

UNDERMINING WOMEN'S LIBERATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: DOGMATIC CONTROL IN INDONESIA'S ANTI-DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DISCOURSE

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Abstrak

Kesadaran terhadap narasi anti-kekerasan terhadap perempuan dalam ranah domestik telah mendorong meningkatnya aktivitas di media sosial yang bertujuan membangun wacana toleransi nol terhadap berbagai bentuk kekerasan. Namun, wacana yang dikonstruksi melalui media sosial sering kali dibentuk oleh narasi keagamaan yang dipengaruhi perspektif patriarkal sehingga secara tidak langsung menormalisasi kekerasan simbolik. Penelitian ini mengkaji bias patriarkal dalam unggahan media sosial yang mempromosikan wacana anti-kekerasan terhadap perempuan di ranah domestik. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan kerangka analisis wacana media yang sistematis, Artikel ini menganalisis 23 unggahan Instagram yang dikumpulkan melalui penelusuran menggunakan tagar #KDRT dan #Islam. Temuan ini menunjukkan adanya afirmasi yang kuat terhadap gagasan keluarga yang harmonis dan bebas dari kekerasan, di mana unggahan yang dianalisis secara eksplisit mengecam kekerasan terhadap istri. Penolakan tersebut umumnya didasarkan pada argumentasi keagamaan, khususnya penafsiran terhadap QS. An-Nisā' [4]:34. Meskipun demikian, penafsiran tersebut, walaupun secara prinsip menolak kekerasan, masih melegitimasi bentuk-bentuk disiplin fisik tertentu yang dianggap tidak melukai, seperti pukulan yang tidak menimbulkan rasa sakit, tidak meninggalkan bekas, dan tidak mengenai wajah. Penafsiran semacam ini pada akhirnya mereproduksi kekerasan simbolik dan psikologis dengan membingkai hukuman fisik terbatas sebagai sesuatu yang diperbolehkan secara agama. Narasi tersebut mencerminkan kuatnya hegemoni model penafsiran tradisional dan jarang menghadirkan alternatif penafsiran yang menegaskan pelarangan mutlak terhadap segala bentuk kekerasan terhadap perempuan. Meskipun beberapa unggahan mengutip hadis yang melarang atau mengecam pemukulan terhadap istri, struktur argumentasi yang dibangun masih cenderung mempertahankan asumsi-asumsi patriarkal dan memperkuat konstruksi stereotip mengenai feminitas.

Kata Kunci : anti-kekerasan dalam rumah tangga, konten kreator Indonesia, Instagram, dogma agama

Abstract

Awareness of anti-violence narratives against women in the domestic sphere has led to increased social media activity aimed at fostering a discourse of zero tolerance toward various forms of violence. However, the constructed by discourse often reflects religious narratives influenced by patriarchal perspectives, inadvertently normalizing symbolic violence. This study examines patriarchal biases in social media posts promoting anti-violence discourse against women in the domestic sphere. Using qualitative methods and a structured analysis of discourse formation in media, the study analyzes 23 Instagram posts collected through searches using the hashtags #KDRT (domestic violence) and #Islam. The findings reveal a strong community affirmation of harmonious, violence-free household life, with data explicitly rejecting violence against wives. This rejection often draws on religious principles, particularly interpretations of Quran 4:34. However, these interpretive narratives, while condemning violence, sometimes endorse permissible forms of non-painful beatings that avoid scarring or targeting the face, thereby perpetuating symbolic and psychological violence. Such narratives are shaped by the hegemony of traditional interpretive models, often without offering alternative arguments for an absolute prohibition of violence. Although some posts reference hadiths prohibiting beatings, their argumentative structure still permits narratives reinforcing stereotypical femininity.

Keyword: anti-domestic violence, Indonesia's content creator, Instagram, Religious Dogma

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Introduction

Rising awareness about anti-domestic violence through reinterpretations of religious texts that seemingly permit beatings of wives presents significant challenges on social media. Efforts to reinterpret these texts by emphasizing religious arguments that prohibit violence, as note by Kodir,¹ aim to foster an anti-violence narrative but are framed differently by Islamic content creators on Instagram. These creators often cite Quran 4:34 to legitimize the permissibility of beatings, inadvertently perpetuating narratives of symbolic violence. This issue stems from the dominance of traditional interpretations, which shape the discourse surrounding this verse. By affirming traditionalist interpretations that define permissible limits of beatings within an anti-violence narrative,² these creators contribute to the objectification of psychological violence. This dynamic may exacerbate psychological violence against women in the household, with reported cases rising by 19.9% in 2024.³ Consequently, the normalization of psychological violence through

narratives posted by Islamic content creators undermines anti-violence discourse and reinforces the objectification of women's subordination.

