

NEGOTIATING DIGITAL POLYGAMY: Hadith, Authority, and Public Engagement on Instagram

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Abstract: Polygamy remains a controversial issue in contemporary Islamic discourse, causing tension between the legitimacy of hadith texts and their social implications for gender justice. This study explores the construction of discourse on polygamy in the digital space through a netnographic approach to the Instagram account @khalidbasalamahofficial. The analysis focuses on the representation of hadiths on justice in polygamy and how the public responds to, affirms, or criticizes the content of these sermons. The results show that hadiths are selectively represented to affirm the legality of polygamy in Islamic law, while also functioning as a symbolic instrument in building digital religious authority. However, public interactions give rise to negotiations of meaning that indicate an epistemic transformation, in which religious authority shifts from formal institutions to a more participatory digital public sphere. In this context, the *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh* approach offers a reinterpretative framework that emphasizes the principles of reciprocity and justice, demanding the realization of equal social relations and fair and dignified treatment of women. Thus, polygamy is not only understood as a permissible practice but also as an arena for moral reflection, affirming that balance, equality, and mutual benefit are at the core of religious authority and practice in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital polygamy, Contemporary hadith, Religious authority, Netnography, Gender justice.

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Introduction

Polygamy remains one of the most controversial issues in contemporary Islamic discourse, giving rise to deep tensions between the textual legitimacy of the Qur'an and ḥadīth and its practical implications for gender justice, power relations, and social dynamics.¹ On the one hand, supporters of polygamy often rely on literal interpretations of ḥadīth to frame the practice as a form of piety and social protection, but this clashes with critiques that highlight inherent contradictions, such as the exploitation of women and patriarchal biases that exacerbate inequality.² This contestation has become increasingly complex in the digital age, where narratives of polygamy spread through online platforms, creating a paradox between idealized traditional authority and the reality of emotional and psychological tension experienced by women.³ Furthermore, the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective emphasizes that polygamy is not an absolute

¹ Rohmansyah, "Polygamy in the Text of the Qur'an, Hadith and Bible: Theory Systems Approach of Jasser Auda," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial* 14, no. 2 (2019): 320–41, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v14i2.2529>; Shafra Shafra et al., "The Dialectic of Polygamy in the Thought of Classical and Contemporary Ulama: An Analysis of the Evolution of Islamic Legal Views on the Practice of Polygamy," *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 8, no. 2 (August 2024): 365–77, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v8i2.8801>.

² Muhammad Nasrulloh and Doli Witro, "Poligami Sebagai Perkawinan Abnormal: Kajian Terhadap Syariat Islam," *Musāwa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 20, no. 1 (July 2021): 17–30, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2021.201.17-30>.

³ Fatma Amilia et al., "The Gendered Politics of Maslahah: Patriarchal Tendencies in the Legal and Judicial Justification of Polygamy," *Asy-Syir'ah: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 58, no. 2 (December 2024): 241–72, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajish.v58i2.1519>; Ilyas Daud, "The Meaning of Justice in the Qur'an and the Implications of Islamic Law on Polygamy Permits: Harmonization of Islamic Law and Positive Law with the Maqasidi Tafsir Approach," *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 9, no. 1 (April 2025): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v9i1.11356>.

recommendation, but rather an alternative with strict conditions, which are often overlooked in contemporary discourse. This has sparked debate about whether this practice supports or undermines the objectives of Sharia, such as the preservation of life and offspring.⁴ This shows that polygamy is an arena of polemics that reveals the imbalance between sacred texts and the dynamic social context.

In the Indonesian context, the debate on polygamy has become increasingly dynamic due to its presence in the digital space, which brings together traditional authorities and new authorities based on social media.⁵ The contest between conservative and moderate perspectives creates ideological tensions that exacerbate polarization within Muslim communities.⁶ Conservative groups often promote polygamy as a symbol of piety and protection for women, through selectively chosen narratives. However, this view has been criticized by many as it is considered to be using religion as a promotional tool in the digital space, using hyperbolic and performative language on social media. The public reaction to this kind of presentation has actually caused many people to increasingly reject the practice of polygamy.

On the other hand, moderate and critical groups emphasize the ethical and social dimensions of polygamy by highlighting the risks of

⁴ Dri Santoso and Muhamad Nasrudin, "Polygamy in Indonesia and Its Relevance to The Protection of Women and Children in The Perspective of Islamic Law Philosophy," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 26, no. 1 (June 2021): 121–36, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v26i1.2406>; Elvira Dewi Br Ginting and Iwan Iwan, "Dynamics of Polygamy: An Attempt to Find Common Ground from the Perspective of Maqasid Sharia and Human Rights," *JURNAL AKTA* 11, no. 1 (February 2024): 82–97, <https://doi.org/10.30659/akta.v11i1.34092>.

⁵ Ahmad Muttaqin, "Women's Identity in the Digital Islam Age: Social Media, New Religious Authority, and Gender Bias," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies (QJIS)* 8, no. 2 (2020): 353–88.

⁶ Nikmatullah Nikmatullah and Emawati, "Conservative Muslim and Textual Interpretation of the Hadiths in Polygamy Propaganda in Indonesia," *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies* 24, no. 3 (2024): 558–70, <https://doi.org/10.69598/hasss.24.3.263308>.

injustice, marginalization, and exploitation of women.⁷ Thus, the debate on polygamy in the digital space is not only theological in nature but also reflects broader social and gender issues. However, previous studies have focused on textual interpretations or state regulations, and few have specifically highlighted the legitimacy of ḥadīth as the main argument produced and reproduced in the digital discourse on polygamy.

