AGENCY IN THE ONLINE MATCHMAKING PLATFORM
STUDY OF *RUMAH TAARUF MYQURAN* AND *MAWADDAH INDONESIA*

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Abstract

The emergence of the online ta'aruf matchmaking platform represents a shift in the community's religious practice from offline to online media. The matchmaking platform's use of internet technology is a unique selling point, as it attracts a large number of members. Apart from the religious messages propagated by each platform, the emergence of the online taaruf matchmaking media is undoubtedly sustained by the agencies involved in order to attract its members. The purpose of this article is to discuss the role of agents in two online matchmaking platforms: Rumah Taaruf myQuran and Mawaddah Indonesia. This research employs an agency theory framework. Based on the data gathered, this study concludes that the success of these two platforms is a reflection of the performance of the numerous agents involved. These agents are not gender-specific, but rather multi-agency.

Munculnya biro jodoh taaruf online merupakan sebuah perubahan sosial dari praktik keagamaan masyarakat dari model offline beralih menjadi online. Pemanfaatan teknologi internet oleh para biro jodoh menjadikan daya tarik tersendiri sehingga banyak yang menggunakan jasanya. Selain bersandar kepada pesan-pesan keagamaan yang dikampanyekan oleh masing-masing, kemunculan biro jodoh taaruf online tersebut tentu ditopang oleh para agensi yang terlibat sehingga sukses menjaring para pencari jodoh. Tulisan ini mengulas tentang bagaimana agen berperan dalam platform perjodohan online: Rumah Taaruf myQuran dan Mawaddah Indonesia. Penelitian ini berda pada pendekatan teori agensi. Berdasarkan data yang didapatkan, penelitian ini berkesimpulan bahwa kesuksesan kedua platform ini merupakan representasi dari kinerja banyak agen yang terlibat. Para agen ini tidak dipecah berdasarkkan gender melainkan multiagensi.

Keywords: *Agency, Mawaddah Indonesia, Online matchmaking; Rumah Taaruf myQuran*

A. Introduction

Taaruf online is a phenomenon that the Indonesian populace has somewhat demanded in the last decade, particularly the youth. Nisa stated in her writing that the reason for the growth and popularity of online taaruf is that they adhere to sharia principles, which distinguish them from traditional matchmaking agencies.[1] Religious jargon such as the invitation to taaruf in sharia, *hijra*, and the movement of *Indonesia Tanpa Pacaran* (Indonesia without dating) have become attractive features among today's youth.[2] Included in this online taaruf are the Rumah Taaruf myQuran and Mawaddah Indonesia, which have been studied in this paper. The large number of enthusiasts who use this online taaruf service is proof of the

organizers' success, who contribute to the management of all stages. Thus, the success of this platform is determined not only by the number of members but also by the level of involvement of agents. These agents are the engines that propel activity by activity, such as promotion, website management, mediation organization, and even assisting in the real marriage process.

These stages are not completed by a single individual, but by a collaborative team. This group is referred to as the agency. The existence of these agents requires further investigation. This existence question stems from Nisa's thesis on agency, which asserts that despite being surrounded by the might of male agencies, female agencies have been instrumental in boosting the success of

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[1]   Eva F. Nisa, 'Online Halal Dating, Taaruf, and the Shariatisation of Matchmaking among Malaysian and Indonesian Muslims', *CyberOrient*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Wiley Online Library, 2021), pp. 231–58.

[2]   *Ibid.*

the online taaruf process in Indonesia and Malaysia.[3] As if Nisa's study of women's ability to act independently confirms Saba's study.[4] Second, this research does not justify women's agencies' dominance in the process of choosing a partner; rather, it demonstrates that the emergence of online taaruf platforms creates a space for women to respond to patriarchal cultural repression in a balanced manner. For instance, women can reject or ignore men who express an interest in them. If we examine the reality on the ground more closely, this argument also holds true, as men's and women's roles actually complement one another during the process of selecting a partner, taaruf. However, Nisa's research does not indicate the extent to which their roles are balanced. Taking this as a starting point, this research seeks to recapture and explain that the agency role is not solely dominated by one gender—for example, only female/male agencies—but that it is shared by many (multi-agency) men and women. To differentiate this research from Nisa's, this research will examine the extent to which male agencies contribute to the platform's success and the extent to which female agencies are empowered as well.

This article serves as a supplement to previous research that aims to emphasize the role of agencies in matters of selecting a partner until marriage. Saba's previous article discussed how the women's agency movement used its capacity to challenge the patriarchy's dominance in mate selection. Obeying a patriarchal culture is regarded as religious teaching that must be followed by every woman, including the fact that she cannot freely choose the man she wishes to marry. Men can choose women only through proposals. Saba wishes to demonstrate that, in addition to serving as a form of resistance to discrimination in mate selection, the existence of female agents enables them to regulate and determine their own choices. Even though this is not always true over time. It has been established that in today's modern era, both men and women are in the same right to choose a life partner based on their preferences. Through online taaruf, each participant shares the equal chance to choose and decline, ensuring that there is no gender discrimination.

