Digital Pranks and Islamic Ethics: A Critical Discourse Study of Aa Gym and Hadith on Humor

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Abstract

The phenomenon of pranks on social media has developed into a form of entertainment that is fraught with ethical and moral issues, especially when carried out without considering the psychological impact on the victims. Although it often receives positive responses from netizens, this type of content essentially indicates a tolerance for symbolic violence in the digital space. This article analyzes Abdullah Gymnastiar's (Aa Gym) critical response to prank practices from an Islamic ethical perspective, which was uploaded to Aa Gym's YouTube account on May 9, 2022, entitled "*Celakanya Prank yang Mendzolimi Orang Lain-kajian singkat Aa Gym*", with reference to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad about joking, particularly in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. This study uses Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis approach through three stages: (1) text analysis as a representation of something that contains a certain ideology because it wants to see how reality is formed in the text to identify lexical, sentence structure, rhetorical style, and intonation; (2) discourse practice analysis to understand the context of the production and dissemination of the message in digital media, and (3) socio-cultural practice analysis to relate the findings to Islamic ethical norms and the dynamics of online humor culture. This study explores the construction of language, moral values, and religious norms in Aa Gym's digital dakwah content and its implications for public understanding of ethical boundaries in online humor culture. The analysis reveals that Aa Gym emphasizes the importance of responsible humor that entertains without hurting or degrading others. This study underscores the importance of ethical reflection on digital humor practices and the need to reevaluate the boundaries of decency in jokes. Thus, this article contributes to the discourse on media ethics and contemporary *da'wah*, while highlighting the relevance of Islamic norms in responding to the challenges of popular culture in the digital age.

Abstrak

Fenomena *prank* di media sosial telah berkembang menjadi bentuk hiburan yang sarat dengan isu etika dan moral, terutama ketika dilakukan tanpa mempertimbangkan dampak psikologis terhadap korban. Meskipun sering mendapat respons positif dari netizen, konten semacam ini hakikatnya mengindikasikan adanya toleransi terhadap kekerasan simbolis di ruang digital. Artikel ini menganalisis respons kritis Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym) terhadap praktik *prank* dari perspektif etika Islam yang di unggah di akun YouTube Aa Gym pada 9 Mei 2022 "Celakanya *Prank* yang Mendzolimi Orang Lain-kajian singkat Aa Gym", dengan merujuk pada hadis Nabi Muhammad tentang bercanda, khususnya dalam *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough melalui tiga tahapan: (1) analisis teks sebagai representasi sesuatu yang mengandung ideologi tertentu karena ingin melihat bagaimana realitas itu dibentuk dalam teks untuk mengidentifikasi leksikal, struktur kalimat, gaya rertorika dan intonasi, (2) analisis praktik wacana untuk memahami

konteks produksi dan penyebaran pesan dakwa di media digital, dan (3) analisis praktik sosial-budaya untuk mengaitkan temuan dengan norma etika Islam dan dinamika budaya humor online. Studi ini mengeksplorasi konstruksi bahasa, nilai moral, dan norma agama dibangun dalam konten dakwah digital Aa Gym, serta implikasinya terhadap pemahaman publik tentang batas-batas etika dalam budaya humor online. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Aa Gym menekankan pentingnya humor yang bertanggung jawab, yang menghibur tanpa menyakiti atau merendahkan orang lain. Studi ini menegaskan pentingnya refleksi etis terhadap praktik humor digital, serta kebutuhan untuk mengevaluasi kembali batas-batas kesopanan dalam lelucon. Dengan demikian, artikel ini berkontribusi pada diskursus etika media dan dakwah kontemporer, sekaligus menyoroti relevansi norma-norma Islam dalam merespons tantangan budaya populer pada era digital.

Keywords	Digital pranks; Aa Gym; Islamic ethics; hadith on joking; critical discourse analysis; online humor culture.

Introduction

The phenomenon of pranks—the act of teasing others with the intention of surprising or entertaining them—is becoming increasingly prevalent on social media and is often carried out without considering the psychological impact on the victim. However, this type of content has received a positive response from the majority of netizens, indicating that society implicitly condones psychological violence in the virtual space.[1] From an Islamic perspective, laughter and jokes are permissible, but ethical and moral boundaries must be upheld.[2] One hadith in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* emphasizes the Prophet Muhammad's prohibition against frightening fellow Muslims, highlighting the importance of maintaining proper speech and behavior, whether in serious situations or in a humorous context, so as not to cause harm or discomfort to others.[3]

The trend of pranks on social media has raised ethical issues that cannot be ignored. Much of the content humiliates individuals publicly, either explicitly or implicitly, causing psychological and even traumatic effects.[4] When such content is disseminated without the victim's consent, the values of privacy and human dignity are at stake. Extreme pranks can not only cause emotional harm but also have the potential to cause physical harm, especially if they are carried out in public spaces or involve large crowds. Therefore, it is important to rethink the ethical boundaries in creating digital entertainment content so as not to cross the line that jeopardizes individual integrity.[5]

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[1] Dafis Heriansyah, "Era Post Truth: Fenomena Prank Dalam Pandangan Hadis Dengan Pendekatan Sosio-Historis," *International Conference on Tradition and Religious Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oktober 2022): 5.

[2] "Fiqih Canda Dan Humor - stid di al-hikmah jakarta," July 20, 2011, https://alhikmah.ac.id/fiqih-canda-dan-humor/.

[3] Sankist Herdiyanti Lina Auliana dkk, 'Peranan Media Sosial Dalam Mengembangkan Suatu Bisnis: Literature Review,' *Jurnal Administrasi Bisnis* Vol. 18, No. 2 (Desember 2022): 103.

[4] Reggina Salsabila Putri Gunawan, "Aspek Pertanggungjawaban Hukum Atas Pelanggaran Konten Prank Pada Media Over the Top Berdasarkan Hukum Positif Di Indonesia," *COMSERVA: (Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat)* Vol. 3 (Januari 9, 2024), 3422.

[5] "Fenomena Maraknya Video Prank Menurut Psikolog," NU Online, accessed October 7, 2024, https://nu.or.id/nasional/fenomena-maraknya-video-prank-menurut-psikolog-SpREx.

In this context, the attention of a popular Indonesian religious figure, Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym), to the phenomenon of pranks is very significant. Aa Gym's educational background began with formal education and continued up to the university level. Although there is not much information about his higher education, Aagym is known as an active and self-taught student. Aagym has two wives: Ninih Muthmaimah Muhsin and Alfarini Edarini. From his first marriage, Aagym has six children, including Ghaida Tsuraya, Muhammad Ghazi al-Ghifari, Ghina Raudhatul Jannah, Ghaitsa Zahira Shofa, Ghefira Nur Fatimah, and Gaza Muhammad Ghazali.[6] However, some say there are seven, including Gheriya Rahima. From his second wife, he has two children, Teuku Diptiya and Teuku Diktiya.[7]

Aa Gym's monumental contributions to Islamic education are marked by the establishment of the Daarut Tauhiid Islamic Boarding School in Bandung, which integrates tauhid education, character development, and values of independence and self-development.[8] In addition to being a preacher, Aa Gym is also an active writer of Islamic books containing spiritual reflections and social ethics, such as *Manajemen Qolbu*, *Jagalah Hati*, and *Refleksi untuk Membangun Nurani Bangsa*. These works serve as educational and inspirational tools in fostering religious awareness among the Indonesian people.[9]

Aa Gym expressed his criticism and ethical reflections on this trend through his social media account. Unlike some content creators who are involved in the production of pranks, Aa Gym took a moral and religious approach by inviting his audience to consider the social impact of every action. His approach is not only normative but also analytical, highlighting how Islamic values can be used as a basis for assessing the phenomenon of pranks in digital culture.[10]

As a public figure with significant influence in the realm of digital preaching, Aa Gym's position does not merely represent the role of a religious figure who conveys moral messages, but also functions as an actor who helps shape public discourse through interactions on social media. Within the framework of the mediatization theory of religion, the presence of religious figures in the public sphere allows religious values to be reframed according to the logic of the media. As a result, the ethical messages conveyed are not only normative but also adapted to the characteristics and preferences of the online audience. Thus, Aa Gym is not merely a messenger but also an agent who mediates Islamic moral values in the digital communication ecosystem.

