

## **Pursuing Peace through Moral Messages of Jihad: A Way Forward against Misconceptions of Virtual Jihad**

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### **Abstract**

*The term 'jihad' seems to sound horrible to a number of people. The misunderstood terms and practices apparently continue to rise. Nowadays, the so-called 'virtual jihad'--as clearly stated in The Sunday Guardian Live, Scientific American, Science Direct, etc.--is addressed as referring to a single connotative meaning of violence in Islam. It seems that they conflate the terms 'jihad' and 'terrorism'. This misunderstood concepts of jihad leads to some acts contradicting the true meaning of 'jihad' itself. This article attempts to (1) scrutinize misconceptions of 'virtual jihad', (2) delve deeper into the moral principle of jihad due to ideal Islamic teachings, as well as (3) ways forward to put into practice of a "peaceful jihad" in a virtual age. Theoretical Approach used in this study mainly employs Teu Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) models of interrelated texts, social cognition, and social contexts. The findings reveal that (1) misconceptions of 'virtual jihad' result from a misunderstood concept of 'jihad' itself and underlying ideological factors in the view of Van Dijk's CDA's texts, social cognition, and social contexts, (2) fundamentally, the moral concept of jihad is to make meritorious struggle in the cause Allah to do good works and repel evil, as well as to reform a civilized society, and (3) the best practices of jihad in this virtual age is supposed to manifest in the enormous efforts of creating "Knowledge Societies" all the way through the advance of digital technologies. As a final point, it is worth highlighting the importance of being critical, as CDA implies, through the lens of objectivity of any deception, propaganda and biased judgment in this disinformation age as well as generating better solutions for peaceful digital societies.*

**Keywords:** Virtual jihad, moral practices, jihad misconception, Knowledge Societies.

## A. Introduction

In the explosion of information in this virtual age, misconceptions, misunderstandings and faulty interpretations over Islamic teachings are profoundly discovered in contemporary discourses. Among the most misunderstood and misused terms, “jihad” has been exploited and interpreted in wrong way in some various publications. Just to mention some, Sumrall’s book entitled *Jihad, The Holy War, Time Bomb in The Middle East* which simply conflate jihad with warfare and terror, Spencer, n.d.(2018), in his *The History of Jihad: from Muhammad to ISIS* apparently goes with his Islamophobic intent and reinforce the misconceptions that jihad is an obligation imposed by qur’an to engage in military warfare in order to impose the Muslim political authority by force. The list goes on and on.

This paper is mainly attempts to analyze the rise of the terms “virtual jihad” which comes into existence in the context of digital era transformation. It is a focus of my interest since scholars, as far as we are aware, is rarely concerned about analyzing the rise of such a relatively new terminology. Interestingly, the special phrase “virtual jihad” (when the words come together) cannot be found even in numerous most popular English dictionaries, i.e. Oxford, Merriam-Webster, Cambridge Dictionary, etc.

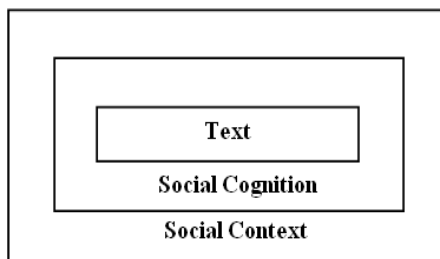
More specifically, this paper is engaged to scrutinize the (mis)conceptions of the term “virtual jihad” of Daniel Wagner’s written work entitled “*The Rise of Virtual Jihad*” in The Sunday Guardian, published in November 10, 2018 and Luis Miguel Ariza’s “*Virtual Jihad, The Internet as the Ideal Terrorism Recruiting Tool*” published in Scientific American. These two articles, as far as I am concerned, would probably represent a vast number of books and articles with similar themes.

## B. Theoretical Approach

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse which views language as a form of social practice (Anthonissen, 2007); (Drid, 2015). CDA constitutes as the recontextualization of social practice, social action and actors as well (Theo van Leeuwen, 2008).

In CDA language is not powerful on its own. Rather, it gains power by the use powerful people make of it. The purpose of CDA, (Fairclough, 2013) argues, to “systematically exploring the relationship of the victim who does not clearly and decisively (between discursive practices, events, and texts, and broader social, cultural, relationships and relationships, process”.