Prior to this research, Sari conducted a cyberculture analysis of Rumah Taaruf myQuran and discovered that this platform engages in computer-mediated communication without departing from the ideal reality.[5] This mode of communication serves as a vehicle/instrument for communicating the agency's message (ideology).[6] This is in tone with Robinson's language, online media is similar to print media which is a tool for buttressing the community or gaining constituents.[7] Apart from Sari's study, Istiqomah and Trihastuti studied Rumah Taaruf myQuran, but her research focused on how this platform evolved into a market instrument (commodification of religious values), rather than a da'wa medium.[8] Istiqomah concluded that the myQuran platform demonstrates that Islamic da'wah can be a reasonably profitable business[9] as confirmed by Rahman.[10] This reflects the Muslim world's consumerism.

3   Nisa, 'Online Halal Dating, Taaruf, and the Shariatisation of Matchmaking among Malaysian and Indonesian Muslims'.

4   Saba Mahmood, 'Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 16, no. 2 (JSTOR, 2001), pp. 202–36.

5   Novita Intan Sari, *Taaruf Digital (Studi Etnografi Virtual Komunikasi Termediasi Komputer Pada Rumah Taaruf Myquran)* (Fakultas Dakwah dan Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2020), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/58043, accessed Dec 2022.

6   *Ibid.*

7   Francis Robinson, 'Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 229–51.

8   Istiqomah Istiqomah and Ainun Sakinah, 'Ta'aruf Dalam Konteks Komodifikasi Agama Studi Kasus pada Rumah Ta'aruf-Qu di Yogyakarta', *Madania: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2021), hlm. 63–9; Risa Trihastuti, 'Representation of the Islamic Values in the Website of rumahtaaruf. com as a Digital Dating Agency Service', *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2017), pp. 137–43.

9   Istiqomah and Sakinah, 'Ta'aruf Dalam Konteks Komodifikasi Agama Studi Kasus pada Rumah Ta'aruf-Qu di Yogyakarta'.

10   Fathor Rahman and Ghazian Luthfi Zulhaqqi, 'Fenomena Ta'aruf Online dan Praktik Komodifikasi Perkawinan di Dunia Digital', *Kafaah: Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2020), hlm. 63–80.

Istiqamah's statement was identical to what Nisa referred to as lucrative da'wah.[11] This paper is not in point of what those authors have explained, but specifically more to how the multi-agency plays the role to assist their platform's members.

To understand the role of multi-agency in this study, the author applies agency theory, which states that relationships are always based on contracts between company members, specifically between the principal (owner) and the agent (actor). The owner and manager of an online taaruf platform are interchangeable terms, while its members are agents who carry out the online taaruf process. Through agency theory, it is understood that there are numerous agents with distinct roles and relationships, as well as how agency roles are assigned. As stated previously, this article will examine two platforms: Rumah Taaruf myQuran and Mawaddah Indonesia. The subject of this study is the platform where the actors or agents are involved. For one year, the author conducted a survey and observation. The data is then analyzed qualitatively using agency theory in order to present it in the form of a description. The presentation of this paper begins with an explanation of the online taaruf phenomenon in Indonesia, followed by the establishment of the two platforms and their contents. The article concludes with a discussion of the multi-agency role on the two platforms.

B.   Taaruf Proliferation: Offline to Online

The term taaruf is taken from the word *ta'arafu* in al-Hujurat verse 13, which connotes the meaning of knowing each other.[12] Taaruf is the first step for any couple who wishes to enter into a marriage, which is a way of implementing religious teachings as mentioned in the source of Islam, Qur'an.[13]

Through this taaruf, each potential partner becomes acquainted with and understands the other's background and personality. Each of them has the ability to exchange information about their family history, personality, education, social life, and culture to better understand each other. Understanding this personality is expected to be one of the factors that contribute to their determination to progress to the level of marriage.[14] Taaruf is a preliminary assessment designed to reduce regret after marriage and increase self-awareness in order to accept partners as they are and deal with marriage gracefully. Because, according to the concept of taaruf, the two prospective husbands and wives are placed in a situation where they can learn about, understand, and explore one another.[15]

In most Muslim societies, the matchmaking process is conducted conventionally by parents, family, or third parties such as matchmaking facilities who facilitate the process by arranging offline meetings. However, with the passage of time and technological advancements, the matchmaking process has shifted online, utilizing technology in the form of the internet and various media platforms such as websites and mobile applications that can be downloaded and accessed without the need to meet in person. The advancement of this technology enables matchmaking agents to offer their services online, thereby simplifying the process for members or users.[16]

It is undeniable that the existence of online matchmaking services is a result of the rapid development of technology, which has increased the diversity of the process of finding a mate. If in the past, it appeared as though parents interceded in the process of finding a mate, this is not the case in today's modern era, when individuals prefer to

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[11]   Eva F. Nisa, 'Creative and Lucrative Daʿwa: the Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia', *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, vol. 5, nos. 1–2 (Brill, 2018), pp. 68–99.

[12]   M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah, Pesan, Kesan dan keserasian al-Qur'an,* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2009), hlm. 617-618.

[13]   *Ibid.*

[14]   Isnadul Hamdi, 'Taaruf dan Khitbah Sebelum Perkawinan', *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2017), hlm. 43–52.

