

MEDIA IDEOLOGY AND CONTESTED GENEALOGICAL LEGITIMACY IN TEMPO'S HABIB CONTROVERSY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Public controversies over the authenticity of religious lineages generate tensions concerning evidentiary standards and traditional authority. This study examines how genealogical legitimacy is constructed, produced, and negotiated within investigative journalism coverage. Adopting a qualitative approach guided by Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis, the study draws on investigative reports published in Tempo magazine and in-depth interviews with journalists and editors. The findings demonstrate that genealogical legitimacy does not function as an isolated source of authority but is negotiated through a nonlinear intersection of genealogical, institutional, philological, and journalistic legitimacies in response to demands for public accountability. Lineage polemics thus develop into broader contestations over epistemic authority concerning who has the power to define valid evidence and determine appropriate methods of historical verification. Investigative journalism functions as a mediating discursive arena that facilitates document comparison, critical examination, and public scrutiny. This study contributes to the understanding of religious authority as a relational phenomenon that is continuously tested, negotiated, and reconstructed through social and discursive practices.

Keywords: Genealogical legitimacy, Epistemic authority, Investigative journalism, Media mediation

INTRODUCTION

Genealogical legitimacy plays a crucial role in the formation of religious authority and the structuring of social hierarchies within Muslim communities. Social recognition of religious lineage, particularly lineage associated with the Prophet within the Ba'alawi community, through the conferral of the titles "habib" or "sayid," has historically placed its descendants in high cultural esteem. (Alatas, 2021). However, this bloodline-based authority faces challenges when genealogical claims are subjected to open scrutiny that demands historical documentation and factual verification (Setia & Dilawati, 2024). The emergence of differing opinions regarding the authenticity of historical genealogical records, as well as the surfacing of cases involving the forgery of lineage certificates by certain individuals, highlights the tension between the practice of maintaining genealogies—where access to the documents is not fully open to the public—and demands for transparency (Al-Bantani, 2022; Muntholib, 2025). In this context, the mass media serves as a discursive arena where the legitimacy of religious genealogy is debated and constructed in the public sphere.

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Academic studies on the authority of the Habaib and the Hadrami community in Indonesia have evolved through a variety of scholarly perspectives. Socio-historical studies focus on the dynamics of Hadrami diaspora migration, the transmission of knowledge, and the process of cultural assimilation in the formation of Islamic networks in the Indonesian archipelago (Azra, 2004; Birchok, 2008). From the perspective of the anthropology of religion, Alatas (2021) demonstrates that the religious authority of the Habaib operates through sustained relational work by articulating prophetic teachings, ritual practices, and the building of communal bonds (Alatas, 2021). Meanwhile, sociological studies highlight the adaptations made by Arab-descended preachers in response to the urban religious market, using symbols of piety and popular media (Rijal, 2020). In the field of media and communication studies, the reviewed literature indicates that academic attention has generally focused on the framing of specific habib figures in relation to electoral political contests, religious movements, or mass mobilization (Megi Primagara; Lisna Agustin, 2018; Saleh, 2021; Taufikurrohman et al., 2021). This body of research demonstrates that previous studies have mapped out historical aspects, the workings of religious relationships, the dynamics of symbolic commodification, and the political representation of individual figures in the public sphere.

Although previous studies have provided a rich foundation, analytical gaps remain inadequately addressed. Existing media studies tend to limit their analysis to textual examinations of individual figures and separate linguistic structures from the news production process within newsrooms. Consequently, our understanding of how investigative media institutionally construct the legitimacy of religious lineages and how journalists negotiate limited access to religious verification documents remains very limited. The absence of studies linking textual dimensions with news production practices creates an important research opportunity to understand the role of the mass media in mediating debates over religious authority. Academically, addressing this gap is relevant for enriching critical discourse analysis and studies of Islamic communication in explaining the relationship between media texts, editorial considerations, and the dynamics of symbolic power. Practically, this investigation contributes to the development of investigative journalism practices in verifying sensitive religious claims, strengthens public literacy regarding religious information, and maps the relationship between media institutions and traditional religious institutions.

Tempo Magazine's April 2024 Special Report, titled "*The 'Habib' Title Sale*," presents a specific case relevant to addressing these issues, as it features an investigative report highlighting the commercialization of genealogical identities, the verification mechanisms at the Maktab Daimi Rabithah Alawiyah genealogy registry, and the cultural relationship between religious figures and their followers (Tempo, 2024). The analytical questions that arise are: how does Tempo Magazine construct the debate over genealogical legitimacy through its choice of language; how does the editorial team implement journalistic strategies and address limitations in data access during the news production process; and how does this representation relate to the broader contestation of

religious authority? In light of these issues, this study aims to analyze the textual structure and linguistic strategies used by Tempo Magazine in constructing the controversy over the “habib” title, to examine discursive practices and editorial considerations in the production of investigative reporting, and to explain the significance of these journalistic practices in mapping religious power relations in Indonesia.

