

# From Scholarly Exegesis to Instagram's Spotlight: The Discursive Representation of Women's Subordination in Hadith

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## Abstract

The use of social media to convey religious texts does not necessarily mean that there is a contextualization of the understanding of the religious context according to contemporary reasoning. This study argues that hadiths concerning women's subordination have generated more textual and discriminatory interpretations when represented on

social media, especially Instagram. Employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) and a representational framework, this study examines three main points: (a) the hadith representation of women in classical literature, (b) the form of subordinate representation of women on Instagram, (c) the consequent identity formation of women through hadith interpretations on Instagram discourses. This study reveals that social media functions as a double-edged sword in contemporary Islamic discourse. It ostensibly provides opportunities for progressive reinterpretations of religious texts, but, on the other hand, the findings indicate it has paradoxically become a powerful ideological weapon to maintain the status quo of patriarchal norms through subordination towards women. Consequently, the reductive portrayals of women's roles on Instagram still exist even though modern reality has significantly changed compared to 15 centuries ago when the Prophet Muhammad lived. Through discursive framing and algorithmic amplification, Instagram increasingly contributes to the legitimization of discrimination against women across both the private and public spheres.

**Keywords:** Islamic gender studies, Women subordination, Hadith, Social media, Instagram.

## A. Introduction

Despite the massive development of social media, the stereotyped paradigm and stigma towards women have remained the same. When women who are represented in hadith texts as subordinates are brought into the realm of new media, their position not only remains subjugated but also reinforces the existing system of women's subordination. Instagram, one of the most popular social media platforms in Indonesia with over 103 million users (DataReportal, 2025), is one of the main channels for spreading propaganda against women's equality. Women on social media are often subjected to subordinate treatment, with religious narratives used to justify their obedience to their husbands (Leiliyanti & Larasati, 2020). Instagram and other social media used in cyberspace have become powerful tools for spreading

exclusive religious ideas that are quickly consumed and readily accessed by the public.

The relationship between media studies and women is a complex and important topic that has attracted the attention of researchers, scholars, and observers alike. On the one hand, studies have pinpointed how the media (Binimelis-Adell & Varela Huerta, 2021; Coyne et al., 2018; Mesiti & Yeo, 2023; Sarkar, 2014; Zaidi et al., 2020) can objectify women's bodies and reconstruct femininity. For example, Sumita (2014) examined the social dynamics of women's bodies and the reconstruction of femininity through the socio-cultural processes of gendering and popular media. Zaidi et al. (2020), in research involving 400 respondents, found that in addition to media objectification, self-comparison and self-gratification also play a significant role in predicting women's clothing purchasing behavior. On the other hand, many studies have also revealed how the media can be used to empower women (Mandal, 2022; Merza, 2019; Premlata & Jukariya, 2018; Rai & Sijariya, 2020; Razak & Jah, 2016; Tamuli & Mishra, 2022; Waheed et al., 2022). For instance, studies have depicted that the media can be utilized to promote women's entrepreneurship and empowerment. However, there is still a need for more comprehensive studies on how women in new media are represented as beings who continue to receive continuous subordination through the narratives of religious texts such as hadith.

This study specifically examines how Instagram has become a platform for spreading propaganda that promotes an exclusive and subordinate understanding of women in hadith. The study will focus on three key areas: First, it

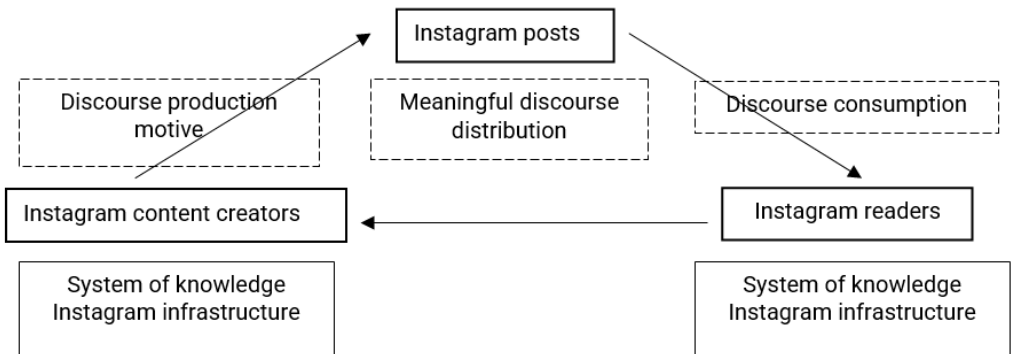
will explore how women are portrayed in hadith texts by examining classical literature to understand how hadiths have traditionally portrayed women. Second, it will analyze how women are represented in subordinate ways on Instagram, focusing on how Instagram users utilize hadiths to justify the subordination of women. Third, it will investigate how women's identities are formed through the dissemination of hadith meaning, looking into how Instagram users use hadiths to construct and reinforce their own and others' understandings of womanhood.

This study argues that the subordination of women through patriarchal domination, which has been a problem for centuries, has become even worse in the era of social media. Instagram, a popular platform for millennials and Gen Z, has become a breeding ground for the continuation of subordinating practices towards women. Religious texts such as the Quran and hadith, which have long been used to justify subordination, are now being increasingly used on Instagram to reinforce these practices. The platform's visual aesthetic, along with the imagery and language used in the captions, plays a significant role in this subordinating effect.

## **B. Method**

To discover a model of women's subordinate institutionalization in Instagram posts by Indonesian users, we used qualitative methods with in-depth analysis to understand the ideas contained therein. The data for this research came from two sources: primary and secondary. The primary data source was Instagram posts. We chose Instagram because it is the fourth most popular social media platform in

Indonesia, with over 103 million active users (DataReportal, 2025; We Are Social & Meltwater, 2023). The secondary data source was previous research on the topic. To collect data, we used observation techniques on Instagram posts by Indonesian users about women's appearance using hadith. We limited our search to posts with #female and #hadith hashtags. We also limited the data to posts from the last five years (2018-2023). We used critical discourse analysis (CDA) with a representational approach to analyze the data, which is common in media studies. The CDA model used therein is presented in Figure 1 as follows.