Many researchers have overlooked the presence of residual patriarchal bias in constructing anti-violence narratives against women within the domestic sphere, particularly through religious narratives on social media. Previous studies have often emphasized the positive contributions of social media in promoting anti violence campaigns while neglecting the objectification and subordination of women perpetuated through stereotypical narratives. For instance, Nurhayati and Sukmono⁴ and Ratnasari et al.⁵ demonstrated the effectiveness of social media in advocating against violence and supporting the enactment of laws protecting women from abuse. These positive contributions have encouraged various accounts to actively campaign to raise awareness about the prohibition of all forms of violence against women. Prabawati et al.,⁶ Cahyani et al.,⁷ and Mahanani et al.⁸ identified numerous programs, services, and campaigns on social media aimed at

¹ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *La Tadhibu Ima Allah: Polemik Wewenang Suami Memukul Istri Dalam Teks Dan Tafsir Hadis* (Cirebon: Institut Studi Islam Fahmina, 2010).

² Ibn Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, vol. 3 (Kairo: al-Farūq al-Ḥadīṣah li al-Ṭibā'ah, 2000); Husein Muhammad et al., *Dawrah Fiqh Concerning Women: Manual for A Course on Islam and Gender*, trans. Marlene Indro Nugroho-Heins (Cirebon: Fahmina Institute, 2007); Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āyi Al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Muḥsin Al-Turkī, Juz 24 (Markaz al-Buḥūṣ wa al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyyah wa al-Islāmiyyah, 2003).

³ Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (KemenPPPA), "Jumlah Korban Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan," siga.kemenpppa.go.id, October 2, 2024, <https://siga.kemenpppa.go.id/pencarian?topik=MTg2>.

⁴ Sri Suci Nurhayati and Filosa Gita Sukmono, "Gender Advocacy, Social Media Campaign to Against Sexual Violence," in *24th International Conference on Human-*

Computer Interaction (Cham: Springer, 2022), 76–82, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-19682-9_11.

⁵ Eny Ratnasari, Suwandi Sumartias, and Rosnandar Romli, "Social Media, Digital Activism, and Online Gender-Based Violence in Indonesia," *Nyimak: Journal of Communication* 5, no. 1 (March 14, 2021): 97–116, <https://doi.org/10.31000/nyimak.v5i1.3218>.

⁶ Dewi Prabawati et al., "Program on Violence against Women and Children for DKI Jakarta Residents," *Kaibon Abhinaya: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 4, no. 2 (July 2, 2022): 214–20, <https://doi.org/10.30656/ka.v4i2.3354>.

⁷ Tinuk Dwi Cahyani, Muhamad Helmi Md. Said, and Muhamad Sayuti Hassan, "Analysis of the Communication Network Among Citizens on Twitter in Violence Victims in Indonesia," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 40, no. 2 (June 30, 2024): 23–42, <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2024-4002-02>.

⁸ Prima Ayu Rizqy Mahanani et al., "Mastering Digital Media Literacy of Muslim Woman's Activists in Preventing Online

combating violence against women. However, other researchers have noted that social media can also serve as a new platform for acts of violence against women. The subordinate discourse embedded within anti-violence narratives is often overlooked, with research focusing primarily on the effectiveness of social media in fostering women-friendly perceptions.

The primary objective of this research is to identify the residual objectification and subordination of women embedded within anti-violence discourse. To achieve this, the study presents two forms of evidence highlighting violence against women, which are constrained by the permissibility of beatings in Islamic religious texts. First, the study examines interpretive mechanisms that reinforce Quranic verses affirming beatings, particularly Quran 4:34, which frames beating as a response to *nusyuz* (wifely disobedience), a common issue in Muslim societies. Second, it analyzes the narrative construct of the complete rejection of wife beating, uncovering arguments that perpetuate stereotypical notions of femininity. Identifying these stereotypes is essential to understanding the cultural and religious hegemony that shapes interpretations of religious texts explicitly permitting beatings. Together, these findings demonstrate how dogmatic interpretations limit women's liberation from domestic violence.

This research argues that patriarchal cultural and religious structures within Indonesian Muslim communities—unquestioned dominant beliefs

operating at a subconscious level—shape the production, interpretation, and reproduction of discourse. The influence of dogma on discourse construction arises from its role as a cognitive framework that governs narrative formation through the arrangement of commonsense, subconscious elements.⁹ This cognitive structure drives the selective use of religious texts as arguments that align with prevailing narratives about beatings, rooted in dogmatic interpretations, while disregarding arguments advocating complete prohibition. This selectivity reflects an ideological square, positively polarized by dogmatic tendencies in discourse creation.¹⁰ The explicit emphasis in religious texts on resolving cases of disobedient wives through beatings influences the construction of anti-violence narratives, as evidenced in Instagram posts.

The study examines the construction of anti-domestic violence discourse through religious arguments in Instagram posts. Instagram was selected as the research focus for two primary reasons. First, its popularity—used by 36.3% of Indonesia's population—makes it an effective platform for disseminating discourse. Second, Instagram's user-friendly interface supports diverse social media campaigns, particularly among teenagers.¹¹ Posts related to anti-domestic violence discourse on Instagram served as the primary data source and were analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA was chosen for its ability to examine text structure and cognitive context, identifying argumentative

Gender-Based Violence," *Profetik: Jurnal Komunikasi* 17, no. 1 (June 29, 2024): 72–87, <https://doi.org/10.14421/pjk.v17i1.3097>.

⁹ Teun A. van Dijk, *Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998).

¹⁰ Noel Heather, *Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

¹¹ Stefanie E Davis, "Objectification, Sexualization, and Misrepresentation: Social Media and the College Experience," *Social Media + Society* 4, no. 3 (July 13, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118786727>.