The novelty of this study lies in the analytical connection between linguistic strategies and the dynamics of discourse production in investigative reporting, explored through in-depth interviews with Tempo Magazine’s reporting journalists and editorial directors, particularly in revealing how investigative journalism negotiates various limitations on access to information verification within traditional religious institutions. The relationship between textual strategies and the production process of these reports yields scholarly insights into how Tempo Magazine frames the genealogy debate as an issue open to empirical testing, information verification, and public accountability. Theoretically, this study contributes to enriching the application of Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis in the study of Islamic communication and the sociology of religious authority. Empirically, this study provides systematic documentation of linguistic constructions and editorial considerations in Tempo Magazine’s production of investigative coverage regarding the controversy over the legitimacy of genealogical lineages. Practically, these findings offer implications for journalism practitioners in managing religious investigative reporting grounded in factual evidence without neglecting the principle of balance.

METHODS

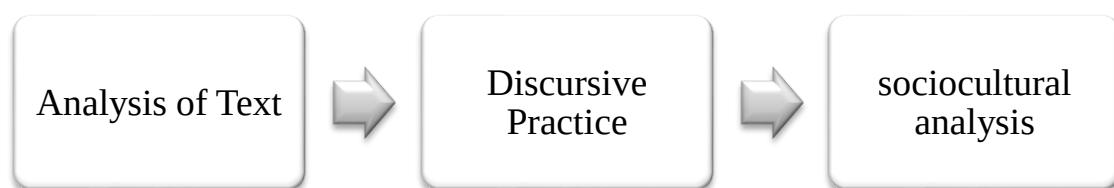
This study employs a qualitative approach using Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework (Creswell & Poth, 2017, 1995). This approach was applied to link the linguistic structure in media texts to social practices and power relations through the analysis of discursive practices. Fairclough’s framework allows researchers to comprehensively examine how news texts are produced, how linguistic choices are used to frame religious legitimacy, and how such discourse interacts with the dynamics of symbolic power in society.

The subject of this study is the Special Report in Tempo Magazine, April 7–14, 2024, titled “The Sale of ‘Habib’ Titles,” on pages 37–59 (Tempo, 2024). The textual corpus comprises ten subthemes: Praise for the Ba’alawi Clan, Seekers of Blessings from the Sayids, Records of Back-Channel Lineages, Guardians of the Prophet’s Lineage, The Chronicler of the Prophet’s Lineage, The Secret Book of the Maktab Daimi, The Search for the Lineage of the Saints, The Debate Over the Ahl al-Bayt Lineage, The Alawiyah Association Is Not an Exclusive Organization, and The Hadrami in Search of Nationalism. Primary data sources consist of textual data from the ten feature articles and in-depth interview data with two key informants directly involved in producing the coverage: Yosea Arga, the journalist who wrote the scripts, and Riky Ferdianto, the managing editor and leader of the special coverage project. Secondary data sources

include historical genealogical documents, treatises on lineage debates, and relevant academic literature to support the analysis.

Text data collection was conducted using documentation techniques by compiling and thoroughly reading all the special report scripts. Interview data were collected through in-depth interviews focused on editorial considerations, fact-finding strategies, interactions with sources, and challenges in verifying data in the field. Interview recordings were transcribed for analysis purposes. Data analysis was conducted through the three dimensions of Fairclough's model. In the textual dimension, the analysis covered lexical choices, modality, the transitivity structure of active and passive sentences, metaphors, and intertextual relations. In the dimension of discursive practice, the interview data were used to trace the processes of text production, editorial considerations, source selection, journalistic strategies, verification, and how journalists addressed limitations in access to primary genealogical documents. In the social practice dimension, the results of the text analysis and production practices are linked to power relations, genealogical legitimacy, and the contestation of religious authority in Indonesia. The stages of critical discourse analysis in this study are presented visually in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Stages of Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis



Data integration was conducted by linking findings on text structure to the results of the examination of discourse production practices, thereby providing a contextual explanation for the language choices in the coverage, grounded in underlying journalistic considerations. The credibility of the analysis was ensured through cross-checking among the coverage text data, journalists' and editors' accounts, and relevant external documents. The researcher also conducted repeated readings of the data to ensure consistency in the interpretation of meaning. Research ethics were upheld through obtaining informants' consent to the recording of interviews, the use of information for scientific publication, and the inclusion of informants' professional identities in the research manuscript.