[15]   Eliyyil Akbar, 'Taaruf dalam Khitbah Perspektif Syafi'i dan Ja'fari', *Musāwa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2015), hlm. 55–66.

[16]   Eva F. Nisa, 'The Bureaucratization of Muslim Marriage in Indonesia', *Journal of Law and Religion*, vol. 33, no. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 291–309.

choose their own partner based on personal characteristics, particularly in terms of 'love' and 'comfort' created/felt by both parties. Labib, for instance, adheres to Knox and Schacht (2010),[17] in stating that the role of parents in selecting a partner has shifted to their children.[18] While it is true that the existence of this online taaruf encourages individualization of the process of finding a mate (away from the control of parents), this is not entirely true[19] because the seekers continue to require the assistance of third parties, specifically the online matchmaking agency.

In Indonesia, many platforms that provide online taaruf services have emerged by offering taaruf concepts that are (considered) in accordance with Islamic law, including Mawaddah Indonesia sited in https://mawaddahindonesia.com and Rumah Taaruf myQuran on http://www.rumahtaaruf.com. Each site has its unique notion for carrying out its functions. Some accompany their members through the marriage process, while others simply bring them together and support them passively using the available platform menus.

Apart from the convenience provided by technology, the primary reason for the public's interest in online taaruf services is the campaign for an invitation to 'hijrah' and the religious messages conveyed. The concept of *hijrah* is an invitation to change one's lifestyle from that is (perceived to be) un-Islamic or not yet Islamic to that is (presumed to be) Islamic. The campaign for Indonesia Without Dating (ITP) movement and the invitation to shari'ah-compliant taaruf is also a major draw for young people looking for a mate.[20] The campaign for the term religious ideology is also a way for them to differentiate themselves from other matchmaking agencies by providing Islamic taaruf services.[21] Along with the emergence of the *hijrah* trend campaign, the shift in the form and value of taaruf is influenced by the intensity of campaigns on social media, particularly Instagram, warning about the dangers of dating and inviting young people to marry. A case in point is the ITP movement, which was launched in September 2015 by La Ode Munafar. Through his Instagram uploads, ITP encourages his followers to abandon the dating culture that contributes to the perpetrators' moral decadence and hasten to marry. Indeed, the movement expanded and spawned the young marriage movement. The movement's central narrative was that "dating is forbidden and dangerous; marriage is the solution."[22]

The *hijrah* trend is indicative of Indonesia's 'Islamization' of public spaces. The purpose of Islamization of the public sphere is to abandon un-Islamic actions and then to become more Islamic, which occurs in the public or open sphere rather than in the private or clandestine sphere.[23]

C. Online Taaruf Process

1. Mawaddah Indonesia

Mawaddah Indonesia is an online learning forum that operates on a website platform managed by Ustadz Khalid Basalamah and aided by a website manager who doubles as an admin mediator, ready to assist participants with questions or issues. Mawaddah Indonesia maintains a website at https://mawaddahindonesia.com that provides matchmakers with free online

[17] David Knox and Caroline Schacht, 'Choices in Relationships: An Introduction', *Choices in Relationships: An Introduction to Marriage and the Family* (Wadsworth Belmont, CA, 2010), pp. 1–42.

[18] Mughni Labib Ilhamuddin Is Ashidiqie, 'Pilihan Masyarakat pada Agen Biro Jodoh Online: Kebutuhan atau Tuntutan?', *TEMALI: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2020), hlm. 281–7.

[19] Nisa, 'Online Halal Dating, Taaruf, and the Shariatisation of Matchmaking among Malaysian and Indonesian Muslims'.

[20] Eva F. Nisa, 'Muslim Women in Contemporary Indonesia: Online Conflicting Narratives Behind the Women Ulama Congress', *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 43, no. 3 (Taylor & Francis, 2019), pp. 434–54.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Fathor Rahman and Ghazian Luthfi Zulhaqqi, 'Fenomena Taaruf Online dan Praktik Komodifikasi Perkawinan di Dunia Digital', *Kafaah: Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2020), hlm. 63–80; Trie Yunita Sari, Fatimah Husein, and Ratna Noviani, 'Hijrah and Islamic Movement in Social Media: A Social Movement Study of Anti-Dating Movement# IndonesiaTanpaPacaran', *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2020), pp. 1–26.

[23] Afina Amna, 'Hijrah Artis sebagai Komodifikasi Agama', *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2019), hlm. 331–50.

taaruf services. Along with free taaruf, this website offers wedding package and event organizer services, as well as all walimah equipment such as decorations, makeup, clothing and accessories, photography and

videography, catering services, and reception accommodations. The platform's office is located at Batu Ampar, Kramat Jati, East Jakarta, on Condet Raya Street No. 50.[24]

**Gambar 1**: The first page (homepage) of the Mawaddah Indonesia website

**Gambar 2:** Package service for Walimah

As illustrated in Figure 1, this platform clearly states that Mawaddah Indonesia is a taaruf forum that places a premium on the syar'i process of finding a life partner. Naturally, this platform would then adhere to more stringent principles. The strictest provisions in the Mawaddah Indonesia taaruf process begin with registration. At the time of registration, each participant who wishes to use the services of this taaruf platform must provide detailed biodata, including a Profile (which must include the NIK KTP), Photos, Physical Description, Self-Description, Family Picture, Education, Experience, Worship,

Marriage Preparation, Expectations, Physical and Non-Physical Criteria. Each one must be completed. If all fields are completed completely, the registrant can proceed to the next stage, which is to search for a mate using the available menu criteria. However, if it is not completely filled out, it will be unable to proceed to the next stage. Before completing the online registration form, the registrant must agree to several conditions.