**Figure 1** Framework of women's representation on Instagram

### C. Results and discussion

#### Hadith on Women's Representation in Classical Literature

The hadith presents women in a way that respects and elevates their status. However, the reality of Arab society during the time of revelation, which discriminated against

women, and the nature of *tabarruj* (showing off or making a wanton display of herself), led to representations of women that both liberated and restricted them.

**Table 1** Descriptions of women in the hadith

Theme	Hadith Text
<b>Interaction with women</b>	<p><i>Man kana yu'minu bi Allah wa al-yaum al-akhir, fala yu'dhi jarahu, wa istausu bi an-nisa khairan, fa innahunna khiliqna min dhil'in, wa inna a'waja syai'in fi adh-dhala'i a'lahu, fa in dhahabat tuqimuhu kasartuhu, wa in taraktahu lam yazal a'waja, fa istausu bi an-nisa khairan</i> (HR. Al-Bukhari no. 4890, HR. Muslim no. 1468, HR. an-Nasa'i no. 9095)</p> <p>[Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt (trouble) his neighbor. And I advise you to take care of the women, for they are created from a rib, and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so I urge you to take care of the women].</p>
	<p><i>Ma taraktu ba'di fitnatan adarra 'ala al-rijal min al-nisa'</i> (HR. al-Bukhari no. 4808, HR. Muslim no. 2740, HR. an-Nasa'i no. 9108, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 21846)</p> <p>[I have not left behind me a trial more injurious to men than women.]</p>

**Pious woman**

*Ad-dunya kulluha mata'un, wa khairu mata' ad-dunya al-mar'atu as-salihah* (HR. Muslim no. 1467, HR. an-Nasa'i no. 3636, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 2527)

[This world is all temporary conveniences, and the best temporary convenience of this world is a righteous woman].

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*Qila ya rasul Allah, ay an-nisa khairun? Qala: al-lati tasurruhu idha nazara, wa tuti'yhu idha amar, wa la tukhalifuhu fi nafsiha wa la fi malihi bima yakruh* (HR. an-Nasa'i no. 3231, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 7421)

[When God's Messenger was asked which woman was best, he replied, "The one who pleases [her husband] when he looks at her, obeys him when he gives a command and does not go against his wishes regarding her person or property by doing anything of which he disapproves"].

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**Women dressing up**

*Ayyuma imra'atin ista'tarat famarrat 'ala qaumin liyajidu min fihaha, fahiya Zaniyah* (HR. an-Nasa'i no. 9361, HR. at-Tirmizi no. 2786, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 19711, HR. Abu Daud no. 4173)

[Any woman who puts on perfume and then passes by people so that they can smell her fragrance, then she is an adulteress].

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*Idha kharajat ihdakunna ila al-masjid, fala taqrabanna tiban* (HR. Muslim no. 443, HR. an-Nasa'i no. 5262, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 27047, HR. Malik bin Anas no. 13)

[Any of you (women) who want to go out to the Masjid should not go near any perfume].

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**Women's clothes**

*Inna asma' binta Abi Bakr ukhtaha dhakhalat 'ala an-nabi fi libasin raqiqin yasiffu 'an jasmiha fa a'radha an-nabi 'anha wa qala: ya asma' inna al-mar'ah idha balaghat al-mahidha lam yasluh an yura minha illa hadha wa hadha wa asyara ila wajhihi wa kaffaihi (Hadith narrated by Abu Daud no. 4104)*

[When Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr, came in to visit the Prophet wearing thin clothes, he turned away from her and said, "Dear Asma', when a woman is old enough to menstruate, she should not have exposed any of her private parts but this and this," pointing to his face and his hands].

**The state of women in the afterlife**

*Uritu an-nar fa idza aktsar ahliha an-nisa' yakfurna, qila ayakfurna bi Allah, qala yakfurna al-'asyir wa yakfurna al-ihsan law ahsanta ila ihdahunna ad-dahr tsumma ra'aitu minka syai'an qalat ma ra'aitu minka khairan faqad (HR. al-Bukhari no. 29, HR. an-Nasa'i no. 1891, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 3373, HR. Malik bin Anas no. 640)*

[I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful." It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?) He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them. If you have always been good (benevolent) to one of them, and then she sees something in you (not of her liking), she will say, "I have never received any good from you."]

*Fainni ra'aitukunna aktsar ahl an-nar, faqalat imra'atun jazlah: wa ma lana, ya rasulallah aktsar ahl an-nar?. Qala: tuktsirna al-la'an, wa takfurna al-'asyir* (HR. al-Bukhari no. 29, HR. an-Nasa'i no. 1891, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 3373, HR. Malik bin Anas no. 640)

[For I have seen that you form the majority of the people of hell." A woman who was very wise said: "Why is it, O Messenger of Allah, that we form the majority of the people of Hell?" He said, "You curse a great deal and are ungrateful to your husbands."

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**Husband and wife relationship**

*Fa inni law amartu syai'an an yasjuda lisyai'in; la'amartu al-mar'ah an tasjuda li zaujiha, wa al-ladhi nafsi biyadihi, la tu'addi al-mar'atu haqqa rabbiha hatta tu'addi haqqa zaujiha* (HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 24470, Hadith Narrated by an-Nasa'i no. 9102, Narrated by at-Tirmizi no. 1159, Narrated by Abu Dawud no. 2140)

[If I were to command someone to bow down to something, I would have commanded women to prostrate to their husbands. By Allah, in Whose Hand my soul is, a woman will not fulfill Her Lord's rights until she fulfills her husband's rights.]

