CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE HADITH ON THE PROHIBITION OF KHALWAT IN *SAHIH MUSLIM*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reinterpret the moral message and protective values contained in the hadith concerning the prohibition of seclusion between non-mahram men and women amid the increasingly complex dynamics of modern society. Cultural shifts, technological advancement, and information openness have transformed patterns of social interaction, often blurring ethical boundaries. Consequently, some people interpret religious texts, including the hadith on seclusion, either too literally or too freely. Therefore, a critical and comprehensive approach is needed so that the hadith may be understood not only as a normative prohibition but also as a moral and ideological discourse. This research applies Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which highlights the interrelation between language, social cognition, and social context. Using a qualitative approach and library research method, the study analyses fifteen hadiths from Sahih Muslim, translated into Indonesian. Data were collected through reading and note-taking, and analysed descriptively through identifying textual structures, social meanings, and contemporary relevance. The findings reveal that, in the Textual Analysis dimension, the hadiths consistently convey moral values through prohibitions, warnings, and recommendations. Linguistic features such as "do not" and "not lawful" indicate strong moral intent. The Social Cognition dimension shows that understanding of the hadith is shaped collectively by experience, knowledge, and culture. In the Social Context dimension, the moral message remains relevant today, functioning as guidance for ethical interaction and protection of human dignity. Overall, the hadith on seclusion prohibition represents a living moral discourse that integrates ethical, social, and ideological dimensions within Islamic society.

Keyword: - *critical discourse analysis, hadith, khalwat, moral values, Teun A. van Dijk, social context*.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hadith serves as the second principal source of Islamic knowledge after the Qur'an, functioning as a vital framework for understanding moral and legal principles in Islam [1]. It contains the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which together guide Muslims in all aspects of life. Among the *hadiths* that highlight moral and social discipline is the *hadith* concerning the prohibition of *khalwat*—the act of seclusion between a man and a woman who are not *mahram*. This prohibition, often cited in *Sahih Muslim*, reflects Islam's deep concern for moral protection and the preservation of social harmony. Beyond serving as a legal command, it communicates the Prophet's broader message on maintaining purity, respect, and ethical interaction within society [2].

In the modern era, social transformation, cultural change, and technological advancement have significantly altered patterns of human interaction. The emergence of social media, private digital communication, and globalised culture has blurred ethical and spatial boundaries once preserved in Muslim societies [3]. These developments have led to varied interpretations of classical *hadiths* relating to gender interaction. Some scholars and laypeople adhere rigidly to literal readings, while others approach them through excessively liberal interpretations that detach moral teachings from their ethical roots [4]. Consequently, there arises a pressing need for a more critical and contextualised interpretation of *hadiths*—one that preserves their moral essence while recognising contemporary realities.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly the model proposed by Teun A. van Dijk, offers a comprehensive framework for examining religious texts through their linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions [5]. CDA does not merely study language as structure, but as a reflection of ideology, cognition, and social relations [6]. Van Dijk's model integrates three interrelated components: textual analysis, social cognition, and social context. Textual analysis

investigates the structure and form of language used in discourse; social cognition explores how individuals and communities process and internalise meaning; and social context examines the power, ideology, and cultural setting that shape discourse production and interpretation [7].

Applying this analytical model to the study of *hadiths* enables a deeper understanding of how language conveys moral authority and social ideology. In the context of the *hadith* on *khalwat*, CDA provides a tool to examine how prophetic discourse is constructed linguistically to produce moral consciousness and regulate social behaviour. Previous studies have tended to focus on jurisprudential or theological interpretations, often neglecting the linguistic and ideological layers embedded in the text [8]. Through CDA, this research highlights how *hadiths* serve not only as legal injunctions but also as social texts that influence moral cognition and social order.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a critical discourse analysis of *hadiths* related to the prohibition of *khalwat* in *Sahih Muslim*. Using van Dijk's tri-dimensional framework, it explores how textual patterns, cognitive interpretations, and social realities interact in constructing a coherent moral discourse. The research employs a qualitative design and library method, with fifteen *hadiths* selected as the primary data. By integrating linguistic and socio-religious perspectives, this study aspires to provide a deeper understanding of *hadiths* as dynamic moral discourses that remain relevant to the ethical challenges of contemporary Muslim society [9].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of *hadiths* from a linguistic and critical perspective has increasingly attracted attention in contemporary Islamic scholarship. Traditional *hadith* studies primarily focus on the authenticity of transmission (*sanad*) and the textual content (*matan*), assessing the reliability of narrators and the legal implications of the texts [10]. While this classical approach remains fundamental, it often overlooks the socio-linguistic and ideological dimensions that shape the moral essence of *hadiths*. Recent academic developments in linguistics and discourse studies have opened new perspectives for reinterpreting *hadiths* as discursive constructions that interact with context, cognition, and culture [11].