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[24] At first glance, it looks like the commodification of taaruf services in Mawaddah Indonesia. Even though they have the main goal as a religious service provider, they actively offer wedding and event organizer packages using digital marketing strategies. https://mawaddahindonesia.com/contact accessed Dec 2021
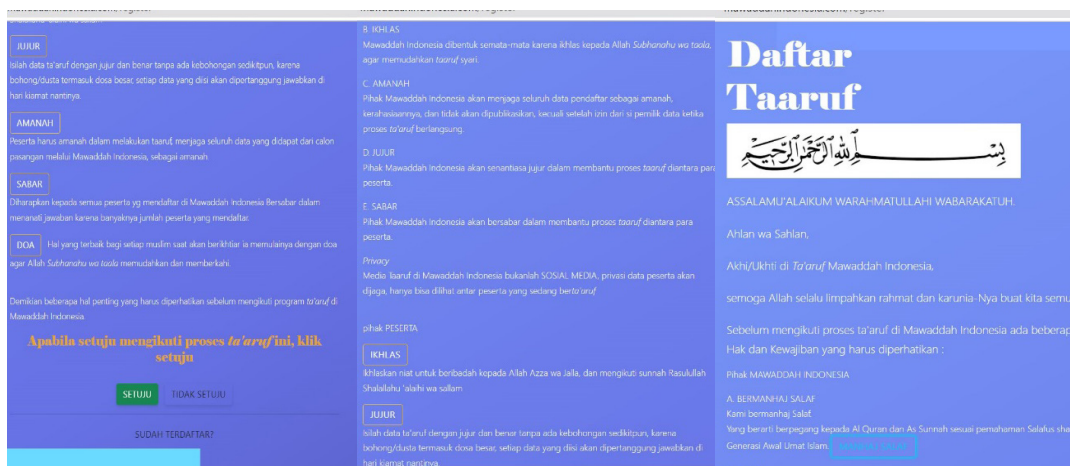
Gambar 3: The registration requirements page before filling out the online form
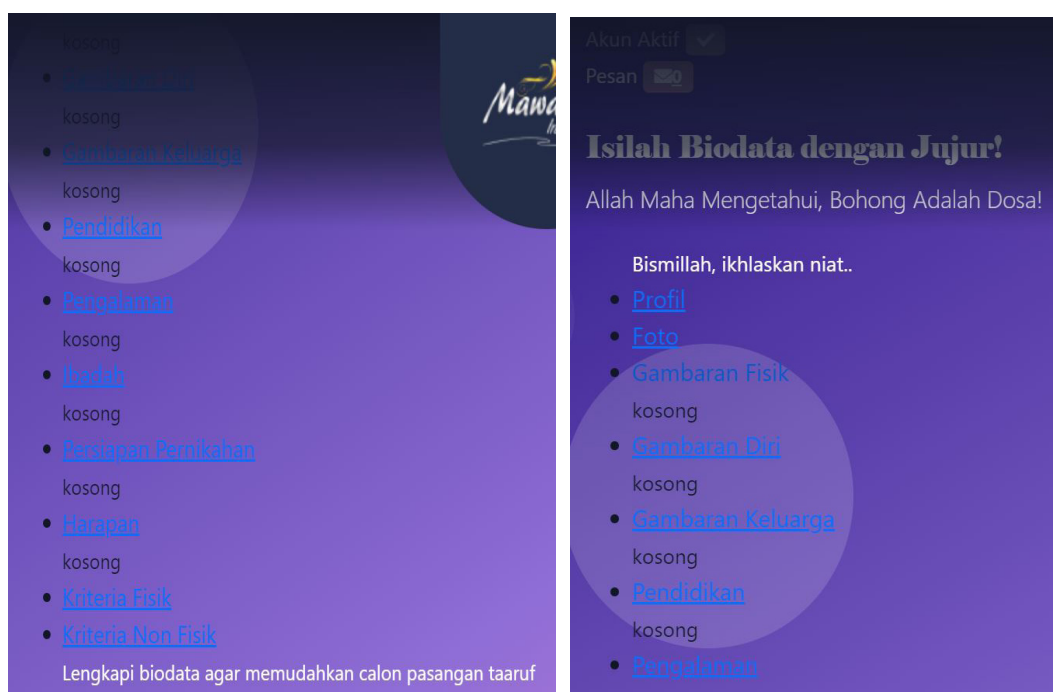
Gambar 4: The participant's biodata page

After agreeing to the terms above, the registrant may create an account; once created, the registrant must complete the biodata as described above.

However, certain things become taaruf principles in Mawaddah Indonesia, most notably that it is not recommended to post a profile photo for women (referred to as *akhwat*) (only a recommendation and not prohibited, with the reason to guard against *fitnah*).[25] However, certain things become principles in

Mawaddah Indonesia's taaruf, most notably that it is not recommended to post a profile photo for women (who are referred to as akhwat) (only a recommendation and not prohibited, with the reason to guard against slander).