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*Idha da'a ar-rajul imra'atahu ila firasyihi fa abat, fabata ghadhbana 'alaiha, la'anatha al-malaikah hatta tusbiha* (HR. al-Bukhari no. 4897, HR. Muslim no. 1436, HR. an-Nasa'i no. 11930, HR. Abu Dawud no. 2141, HR. Ahmad bin Hanbal no. 9671)

[When a woman who has been called to come to her husband's bed refuses and he spends the night angry, the angels curse her till the morning.]

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The hadiths in Table 1 illustrate two different ways that the Prophet Muhammad represented women. One hadith, narrated by Abu Hurairah (Al-Bukhari, 1993, p. 1987), emphasizes gentle and kind treatment toward women (Al-Bayḍawī, 2012, p. 372). This hadith is considered to be metaphorical, using the phrase *dhila' a'waj* or “crooked bones,” to suggest women's vulnerability at the time of the Prophet (Al-'Asqalānī, 1389, p. 253). This vulnerability was due to the various forms of oppression that women faced in pre-Islamic times (Al-Ziyāt, 2017, p. 30). Another hadith, narrated by the Prophet himself, warns against the temptations posed by women. This hadith is considered to be factual, reflecting the reality that women's beauty can lead to jealousy and conflict (Al-Ziyāt, 2017). The Prophet's message against the temptations posed by women (*ma taraktu ba'di fitnatan*) reflects the factual reality that women can be a source of temptation (Al-Bukhari, 1993). Hamzah Qāsim argued that the power of women's temptation is the reason for the existence of this hadith (Qāsim, 1990, p. 100).

The relationship between the condition of women during the prophetic period and the Prophet's statements that seem discriminatory is complex. For example, the pre-Islamic habit of women wearing revealing clothes (*tabarruj*) is addressed in statements related to dress codes (i.e. the hadith text of "*ya asma' inna al-mar'ah idha balaghat al-mahidha lam yasluh an yura minha illa hadha wa hadha*" [When a woman reaches puberty, it is not appropriate for her to expose anything except this and this]) (Al-Sijistānī, n.d., p. 62) and decoration (*ayyuma imra'atin ista'tarat* [Any woman who puts on perfume]) (An-Nasā'i, 2001, p. 349). Similarly, the prohibition against using perfume is limited to deliberately exposing the smell to men for the purpose of seduction (Al-Ṣan'ānī, 2011, p. 440). This prohibition reflects the fact that perfume was one of the methods used by women in pre-Islamic times to tempt men (Al-Ziyāt, 2017).

Women's abilities were also reflected in their position in marriage. During the Jahiliyah era, women had control over choosing and divorcing their husbands. Additionally, women in the pre-Islamic era had a tendency to dislike and disagree with men whom they considered weak (Masarwah, 2013). This reality is synergistic with the protection given by the Prophet to men through the narrative of obedience to wives, which has a threatening tone.

### **The Subordinative Tendency in the Discourse Production of Women**

The representations of hadith in social media, particularly Instagram, in relation to women involve reinterpreting concepts

through narrative and image. This reinterpretation does not merely present reality directly but involves reconstructing a more individualized visualization of meaning shaped by specific contexts and reflecting the account owner’s perspective (Mohammed et al., 2021; van Dijk, 1998). The embodiment of subjective values and context renders these representations non-neutral, potentially perpetuating stereotypes, normalization, or hegemony over certain discourses. Representations are manifested through symbolization, reflecting individuals’ cognitive and social tendencies via language codes that express their worldview (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1985). Such subjective representation reveals the account owner’s understanding of women’s roles and responsibilities, shaped by a complex process of discourse production within a broader social context.

The social context influences the discourse produced through Instagram uploads, as reflected by the selection of hadith as the main source of meaning. This can be seen in how hadith that constructs women as a source of temptation is often shared and promoted. (see Table 2).

**Table 2** *Hadith on women as temptation*

Hadith Text	Instagram Accounts
<i>Ma taraktu ba’di fitnatan adarra ‘ala al-rijal min al-nisa’</i>	@cikarangmengajiofficial
[I have not left behind me a trial more injurious to men than women]	@dedirdwan_
	@wanitasalihah

*Ayyuma imra'ah ista'tarat, fa marrat  
bi qaumin liyajidu rihaha fahiya  
zaniyah*

@sufyanruray.info

@nasihatsahabatcom

[Any woman who puts on perfume  
and then passes by people so that  
they can smell her fragrance then she  
is an adulteress]

@nasihatsahabatcom

@wanitasalihah

*Idza atakum man tardlauna khuluqahu  
wa dinahu fatazawwajuhu, illa taf'alu  
takun fitanah fi al-ardi wa fasad 'arid*

[If there comes to you one with whose  
character and religious commitment  
you are pleased, then marry (your  
daughter or female relative under  
your care) to him, for if you do not do  
that, there will be Fitnah in the land  
and widespread corruption]

@sufyanruray.info

*Ayyuma imra'ah tatayyabat, tsumma  
kharajat ila al-masjid, lam tuqbal laha  
salatun hatta taghtasil*

[Any woman who puts on perfume  
then goes out to the mosque, no  
prayer will be accepted from her until  
she takes a bath]

@sufyanruray.info

The selection of hadith that constructs women as a source of temptation creates stereotypes about women. For example, the hadith "Women are a trial" (*al-mar'atu fitnatun*) taken from the history of al-Bukhari no. 5096 and Muslim no. 2740 (Cikarang Mengaji [@cikarangmengajiofficial], 2020; Dedi Ridwan [@dedirdwn\_], 2023; Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2019) is used to claim that women are naturally tempting to men. This stereotype is also reflected

in hadith, which emphasizes the importance of women marrying good men quickly (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sufyanruray.info], 2018) and in the prohibition on women using perfume (Nasihah Sahabat [@nasihatsahabatcom], 2021a, 2021b; Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sufyanruray.info], 2018f, 2019; Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2021b). Another hadith that is used to construct women as a source of temptation is the one that states that temptation arises naturally from women's private parts. This hadith is used to justify the need for women to guard their bodies and to stay home. The selection of these hadiths creates a negative stereotype of women as being inherently tempting and dangerous. This stereotype can have a harmful impact on women's lives, as it can lead to them being restricted in their activities and freedoms.

