

Digital Fatwas and the Reproduction of Salafi Authority: Islamic Legal Reasoning on Women in Indonesia

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Abstract

The development of digital media has transformed how religious authority is produced, disseminated, and legitimized in contemporary Muslim societies. In this context, online fatwa platforms have become important spaces for producing and disseminating Islamic legal knowledge. Although scholarship on digital fatwas, Salafism, and women's *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) has expanded, limited attention has been given to how digital fatwas reproduce religious authority through legal reasoning. This article examines how KonsultasiSyariah.com (KS) reproduces Salafi authority through fatwas on women. It employs a qualitative approach based on content analysis of fatwas on women published between 2009 and 2019, complemented by interviews, observations, and documentary research. The findings show that the conservative tendency of KS's fatwas cannot be attributed solely to ideological affiliation with Salafism or proximity to the Hanbali school of law. Instead, this tendency is produced through three interrelated mechanisms: privileging transnational Salafi scholarly authorities, employing text-centered legal reasoning grounded in textual authenticity, and reconfiguring the diversity of *fiqh* opinions into a more uniform normative framework concerning women. Digital fatwas, therefore, function not only as a means of providing Islamic legal answers but also as mechanisms for constructing and reproducing religious authority, determining which sources of knowledge are regarded as legitimate, and defining the boundaries of female piety. This study contributes to scholarship on digital Islam, Islamic law, and Salafism by demonstrating that conservatism in digital fatwas should be understood not only through the substantive content of legal rulings but also through the epistemic mechanisms by which Salafi authority is produced, legitimized, and normalized in digital spaces.

[Perkembangan media digital telah mengubah cara otoritas keagamaan diproduksi, disebarkan, dan dilegitimasi dalam masyarakat muslim kontemporer. Dalam konteks tersebut, platform fatwa daring menjadi salah satu ruang penting bagi produksi dan penyebaran pengetahuan hukum Islam. Meskipun kajian mengenai fatwa digital, Salafisme, dan fikih perempuan telah berkembang, perhatian terhadap bagaimana fatwa digital mereproduksi otoritas keagamaan melalui penalaran hukum masih relatif terbatas. Artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana KonsultasiSyariah.com (KS) mereproduksi otoritas Salafi melalui fatwa mengenai perempuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berdasarkan analisis isi terhadap fatwa mengenai perempuan yang dipublikasikan sepanjang 2009–2019, yang dilengkapi dengan wawancara, observasi, dan studi

dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kecenderungan konservatif dalam fatwa KS tidak dapat semata-mata dijelaskan oleh afiliasi ideologis terhadap Salafisme atau kedekatannya dengan mazhab Hanbali. Sebaliknya, kecenderungan tersebut terbentuk melalui tiga mekanisme yang saling berkaitan, yaitu pengutamaan otoritas ulama Salafi transnasional, penggunaan penalaran hukum yang berpusat pada teks dan bertumpu pada keautentikan dalil, serta rekonfigurasi keragaman pendapat fikih ke dalam kerangka normatif yang lebih seragam mengenai perempuan. Dengan demikian, fatwa digital tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sarana pemberian jawaban hukum Islam, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme untuk membentuk dan mereproduksi otoritas keagamaan, menentukan sumber pengetahuan yang dipandang sah, serta menetapkan batas-batas kesalehan perempuan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian Islam digital, hukum Islam, dan Salafisme dengan menunjukkan bahwa konservatisme dalam fatwa digital perlu dipahami bukan hanya melalui substansi putusan hukumnya, tetapi juga melalui mekanisme epistemik yang memungkinkan otoritas Salafi diproduksi, dilegitimasi, dan dinormalisasi di ruang digital.]

Keywords: Digital Fatwas, Salafism, Epistemic Authority, Islamic Legal Reasoning, Women's Fiqh.

Introduction

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how religious authority is produced, distributed, and consumed in contemporary Muslim societies.¹ Whereas fatwas were previously issued primarily through religious institutions with relatively established structures of authority, the internet has created new spaces where fatwas can be produced and circulated more openly, rapidly, and across national boundaries.² This transformation has not only expanded public access to religious knowledge but also reconfigured the relationship between scholarly authority, digital media, and Muslim audiences. In digital spaces, the legitimacy of a fatwa is no longer determined solely by the institutional position of a *mufti* (fatwa-giver) but also by a platform's ability to establish visibility, reach broad audiences, and cultivate public trust.³ As a result, digital spaces have become strategic arenas where religious actors produce, negotiate, and claim interpretations of Islam as the most authentic.⁴ Thus, the central issue in the study of digital fatwas concerns

¹ Moch. Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Digital Islam: New Space for Authority and Religious Commodification among Islamic Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Contemporary Islam* 19, no. 1 (April 2025): 161–94.

² Samiullah Adel and Muhammad Numan, "Online Fatwas in Pakistan Using Social Networking Platforms," *Uloomuna* 27, no. 1 (June 2023): 201–26; Fouad Ahmed Atallah, "Digital Mediation and Fatwa Authority in Contemporary Islam: A Critical Islamic Legal and Media-Theoretical Framework," *Religions* 17, no. 3 (March 2026): 350.

³ Soleh Hasan Wahid, "Research Insights on Online Fatwas. A Comprehensive Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* 29, no. 1 (January 2024): 23–46; Stefan Heep, "Conspiracy Narratives and Religious Legitimation in Digital Politics: A Cross-Case Analysis of State-Linked Discourses and the Success of Autocracy," *Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya* 9, no. 3 (December 2025): 237–56.

⁴ Muhammad Latif Fauzi et al., "The Digital Minbar: Repositioning Religious Authority and the Dynamics of Islamic Law in Contemporary Egypt's Virtual Landscape," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 5, no. 1 (January 2026): 178–209; Abdelhalim Mohamed Mansour Ali and Muhammad Ahmad Ibrahim Aljahsh, "The Proliferation of Anomalous Digital Fatwas: A Critical Examination of Jurisprudential Challenges and Societal Impacts in the Digital Age," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 25, no. 1 (December 2025): 37–52; Tri Wahyu Hidayati et al., "From Doctrine to Domestic Resilience: The Lived Meaning of Miṣāqan Ghalīzan among Salafi Families," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (May 2026): 99–114; Norma Azmi

not merely changes in the medium of communication but also the reconfiguration of the mechanisms through which religious authority is produced, distributed, and legitimized.⁵

These transformations have particularly important implications for *fiqh al-nisā'* (women's Islamic jurisprudence), one of the most dynamic and contested domains of Islamic law in contemporary Muslim societies.⁶ Issues such as menstruation (*ḥayḍ*), *awrah* (parts of the body that must be covered), *niqāb* (face veil), marital relations, women's leadership, and women's participation in public spaces not only reflect the complexity of Islamic law but also constitute sites where *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) traditions, social change, and religious identity politics intersect. In digital spaces, debates over these issues have intensified because online platforms enable fatwas to be produced, disseminated, and consumed on a large scale by highly diverse audiences. This dynamic is evident in the numerous fatwas on women published by KonsultasiSyariah.com (KS), one of Indonesia's most influential digital fatwa platforms, which consistently ranks highly in search engine results for various Islamic legal questions. Although the platform is frequently situated within the broader landscape of Salafi preaching in the digital sphere,⁷ the mechanisms through which it constructs legal legitimacy have received limited systematic analysis. Therefore, examining digital fatwas on women is important not only for understanding transformations in Islamic legal practice but also for explaining how religious authority is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced within the contemporary digital Islamic landscape.