Each participant, male (*ikhwan*) or female (*akhwat*), has the right to select a partner from the partner search menu based on the criteria desired, such as education,

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[25] The photos are not visible in the partner search menu and can be viewed only after the taaruf application has been accepted. Additionally, photo settings can be adjusted to specify whether privacy requires a request to view photos or whether they can be viewed immediately upon receipt of a taaruf request.

physique, occupation, ethnic origin, younger or older age, status, or domicile. You can also search by polygamy (polygamy data is also available). Mawaddah Indonesia is dedicated to facilitating the search for polygamy for those who desire it.[26] Each has the right to apply for taaruf with the opposite sex, and each has the option of accepting or rejecting it based on the criteria specified in the profile. If the recipient accepts their request for taaruf, they may continue by sending a conversation message with a maximum of 11 messages and a maximum of 500 words per message. As a result, the time remaining in this taaruf conversation session must be maximized, as it is limited. Each taaruf partner is given the freedom and confidentiality of privacy to ask each other whatever they want during the conversation process. The admin manager does not actively participate in this process; rather, he or she acts as a mediator, monitoring the message inbox for any impediments. Participants may also withdraw from the taaruf process during this conversation session if they do not find a match. When they chose to withdraw, they did convey the reason by clicking on one of the withdrawal reasons as a means of communicating with their taaruf partner.

If the couples find a match during the conversation session, they have the right to fill out the *nazhor* schedule in the *nazhor* advanced menu, namely the plan to see the couple in person, on the condition that the sister fills out the guardian's phone number and the brothers contact the sister's guardian to arrange for a Nazhor session at a location agreed upon by both parties. A suitable taaruf couple may also immediately complete the sermon's schedule and the marriage contract in the sermon's additional menu if the parties are certain to proceed to the marriage level.

From the beginning of the taaruf message conversation session to the determination of the *nadhor* and *khitbah* schedules, it is entirely up to the taaruf couple and their families to exercise their rights and freedoms. The platform administrator does not attempt to intervene or assist. This may be one of their sources of comfort and security, as their privacy is maintained without them feeling as if they are being watched by third parties. Apart from being free, the convenience of the members' privacy is undoubtedly the primary reason for this platform's popularity among Indonesians. The account page provides access to all taaruf features.

2. *Rumah Taaruf myQuran*

Rumah Taaruf myQuran is an Islamic media outlet devoted to premarital taaruf. Rumah Taaruf myQuran's existence is inextricably linked to the birth of the online Islamic discussion forum myQuran.com. Taaruf myQuran began in 2001 as an Introduction and Matchmaking subforum. Because all taaruf processes are coordinated online, this platform does not have an office or secretariat. If the process progresses to the stage of face-to-face meetings, they are typically scheduled at a large/major mosque or another location close to the women's domicile. In 2004, it was renamed the Taaruf, Pernikahan, dan Jalin Rumah Tangga (Tahan Jaga) subforum, which served as a venue for forum members to engage in taaruf and matchmaking, as well as a forum for discussion of marriage and the household. To keep the discussion focused, the subforum is divided into two sections: the Bina Keluarga section, which discusses marriage and household matters, and the Taaruf Process section, which serves as a means of taaruf and locating a mate for forum members. Between 2011 and 2013, the Taaruf Process subforum was renamed the Taaruf and Matchmaking subforum, until January 2014, when theRumah Taaruf myQuran was established with the website domain address www.RumahTaaruf.com to further benefit the ummah.

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[26] This is understandable, given that the founder of this platform is a salafi figure who openly supports polygamy, rather than secretly, despite the fact that he has not engaged in polygamy himself. This statement is based on Ustadz Khalid Basalamah's statement on Youtube, "Offered Polygamy by Wife," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xaiVcFcp7A. December 2021.

Ishak Tri Nugroho

Gambar 5: Homepage of Taaruf myQuran

Rumah Taaruf myQuran is run by Tri Wahyu Nugroho with the assistance of regional mediators who are members of the myQuran.com community forum and married alumni of RumahTaaruf.com. Through taaruf, this platform fights for an invitation to 'syar'i effort' in Knitting Sakinah. On the main page of its website, this platform also provides suggestions in the form of Islamic texts relating to taaruf and inspiration for marriage. This platform appears to be quite systematic and comprehensive because it provides step-by-step assistance on the Taaruf procedure, including etiquette, on its internet page through Taaruf Guide columns, Taaruf Tips, and Premarital Fiqh Consultations.

Numerous guiding principles serve as the foundation for performing Taaruf through the Rumah Taaruf myQuran. To begin, the third person principle, namely that all taaruf activities are mediated by an administrator/mediator who will assist throughout the process. Communication is permitted only through the administrator/mediator in order to avoid the negative consequences of direct communication between parties who share an affinity. Direct communication between taaruf members is permitted only after the two families have reached a more serious stage in their marriage preparations, while still maintaining communication and interaction with non-mahrams.