**Table 3** *Hadith of women's private parts*

<b>Hadith Text</b>	<b>Instagram Accounts</b>
<i>Al-mar'atu auratun, wa innaha idza kharajat istasyrafaha al-syaitan, wa innaha aqrab ma yakunu ila Allah wa hiya fi qa'r baitiha</i>	@tulusberhijrah
[A woman should be concealed, for when she goes out, the devil looks at her, and indeed, a woman is closer to Allah when she is inside her house.]	@sufyanrurar.info

*Ma min imra'atin takhla' tsiyabaha fi  
ghair baitiha illa hatakat ma bainaha wa  
baina Allah*

@sofyanrurar.info

[If a woman puts off her clothes in a place  
other than her house, she tears the veil  
between her and Allah, the Exalted]

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Instagram accounts @tulusberhijrah (Muhammad [@tulusberhijrah], 2018), and @sofyanruraray.info (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruraray.info], 2018d) use hadiths to prohibit women from revealing themselves and to emphasize the importance of staying home. For example, they use the hadith “A woman’s body is a private part” (*al-mar’atu auratun*) to argue that women should not expose their bodies outside the home. They also use the hadith “The closest a woman can be to Allah is in the innermost part of her home” (*aqrab ma yaqunu ila Allah wahiya fi qa’ri baitiha*) (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruraray.info], 2018g) to threaten women with being shunned by Allah if they do not stay home. These accounts also use hadiths to construct a specific understanding of women’s obligations in domestic life, as indicated by how they use hadiths that explain women’s relationship with their husbands to argue that women have a duty to obey their husbands (see Table 4).

**Table 4** Hadith regarding the position of women towards men

Hadith Text	Instagram Accounts
<p><i>Uritu an-nar fa idza aktsar ahliha an-nisa' yakfurna, qila ayakfurna bi Allah, qala yakfurna al-'asyir wa yakfurna al-ihsan law ahsanta ila ihdahunna ad-dahr tsumma ra'aitu minka syai'an qalat ma ra'aitu minka khairan faqad</i></p> <p>[I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful." It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?) He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them. If you have always been good (benevolent) to one of them, and then she sees something in you (not of her liking), she will say, 'I have never received any good from you.]</p>	@sufyanruray.info
<p><i>Fainni ra'aitukunna aktsar ahl an-nar, faqalat imra'atun jazlah: wa ma lana, ya rasulallah aktsar ahl an-nar?. Qala: tuktsirna al-la'an, wa takfurna al-'asyir</i></p> <p>[I saw you in bulk amongst the dwellers of hell. A wise lady among them said: Why is it, Messenger of Allah, that our folk is in bulk in hell? Upon this, the Prophet observed: You curse too much and are ungrateful to your spouses.]</p>	@wanitashalihah

*Awwalu ma tas'al 'anhu al-mar'ah yaum al-  
qiyamah 'an salatiha, wa 'an haqq zaujiha*

[At the end of the day, a woman will first ask about her prayers and her husband's rights (the wife's obligations towards her husband, whether she carried them out well or not).]

@ammartourtravel

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*Ayyuma imra'atin sa'alat zaujaha talaqan  
fi ghair ma ba's faharam 'alaiha ra'ihah al-  
jannah*

[If any woman asks her husband for divorce without some strong reason, the odor of paradise will be forbidden to her.]

@sufyanruray.info

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*Wa la tajud imra'atun halawah al-iman  
hatta tu'addia haqq zaujaha*

[A wife will not taste the sweetness of faith until she fulfills her husband's rights.]

@ammartourtravel

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The data demonstrate that the hadiths used in these Instagram accounts focus on women's absolute obedience to men. This obedience is presented as essential for women to avoid hell (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018c; Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2021a), taste the sweetness of faith (Anugerah Maju Makmur Raya [@ammartourtravel], 2021a), avoid divorce (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018a), and be judged favorably in the afterlife (Anugerah Maju Makmur Raya [@ammartourtravel], 2021b). These hadith narratives construct an identity of a woman who is obedient and protective of her husband's rights.

The use of hadith narratives to display women’s faces on Instagram reflects the account owner’s understanding of women’s roles and responsibilities in religion. This understanding is characterized by three tendencies. *Firstly*, it is stereotyping. Women are portrayed as slanderers who tempt men. This is evident in the choice of hadiths that directly refer to the Prophet’s statements about women. The labeling of women as temptation is a common stereotype on social media, transcending regional and cultural boundaries. This is evident in the consistent selection of hadith across various Instagram accounts outside Indonesia, reflecting similar interpretive intentions (see Table 5).

**Table 5** *Representation of women as temptation in international accounts*

Hadith Text	Instagram Accounts
<i>Ma taraktu ba'di fitnatan adarra 'ala al-rijal min al-nisa'</i>	@islam.dawah
[I have not left behind me any fitnah (temptation) more harmful to men than women.]	@slave_of_allah_
	@here4jannah
	@jannah.reminder
<i>Ayyuma imra'ah ista'tarat, fa marrat bi qaumin liyajidu rihaha fahiya zaniyah</i>	@reciteandriseacdemy
[Any woman who puts on perfume and then passes by people so that they can smell her fragrance then she is an adulteress.]	@blackarab_

*Kullu 'ainin zaniyah wa al-mar'ah idza  
ista'tarat fa marrat bi al-majlis fa hiya  
kadza wa kadza ya'ni zaniyah*

[Every eye commits adultery, and when the woman uses perfume, and she passes by a gathering, then she is like this and that." Meaning an adulteress.]