Scholarship on digital fatwas has expanded significantly over the past two decades.⁸ Some studies have examined how the internet reconfigures structures of religious authority and transforms relationships among *muftīs*, religious institutions, and Muslim publics.⁹ Other

Farida and Zainal Abidin, "Husein Jafar Al-Hadar's Islam Mazhab Cinta: Meaning and Media Analysis of Instagram Content @husein_hadar," *International Journal of Islamic Khasanah* 14, no. 2 (2024): 143–55.

⁵ Soleh Hasan Wahid and Syahid Abdulloh, "Digital Islamic Authority: A Revolutionary Shift or Mere Hype? A Systematic Review," *SN Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (February 2026): 62; D. I. Ansusa Putra, Sayuti Sayuti, and Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahim, "Inconsistency of Salafi's Bid'ah Concept: Shifting the Quran-Hadis Law Consideration During Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 24, no. 1 (June 2024): 116–34.

⁶ Nurlaila Harun et al., "Revisiting Nafaqah Iddah for Women in Court Decisions: Evidence from Muslim-Majority Legal Systems," *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah dan Masyarakat* 26, no. 1 (June 2026): 111–31; Farida Nurun Nazah et al., "Reforming Islamic Family Justice: Integrating Legal and Psychological Perspectives in Handling Polygamy and Divorce Cases in Indonesia," *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 5, no. 2 (August 2026): 1226–59; Nur Syahirah Mohammad Nasir et al., "Local Muftis Dealing Approach to Married Women's Issues Embracing Islam Without Their Husbands in the United Kingdom," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 25, no. 1 (June 2025): 107–20; Yusna Zaidah and Raihanah Abdullah, "The Relevance of Ihdad Regulations as a Sign of Mourning and Human Rights Restriction," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 4, no. 2 (June 2024): 422–48.

⁷ Mahmud Hibatul Wafi, Mega Hidayati, and Sunyoto Usman, "The Reproduction of Salafism in the Online Ecosystem: Strengthening of Indonesian Salafi Groups," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 8, no. 2 (2026): 2026128–2026128.

⁸ Wahid, "Research Insights on Online Fatwas. A Comprehensive Systematic Literature Review," 23–46; Arip Purkon et al., "Between Text, Technology and Context: Contemporary Ijtihād in the Interpretation of Islamic Legal Sources in the Digital Age," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi dan Penelitian Hukum Islam* 9, no. 2 (2026): 134–52; Amin Muhtar et al., "Digital Khul' and Algorithmic Mediation in Indonesia's e-Court: Redefining Female Agency in Islamic Family Law," *Islamic Law and Social Issues in Society* 2, no. 1 (2026): 109–29.

⁹ Arif Zamhari, Muhamad Ibtissam Han, and Zulkifli Zulkifli, "Traditional Religious Authorities in New Media: Cariustadz.Id Platform as an Alternative Cyber Fatwa and Da'wah Media among the Middle-Class Urban Muslims," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 21, no. 1 (June 2021): 65–88; Eva F. Nisa, "Internet and

studies have approached digital media as an important instrument in the expansion of Salafism through the dissemination of *da'wah* (Islamic proselytizing), the formation of transnational communities, and the consolidation of religious identities.¹⁰ Meanwhile, studies on *fiqh al-nisā'* have primarily focused on the dynamics of Islamic legal interpretation concerning women's bodies, family relations, and participation in public spaces.¹¹ In Indonesia, several studies have likewise documented the growing influence of digital *da'wah* platforms that promote conservative religious orientations.¹² Nevertheless, much of this scholarship continues to approach digital fatwas either as legal products or as vehicles for disseminating religious ideologies.¹³ Consequently, relatively limited attention has been given to the epistemic mechanisms through which a platform constructs, legitimizes, and reproduces religious authority through legal reasoning and the selective use of authoritative sources, which constitutes the primary focus of this article.

The limitations of existing scholarship become particularly evident in studies of fatwas concerning women in Indonesia. To date, previous research has not adequately explained how digital fatwa platforms reproduce religious authority through epistemic mechanisms that connect classical *fiqh* traditions with contemporary transnational networks of Salafi scholars. Focusing on fatwas on women published by KS, this article argues that the conservative orientation of these fatwas is not simply a consequence of ideological affiliation with Salafism or proximity to the Hanbali *madhhab* (school of law). Rather, it results from the reproduction of Salafi epistemic authority through digital spaces. Furthermore, the article demonstrates that digital fatwas function not only as vehicles for communicating Islamic legal rulings but also as mechanisms for producing and reproducing religious authority that shapes contemporary Muslim religious practices. By shifting attention from the substantive content of fatwas to the epistemic mechanisms underlying the construction of legal legitimacy, this

Muslim Women," in *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives*, ed. Ronald Lukens-Bull and Mark Woodward (Springer, Cham, 2021), 1023–41.

¹⁰ F. Aidulsyah, "The Rise of Urban Salafism in Indonesia: The Social-Media and Pop Culture of New Indonesian Islamic Youth," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 51, no. 4 (December 2023): 252–59; Wafi, Hidayati, and Usman, "The Reproduction of Salafism in the Online Ecosystem," 2026128–2026128; Jafar Ahmad, Ade Putra Hayat, and Mahmud Hibatul Wafi, "Pragmatism of Doctrine: Salafi Political Discourse in Digital Spaces," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 46, no. 3 (2025): 1–9.

¹¹ Anna Piela, "Muslim Women's Online Discussions of Gender Relations in Islam," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30, no. 3 (September 2010): 425–35; Shaheen Sardar Ali, "Cyberspace as Emerging Muslim Discursive Space? Online Fatawa on Women and Gender Relations and Its Impact on Muslim Family Law Norms," *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* 24, no. 3 (October 2010): 338–60; Fatum Abubakar, Euis Nurlaelawati, and Ahmad Bunyan Wahib, "Interpreting 'Bulugh': Enhancement of Women's Right through Management of Marriage within Salafi Community in Wirokerten Yogyakarta," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 12, no. 1 (June 2022): 139–63.

¹² Marhumah, Iffah Khoiriyatul Muyassaroh, and Rosalia Sciortino, "Negotiating Living Hadith in Public Spaces: The Case of Salafi Muslimah Religious Study Groups in Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 26, no. 1 (March 2025): 131–58; Muhammad Jihadul Hayat, "Preaching Islamic Legal Rules on Screen: Conservatism on Islamic Family Law in Digital-Based Dakwah Program Mamah dan Aa Beraksi," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, no. 2 (November 2022): 427–66.

¹³ Mia Lövhelm, "Gender and Agency in Digital Religion," in *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Religion*, ed. Heidi A. Campbell et al. (Oxford University Press, 2024), 237–53; Salinayanti Salim et al., "Modern Platforms for Timeless Principles: Sharia-Based 'Aurah Norms on TikTok," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 25, no. 1 (February 2026): 29–40; Mohammad Bachrul Falah and Riyanta Riyanta, "Digital Patriarchy: How Indonesian Islamic Preachers Construct Gender Asymmetry through YouTube Fatwas," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 18, no. 1 (June 2025): 103–22.

study offers a new contribution to scholarship on digital fatwas, Salafism, and religious authority within the broader field of digital Islam.

Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative, field-based inquiry combined with textual analysis of digital fatwas published by the KS, an Islamic legal consultation platform managed by the Yufid Network in Sleman, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.¹⁴ The research was conducted through field visits to the platform's management office and a systematic examination of its fatwa archive, covering publications from October 8, 2009, to July 16, 2019. A qualitative approach was adopted because the study does not aim to measure statistical trends in fatwa production but rather to explain how legal reasoning is employed to construct and reproduce Salafi epistemic authority through fatwas on women in digital spaces. Empirically, the study draws on two levels of data corpus. The first is a macro-corpus comprising all 265 fatwas on women, which were mapped by theme and year of publication to identify broader patterns in fatwa production. The second is an analytical corpus consisting of five fatwas purposively selected because they represent major issues in women's *fiqh* and most clearly demonstrate the legal reasoning patterns employed by the platform. Of these five fatwas, this article focuses its analysis on two concerning women's prayer practices and the wearing of the *niqāb*, while the remaining three are used as supporting data to assess the consistency of the identified patterns of legal argumentation.