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[6] Caesar Nova Arrasyiid, "Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwa Dalam Buku Meraih Bening Hati Dengan Manajemen Qalbu" (Jakarta, Islam Negeri Syarif Hidyatullah, 2018), 51.

[7] Eddy Welly, "Konsep Manajemen Qalbu Abdullah Gymnastiar" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2010), 14.

[8] "Abdullah Gymnastiar," *Wikipedia bahasa Indonesia, ensiklopedia bebas*, September 23, 2024, accessed October 7,2024, https://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Abdullah_Gymnastiar&oldid=26337417.

[9] Abdullah Gymnastiar, *Meraih Bening Hati Dengan Manajemen Qalbu* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2002), 143.

[10]*Hukum Prank Dalam Islam | LIVE Kajian MQ Pagi | 16-08-2020*, directed by Aagym Official, 2020, 49:32, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7R-YfdMV7Q.

From the perspective of a public sphere transforming a digital context, social media can be understood as a discursive arena where moral ideas and religious values interact, compete, and negotiate with various other popular narratives. Utilizing this space for preaching—including criticizing the phenomenon of pranks—requires a discourse strategy that combines religious authority with a communication style relevant to digital culture. Therefore, *da'wah* messages are not sufficient merely to reiterate established moral principles but must also function as discursive interventions into evolving cultural practices, thereby shaping public opinion and fostering ethical reflection within digital society.[11]

The content posted by Aa Gym's account consistently emphasizes the importance of maintaining self-respect, empathy, and social sensitivity towards the feelings of others, both in real and virtual interactions. This is crucial in the discourse on pranks, as these values are often sacrificed in pursuit of engagement or viral sensations. In several posts, Aa Gym emphasizes that good entertainment should not sacrifice the dignity of others because what seems trivial in the virtual world can have serious psychological and social impacts in the real world.

Based on the above context and issues, this article aims to critically analyze how Aa Gym's account frames the phenomenon of pranks from an Islamic ethical perspective, specifically through the approach of hadiths about joking in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. This study employs Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method to explore how moral and religious values are communicated in digital spaces and how this influences public understanding of moral boundaries in cultural content. The analysis of the hadith and its implementation in Aa Gym's *da'wah* discourse contributes to reassessing the relevance of Islamic norms in addressing contemporary ethical challenges.

Several previous studies discussing digital prank content, such as those written by I Wayan Budha Yasa,[12] Yulianti Eni,[13] and Arif Fauzan Amrullah,[14] focused on the social impact of digital content on teenagers and students, particularly on YouTube and TikTok. These studies emphasize that prank content can violate the law, such as the ITE Law, if it contains elements of insult or violence and has the potential to normalize symbolic violence. Previous studies have provided an overview of the social impact and potential legal violations of the prank phenomenon, but they are generally limited to legal or psychological approaches. The dimension of religious discourse, particularly the contribution of

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[11] Neil Pemberton, "The Rat-Catcher's Prank: Interspecies Cunningness and Scavenging in Henry Mayhew's London," *Journal of Victorian Culture* Vol. 19, no. 4 (2014): 525.

[12] I Wayan Budha Yasa, Konten Prank Youtuber Sebagai Tindakan Pidana Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Informasi Dan Transaksi Elektronik," *Seminar Nasional Hukum Universitas Negeri Semarang* Vol. 7, No. 2 (2021).

[13] Yulianti Eni, "Analisi Konten Tiktok Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Perilaku Peserta Didik Di Upt SMA Negeri 5 Tanah Traja," *Pinisi Journal of Sociology Education Review* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Juli 2024).

[14] Arif Fauzan Amrullah, ""Analisis Konten Prank KDRT Pada Chanel Youtobe Baim Wong Terhadap Perilaku Masyarakat," *JIKA (Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Andalan)* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Juli-Desember).

Islamic ethical values in the context of digital culture, has not received adequate attention. This condition creates a significant research gap. The novelty of this study lies in its critical analysis of Aa Gym's digital *da'wah* discourse using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis theory, which examines how Islamic moral values are constructed and positioned as an evaluative framework for the prank phenomenon on social media. This approach not only highlights normative aspects but also reveals the linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural strategies employed to articulate ethical messages in virtual public spaces.[15]

However, much research has not discussed this phenomenon from a religious-ethical perspective, especially in the context of social media *da'wah*. Therefore, this research makes an important contribution to academic discourse by presenting a religious and ethical perspective from public figures like Aa Gym in addressing the controversy surrounding pranks in the digital age.

Norman Fairclough's CDA approach was chosen because it is able to reveal the relationship between text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural context in depth. In this case, CDA provides an analytical framework that enables researchers to identify how Aa Gym's ethical and religious messages related to the prank phenomenon are formed, disseminated, and received by the public in the digital realm. The strength of this method lies in its ability to combine linguistic analysis with ideological studies, making it relevant for examining the interconnection between Islamic values and the dynamics of social media culture.

This study uses Norman Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) framework to examine the content of Aa Gym's social media accounts, with a particular focus on its response to the phenomenon of *pranks* in the digital space. The *data sources* for this study consist of three videos and two posts published on Aa Gym's official accounts on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram on May 9, 2022.[16] Additionally, on his YouTube channel, Aa Gym also advised Ferdian Paleka, who carried out a prank involving the distribution of food packages filled with trash, an act that Aa Gym deemed highly reprehensible due to its deceptive nature.

Data selection was based on three criteria: (1) explicitly discussing or mentioning the phenomenon of pranks, (2) containing Aa Gym's views or comments accompanied by references to hadith, and (3) having significant audience interaction, namely a minimum of 5,000 views and several comments. Additionally, 150 comments from the audience were collected as supporting data to identify patterns of public response. This approach provides a comprehensive analytical framework for

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[15] Muhammad Fajri, "Humor in the Perspective of Hadith: Analysis of the Theory of Hierarchy of Needs Towards Prank in Social Media," *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* Vol. 9, no. 1 (2021): 51.