@love\_jannaah

*Sab'ah yuzillmuhum Allah ta'ala fi zillah  
yaum la zilla illa zillahu...wa rajulun  
da'athu imra'ah dat mansib wa jamal faqal  
inni akhaf Allahi*

@eternah

[Seven people Allah will give them His Shade on the Day when there would be no shade but the Shade of His Throne (i.e., on the Day of Resurrection): And they are: a just ruler; a youth who grew up with the worship of Allah; a person whose heart is attached to the mosques, two men who love and meet each other and depart from each other for the sake of Allah; a man whom an extremely beautiful woman seduces (for illicit relation), but he (rejects this offer and) says: 'I fear Allah']

@beutifuldeen

*Inna al-mar'ah tuqbil fi surah asy-syaitan  
wa tudbir fi surah asy-syaitan*

[The women comes in the form of syaitan and goes in the form of devil.]

@weallmuslim

*Innama asy-syu'm fi tsalatsah fi al-firas wa  
al-mar'ah wa ad-dar*

[Evil omen is in the women.]

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The diction of temptation (*fitna*) (Believer [@slave\_of\_allah\_], 2021; Faheem Siddiq [@here4jannah], 2022; Islam Dawah [@islam.dawah], 2021; Islamic Reminder [@jannah.reminder], 2022) and adulteress (Adroitlady YouTuber [blackarab\_], 2024; Allah Hu Akbar [@love\_jannaah], 2021) dominates the representation of women, emphasized through explicit titles. For instance, the Instagram accounts of @eternah and @beutifuldeeen select hadith, which portrays women as a temptation that leads men astray. This emphasis on the seductive aspect, highlighting the dangers of women, is further reinforced by hadith equating women with Satan (WAM [@weallmuslim], 2023). This suggests that the formation of female stereotypes is not shaped by cultural locality but by a shared projection of knowledge.

*Secondly*, it is domestication. Women are considered something that should not be seen, so they are obliged to hide themselves at home. This is reflected in the choice of hadiths that emphasize the importance of women's modesty and seclusion. The theological narrative promoted by various Instagram accounts in Indonesia, which positions women as part of the *aurat* and obliges them to remain at home as a form of worship, is presented differently by Instagram accounts outside Indonesia (see Table 6).

**Table 6** Representation of women as aurat in international accounts

Hadith Text	Instagram Accounts
<i>Al-mar'atu auratun, wa innaha idza kharajat istasyrafaha al-syaitan, wa innaha aqrab ma yakunu ila Allah wa hiya fi qa'r baitiha</i>	@way_2_jannah
[A woman should be concealed, for when she goes out, the devil looks at her, and indeed, a woman is closer to Allah when she is inside her house.]	@womenofsunnah
<i>Ma min imra'atin takhla' tsiyabaha fi ghair baitiha illa hatakat ma bainaha wa baina Allah</i>	@muslimremindz
[If a woman puts off her clothes in a place other than her house, she tears the veil between her and Allah, the Exalted.]	

The Instagram accounts @way\_2\_jannah (Allah is Watching You [@way\_2\_jannah], 2024) and @womenofsunnah (Women of Sunnah [@womenofsunnah], 2023b) use hadith diction to advocate the prohibition of women working outside the home. In contrast, @muslimremindz, based in Pakistan, interprets hadith about removing clothes outside the home as part of *tabarruj* (Muslim Reminds [@muslimremindz], 2023). These differences in representation reflect varying intentions, with some accounts emphasizing domestication while others outside Indonesia prioritize productivity.

*Thirdly*, it is objectification. Hadith's selections concerning women's roles in marital relationships relative to men often position women as objects dependent on men

for matters of merit and sin. Such narratives are prevalent across various Instagram accounts, transcending regional and cultural boundaries (see Table 7).

**Table 7** *Models of women's objectification in international accounts*

Hadith Text	Instagram Accounts
<p><i>Uritu an-nar fiiza aktsar ahliha an-nisa' yakfurna. Qila ayakfurna bi Allah? Qala yakfurna al-'asyir wa yakfurna al-ihsan law ahsanta ila ihdahunna ad-dahr tsumma ra'aitu minka syai'an qalat ma ra'aitu minka khairan faqad</i></p>	<p>@ya_allah_muslims</p>
<p>[I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful." It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?) He replied that they are ungrateful to their husbands and for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them. If you have always been good to one of them and then she sees something in you (not of her liking)].</p>	
<p><i>Idza batat al-mar'ah muhajirah firasy zaujiha la'anatha al-malaikah hatta tarji'</i></p>	<p>@attiresformuslimah</p>
<p>[If woman spends the night deserting her husband's bed (does not sleep with him), then the angels send their curses on her till she comes back (to her husband)].</p>	

*l-mar'ah idza salat khamsaha wa samat  
syahraha wa ahsanat farjaha wa ata'at  
ba'laha faltadhul min ayy abwab al-jannah  
sya'at*

@way\_to\_allah

[If a woman prays her five prayers, fasts her month of Ramadan, guards her chastity, and obeys her husband, she will enter paradise from any gate she wishes].

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The narrative patterns displayed by the Instagram account @ya\_allah\_muslim (Islamic Quotes about Life[@ya\_allah\_muslims], 2024), @attiresformuslimah (Attires for Muslimah [@attiresformuslimah], 2023), and @way\_to\_allah (Way To Allah [@way\_to\_allah], 2024) reflect a consistent tone in portraying women's roles in marriage. However, differing emphases beyond domestication highlight women's productivity in verified accounts. In Indonesia, subordinate narratives are typically produced by personal accounts, in contrast to the often-anonymous accounts outside Indonesia.