Understanding ḥadīths on polygamy in the digital space can also influence social constructs. Heidi A. Campbell explains that religious communities' responses to new media are always shaped through negotiations between tradition, authority, and religious texts they recognize. This negotiation process determines how religious teachings are understood, interpreted, and practiced in the digital age.⁸ Research conducted by Miski (2022) shows that the representation of polygamy in digital preaching often reinforces male superiority and places women in a subordinate position.⁹ A tendency that indicates the reproduction of patriarchy based on religious texts. Therefore, studies on the legitimacy of ḥadīth in the discourse of digital polygamy have significant academic relevance. Through a netnographic approach, this study can reveal how sacred texts transform when interacting with the logic of digital commodification inherent in online *da'wah* practices. Thus, this kind of research has the potential to enrich contemporary ḥadīth studies by presenting a netnographic perspective to read how ḥadīth texts are transformed into digital narratives.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine how ḥadīths about polygamy are used as instruments of legitimacy in the digital discourse developed on the @khalidbasalamahofficial account. The focus of this study is not limited to tracing the ḥadīth texts used as

⁷ Rohmadi, "Polygamy in Indonesia: A Critical Interpretation through the Lens of Mubadalah Theory," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mizani* 11, no. 2 (2024): 378–90, <https://doi.org/10.29300/mzn.v11i2.5068>.

⁸ Heidi A. Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (London: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010).

⁹ Miski Miski et al., "Polygamy Mentoring in Indonesia: Al-Qur'an, Hadith and Dominant Discourse Resistance," *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 7, no. 1 (June 2022): 15–32.

the basis for argumentation, but also on how these ḥadīths are produced, disseminated, and received in the context of digital space. Thus, this study seeks to reveal how the discourse on polygamy circulating on social media is constructed and narrated. More specifically, the objectives of this study are to analyze the patterns of ḥadīth legitimization in the digital discourse on polygamy, identify the forms of argumentation that emerge from this process, and examine the dynamics of the narrative constructed through one of the posts on the Instagram account @khalidbasalamahofficial.

The originality of this research lies in integrating ḥadīth studies and ethnographic analysis, which distinguishes it from previous studies. While previous studies have focused more on positive law aspects, as done by Yenny Febriyanti (2025),¹⁰ Dri Santoso, and Muhamad Nasrudin (2021),¹¹ and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective as shown by Ipandang (2021)¹² and Ilyas Daud (2025),¹³ or on the issue of gender bias in text interpretation as studied by Nikmatullah and Emawati (2024)¹⁴ and Muhammad Nasrulloh (2021),¹⁵ this study specifically focuses on how ḥadīth is positioned, constructed, and negotiated in digital discourse. By positioning social media as a new arena for religious authority and reception, this research significantly contributes to contemporary ḥadīth studies, while enriching the study of Islamic digital communication and gender literacy in religious practice.

¹⁰ Yenny Febrianty et al., "Answering the Challenges of Polygamy: Justice and Legal Protection in Islamic and Indonesian Law," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mizani* 12, no. 1 (2025): 15–32, <https://doi.org/10.29300/mzn.v12i1.6930>.

¹¹ Santoso and Nasrudin, "Polygamy in Indonesia and Its Relevance to The Protection of Women and Children in The Perspective of Islamic Law Philosophy."

¹² Ipandang Ipandang, "The Phenomenon of Polygamy of Civil Servants (PNS) in Al Maqashid Al Sharia Perspective: Analysis Study of Government Regulation No 45 of 1990 in Konawe Southeast Sulawesi," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 26, no. 1 (June 2021): 75–90, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v26i1.3203>.

¹³ Daud, "The Meaning of Justice in the Qur'an and the Implications of Islamic Law on Polygamy Permits."

¹⁴ Nikmatullah and Emawati, "Conservative Muslim and Textual Interpretation of the Hadiths in Polygamy Propaganda in Indonesia."

¹⁵ Nasrulloh and Witro, "Poligami Sebagai Perkawinan Abnormal."

This study uses a qualitative method with a netnography approach to analyze the representation of polygamy discourse on the @khalidbasalamahofficial account. The netnography approach was chosen because it aims to explore a deep understanding of the culture of social media users, which is reflected through digital traces, interaction practices, and the behavior of individuals or communities in the digital world. The netnographic analysis examines netizens' responses to one of the posts related to polygamy on the account.

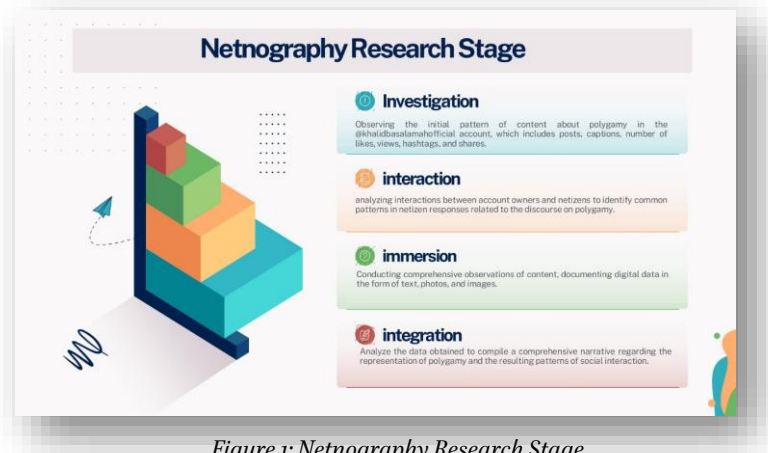


Figure 1: Netnography Research Stage

The stages of netnographic research in this study refer to the framework proposed by Kozinets, which includes four main phases: investigation, interaction, immersion, and integration.¹⁶ The investigation was the first step, which aimed to observe the initial patterns of polygamy content in the @khalidbasalamahofficial account, including posts, captions, number of likes, views, hashtags, shares, and comments from netizens. At the interaction stage, we actively understood netizens' perceptions and emotions towards polygamy content. The analysis focused on comments that represented support, criticism, and opinions, as well as tracing common patterns of netizen responses to the discourse on polygamy in each post. Furthermore, the immersion stage emphasized deepening the phenomenon through comprehensive observation of

¹⁶ Eriyanto, *Metode Netnografi (Pendekatan Kualitatif Dalam Memahami Budaya Pengguna Media Sosial)* (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021).

the content, documenting digital data in the form of text, photos, and images, and identifying the dynamics of public reactions in the comments section to gain a deeper understanding of the construction of the discourse on polygamy on the @khalidbasalamahofficial account. In the integration stage, all data obtained from the previous processes is processed and analyzed to compile a comprehensive narrative regarding the representation of polygamy, including the patterns of social interaction formed and their implications for public perception in the digital realm.