[16] *CELAKANYA (PRANK) YANG MENDZOLIMI ORANG LAIN - Kajian Singkat Aa Gym*, directed by Aagym Official, 2020, 02:57, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwlBhcathSY.

examining the linguistic structure, meaning-making processes, and ideological dimensions embedded in the statements or narratives presented.[17]

Through CDA, this study not only pays attention to the linguistic aspects of the text but also examines the social and cultural dimensions surrounding the discourse practice. The focus of the analysis is directed at the controversy surrounding pranks on social media, as discussed by Aa Gym, which contains moral and religious views as criticism of problematic digital entertainment practices.
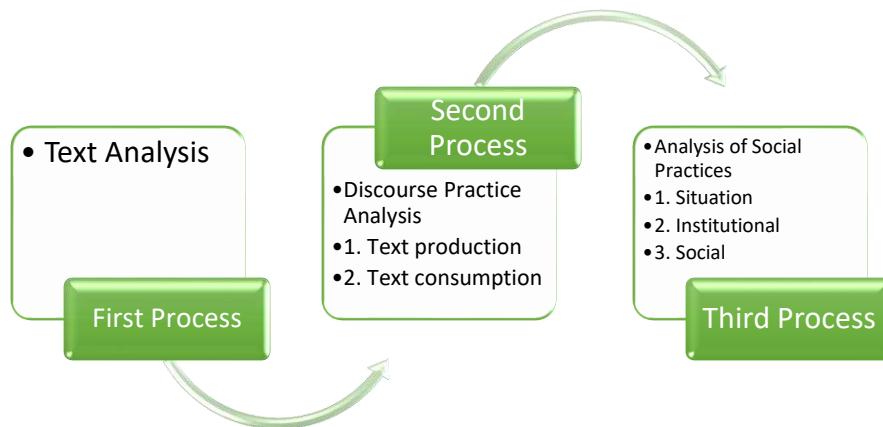

Figure 1. Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis Stages

The analysis is conducted through three main dimensions in Fairclough's model, namely: (1) the text dimension, which analyzes the structure of religious discourse, including hadith quotations and religious expressions used in the content; (2) discourse practices, which evaluates the production, distribution, and consumption processes of Aa Gym's content, as well as how interactions between communicators and audiences occur within the digital ecosystem; and (3) social practices, which reflects the broader socio-cultural context, including norms, values, and ethical dynamics that frame responses to pranks. Through this approach, the study aims to reveal the construction of meaning, identify discourse patterns, and reinterpret the social norms manifested in responses to the prank phenomenon.

This study aims to identify discursive patterns, moral themes, and forms of social response to prank practices by examining video content and audience comments. The CDA approach explores the relationship between language, power, and ideology in shaping public perceptions.[18] Thus, this study describes linguistic reality and explains how religious figures such as Aa Gym play a strategic role in formulating and disseminating a public ethical framework amid the massive flow of digital culture. The contribution of this research lies in its ability to bridge religious, media, and social ethics studies in a contemporary context.

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[17] See Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003); Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Language in Social Life Series (London; New York: Longman, 1995); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, Reprinted (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

[18] Ismail Marzuki, *Analisis Wacana Kritis (Teori Dan Praktik)* (Sorong: 2021).

This analysis applies Fairclough's three dimensions, namely text, discourse practice, and social practice, with the integration of the hadiths of *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* as a normative lens and interpretive framework to assess the alignment of prank content with Islamic ethical principles. In the text dimension, hadiths are used as a reference to examine discourse structure, quotations, and religious expressions; in the discourse practice dimension, hadiths serve as a benchmark in interpreting audience responses to pranks, assessing the extent to which their comments reflect ethical awareness; while in the social practice dimension, hadiths are used to analyze the norms and values that shape digital social interactions. This approach enables research to represent linguistic and social realities and affirm the strategic role of religious figures such as Aa Gym in formulating and disseminating a public ethical framework amid the dynamics of contemporary digital culture.

Aa Gym's Account: Role and Influence in the Digital Society

Abdullah Gymnastiar, better known as Aa Gym, is one of Indonesia's most influential religious figures, widely known for his moderate and communicative approach to preaching. Born on January 29, 1962, in Bandung, West Java, Aa Gym comes from a military and religious family—his father was a Lieutenant Colonel, Engkus Kuswara, and his mother, Yeti Rohayati. As the eldest of four siblings, Aa Gym was raised in a disciplined and religiously oriented environment, which shaped his character and Islamic orientation from a young age. His popularity began to rise in the 1990s due to his ability to communicate religious messages down-to-earth and persuasively.

Abdullah Gymnastiar, known as Aa Gym, is an influential Indonesian religious figure with a moderate, communicative, and adaptive da'wah approach to digital media, thus able to reach a young audience; his popularity increased in the 1990s due to his ability to convey religious messages persuasively and simply, especially regarding Islamic ethical values in everyday life, including in responding to the prank phenomenon on social media, where he emphasized the prohibition of scaring, protecting the feelings of others, and limiting harmful humor; through his choice of soft diction, clear sentence structure, and persuasive delivery, Aa Gym builds a moral narrative that is not only normative but also applicable, shaping digital social practices that reflect Islamic ethical values, while also being an example of how religious figures can integrate digital da'wah with media ethics awareness, moral construction, and communication strategies relevant to contemporary online culture.

In the digital age, Aa Gym utilizes social media as a strategic tool for preaching and shaping public ethics. He is active on various platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to convey contextual religious messages and respond to current social issues, including the phenomena of pranks, bullying, and the spread of hoaxes. Beyond offering normative religious advice, Aa Gym encourages the public to adopt critical and ethical attitudes toward digital social realities. This demonstrates his

active role in reconstructing public consciousness through a responsive approach to religious outreach that aligns with contemporary developments.

Abdullah Gymnastiar, better known as Aa Gym, is one of Indonesia's most influential religious figures, widely known for his moderate, communicative, and adaptive approach to preaching. Born on January 29, 1962, in Bandung, West Java, Aa Gym comes from a family that combines military and religious backgrounds; his father, Engkus Kuswara, was a Lieutenant Colonel, while his mother, Yeti Rohayati.[19] As the eldest of four siblings, he grew up in a disciplined and religiously oriented environment, shaping his character and Islamic orientation from an early age. His popularity began to rise in the 1990s thanks to his ability to convey religious messages in a persuasive, simple, and relevant manner to everyday life.[20]

In the context of digital *da'wah*, Aa Gym utilizes social media as a strategic tool to disseminate contextual religious messages while shaping public ethics. He is active on various platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to address contemporary social issues, including the phenomenon of pranks, bullying, and the spread of hoaxes. Through his choice of gentle diction, clear sentence structure, and persuasive delivery style, Aa Gym builds a moral narrative that is normative and applicable, encouraging the public to adopt a critical and ethical attitude towards the digital social reality.

Aa Gym's involvement in responding to the prank phenomenon confirms its dual role as a moral communicator and agent of social transformation in the digital space. In his message, he emphasizes the prohibition of scaring others, the obligation to respect other people's feelings, and the importance of limiting harmful humor. This attitude reflects an awareness of media ethics and communication strategies that are in line with contemporary online culture, while also demonstrating his ability to integrate Islamic moral values with the dynamics of modern digital communication.[21]

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[19] Abdullah Gymnastiar, *Aa Gym Apa Adanya, Sebuah Qolbugrafi* (MQS: Publising, 2006), 2.

[20] Enung Asmaya, *Aa Gym: Dai Sejuk Dalam Masyarakat Majemuk* (Bandung: Mizan Media Utama, 2004), 61.

[21] Muhammad Nashrul Husaeni, "Media Dakwa IGTV Dalam Akun Instagram @Aagym" (Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, 2021), 39.

Figure 2. Aa Gym's Instagram account and hadith meme about *pranks*

Aa Gym carefully crafts his communication with social media audiences using a simple, inclusive, and easily understandable language style. His approach, which combines humor and moral wisdom, is a major strength in attracting attention, especially among the younger generation, who are the dominant users of digital media. In addition, the use of attractive visual elements and short video formats that are easily accessible is an effective strategy for delivering *da'wah* messages quickly and massively.[22]

One of the contemporary issues that has become a concern on Aa Gym's social media accounts is the widespread trend of pranks among digital media users. The term "prank" originated in English and means a joke or teasing. It was initially developed among YouTube content creators but then spread to the general public.[23] Pranks are done to entertain or tease someone, but they often do not consider the ethical aspects and impact on the victim. This phenomenon indicates a degradation of values in the increasingly uncontrolled context of digital entertainment.[24]

From a linguistic perspective, "prank" can be categorized as slang or non-standard terminology for the act of surprising others for one-sided entertainment. While some forms of pranks may seem harmless, many have the potential to cause physical and psychological harm, such as pretending to

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[22] Dara Yulia Tamara, "Penggunaan Media Instagram Sebagai Media Dakwa" (Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, 2020), 51.