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strategies that shape discourse.¹² Data were collected through keyword-based social media scraping, using the hashtags #KDRT (Domestic Violence) and #Islam. The collected data were categorized typologically to address the study's main objectives.

Dynamics of Rejecting Domestic Violence against Women in Indonesia: Contesting Religious Doctrine—A literature Review

The struggle to foster a women-friendly society within Indonesia's religious context is evident in the history of efforts to enact anti-domestic violence legislation. This movement gained momentum during the reform era, beginning in 1998, with the establishment of the Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women—Komnas Perempuan) through Presidential Regulation No. 65 of 2005. The reform era provided a platform for advancing women's rights through the creation of the Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan (Ministry of Women's Empowerment), which collaborated with religious organizations, NGOs, Komnas Perempuan under the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 2001-2005.¹³ This plan aimed to eradicate all forms of

violence against women by promoting a zero-tolerance policy. On September 14, 2004, Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence was enacted, protecting women and other marginalized groups from acts that cause or are likely to cause physical, sexual, economic, or psychological suffering, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty within the house hold.¹⁴

The implementation of regulations protecting women from domestic violence in Indonesia faces significant challenges. Zakiyah Munir¹⁵ and Mas'udah¹⁶ argues that strict adherence to religious dogma within Indonesian society poses a major obstacle to enforcing protections for women in the domestic sphere. Furthermore, religion often leads women to accept violence as trials or tribulations.¹⁷ This acceptance is shaped by interpretations of Islamic religious texts, which, combined with cultural worldviews, reinforce societal norms. Hayati et al.¹⁸ contend that the objectification of women's subordination, driven by diverse religious interpretations, fosters widespread acceptance of various forms of violence in traditional Indonesian society. The dominant influence of religion in encouraging women to tolerate violence presents a significant

¹² Teun A. van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis," in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publisher, 2001).

¹³ Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan, *Rencana Aksi Nasional Penghapusan Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan (RAN-PKTP)* (Jakarta: Komnas HAM, 2003).

¹⁴ Hanafi Arief, "Domestic Violence and Victim Rights in Indonesian Law Concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence," *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 21, no. 4 (2018).

¹⁵ Lily Zakiyah Munir, "Domestic Violence in Indonesia," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 1 (January 2, 2005): 1–37, <https://doi.org/10.2202/1554-4419.1031>.

¹⁶ Siti Mas'udah, "Resistance of Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Dual-Career Family: A Case from Indonesian Society," *Journal of Family Studies* 28, no. 4 (October 2, 2022): 1580–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2020.1852952>.

¹⁷ Rika Saraswati, "Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce," *Identities* 27, no. 5 (September 2, 2020): 557–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2019.1600313>.

¹⁸ Elli Nur Hayati et al., "'Elastic Band Strategy': Women's Lived Experience of Coping with Domestic Violence in Rural Indonesia," *Global Health Action* 6, no. 1 (December 2, 2013): 18894, <https://doi.org/10.3402/gha.v6i0.18894>.

barrier to the effective implementation of legal protections.

Rising women's awareness is a sustainable process driven by feminist activists in Indonesia, aimed at offering alternative perspectives for reinterpreting religious texts. The Fahmina Institute has played a key role in this effort, supported by scholars such as Husein Muhammad¹⁹ and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir²⁰. Islamic organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah have pioneered movements to promote awareness of women's rights by providing education that advocates gender equality through reinterpretations of religious texts.²¹ Feminist activists, including notable and sometimes controversial figures like Musdah Mulia²² and Zaitunah Subhan²³, have also worked to reframe religious texts to foster interpretations more supportive of women. Organized efforts to promote gender equality and combat violence against women were advanced through the Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI—Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress), first held in Cirebon in 2017. These initiatives are grounded in a commitment to raising awareness and eliminating all forms of violence against women.

Normalizing Symbolic Violence: Social Media Discourses in Indonesia on the Rejection of Domestic Abuse

The Quranic verse (Q. 4:34), which includes the phrase *fadribuhunna* (so strike them), addresses wife-beating in Islam and is frequently referenced by Islamic content creators on social media to advocate against domestic violence. This engagement is evident in numerous Instagram posts citing Quran 4:34 as a primary narrative (see Table 1).

