circulate more than other, more complex messages in the economy of the platforms. This is because messages that are overly simplistic around gender issues are likely to circulate more than other, more complex messages in the economy of the platforms.

There are concerns regarding how the digital world shapes religious authority. Hjarvard 2016) posits that while mediatization does not eliminate religion, it transforms the practice and interpretation of religion. The sermons analyzed for this study exemplify this transformation in the sense that more authority is granted to the platform's measurement of the sermons, visual branding, and engagement from the audience. This is especially the case for gender discourse. Audience agency is equally important. Digital religion researchers have shown that audiences construct their own meanings, remix the religious content, and resist it (Campbell, 2013). In the comment sections, there are a number of disagreements, and people reinterpret messages and provide alternative perspectives. Though this study is not looking at audiences, the presence of conversational elements indicates that people can construct their own meaning.

The results signify an ongoing tension in contemporary Muslim societies' approach to gender roles. They indicate the challenges that rapid urbanization, women's education, and women's employment have created for family structures in many societies (Hefner, 2023). Digital sermons may not create the tensions; however, they do create spaces in which tensions are negotiated. Thus, digital preaching engages with gender discourses and the contemporary tensions in society concerning authority, morality, and the family. The research also intersects with the scholarship on everyday religion. Lived religion in a digital context, as discussed by Gao et al. (2024), does not constitute a defiance of religion; rather, it fosters a practice through the ordinary and informal in the place of the ritualistic and the institutional. If listeners encounter short sermons during their routine social media scrolling, then they, indeed, become part of that routine. While gender norms embedded in the sermon may negatively influence moral reasoning, it may do so in an unobtrusive way.

The findings also suggest a need to rethink the circulation of religious knowledge in the present context. Digital preaching may be viewed as a widening rather than a narrowing of the spaces of religious interpretation. A complex web of religious discourse consists of traditional scholars, influencers, and lay preachers. Gender discourse becomes one of the areas where this plurality of discourse is negotiated. Digital Islamic sermons serve as discursive nodes at the intersection of gender relations, religious authority, and media logic. They neither shape gender relations completely nor reflect them entirely. They are involved in processes of normalization, contestation, and reinterpretation. This study aims to locate gender discourse in the context of mediatized religious communication and draw attention

to the ways in which routine digital practices impact the construction of current Islamic moral universes (Hjarvard, 2016; Campbell, 2013; Asad, 1993). The value of this research is in explaining the ways in which short digital sermons serve as discursive spaces in which gender norms are articulated, transmitted, and contested synchronously. The study directs the interface of gender, digital religion, and discourse studies towards the construction of a practical tool to understand how everyday digital interactions influence the emerging Islamic gender norms.

Conclusion

This study examines the implications of digital Islamic preaching on social media as an important site for articulating and circulating contemporary social constructions of gender, authority, and morality. Using Critical Discourse Analysis of digital short-form sermons, the study contends that the sermons function as quotidian religious discourses that integrate and shape the moral and social expectations. Digital sermons do not merely serve as moral reminders, but also engage in more extensive processes of social construction surrounding gender issues in Muslim societies. Three primary points can be emphasized. Many sermons reproduce and deepen hierarchical gender structures in the family. Often portraying men as the moral scaffolders and women as the moral custodians of the domestic sphere. These portrayals are the result of the same cultural and communicative mechanisms that see gender structures as divinely rooted. Secondly, women's descriptions are routinely framed as modest, emotionally inhibited, and obedient. Such portrayals introduce and help entrench certain gender ideals as morally acceptable and socially fitting. From the narratives and descriptions given, it can be easily taken as normal for almost all religious framing and communication to be dismissive of the explanatory presence of gender. Finally, sermons advocating models of partnership, reciprocity, and relational responsibility are, although still underrepresented, increasingly more common. The more hierarchical and inclusive narratives we have from digital preaching, the more we see that it is a multi-layered ideological space, and not a homogeneous field of discourse.

These illustrate how the digital da'wah ecosystem is a site of a routine religious communication system, wherein gender norms are upheld and negotiated. Gender relational expectations are framed concurrently in religious texts and in digital sermons that are designed to be brief and easily accessible for widespread circulation. In this way, digital sermons engage in the circulation of gendered moral discourse. The research adds to the field of Islam and gender studies by focusing on the informal digital discourse channels instead of the formal theological debates, answering the gap left by most of the research that has been done focusing on the legal reforms and interpretations of the religious texts. The study shows how gender discrimination is reproduced at the micro level in the daily religious messages and contributes to the study of digital religions by demonstrating how the structure of the digital platform (as a kind of religious instrumentalism) influences the unobtrusive presence and the spread of certain moral narratives.

The research has not focused on how preaching should be done, but rather emphasizes the need to view digital religious discourse as a site of interpretive plurality. The multitude of narratives and interpretations that have been observed indicate that digital religious discourses can be sites of emergence, competition, and

evolution of diverse discourses of gender. This is consistent with the general theories of mediated religion, which suggest that the roles of religious mediators and the meaning of religion are fora that change the conditions in which the roles of religious mediators and the meaning of religion are defined. With regard to the findings, the research illustrates the impact of digital platforms on contemporary Islamic discourse. While digital spaces may not define gender norms simplistically, they become social channels that circulate, stabilize, and even contest social norms. Understanding digital preaching within the context of the wider discursive dynamics offers insight into the relationships between religion, gender, and the media in the contemporary digital sphere.

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