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Constructing Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah Identity in Muhammadiyah's Tarjih Fatwas: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Konstruksi Identitas Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah dalam Fatwa Tarjih Muhammadiyah: Analisis Wacana Kritis

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the construction of Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah identity in Muhammadiyah's Tarjih Fatwas using Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model. A qualitative approach was employed by examining selected Tarjih Fatwas through macrostructure, superstructure, microstructure, social cognition, and social context. The findings reveal that Muhammadiyah constructs Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah identity through methodological authority grounded in the Qur'an, al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah, ijtihād, and tajdīd rather than sectarian affiliation. This identity is reinforced by systematic legal argumentation, collective reasoning, and linguistic strategies emphasizing openness, scholarly responsibility, and evidence-based interpretation. Furthermore, the interaction between institutional cognition and Indonesia's plural socio-religious context enables Muhammadiyah to maintain doctrinal commitment while accommodating legitimate differences of opinion. This study contributes to Islamic discourse studies by demonstrating that Tarjih Fatwas function not only as legal instruments but also as discursive mechanisms for constructing and legitimizing institutional religious identity.

Keywords: Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah; Critical Discourse Analysis; Muhammadiyah; Religious Identity; Tarjih Fatwas

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konstruksi identitas Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah dalam Fatwa Tarjih Muhammadiyah menggunakan model Analisis Wacana Kritis Teun A. van Dijk. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menganalisis sejumlah Fatwa Tarjih melalui dimensi makrostruktur, superstruktur, mikrostruktur, kognisi sosial, dan konteks sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Muhammadiyah mengonstruksi identitas Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah melalui otoritas metodologis yang berlandaskan al-Qur'an, al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah, ijtihād, dan tajdīd, bukan melalui afiliasi mazhab tertentu. Identitas tersebut diperkuat melalui argumentasi hukum yang sistematis, ijtihād jamā'ī, serta strategi kebahasaan yang menekankan keterbukaan, tanggung jawab keilmuan, dan penalaran berbasis dalil. Interaksi antara kognisi kelembagaan dan konteks sosial-keagamaan Indonesia yang majemuk memungkinkan Muhammadiyah mempertahankan komitmen akidah sekaligus mengakomodasi perbedaan pendapat yang sah. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian wacana Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa Fatwa Tarjih tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai produk hukum Islam, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme konstruksi dan legitimasi identitas keagamaan kelembagaan.

Kata Kunci: Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah; Analisis Wacana Kritis; Muhammadiyah; Identitas Keagamaan; Fatwa Tarjih



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INTRODUCTION

The term *Ahl al-Haqq wa al-Sunnah* occupies a significant position in contemporary Islamic discourse in Indonesia as a marker of religious identity.¹ While commonly understood as representing adherence to the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, the term has also been employed to distinguish one Muslim community from another. Its meaning, however, is far from uniform, as interpretations vary according to organizational affiliation, intellectual tradition, and theological orientation. Consequently, *Ahl al-Haqq wa al-Sunnah* should not be viewed merely as a theological concept but as a social identity continuously produced, negotiated, and reproduced through discourse.² This phenomenon demonstrates that religious identity is dynamic rather than fixed, emerging through discursive practices embedded in religious texts and communicative interactions within Muslim society.

Muhammadiyah is one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations that adopts the concept of *Ahl al-Haqq wa al-Sunnah* as an integral component of its theological orientation.³ Rather than interpreting the term as an exclusive sectarian label, Muhammadiyah frames it within a *manhaj* rooted in the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* while emphasizing *tajdid*, *ijtihad*, and *maṣlahah* in responding to contemporary religious issues.⁴ This orientation is reflected not only in Muhammadiyah's ideological documents but also in its *Tarjih Fatwas*, which function as authoritative references for religious guidance. Beyond establishing legal rulings, these fatwas articulate institutional identity through carefully selected lexical choices, patterns of argumentation, and rhetorical strategies that simultaneously reinforce theological legitimacy and shape the religious perspectives of their audiences.

Language in Islamic legal discourse performs functions that extend well beyond the communication of legal rulings. Lexical selection, syntactic organization, and argumentative structure reveal how religious institutions construct identity, establish the boundaries of meaning, and position themselves within broader social contexts. From this perspective, *Tarjih Fatwas* should be understood as discursive practices that not only formulate Islamic legal norms but also construct social reality through language.⁵ To examine this process, the present study employs Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which conceptualizes discourse as the interaction of textual structures, social cognition, and social context. This analytical framework enables a systematic investigation of how religious identity is constructed through macrostructures, superstructures, microstructures, social cognition, and the socio-cultural conditions surrounding the production of religious discourse.