Data were collected through open participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentary research. The observation focused on understanding the platform's management mechanisms, editorial processes, and the production of fatwas from the receipt of questions to their publication. Interviews were conducted with two key informants: the platform's technical developer and a member of its Board of Advisors, who also serves as one of its principal fatwa authors. These informants were selected because of their direct involvement in both the technical and substantive aspects of fatwa production and were therefore able to explain the processes of question selection, the choice of legal sources, and the methodological considerations underlying the formulation of legal responses. Interviews were conducted both in person and via Telegram to clarify findings emerging from the documentary analysis. Documentary research covered the complete archive of fatwas on women and institutional documents related to the platform's management, as well as classical *fiqh* literature and contemporary Salafi fatwas cited in the legal arguments. The credibility of the findings was enhanced through source triangulation by comparing observations, interview data, and textual evidence contained in the fatwa archive.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis through the iterative stages of data reduction, categorization, data display, and verification. The analysis began by identifying the principal themes of the fatwas on women, followed by tracing the patterns of Islamic legal reasoning employed in each fatwa. This included the use of Qur'anic verses and hadith reports, methods of *istinbāt* (legal derivation), patterns of reference to religious

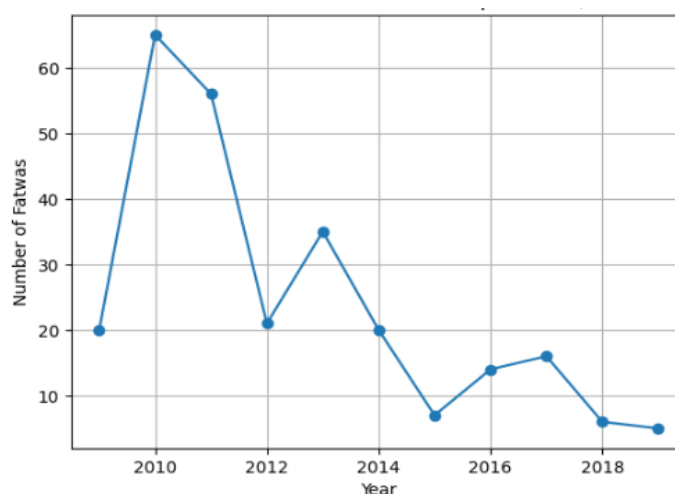
¹⁴ "Profil Yufid Network," *KonsultasiSyariah.com*, July 8, 2022, <https://KonsultasiSyariah.com/profil-yufid-network>.

authorities, and argumentative strategies used to legitimize particular legal rulings. Subsequently, *uṣūl al-fiqh* (Islamic legal theory) was employed to examine the methods of legal derivation applied by the *mufṭīs*, while comparative *fiqh* analysis was used to situate these legal arguments in relation to the positions of the four Sunnī *madhhabs* and the fatwas of contemporary Salafi scholars. Integrating these two approaches enabled the study not only to identify the substantive legal positions produced but also to explain how the selection of textual evidence, the privileging of particular religious authorities, and the marginalization of diverse *fiqh* opinions operate as mechanisms for reproducing Salafi epistemic authority in digital fatwas concerning women.

KonsultasiSyariah.com and Fatwas on Women

The KS is a digital fatwa platform within the Yufid Network, alongside several other *da'wah* platforms, including Muslim.or.id, Muslimah.or.id, and Yufid.TV.¹⁵ Based in Yogyakarta, the platform was founded by FJ and HT with the aim of expanding public access to Islamic knowledge through various digital media formats.¹⁶ As one of the network's centers for producing Islamic discourse, KS provides Islamic legal consultation services that emphasize accessibility, speed, and ease of access to fatwas in the digital age. Its use of search engine optimization has enabled the fatwas published on the platform to consistently appear on the first page of Google search results for a range of keywords related to Islamic law in Indonesia.¹⁷ This digital visibility has strengthened KS's position as a widely accessible source of Islamic legal knowledge in the online sphere. Although the platform does not explicitly refer to classical *fiqh* literature, an analysis of its fatwas indicates that the religious authority it constructs relies substantially on a selective synthesis of the classical *fiqh* tradition and the thought of contemporary Salafi scholars.

Figure 1
Statistics on Fatwas about Women on KonsultasiSyariah.com
2009-2019



Source: Compiled by the authors, 2025.

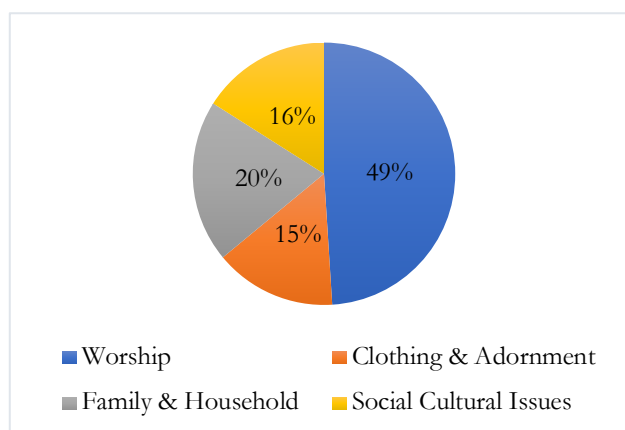
¹⁵ "Profil Yufid Network."

¹⁶ ANB, "Interview with an Advisory Board Member of KonsultasiSyariah.com," December 2020.

¹⁷ FJ, "Interview with a Technical Developer of KonsultasiSyariah.com," December 2020.

Based on the authors' examination of the platform's official website, the KS published 265 fatwas on women between 2009 and 2019. These comprised 20 fatwas in 2009, 65 fatwas in 2010, 56 fatwas in 2011, 21 fatwas in 2012, 35 fatwas in 2013, 20 fatwas in 2014, 7 fatwas in 2015, 14 fatwas in 2016, 16 fatwas in 2017, 6 fatwas in 2018, and 5 fatwas in 2019. The data indicate that fatwa production peaked in 2010-2011 before gradually declining in subsequent years. The most significant decline occurred from 2015 onward and continued through 2019. According to interview data from FJ, one of the platform's technical developers, this trend does not simply reflect a decline in public demand for fatwa services but is also related to changes in the platform's digital *da'wah* strategy.¹⁸ On one hand, the accumulation of fatwa archives has enabled many recurring questions to be addressed through already available articles. On the other hand, the development of social media has encouraged KS to diversify its *da'wah* strategy across various platforms and social media channels, including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and others.¹⁹ Accordingly, fluctuations in the number of fatwas produced can be understood as part of a broader transformation in the strategies through which religious authority is produced and distributed in digital spaces.

Figure 2
Themes of Fatwas on Women



Source: Compiled by the authors, 2025.

After examining all fatwas on women published by KS over the decade, the authors classified them into four main themes: worship (*ibādah*), clothing and adornment, family and household, and socio-cultural issues. Ritual worship was the most prominent theme, comprising 129 fatwas. These included 19 fatwas on prayer, 16 fatwas on fasting, 6 fatwas on pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj* and *umrah*), 1 fatwa on obligatory almsgiving (*ṣaḥāb*), and 12 fatwas on various other rituals, such as funerals and sacrificial offerings (*qurbān*). Among these 129 fatwas, issues of ritual purity (*ṭahārah*), particularly those concerning *ḥayḍ*, postpartum bleeding (*nifās*), and other forms of female bleeding, constituted the most frequently consulted subtheme, with a total of 75 fatwas. This finding was confirmed by one of KS's board members and principal *muftī*. ANB explained:²⁰

¹⁸ FJ, "Interview with a Technical Developer of KonsultasiSyariah.com," December 2020.