Teun Van Dijk is attributed to socio-cognitive approach in view of understanding that ideological practices and social relations of power, politic, hegemony are involved in discourse. Van Dijk’s CDA adopts three interrelated dimensions: text (macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure), social cognition, and social contexts. Thus, CDA is analyzes a complex social phenomenon with a multi-methodical approach. (Frawley & van Dijk, 1987; Rahimi & Riasati, 2011; Wilks, 1979)



**Figure 1.** Three Dimensions of Van Dijk’s Discourse Analysis model.

Van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis model is considered appropriate to be used in revealing the hidden ideological relations embedded in texts. The use of Van Dijk’s CDA analysis is aimed to investigate critically ideological and social inequality expressed,

signaled, constituted, and legitimized by language use (T. A. Van Dijk, 2012). Thus, Van Dijk's CDA model is used to be theoretical bases of analysis to scrutinize "virtual jihad" discourse.

### **C. Ideological Criticism of 'Virtual Jihad' (Mis)Conceptions**

Ideology refers to the system of ideas used by the ruling group in society to justify its dominance (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2017, p. 144). It has something to do with systems of ideas, and especially with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group or movement (T. a. Van Dijk, 2011, p. 6).

Ideology is central in critical discourse analysis since it explains the relations between groups or institutions are involved in the development and reproduction of ideologies. Ideologies create a shared worldview and sense of purpose among people in a particular group. For this reason, critical discourse analysis is taken into consideration to reveal how people promote a particular ideology with the words ('virtual jihad'—in that regard) and how they represent them in a certain way (Haryo et al., 2016).

Additionally, the power of the media is a highly complex phenomenon and requires a detailed textual, ethnographic and social deconstruction. The ideological dimension of language representation and making-meaning appears in the context of late-modern media discourse. (Johnson, 2010, p. 4), (T. A. Van Dijk, 1994)

In elaborating Ideologies as social cognition, Van Dijk asserts that mental aspects of ideologies, such as their nature as ideas or beliefs, their relations with opinions and knowledge, and their status as socially shared representations, are all covered under the label of 'Cognition'. Thus, ideology mostly presents in interrelated cognition, society and discourse (Semino & Basuki, 2017).

No words are neutral as Rodney stated (R. H. Jones, n.d.), since the authors or speakers have such ideological interests in conveying the texts. In some respects, authors tend to create 'versions of reality' through texts (such as the term "virtual jihad") based on their choice of words and how they combine words together to promote certain points of view and draw upon a specific set of beliefs and

assumptions people have about things which govern what is good and bad, right or wrong, and normal and abnormal in a particular society.

Advances in Information and Communication Technology have led to an explosion of new words and phrases emerging (or made up) in this virtual age, including the term “virtual jihad”. Daniel Wagner’s *“The Rise of Virtual Jihad”* and Miguel Ariza’s *“Virtual Jihad, The Internet as the Ideal Terrorism Recruiting Tool”* are in my interest to dig further what are in and beyond the so-called “virtual jihad”, since, as I stated earlier, the phrases cannot be found in various top ranked and notable English dictionaries (i.g. Merriam-Webster, Cambridge, Oxford, The American Heritage Dictionary and so forth).

Van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis attempts to uncover underpinning ideologies of “virtual jihad” discourse. The data are to be analyzed with the orientation of analytic descriptive method of Van Dijk’s DCA model as follows:

## **Texts**

### ▪ **Macrostructure**

Ideological analysis in the macro structure includes word choices, styles and rhetoric.

The macro structure is analyzed by seeing the thematic elements of the texts. In a global meaning, it is discovered that the theme Daniel Wagner conveys is the potential threat of ISIS’s cyber tool which he points out to become a threat of terrorism to the world.

He writes:

“Cyberspace offers potential jihadists the opportunity to receive instruction and training on topics ranging from data mining to psychological warfare. The use of the Dark Web and encryption programs allow terrorist groups to effectively communicate in secret. Cyberattacks attributed to terrorists have largely consisted of unsophisticated tactics such as e-mail bombings of ideological foes, DDoS attacks, or defacing of websites.”