RESULTS

Tempo Magazine's Special Report, April 7–14, 2024, featured a major investigative report titled “*The Habib Title Sale*,” spanning pages 37 to 59. The research corpus comprises ten subthemes that present various aspects of the controversy over the legitimacy of religious genealogies. The coverage begins with a report on social dynamics within santri communities and majelis taklim, followed by an investigation into cases of genealogy certificate forgery by unofficial parties, the history and mechanisms of lineage

registration at genealogy-recording institutions, debates over classical philological texts, institutional rights of reply, and a historical review of the integration of Arab-descended communities within the national historical narrative. The cover of this special edition features an illustration of a figure dressed in a white robe and turban, paired with a large yellow-and-white headline text on a dark background. The stages of documentation for the research subject are presented visually in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Cover of *Tempo Magazine's* Special Report Issue on the “Habib” Title Scandal



An empirical analysis of the article's ten subthemes reveals the range of factual data and the variety of information sources compiled in the investigative report. The first subtheme, “*The Worship and Praise of the Ba’alawi Clan*,” describes the social reverence shown toward the figure of the habib in religious gatherings, such as the tradition of mutually kissing hands, the provision of special seats in the front row, and the provision of escorts and transportation by the congregation. The second subtheme, “*Seekers of Blessings from the Sayids*,” contains data on pilgrimage activities to the graves of prominent habib figures in various regions, the practice of seeking blessings or *tabarruk* by pilgrims, accounts of the miraculous powers of the figures being visited, as well as the economic transactions of souvenir vendors and sellers of prayer books around the cemetery complex. The third subtheme, “*Recorders of Backdoor Lineages*,” details a legal case involving the forgery of genealogical documents by Janes Meliawan Wibowo in the Kalideres area, who fraudulently used the name of the Rabithah Alawiyah institution, created a fake website, and charged fees for issuing lineage documents.

The series of articles continues with a discussion of genealogy-recording institutions and the tracing of historical documents. The fourth subtheme, “*Guardians of the Prophet’s Lineage*,” presents historical data on the establishment of Maktab Daimi as an autonomous institution under Rabithah Alawiyah tasked with recording and publishing genealogy books of the Ba’alawi lineage in Indonesia since 1928. The fifth subtheme, “*Recorders of the Prophet’s Lineage*,” describes the stages of verifying genealogy

application files by naqib officials through examining the applicant's family genealogy books, cross-referencing data with the master genealogy register, tracing family witnesses, and administrative approval procedures. The sixth subtheme, "*The Secret Book of the Maktab Daimi*," presents a report by a team of journalists as they traced genealogical reference manuscripts at the Maktab Daimi office and notes that the journalists received verbal explanations without examining the physical pages of the ancient master reference manuscripts or taking photographs of the book.

Data regarding philological debates over manuscripts and historical aspects are presented in the next four subtopics. The seventh subtheme, "*Tracing the Lineage of the Saints*," documents the genealogies of descendants of local sultanates in Java and Sumatra, the existence of the Naqobah Ansab Auliya Tis'ah organization, and the methods used to trace the lineage of the saints who spread Islam throughout the Indonesian archipelago. The eighth subtheme, "*The Debate on the Lineage of the Ahl al-Bayt*," details the written debate between KH Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani's research treatise—which discusses the absence of any mention of the figure Ubaidillah in contemporary manuscripts from the fourth to the ninth Hijri centuries—and the response book compiled by Habib Hanif Alatas, which presents arguments defending the continuity of the lineage. The ninth subtheme, "*Rabithah Alawiyah Is Not an Exclusive Organization*," features a clarifying interview with Rabithah Alawiyah officials, conducted through the Head of the Legal Department, Ahmad Ramzy Ba'abud, regarding the legal basis for reporting cases of certificate forgery and the organization's structure. The tenth subtheme, "*Hadrami in Search of Nationalism*," presents historical data on the role of the Indonesian Arab Union, led by A.R. Baswedan in 1934, the categorization of population groups during the Dutch colonial period, and figures of Hadrami descent in government institutions and the national political arena.

Textual findings regarding linguistic aspects reveal the use of specific word choices in describing the parties involved in the document forgery case. In the subtheme "*Back-Channel Genealogy Recorders*," the text contains the terms "*claim*," "*plagiarize*," "*steal*," "*fake website*," and "*back channel*." The word "*claim*" appears in the phrase "the man who claimed to be a habib." The phrase "*back channels*" appears in the title and body text when the text discusses obtaining certificates without going through official organizational procedures. The words "*plagiarize*" and "*steal*" are used when the text describes the inclusion of official institutional names and organizational logos on websites created by the perpetrators.