¹⁹ "Profil Yufid Network."

²⁰ ANB, "Interview with an Advisory Board Member of KonsultasiSyariah.com."

“Questions most frequently concern women’s bleeding, such as ḥayḍ and nifās. The second most common questions relate to family and household matters, often expressed as personal complaints. Specifically, regarding household problems and complaints, we have stated on the website that we provide only legal explanations, not personal counseling.”

In addition to worship, family and household matters constituted the second-largest theme, with a total of 55 fatwas. The most frequently discussed subthemes were marriage (18 fatwas), household conflict (17 fatwas), childrearing (6 fatwas), family planning (6 fatwas), financial maintenance (*nafaqah*) (5 fatwas), and divorce (3 fatwas). Socio-cultural issues were the third most frequently consulted theme, with a total of 41 fatwas. These included 11 fatwas on women’s careers and professions, 8 on social interaction, 8 on *‘awrah*, 6 on *maḥram* (unmarriageable male relatives), 5 on local traditions, and 3 on women’s travel (*safar*). Clothing and adornment ranked last, with a total of 40 fatwas, comprising 18 on cosmetics and beauty, 11 on fashion trends, and 11 on the *ḥijāb* (head covering) and *niqāb*. This thematic distribution indicates that KS’s concerns extend beyond ritual matters to various aspects of women’s social lives involving family, the body, and public space. Thus, the thematic classification of these fatwas suggests that fatwa production at KS functions not merely as a response to public questions but also as a discursive practice through which religious authority is constructed and reinforced in defining women’s identities, roles, and expressions of religious practice in digital spaces.²¹

Fatwas on Women: Methods and Islamic Legal Reasoning

In this section, the authors do not analyze all 265 fatwas on women published by KS between 2009 and 2019. Instead, we focus on a subtheme selected through purposive sampling: fatwas concerning women’s prayer practices and the legal status of wearing the *niqāb*. These two fatwas were selected because they represent issues that were among the most frequently consulted and clearly illustrate the legal reasoning methods employed by KS in responding to questions about women.²² Substantively, the two fatwas represent two distinct domains—ritual practice and the expression of social identity—thereby enabling an examination of the consistency of the *istinbāṭ* methods applied by KS’s *muftīs*. The analysis focuses on how the fatwas are constructed through the use of Qur’anic verses and hadith reports, the selection of scholarly authorities cited as references, and the legal reasoning strategies employed to legitimize particular legal positions. Accordingly, this discussion seeks not only to identify the substantive legal positions produced but also to explain how these methods of legal reasoning contribute to the construction of configurations of religious authority in digital fatwas concerning women.

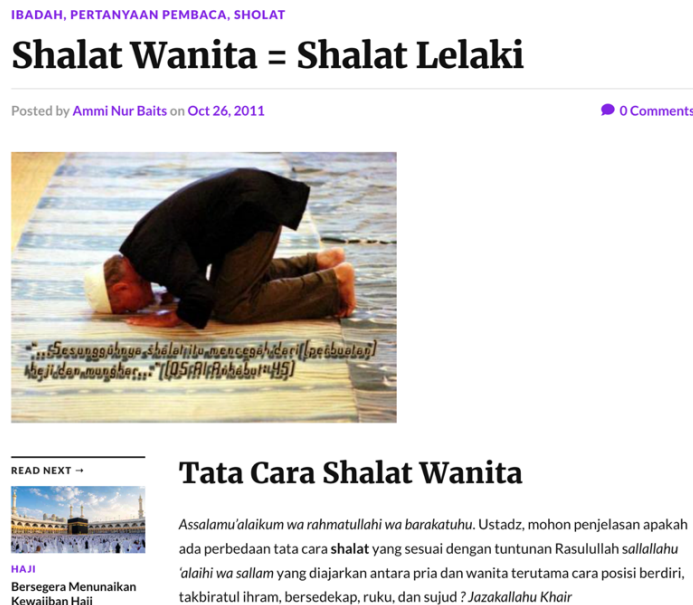
²¹ Marhumah, Muyassaroh, and Sciortino, “Negotiating Living Hadith in Public Spaces,” 131–58; Salim et al., “Modern Platforms for Timeless Principles,” 29–40; Yuyun Sunesti, Noorhaidi Hasan, and Muhammad Najib Azca, “The Sunnah Lake of Muslimah: Salafi Women, the Manhaj and Online Media,” *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews* 6, no. 3 (2018): 67–71.

²² Andrey Bykov, Mehrubon Ashurov, and Khatiya Khutuashvili, “Secular Law and the Niqab Issue: Analysis of the Face Covering Ban as a Measure to Prevent Islamic Radicalism in Central Asia and the Caucasus,” *Politics and Religion Journal* 18, no. 2 (2024): 407–27; Yo Nonaka, “Practising Sunnah for Reward of Heaven in the Afterlife: The Expansion of Cadar Wearing among Urban Muslim Women in Indonesia,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 49, no. 145 (September 2021): 429–47; Yahya Nurgat, “Menstruation and the Ṭawāf Al-Ifāḍa: A Study of Ibn Taymiyya’s Landmark Ruling of Permissibility,” *Hanwa* 20, no. 3 (2020): 256–75.

Fatwa on Women's Prayer Practices

In the *fiqh* tradition, both men and women bear the same legal responsibility (*taklīf*)²³ in fulfilling obligatory acts of worship, except in certain circumstances in which Islamic law explicitly establishes gender-specific rulings. Differences in the performance of acts of worship between men and women generally relate to their natural characteristics and embodied dispositions.²⁴ These differences include rulings concerning *ḥayḍ* and women's *ʿawrah*, which consequently affect certain aspects of the *fiqh al-ʿibādah*. In addressing such issues, the fatwas published by KS demonstrate a discernible tendency toward positions rooted in the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*. This tendency is influenced by the educational backgrounds of the platform's *mufīdīs* and advisory board members. ANB confirmed that KS's fatwas tend to refer to the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* because most members of the advisory board are graduates of the Islamic University of Madinah, although they formally remain open to positions from other *madhhab* when those positions are considered to have stronger supporting arguments.²⁵

Figure 1
Fatwa on Women's Prayer Practices



Source: KonsultasiSyariah.com, 2011.

An analysis of the KS's fatwa on women's prayer practices demonstrates that its method of Islamic legal reasoning does not strictly adhere to any single *madhhab*. The fatwa originated from a question concerning whether women's manner of performing prayer differs from that of men, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. In responding to the question, ANB developed his argument through a literal interpretation of three hadith reports narrated by Imām al-Bukhārī. The hadith, “*ṣallū kamā raʾaytumūnī uṣallū*” (pray as you have seen me pray), is understood as a universal command that does not distinguish between men and women. This interpretation is further supported by a report attributed to Imām

²³ Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, *Al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1997), 133.

²⁴ Muḥammad al-Khushyt, *Fiqh al-Nisāʾ* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 95.

²⁵ ANB, “Interview with an Advisory Board Member of KonsultasiSyariah.com.”

Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī, which states that a woman performs prayer in the same manner as a man. In addition to these two reports, he also cites another hadith recorded by Imām al-Bukhārī concerning Umm al-Dardā’, a female scholar, who sat during prayer in the same manner as a man. Based on these textual proofs, the fatwa concludes that women’s manner of performing prayer is identical to that of men.²⁶ This argumentative structure demonstrates that legal legitimacy is constructed primarily through a textual reading of selected hadith reports, while comparative engagement with the *fiqh* traditions of different *madhhabs* receives relatively limited attention.