The discourse promoted by Indonesian account owners, which subordinates women through the selective use of objectifying and domesticating hadith, reflects their orientations, shaped by motives and goals, and intertwined with mental models formed by knowledge as part of the discourse production process, aiming to foster a shared understanding (Gyollai, 2022). The representation of meaning, tailored to the account owner's intentions, often neglects alternative hadith narratives addressing the same issue, reinforcing a subordinative perspective. For example, the emphasis on hadith prohibiting women from using

perfume overshadows hadith encouraging its use, which is more commonly highlighted by accounts outside Indonesia (Abdul Muqet Jeelani [@abmuqetjeelani], 2024). This selective focus also reveals a pattern of aligning the account owner's orientation with their Indonesian audience's cultural and religious expectations, the intended communicative target. The account owner uses a semantic model to select hadiths intentionally and referentially so that a subjective understanding of the hadiths can be controlled and accessed with the same meaning (Bunker, 2020; van Dijk, 2003, p. 85). This creates a shared situation model, a mental model representing the shared knowledge and understanding of the communicator and audience. In this line, Bograd argued that efforts to subordinate women are always presented in a way that adapts to the conditions and experiences of certain groups (Bograd, 1999). The representation of group experiences is reflected in the selection of hadiths about women to place them in a subordinate space.

The production of discourse on Instagram using selected hadiths that reflect the account owner's motives reflects the worldview of Indonesian society about women's roles and responsibilities, which perpetuates subordinate stereotypes. This is done through referential mechanisms, emphasizing the repetition of people's understanding of women as second-class figures confined to the domestic sphere. The conformity of society's reality with the choices of hadith produced contributes to the institutionalization of the subordinate image of women in a patriarchal society (Hwang, 2023). Referential mechanisms emphasize the repetition of people's understanding, which is reflected in actions consistent with

the meaning of the hadiths. Morgenroth and Ryan (2018), and Meyerhoff (2014, p. 457) highlighted that emphasis and repetition are basic mechanisms for institutionalizing gender gaps so that the actions that appear are seen as natural (Badstue et al., 2021). The repetition of context-relevant narratives that construct a subordinate image of women is naturally reflected in the discourse production process on Instagram through the selection of the same hadiths.

Many researchers have neglected the emphasis on referential aspects in the discourse production mechanism on Instagram to strengthen the subordinate image of women. Research on discourse production in the media often focuses on the appearance of discourse rather than analyzing its motives. Gender discourse on social media is often seen as a discourse formed through technical infrastructure, such as hashtags (#), to strengthen its discursive position and open up the representation of meaning (Santoso et al., 2020). It is also seen as a discourse normalized in its delivery style (Chavez & Prado, 2023; Suk et al., 2023) and shaped by media policies (Zolides, 2021). However, these approaches ignore the discourse construction that develops in society, which is the target of the posts. The construction of biased meaning towards women's position through the selection of hadiths that are relevant to society's basic knowledge represents a motive to strengthen women's subordination through Instagram posts.

Instagram is not only a platform for interaction and self-expression among young people but also a tool for legitimizing subordinate actions towards women through the selective use of religious narratives. Account owners'

deliberate selection of hadiths clearly indicates their motives. The selectivity of religious discourse can dominate certain discourses and institutionalize them as natural actions (Guo et al., 2021; Maccaferri, 2019; Sert & Daniş, 2021). When society is presented with the same narratives that reinforce their existing views of women, it encourages forming a common understanding of women. Bunker (2020) articulated that this mechanism encourages readers to believe in the presented model of meaning, which is equivalent to their initial understanding. The emphasis on equalizing knowledge with readers becomes a discourse production mechanism on Instagram that produces a subordinate image of women.

### **How the Distribution of Hadith Meanings Shapes Women's Identity**

The selection of hadiths to construct a subordinate discourse towards women is a structured process that uses discourse structures in language to create the desired meaning. The discourse structure model determines how meaning is captured through symbolism, emphasizing the same image and social identity for readers (Goffman, 1956). Image formation on Instagram functions as a discourse structure through framing, which organizes one's view of the world (Goffman, 1974). Framing occurs through the choice of words (diction) and the formation of themes to display discourse performances that can shape gender identity (Butler, 2011, p. 163). Framing in themes and diction is used to disseminate discourse that subordinates women based on hadith.

The subordination of women in the selection of hadiths is strengthened through discourse framing. For example, the word "slander" is translated in different ways, such as "ordeal" (Dedi Ridwan [@dedirdwn\_], 2023) and "disaster" (Sofyan Chalid bin

Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018e). This framing mechanism shifts one meaning to another meaning that is not lexically contained. For example, the phrases ‘*ala al-nisa*’ (Pelajar Sunnah [@pelajarsunnah.id], 2019), *imra’ah yatazawwajuha* (Makna Hijrah [@mahnahijrah], 2019), and *ittaqū al-nisa*’ (Anugerah Maju Makmur Raya [@ammartourtravel], 2020) are interpreted as “slander” (see Figure 2). The word “prostitute” is also interpreted from the word *zaniyah* (Nasihat Sahabat [@nasihatsahabatcom], 2021b, 2021a; Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2021b). Another framing mechanism is the interpretive mechanism for the redaction (matn) of hadiths. For example, the hadith *yakfurna al-’asyir* is interpreted as “*kufir* towards the husband” (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018c, 2018a), and “cursing her husband” (Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2021a).



Figure 2 Framing women’s subordination through the meaning of slander

The editorial meaning (matn) of hadith can be used to frame women as subordinate to men, distracting from their true position. Using a theme is a common way for Instagram account owners to control the meaning of hadiths and create a subordinate view of women. For example, by choosing themes such as “Why do most women go to hell?” (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018c), “Women will be

asked on the Day of Judgment” (Anugerah Maju Makmur Raya [@ammartourtravel], 2021b), and “Wives who will not smell the fragrance of heaven” (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018a), account owners can create the impression that men determine women’s salvation. The reality of the hadiths themselves, which insinuate that the majority of women are in hell because they deny their husbands’ goodness, is constructed as sin with themes such as “O women, give charity and do recite more *istighfar!*” (Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2021a) and “The wife will not taste the sweetness of faith” (Anugerah Maju Makmur Raya [@ammartourtravel], 2021a).