[23] "Ual Buku Kamus Inggris-Indonesia Karya John M. Echols | Toko Buku Online Terbesar Gramedia.Com," accessed November 6, 2024, https://www.gramedia.com/products/kamus-inggris-indonesia-sc?srsltid=AfmBOoqhrkodL89HXsFCA5eDHhViJNYV1JTepmsPS1yvTUwXj7Vys8qq.

[24] Uum Umdah, "Prank Phenomenon In Islamic View Fenomena Prank Dalam Pandangan Islam," *Jurnal Hadis Tematik* Vol. 4, No. 2 (November 2020), 3.

kidnap, threaten, or intimidate someone. Pranks like this not only violate social norms but can also break criminal laws, considering the potential harm and trauma caused to the victims.[25]

In this context, Aa Gym strongly condemned pranks as harmful behavior that goes against Islamic values. On July 6, 2022, the Indonesian government proposed a special article in the Criminal Code Bill prohibiting pranks that cause harm to victims.[26] Aa Gym supports this policy and emphasizes that pranks are despicable acts that carry sin because they involve lies and deceit. This statement reaffirms his position as a cleric who consistently defends moral values and opposes deviant behavior in the digital society.

Figure 3: Pranks according to Aa Gym in Islam

In Islam, any action that causes harm or discomfort to others is categorized as reprehensible behavior and contrary to Islamic principles of morality. Aa Gym strongly reminds the public of the importance of avoiding behavior that is considered haram, including pranks, which he considers not only degrading to human dignity but also containing elements of deception and insult. One notable example is the prank involving groceries filled with trash carried out by YouTuber Ferdian Paleka during Ramadan. The act was done solely to gain popularity online, but instead sparked widespread condemnation for hurting people's feelings and undermining social solidarity values.

Based on Aa Gym's explanation of the prank phenomenon, there have been various responses from the public, some of which are contrary to this view. Those who reject it argue that pranks, especially those that cause harm or hurt others, are contrary to the values of empathy and ethical principles that should be upheld. In this study, the author collected various online comments related to Aa Gym's post about the prank phenomenon. Generally, these comments can be classified into two main categories: those that support (*pro*) and those that oppose (*contra*).

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[25] Ida Ayu Putu Trisna Candrika Dewi, "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Korban Prank Di Indonesia", 3–4.

[26] "Pernyataan Sikap," Komnas Perempuan | Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan, accessed November 7, 2024, https://komnasperempuan.go.id/pernyataan-sikap-detail/pernyataan-sikap-komnas-perempuan-terhadap-rancangan-undang-undang-kitab-undang-undang-hukum-pidana-rkuhp-per-9-november-2022.

Figure 4. Aa Gym's explanation of the prank. Source: YouTube channel Aagym Official

No	Pro Comments	Neutral Comments	Contra Comments
1	@anwarsanusi1367: *Pranks* are sinful acts. May we all be protected from such acts.	@donnyardhianto4017: *The location is excellent.*	If a prank is just light entertainment and not excessive, then it is not a problem.
2	@biyuztankff7143: *Pranks* are forbidden because they can hurt others and contain elements of lies.	@azuka2706: *May you, your family, and all the audience always be in good health.*	Pranks can be seen as a form of entertainment, as long as all parties involved give their consent.
3	@widad4180: The lesson is that we should not prank others carelessly because it is a lie.	@ar0775: *Best wishes for your success, Aa.*	Without pranks, the world of entertainment would probably be more monotonous.
4	@aguskurniawan15: Excessive laughter can harden the heart. May we avoid such behavior?	@naufalaz682: *MasyaAllah, Tabarakallah* 🙏	In some cases, pranks can actually strengthen friendships.
5	@kalangyhelda9166: May the widespread prank content on YouTube decrease, as such actions are considered unjust.	@fackroejak6375: *Assalamualaikum Aa, here to listen.*	As long as pranks are done creatively and are not cruel, I think they are acceptable.
6	@naufalliandaff: Do not prank others, as it can cause sadness.		Some pranks contain a moral message at the end.
7	@erfamilydaily4617: Excessive pranks are pointless and hurt others without bringing any benefit.		Pranks can have a positive side, for example, teaching individuals not to be too sensitive to jokes.

8	@alfarizirasyid556: Pranks are not allowed, as they can lead to misunderstandings in emergencies.	I agree that some pranks are reprehensible, especially when they involve sensitive issues such as food security and the distribution of necessities, which are currently sensitive issues.
9	General opinion: Pranks are indeed wrong, but they can serve as a lesson for everyone to be more careful when creating content.	Unfortunately, some still do not consider the impact and post it on social media. Small-scale pranks can be fun entertainment if they do not cause physical harm or injury.
10	@dianpratama2024: Pranks are only aimed at getting views at the expense of other people's feelings.	The important thing is that the pranksters convey that their actions are just a joke, so that potential misunderstandings can be avoided.
11	@lia.hanifah: Joking is okay, but don't lie.	Pranks can be a cheap and light-hearted alternative form of entertainment that serves to entertain others.
12	@rezaputra_88: Viewers can also be guilty if they laugh at pranks that hurt others.	A blanket ban on pranks has the potential to make entertainment content too limited and monotonous.
13	@ayu_safitri_official: Pranks make people reluctant to trust again, and they can be dangerous in emergencies.	Pranks that are funny and not offensive can serve as a form of shared entertainment.
14	@iqbalmaulana11: If you want to make someone smile, give them a gift, not a lie.	As long as they do not cause suffering or pain, pranks can be seen as a normal form of social interaction.

15 @dwi_fauziah99: Humor is fleeting, but the sin is eternal.

16 @ahmadsutrisno83: Many pranks nowadays are excessive and not funny at all.

17 @ummi.rahma82: Pranks are a big lie that brings sin.

18 @nana_amelia12: May those who create pranks realize their mistakes.

19 Watching pranks sometimes evokes pity for the victims. Entertainment should be positive and not disappoint others.

20 Although they may seem funny, pranks have a significant negative moral and emotional impact. Criticism of this behavior should be conveyed kindly, as exemplified by Aa Gym in advising without hurting others.

Based on an analysis of comments on Aa Gym's YouTube content titled *"Celakanya Prank yang Mendzolimi Orang Lain"* (The Misfortune of Pranks that Harm Others) uploaded on May 9, 2022, it appears that the majority of the audience supports Aa Gym's view that pranks are bad or prohibited acts. Out of the 53 comments analyzed, pro-prank comments generally emphasize that pranks are a form of deception, unjust acts, pointless actions, and even sinful, thus deserving to be avoided.

On the other hand, comments that were against, although some were only additional illustrations to maintain data balance, showed the perspective that pranks can be accepted if done lightly, safely, and do not cause suffering to others. Neutral comments contained greetings, prayers, or praise that did not directly respond to the substance of the topic.