Similarly, global theme conveyed by Luis Miguel Ariza in his *Virtual Jihad, The Internet as The Ideal Terrorism Recruiting Tool* stated that the threat is to be the case. He writes:

“The Internet has long been essential for terrorism, but what has surprised experts is the growth of such Islamist (radical Islam) and jihadist sites. Their continuing rise suggests that recruitment for a “holy war” against the West could proceed unabated, despite capture of key leaders.”

▪ **Superstructure**

Superstructure focuses on the written scheme, namely; introduction, content, and closing in a way that it becomes a comprehensive text. Daniel Wagner’ written work starts by stating the following issues:

*“ISIS has exploited the socio-political environment and young adults’ obsession with technology.”*

Then, he begins to narrate:

“Cyberspace is the ideal platform for terrorists because, unlike conventional warfare, barriers to entry into cyberspace are much lower—the price of entry is an Internet connection. The surreptitious use of the Internet to advance terrorist group objectives has created a new brand of Holy War—“Virtual Jihad”...”

Afterward, the Daniel goes on with a sub-title: “Virtual Caliphate” attributed to ISIS terrorist organization.

“Long after the current collection of terrorist groups have ceased to be a major threat from a physical perspective, they will remain omnipresent in cyberspace, promoting a virtual caliphate from their safe haven behind computer keyboards around the world. Islamic extremists are natural candidates to transition to the virtual world because it offers them automatic citizenship beyond the nation-state.”

Then, he goes with such narrative regarding ISIS and the virtual caliphate:

“The ISIS has successfully exploited the socio-political environment and young adults’ obsession with technology to establish a growing community of devotees in the ungoverned territory of cyberspace, ensuring its ability to continue to coordinate and inspire violence well into the future.”

He concludes his writing by pointing out Muslims’ support toward ISIS:

“The vast majority of the world’s estimated 1.6 billion Muslims are not ISIS supporters (perhaps just a fraction of 1%, although no one can say for certain).”

Then, he ends up with a writing reinforcement:

“The ISIS has found its own salvation via the Internet, particularly since it has already passed the peak of its real-world power.”

Meanwhile, The schematic elements of Luis Miguel Ariza’s writing is rather different. He begins by pointing out the readers to refer a website belonging to GIMF.

“If you read Arabic and want a degree in jihad, click on [www.al-farouq.com/vb/](http://www.al-farouq.com/vb/). If you’re lucky--the site disappears and reappears--you will see a post that belongs to the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF). It announces the "Al Qaeda University of Jihad Studies."

Then, he continues with narrative statement regarding the terrorism, “radical Islam”, “jihadist” and “Holy War” against the West by means of internet:

“The Internet has long been essential for terrorism, but what has surprised experts is the growth of such Islamist (radical Islam) and jihadist sites. Their continuing rise suggests that recruitment for a "holy war" against the West could proceed unabated, despite capture of key leaders.”

He later referring to Israeli professor’s Gabriel Weimann

“According to Gabriel Weimann, a professor of communications at the University of Haifa in Israel, the number of all terrorist Web sites--those advocating or inciting terrorism or political violence--has grown from a dozen in 1997 to almost 4,700 today, a nearly 400-fold increase.”

The latter, his paper mostly refers to Scott Atran, a researcher at the Jean Nicod Institute who asserted: “Without the Internet, the extreme fragmentation and decentralization of the jihadi movement into a still functioning global network just would not be possible.”

Above all, the two writers have their own schemes of how they systematically convey messages to convince the readers.

### ▪ **Microstructure**

Microstructure is dealt with how the local meaning is conveyed through the choices of words, sentences, semantic, rhetoric and styles.

The words “virtual jihad” noticeably appear at large amount in both written works of Daniel Wagner and Luis Miguel Ariza, yet it is to be regretted that the writers do not define what “virtual jihad” really means. They do not enlighten the readers regarding etymological and terminological definition of the term they promote originally came into existence.