Studies on religious identity within Islamic organizations have been extensively conducted from the perspectives of theology, Islamic thought, religious moderation, and institutional development. Existing studies indicate that organizational religious identity is primarily shaped

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- 1 Alina Isac Alak, "Defining Humanist Hermeneutics," in *Humanitarian Islam* (Brill | Schöningh, 2023), 21–43, https://doi.org/10.30965/9783657790265_003.
 - 2 Arfan Arfan et al., "Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Thought of Nūr Al-Dīn Al-Rānīrī," *Justicia Islamica* 22, no. 2 (November 25, 2025): 327–56, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v22i2.10808>.
 - 3 Abdul Salam Muhamad Shukri, "The Essential in the Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamā'ah," *AL-ITQAN: Journal Of Islamic Sciences And Comparative Studies* 5, no. 3 (2021): 85–115, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/al-itqan/index.php/al-itqan/article/view/214>.
 - 4 M. Amin Abdullah, "The Manhaj of Muhammadiyah Progressive Islam: Theological, Philosophical, and Ethical Perspectives," *Progresiva: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 13, no. 02 (June 22, 2024): 165–80, <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v13i02.33887>.
 - 5 Fariz Alnizar, "The Language of Exclusion: Ideology and Power in the Fatwa of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia on Ahmadiyah," *Journal of Islamic Law* 6, no. 1 (February 20, 2025): 67–88, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v6i1.3338>.

by commitment to Islamic teachings, the principles of *wasatīyyah*, and continuous intellectual renewal; however, these discussions remain largely confined to normative theological dimensions.⁶ Other studies demonstrate that Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih Fatwas* play an important role in shaping the religious outlook of Muhammadiyah members, yet they primarily emphasize legal substance rather than the linguistic mechanisms through which identity is constructed.⁷ Meanwhile, Critical Discourse Analysis has been widely applied to media discourse, political speeches, and literary texts to uncover underlying ideological structures, but its application to Islamic legal discourse as a site for constructing religious identity remains relatively limited.

These limitations reveal that the construction of religious identity in Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih Fatwas* has not been comprehensively examined through the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis. Previous scholarship has generally treated fatwas as normative legal products designed to formulate religious rulings, leaving the discursive mechanisms through which institutional identity is represented largely unexplored. In reality, religious identity is constructed not only through doctrinal content but also through discursive strategies involving thematic organization, argumentative sequencing, lexical selection, and the relationship between textual structures and their broader social contexts. Accordingly, this study offers a new perspective by conceptualizing *Tarjih Fatwas* as discursive practices that actively construct the identity of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* within Muhammadiyah through systematic linguistic strategies.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the construction of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* identity in Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih Fatwas* by employing Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis. The analysis focuses on textual structures, social cognition, and social context to explain how religious identity is constructed through the discursive strategies embedded within these legal texts. Theoretically, this study expands the application of Critical Discourse Analysis to the field of Islamic legal discourse, an area that has received relatively limited scholarly attention within contemporary Islamic studies. Practically, the findings are expected to contribute to the development of Islamic studies, discourse studies, and organizational studies by providing a deeper understanding of how language functions in constructing representations of religious identity within pluralistic Muslim societies.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary analytical framework.⁸ CDA was selected because it enables a comprehensive examination of discourse by integrating textual analysis with social cognition and broader social contexts, thereby revealing the ideological dimensions embedded in language.⁹ The primary data consisted of selected *Tarjih Fatwas* issued by the *Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid* of Muhammadiyah that explicitly discuss *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah*, Islamic creed, religious identity, and intergroup relations. These documents were purposively selected because they represent Muhammadiyah's official religious discourse and institutional position regarding theological identity. Secondary data comprised scholarly journal articles, books, and official Muhammadiyah publications relevant to Critical Discourse Analysis, religious identity, and Islamic discourse to strengthen the interpretation and contextualization of the findings.

6 Asep Iwan Setiawan et al., "Transforming Religious Education Through Inclusivity: How Indonesian Pesantren Cultivate Moderate Islamic Values and Da'wah Practices," *Nazḥruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 2026): 70–92, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v9i1.406>.

7 Ahwan Fanani et al., "Muhammadiyah's Manhaj Tarjih: An Evolution of a Modernist Approach to Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (October 28, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6942>.

8 Teun A van Dijk, *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

9 Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Longman, 1995).