This analysis indicates that Aa Gym's YouTube audience tends to come from religious circles and places ethics as a key principle, so that religious messages related to the prohibition of pranks receive significant support. However, a segment of viewers still views pranks from an entertainment perspective, so they consider that this practice is not always negative. This diversity of perspectives, rather than diminishing the effectiveness of the religious messages, has the potential to spark constructive discussions in the comment section, which in turn can increase engagement and expand the reach of the content on the platform.
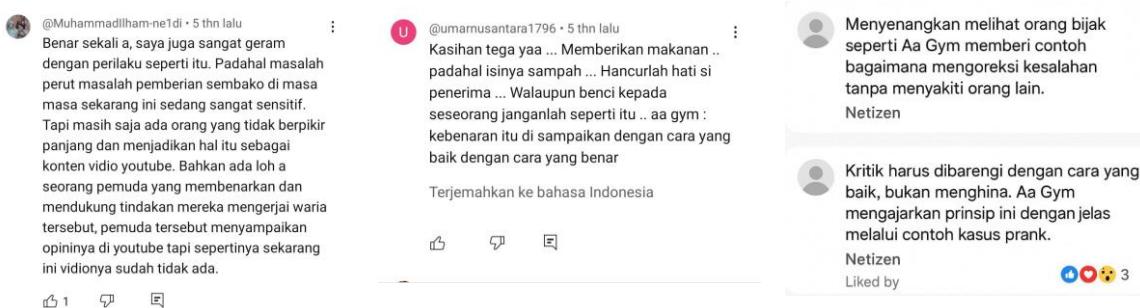
Figure 4: Screenshot of several netizen comments on Aa Gym's explanation of the prank

Source: YouTube channel Aagym Official

Hadiths regarding joking behavior can be found in *Sunan Abī Dāwud* No. 5004:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ الْأَنْبَارِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ، عَنِ الْأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَصْحَابُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَسِيرُونَ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَنَامَ رَجُلٌ مِنْهُمْ، فَانْطَلَقَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى حَبْلٍ مَعَهُ فَأَخَذَهُ، فَفَزِعَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يُرَوِّعَ مُسْلِمًا[27].

This hadith shows that the Prophet Muhammad SAW took seriously the psychological impact of joking that goes beyond boundaries. In the narrated incident, one of the companions fell asleep during a journey, and another companion pulled his rope, startling him. The Prophet Muhammad SAW reprimanded the action and emphasized that it is not permissible for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim. This signifies moral boundaries in joking, which must consider the feelings and comfort of others.

The context of this hadith occurred during the Prophet's journey with his companions. When one of the companions was asleep in a potentially dangerous location, another companion spontaneously pulled him to startle him. The Prophet then reprimanded the action with a statement emphasizing the prohibition against frightening fellow Muslims.[28] The main message of this hadith is that Islam regulates

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[27] Abu Dāwud Sulaimān bin Al-As'ad bin Ishāq bin Bāsh{ri, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Juz. 4 (Bayrūt: Al-Makātaba, 275), 301.

[28] Damsyiqi Ibnu Hamzah al-Husaini al-Hanafi ad, *Asbabul Wurud Jilid 3 : Latar Belakang Historis Timbulnya Hadits-Hadits Rasul / Ibnu Hamzah Al-Husaini Al Hanafi Ad Damsyiqi; Penerjemah: M. Swarta Wijaya, Zafrullah Salim*, Jilid 3 (Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 2002), 450.

social ethics, including in the context of humor and jokes, so that they do not lead to actions that hurt, humiliate, or insult others physically or emotionally.

When linked to contemporary phenomena, this hadith has strong relevance in responding to the practice of pranks on social media. In modern practice, pranks are often used as a form of digital entertainment packaged in videos for public consumption. However, the content of these pranks often disturbs the comfort and even causes fear for the victims. Behind the purpose of entertainment, there is emotional manipulation that ignores the principles of interpersonal ethics. This action not only contradicts Islamic teachings but also risks normalizing symbolic violence in digital culture.[29]

Thus, pranks can be classified as a deviant form of humor because they use tricks to manipulate the victim's reactions. This aims to cause surprise, confusion, or discomfort for the audience's satisfaction. When these actions are carried out without considering their impact on the dignity and psychological safety of others, they are not only ethically wrong but also contrary to the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, which prioritize the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and human dignity.

Another hadith that reinforces this argument can be found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* No. 2617.

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ رَافِعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنْ هَمَّامِ بْنِ مُنَبِّهٍ، قَالَ: هَذَا مَا حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَذَكَرَ أَحَادِيثَ مِنْهَا: وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَا يُشِيرُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى أَخِيهِ بِالسِّلَاحِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَدْرِي أَحَدُكُمْ لَعَلَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ فِي يَدِهِ فَيَقَعُ فِي حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ.[30]

Muhammad Ibn Rafi' narrated to us, 'Abd al-Razzāq narrated to us, Ma'mar informed us, from Hammām Ibn Munabbih said, Abu Hurairah narrated to us, from the Messenger of Allah: *Let none of you point a weapon at his brother, for you do not know—perhaps Satan will cause him to take his brother's life through his hand, and thus he will fall into the pit of Hellfire.*

This hadith serves as a stern warning from the Prophet Muhammad against actions that instill fear, even when done in jest. Pointing a weapon at another person, even without serious intent, is considered a dangerous act because it has the potential to provoke Satan's interference, which may lead to fatal consequences. In this context, Satan is depicted as an agent who tempts humans to commit acts that transcend rational control. This hadith reinforces the prohibition contained in the narration of *Sunan Abī Dāwud* discussed earlier. In terms of authenticity, this hadith is categorized as sahih because it is also narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which strengthens its validity in the corpus of hadith.

The relevance of the hadith from *Sunan Abī Dāwud* remains intact in the context of contemporary society. The prohibition against frightening fellow Muslims is not merely an ethical norm in the social context of the 7th century but a universal moral principle that remains rational and applicable in the

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[29] Leti Latipah, "Fenomena Prank Di Media Sosial Dalam Perspektif Hadis" (Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri, 2023), 72.

[30] Muslim bin Al-Hajjāh Abū H{asan Al-Quṣairi Al-Nisabūri, *Shahih Muslim* (Bayrūt: darah ikhya'ah tarasun Al-Aroy, 261), 2020.

modern era, including in digital phenomena such as pranks. The meaning of this hadith can be interpreted as a call to uphold human dignity and reject all forms of entertainment that demean or hurt others, whether physically or psychologically.[31]

An analysis of the text of the hadith narrated by *Sunan Abī Dāwud* Number 5004 shows that the hadith has a degree of authenticity (*ṣaḥīḥ*). This assessment is based on several indicators: first, there is no contradiction with other hadiths on similar themes; second, no *'illat* (cause) or hidden flaws were found in the *sand* or *matn*; and third, its substance is consistent with the moral principles in the Qur'an, particularly Surah al-Isrā' verse 53.

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَنَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَنَ كَانَ لِلا نْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُبِينًا

And say to My servants that they should say what is best. Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you. (Q.S. al-Isrā': 53)

The reason for the revelation of this verse refers to the period of preaching in Mecca when some Muslims began to show harsh attitudes towards the polytheists who continued to criticize and belittle the Prophet Muhammad. This verse serves as a reminder for Muslims to maintain politeness in speech, even in provocative situations. The Prophet himself set an example by being forgiving in the face of insults while remaining firm when the religion was under threat.