Scholars such as Fairclough and van Dijk emphasise that discourse analysis provides a powerful framework for understanding how language constructs meaning, power, and ideology in social life [12]. Language, in this view, is not merely a communicative tool but also a medium that both reflects and reinforces social realities. Applying this framework to religious texts, including *hadiths*, allows researchers to uncover how language functions to establish authority and convey moral values. Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model is particularly relevant due to its multidimensional focus, combining textual analysis, social cognition, and socio-political context [13].

According to van Dijk, discourse can be examined through three interconnected levels: (1) *textual structure*, involving macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure; (2) *social cognition*, which reflects shared mental models influencing interpretation; and (3) *social context*, encompassing power, ideology, and social relations [14]. These dimensions enable a deeper exploration of how religious texts produce moral consciousness and sustain ideological meanings. Hence, CDA provides an appropriate analytical lens for understanding *hadiths* as living moral discourses embedded within the sociocultural dynamics of Muslim societies.

A number of previous studies have demonstrated the potential of CDA in examining religious and moral communication. Tenorio [15] analysed the ideological mechanisms within Christian sermons, while Kong [16] investigated the relation between language and social power in sacred narratives. In the Islamic context, Al-Khazraji [17] explored the sociocognitive features of Qur'anic discourse, revealing that language functions as an ideological medium for moral instruction. Similarly, Ihsan and Fitriani [18] viewed *hadiths* as moral discourses that negotiate divine command with social meaning. However, these studies still leave a research gap regarding the application of CDA to *hadiths* related specifically to *khalwat* (seclusion between non-*mahram* men and women).

The *hadith* on the prohibition of *khalwat* is a valuable object of study because it combines moral, social, and ideological dimensions. Classical commentators such as al-Nawawi interpreted this prohibition primarily as a safeguard to prevent immoral acts, yet CDA enables a broader understanding by examining how linguistic structures reflect moral authority and protection within a specific social context [19]. In this sense, the *hadith* not only provides legal guidance but also conveys ideological messages that reinforce the ethical foundations of Islamic society.

Building upon previous scholarship, this study applies van Dijk's CDA model to analyse the *hadiths* on *khalwat* in *Sahih Muslim*. This approach is distinct from traditional *hadith* interpretation because it integrates classical Islamic scholarship with modern linguistic theory, revealing how textual structures, cognitive processes, and social contexts interact to form a unified moral discourse. Thus, this research situates itself at the intersection of linguistic inquiry and

Islamic moral thought, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of *hadiths* as dynamic instruments of moral and ideological expression in the modern world [20].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the analysis and discussion based on the application of Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model to fifteen *hadiths* concerning the prohibition of *khalwat* (seclusion between non-*mahram* men and women) found in *Sahih Muslim*. The analysis explores the data through three interrelated dimensions of van Dijk's framework: *textual analysis*, *social cognition*, and *social context*. These dimensions reveal how linguistic structures, cognitive understanding, and socio-cultural realities interact to construct the moral discourse of *khalwat* as a reflection of Islamic ethical ideology.

3.1 Textual Analysis

At the textual level, the analysis focuses on how language structures communicate moral meaning within the *hadiths*. Van Dijk's textual dimension comprises three analytical layers: *macrostructure*, *superstructure*, and *microstructure*.
The textual analysis of this study focuses on how the *hadiths* concerning the prohibition of *khalwat* (seclusion between non-*mahram* men and women) in *Sahih Muslim* construct moral and ideological meaning through linguistic and structural strategies. Using Teun A. van Dijk's framework, this analysis examines three textual dimensions: macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. The data consist of five *hadiths* that explicitly or implicitly address the issue of seclusion, selected from different chapters (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, *Kitāb al-Salām*, and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*) to represent various contexts of discourse.
The five sample *hadiths* are as follows:

1. *"No man should be alone with a woman unless she is accompanied by a mahram."* (*Sahih Muslim*, no. 1341)
2. *"Beware of entering upon women."* (*Sahih Muslim*, no. 2172)
3. *"The in-law is death."* (*Sahih Muslim*, no. 2172b)
4. *"No man is alone with a woman but the third of them is the devil."* (*Sahih Muslim*, no. 2173)
5. *"The best of you are those who are best to their families."* (*Sahih Muslim*, no. 2328)

These five *hadiths* collectively represent the Prophet's moral teaching concerning social interaction, ethical restraint, and the protection of personal and communal honour.