Data were collected through document analysis by identifying, classifying, and examining the selected *Tarjih Fatwas* based on their relevance to the research objectives. The analysis followed Teun A. van Dijk's analytical model, encompassing five interconnected dimensions: macrostructure, superstructure, microstructure, social cognition, and social context. At the textual level, the analysis focused on thematic organization, argumentative structure, lexical selection, semantic features, and rhetorical strategies employed in constructing the identity of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah*. These textual findings were subsequently interpreted in relation to Muhammadiyah's institutional perspectives and the socio-religious dynamics of contemporary Indonesian Islam to explain how religious identity is discursively constructed and legitimized through the language of the *Tarjih Fatwas*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Linguistic Construction of Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah Identity

The analysis indicates that the construction of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* identity in Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih Fatwas* is primarily established through methodological authority rather than affiliation with a particular *madhhab*.¹⁰ At the macrostructural level, the dominant theme consistently emphasizes the *Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah* as the principal sources of Islamic teachings, while the opinions of classical jurists and legal schools are positioned as complementary references that may be adopted when supported by stronger textual evidence. This orientation demonstrates that Muhammadiyah's religious identity is grounded in epistemological legitimacy rather than sectarian affiliation. Consequently, the identity of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* is represented as a commitment to a methodology of deriving Islamic rulings based on revelation and *ijtihad*, rather than as a symbol of organizational exclusivism.

At the superstructural level, the *Tarjih Fatwas* exhibit a consistent pattern of argumentation. Each fatwa begins with scriptural evidence derived from the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, followed by legal reasoning, critical evaluation of relevant opinions, and finally the formulation of the *tarjih* decision. This organizational pattern demonstrates that the legitimacy of Muhammadiyah's religious discourse is constructed through a systematic and evidence-based reasoning process rather than institutional authority alone. Furthermore, the application of *ijtihad jamā'i* (collective reasoning) reinforces the representation of religious authority as a collaborative intellectual endeavor, thereby strengthening Muhammadiyah's institutional credibility in constructing its religious identity.¹¹

At the microstructural level, the analysis identifies several recurring lexical expressions that collectively shape Muhammadiyah's institutional identity. Terms such as *tajdid*, *ijtihad*, *al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah*, *dalil*, *tarjih*, and *maṣlaḥah* function as key linguistic markers emphasizing renewal, rational inquiry, and commitment to scriptural authority.¹² At the same time, expressions advocating non-affiliation with a particular *madhhab*, openness to scholarly criticism, and the willingness to revise previous decisions when stronger evidence becomes available illustrate a discursive strategy that presents Muhammadiyah as an intellectually open institution. These lexical choices demonstrate that the identity of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* is constructed through language that simultaneously affirms methodological rigor and intellectual openness.

10 Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2018).

11 Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah and Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2009).

12 Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah, Ijtihad and Civilization Renewal*, vol. 20 (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2012).

Table 1. Discursive Characteristics in the Construction of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* Identity

Discursive Dimension	Main Findings	Identity Representation
Macrostructure	<i>Qur'an</i> and <i>al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah</i> are positioned as the primary sources of Islamic teachings	Religious identity is constructed through scriptural authority rather than organizational affiliation
Macrostructure	Non-affiliation with a single <i>madhhab</i>	Identity is represented as methodological rather than sectarian
Superstructure	Fatwas follow the sequence of scriptural evidence, legal reasoning, deliberation, and conclusion	Institutional legitimacy is built through systematic reasoning
Superstructure	Decisions are formulated through <i>ijtihad jama'i</i>	Religious authority is presented as collective and consultative
Microstructure	Frequent use of <i>tajdid</i> , <i>ijtihad</i> , <i>dalil</i> , <i>tarjih</i> , and <i>maṣlaḥah</i>	Identity emphasizes renewal, rationality, and scriptural commitment
Microstructure	Expressions promoting openness, tolerance, and willingness to revise decisions	Identity is discursively framed as inclusive while maintaining theological commitment

Source: Compiled by the author (2026)

The findings demonstrate that the identity of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* within Muhammadiyah is not constructed through narratives emphasizing group superiority but rather through methodological legitimacy. The consistent emphasis on the *Qur'an*, *al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah*, the application of *ijtihad jama'i*, and openness to revision based on stronger evidence constitutes the principal elements shaping Muhammadiyah's institutional identity.¹³ Accordingly, the language employed in the *Tarjih Fatwas* functions not merely as a medium for communicating Islamic legal rulings but also as an instrument for constructing Muhammadiyah's representation as a movement characterized by *tajdid*, scholarly reasoning, and collective responsibility in the formulation of religious decisions.