No.	Title	Statement Meaning
1.	KDRT diposting? [Domestic Violence Posted?]	...dan bagaimana tentang masalah ini? ada sebuah fenomena, di mana ada suami yang memukul istrinya. Dan ini adalah masalah yang harus kita perhatikan. ... [If there is a problem with domestic violence, how should we deal with it? There is a phenomenon where some husbands hit their wives. This is a problem that we must pay attention to.]
2.	Tutorialukul istri? [Tutorial on how to discipline your wife?]	...nah kita akan lihat ayat-ayat yang berkaitan dengan hal ini. ... [Then we will look at verses related to this. ...]
3.	Konflik & KDRT dalam Peradaban Islam [Conflict and Domestic Violence in Islam]	...Namun, perlu kita ingat bahwa memukul bukanlah tindakan yang benar-benar diperintahkan dalam Islam. ... [However, we must remember that hitting is not actually commanded in Islam. ...]
4.	Sebagian Suami Tidak Tahu, Kalau Memukul Istri Itu Haram [Some husbands do not know that hitting their wives is haram]	...Pada ayat yang dimaksud, ada kata naba, dan itu adalah perintah yang tidak boleh dilakukan. ... [In the verse mentioned, there is the word naba, and it is a command that should not be followed. ...]
5.	Afad mau tanya ke suami? [Excuse me, I want to ask a husband]	...Kalau mau tanya, apakah suami itu harus memukul istrinya? ... [If you want to ask, should a husband hit his wife? ...]
6.	Memukul istri [Hitting wife]	...Jika kita lihat ayat ini, kita akan menemukan bahwa memukul istri itu adalah tindakan yang tidak diperbolehkan. ... [If we look at this verse, we will find that hitting a wife is not allowed. ...]
7.	Cara mengatasi kekerasan rumah tangga [How to address partner's behavior in a respectful and compassionate manner]	...Salah satu cara untuk mengatasi kekerasan rumah tangga adalah dengan komunikasi yang terbuka. ... [One way to deal with domestic violence is through open communication. ...]

Table 1. Interpretations of Quran 4:34 in Addressing Domestic Violence

Dominant interpretations of Quran 4:34 frame beating as a response to *nusyuz* (wifely disobedience), presenting it as a step,²⁴ stage,²⁵ or

¹⁹ Husein Muhammad, *Islam Agama Ramah Perempuan: Pembelaan Kiai Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2004).

²⁰ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Qira'ah Mubadalah* (Yogyakarta: IRCISoD, 2019).

²¹ Pieterella Van Doorn-Harder, "Controlling the Body: Muslim Feminists Debating Women's Rights in Indonesia," *Religion Compass* 2, no. 6 (November 24, 2008): 1021–43, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2008.00105.x>.

²² Siti Musdah Mulia, *Indahnya Islam Menyuarakan Kesetaraan Dan Keadilan Gender* (Yogyakarta: Naufan Pustaka, 2014).

²³ Zaitunah Subhan, *Tafsir Kebencian: Studi Bias Gender Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999).

²⁴ Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "KDRT Diposting?," Instagram Photo, August 14, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/quranreview/p/C-o4zaOhzKw/?img_index=1; Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "Memukul Istri," Instagram Photo, February 7, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/quranreview/p/CZrAYpGBZTD/?img_index=1.

²⁵ Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "Tutorial Mukul Istri?," Instagram Photo, October 10, 2022,

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recommendation²⁶ to be used only as a last resort. These interpretations emphasize limitations, stipulating that beatings should not cause pain,²⁷ target the face,²⁸ or leave marks such as bruises.²⁹ These restrictions are used to define forms of domestic violence deemed reportable.³⁰ By emphasizing these limits, interpretations of Quran 4:34 reinforce the text's dominance in justifying disciplinary beatings for wives considered disobedient, thereby perpetuating symbolic violence.

The narrative that permits wife-beating, provided it is painless, as seen in various social media posts, constitutes a form of symbolic and psychological violence that feminist movements seek to challenge in order to prevent harm to women. Allowing beatings within certain limits of severity fails to provide women with pathways to escape patriarchal domination and achieve equality.³¹ Legitimizing any form of violence—whether painless, non-facial, or non-marking—normalizes

domestic violence under religious pretexts. Religion is often used to justify psychological pressure and undermine women's dignity. This model of painless violence is considered a dangerous and invisible form of domestic violence by Htun and Jensenius³² and Ziniakova³³. There is an urgent need to demand egalitarian interpretations of religious texts to protect women from narratives that perpetuate violence. Rebecca J. Hall³⁴ argues that seeking protection from institutions complicit in women's oppression is a dual strategy to safeguard women's well-being and dignity. A model of religious legitimacy that unequivocally rejects all forms of domestic violence is essential to strengthen protections absent in content creators' posts, which often affirm symbolic and psychological violence.

The pattern of affirming symbolic violence in gender-just discourse on Instagram diverges from the interpretive models developed by scholars advocating for women's liberation from domestic

https://www.instagram.com/quranreview/p/CjHwMkCrEf4/?img_index=1; Ilmu Pernikahan dan Media Ta'aruf Syar'i [@nikahsyari], "Cara Menegur Pasangan Yang Menyentuh Hati," Instagram Photo, January 26, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C2jJ2gyJrBN/?img_index=3.

²⁶ Hammad Rosyadi [@hammadrosyadi], "Konflik & KDRT Dalam Pandangan Islam," Instagram Photo, February 4, 2022,

https://www.instagram.com/p/CZi5vozs2mn/?img_index=1.

²⁷ Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "KDRT Diposting?"; Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "Tutorial Mukul Istri?"; Ittiba Projects [@ittiba.projects], "Sebagian Suami Tidak Tahu, Kalau Memukul Istri Itu Haram," Instagram Video, June 5, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DKg5W0cy-DH/>; Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "Memukul Istri"; Ilmu Pernikahan dan Media Ta'aruf Syar'i [@nikahsyari], "Cara Menegur Pasangan Yang Menyentuh Hati."