The fatwa issued by the KS’s *muftī* differs from the positions of the major Sunnī *madhhabs*, including the Ḥanbalī and Shāfi‘ī *madhhabs*. The Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* holds that there are differences between men’s and women’s prayer postures, particularly in *rukū‘* (bowing) and *sujūd* (prostration). Women are encouraged to keep their bodies more closely aligned, avoid exposing the armpits, and keep their feet and knees close together during *rukū‘* and *sujūd*, in contrast to the manner recommended for men.²⁷ Ibn Qudāmah of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* likewise identifies differences between men and women in *al-tajaffī*—that is, keeping the limbs close to the body rather than extending them outward, such as by opening the shoulders or armpits. Women are encouraged to keep their bodies close together to safeguard their ‘*awrah*. The same consideration applies to the *iftirāsh* (sitting posture). In addition, ‘Abd al-Karīm Zaydān identifies two reports from Imām Aḥmad concerning *takbīrat al-iḥrām* (the opening *takbīr*) for women: the first states that women raise their hands but in a manner different from men, while the second holds that women are not required to raise their hands. He does not determine which report is stronger. He also explains the Ḥanafī position that women should raise their hands only to shoulder level because this is considered more protective of their ‘*awrah*.²⁸ Thus, these *fiqh* traditions fundamentally take into account considerations of *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) in protecting women’s ‘*awrah* from exposure during prayer, given that the requirements concerning women’s ‘*awrah* in prayer are more restrictive than those applicable to men.

An analysis of the final portion of the fatwa more clearly reveals the character of KS’s method of Islamic legal reasoning. Although ANB cites the views of scholars who distinguish between men’s and women’s prayer practices, he rejects those views because the supporting hadith reports are considered weak because of problems in their chains of transmission, particularly concerning the reliability of ‘Abd Allāh al-Wāqidī. This argumentative strategy demonstrates that the selection of legal evidence prioritizes the authenticity of hadith over *madhhab* authority or the established consensus of classical *fiqh*.²⁹ Significantly, although the fatwa does not explicitly cite contemporary Salafi scholars, its argumentative structure closely

²⁶ ANB, “Shalat Wanita = Shalat Lelaki,” *KonsultasiSyariah.com*, October 26, 2011, <https://KonsultasiSyariah.com/8254-samakah-cara-salat-laki-laki-dan-perempuan.html>.

²⁷ Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī* (Cairo: Dār ‘Ālam al-Kutub li al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 1997), 1:391.

²⁸ Md Mokhter Ahmad and Imām Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī, “Reviewing Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī’s Tafsīr Āyāt al-Aḥkām for Developing Principles of Contemporary Tafsīr Literature,” *IIUC Studies (Research Journal of the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC))* 10–11, no. December (2014): 9–38.

²⁹ Itzhak Weismann, “The Controversy over the Law Schools (Lā Madhhabiyya) in Twentieth-Century Syria,” *Islamic Law and Society* 31, no. 4 (2024): 403–30.

corresponds to the positions of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Bāz and Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Uthaymīn. Both scholars interpret the hadith “*ṣallū kamā ra’aytumūnī uṣallī*” as a universal proof that does not establish gender-based differences in the manner of performing prayer, while also rejecting *fiqh* arguments that justify such differences based on the protection of women’s ‘*awrah*.³⁰ These findings indicate that the legal authority constructed by KS rests not primarily on formal affiliation with the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* but on a mode of reasoning that places a literal reading of sound hadith at the center of legal legitimacy.³¹ In this context, the diversity of interpretations within the classical *fiqh* tradition is reconfigured into a single legal conclusion presented as the most authoritative representation of the Prophet’s Sunnah.

Fatwa on Women’s Use of the Niqāb

The fatwa on women’s use of the *niqāb* is one of the clearest examples of how KS’s *muftīs* construct legal authority on issues of *fiqh al-nisā’*. Unlike the issue of women’s prayer practices, which centers on ritual observance, the fatwa on the *niqāb* directly concerns the construction of religious identity in the public sphere.³² Before examining the fatwa, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms *ḥijāb* and *niqāb* in women’s *fiqh*. In this discussion, *ḥijāb* generally refers to the head covering worn by Muslim women as part of the broader requirement to cover the female ‘*awrah*, whereas *niqāb* or *burqa* specifically denotes a face covering that leaves only the eyes visible.³³ Although the obligation to cover the ‘*awrah* has a normative basis in *Shari‘ah* (Islamic law), the legal status of the woman’s face as part of the ‘*awrah* is a matter of *fiqh* interpretation that has historically generated disagreement among scholars. Thus, the debate over the *niqāb* does not fundamentally concern the obligation to cover the ‘*awrah* itself, but rather the methods of interpreting the textual evidence concerning the boundaries of women’s ‘*awrah*.³⁴ It is in this context that the fatwas published by KS warrant analysis, as they demonstrate how a particular *fiqh* position is constructed and legitimized as the most authoritative view.

The fatwa originated from a question submitted by a woman who already wore the *ḥijāb* and wished to wear the *niqāb* but had not received her mother’s permission. In response,

³⁰ Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ al-Mumtī‘* (Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, n.d.), 3:217; “Hal Ṣalāt al-Mar’ah Takhtaliḥ ‘an Ṣalāt al-Rajul?,” Abdullah bin Baz Official Website, accessed August 7, 2025, <https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/17736/هل-صلاة-المرأة-تختلف-عن-صلاة-الرجل>.

³¹ Sarwan Sarwan et al., “Romanticism in Salafi Da’wah: A Cultural and Historical Perspective from West Sumatra, Indonesia,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Penuradeun* 13, no. 1 (January 2025): 177–98; Samira Tabti, “The Charisma of Script: The Quran and the Hadith in Neo-Salafi Online Community,” *Journal of Religion in Europe* 12, no. 2 (2020): 191–216.

³² Bykov et al., “Secular Law and the Niqab Issue,” 407–27; Raphael Cohen-Almagor, “Indivisibilité, Sécurité, Laïcité: The French Ban on the Burqa and the Niqab,” *French Politics* 20, no. 1 (March 2022): 3–24.

³³ Rana Haq, “Hijab, Niqab, Veil,” in *Elgar Encyclopedia on Gender in Management*, ed. Jean Helms Mills et al. (Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2025), 236–39; Nehaluddin Ahmad, Hjh Hanan binti Dato Haji Abdul Aziz, and Siti Nurdianah binti Edirahman, “Religious Freedom and the Hijab Controversy: A Human Rights Perspective,” *Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law and Practice* 18, no. 1 (2022): 30–51; Muhammad Hanafiah et al., “Islamic Perspective on Students Wearing a Burqa at Universities in Indonesia: Results from a Survey at Three Universities,” *Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research* 7, no. 4 (2019): 251–60.