These findings reinforce the argument that religious identity in Indonesian Islamic discourse should not be understood as a fixed or essential entity but rather as a dynamic construct continuously shaped through discursive practices. Within Muhammadiyah, the identity of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* is represented not as an exclusive sectarian label but as a theological orientation grounded in the *Qur'an*, *al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah*, and the methodology of *ijtihad*. The recurring use of lexical expressions such as *tajdid*, *ijtihad*, *dalil*, and *maṣlaḥah*, together with principles of openness, tolerance, and willingness to accept scholarly revision, illustrates that theological commitment and intellectual openness are discursively constructed as complementary rather than contradictory principles. Through these discursive strategies, the *Tarjih Fatwas* function not only as instruments for producing Islamic legal rulings but also as mechanisms for constructing and legitimizing Muhammadiyah's religious identity within Indonesia's plural Muslim society.

13 Nurbaeti, Bakry Muammar, and Abdul Syatar, "Digital Transformation of Fatwa Authorities," *Parewa Saraq: Journal of Islamic Law and Fatwa Review* 4, no. 2 (November 30, 2025): 82–100, <https://doi.org/10.64016/parewasaraq.v4i2.58>.

Social Cognition and Social Context of Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah Identity

The construction of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* identity in Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih Fatwas* cannot be separated from the social cognition underlying the formulation of its religious discourse.¹⁴ According to Van Dijk, social cognition represents the collective knowledge, beliefs, and ideological frameworks shared by discourse producers.¹⁵ In the context of Muhammadiyah, the *Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid* functions as the institutional actor responsible for formulating religious interpretations based on a shared epistemological framework rooted in the *Qur'an*, *al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah*, and collective *ijtihad*. Consequently, the language employed in the *Tarjih Fatwas* reflects not merely individual opinions but the institutional worldview of Muhammadiyah regarding Islamic teachings, religious authority, and the principles guiding legal reasoning.

This collective cognition is further represented through Muhammadiyah's commitment to *tajdid* as an intellectual orientation rather than a doctrinal slogan. The recurrent emphasis on *ijtihad jamā'i*, openness to stronger textual evidence, and the rejection of rigid adherence to a single *madhhab* demonstrates that Muhammadiyah constructs its religious identity through methodological consistency instead of sectarian exclusivism.¹⁶ Such representations indicate that institutional authority is legitimized through scholarly reasoning and collective deliberation rather than hierarchical religious authority. As a result, *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* is presented as a methodological identity grounded in scriptural interpretation and continuous intellectual engagement with contemporary religious issues.

The social context surrounding the production of Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih Fatwas* also plays a significant role in shaping the construction of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* identity.¹⁷ Indonesia's Muslim society is characterized by diverse theological traditions, organizational affiliations, and legal interpretations, creating a pluralistic religious environment in which Islamic organizations continuously negotiate their identities. Within this context, Muhammadiyah formulates religious discourse that maintains theological commitment while recognizing the legitimacy of scholarly differences (*ikhtilāf*).¹⁸ This contextual orientation explains why the *Tarjih Fatwas* consistently employ language that emphasizes evidence-based reasoning, dialogue, and openness without abandoning doctrinal principles.

The interaction between social cognition and social context demonstrates that Muhammadiyah's religious identity is constructed through a balance between institutional consistency and social adaptability. On the one hand, the *Tarjih Fatwas* reinforce the authority of the *Qur'an*, *al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah*, and *ijtihad* as the primary foundations of Islamic legal reasoning.¹⁹ On the other hand, the discourse simultaneously accommodates social realities by encouraging tolerance

14 Muhamad Ali, "Between Faith and Social Relations: The Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama's Fatwas and Ideas on Non-Muslims and Interreligious Relations," *The Muslim World* 110, no. 4 (September 27, 2020): 458–80, <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12363>.

15 Teun A van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: Sage Publications, 1998).

16 Hasnan Bachtiar, "Dār Al-'Ahd Wa Al-Shahādah: Muhammadiyah's Position and Thoughts on Negara Pancasila," *Studia Islamika* 27, no. 3 (December 23, 2020): 485–513, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i3.11325>.

17 Arifuddin Ahmad, Abd. Bashir Fatmal, and Erwin Hafid, "The Development of Hadith Studies in Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 15, no. 2 (December 30, 2025): 227–55, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v15i2.227-255>.

18 Muhammad Qorib and Umiarso Umiarso, "Socio-Cultural Transformation within Indonesian Academics: Cases in Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Universities," *Asian Education and Development Studies*, July 1, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-12-2024-0295>.