The teachings of the Qur'an consistently emphasize the importance of guarding one's tongue, both in serious contexts and in jest. Good speech is an indicator of faith and a social instrument capable of maintaining harmony and preventing conflict. Therefore, all forms of speech that have the potential to hurt others, including in the form of humor or pranks, must be avoided. The habit of speaking carelessly can damage social relationships and open the door for Satan to plant enmity and hatred in society.[32]

Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis of Aa Gym's Account
The critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach developed by Norman Fairclough stems from the understanding that language is not merely a tool of communication but an integral element in social structures and dynamics. Language has a dialectical relationship with various other aspects of social life, so in social studies, analysis of language must be seen as an important part of understanding the production of meaning and power. The main focus of this approach is to uncover the hidden relations of power and social inequality in linguistic practices by highlighting the discursive dimensions that underlie the formation of these relations. Fairclough emphasizes the importance of understanding how

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[31] Fuadi Isnawan, "Konten Prank Sebagai Krisis Moral Remaja Di Era Milenial Dalam Pandangan Psikologi Hukum Dan H," *Jurnal Surya Kencana Satu: Dinamika Masalah Hukum Dan Keadilan* Vol. 12, no. 1 (March 2021): 62.

[32] Reza Pahlevi Dalimunthe, "Kontektualisasi Hadis: Menyikapi Penomena Prank Di Media Sosial," *DIROYAH: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2021): 138–140.

discourse shapes and is shaped by social structures and plays a role in maintaining or challenging dominant ideologies in society.[33]

Fairclough proposes three complementary dimensions within his analytical framework: text analysis, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practice. This multidimensional approach aims to bridge the gap between linguistic structures and the social context that underlies the production and interpretation of discourse.

The first dimension, text analysis, involves the study of linguistic structures—both spoken and written—that reflect specific ideological constructions. In this stage, researchers examine how texts are structured, packaged, and delivered, as well as how they reflect the relationship between the writer and the reader. This analysis emphasizes the linguistic strategies used to construct representations of reality, social relations, and identity. These relationships can be explicit or implicit, formal or informal, and reveal the ideological position of the speaker.[34]

The second dimension is discourse practice analysis, which examines the production, distribution, and consumption processes of texts. The production process includes the socio-cultural background, personal experiences, and institutional structures that influence the text producer. Meanwhile, the consumption of texts is influenced by the reader's background, knowledge, and social position. The meaning of a text is not singular but open to various interpretations depending on the reader's frame of reference. Text distribution in this dimension shows how texts are designed to reach a wide audience, including through rhetorical strategies, social media, or other forms of dissemination.[35]

The third dimension is the analysis of social practices, which links the existence of texts to broader social, cultural, and political contexts. This approach is carried out through three analysis levels: micro, meso, and macro. At the micro level, attention is directed at linguistic elements such as syntactic structure, style, and rhetorical devices. The meso level covers the relationship between text and social institutions, including the power dynamics in the production and consumption of text. Meanwhile, the macro level highlights the social conditions that underlie the emergence of discourse, including ideological structures and hegemony that develop within society.[36]

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[33] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis The Critical Study Of Language*, 27.

[34] Mohamad Abdul Choliq, "Aplikasi Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough Dalam Buku 'Wasatiyyah Wawasan Islam Tentang Moderasi Beragaman' Karya M. Quraish Shihab" (Surabaya, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, 2022), 48–49; Sutikno Sutikno et al., "Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Norman Fairclough's Theory on Gojek YouTube Advertisement GoSend Version: Jadi #BestSellerGoSend Bareng Ariel Noah," *Studies in Media and Communication* 13, no. 2 (March 4, 2025): 175–86, https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v13i2.7561; M. Abdul Hamid, Abdul Basid, and Isma Nida Aulia, "The Reconstruction of Arab Women Role in Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis," *Social Network Analysis and Mining* 11, no. 1 (October 20, 2021): 101, https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-021-00809-0.

[35] Nureta Dwika Handayani dan Mailin, "Analisis Wacana Fairclough Pada Pemberitaan Selebgram Rachel Vennya Di Media Daring Tempo.Co," *KOMUNIKOLOGI:Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Sosial* Vol. 6, no. 2 (2022): 156.

[36] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis The Critical Study Of Language*, 28.

In the context of this study, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach is used to understand how Aa Gym, as a public figure, responds to the prank phenomenon on social media, as well as how the religious narratives he conveys are constructed and received by the public. The study focuses on three main aspects: text structure, social practices, and discourse practices that surround Aa Gym's religious messages, particularly in responding to the disturbing phenomenon of pranks in the digital realm.[37]

Through a study of the title "Controversy over Pranks on Social Media According to Aa Gym: A Study of Joking Hadiths from the Perspective of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis," the exploration of text structure highlights the selection of diction that is rich in moral, religious, and religious authority values. The choice of words and sentence structure reflects the normative position that he wants to emphasize while also building an emotional relationship with the audience. This analysis also highlights the importance of understanding the text production process, namely, the social and cultural context that shapes the background of the sermon. This approach examines not only the explicit meaning of the text but also the implicit meaning that contains ideological interests and the power relations between the speaker and the audience.

Figure 5: Aa Gym's explanation about the prank

The following table presents the application of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model to Aa Gym's discourse on the phenomenon of pranks on social media.

Dimensions of Analysis	Focus of Analysis	Findings in Aa Gym's Discourse	Critical Implications
Text Analysis (Micro)	• Lexical choices (diction) • Sentence structure • Self-image and speaker-	• Use religious and moral diction, such as "be careful with hurtful jokes, Islam does not teach mockery." Do not make	• The diction reinforces religious authority and affirms Islamic norms. • The sentence structure reinforces the effectiveness of the

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[37] Nureta Dwika Handayani dan Mailin, "Analisis Wacana Fairclough Pada Pemberitaan Selebgram Rachel Vennya Di Media Daring Tempo.Co,,, 157.

	listener relations.	suffering a source of entertainment. • Use simple and persuasive sentence structures. • Use collective pronouns such as "we" to create closeness with the audience.	message on digital platforms. • The choice of pronouns builds a sense of community and moral solidarity.
Discourse Practice Analysis (Meso)	• Message production • Message distribution • Message consumption	• Presented in the context of Aa Gym as a popular religious figure in the digital age. • Distributed via Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and other Islamic outreach platforms. • Audience comments indicate acceptance/support for Islamic values and rejection of the content being perceived as overly preachy.	• Message production is influenced by religious identity and digital proselytizing strategies. • Distribution shows the use of social media algorithms to expand reach. • Consumption shows the negotiation of meaning between religious authorities and digital entertainment culture.
Social Practice Analysis (Macro)	• Social-political and cultural context. • Dominant ideology and power relations.	• Referring to Islamic values regarding the etiquette of joking. • Responding to the phenomenon of pranks as moral degradation. • Confronting the logic of the online entertainment industry, which prioritizes sensationalism for the sake of engagement, meaning that content focuses more on elements of lies, drama, or controversy.	• Aa Gym's discourse on maintaining the hegemony of Islamic values in the digital space. • Describing the ideological battle between religious norms and digital capitalism. • Positioning religious figures as guardians of public morality amid sensational content.

By applying Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model, this study reveals how Aa Gym builds religious authority while negotiating the meaning of Islamic values in a digital culture dominated by entertainment content such as pranks. This approach emphasizes that the moral messages conveyed by Aa Gym do not stand alone but are produced, distributed, and consumed within complex social, institutional, and ideological networks. At the micro level, word choice and sentence structure function as instruments to reinforce the message of da'wah; at the meso and macro levels, this discourse participates in ideological contestations between religious norms and the logic of the digital

entertainment industry. Thus, this study contributes to enriching academic research on the role of religious figures in social media while expanding the discourse on how religious authority is maintained, adapted, or even contested in the digital age.