“The Rise of Virtual Jihad” comes with a bold leading sentence: **“ISIS has exploited the socio-political environment and young adults’ obsession with technology”**, the gambit ISIS he use in the sentences following the title are provoking and it is identify that the words “virtual jihad” attributed to ISIS. It is apparently used to emphasized the real threat phenomenon occurred. It is also clear that Daniel’s “virtual jihad” is associated with ISIS. With his interchanged words, virtual jihad, virtual terror, virtual caliphate, it is clear that he confuse the word ‘jihad’, ‘terror’, and ‘caliphate’.

Likewise, Luis Miguel’s “Virtual Jihad” is attributed with Al Qaida, “radical jihadists”, “Islamist” “radical Islam” in that intertextuality. Luis Miguel seems to convince the readers by pointing them out to a site of GIMF in the beginning of his writing. The pronoun “you” he selects in the earlier paragraph is parts his own rhetoric. It is also apparent that he try to convince readers with research data in his whole writing.

### **Social Cognition**

Ideologies as social cognition of both writers (Daniel Wagner and Luis Miguel) apparently encounter social polarization of “in group and out group” as legitimization of dominance in their writings in which they represent particular ideologies of their own groups.

Despite limited information provided to disclose the writers’ knowledge background, still one can recognize them through their writings. For those critical readers, it could be well-recognized that Luis takes sides as data he presented are mostly refer to figures



presumably opposed to Muslims. ‘Us and them’-- as Van Dijk’s term of discourse -- could easily be recognized when Luis refers to the presented expressions of Reuven Paz, director of PRISM (Project for the Research of Islamist Movements), a watchdog group in Herzliya, Israel:

“We are talking about groups that are opposed and persecuted all over the Arab and Muslim world, so the Internet becomes the only alternative to spread their messages,”

Daniel and Luis had shared the same ideas constructed in their cognition he writes that “virtual jihad” refers to terrorism. Replacement of terms, i.e. virtual jihad, virtual terror, virtual caliphate, virtual jihadist (in Daniel’s written work) implies that there is a problem of conflation of those terms. They mistakenly limit the term “jihad” to their own (misguided) cognitive ideologies to such acts of terror. Hence, they are trapped to what Noam Chomsky, cognitive scientist, and social critic, noted as system of ‘thought control’ (Chomsky, 2003, p. 25).

## **Social Context**

Social contexts focus on how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written texts in communities.

The term ‘virtual jihad’ appears under the emergence of virtual technology following 9/11 in which the terms terrorism and jihad are profoundly misused and misunderstood.

With regard to terrorism, Noam Chomsky, spot ‘newspeak’ or ‘manufacture of consent’ used to be a functioning propaganda system as ideological manipulations and power relation manifested in new terms of ‘terrorist’, ‘extremist’, ‘Islamist-jihad’. Chomsky makes such a sarcastic remark that ‘terrorism’ refers to terrorist acts by various pirates, particularly Arabs. Terrorist acts by the emperor and his clients are termed “retaliation”.

Daniel Wagner and Luis Miguel Ariza obviously reinforce the misleading conceptions of ‘virtual jihad’ which has been stereotypes perpetuated in every form of the media accompanied by gross misinformation about Islam and Muslims.

Above all, In the study of intertextuality in which words allude and relate to each other (Gee, 2010, p. 21), it is clear that term ‘virtual jihad’, ‘virtual terror’, ‘virtual caliphate’--promoted by the writers we previously discussed--are referring to such ‘virtual acts of terrorism’ done by ‘radical Muslims’. This is what Van Dijk illustrates as *ideology as 'false consciousness' or 'misguided beliefs'* (T. a. Van Dijk, 2011, p. 7). I assert the term ‘virtual jihad’ associated with terrorism in the above definition is false and problematic. To cope with the term confusion, I suggest any writers to use the alternative terms referring to such connotative meaning, namely ‘virtual terror’ or ‘cyber terror’, like stated in Imran Awan’s work: *Cyber-Extremism: ISIS and the Power of Social Media* (Awan, 2017)

Further, as regard to those false ideologies regarding the term ‘virtual jihad’, I shall propose a more general notion of ideology (as suggested by Van Dijk) as systems which sustain and legitimize opposition and resistance against domination and social inequality. This is what Karl Mannheim noted as oppositional ideologies or 'positive' ideologies', that is to clear up misconception by way of delving into the morals of jihad and offer a better way forward to pursue peace in contemporary society.