Second, it is confidential; that is, all stages of the Taaruf Process at theRumah Taaruf myQuran are known only to the process's administrator/mediator and the contemplating parties. Taaruf's brief profile on the website is presented in the form of general information, without mentioning the owner's name or displaying the owner's photo. Personal data is not exchanged during the process of exchanging personal data in order to protect the privacy of taaruf members. Third, the nazhor activity, specifically this process is a continuation of the online taaruf process, accompanied by a regional mediator who serves as both the taaruf companion and the offline meeting leader, specifically after the taaruf party exchanges biodata and asks questions via email with an admin/mediator intermediary. From these principles, it is clear that the administrator/mediator plays a critical role in managing the course of study at Rumah Taaruf myQuran from the beginning to the end.

At Rumah Taaruf myQuran, the online Taaruf application process begins with member registration. Each month, registration is open to the general public. To become a member, each participant must meet the predetermined requirements, join the Taaruf RumahTaaruf.com online Training group, and pay a registration fee of 50000 rupiahs to the account number communicated via Whatsapp application. Each participant candidate member will receive facilities at the Taaruf Clinic in the form of an electronic book that contains a collection of questions and answers

about taaruf articles, taaruf training materials, explanations of taaruf procedures, questions and answers, and consultations, as well as taaruf mediation for participants interested in undergoing taaruf at Rumah Taaruf. Each participant in Taaruf training has the right to register their biodata with the administrator. Participants whose biodata pass the selection process and meet the requirements will be added to the RumahTaaruf.com membership directory.

At RumahTaaruf.com, all stages of the taaruf process are conducted online via admin email. Online taaruf entails exchanging profiles and then exchanging questions and answers via email admin to further cement the connection. Members of Taaruf can submit the desired profile number via the Contact admin menu. The administrator determines the compatibility of the requester's profile (applicants) with the specified criteria and, if necessary, submits the profile to applicants for consideration. The applicant confirms whether or not the profile he reviewed is a match. If the profile number does not match, applicants may request another member's profile number from the list. If the applicant's profile is deemed suitable, it will be forwarded to the desired taaruf member for consideration. The desired taaruf member confirms his or her agreement with the applicant's profile. If the applicant's profile does not match, he or she may submit profiles of other members on the list. If it matches, the process advances to the next stage, which is a question and answer via email admin. The duration of the profile exchange process is determined by how long the profile recipient takes to consider the profile he has received.

If the applicant's submission is accepted, the next step is an email-based question and answer session facilitated by the administrator. Admin allowed women to submit five questions ahead of men. Admin accepts female-submitted questions and forwards them to male-submitted questions. Men respond to women's questions and

also submit five questions to the women via the administrator. The admin conveys the male party's response to the female party's question, as well as the male party's response to the female party. The women submit responses to the men's questions, and the admin distributes the responses to the men. Men and women alternately receive the same rights and opportunities through administrative intermediaries.[27] Once both parties have gained a sense of stability and confidence, the process is extended to the level of offline taaruf.

When the online taaruf process is complete, the next step is offline taaruf, which refers to the stages of the taaruf process at RumahTaaruf.com that occur after the two parties involved in the online taaruf process agree to continue the process directly without the assistance of a third party. Offline taaruf entails a direct meeting and additional question and answer sessions, followed by a period of istikhara and, if both parties are equally suitable following a direct meeting, continued with family taaruf. The administrator proposes an offline meeting time and location to the men and women who share an affinity. The offline meeting location is changed to a more convenient location for the women's residence. The administrator will designate a regional mediator who will assist in the taaruf process. If no regional mediator is available to assist, the administrator will request assistance from the taaruf party in identifying a taaruf companion who can serve as the offline meeting's leader. The administrator will guide the taaruf companion through the offline meeting's stages.

All taaruf processes at Rumah myQuran demonstrate the dominance of admin/mediators in managing the taaruf process, from registration to online taaruf to offline taaruf meetings with the prospective partners family. What's interesting is that the administrators on duty are married alumni of the Rumah Taaruf myQuran community, which is dominated by male administrators

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27   During this Q&A session, the administrator allows women to submit five questions to the men first. Then the Admin accepts the women's questions and forwards them to the men. The men respond to the women's questions and also submit five questions via Admin to the women. The admin conveys the male party's response to the female party's question, as well as the male party's response to the female party. The point is that through administrative intermediaries, all parties obtain the same rights.

but also includes women who are actively involved. This is evident from the list of husband-and-wife admin and mediator teams. Their website features a total of 51 mediators. These mediators are dispersed throughout

the world. As a result, the mediator assigned to the case is determined by the resident's address. The administrator of Rumah Taaruf myQuran can be contacted via the website.

Gambar 6: The organizational structure and mediator of Rumah Taaruf myQuran

D. Male and Female Agencies in Mawaddah Indonesia and Rumah Taaruf myQuran

Plural agents are defined as actors capable of acting. While agency theory is defined as a person's (actor/ agent's) capacity to think, behave, and act independently, freely, and autonomously, following his or her own will.[28] This is consistent with Sewell's assertion that humans as agents possess the capacity to exert control over the social relations in which they are embedded, which ultimately translates into the capacity to transform these social relations to a degree. Humans are capable of becoming agents due to their ability to act. This agency is concerned with the will, creative action, and the capacity

to coordinate one's actions and interactions with others.[29] According to Giddens, this agency extends to an individual's capacity for intentional behavior. Giddens views these agents as "knowledgeable," implying that they are capable of agency within and through the practices of their activities.[30] Through its capabilities, this agency is responsible for establishing the social structure.