Text Analysis

In one of his statements, Aa Gym emphasized that pranks are a form of lying, which is considered haram in Islam. According to him, a true Muslim is an individual who can guarantee the safety of others from verbal and physical harm. This statement underscores that all actions that harm others, including jokes such as pranks, are despicable behavior. The emphasis on the prohibition of excessive laughter also reflects the spiritual values in Islam that place the peace of mind as an ideal condition. The use of words such as "lies," "forbidden," and "deadens the heart" shows high emotional and moral content, as well as implying a strong warning against pranks as a form of behavior that deviates from Islamic teachings. This statement's dense and straightforward structure makes it easy for the audience to understand the substance of the prohibition.

Furthermore, Aa Gym criticizes pranks as cruel acts because they are deliberately done to harm others for personal gain. He highlights that such actions not only violate religious values but also violate the principles of humanity. Pranks aimed at gaining popularity, followers, or material gain are considered a form of exploitation of others' suffering. In this context, the text conveys a strong moral message with an argumentative structure linking religious prohibitions and universal ethical imperatives. The use of strong normative statements clarifies the position of this discourse as a form of social criticism against digital media practices deemed morally destructive.

The case of a prank involving garbage-filled food packages carried out by YouTuber Ferdian Paleka during Ramadan is a concrete example in Aa Gym's statement. He emphasized that seeking livelihood by oppressing others is an unjustifiable act, especially during Ramadan, which should be a time for increasing charity and kindness. This statement not only condemns the act but also teaches the public to be more wise and careful in their behavior. By referring to the context of the time (the holy month of Ramadan), Aa Gym reinforces the religious aspect of the message and encourages collective reflection on the ethical meaning of actions in public spaces.

Pranks involving children against their parents are considered more serious offenses because, in addition to containing elements of deception, they also hurt the feelings of the parents who are the targets. Aa Gym believes that such actions contain elements of disobedience because they cause anxiety, worry, or fear that should not be inflicted on parents. Within the framework of Islamic ethics, being dutiful to parents is a primary obligation, and any behavior that hurts their feelings is considered a serious violation. This statement clarifies the more complex ethical dimensions of such pranks, which

are not merely a matter of lying but also a violation of the values and social relationships that are respected in Islam.

Historical examples of humorous behavior during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are also presented as normative comparisons. In one account, when a companion had his bed moved while he was asleep, causing him to wake up startled and making others laugh, the Prophet still condemned the action, saying, "It is not permissible for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim" (Hadith Narrated by Abū Dāwud). This hadith shows that even without malicious intent, actions that cause fear or discomfort are still not permissible in Islam. This affirmation sets ethical boundaries for humor, stating that jokes or pranks should not be done at the expense of others' peace of mind and sense of security.

Aa Gym's final statement highlights that pranks contain five objectionable elements, thereby placing the perpetrator in the category of the unjust. He also emphasizes that pranks damage the perpetrator's reputation by eroding others' trust. In the Islamic perspective, a person's honor and credibility are safeguarded through honesty, avoiding harm, and striving to bring joy to others. Therefore, pranking is positioned as the antithesis of the core values of Islam. This statement clarifies the relationship between seemingly trivial social actions and serious moral consequences and demonstrates that the formation of a Muslim's self-image must be based on integrity, not on harmful jokes.

Aa Gym emphasized that pranks are a form of lying, which is forbidden in Islam, because true Muslims must protect others both physically and verbally. The choice of words "lies," "forbidden," and "deadens the heart" carries strong moral and emotional dimensions, emphasizing that pranks damage spirituality. This criticism links Islamic normative values with universal ethical principles, positioning pranks as exploitative acts that harm others for the sake of popularity or material gain. The case of Ferdian Paleka's prank during Ramadan serves as a contextual example reinforcing the argument, as it contradicts the essence of the holy month as a time for increasing good deeds and kindness. Criticism of pranks targeting parents is positioned as a violation of filial piety and a form of disobedience, which breaches the principle of honesty while also damaging family values and emotional well-being. Referring to the Prophet's hadith prohibiting frightening fellow Muslims even in jest, Aa Gym established clear ethical boundaries for humor and identified five objectionable elements in pranks that place the perpetrator as an oppressor, damaging personal integrity, and eroding social trust. This analysis demonstrates how religious authority is mobilized to criticize digital culture deemed morally corrupting, while simultaneously shaping social norms in virtual spaces.

Discourse Practice Analysis

The discourse practice analysis stage focuses on the relationship between text and social context through text production and consumption processes. Text production encompasses how discourse is formed, including the ideology, purpose, and communicative strategies used by the speaker or writer, while text consumption analyzes how the discourse is received, interpreted, and responded to by the audience based on their social, cultural, and ideological backgrounds. In Norman Fairclough's framework, discourse practice is not merely a communication process but a field of social interaction involving power relations, value structures, and the reproduction of meaning in society.[38]

In this context, Aa Gym carries out text production as a response to the rampant phenomenon of pranks on social media. The discourse he constructs is based on ethical and spiritual values that refer to the hadith of the Prophet, especially regarding manners in joking. Through his choice of words, such as "joking in a good way" and "not hurting other people's feelings," Aa Gym constructs a normative and educational narrative. Criticism of the prank phenomenon is not only conveyed descriptively but also as part of moral preaching aimed at strengthening the ethical awareness of the digital community. Thus, the discourse produced by Aa Gym can be understood as a response to social unrest over digital humor practices that often violate boundaries of propriety and disregard human dignity. References to the Prophet's hadith serve as religious legitimacy and a source of moral authority that strengthens the position of his discourse.

Meanwhile, the consumption of texts in this discourse reveals a variety of responses from audiences with different social and ideological backgrounds. Aa Gym's views are accepted as valid and educational guidelines for those who are religious or uphold Islamic moral values. However, for more liberal groups or those who value freedom of expression in the digital space, this discourse has the potential to be perceived as a restriction on creativity, particularly in the form of humor. This is where we see how text consumption is influenced by the configuration of values and social identity of the audience, which determines how a discourse is interpreted and understood.

Figure 4 shows responses from viewers of Aa Gym's YouTube channel who generally support his views. The comments show positive acceptance of the moral message conveyed, such as the hope that the pranksters will realize their mistake and appreciation for the call to repent. This kind of support shows that some people consider the discourse relevant and touch on their concern about the social impact of pranks.

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[38] See Sanne Mohr and Kirsten Frederiksen, "A Constructed Reality? A Fairclough-Inspired Critical Discourse Analysis of the Danish HPV Controversy," *Qualitative Health Research* 30, no. 7 (June 1, 2020): 1045–57, https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732320909098; Israa Burhanuddin Abdurrahman et al., "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Feminism in Katherine Mansfield's Bliss," *Asian Journal of Human Services* 24 (2023): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.14391/ajhs.24.1.

However, as shown in Figure 5, although there were no comments that directly opposed Aa Gym's opinion about the negative impact of pranks, several comments directed criticism at Aa Gym personally. This phenomenon reflects how discourse on social media does not exist in a vacuum but within a complex landscape of digital interactions, where the credibility of the source of discourse influences the reception of the message. In addition, social media algorithms and patterns of interaction between users also mediate how a message is distributed and digested. Within this framework, the interpretation of a text does not stop at its content alone but is influenced by the social and technological dynamics that shape the digital discourse arena. Therefore, the consumption of discourse about pranks on social media reveals responses to certain moral values and highlights the close interconnection between religion, popular culture, and digital infrastructure in forming public opinion.