The @Khalidbasalamahofficial Account and the Legitimacy of the Hadith on Polygamy

The Instagram account @khalidbasalamahofficial, which currently has more than 3.6 million followers, is estimated to have been active since August 2018 and is a continuation of the success of Khalid Basalamah's digital *da'wah* with the KBH Digital Studio team through the YouTube platform. KBH Digital Studio is a non-profit organization established in 2013 under the auspices of PT Gazwah Enterprise. The company was founded by Khalid Basalamah and his partner, Diarto, as a platform for developing digital-based *da'wah* media.¹⁷ The @khalidbasalamahofficial account, which has been verified since May 2019, shows significant achievements with many followers and a high level of engagement, as seen from the number of likes and comments on each post. This high level of interaction shows that Khalid Basalamah can be categorized as a preacher who is a macro influencer with a broad audience reach and the ability to influence public opinion in the digital space.¹⁸ Therefore, this account can be positioned as a leading digital preaching channel influencing religious discourse on social media.

¹⁷ Randa Aditia and Muhammad Husni Ritonga, "Analisis Pesan Dakwah Ustadz Khalid Basalamah 'Membangun Keluarga Islami' di Media Sosial Instagram," *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 9, no. 2 (November 2024): 154–63.

¹⁸ Dita Verolyna, "Cyber Dakwah: Plus Minus Penyiaran Islam Pada Era Disruptif," *Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 6, no. 1 (2021).



Figure 2: Account Profile @khalidbasalamahofficial

One of the reels uploaded on October 6, 2025, titled “*The Apocalypse is Near! Israfil’s Trumpet is Already at His Mouth*” managed to reach 8 million views, with 718 thousand likes, 68.7 thousand shares, 59.1 thousand reposts, and 1,911 comments.¹⁹ This indicates that the religious content produced by the @khalidbasalamahofficial account can touch the emotions and elicit responses from its followers. As such, the account can be viewed as a strategic medium in forming digital religious authority that blends traditional Islamic narratives with the dynamics of modern communication.

The content uploaded by the @khalidbasalamahofficial account generally focuses on normative Islamic studies, including interpretations of verses from the Qur’an, ḥadīth, Islamic history, and fiqh worship and *mu’āmalah*. In terms of presentation, this account uses a simple but elegant visual display to attract the audience’s attention. One of the distinctive characteristics that sets this account apart from other digital *da’wah* accounts is the absence of human visual representations in every image upload. If there are human figures, the faces, such as the mouth and nose areas, are usually blurred

¹⁹ “Khalid Z.A Basalamah on Instagram: ‘Kiamata Sudah Dekat! Terompet Israfil Sudah di Depan Mulutnya,’” Instagram, October 5, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/khalidbasalamahofficial/reel/DPcYxEZDHeO/>.

or only partially shown. However, in video format, Khalid Basalamah still shows his face in its entirety, especially when delivering lectures or live explanations.²⁰



Figure 3: A photo post from @khalidbasalamahofficial



Figure 4: A video post from @khalidbasalamahofficial

The post titled “*Misconceptions about Polygamy*” posted on August 18, 2024, is the subject of this study. The lecture featured in the reel builds a narrative that polygamy is part of valid Islamic law, but cannot be practiced indiscriminately. In his post, Khalid Basalamah emphasizes the mistakes made by some people who practice polygamy, which is based solely on lust without sufficient knowledge and spiritual readiness.²¹ Thus, polygamy is constructed not merely as a male right, but as a form of worship that requires moral responsibility and readiness to uphold justice.

The post’s caption emphasizes the legitimacy of ḥadīth in the discourse on digital polygamy. The caption on the post explicitly quotes the ḥadīth narrated by Abu Hurairah about the obligation to be

²⁰ Mohammad Fattahun Ni’am, “Menakar Kembali Otoritas Ulama: Antara Kesalehan Dan Komodifikasi Agama,” *Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* 8, no. 2 (October 2023): 135–60, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jkii.v8i2.1349>.

²¹ “Khalid Z.A Basalamah on Instagram: ‘Miskonsepsi Tentang Poligami,’” Instagram, August 18, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/khalidbasalamahofficial/reel/C-z31BFsqzC/>.

fair in polygamy, which is found in the books of Abū Dāwud (2133), Ibn Mājah (1969), and al-Nasa'ī (3394).²² Interestingly, the caption also displays al-Albānī's authoritative assessment confirming the authenticity of the ḥadīth. Thus, this post not only conveys a moral message about polygamy but also builds religious authority through the legitimacy of the ḥadīth. Therefore, the narrative presented shows normative and authentic quality in the eyes of the digital audience. In addition to the ḥadīth sources explicitly mentioned in the caption, we found that this ḥadīth is also written in the book *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (1141)²³ and *Musnad Aḥmad* (8566).²⁴ This finding shows that the ḥadīth on the obligation to be fair in polygamy has a fairly broad chain of transmission, so that the existence of other ḥadīth references further strengthens the legitimacy built through these posts.

This pattern of legitimization represents a broader phenomenon in the dynamics of digital religion, where formal institutions no longer monopolize religious authority but are instead disseminated through social media platforms.²⁵ Popular preachers who gain digital visibility through viral content have successfully positioned themselves as alternative authorities that are easily accessible to the public, allowing people to obtain legal opinions without referring directly to conventional religious institutions. However, the spread of religious authority through digital media also raises problems, particularly on the issue of polygamy, because most content still reproduces the classical fiqh framework that emphasizes sharia legality while demanding women's patience to maintain the integrity of the

²² Instagram, "Khalid Z.A Basalamah on Instagram," August 18, 2024.