#### **D. Jihad and Morality: Clearing Up Misconceptions**

Here we can identify that the misconception of ‘virtual jihad’ is rooted in the ignorance, misguided information and false making-meaning of ‘jihad’ itself. In point of fact, over the past several decades, there is a prevailing phenomenon that there are some evildoers called ‘extremist groups’ spoiled the image of Islam by exploiting the misinterpreted ‘*jihad*’ to be their ideological reasons to legitimate their cause to justify their deviant acts, though the vast majority of Muslims are appalled by the acts of violence against humanity committed in the name of their faith (Razak et al., 2020).

Besides, there are those ‘Islamophobes’ who tirelessly attempt to damage the true Islamic ideologies (Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic verses*, Christian Prince’s *The Deception of God*, -- just to mention some). Thus, this phenomenon is due to both internal and external

factors, namely incomplete understanding towards the text discourse and socio-cultural and political agenda (Salenda, 2009). Regrettably, the misunderstood concepts and practices of Islam ('jihad' in particular) are profoundly conveyed by writers, global media, publications through such an 'overgeneralization' and 'simplification', Webster's definition of "as a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty", and "a crusade for a principle or belief" seems to be part of 'newsmaking' as social cognitive construction (T. A. van Dijk, 2013) in which elites and media create (re)production of prejudice (T. Van Dijk, n.d., p. 358); (T. A. Van Dijk, 1988).

In view of that, to cope with jihad misconceptions, we need to delve deeper into the fundamental concept of 'jihad' by exploring three guidelines: 1) the normative teaching of Jihad (textual and contextual practices. 2) Historical context and 3) social contexts. Those three essential views are to be implicitly discussed below:

"*Jihad*" is often translated as "holy war" (Sumrall, n.d.), and mostly associated to warfare. Yet, in a purely linguistic sense, the Arabic word "*jihad*" means 'struggling' or 'striving', whereas Arabic posses other words for saying "war" namely: '*al-harb*' or '*al-qitâl*'. The word '*jihad*' derives from the Arabic root '*juhd*', signifying intense struggle or effort. '*Jihad*' is a verbal noun of the third Arabic form of the root '*jahada*', which is defined classically as exerting ones upmost efforts, endeavors, or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation.

Jihad, in essence, never contradicts morality, since Islam historically did not begin with violence, but a peaceful proclamation of the absolute unity of God (ca. 610 C.E.) (Cook, 2005). In this regard, as mentioned in the famous hadith narrated by Malik the Prophet said, "I was sent to perfect good character".

In addition, there are five high objectives (*maqasid*) of Islam, as Al-Ghazali (d.111) stated, namely: preservation of religion (*hifz al-diin*), preservation of their souls (*hifz al-nafs*), their mind (*hifz al-'aql*), preservation of lineage and preservation of wealth (*hifz al-maal*). To this point, we can pursue an undertanding that Islam prohibit any acts againts humanity. Allah says: "And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbade (to be killed) except by (legal) right."

(6:33). As well, a hadith reported by Ibn Majah, Daraqutni and others said: "There should be no harming nor reciprocal harming."

In a well-known Prophetic tradition, Muslim reports that, when Prophet Muhammad returned from a battle, he told his followers, "We return from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." The greater jihad is the struggle against one's ego, selfishness, greed, and evil. It is to note, the Prophet make more emphasis upon the 'greater jihad' (*jihad al-akbar*) when contrasting it with a jihad of the sword, as called as 'lesser jihad' (*jihad al-asghar*). Thus, the greater jihad was said to be the most noble of actions which embraces level of precedence especially in the context of modern digital society 5.0.

Regarding *jihad al-asghar*, it is unacceptable that Muslims are obliged to spread Islam swords, or to force Non-Muslims to embrace Islam, by since the Qur'an clearly states "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error" (Q.S. 2: 256).