²⁸ Hammad Rosyadi [@hammadrosyadi], "Konflik & KDRT Dalam Pandangan Islam"; Shofia Maghfiroh [@ummuzahrani], "Maaf, Mau Tanya Ke Suami," Instagram Photo, February 10, 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/CoexlelygFr/?img_index=1.

²⁹ Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "Tutorial Mukul Istri?"; Hammad Rosyadi [@hammadrosyadi], "Konflik & KDRT Dalam Pandangan Islam"; Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "Memukul Istri."

³⁰ Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "KDRT Diposting?"; Quranic Creative Media [@quranreview], "Memukul Istri."

³¹ Vivian Fox, "Historical Perspectives on Violence Against Women," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 4, no. 1 (November 1, 2002).

³² Mala Htun and Francesca R. Jensenius, "Fighting Violence Against Women: Laws, Norms & Challenges Ahead," *Daedalus* 149, no. 1 (January 2020): 144–59, https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01779.

³³ Tatsiana Ziniakova, "Gender-Based Violence in International Human Rights Law: Evolution Towards a Binding Post-Binary Framework," *William & Mary Journal of Race, Gender, and Social Justice* 27, no. 3 (June 25, 2021): 709–64.

³⁴ Rebecca J. Hall, "Feminist Strategies to End Violence Against Women," in *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*, ed. Rawwida Baksh and Wendy Harcourt (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

violence through progressive readings of Quran 4:34. Kodir argues that preventing the permissibility of beatings requires rejecting any arguments that justify violence against women.³⁵ This approach employs alternative interpretations to establish protections within a patriarchal religious framework, representing a dual strategy for safeguarding women. Such narratives dominate scholarly discourse on gender equality, advocating for protections without exceptions that permit violence.³⁶ Another mechanism involves metaphorically reinterpreting the text to align with contemporary contexts, fostering protective discourse. Claims of oppression are linked to interpreters who normalize domestic violence by offering alternative meanings that account for trauma and psychological harm.³⁷ However, these scholarly strategies, which prioritize diverse and relevant arguments, are absent in Instagram's gender-just discourse, which often legitimizes beatings as prescribed in Quran 4:34.

The Paradox of Anti-Violence Advocacy: Traces of Stereotypical Femininity in Women's Liberation of social media

³⁵ Kodir, *La Tadhribu Ima Allah: Polemik Wewenang Suami Memukul Istri Dalam Teks Dan Tafsir Hadis*; Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Bergerak Menuju Keadilan: Pembelaan Nabi Terhadap Perempuan* (Jakarta: Rahima, 2006).

³⁶ Mulia, *Indahnya Islam Menyuarakan Kesetaraan Dan Keadilan Gender*; Zaitunah Subhan, *Al-Qur'an Dan Perempuan: Menuju Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Penafsiran* (Jakarta: Prenada Media Group, 2015).

³⁷ Lutfiana Dwi Mayasari, "Menyoal Makna Nusyuz Yang Sering Disalahkan," in *Relasi Saling, Bukan Paling: Keadilan Gender Dalam Perspektif Mubadalah*, ed. Zahra Amin (Jakarta: Mubadalah.id, 2023).

³⁸ Daily Qur'an and Dakwah Sunnah [@thequran_path], "Termasuk KDRT, Suami Memukul Wajah Istri," Instagram Photo, December 12, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C0wbhTxvZXn/>; M.S.I [@dr.ferihana] dr. Ferihana, "Memukul Istri," Instagram

The construction of anti-domestic violence discourse incorporating religious narratives to protect women often perpetuates paradoxical stereotypes. Data reveal that while religious discourse aims to reject violence, it frequently embeds demeaning narratives about women (see Table 2).