²³ Muḥammad ibn 'Isā ibn Saurah ibn Mūsā ibn al-Ḍaḥāk al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Mesir: Syirkah Maktabah wa Maṭba'ah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalbi, 1975), 439.

²⁴ Al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 14 (Muassis al-Risālah, 2001), 237.

²⁵ Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2022).

household. In contrast, challenges to polygamy are often positioned as a form of rejection of Sharia.²⁶

However, field findings show that the ideal construction of polygamy as constructed in digital discourse often conflicts with the reality of social practice. As revealed by research conducted by Hamka Hasan et al., there is a high rate of problematic polygamy involving several prominent religious figures, in which women and children are the most affected and often play the role of the main victims.²⁷ The practice of polygamy often does not provide justice for wives, but rather makes them objects for the fulfillment of biological needs. Family conditions also experience pressure and injustice; conflicts between wives can lead to domestic disharmony. The aspect of justice is more often narrowed down to financial distribution or turns, which are highly subjective and open to injustice. As a result, polygamy actually gives rise to real social and psychological problems, both for wives and children.²⁸

Reinterpreting Ḥadīth on Justice in Polygamy: A *Mubādalāh* Perspective

Terminologically, *mubādalāh* is a form of *maṣdar* (gerund) from the word *Bādala*, following the wazan *Fā'ala* with the meaning *Mushārahah bayna Ithnayn*, which is to do something between two parties. So, the term means to replace, change, or exchange one thing for another.²⁹ Conceptually, *mubādalāh* is understood as a method of interpretation that seeks to reinterpret religious texts that tend to be gender biased by emphasizing the principle of reciprocity. This approach aims to place women as active subjects in reading texts,

²⁶ Mhd Yazid, "Neglecting Women's Right: Indonesian YouTube Preachers' Legal Opinion on Polygamy," *Al-Aḥwāl: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 16, no. 1 (2023): 70–86.

²⁷ Hamka Hasan et al., "Polygamy: Uncovering the Effect of Patriarchal Ideology on Gender-Biased Interpretation," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7970>.

²⁸ Hasan et al., "Polygamy."

²⁹ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019).

while ensuring that men and women receive equal benefits from the basic mission contained in the text.

The *Mubādalāh* method is based on three main premises: first, Islamic revelation is addressed to men and women equally. Second, the relationship between the two is based on cooperation and reciprocity, not domination and hegemony. Third, religious texts are open to reinterpretation to align with the two previous principles. Based on these foundations, interpreting *Mubādalāh* is oriented toward discovering the main ideas of each text so that it remains in harmony with the universal values of Islam, which uphold justice and benefit for all human beings.³⁰ Within the framework of *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh*, religious texts are categorized into three main groups. *First, Mabādi'* (principles), which are texts that contain the fundamental values of Islam that inspire all aspects of life, such as tawhid, public interest, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and humanity. Second, *Qawā'id* (rules), which contain the basic values of Islam in specific fields, such as marriage with the concepts of *sakīnah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. *Third is juz'iyāt* (particulars), texts containing specific provisions or behaviors such as the obligation to provide for and take responsibility for one's family.³¹

The ḥadīth narrated by Abu Hurairah, found in the books *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, and *Musnad Aḥmad*, forms the normative basis for a post on the Instagram account @khalidbasalamahofficial, which highlights the moral responsibility of a husband in the practice of polygamy. The ḥadīth emphasizes the obligation of a husband to treat his wives fairly. The text of the ḥadīth is as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْوَلِيدِ الطَّيَالِسِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامٌ، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنِ النَّضْرِ بْنِ
أَنْسٍ، عَنْ بَشِيرِ بْنِ مَرْيَمَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

³⁰ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam*, 196.

³¹ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam*, 34.

قَالَ: «مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ امْرَأَتَانِ فَمَالَ إِلَىٰ إِحْدَاهُمَا، جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَشِقُّهُ مَائِلٌ»

Abū al-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī narrated to us, from Hammām, from Qatādah, from al-Naḍr ibn Anas, from Bashīr ibn Nahīk, from Abū Hurairah, from the Prophet Muḥammad said: “Whoever has two wives and favors one over the other will come on the Day of Judgment with his body leaning to one side.”³²

Classical scholars interpret this ḥadīth as evidence of the obligation to be fair in physical aspects such as division of time (qism), financial support, and place of residence. This explanation is based on the words of Allah in QS. al-Nisā’ [4]: 19, “And acceptably live with them.” Ibn Zayd explains that *ma’rūf* means being pious to Allah by treating wives fairly without favoring one. Therefore, in the commentary on the ḥadīth, it is explained that a husband should not initiate turns without drawing lots (*qur’ah*) to not appear biased toward one of his wives.³³ This provision indicates that the meaning of justice is understood normatively within the framework of technical household arrangements that are physical in nature.

Referring to the verses of the Qur’an that are *al-qawā’id* in nature, five main pillars support family life: commitment to the bond of marriage as a trust from Allah. (QS. al-Nisā’ (4): 21), the marriage relationship is built on the principles of partnership and mutuality (QS. al-Baqarah (2): 187 and QS. al-Rūm (30): 21), feeling comfortable with each other and providing comfort or willingness (QS. al-Baqarah (2): 233), treating each other well (*mu’āsharah bi al-ma’rūf*) (QS. al-Nisā’ (4): 19), and the habit of discussing and deliberating together when making decisions (QS. al-Baqarah (2): 233).³⁴

³² Abū Dāud Sulaymān ibn al-Asy’at al-Azdī al-Sijistanī, *Sunan Abī Dāud*, vol. 3 (Dār al-Risālah al-Ālamīyah, 2009), 468.

³³ Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Abbās Aḥmad ibn Ḥusain ibn ‘Alī ibn Ruslān, *Sharah Sunan Abī Dāwud Li Ibn Ruslān*, vol. 9 (Mesir: Dār al-Falāh li al-Baḥtsi al-Ilmī wa Tahqīq al-Turats, 2016), 453.

³⁴ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Qirā’ah Mubādalāh Tafsir Progresif Untuk Keadilan Gender Dalam Islam*, 343.