³⁴ Mayyadah, Jusmiati, and Muhammad Zakīn bin Husain, “Psychological or Theological Dynamics of Students Who Wear Cadar at Islamic Universities in Indonesia,” *Mazhabuna: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab* 6, no. 1 (June 2024): 48–64.

the fatwa states that covering the face is obligatory for women when appearing before non-*mahram* men or when traveling. This conclusion is derived from an interpretation of Sūrat al-Aḥzāb, verse 53; Sūrat al-Nūr, verses 30–31; and several hadith reports considered authentic. After establishing the obligation to wear the *niqāb*, the legal argument is extended by asserting that obedience to anyone, including one's parents, is impermissible when it conflicts with the *Shari'ah*. To reinforce this position, the fatwa cites Sūrat Luqmān, verse 15; Sūrat al-ʿAnkabūt, verse 8; and hadith reports concerning the prohibition against obeying a created being in disobedience to the Creator. Based on this reasoning, the questioner is advised to continue wearing the *niqāb*, even if she must do so without her mother's knowledge, provided that she maintains proper conduct and avoids open conflict. The fatwa reproduces a ruling issued by AR and previously published in *Majalah al-Mawaddah*, no. 7, February 2008.³⁵ Although the fatwa does not explicitly identify any particular scholar as its source of authority, its overall argument rests on the assumption that a woman's face constitutes part of her *ʿawrah* and that wearing the *niqāb* represents the strongest position according to the *Shari'ah*.³⁶ This finding indicates that legal legitimacy is constructed not by presenting the diversity of *fiqh* opinions but through the formulation of a single interpretation positioned as a direct representation of the normative textual evidence.

Figure 2 Fatwa on Women's Use of the *Niqāb*

FIKIH, JILBAB, PAKAIAN, WANITA

Ketika Wanita Dbolehkan Bercadar Hanya Ketika Telah Menikah?

Posted by KonsultasiSyariah.com on Nov 20, 2010

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FIKIH
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FIKIH
Orang-Orang yang Ibadahnya Sia-Sia (Bagian 1)

Pertanyaan:

Saya gadis berjilbab yang sudah lama ingin bercadar, tetapi belum mendapat restu dari ibu. Beliau akan izinkan setelah saya berkeluarga nanti. Bagaimana seharusnya saya bersikap dalam menghadapi hal ini? Bagaimana cara saya menjelaskan pada ibu agar tidak menyinggung perasaannya?

Jawaban:

Menutup wajah bagi wanita adalah wajib ketika safar atau berjumpa dengan laki-laki yang bukan mahram-nya, menurut pendapat yang kuat berdasarkan al-Quran dan hadits yang shahih. Adapun menaati siapapun yang mengajak kepada kemungkaran hukumnya haram, berdasarkan hadits yang shahih. Demikian juga perintah orang tua yang salah, tidak boleh ditaati. Silakan baca surat Luqman: 15 dan al-Ankabut: 8.

Nasihatilah ibu dengan lembut dan dengan kata-kata yang menunjukkan bahwa anak masih sayang kepada orang tua walaupun hati ibu atau bapak kurang berkenan. Nasihati ibu, bahwa wanita dilarang membuka wajahnya di hadapan laki-laki yang bukan mahram-nya.

Source: KonsultasiSyariah.com, 2010.

This pattern becomes clearer when compared with another KS's fatwa concerning a wife's obligation to follow her husband's *fiqh* position. The fatwa arose from a wife's concern that she might be disobedient because she disagreed with her husband over a disputed *fiqh*

³⁵ AR, "Ketika Wanita Dbolehkan Bercadar Hanya Ketika Telah Menikah?," *KonsultasiSyariah.com*, November 20, 2010, <https://KonsultasiSyariah.com/3229-cadar-setelah-menikah.html>.

³⁶ Musda Asmara et al., "Trendy Veil: Law, Function, and Its Stigma on Muslim Society," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 22, no. 2 (2023): 245–57.

issue. In responding to the question, AA, a graduate of the Islamic University of Madinah, divided the relevant rulings into four categories. First, a wife may follow the position she considers stronger in matters of obligatory or recommended worship that do not concern her husband's rights. Second, she may not follow the position she considers stronger in matters of obligatory or recommended worship that do concern her husband's rights. Third, a husband has the right to prohibit his wife from performing an act of worship or another act that is *mubāḥ* (permissible). Fourth, a husband must prohibit his wife from engaging in an act that is *ḥarām* (prohibited) or *bid'ah* (religious innovation). In the case of a wife who adopts the scholarly position that wearing the *niqāb* is obligatory while her husband considers it recommended, the husband may not compel her to follow his preferred *fiqh* position. Accordingly, the wife may decline to obey her husband in this matter because it falls within the first category.³⁷ To legitimize this position, AA cites a hadith narrated by Aḥmad stating that there is no obedience to a created being in disobedience to the Creator.³⁸ At the end of the fatwa, AA explicitly refers to an official ruling issued by the al-Lajnah al-Dā'imah li al-Buḥūth al-ʿIlmiyyah wa al-Iftā' in Saudi Arabia, signed by Bāz, ʿAbd al-Razzāq ʿAfīfī, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ghudayyān on February 8, 2007.³⁹ This explicit reference indicates that the legal authority constructed by KS extends beyond the use of the Qur'ān and hadith as normative sources and also derives legitimacy from the transnational network of contemporary Salafi scholars in Saudi Arabia. The legal argument is, therefore, not only text-centered but also reflects a clear orientation toward a transnational configuration of Salafi scholarly authority.

These findings demonstrate that the construction of Islamic legal reasoning concerning the *niqāb* at KS cannot be understood simply as the adoption of a single position within the classical *fiqh* tradition. Within *Sunni fiqh* traditions, the legal status of the *niqāb* is a matter of *khilāfiyyah* (juristic disagreement). The Ḥanafī and Mālikī *madhhabs* generally do not classify the face as part of the *ʿawrah* and therefore do not consider the *niqāb* obligatory,⁴⁰ while several Shāfiʿī and Ḥanbalī scholars, including al-Nawawī and Ibn Qudāmah, similarly acknowledge the permissibility of uncovering the face, provided that doing so does not give rise to sexual temptation.⁴¹ Yet, this diversity of views receives almost no substantive attention in the legal arguments employed by KS. Instead, its fatwas consistently privilege the views of contemporary Salafi scholars, particularly Saudi religious authorities, as the primary basis for determining the law. From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, this strategy reveals the privileging of a particular configuration of epistemic authority alongside the marginalization of more pluralistic traditions of *fiqh* interpretation. As a result, an issue historically situated within the domain of *khilāfiyyah* is reconfigured as a singular legal norm

³⁷ Konsultasi Syariah, "Haruskah Istri Mengikuti Pendapat Fikih yang Dipegang oleh Suami?," KonsultasiSyariah.com, 2019, <https://KonsultasiSyariah.com/35745-haruskah-istri-mengikuti-pendapat-fikih-yang-dipegang-suami.html>.

³⁸ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Bairut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2001), 1:131.

³⁹ "Al-Ikhtilāf bayna al-Zawjayn fī al-Masā'il al-Khilāfiyyah," Islam-QA, February 8, 2007, [https://islamqa.info/ar/answers/97125/الاختلاف بين الزوجين في المسائل الخلافيه](https://islamqa.info/ar/answers/97125/الاختلاف%20بين%20الزوجين%20في%20المسائل%20الخلافيه).

⁴⁰ Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhu* (Bairut: Dār al-Fikr, 2008), 2:743.

⁴¹ Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī*, 1:596.

presented as the most authentic representation of the *Shari'ah*.⁴² In this context, the *niqāb* is no longer positioned merely as a clothing choice but as a marker of religious identity and a symbolic mechanism for distinguishing Salafi orientation from mainstream Islamic practices in Indonesia.⁴³

Constructing Salafi Epistemic Authority through Digital Fatwas

An analysis of the fatwas on women published by KS shows that its Salafi character is manifested not primarily through institutional identity or organizational affiliation but through patterns of legal reasoning and the configuration of authoritative sources consistently employed in constructing *fiqh* arguments. Across the fatwas examined, legal legitimacy is not established by adherence to a particular *madhhab* but through the selective use of textual evidence and scholarly authorities positioned as the most authentic representatives of Islamic teachings. These findings suggest that the platform's Salafi orientation is better understood as an epistemic configuration, namely, a set of principles governing how religious knowledge is produced, which legal sources are prioritized, and how scholarly authority is legitimized. In this sense, Salafism operates not merely as an ideological identity but as a distinct mode of organizing Islamic legal knowledge.⁴⁴ Based on the analysis of KS's published fatwas, this epistemic configuration consists of three interrelated characteristics: an orientation toward transnational religious authorities, the intellectual genealogy of the *muftīs*, and the construction of symbolic boundaries through fatwas.