No.	Statement Anti-Violence	Gender Stereotype
1.	Bukanlah termasuk kemuliaan kepatuhan, dan keperkasaan bahwa seorang suami memukul istrinya. [It is neither noble nor masculine or strong for a husband to beat his wife]	Memperlihatkan istri beda sekali dengan memperlakukan eris. Karena istri diciptakan dari tulang rusuk dan siku yang seperi itu pula (bengkok). [Treating a wife is different from treating a man because a wife was created from a rib and is naturally curved]
2.	Janganlah memukul, mencaci, maki istri, dan mengabaikan kesetaraan dan toleransi dalam Islam [Physical violence and verbal abuse, such as cursing or insulting a wife, are strictly forbidden in Islam]	Untuk laki-laki, wanita itu memang bengkok, banyak sekali kekeliruannya, kadang keras kepala pula. Untuk sebauh itu bersabarlah dan diajak mereka dengan baik, jangan sampai sebauh-bai main tangan. [While men may perceive women as flawed, prone to mistakes, and sometime stubborn, they are encouraged to exercise patience, provide proper guidance, and never resort to physical harm]
3.	Bukan laki-laki sejati... sehingga, istri tidak boleh diabaikan. [Not a real man... a wife should not be treated harshly]	Memperlihatkan istri beda sekali dengan memperlakukan eris. Karena istri diciptakan dari tulang rusuk dan siku yang seperi itu pula (bengkok). [Treating a wife is different from treating a man because a wife was created from a rib and is naturally curved]
4.	Wahai suami! Berbuat baiklah kepada istrimu. "Aiyah berkata, aku tidak pernah sama sekali melihat Rasulullah memukul seseorang, begitu pula istrinya." [Husband! Be kind to your wife. Allah said, never saw the Prophet beat a servant, nor did he beat his wife]	Memperlihatkan istri beda sekali dengan memperlakukan eris. Karena istri diciptakan dari tulang rusuk dan siku yang seperi itu pula (bengkok). [Treating a wife is different from treating a man because a wife was created from a rib and is naturally curved]
5.	Wahai suami, jangan sampai terjadi KDRT! Benda, aiyah berkata Rasulullah sama sekali tidak pernah memukul dengan tangannya. [O husband, do not allow domestic violence to happen! Allah's mother said, the Prophet never struck anyone with his hand]	...memukul dan memperlakukan di wajah itu dilarang oleh agama baik untuk laki-laki, perempuan, anak-anak, dan siapa saja... apalagi benda otot dengan sesama laki-laki, tetapi engkau berhadapan dengan Wanita yang disifati sebagai kaca yang mudah pecah. [Hitting and slapping in the face is forbidden by religion for men, women, children, and everyone else. While you may be competing with other men, you are dealing with a woman who is as fragile as glass]
6.	Islam mengajarkan lemah lembut kepada istri. Wahai suami, jangan sampai terjadi KDRT. [Islam teaches gentleness towards your wife. O husband, do not allow domestic violence to occur]	...memukul dan memperlakukan di wajah itu dilarang oleh agama baik untuk laki-laki, perempuan, anak-anak, dan siapa saja... apalagi benda otot dengan sesama laki-laki, tetapi engkau berhadapan dengan Wanita yang disifati sebagai kaca yang mudah pecah. [Hitting, especially striking the face, is prohibited by religion for men, women, children, and everyone else. While you may engage in conflicts with other men, remember that women are like glass—fragile and easily broken]
7.	Dan orang-orang baik dari kalian tidak akan memukul (istri) [and the good among you will not beat their wives]	...dan Allah berfirman, <i>For as-sabih al-mabit hafiz il al-ghab bimā hifz Allah</i> (Maka perempuan-perempuan yang sholihah adalah mereka yang taat (kepada Allah), dan menjaga diri ketika (suaminya) tidak ada, karena Allah telah menjaga (mereka)) [and Allah said, so pious women are those who are obedient to Allah and take care of themselves when their husbands are not around, because Allah takes care of them]

Table 2. Stereotypical Statements About Women in Protection Narratives

The explicit rejection of violence is often justified by referencing women's creation from a crooked rib, implying inherent fault.³⁸ Similarly, accounts such as @ibnu.al.iskandar³⁹ and @muslimah.salafy⁴⁰ describe women's fragility as

Photo, October 3, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CjPGT7ABA9W/?hl=id>; Media Dakwah Islam [@thesunnah_path], "Bukan Laki-Laki Sejati!," Instagram Photo, August 20, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CwK5K1GPCId/>; Official Wlingi Mengaji [@wlingimengajiofficial], "Wahai, Suami! Berbuat Baiklah Kepada Suami," Instagram Photo, September 9, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C_su5M5yd6L/.

³⁹ Ibnu Al Iskandar [@ibnu.al.iskandar], "Wahai Suami, Jangan Sampai Terjadi KDRT!," Instagram Photo, August 15, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cv-BHxTxv4I/>.

⁴⁰ Berani syar'i tanpa selfie [@muslimah.salafy], "Islam Mengajarkan Kelembutan Kepada Istri," Instagram Photo, September 25, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DAVC0reyOXI/>.

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akin to fragile glass. These arguments, while condemning husbands' abusive behavior, often reinforce the expectation that wives must obey their husbands⁴¹. Such religious narratives rejecting domestic violence inadvertently perpetuate stereotypical notions of femininity, portraying women as inherently flawed, weak, and obligated to submit to their husbands.

The seemingly protective narrative rejecting violence against wives, laden with residual stereotypes about women, reflects the longstanding dominance of religious texts in normalizing patriarchal discourse in Indonesia. These texts shape consciousness through latent cognitive structures, often rendering discourse producers unaware of their influence. Van Dijk argues that the cognitive function of texts operates within a productive space that conventionalizes knowledge and reinforces stereotypes.⁴² The portrayal of women as inherently vulnerable and in need of protection underpins efforts to prevent and prohibit violence. However, this discourse structure inadvertently objectifies women through stereotypes driven by religious dogma, which shapes a worldview of gendered vulnerability.⁴³ This worldview creates a paradoxical protective discourse that, while rejecting domestic violence, perpetuates stereotypical representations of women.

Perceptual identities rooted in worldviews shape the stereotypical objectification found in content creators' narratives, often prioritizing normative interpretations of religious texts over their

contextual relevance. Contextual considerations are essential for constructing counternarratives, which tend to selectively emphasize a single religious argument while sidelining other discourse structures. These counternarratives are evident in posts from accounts affiliated with organizations and institutions that promote religious moderation (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Alternative Discourse on Rejecting Violence Against Women

The Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)⁴⁴ account promotes gender equality by explicitly prohibiting wife-beating as a basis to advocate for a complete ban on domestic violence.