Based on these principles, the practice of polygamy, which is often carried out without the consent of the first wife, reflects a violation of the value of mutuality in marital relationships, particularly in the third pillar, which is feeling comfortable with and providing comfort to one another. Polygamy in this context has the potential to cause emotional tension and relational injustice in domestic life. The reality on the ground shows that the practice of polygamy remains common and is often one of the main causes of divorce in religious courts.³⁵ Several studies have also revealed that women in polygamous marriages tend to experience lower levels of self-confidence, life satisfaction, and marital happiness compared to those living in monogamous relationships.³⁶

The principle of reciprocity (*mushārah*) in *Mubādalah* leads to the understanding that the message of this ḥadīth is addressed to men as a single subject, but can also be interpreted reciprocally in the context of husband-wife relationships. Thus, justice does not only mean the husband's obligation to treat his wife fairly, but also the wife's right to be treated humanely, equally, and with dignity. Through the *Mubādalah* approach, this ḥadīth can be understood not as a legitimization of the practice of polygamy, but as a warning against the potential for injustice that arises from it. The moral message being upheld is not about the permissibility of polygamy, but about maintaining balance and mutual benefit. Thus, when viewed reciprocally, this ḥadīth is not legitimizing polygamy, but rather a stern warning against the potential for injustice in its practice. Therefore, the value of justice becomes the benchmark for assessing whether polygamy is appropriate. If polygamy almost certainly gives rise to injustice, then monogamy is more in line with the principle of *Mubādalah*.

Table 1: *Mubadalah Analysis*

Analysis Aspects	Classic description	Findings on <i>Mubādalah</i> Perspectives	Implications

³⁵ Rohmadi, "Polygamy in Indonesia."

³⁶ Rohmadi, "Polygamy in Indonesia."

The Basics of Understanding Ḥadīth	The ḥadīth is interpreted as the husband's obligation to be fair in physical aspects.	The ḥadīth is read reciprocally, affirming equality and humane treatment for wives.	Ḥadīths serve as moral warnings, not justifications for polygamy.
The Meaning of Justice	Justice is technical (turns, alimony, place of residence).	Justice is relational and ethical (emotions, respect, dignity).	Polygamy is difficult to reconcile with substantive justice.
Gender Relations	A hierarchical husband-wife relationship, with the husband as the center of responsibility.	Mutual relationship (<i>mushārah</i>), both are active subjects.	Rejecting dominant relationships in the household
Intrinsic values	Focus on legal aspects (<i>qism</i> , polygamy permits)	Emphasizing core values: <i>ma'rūf</i> , <i>rahmah</i> , <i>musyawarah</i> , mutual comfort.	Shifting the orientation from legal rules to the values of justice and benefit.
The Social Impact of Polygamy	Considered a valid choice according to Islamic law	Negatively impacts women's welfare and psychological well-being	There needs to be an ethical evaluation of modern polygamy practices.
Practice Benchmarks	Formal and Technical Justice	Substantive justice and relational reciprocity.	If polygamy is unfair, then it is not in accordance with Islamic principles.
Final	Polygamy is	Polygamy often	Monogamy is

conclusion	allowed as long as it is fair	violates the principles of fairness and reciprocity.	more in line with the principles of <i>Mubādalāh</i> and <i>maqāṣid al-sharī'ah</i> .
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Reinterpreting the ḥadīth on polygamy through the lens of *Mubādalāh* affirms that justice is the spirit of Islamic teachings, not merely a normative rule. If the practice of polygamy causes inequality, emotional trauma, and inequity, then it loses its moral legitimacy. Thus, *Mubādalāh* does not reject the text, but purifies its meaning from structural bias so that it is in harmony with the universal humanitarian message of Islam. This paradigm shifts the meaning of polygamy from “male rights” to “a heavy ethical responsibility to ensure relational justice.” In this perspective, monogamy is not merely a practical alternative but the highest theological reflection of the principles of justice and reciprocity. Thus, *Mubādalāh* presents a face of Islam that is just, compassionate, and pro-humanity, with an interpretation that liberates the text and explores the human values contained within its meaning.

Netnographic Study of Polygamy Discourse on @khalidbasalamahofficial

Studies related to the legitimacy of ḥadīth in the discourse of digital polygamy require an approach capable of capturing the dynamics of the transformation of religious space on social media. The digital realm has become a new arena for the production, reproduction, and debate of religious meaning, where sacred texts no longer operate solely as normative sources, but also as symbols of authority that are openly negotiated. In this context, the netnography approach developed by Robert Kozinets presents a significant methodological framework for understanding communities' cultural practices and communication patterns in the digital space. Unlike conventional ethnography, which focuses on community interactions in physical spaces, netnography enables us to participate in and

contextually observe, interpret, and analyze cultural practices and social dynamics that develop within virtual communities.³⁷

1. Investigation Stage

This study examines a post about polygamy on the Instagram account @khalidbasalamahofficial. This post was chosen because it presents a narrative that represents the legitimacy of ḥadīth in the discourse on polygamy in the digital space. The post, titled “Misconceptions about Polygamy,” has a fairly high number of *engagements*. The post received 5,242 likes and 121 comments and was shared 441 times, with 141,000 viewers.³⁸ Substantially, the post argues that polygamy is part of Islamic law, but its implementation cannot be done arbitrarily because some specific terms and conditions bind it. This initial finding then became the starting point for a more in-depth exploration of how the discourse on polygamy is constructed, disseminated, and debated in the digital space. Using a netnographic approach, this study attempts to capture the deeper social meaning of these digital representations as a form of expression and contestation of religious values in the virtual community.



Figure 5: A post titled “Misconceptions about polygamy” on the @khalidbasalamahofficial account

³⁷ Eriyanto, *Meode Netnografi (Pendekatan Kualitatif Dalam Memahami Budaya Pengguna Media Sosial)*.

³⁸ Instagram, “Khalid Z.A Basalamah on Instagram,” August 18, 2024.