Meanwhile, all command to fight in a battlefield is under condition of Muslims whom were oppressed, persecuted, tortured and expelled. Still, this is upright on the ethics of war, not to kill old men, women and children and those who gave up fighting. It is also prohibited to destroy houses of worship, and cultivated area. Thus, command to fight for Muslim is a consequence of the previous events as a cause. Iftitah and Mudzhira have perfectly securitized this under *al-'illat wa al-ma'lûl* (the concept of cause and effect) in understanding the verses of war contexts. (Jafar & Amrullah, 2019). In brief, this defensive nature of jihad is noticeably stressed in the verse: "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors" (2:190).

Further, It is to also important to identify the origin and causes of 'jihad' in Islam. The period that predated the prophethood of Muhammad was known as the era of ignorance for barbaric practices prevalent in Arabian Peninsula. There was chaos in religious, social, cultural, political and economical aspects of life (Bashir, 2015). In the earlier time (Makkah period), jihad was in practiced in such a spiritual and moral struggle manifested in patience against turbulences (25: 52). The physical struggle in war was later conducted in Medina period in which Muslims were on the attack.

The Prophet commanded to fight only those who aggressively opposed him and his followers. Still, this is with limitations. (Darajat, 2016). Jihad, in particular, was put in practice by the Prophet Muhammad, the Companions and the Successors in various ways due to varying circumstances during the subsequent periods (medieval, modern and contemporary). The time of Prophet in 7<sup>th</sup> Century is absolutely different to the present modern time.

In an attempt to clear up the misconception of jihad, we have come to an understanding that the core of jihad is rooted in the Quran's command to "struggle" or "exert" oneself in the path of God. "And those who strive hard in Our cause We will certainly guide them in the ways that lead to Us. Verily, Allâh is always with the doers of good." (29:69). Thus, jihad enormously manifest in pursuing peace, spreading knowledge, performing good education, eradicating ignorance, overcoming poverty, suspicions, hatred, greed, corruption and tyranny, as well as struggling against terrorism and violence, etc.

#### **E. The Way Forward: Peaceful Jihad to Build Knowledge Societies**

The term "virtual jihad" which is defined as an act of spreading messages of terrorism through internet tools is a false 'making-meaning' conception, since it totally contradicts the moral spirit of "jihad" itself. In the broader sense, this goes up against the moral message of Islam as "a religion of peace" ("*Islam*" itself literally means "peace") (Eberle & Salman, n.d.) and its mission as a mercy to all creation: "*rahmatan lil 'alamin*" (QS. 21:107).

Jihad must be separated from any group's interests who have tended to exploit it for their own political agenda. Jihad must be put back into the original messages of Islam as the mercy to all creatures. To this understanding, it is must be perfectly understandable that jihad is intended to bring benefits and repel damages. Islamic messages are for humanity against destructive acts, rather to do good to people, environmental nature, and the world as a whole (Moussa, 1993). Without a doubt, it is not jihad to cause destruction, to humanity. It is not jihad to persuade people to commit a sin, crimes, violence or terrorism. There are a great many verses in the Holy Quran which mention about this, such as: Al-Qashash (28): 77 "And

do good as Allah has done good to you. Do not seek to cause corruption in the land, for God does not like those who spread corruption.”, and elsewhere in the Quran like: 2: 60; 7: 74; 7: 8; 11: 85; 26: 183.

Nabeel's *Answering Jihad*--apart from some prejudiced views to be criticized--offers a better way forward that people are supposed to acknowledge the truth about Islam, that is, the core spiritual and social values of Islam: peace, compassion, social justice, and respect for others (Qureshi, 2017). In line with this view, Azumardi Azra, as quoted by Ramlan et al., (2016, p. 41) insists that jihad is the earnest effort to build prosperity for mankind, enforce national discipline, build justice in a democratic country, and all are part of universal values of jihad which will benefit not only to Muslims, but to non-Muslims as well. Hence, jihad is meritorious struggles of making serious efforts to do good and fighting against the evil in oneself, and to reform society as well. Depending on the circumstances in which one lives, it also means to struggle against injustice and oppression, build good governance, establish a better society spread true Islamic teachings, etc. (Hartini, 2019, p. 98).