⁴¹ Maktabah Az Zaen [@maktabah_azzaen], "Hukum Suami Memukul Istri," Instagram Photos, September 6, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C_jdj6bTuX-/.

⁴² van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis"; Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse, Knowledge, Power and Politics: Towards Critical Epistemic Discourse Analysis," in *Critical Discourse Studies in Context and Cognition*, ed. Christopher Hart (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011).

⁴³ George Lakoff, *The Political Mind: A Cognitive Scientist's Guide to Your Brain and Its Politics* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009); van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis."

⁴⁴ Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia [@indonesia_kupi], "Larangan Memukul Istri," Instagram Photo, April 23, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/p/COAJLRjgmV4/?img_index=2.

Similarly, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)⁴⁵ account and the Aisyiyah⁴⁶ account—the women’s branch of Muhammadiyah—Indonesia’s largest Islamic organization, adopt a narrative of absolute prohibition of domestic violence, relying on a single religious argument. The Kementerian Agama,⁴⁷ through its Islamic Guidance account, also endorses this narrative to prohibit all forms of domestic violence. The selective use of a single religious argument, while excluding texts that permit violence, reflects a broader trend among social media users to promote women-friendly religious discourse.

Algorithmic Patriarchy and Selective Theology: Unmasking the Ideological Façade of Anti-Violence Campaigns

The discourse against domestic violence articulated by Islamic content creators on social media operates through a dual mechanism that reinforces the hegemonic discourse of patriarchy. On one level, this discourse normalizes symbolic violence through a conditional interpretation of Quran 4:34, rationalizing physical punishment as a legitimate disciplinary measure against a wife’s disobedience (*nusyuz*), provided it leaves no visible marks. On other level, the narrative of absolute protection—which explicitly rejects physical violence—paradoxically gives rise to a new form of objectification: the reduction of women to fragile or defective beings, based on

literal readings of theological metaphors such as the crooked rib or fragile glass. The interconnection of these two discursive strands demonstrates the resilience of conservative dogma in infiltrating the digital ecosystem. Rather than deconstructing gender hierarchies, this discourse perpetuates women’s subordination by diminishing their agency and concealing patriarchal control behind a veil of illusory protective rhetoric.

The dual mechanisms at work in this discourse are paradigmatically rooted in a highly selective theological approach that cherry-picks textual authorities—particularly the strategic use of hadith to derive meaning. As Fatima Mernissi has criticized,⁴⁸ this partial textual excavation is not merely a methodological oversight but a form of discursive authoritarianism that deliberately manipulates the interpretive framework of Quran 4:34. Rather than adopting a progressive reading by drawing on egalitarian hadiths that unequivocally reject violence, social media narratives heavily emphasize traditions portraying women as subordinate and inferior. This theological choice ultimately serves to rationalize men’s prerogative to discipline their wives. This pattern aligns with Kecia Ali’s analysis of hierarchical bias in the construction of sacred texts:⁴⁹ masculine dominance, articulated through the narrative of protection, is no longer expressed crudely. Instead, it has evolved into a subtle, veiled form of patriarchal legitimations that hides behind

⁴⁵ NU Online [@nuonline_id], “Meneladani Rasulullah Yang Tak Pernah Lakukan KDRT,” Instagram Photo, August 15, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C-rhTWYSeWq/>.

⁴⁶ Pimpinan Pusat ‘Aisyiyah [@aisyiyahpusat], “Yang Paling Baik Kepada Keluarganya,” Instagram Photo, November 18, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DCfek6ITAwN/>.

⁴⁷ Bimas Islam Kemenag RI [@bimasislam], “Larangan KDRT Dalam Islam,” Instagram Photo, March 12, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/Ca_JezVv5fY/.

⁴⁸ Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and The Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women’s Rights in Islam*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (New York: Perseus Books Publishing, 1991), 155.

⁴⁹ Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Quran, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 9.

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the rhetoric of piety—a rhetoric that ultimately stifles genuine discourse on gender equality.

The theological intent behind this subtle legitimization finds its most effective catalyst in the algorithmic architecture of social media. As Heidi Campbell observes,⁵⁰ these platforms are not neutral mediums but possess specific affordances—structural capacities—that actively shape the transmission and amplification of discourse. Within this ecosystem, content creators strategically exploit platform infrastructure to embed the doctrine of absolute obedience to husbands, achieving widespread penetration into the public sphere. Gender-biased hermeneutics—once confined to specific traditional authorities—are now amplified and injected directly into users' cognitive environments through repetitive digital formats. In line with Teun van Dijk's framework,⁵¹ this digital architecture functions as a highly efficient ideological apparatus for normalizing inequality. Consequently, social media has become a powerful vehicle for institutionalizing subordination through selective Quranic interpretation.

The interplay between these interpretive models and the exploitation of digital architecture ultimately reveals a deeper discursive reality: anti-domestic violence discourse that engages sacred texts within the social media ecosystem can serve

as ideological camouflage. Rather than dismantling structures of oppression, this discourse often functions as a project of re-traditionalizing gender hierarchies, cloaked in the modern language of protection. Through this narrative, conservative groups effectively hijack anti-violence sentiment to transform physical repression into what Peter Glick and Susan Fiske term “benevolent sexism”.⁵² Within this paradigm, women's physical safety and integrity are not treated as absolute human rights but as conditional privileges granted only in exchange for complete compliance with masculine authority. The result is an illusion of justice that shields the foundations of patriarchy from challenge by disguising them through sophisticated interpretive mechanisms.