2. Interaction and Immersion Stage

This section presents representations of the discourse on polygamy in the digital space and various responses from netizens that reflect religious perceptions of the practice. In addition, this section also examines the discursive dynamics that arise among digital communities in responding to polygamy as a socio-religious issue that continues to develop in the digital realm. This discursive interaction is evident in the comments section, where there is reciprocal communication between the @khalidbasalamahofficial account and its followers. This is reflected, for example, in the account's response to comments from users @amira_aisa and @mahendra_aru, who wrote *Bārakallāh fikum*, which was replied to with the expression *wa fik bārakallāh*, indicating a dialogical relationship and a sense of religious familiarity between the account owner and netizens in the digital space.³⁹



Figure 6: comment section on the post



Figure 7: comment section on the post

The general response patterns of netizens can be categorized into several main categories that reflect the diversity of positions and perspectives on the issue of polygamy. *First*, comments that show

³⁹ Instagram, “Khalid Z.A Basalamah on Instagram,” August 18, 2024.

support with affirmation of Sharia law, which is a form of approval that refers to the legitimacy of polygamy as part of Islamic law. This support is not merely in the form of general approval, but is also based on textual references from the Qur'an. For example, @agungtriharyadi's comment quotes QS. al-Aḥzāb verse 36 as an argumentative basis for asserting that polygamy is part of Islamic law that cannot be opposed. This verse explicitly emphasizes absolute obedience to the decrees of Allah and His Messenger, and asserts that any form of rejection of it is considered a form of heresy.

Second, comments express criticism and rejection of polygamy in social reality. These responses are generally skeptical and highlight issues of morality, justice, and the spiritual and economic readiness of those who practice polygamy. *Third*, critically affirmative comments, namely, views that acknowledge the validity of polygamy under Islamic law but still raise moral and rational criticisms of its practice and implementation in society. *Fourth*, comments that present the personal experiences of netizens who claim to be victims of polygamy, thereby adding an empathetic and affective dimension to the discourse dynamics that are formed in the digital space.

Table 2: Classification of netizens' comments on the issue of polygamy

Categories	Description	Example Comments
Support with affirmation of Sharia law	Expressing support for the ustaz's views, affirming the legitimacy of polygamy, or quoting arguments to affirm Sharia law.	@layla_love_sunnah: "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The practice of polygamy is mentioned in the Quran, so we must believe in it. Because Allah the Almighty revealed it for the greater good. It is not polygamy itself that is wrong, but the person who practices it. Have they fulfilled the requirements of Islamic law? Do not want to practice polygamy if you are not prepared in terms of knowledge and mentally. Indeed, polygamy can be a solution if a person has sufficient knowledge to apply it. Especially if the husband is wealthy, knowledgeable in Islamic law, and intends to practice polygamy to draw closer to Allah. Of course, one must choose a Sharia-compliant partner with good religious and moral

		<p>character. Because matters of the heart will always have differences, the most important thing is to be fair and uphold one's responsibilities. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, also had differences in his feelings toward his wives, but he remained fair regarding material support and responsibility. And Allah knows best.”</p> <p>@abymvll: “That’s right, Ustadz. Many people don't understand the science behind it and just go full throttle.”</p> <p>@agungtriharyadi: “And it is not fitting for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should have any choice in their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly gone astray into clear error.” (QS Al-Ahzab: 36)</p> <p>@caisarnoris: “What’s the point of polygamy? Just ask your prophet why he allows it. This is a permissible practice, so if you don't follow it, don't be against it either.”</p> <p>@utianggra: “Mashaa Allah... listen, 10:1... duhhh, sorry, ustadz, I'm angry with their various excuses for polygamy without sufficient religious knowledge.”</p> <p>@cahyoramadhan8: “The best form of polygamy is practiced with the consent and sincerity of the first wife... do not marry a widow only to create a new widow.”</p> <p>@fiddarrain: “Polygamy is more about necessity than desire. Because if it is based on lust, it is difficult to run a good household, but if it is out of necessity, for example, if the first wife cannot bear children, or there are other reasons why the wife cannot fulfill her obligations due to illness or something else. Only Allah knows best.”</p>
Moral criticism and rejection of practices	Criticizing or rejecting polygamy for moral,	@anie_dedi: “That’s right, ustad. Nowadays, people have the wrong idea about it being permissible for a man to have four or more wives. Is it not wrong to make the first wife,

	<p>psychological, or social reasons.</p>	<p>who has been with him from the beginning, feel hurt and sad to the point of tears? The funny thing is, they say it is the sunnah of the Prophet. Why is this so highly regarded, while other sunnahs of the Prophet, which are better, are not practiced?"</p> <p>@ayursaa: "Most polygamists just want to satisfy their desires, even though they are fair and religious."</p> <p>@andiridha3: "One wife is enough until the end of life, so why practice polygamy? No woman would accept polygamy. Even the Prophet's wives were jealous, so don't even think about it. One wife is enough."</p> <p>@makzudeo4o6: "If the marriage is done secretly, it's not called polygamy."</p> <p>@ayeshaamel: "They think that as long as they have the money, they can practice polygamy."</p> <p>@perjalananceritarkyat: "Masha'Allah, Ustadz, I always remind them, but they oppose me. I feel sorry for the mental health of the children and wives in polygamous marriages. Not to mention the financial issues, character, and knowledge that are not yet healthy or in sync with practice. This is a serious matter, Ustadz, from the upper classes to the lowest classes."</p> <p>@nengchayankaku: "The result is shame and reproach 😞"</p> <p>@azimrakasiwi: "Even worse is the religious court system that disregards Islamic law."</p>
<p>Critical affirmation (supports the law of polygamy but disagrees with Khalid Basalamah's point of view)</p>	<p>Not rejecting Sharia law, but providing normative assessments or corrections to the practice of polygamy that is considered inappropriate.</p>	<p>@akuma_goki: "Why should one form of worship be pitted against another? Using that kind of logic will only result in a negative view of one of those forms of worship. One of the benefits of polygamy is avoiding adultery, because there are times when a wife is unable to fulfill her husband's needs, for example, during her period or after giving birth. My question is, are people whose prayers and fasting are not yet good</p>