Most of all, jihad is a universal value of humanities which may manifests in many ways depending on contexts. I am firmly convinced that in the Knowledge Era, “jihad of the pen” (dissemination of knowledge) constitutes the “the greater jihad”, since pursuing knowledge is honored in Islam. Knowledge is essence of religion. The first verse descended on the Prophet Muhammad was “*Iqra*” (Al-‘Alaq (96): 1) meaning "read". The the word ‘*ilm*’ (knowledge) comes with 750 mentions in the Glorious Quran accentuating the importance of knowledge. Indeed, there are many verses of The Quran and Prophet's words which powerfully stress the high value of knowledge. “Allah will raise up in rank those of you who have been granted knowledge, Al-Mujadalah (58: 11) “Can those be equal, they who know and they who do know not? (39:9)” See also: 20:11; 35:28 and elsewhere. In the same way, in Prophetic tradition, narrated from Abu Hurairah, The Prophet said: “The best of charity is when a Muslim man gains knowledge, then he teaches it to his Muslim brother.” (Sunan Ibnu Majah, Vol.1, Hadith 243),

“Whoever takes a path upon which to obtain knowledge, Allah makes the path to Paradise easy for him.”(Jami’at-Tirmidhi: 2646). In another hadith: “Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim.” One knowledgeable man is more formidable against the Shaytan than one thousand devoted worshipers.” (Ibnu Majah, Book 1, vol. 1, Hadith 222).

These Quranic verses and the Traditions (Hadith) had awakened the spirit of enhancing great civilization through the power of knowledge in the Golden Age of Islam. It is evident that under the Abbasids (especially from the seventh to thirteenth centuries CE), scholars, scientists, philosophers, researchers, writers, doctors, and other thinkers all gathered and formed the vanguard of civilization. There are internationally recognized prominent figures, namely: Ibn Sina (Avicenna), called “the father of early modern medicine”, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), among others, called "father of rationalism", Rhazes as the “father of pediatrics”, Al-Khawarizmi, mostly renowned as “the father of algebra”, Ibn Khaldun father of sociology, historiography and modern economics, etc. Knowledge enhancement did create its characteristic religious, political and social institutions, and make through its philosophy, literature and art a notable contribution to civilizations outside its own household of faith.(L. L. Jones et al., 2014). That is the evidence of jihad in view of knowledge dissemination and the history speaks for itself.

In the context of digital society 5.0 in which knowledge and technology have significant impacts on people’s lives, jihad might manifest in disseminating knowledge through the advance of digital technologies. It is a ‘jihad’ to create “knowledge societies” in this modern era. Yudian Wahyudi had his own term “*jihad ilmiah*” (“scientific jihad”) to signify a struggle all the way through spreading of knowledge worldwide. Yet, the way scientific knowledge is disseminated must be following the advance of information and technology.

With the rise of the internet, it is a great jihad to disseminate knowledge, spread moral messages of Islam, educate or enlighten the mind of people by means of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn Tumblr, Wattpad, Goodread, Telegram,

Youtube, etc. As well, it is also a great jihad to tackle hoaxes (false information), fake news, hate speech, and promote peaceful lives to the world. Most of all, 'virtual jihad' should have exactly meant to make great efforts in building civilized and literate societies through scientific knowledge dissemination along with the progression of digital technologies.

## **F. Conclusion**

In conclusion, there are three important points to note. *First*, misconceptions of “virtual jihad” are due to ignorance (misguided information) or the failure to understand the true Islamic concepts of ‘jihad’ itself. As well, ideological factors underlying the writers’ false making-meaning of the terms are noticeable in the course of Van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis’s interrelated texts, social cognition, and social contexts. *Second*, a more comprehensive understanding regarding moral values of jihad might possibly clear up some misconceptions, considering that jihad cannot be separated from morality. To that point, jihad is a moral struggle which individually manifests in persistent controls of the self against evil desires and collectively manifests in the implementation of justice, non-aggression, as well as fights against abuse of human rights, injustice, oppression and terrorism. *Third*, the ideal moral practices of jihad in a virtual age are supposed to manifest in constructing “Knowledge Societies” corresponding to technological advancement in this digital era. With respect to this, contemporary jihad is required to be compatible with modernity.

Above all, it is worth pointing out that we must be highly critical, as Van Dijk’s CDA suggests, to be free from any misconception, deception, or even propaganda in the age of information explosion as well as to construct open-mindedness and generate solutions as better ways forward for digital knowledge societies.



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