Agency theory is also frequently used to examine agency relationship patterns in order to achieve good governance, or what is commonly referred to as good corporate governance.[31] To accomplish this, governance must enforce an agency relationship pattern, in which one or more owners hire an agent to perform a service and then delegate decision-

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[28]   Rilus A. Kinseng, 'Structugency: A theory of action', *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2017); Barry Barnes, *Understanding agency: Social theory and responsible action* (Sage, 1999).

[29]   William H. Sewell Jr, 'A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 98, no. 1 (University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 1–29.

[30]   David Inglis, *An Invitation to Social Theory* (John Wiley & Sons, 2018); Mukunda Lamsal, 'The Structuration Approach of Anthony Giddens', *Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 5 (2012), pp. 111–22.

[31]   Arad Reisberg, *Derivative Actions and Corporate Governance: Theory and Application* (Oxford University Press, December, 2007).

making authority to the agent. Thus, an agent is obligated to account for the mandate delegated to him by the owner.[32]

When linked to Mawaddah Indonesia and Rumah Taaruf myQur'an, this agency theory can be interpreted as implying that Mawaddah Indonesia and Rumah Taaruf myQur'an are similar to a company. The founder of the business is referred to as the owner, who delegated management responsibilities to the agents/actors who manage and operate the platform. The two online taaruf platforms are owned by Ustadz Khalid Basalamah and Tri Wahyu Nugroho, while the agents in question are administrators, mediators, website managers, and members/members who contribute to the success of the online taaruf process on both platforms.

The application of agency theory to the management of Mawaddah Indonesia's online taaruf platform and the Rumah Taaruf myQuran is evident in the platform's structured step-by-step management. Success in managing the platform cannot be divorced from the role of agents who are capable of acting, being creative, and coordinating their actions with those of others in order to create social structures in society. The agents' success in managing the platform demonstrates that they possess the ability to manage successful businesses (good corporate governance). This is consistent with agency theory's principles, which state that agency theory is a relationship based on contracts that occur between company members, specifically between the owner and the agent as the primary actor. The agents involved in their awareness and capability are willing to assume the roles of one another. On the one hand, there are those who act as facilitators of the Taaruf process, such as administrators, mediators, and website administrators. On the one hand, some serve as objects in the taaruf process, namely the members/members of matchmakers who are also active in utilizing the two platforms' facilities.

If we examine each platform in considerable detail, we can see the distinctions between Mawaddah Indonesia and Rumah Taaruf myQur'an. The agency's role as administrator and website manager on the Mawaddah Indonesia Platform is that of a passive facilitator, not interfering with the online taaruf process. They merely facilitate the procedures and constraints established, such as a conversation facility that is limited to 11 (eleven) messages per day and each message is limited to 500 words. Meanwhile, during the conversion process, each partner is given the freedom to communicate with the other, asking any necessary questions without the intervention of the administrator.

Taaruf couples act as active and free agencies to determine and consider their partner's choices without having to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to ask and answer dialogue questions. This passive admin position can be a factor providing comfort and privacy for taaruf couples because their conversations are not accompanied by a third party. On this platform, it is clear that the position of the agency is not dominated by only men and women, they have the same rights and opportunities to apply for taaruf, or refuse. There is no domination or "men win to vote while women win to refuse". However, all have the right to vote first and all have the right to fight actively without any intervention.

The admin is not involved in any of the taaruf processes at Mawaddah Indonesia, from registration to finding a partner, accepting taaruf, and the conversation process, to continuing with the nazhor meeting and sermons, to offline meetings with families. Admin acting as a passive agent will assist further only if there are incoming messages (inboxes) from each couple interested in using Mawaddah Indonesia's wedding and event organizer services, or if members encounter difficulties using the platform's account and menu facilities. the. On the one hand, it appears as though this platform is managed by administrators as a taaruf agency that provides free, online, and privacy-protected taaruf services. On the other hand, the admin functions as a marketing agency that

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[32] Mailani Hamdani, 'Good Corporate Governance (GCG) dalam Perspektif Agency Theory', *Semnas Fekon*, vol. 2016 (2016), pp. 279–83.

commodifies the taaruf process by offering economic value-added taaruf support services, such as wedding and organizer services and equipment. Commodification can be defined as the packaging of content or information in an attractive and relevant manner to the market's will.[33] Taaruf commodification, which begins with religious values, is then packaged with interesting media content that can generate economic benefits.[34]

Indeed, administrative agencies and mediators dominate the role of the agency at Rumah Taaruf myQuran. The taaruf students will be guided and facilitated by the taaruf administrator and mediator through the online taaruf submission stage, the question and answer conversation stage, and on to the offline meetings stage. Because everything in the taaruf process must pass through an admin intermediary and mediator, the role of the admin agent/actor becomes critical. Those who guide the taaruf process from online introductions to offline meetings with each partner's family during the nazhor and khitbah stages.