This discursive reality provides a critical counterpoint to the prevailing optimism that has characterized much of the existing literature on digital activism. Most previous studies have tended to portray social media as an inherently emancipatory tool. For instance, Nurhayati and Sukmono,⁵³ along with Ratnasari et al.⁵⁴ emphasize the role of digital platforms in legal advocacy, while Prabawati et al.,⁵⁵ Cahyani et al.,⁵⁶ and Mahanani et al.⁵⁷ document the success of various campaigns in promoting women-friendly perceptions. However, this uncritical celebration of functionality creates a significant blind spot in the scholarship. By accepting

⁵⁰ Heidi A. Campbell, “Introduction: The Rise of the Study of Digital Religion,” in *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, ed. Heidi A. Campbell (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

⁵¹ van Dijk, *Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*.

⁵² Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske, “An Ambivalent Alliance: Hostile and Benevolent Sexism as Complementary Justifications for Gender Inequality,” *American Psychologist* 56, no. 2 (February 2001): 109–18, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.2.109>.

⁵³ Nurhayati and Sukmono, “Gender Advocacy, Social Media Campaign to Against Sexual Violence.”

⁵⁴ Ratnasari, Sumartias, and Romli, “Social Media, Digital Activism, and Online Gender-Based Violence in Indonesia.”

⁵⁵ Prabawati et al., “Program on Violence against Women and Children for DKI Jakarta Residents.”

⁵⁶ Cahyani, Md. Said, and Hassan, “Analysis of the Communication Network Among Citizens on Twitter in Violence Victims in Indonesia.”

⁵⁷ Mahanani et al., “Mastering Digital Media Literacy of Muslim Woman's Activists in Preventing Online Gender-Based Violence.”

advocacy rhetoric at face value, these studies overlook the persistent patriarchal biases embedded within the very structure of the discourse itself. In contrast to this trend in the literature, the present findings demonstrate that anti-violence campaigns on social media do not always reflect a genuine agenda of liberation. On the contrary, through the mediation of stereotypical religious narratives, digital platforms are often used as arenas where the subjugation of women is reorchestrated and artfully concealed behind campaigns labeled as justice.

In the face of ideological camouflage infiltrating digital infrastructure, the agenda for women's liberation can no longer be limited to superficial anti-violence campaigns. This reality demands a radical reorientation from moderate institutions—such as KUPU, NU, Muhammadiyah, and The Ministry of Religious Affairs—moving beyond mere rhetoric about the absolute prohibition of violence. Progressive religious authorities must undertake more robust epistemological interventions in the algorithmic sphere, specially by dismantling and deconstructing the theological metaphors that have long legitimized women's inherent vulnerability. Furthermore, gender-sensitive digital literacy must be integrated with sacred-text literacy so that the public can recognize the benevolent sexism concealed within pop piety content. Without producing a counter-discourse that directly addresses the theological roots of women's inferiority, advocacy against domestic violence on social media will continue to operate in superficial cycle that reproduces—rather than breaks—the chains of patriarchal oppression.

Conclusion

The growing discourse on gender equality in Indonesia society, particularly efforts to combat

domestic violence against women, varies significantly across social media narratives. Anti-domestic violence content produced by creators often retains patriarchal biases by incorporating religious texts that justify limited forms of physical discipline. Although these narratives are rooted in Quran 4:34, they fail to fully challenge violence, as they perpetuate symbolic and psychological abuse. This form of violence represents a significant yet often invisible barrier to eliminating abuse within marital relationships. While some accounts address symbolic violence, they frequently rely on protective narratives that reinforce stereotypical feminine tropes. The objectification of women through religious and cultural stereotypes remains a fundamental flaw in anti-violence discourse, undermining the broader struggle for gender equality. Ultimately, the intersection of selective theological arguments—particularly the intentional appropriation of specific hadiths—and the algorithmic architecture of social media transforms these anti-violence campaigns into ideological camouflage. Rather than dismantling patriarchal structures, these digital discourses operate as a form of benevolent sexism, creating an illusion of justice that subtly re-traditionalizes male dominance under the guise of religious protection.

This study's findings on interpretive bias, feminine stereotypes, and the manipulative nature of digital religious mediatization are based on a discourse analysis model that examines the construction of anti-violence discourse in Instagram posts by Islamic content creators in Indonesia. The model evaluates the selection of arguments and discourse structures, providing a critical intervention against previous literature that has largely over-glorified social media as a purely emancipatory tool. Consequently, addressing this ideological hijacking requires progressive Islamic

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institutions to move beyond absolute prohibitions of violence and actively deconstruct the theological metaphors that legitimize female subordination in digital spaces. However, the study is limited to discourse formation and does not explore audience reception, which is a common focus in media studies, thereby necessitating further research. Investigating audience responses to these narratives is crucial for understanding how social media users interpret and internalize this paradoxical anti-violence discourse and their resulting attitudes toward violence against women.

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