The first characteristic is evident in a citation pattern that consistently directs legal legitimacy toward networks of contemporary Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia. Across the fatwas examined, KS more frequently refers to rulings issued by the al-Lajnah al-Dā'imah li al-Buḥūth al-ʿIlmiyyah wa al-Iftā' and the views of 'Uthaymīn than it engages with the diversity of the four Sunnī *madhhabs*. This shift indicates that legal legitimacy is constructed through recognition of a transnational network of scholarly authorities positioned as the most authoritative standard for Islamic interpretation.⁴⁵ This pattern is particularly evident in the fatwas on women's prayer practices and the *niqāb*, where the *khilāfiyyah* acknowledged within the classical *fiqh* tradition is narrowed by privileging interpretations advanced by contemporary Salafi scholars. Therefore, the legal authority produced by KS is not only text-

⁴² Muhammad Ridha Ds et al., "Mapping the National Insight of the Salafi Group in Indonesia Based on Their Fatwa on Social Media," *Al-Adalah* 21, no. 2 (2024): 245–70; Laily Hidayati and Rosdiana, "Keabsahan Akad Digital dalam Fintech Syariah: Perspektif Hukum Ekonomi Syariah dan Perlindungan Data," *Selaparang: Journal of Law Studies* 1, no. 1 (February 2026): 20–25.

⁴³ Saparudin Saparudin and Emawati Emawati, "Ideological Framing, Mosques, and Conflict: Bargaining Position of Salafi Movement in Lombok, East Indonesia," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 18, no. 1 (June 2023): 231–44; Nonaka, "Practising Sunnah for Reward of Heaven in the Afterlife," 429–47; Maghfur Ahmad, Siti Mumun Muniroh, and Shinta Nurani, "Niqab, Protest Movement, and the Salafization of Indonesian Islam," *QIJS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 9, no. 2 (December 2021): 423–62.

⁴⁴ Lövheim, "Gender and Agency in Digital Religion," 237–53; Falah and Riyanta, "Digital Patriarchy," 103–22; Bambang Husni Nugroho, Ahmad Mustaniruddin, and Ahmad Taufik, "Ideological Contestation on the Production of Gender Exegesis within Institutional Quranic Interpretation in Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 25, no. 2 (October 2024): 346–69.

⁴⁵ Roel Meijer, "Global Salafism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2022), 1–5.

centered but also derives its legitimacy from a Salafi epistemic network that extends beyond the local Indonesian context.⁴⁶

The second characteristic pertains to the educational and intellectual lineage of the *muftīs* and contributors involved in producing the fatwas. Most of the fatwa authors are graduates of the Islamic University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia, an institution widely recognized in the literature as a major center for the global dissemination of the Salafi methodological approach (*manhaj*).⁴⁷ This affiliation, however, is reflected not only in the authors' academic backgrounds but also in the methods of Islamic legal reasoning they employ. The KS's fatwas consistently prioritize their interpretations of Qur'anic verses and *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) hadith as primary sources of legal legitimacy,⁴⁸ while arguments based on *ijmā'* (juristic consensus), *urf* (custom), or *madhhab* authority receive more limited consideration. For example, in the fatwa on women's prayer practices, differences between the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī *madhhabs* are not treated as equally valid forms of interpretive plurality but are resolved through an evaluation of *isnād* (chain of transmission) authenticity and the elevation of *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith as the highest legal authority. Thus, the educational and intellectual lineage of the *muftīs* functions not merely as a channel for disseminating Salafi ideology but also as a source of legitimacy for the fatwas by anchoring them within a broader transnational religious movement.⁴⁹

The third characteristic relates to the function of fatwas as a mechanism for constructing symbolic boundaries that distinguish Salafi identity from mainstream Muslim religious practices in Indonesia. In this context, fatwas do not merely determine the legal status of an act; they also construct categories of piety that define which religious practices are regarded as consistent with the Sunnah and which are considered deviations. Although some contemporary Salafi groups have adapted in various ways to social and technological changes,⁵⁰ KS's fatwas on the *niqāb* and criteria for spouse selection reveal a tendency to

⁴⁶ Tabti, "The Charisma of Script," 191–216; Noorhaidi Hasan, "Between Transnational Interest and Domestic Politics: Understanding Middle Eastern Fatwās on Jihad in the Moluccas," *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 1 (2005): 73–92.

⁴⁷ Christian Tratzi, "Saudi Arabia and Da'wa Mission: The Role of Muslim World League and Islamic University of Medina in Spreading Wahhabi-Salafi Doctrine in the 1960s," *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 35, no. 2 (July 2024): 168–78; Jamhari Makruf and Saifudin Asrori, "In the Making of Salafi-Based Islamic Schools in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, no. 1 (June 2022): 227–64.

⁴⁸ Norasimah Haji Omar and Mazlan Ibrahim, "Evaluation of Muslim Scholars on the Method of Interpretations of Verses on Divine Attributes by Contemporary Salafi School," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 16 (2019): 98–107; Tabti, "The Charisma of Script," 191–216.

⁴⁹ Toto Suharto, "Transnational Islamic Education in Indonesia: An Ideological Perspective," *Contemporary Islam* 12, no. 2 (July 2018): 101–22; Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Failure of the Wahhabi Campaign: Transnational Islam and the Salafi Madrasa in Post-9/11 Indonesia," *South East Asia Research* 18, no. 4 (December 2010): 675–705; Aksin Wijaya, Ahmad Zainal Abidin, and Muh Syaifudin, "State-Sponsored Qur'anic Exegesis and Interreligious Relations: A Comparative Study of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia," *Ascarya: Journal of Islamic Science, Culture, and Social Studies* 5, no. 2 (December 2025): 280–92.

⁵⁰ Khairul Hamim, Lalu Supriadi Bin Mujib, and Ahmad Muhasim, "Religious Fatwā and Human Security: Managing Public Health through the Lens of Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia," *Kbayanah Hukum* 6, no. 3 (December 2024): 234–50; Suwarjin et al., "The Concept of Nationhood and the Implementation of Hadith on Nationalism in the Salafi Perspective: A Critical Study of Contemporary Islamic Law," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 3, no. 2 (December 2024): 432–58; Wawan Hermawan et al., "DNA Testing and Nafyu Al-Nasab: A Comparative Study of Ali Jum'ah's Fatwa and Its Socio-Legal Implications in Global Jurisdictions," *Kbayanah Hukum* 8, no. 2 (May 2026): 243–58.

establish relatively strict social boundaries.⁵¹ Practices traditionally understood within the classical *fiqh* tradition as matters of *kehlāfiyyah* are represented as religious obligations and symbols of commitment to the *Shari'ah*. A similar process can be observed in fatwas concerning the verbalization of intention, the recitation of the “*basmalah*” during prayer, and the performance of *qunūt* (supplication recited during the dawn prayer),⁵² where practices long established within Indonesian Islamic traditions are reinterpreted through normative standards developed by contemporary Salafi scholars. From a discourse-analytic perspective, this mechanism not only produces legal rulings but also reinforces symbolic boundaries between a community perceived as authentically following the Sunnah and more pluralistic forms of Islamic practice.⁵³