Using themes to represent meaning not only guides readers’ views of the desired stereotype but also acts as a persuasive tool. For example, the themes “it is sunnah for a woman to feel at home and not be lazy” (Muhammad [@tulusberhijrah], 2018), “the closest time a woman has to Allah’s grace” (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018d), “Perfume for Women, Fragrant but Haram” (Nasihat Sahabat [@nasihatsahabatcom], 2021b), “don’t reject his love” (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018b), and “My sister, you are the biggest ordeal for men” (Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2019) create the impression that following the hadith is inevitable.



Figure 3 Construction of meaning through aurat hadith messages

Images on Instagram are used to reinforce the meanings constructed through themes and translation in order to spread female stereotypes. For example, the image of a woman in a hijab looking at the road, which is used to accompany a hadith prohibiting women from leaving the house, strengthens the impression that women should be confined to their homes, as depicted in Figure 2 (Muhammad [@tulusberhijrah], 2018). Similarly, the image of burning roses, which is used to accompany a hadith about women being more likely to go to hell, reinforces the stereotype that women are sinful and deserve punishment (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018c).

Images reinforce the representation of meaning and frame it in a persuasive way, leading readers to follow the desired meaning. Instagram posts distribute meaning that reinforces the subordinate image of women. Three tendencies of account owners are evident: The first is the diversion of meaning through editorial translation of hadiths. Hadiths are translated using diction emphasizing women's inability to fulfill their husbands' rights. The focus is on the textual wording of hadith fosters subordinative tendencies, which many scholars seek to avoid when interpreting this hadith. Abou el Fadl (2021) situates the redaction of hadith within the context of Arab society, shaped by Sasanian and Byzantine cultural influences. Applying these hadith in new contexts, where views on women's roles differ, is necessary to reframe them as more egalitarian (Mernissi, 1991, p. 99). The failure of Instagram account owners in Indonesia to explore the historical context deeply has legitimized subordinative discourses toward women.

The second is control of meaning through themes. Translational diversion is strengthened by framing absolute meaning in the title. The title of an Instagram post shapes readers' expectations by influencing their mental framework, guiding their focus, and establishing the discourse's meaning (Entman, 1993). This reflects the account owner's intention to frame the narrative, impacting readers' prohibiting women from leaving the house with titles such as "Can a Woman Work in Islam?" (Allah is Watching You [@way\_2\_jannah], 2024) or "Ideal Jobs for Muslim Women" (Women of Sunnah [@womenofsunnah], 2023a). These titles demonstrate how framing influences readers' interpretations, with the main slide of Instagram posts playing a critical role in the subsequent meaning-making process. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) describe this as a framing device that emphasizes the discourse creator's intentions, shaping readers' understanding as part of the framing mechanism. Third, binding of meaning through images. The representation of meaning in translations and themes is strengthened by representative images that align the account owner's view of women with the reader's view. These three tendencies insinuate that account owners are unified in their efforts to disseminate a subordinate image of women through discourse performance on Instagram.

Discourse performance confines the meaning of hadiths to the meaning determined by account owners. Framing mechanisms, such as meaning shifting, message determination, and visual identity, narrow meaning to a single, generalized meaning. Hoppstadius (2020) identified framing efforts in one direction of meaning as a mechanism for hiding messages with other meanings. The emphasis on

identity and meaning through themes is used to construct universal needs for women and disseminate messages to Instagram users. The meaning present in general and universal expressions is a modality in discourse production that universalizes interpersonal meaning content so that it is generally accepted (Fairclough, 1993, p. 158). The enactment of the meaning represented for all women is strengthened by images, which bridge discursive reality with social action. The relationship between translation, themes, and images forms a modality of discourse that bridges the understanding of reality (hadiths) and the discursive reality of society (Fairclough, 1993; Krzyżanowski, 2020), shaping and institutionalizing subordinate actions towards women.

The objective style of distributing meaning through the translation of hadiths, presented through editorial, subjectively represents the use of discourse modalities to institutionalize subordinate actions against women. Discourse modalities bridge discursive awareness and social action and are presented as images containing meaning, framing, and visual representations of hadith meaning. Discourse modalities contribute to forming the image of the object according to the desired representation of the discourse maker in a metaphorical form (Abdel-Raheem, 2023). The translation mechanism to visualize meaning limits understanding of hadith meaning content, emphasizing the representation of meaning desired by the account owner. The image becomes a reference point for meaning, a “front region” in Goffman’s terms (1956), controlling the absence of other meanings beyond the displayed meaning. Image-based posts bring readers to a limited representation of meaning without

aiming to cover the actual meaning through framing in the distribution process.

Framing encourages readers to construct meaning through a pattern of affirmation based on equal perceptions of women, achieved by selecting hadiths that match readers' knowledge. Through framing as the initial meaning, the distribution process creates discursive equality to represent women's positions in a way previous researchers have not identified. The representation of gender discourse in the distribution process emphasizes the style of language use (Lingiardi et al., 2020) and the choice of words that demean women (Dada et al., 2021; Saha et al., 2019). Hegemonic masculinity is a general trend in analyzing women's representation from the distribution perspective (Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2019; Ricciardelli & Adorjan, 2019; Trottier, 2020). The emphasis on limiting the representation of other meanings beyond the account owner's will through the front meaning mechanism is a unique mechanism found on Instagram that previous researchers have overlooked.