The presence of the agents and their freedom to act in order to perform taaruf and assist in the taaruf process demonstrate the multi-agency equality at Rumah Taaruf myQuran. The administrators and mediators were revealed to be men and women, all of whom were married couples from the Rumah Taaruf community. There is no presumption that administrators and mediators must be exclusively men or women; rather, they all act actively to assist one another. Similarly, there is no discrimination against the member/member agency in terms of the right to actively submit a request for taaruf in advance to the partner. Men may submit to women first, and women may submit to men first. Here, it is clear that members/member agents have the option of actively seeking out partners who meet their criteria.

As a result of the foregoing, it is clear that the roles of the agencies involved in Mawaddah Indonesia and Rumah Taaruf myQuran are similar and dissimilar. The similarities are that the agents are complex, there is no domination or discrimination/restrictions on acting for men or women, and everyone has equal rights in their respective roles. This demonstrates unequivocally that each platform has a large number of agents. The presence of an agency and its role is critical to the success of managing a platform, which is comparable to managing a business. Ustadz Khalid Basalamah and Tri Wahyu Nugroho serve as the company's principals in the form of an online taaruf platform, while the agents range from administrators, mediators, website managers, to members who contribute to the success of the online taaruf process on both platforms. the. This clearly contradicts the belief that women's agencies play a significant role in the online taaruf process because women as women agencies are a form of change and resistance to freedom of choice. In fact, this is not the case; everyone plays a critical role and enjoys the same level of freedom in ensuring the Taaruf process's success.

Concerning the distinctions between the agencies in terms of their capabilities, those involved in Mawaddah Indonesia and Rumah Taaruf myQuran differ only in terms of role division, not in terms of gender identity dominance. The division of roles establishes their position in action, including who should serve as administrator, mediator, and website manager, as well as who should act as a member or member of the taaruf participant. They are empowered to act in accordance with their assigned roles.

In Mawaddah Indonesia, the admin role is a passive one that serves as a facilitator for connecting taaruf couples online via the platform facility. While members are expected to participate in taaruf, in practice, the positions and roles of administrators

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[33]   This platform does not charge members who use online taaruf services, but rather promotes consumptive and economical services related to all events and wedding preparations. This is in contrast to other taaruf bureaus, which charge an initial fee to join and utilize their taaruf services. The commodification of various taaruf service platforms can be viewed as a form of capitalism, as it transforms the messages displayed in the media into marketable commodities that generate economic value.

[34]   In other words, media and the value that exist within them both have a reciprocal orientation that is related to the commodification of religious values. See Dwi Haryanto, 'Komodifikasi Agama Pada Media Sinema Sebagai Strategi Jualan Industri Perfilman Indonesia', *Journal of Urban Society's Arts*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2017), hlm. 61–70.

and mediators are critical, particularly on the Rumah Taaruf myQuran platform. The administrators perform an active role as facilitators, accompanying the taaruf process from inception to marriage. Both active and passive admin roles are critical in assisting the taaruf process in accordance with the platform-specific procedures. While taaruf couples are not permitted to communicate directly, as they are in Mawaddah Indonesia, this does not mean their rights are limited to taaruf. Male and female partners both have the same right to submit taaruf in advance and the ability to accept or decline. There are no gender restrictions when it comes to choosing a partner on this platform, which is frequently referred to as "women win to refuse," but everyone has the right to choose and is permitted to refuse without regard for gender. Similarly, the existence of multi-agency Rumah Taaruf myQuran can be deduced from the fact that the majority of administrators and moderators are husband and wife from the community.

According to some of the findings above, the role of multi-agency is critical in carrying out the online taaruf process on both the Mawaddah Indonesia platform and the Rumah Taaruf My Qur'an platform. With all of the relevant provisions and rules in place, the principal platform acting as principal is able to regulate the management mandate and the course of online taaruf for the agents involved. Each agent is assigned a role and is empowered to act. There are no gender-based barriers to discrimination or domination, and all agents, male or female, have the same rights in their respective roles.

E.   Conclusion

The existence of online taaruf platform cannot be divorced from the existence of numerous agents (multi-agency), not just female agents. It is true, the role of female agencies is critical because the number of female participants outnumbers the number of male participants. But it does not mean that one gender dominates another. Both genders are to see in collaborative work, multi-agency. Even though this is not always a reliable indicator of online taaruf's success. Including

the opinion that women's agents frequently dominate the process of determining elections by claiming that men win the right to vote and women win the right to refuse, it is widely accepted that women's role is critical as a determinant of the continuation of online taaruf.

This research is tended to agree that all agents, despite the gender, play a critical role, not just female, but also involving a large number of male and female agents. The agents' success in managing the platform demonstrates that they possess the ability to manage a successful business (good corporate governance). Ustaz Khalid Basalamah and Tri Wahyu Nugroho founded the two online taaruf platforms as principals, while the agents range from administrators, mediators, website managers, to members. This collaboration between principals and agents ensures the success of both platforms' online taaruf processes. Indeed, this research does not eliminate the gender imbalance in the implementation or visualization of the two platforms, but it is also ensured that the gender imbalance does not become an impediment to the platforms' success.

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