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a. Macrostructure

At the macrostructural level, the global meaning of these *hadiths* centres on the theme of moral protection and prevention of social corruption. The prohibition of *khalwat* is not merely a legal injunction but part of a broader discourse that constructs a moral worldview in which purity, modesty, and family stability are prioritised. The Prophet's warnings are framed as acts of care and guidance, aiming to prevent harm before it occurs (*sadd al-dharī'ah*).
Across the five texts, several consistent semantic fields emerge—words and ideas related to *prohibition* (do not, beware), *danger* (death, devil), and *virtue* (best to one's family). The semantic network built by these lexical choices projects a unified ideology of self-control as a form of devotion. In this worldview, moral discipline is depicted as both spiritual protection and social preservation.
The *hadiths* also reflect Islam's preventive ethics (*akhlaq al-wiqayah*), which encourage individuals to guard themselves and society against circumstances that could lead to wrongdoing. The macrostructure thus constructs the *khalwat* prohibition as part of a larger moral order, linking individual behaviour to communal wellbeing.

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b. Superstructure

The *superstructure* refers to the schematic organisation or overall structure of the discourse. Each of the five *hadiths* follows a relatively stable rhetorical sequence that can be outlined as Prohibition → Explanation → Reinforcement. This pattern illustrates how the Prophet's speech operates pedagogically to convey not only rules but also reasoning and emotional impact.

1. In *"No man should be alone with a woman unless she is accompanied by a mahram"*, the structure combines a command with an exception, creating a rational and socially sensitive prohibition. The Prophet sets a boundary but allows a legitimate alternative, reflecting a discourse of balance rather than extremity.
2. In *"Beware of entering upon women"*, the discourse uses a warning structure, employing the formula *iyyākum wa…* ("beware of…") which in classical Arabic functions as a rhetorical signal of urgency and collective responsibility.

3. The *hadith "The in-law is death"* expands the schematic pattern by including a dialogue form: question → clarification → metaphorical conclusion. The Prophet's metaphor transforms abstract moral risk into vivid emotional imagery.
4. In *"The devil is the third among them"*, the prohibition is followed by a causal clause (*fa inna...*), giving theological justification and reinforcing obedience through spiritual reasoning.
5. The final *hadith*, *"The best of you are those who are best to their families"*, follows a comparative moral schema—defining virtue through social behaviour. It functions as a complementary reinforcement of the previous prohibitions, connecting moral restraint in public with goodness in private life.

Overall, the *superstructure* of these *hadiths* demonstrates that prophetic discourse is methodically constructed: it does not merely instruct but educates, rationalises, and emotionally appeals to its audience. Each *hadith* balances moral law with pedagogical wisdom, ensuring that the message is both intellectually convincing and spiritually resonant.

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c. Microstructure

The *microstructure* analysis explores how meaning is shaped through the linguistic details of the text—lexicon, syntax, cohesion, and rhetorical devices.

1. Lexical Choices and Semantic Emphasis

The repeated use of negative imperatives such as *lā yakhluwanna* ("do not be alone") and *iyyākum* ("beware") establishes a strong prohibitive tone. The negation *lā* and the double *nūn* of emphasis (ّ) intensify the prohibition, signalling absolute moral seriousness. The frequent collocation of these verbs with terms implying danger (*shayṭān* – the devil; *mawt* – death) constructs an atmosphere of vigilance. The Prophet's diction therefore merges ethical instruction with emotional persuasion.

2. Syntax and Sentence Structure

The syntactic patterns across the *hadiths* are short, direct, and rhythmically balanced—typical of oral discourse designed for easy memorisation. The Prophet often uses conditional and causal clauses, such as *"No man should be alone with a woman, for the third is the devil."* The connective *fa inna* ("for indeed") functions as a logical bridge between command and reasoning, transforming the text from mere rule to moral argument.

3. Cohesion and Repetition

Repetition is a dominant cohesive feature. The repeated structures (*lā yakhluwanna rajulun bi imra'ah*) in multiple narrations produce intertextual coherence. This stylistic repetition reinforces the universality of the moral rule, embedding it in the collective consciousness of the Muslim community.

4. Metaphor and Figurative Language

The Prophet's discourse frequently employs metaphor to evoke emotional and moral awareness. The metaphor *"the in-law is death"* (*al-ḥamwu al-mawt*) shocks the listener, illustrating the hidden danger of assumed familiarity. Likewise, *"the devil is the third"* personifies evil as an unseen participant, creating an internal image of temptation intruding into human interaction. These metaphors transform abstract ethical risks into vivid moral imagery that enhances memorability and reflection.

5. Rhetorical and Pragmatic Strategies

The Prophet's language reveals strategic use of collective address and indirect persuasion. In *"Beware of entering upon women"*, the plural form addresses the entire community, reinforcing moral solidarity rather than individual blame. In contrast, *"The best of you are those who are best to their families"* uses positive reinforcement, motivating believers through aspiration rather than fear. Together, these rhetorical strategies display an alternation between warning and encouragement—a balance of deterrence and compassion characteristic of prophetic pedagogy.