The front display mechanism limits meaning, preventing readers from constructing other meanings. This can legitimize and strengthen the account owner's perception of meaning in the reader's mind. Meaghan McIntyre found that efforts to form beliefs about gender identity are carried out, emphasizing the front area in literary representation (McIntyre, 2020). This suggests that the front region can be used to affirm gender identity on social media, changing or challenging existing perceptions (Colosi et al., 2023). Instagram contributes to cultivating certain discourses by framing front displays in the feed to form readers' first impressions. This gives

account owners space to direct opinions on first appearances (Goffman, 1956). The first impression becomes the entry point into a limited discourse description, which is explained in more depth in the caption, strengthening the account owner's framed meaning.

### **Deletion of Discourse in Instagram Captions**

Instagram posts frame meaning through images; captions strengthen this meaning with long descriptions. Captions explain the posted image and present arguments supporting the formed discourse. Hall (1980) pronounced that media infrastructure provides opportunities for readers to create new ideas and discourse by producing new discourse in their minds. Media infrastructure is not only a communication channel but also a structure of power and control that can influence the formation of discourse and identity in society (Hall, 2013). By maximizing the use of media infrastructure, we can shape and change the way we communicate and convey ideas and views of the world to a broader audience.

Captions present arguments to strengthen discourse. For example, the prohibition against women leaving home is strengthened by additional explanations from the Quran Surah al-Ahzab 33:33, "*wa qarna fi buyutikunna*" (stay at home) (*The Qur'an*, 2004) and Ibn Mas'ud's said, "*ma ta'abbadat Allah imra'atun bi mitsli taqwa Allah wa julusiha fi baitiha*" (It is not a woman to worship Allah such as obedience to Allah and staying at home), to prevent them from leaving the house and being a temptation for men (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray

[@sofyanruray.info], 2018d). The @sofyanruray account explains the prohibition on leaving the house by involving other hadiths with the same meaning to avoid slander against men (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018g). The @ammartourtravel account also uses reference sources in its captions to emphasize the meaning of hadiths that command full obedience, prohibit complaining, and curse the husband (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018c, 2018a).

The @wanitasalihah account uses captions to recommend hashtags for sharing their posts on Instagram (Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2021a). The account owner's interpretation of the hadith, which emphasizes their understanding of the meaning, is part of their effort to form a meaning that is appropriate to the chosen theme. This hadith is not an exaggeration. The facts prove it. Even though women are created with weak minds, many intelligent, strong, and brave men have been made weak and submissive by them (Cikarang Mengaji [@cikarangmengajiofficial], 2020). This statement highlights the importance of guarding against the temptations and trials that can arise in relationships with women. Slander against women can take many forms, including sexual temptation, behavior that violates religious teachings, or emotional instability that can damage relationships (Dedi Ridwan [@dedirdwn\_], 2023).

The Instagram account @wanitasalihah also shared a story explained by al-Qurtubi about an obedient man who was tempted by a woman and went astray (Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2019). The account provided a detailed explanation of the prohibition on women leaving the house

wearing perfume, using arguments from Islamic jurisprudence (Nasihah Sahabat [@nasihatsahabatcom], 2021b), other hadiths (Nasihah Sahabat [@nasihatsahabatcom], 2021a; Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2019), the views of scholars (Wanita Salihah [@wanitasalihah], 2021b), and the lessons learned from hadiths (Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray [@sofyanruray.info], 2018f). The captions adapt to the posts' translation and themes, using various interpretation models.

Image posts on Instagram that reflect the subordinate position of women use captions to strengthen the meaning of the hadiths they reference. The captions work together with the images to create a synergistic message reinforcing the account owner's desire to subordinate women. The captions also strengthen the subordinate message by referencing verses from the Quran that contain the same narrative and other similar hadiths. The argumentative captions provide a basis for interpreting the hadiths to reflect the account owner's ideology. This is because the captions are constructed from the account owner's own reflective understanding of the textual meaning of the hadiths, which reflects their model of understanding women. The use of explanations as an extended explanation (*syarh*) mechanism reflects the account owner's ideological tendencies in framing the meaning of the images they post.

Reflecting on the way captions frame meaning in images reveals that other meanings are erased by emphasizing specific meanings using the Quran and other hadiths. This narrowing of meaning is further reinforced by captions focusing on constructing the desired meaning. This mechanism, called

deletion, removes all propositions from the text that are irrelevant to interpreting other propositions in the discourse (Dijk, 2019, pp. 46–47; Kocoń et al., 2021). The construction of the meaning of hadiths about women is presented one-sidedly by ignoring other possible interpretations or the context in which the hadiths were produced. This indicates a single attempt to justify the production of the discourse. Truth from one perspective, ignoring the diversity of meanings, makes discourse function ideologically (Fairclough, 2013, p. 26; Hjelm, 2021). The emphasis on framing meaning in captions makes Instagram a platform for displaying ideological discourse about women.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The use of social media technology to spread hadiths about women has resulted in a framing of the transmission of hadiths that reinforces the subordination of women. This eliminates the diversity of meanings that can be achieved by looking at other hadith sources. Social media has become a powerful ideological weapon to maintain the status quo of gender inequality, even though modern reality has significantly changed since the Prophet Muhammad era 15 centuries ago. In addition, media framing increasingly legitimizes discrimination against women both in the private and public spheres. The results from the critical discourse analysis reveal that the representation of subordinate truth formation towards women is successfully achieved by certain groups through systematic framing on social media such as Instagram. The presence of Instagram highlights that, regardless of technological advancement, it remains a double-

edged sword. On the one hand, it can be used to paradoxically legitimize the status quo of gender inequality, but, on the other hand, it can also be used to critically examine the narratives of hadith texts. It includes the critical evaluations of the underlying values within the messages contained therein, while also engaging contemporary audiences living in this era shaped by modern sensibilities. Therefore, these two opposing forces—preserved subversion versus critical reinterpretation—persist in an ongoing ideological struggle across social media as conservative and moderate tension manifests as a religious interpretation contestation on digital spheres to shape the worldview of its users.

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