		<p>not allowed/forbidden to avoid adultery by a lawful means, namely by marrying again, during menstruation, or after childbirth? My question is: are people whose prayers and fasting are not yet good not allowed/forbidden to avoid adultery in a lawful manner, namely by marrying again, or must such people follow the devil's will and seek unlawful women because the ustad's statement seems to imply that the conditions for polygamy are that one's prayers and fasting must be good first? With all due respect to Ustad Khalid, please provide evidence for what you have said. Thank you. 🙏”</p> <p>@tersenyumlah_rindu: “I want to ask what the basis for polygamy is. If we take the Prophet as an example, he practiced polygamy after his first wife passed away. As long as Khadijah was alive, he never practiced polygamy. The Prophet practiced polygamy for political, social, and Islamic reasons, among others. The requirement for polygamy is not that he is good in his worship. But there are strong reasons for doing so. What are the reasons for polygamy today? It seems like there are no strong reasons for practicing polygamy. If there are, please explain.”</p>
<p>Personal experience</p>	<p>Sharing personal experiences as a victim of polygamy</p>	<p>nitabunostory: “My husband ustadz, and you know he is. In the end, I couldn't take it anymore because my ex-husband and his wife were constantly being cruel to me. 😞”</p> <p>@huwai idacollection: “I feel polygamy without knowledge...subhanallah”</p> <p>@ummayusufzq: “Excuse me, may I share what I experienced? My husband remarried without my knowledge, and now he has a child. I am shocked and confused about what to do next.”</p> <p>@mayabintuansyori: “In the name of God... To get married under polygamy in Jambi, it is</p>

	<p>rather difficult to obtain a marriage certificate/official document.”</p> <p>@dianpuspasari7kids: “To Eddy Handoko, listen to his lecture.”</p> <p>@ekamerka: “Sharing with friends from outside about polygamy, I strongly agree with him because his intention for polygamy is not to avoid falling into adultery but to save women from humiliation. And he will always be honest at the beginning of the marriage with whoever he marries, if he practices polygamy at some point. And he will make all his wives happy without anyone feeling unfair because he feels physically and emotionally capable. If anyone is jealous, he will try to calm them down. And if he marries a widow, he will take care of her children's needs until they have a decent life and a good education. But why are Indonesians afraid that the concept of polygamy will lead to adultery? How low is the essence of polygamy if all that is considered is lust? 😞”</p>
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Additionally, there was a debate among netizens in the comments section in response to one of the responses from the @akuma_goki account, which was considered a critical affirmation. The account questioned the logic that requires perfection in worship before a person can practice polygamy, emphasizing the need for a clear basis for the argument. This view then sparked a debate. Some netizens rejected this opinion, highlighting the importance of spiritual and moral readiness before practicing polygamy, as expressed by the accounts @yodi.ryandaru, @menik_kumala, and @rizkyamalia.⁴⁹ This difference shows the diversity of views among netizens in interpreting the boundaries between Sharia and ethics in polygamy.

3. *Integration Stage*

The integration stage is a key phase in netnographic research that integrates the results of digital field observations with the theoretical framework regarding religious authority, ḥadīth legitimacy,

⁴⁹ Instagram, “Khalid Z.A Basalamah on Instagram,” August 18, 2024.

and *da'wah* culture in the digital era. At this stage, analysis is conducted by linking empirical findings such as account characteristics, interaction patterns, and audience responses with broader conceptual interpretations of how religious authority is formed, negotiated, and maintained through social media.

The integration process began with interpreting the @khalidbasalamahofficial account not merely as a digital *da'wah* channel, but as a space for the production and reproduction of religious authority.⁴¹ With more than 3.6 million followers and a high level of interaction, this account functions as a new symbolic institution in contemporary Islamic *da'wah*. Through consistent content presentation and authentic ḥadīth references, Khalid Basalamah utilizes his knowledge and textual legitimacy to strengthen his authority as a credible preacher in the eyes of the digital public.

Integration is also carried out by examining the relationship between text, context, and digital interaction. The post “Misconceptions about Polygamy” is a concrete example of how ḥadīths are used as normative references and discursive legitimization strategies that affirm the validity of religious views on controversial issues. The caption displaying the ḥadīth narrated by Abu Hurairah, complete with al-Albānī’s assessment of its authenticity, signifies an effort to build authority based on scientific *sanad*, reinforcing the truth of Sharia in front of a diverse audience.

However, integration also reveals epistemic tensions between the ideal construction of polygamy presented in digital *da'wah* discourse and the social reality faced by society. Netizen comments show that digital space is not homogeneous but an arena for negotiating meaning and contesting interpretations. Affirmation of the Sharia law of polygamy confirms acceptance of the authority of the ustaz. At the same time, moral criticism and personal experiences reveal resistance to the literal application of religious teachings without considering social and psychological aspects. Thus, the digital space presents a new form of dialogical authority, in which the

⁴¹ Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*.

audience is not only passive recipients of *da'wah* but also active actors in interpreting, negotiating, and even challenging religious authority.

Based on the principle of reciprocity (*mushārah*) in *Mubādalah*, it is understood that the message of this ḥadīth is not intended for men as the sole subject, but can also be interpreted reciprocally in the context of husband-wife relationships. Thus, justice does not only mean the husband's obligation to treat his wife fairly, but also the wife's right to be treated humanely, equally, and with dignity. Therefore, the ḥadīth used as justification by the @khalidbasalamahofficial account can be understood not as justification for the practice of polygamy, but as a warning against the potential for injustice that arises from it. The moral message being upheld is not about the permissibility of polygamy, but about maintaining balance and mutual benefit.