19 Nurul Lutfiah Sultan, "Islamic Legal Approaches to Da'wah on Social Media," *Parewa Saraq: Journal of Islamic Law and Fatwa Review* 2, no. 2 (November 30, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.64016/parewasaraq.v2i2.50>.

toward legitimate differences of opinion and continuous scholarly evaluation. The principal findings of this interaction are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Social Cognition and Social Context in the Construction of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* Identity

Analytical Aspect	Main Findings	Implication for Religious Identity
Social Cognition	The <i>Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid</i> constructs religious discourse through a shared epistemological framework based on the <i>Qur'an</i> , <i>al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah</i> , and <i>ijtihad jamā'i</i> .	Religious identity is legitimized through collective reasoning rather than individual authority.
Institutional Orientation	The principles of <i>tajdid</i> , methodological openness, and evidence-based reasoning consistently guide the formulation of <i>Tarjih Fatwas</i> .	Muhammadiyah's identity is represented as reformist, methodological, and intellectually grounded.
Social Context	Indonesia's plural Muslim society encourages discourse that accommodates legitimate differences while maintaining theological commitment.	Religious identity is positioned as inclusive without compromising doctrinal principles.
Discursive Function	The language of the <i>Tarjih Fatwas</i> integrates scriptural authority with social responsibility through balanced legal argumentation.	<i>Tarjih Fatwas</i> function as both legal guidance and instruments for constructing institutional identity.
Ideological Representation	Linguistic strategies emphasize openness to scholarly revision, collective responsibility, and methodological integrity.	Muhammadiyah is represented as an adaptive Islamic movement that combines doctrinal consistency with constructive social engagement.

Source: Compiled by the author (2026)

The findings summarized in Table 2 demonstrate that the construction of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* identity extends beyond textual organization and is closely associated with Muhammadiyah's institutional ideology and the socio-religious realities of Indonesian Islam. The interaction between social cognition and social context enables Muhammadiyah to maintain doctrinal consistency while simultaneously responding to the challenges of religious diversity.²⁰ Consequently, religious identity is not represented as a rigid or exclusive theological category but as a methodological orientation that continuously negotiates the relationship between scriptural authority and contemporary social realities.

Overall, the analysis confirms that *Tarjih Fatwas* function not merely as instruments for issuing Islamic legal rulings but also as mechanisms for constructing and legitimizing Muhammadiyah's institutional identity. Through the integration of shared institutional cognition and the socio-religious realities of Indonesian Islam, the identity of *Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Sunnah* is represented as a methodological, inclusive, and intellectually grounded orientation. This finding reinforces Van

20 Sri Iswati et al., "The Role Of Muhammadiyah in the Development of Social Capital Community," in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference Postgraduate School Universitas Airlangga : "Implementation of Climate Change Agreement to Meet Sustainable Development Goals"* (ICPSUAS 2017) (Paris, France: Atlantis Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.2991/icpsuas-17.2018.13>.

Dijk's proposition that discourse is inseparable from the cognitive frameworks of its producers and the social contexts in which it is generated, thereby highlighting the strategic role of language in shaping religious identity within contemporary Islamic organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the identity of *Ahl al-Haqq wa al-Sunnah* in Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih Fatwas* is constructed through systematic discursive strategies rather than through exclusive theological claims. By employing Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, the study reveals that the construction of religious identity operates across textual structures, social cognition, and social context. At the textual level, the consistent emphasis on the *Qur'an*, *al-Sunnah al-Maqbūlah*, *ijtihad*, and *tajdid* establishes a methodological foundation for religious authority. At the cognitive level, the collective epistemology of the *Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid* shapes the institutional understanding of Islamic teachings, while the broader socio-religious context of Indonesia encourages the articulation of an identity that combines doctrinal commitment with intellectual openness. Consequently, *Tarjih Fatwas* function not only as instruments of Islamic legal guidance but also as mechanisms for constructing and legitimizing Muhammadiyah's religious identity within a plural Muslim society.

This study contributes to the literature by extending the application of Critical Discourse Analysis to Islamic legal discourse, demonstrating that *Tarjih Fatwas* can be examined not only as normative legal documents but also as discursive practices that construct institutional religious identity. The findings enrich discussions on religious identity, Islamic discourse, and organizational communication by highlighting the strategic role of language in legitimizing religious authority. Nevertheless, this study is limited to selected *Tarjih Fatwas* and focuses exclusively on textual analysis without incorporating interviews or audience reception to explore how these discourses are interpreted by Muhammadiyah members and the wider Muslim community. Future research is therefore recommended to examine a broader corpus of *Tarjih Fatwas*, compare them with the legal opinions of other Islamic organizations, and integrate qualitative field data to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of religious identity construction in contemporary Islamic discourse.

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