These three characteristics demonstrate that KS's Salafi orientation is not constructed through rigid adherence to the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*, as has sometimes been assumed in scholarship on Salafism.⁵⁴ Instead, the platform develops a hierarchical structure of authority in which the Qur'ān, *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith, and interpretations of contemporary Salafi scholars occupy the highest positions, while classical *madhhab* opinions are employed selectively, insofar as they do not conflict with this structure of authority. This pattern is evident across the fatwas examined. In the case of *nifās*, for example, the view of 'Uthaymīn is adopted because it aligns with the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*. By contrast, on issues including women's prayer practices, the verbalization of intention, and the *niqāb*, the views of modern Salafi scholars are prioritized even when they differ from some classical Ḥanbalī *madhhab* opinions or from other *madhhabs*.⁵⁵ These findings indicate that the principal mechanism operating in KS's fatwas is not the reproduction of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*, but the construction of Salafi epistemic authority through the selective use of legal sources, the privileging of transnational Salafi scholarly networks, and the normalization of symbolic boundaries that define women's piety according to Salafi standards. The digital sphere, therefore, functions not merely as a medium for disseminating fatwas but also as a strategic arena for the reconfiguration of religious authority,⁵⁶ transforming the diversity of *fiqh* traditions into a more uniform normative framework.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Ahmad et al., “Niqab, Protest Movement, and the Salafization of Indonesian Islam,” 423–62.

⁵² ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Mardāwī, *Al-Inṣāf fī Ma‘rifat al-Rajih min al-Khilāf ‘alā Madhhab al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (1955), 142; Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī*, 1:329.

⁵³ Marhumah Marhumah, Iffah Khoiriyatul Muhyassaroh, and Rosalia Sciortino, “Public Expressions of Religion among Yogyakarta's Salafi Muslimah,” *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 32, no. 2 (2024): 1–20; Marhumah, Muhyassaroh, and Sciortino, “Negotiating Living Hadith in Public Spaces,” 131–58.

⁵⁴ Pavel Ťupek and Ondřej Beránek, “Monotheism of the Divine Names and Attributes as a Defining Criterion of Salafism,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 66, no. 1 (2026): 81–109; Jeffrey T. Kenney, “SALAFĪS: Past to Present, Present to Past,” in *Routledge Handbook on Early Islam*, ed. Herbert Berg (Taylor and Francis, 2017), 274–95; Chika Praska Anggraini, Darul Akbar, and M. Fajar Ishlahul Ummah, “Women's Leadership in Islamic Law: Between Normative Foundations and Contemporary Realities,” *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 3, no. 1 (July 2024): 1–13.

⁵⁵ ANB, “Hukum Darah yang Keluar Sebelum Melahirkan,” *KonsultasiSyariah.com*, October 5, 2016, <https://KonsultasiSyariah.com/28415-hukum-darah-yang-keluar-sebelum-melahirkan.html>.

⁵⁶ Adel and Numan, “Online Fatwas in Pakistan Using Social Networking Platforms,” 201–26; Abdurrohman Kasdi et al., “Fatwa and Religious Authority: Islamic Law, Social Media Ethics and Digital Age,” *Al-Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah dan Hukum* 11, no. 1 (March 2026): 56–66.

⁵⁷ Atallah, “Digital Mediation and Fatwa Authority in Contemporary Islam,” 350; Fauzi et al., “The Digital Minbar,” 178–209.

Overall, the fatwas on women published by KS demonstrate that Salafi epistemic authority is constructed through an interconnected relationship among texts, scholarly authority, and practices of piety. Legal legitimacy is established through the selective use of textual evidence and specific forms of scholarly authority, while alternative *fiqh* interpretations receive less attention when they do not conform to this normative framework. The three processes identified above—orientation toward transnational authority, the intellectual genealogy of the *muftis*, and the construction of symbolic boundaries—do not operate independently but mutually reinforce one another in producing a configuration of authority that positions Salafi interpretations as prominent normative references. In this context, the conservative character of KS’s fatwas lies not merely in the substantive rulings they produce but in how particular sources of knowledge are selected, legitimized, and normalized as the most authentic representations of Islamic law.⁵⁸ The digitalization of fatwas further expands the social conditions for reproducing this authority through search-engine visibility, networks of Islamic media, and the accumulation of fatwa archives, enabling a particular configuration of religious authority to reach a broader audience amid Indonesia’s plural *fiqh* traditions.⁵⁹ Accordingly, the contribution of this study lies not primarily in demonstrating that KS’s fatwas tend to be conservative but in explaining how such conservatism is produced and legitimized through epistemic and discursive mechanisms in the digital sphere. In the case of KS, the reproduction of Salafism occurs through the construction of epistemic authority that selectively connects texts, transnational scholars, and women’s practices of piety, making the digital sphere an important arena for the reconfiguration of local *fiqh* traditions through a Salafi-oriented normative framework.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Salafi character of KonsultasiSyariah.com (KS) is not reproduced through institutional affiliation or exclusive adherence to the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* (school of law), but rather through a particular configuration of epistemic authority in the production of digital fatwas. Analysis of the fatwas on women reveals that Islamic legal legitimacy is constructed through the selective use of textual evidence, particularly Qur’anic verses and hadith deemed authentic, the privileging of contemporary Salafi scholars, and the restriction of space for alternative interpretations within the plural Sunnī *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) tradition. This configuration is particularly evident in fatwas addressing women’s prayer practices and the *niqāb* (face veil), where legal questions historically situated within the domain of *khilāfīyyah* (juristic disagreement) are reconstructed into relatively singular normative positions. Fatwa production at KS, therefore, serves not only to provide legal rulings but also to establish hierarchies of knowledge, determine which sources of religious authority are regarded as legitimate, and delineate the boundaries of women’s piety.

⁵⁸ Marhumah, Muyyassaroh, and Sciortino, “Negotiating Living Hadith in Public Spaces,” 131–58; R. Rusli, “Progressive Salafism in Online Fatwa,” *Al-Jami’ah* 52, no. 1 (2014): 205–29; Ron Shaham, “Debates on the Diya (Blood Money): Contemporary Juristic Discourse and Women’s Rights,” *Hamwa* 19, no. 2 (2019): 129–58.

⁵⁹ Mualimin et al., “Are Fatwas Visible on New Media? Dissemination of the Fatwas of the Indonesian Ulama Council on Instagram,” *El-Mashlahab* 15, no. 1 (June 2025): 21–40; Atallah, “Digital Mediation and Fatwa Authority in Contemporary Islam,” 350; Wahid and Abdulloh, “Digital Islamic Authority,” 62.

Digital Salafism, consequently, should not be understood merely as the dissemination of conservative doctrines via the internet but as a process through which particular forms of legal knowledge and authority are selectively constructed, standardized, and normalized through digital infrastructures.

The principal contribution of this study lies in linking the analysis of Islamic legal reasoning with scholarship on Salafism and digital religious authority. It demonstrates that digital platforms can function as arenas of epistemic reconstruction, where transnational Salafi authority, text-centered Islamic legal reasoning, and Muslim religious practices in Indonesia are reconfigured within a new structure of authority. This perspective shifts the focus from whether a fatwa is conservative to the more fundamental question of how such conservatism is epistemically produced and legitimized. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single platform and its purposive selection of fatwas; therefore, its findings are not intended to be generalized across all Salafi digital fatwa practices or Muslim women's reception of them. Future research could compare multiple digital fatwa platforms representing different Islamic orientations and examine how users receive, negotiate, or reject the normative authority produced through digital fatwas. Such comparative and reception-oriented approaches would further clarify how the digitalization of Islamic legal knowledge transforms the relationship among textual authority, religious expertise, and Muslim religious practice in contemporary Indonesia.

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