This integration stage shows that the legitimacy of ḥadīth in the discourse of digital polygamy does not exist in a vacuum, but is formed through symbolic interactions between religious texts, the authority of preachers, and public participation.⁴² Netnography in this context allows researchers to understand that preaching on social media is a complex cultural practice, in which spiritual, social, and digital dimensions are interrelated in producing religious meaning. Through the integration stage, all field findings are interpreted holistically to emphasize that digital preaching is not merely the dissemination of Islamic teachings, but also a process of constructing authority and legitimacy that continues to change in the new media landscape.

Rethinking Digital Polygamy: A Critical Perspective

The issue of polygamy in the digital space cannot be understood as a reproduction of normative teachings, but rather as a socio-religious phenomenon involving the circulation of discourse, negotiation of authority, and epistemic transformation. This phenomenon shows that religion and technology interact in a complex and mutually influential social process. In line with the concept of

⁴² Heidi A. Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*.

Religious–Social Shaping of Technology (RSST) proposed by Heidi A. Campbell, each religious community shapes its attitudes and meanings towards technology based on the history, values, and collective practices inherent in that community.⁴³ Therefore, digital technology is not merely a tool for spreading religious messages, but also a space that helps shape how religious values are understood, expressed, and adapted to the character of digital media culture.

In the context of digital polygamy, the @khalidbasalamahofficial account shows significant efforts to adapt to the character and logic of social media culture. The sermons are no longer in the form of long lectures as in conventional assemblies, but are packaged in short, easily shareable video formats, complete with consistent visual designs. This strategy demonstrates an awareness of how algorithms and digital aesthetics work, focusing on efforts to expand the reach of the message and encourage active user engagement. In addition, the KBH logo on these posts confirms the institutional character of its *da'wah* management, which shows a shift in Islamic *da'wah* towards professional modern media production. Through this strategy, Islamic sharia values are reworked and repackaged in a format that suits the dynamics and rhythm of contemporary social media.

Furthermore, this preaching practice shows that religious life in the digital age can no longer be separated between online and offline spaces. Religious activities on social media have become an integral part of the religious experience of the faithful, where religious teachings, discourse, and authority operate in an open and interactive digital environment. This phenomenon reflects a form of digital religion, namely religious practices that are mediated and constructed through digital technology.⁴⁴ The circulation of discourse on polygamy on the @khalidbasalamahofficial account shows that religious values related to polygamy do not exist as a single truth, but are formed through the encounter between religious texts, the authority of preachers, and public participation. The responses of netizens who

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*.

support, reinterpret, or even criticize these preaching narratives show that digital space has become a medium where the legitimacy of ḥadīth and Islamic teachings is negotiated. Thus, the meaning of polygamy that has developed online is the result of a social construction born from symbolic interactions between preachers and the digital community, who together have formed a new way of understanding and interpreting religious teachings in the digital media era.

Ultimately, there has also been a shift in the sources and forms of religious authority. Legitimacy no longer relies solely on hierarchical structures or traditional scholarship, but also on the ability of religious figures to establish a presence and build trust in the digital space. This phenomenon illustrates the dynamics of *digital religious authority*, where religious authority, which was once hierarchical and determined by formal institutions, is now distributed through digital networks and public participation.⁴⁵

In this context, the legitimacy of Khalid Basalamah's preaching is formed through social constructs involving various dimensions. The credibility of his religious knowledge becomes the epistemic basis that strengthens public acceptance of him. Meanwhile, the consistency of his communication style, his significant number of followers, and the emotional closeness built through online interactions such as likes, shares, and comments serve as symbolic capital that expands his influence and strengthens his religious authority in the digital space. This dynamic marks a transformation of religious authority while reflecting a new way of understanding and affirming Islamic teachings amid digital culture.

Thus, this shows that the issue of polygamy in the digital space cannot be separated from the dynamics of discourse circulation and shifts in religious authority that occur in the digital media space. Through an analysis of the @khalidbasalamahofficial account, it appears that digital preaching practices not only reproduce normative teachings but also adapt to the logic of social media culture, which

⁴⁵ Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital Creatives and the Rethinking of Religious Authority* (London: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 10-11.

emphasizes engagement, visuality, and public participation. The meaning of polygamy is formed through the interaction between religious texts, the authority of preachers, and the responses of digital audiences, symbolically influencing the legitimacy and perception of these teachings. Based on this, the theories of Religious Social Shaping of Technology (RSST), Digital Religion, and Digital Religious Authority proposed by Heidi A. Campbell help explain how religion, technology, and society shape each other in constructing religious meaning. This whole dynamic confirms that digital space functions as a medium for preaching and as an arena for negotiating meaning and epistemic transformation in understanding Islamic teachings, including the issue of polygamy.

Concluding Remarks

This study shows that the legitimacy of ḥadīth in digital discourse on polygamy serves a dual function: as a normative basis for religious teaching and as a symbolic instrument in building and maintaining religious authority in the digital space. Through a netnographic analysis of the @khalidbasalamahofficial account, it was found that hadiths about justice in polygamy are selectively represented to emphasize that polygamy is a legitimate practice in Islamic law, subject to certain conditions. However, the digital space presents new dynamics in which religious texts are no longer passively accepted but are negotiated through open interaction, where the audience responds to, affirms, or even criticizes the content of the preaching. This process of legitimization marks an epistemic transformation, in which religious authority shifts from formal institutions to a more participatory digital public sphere, where Khalid Basalamah utilizes visual power, authentic hadith quotations, and moral-religious language to strengthen his authoritative image while negotiating the meaning of sharia before a wide audience.

The discourse on digital polygamy reflects the tension between text, authority, and social context, where ḥadīth becomes an arena for the battle of meanings, not merely a normative reference. The *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh* approach offers an important reinterpretative framework

for upholding the principles of reciprocity and justice, emphasizing that justice cannot be understood merely in formal-legal terms, but must be realized in equal social relations, where women have the right to humane, dignified, and fair treatment. Through the lens of *Mubādalah*, polygamy is no longer merely a permitted practice, but a reminder of the potential for injustice, affirming that the main moral message is not only about the legality of polygamy, but the need to maintain balance, equality, and mutual benefit in family life, affirming that justice is at the heart of religious authority and practice in the digital age.

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