6. Ideological Implications

At the microstructural level, language functions as a carrier of ideology. The *hadiths* linguistically position moral discipline as a marker of faith and social integrity. By linking ethical behaviour with divine awareness, the discourse naturalises piety as part of everyday conduct. Words like *mahram*, *shayṭān*, and *ahl* (family) form a semantic triangle that ties social relations to spiritual responsibility.

3.2 Social Cognition

In van Dijk's model, social cognition represents the intermediary process that connects text and society. It refers to how individuals and communities interpret, internalise, and reproduce meanings within discourse. In the case of *hadiths* prohibiting *khalwat* (seclusion between non-*mahram* men and women), cognition plays a crucial role in transforming linguistic expressions into moral understanding.

The findings indicate that Muslims interpret the prohibition of *khalwat* not merely as a legal restriction but as an ethical reminder rooted in self-control and spiritual awareness. When the Prophet declares, *"No man should be alone*

with a woman, for the third among them is the devil," believers form a mental image of moral danger. This image operates as a cognitive deterrent, shaping consciousness and guiding behaviour. Such internal representations, known as *mental models* in van Dijk's framework, sustain moral vigilance even in the absence of external supervision.

Religious education further strengthens this cognition. Within traditional *pesantren* or community learning settings, *hadiths* on *khalwat* are taught as moral safeguards that preserve dignity and prevent suspicion. Through continuous repetition and social reinforcement, the discourse becomes embedded in collective moral memory.

However, the research also finds that interpretation evolves with social experience. In contemporary contexts, Muslims tend to read *khalwat* symbolically, linking it to ethical boundaries rather than spatial isolation. Digital communication, for example, introduces new forms of "virtual seclusion", yet the same moral cognition—of restraint, transparency, and respect—remains relevant.

Therefore, the *hadiths* on *khalwat* demonstrate that cognition in Islamic discourse is not limited to knowledge but extends to belief, emotion, and behaviour. They function as mental frameworks that generate ethical awareness and collective ideology, ensuring that the Prophet's moral vision continues to shape Muslim consciousness across time and context.

3.3 Social Context

The social context dimension reveals how discourse operates within broader social and cultural structures. The *hadiths* on *khalwat* emerged in a seventh-century society where moral protection and family honour were essential social values. At that time, private encounters between unrelated men and women often led to suspicion or social tension. The Prophet's guidance, therefore, served as preventive regulation to maintain public morality and trust within the community.

In the present era, the context has evolved but the ethical principle remains consistent. The prohibition of *khalwat* can be viewed as an enduring call for responsibility and modesty in all interactions—physical or digital. In professional and social environments where men and women cooperate, the moral essence of the *hadith* encourages decorum, self-awareness, and ethical restraint rather than separation.

Across societies, application of the *hadith* varies. In conservative contexts, it is implemented literally through gender boundaries, whereas in more open societies it functions as symbolic guidance for ethical behaviour. This variation reflects how discourse interacts with ideology and power: religious authority adapts interpretation to sustain Islamic morality in changing social realities.

Overall, the analysis shows that *hadiths* about *khalwat* act as dynamic moral discourses. They balance divine guidance with social adaptation, preserving the essence of modesty and protection while accommodating contemporary needs. The Prophet's teachings thus remain socially alive, guiding Muslims to uphold ethical consciousness within modern cultural frameworks.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This research concludes that the discourse of hadith prohibiting khalwat in Sahih Muslim reflects a comprehensive moral and social framework rooted in Islamic ethics. Through the Critical Discourse Analysis model of Teun A. van Dijk, the hadiths are understood not only as normative injunctions but also as dynamic texts shaping social awareness, moral reasoning, and behavioural norms. From the textual dimension, the hadiths demonstrate a coherent pattern comprising three linguistic strategies: prohibition, warning, and recommendation. The prohibitive forms, such as "do not" (laa), function to establish preventive control over actions that might lead to moral transgression. The warnings emphasise moral consequences, while the recommendations—such as commands to marry or to fast—serve as positive alternatives for maintaining chastity and self-control. Collectively, these structures form an interrelated moral discourse that regulates behaviour while fostering ethical awareness. In the social cognition dimension, interpretation of the hadiths is shown to be shaped by the collective understanding of Muslim society. The moral messages embedded in the hadiths are internalised through education, culture, and shared religious experience. Social cognition thus becomes the bridge connecting textual meaning with real-life practice, where hadiths act as tools of moral formation that influence thought, belief, and conduct. Within the social context dimension, the findings reveal that the prohibition of khalwat remains highly relevant in modern times. Despite the changing patterns of interaction—especially in digital spaces—the hadiths continue to function as protective discourse that preserves dignity and moral order. Overall, this

study demonstrates that hadiths about the prohibition of khalwat are not static religious texts but living moral discourses. They sustain ethical consciousness, reinforce social harmony, and serve as ideological instruments guiding Muslims to uphold moral integrity in contemporary society.

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