This analysis examines the relationship between Aa Gym's anti-prank discourse construction and the surrounding social context, based on Norman Fairclough's discourse practice framework, which highlights the dimensions of text production and consumption. In the realm of production, Aa Gym responds to the prevalence of prank content on social media by framing his message within an Islamic ethical framework, referencing the Prophet's hadith emphasizing proper conduct in joking and respect for others' dignity. The choice of phrases such as "joking in a good way" and "not hurting other people's feelings" represents a normative-didactic rhetorical strategy to strengthen the digital community's ethical awareness.

In the realm of consumption, discourse reception shows divergence influenced by the configuration of values and social identities of the audience. Religiously oriented groups tend to affirm these views as authoritative and morally instructive. In contrast, liberal or secular groups may perceive them as restrictions on freedom of expression, particularly in the realm of humor. Data from Aa Gym's YouTube channel shows that most comments (Figure 4) support his moral criticism, expressing concern about the ethical implications of prank culture. However, some comments (Figure 5) shift the focus to the personal credibility of the cleric, indicating that the acceptance of messages in the digital space is not only determined by the substance of the discourse, but also by perceptions of the authority of the speaker and the technological structures that mediate online interactions. Thus, these findings confirm the complex interplay between religious authority, the digital cultural ecosystem, and algorithmic logic in shaping the construction of meaning and public responses to moral discourse in the social media era.

Socio-cultural Practice

The final stage of this analysis focuses on Abdullah Gymnastiar's (Aa Gym) position on pranks in social media from an Islamic ethical perspective based on hadiths about joking. Using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework, this study seeks to reveal how Aa Gym's statements represent

Islamic normative values in responding to humorous practices that are considered to have crossed the boundaries of decency, both morally and religiously. In Fairclough's approach, social practices are analyzed at three main levels: situational, institutional, and social, which comprehensively describe the socio-cultural context of a discourse.

First, *Situational Level*. The phenomenon of pranks on social media has developed as a form of entertainment that often causes controversy, particularly in relation to the boundaries of public ethics and morality. In this context, Aa Gym, as a religious figure, has responded critically to pranks that harm or humiliate others. In one of his lectures, Aa Gym emphasized the importance of understanding the etiquette of joking as taught by the Prophet Muhammad, namely, joking that does not hurt feelings or demean others. This perspective is relevant amid the proliferation of prank content on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, which often feature extreme actions to gain public attention. Aa Gym's critical stance reflects concerns about shifting values in digital society while also demonstrating efforts to revitalize Islamic norms in the face of challenges posed by the new media era. Public responses have been varied—some appreciate the perspective of moral enlightenment, while others question the significance of religion in evaluating contemporary digital creativity.

Second, *Institutional Level*. The prank phenomenon on social media involves various actors and institutions, including content creators, digital platforms, and users or audiences. Within this structure, Aa Gym acts as a moral and religious authority that criticizes prank practices through a preaching approach. His views are disseminated through direct sermons and reinforced by the distribution of his content through digital *da'wah* channels and Islamic media. However, platforms like YouTube and TikTok do not systematically regulate prank content unless explicit community guidelines are violated. This lack of regulatory clarity opens space for religious figures to offer ethical alternatives rooted in religious values. Thus, Aa Gym's institutional intervention reflects civil society's efforts—particularly religious institutions—to fill the normative vacuum left by the liberal and commercial digital market.

Third, *Social Level*. Pranks as a social practice cannot be separated from the cultural and religious values that have developed in Indonesian society, especially among Muslims. Within the framework of Islamic values, humor is still allowed as long as it does not contain elements of lies, abuse, or degradation of others. This view seeks to balance freedom of expression and social responsibility. The public response to Aa Gym's statement shows a dialectic between religious values and popular culture. Some people welcome criticism of pranks as a reminder of the importance of ethics in entertainment, while others consider pranks to be a light form of expression that should not be interfered with by religious rules. This tension highlights the clash between digital modernity, which prioritizes instant entertainment, and traditional norms that demand moral responsibility in social interactions. Thus, the

debate surrounding pranks reflects a broader conflict of values between religiosity, digital culture, and individual freedom in contemporary society.

Maintaining Social Harmony: The Antithesis of Pranking

Maintaining social harmony is important for positive, mutually reinforcing, and sustainable interactions. Social harmony is built on the principles of mutual respect, appreciation of diversity, and avoidance of actions that can disrupt human relationships. In this context, pranks that are carried out without regard for ethical values and the feelings of others often run counter to this spirit. Although often claimed to be a form of entertainment, humiliating, deceitful, or hurtful pranks can cause social unrest, conflict, and weaken mutual trust within the community.

The principles of ideal interaction in Islam emphasize the importance of politeness, empathy, and moral responsibility. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized that jokes are only acceptable if lies do not accompany them, do not hurt feelings, and do not demean others. Hadiths show that the Prophet himself joked without deviating from the truth and never made others the object of ridicule. These values reinforce the view that humor in Islam should be directed toward strengthening brotherhood, not becoming a tool to corner or exploit the weaknesses of others. Pranks that contradict these principles reflect a decline in social and spiritual sensitivity in society.

Maintaining social harmony also requires self-control in public and digital interactions. Individuals who can refrain from actions that may hurt or humiliate others will be more respected and trusted within the community. This ethical perspective is consistent with universal values and is also emphasized in the teachings of the Prophet, who encouraged speaking kindly or remaining silent and guarding one's tongue from hurtful words. Therefore, pranks that cause physical suffering or emotional distress are not only wrong from a social perspective but also contrary to the spirit of prophethood in upholding the dignity and comfort of others.

Social harmony is more easily achieved when society has a collective awareness to protect and respect diversity. Islam itself encourages the growth of empathy and solidarity as the foundation of togetherness. From a prophetic perspective, behavior that prioritizes compassion, respects personal boundaries, and avoids mocking others is part of noble character. Therefore, pranks that humiliate or disturb someone's comfort, even in the name of entertainment, are fundamentally contrary to the ideals of peaceful, just, and civilized coexistence. A society that seeks to maintain a healthy social order must prioritize respectful interactions, avoid destructive jokes, and foster constructive communication.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of pranks on social media has developed into a practice that is not only controversial but also ethically and morally problematic. Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym) responded to this phenomenon by emphasizing the urgency of public ethics and Islamic values in joking. The principles of the Prophet's hadith affirm that healthy humor brings joy without deception, without hurting feelings, and without degrading human dignity. Pranks that scare, humiliate, or exploit others' ignorance, as often occurs on social media, contradict these principles and reflect a decline in empathy in the digital public sphere.

From an Islamic perspective, humor that violates norms of decency, provokes, or is manipulative cannot be separated from moral criticism. The Prophet Muhammad practiced humor ethically, without lying, without cornering others, and while maintaining respect, thus becoming a strong normative reference for Aa Gym's criticism of digital prank culture. The solution he offers is rooted in strengthening the values of mutual respect, maintaining honor, and building healthy communication. By utilizing Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which combines textual, discursive, and social dimensions, this study emphasizes that the language in prank content is not neutral but is produced and simultaneously produces the socio-cultural structures that influence it.

This research is limited to analyzing Aa Gym's sermons related to digital pranks from an Islamic ethical perspective through CDA, without comparing them to other religious figures or empirically studying audience responses, particularly among the younger generation. Further research could expand the study by analyzing the narratives of different preachers or examining the perceptions of specific demographic groups toward prank content on social media. Such an approach would enrich our understanding of the interplay between religious ethics, digital culture, and audience engagement patterns.

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