In terms of sentence structure, several clauses position the perpetrator of document forgery as the active subject. This form is evident in the sentences "Janes claimed to be a Habib of the Assegaf clan" and "Janes sold the certificate for millions of rupiah to applicants." In other constructions, Rabithah Alawiyah appears in the passive voice, as in the sentence "the perpetrator was reported by Rabithah Alawiyah officials," while certificate applicants appear in the sentence "no applicant has come forward as a victim of fraud." In terms of modality and adverbial markers, the text includes the words

“admitted” and “allegedly” in sections that discuss the identities and actions of specific actors. The text also includes the particle “even” in the sentence “the perpetrator even managed a religious study group chat on a smartphone” that had dozens of members.

In terms of intertextuality, the news report presents direct quotes from several sources. The text includes a statement by Ahmad Ramzy Ba’abud of Rabithah Alawiyah regarding the process of determining “sayid” status through document verification. This statement is placed alongside a quote from a treatise by KH Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, which details the results of research into classical genealogical manuscripts, as well as RMAIL Abbas’s views on the cultural relationship between the habaib and the santri community within the pesantren environment.

A summary of the textual findings—including lexical choices, modality, transitivity, metaphors, and intertextuality in the news coverage corpus—is presented in Table 1.

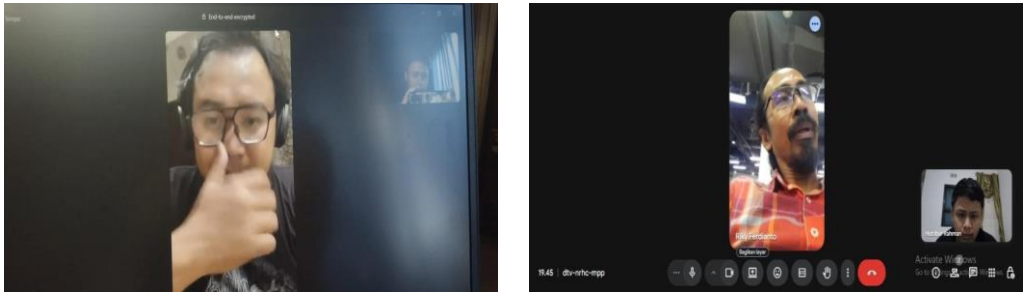
Table 1. Summary of Textual Findings in the Special Report *on the “Habib” Title Sale*

Analysis Aspects	Key Evidence	Location or Subtheme	Empirical Findings
Lexical Choices	The words “admit,” “plagiarize,” “steal,” “fake websites,” and “back channels”	<i>Backdoor Genealogy Recorders</i>	These words and phrases appear in the section discussing identity status and the process of issuing genealogical documents.
Modality	The word “claims” in the phrase “the man who claims to be a habib” and the word “alleged”	<i>Backdoor Genealogy Recorders</i>	Both forms appear in the section discussing the identity status and actions of certain actors.
Transitivity	The clauses “Janes, admitted” and “Janes sold,” as well as the passive form in “the perpetrator was reported by the Rabithah Alawiyah administration”	<i>’s Lineage Recorder (Back Line)</i>	Janes appears as the subject in several active clauses, while Rabithah Alawiyah appears in passive constructions in certain clauses
Metaphors	The phrase “back channel” and the headline “Title Sale”	<i>“Back-Channel Genealogy Registrar”</i> and the headline	Both expressions appear in headlines or sections of the content that discuss the process and practice of publishing genealogical documents

Intertextuality	Quotes from Ahmad Ramzy Ba'abud, KH Imaduddin Utsman al Bantani, and Rumail Abbas	<i>Comparison of the Ahlul Bait Lineage and Rabithah Alawiyah: Not an Exclusive Organization</i>	The text contains direct quotes from genealogy administrators, authors of manuscript study papers, and social observers.
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Table 1 summarizes the patterns of textual data identified in the special coverage corpus, including the use of specific lexical items, active and passive clause forms, figurative expressions, and quotations from various sources. The stages of documenting the interview data collection process through in-depth interviews with the reporting journalists are presented visually in Figure 3

Figure 3. Documentation of the Interview with a *Tempo* Magazine Journalist



Data from an in-depth interview with Yosea Arga, the journalist who wrote the Special Report “*Obral Gelar Habib*,” contains details regarding the stages of field reporting. Yosea Arga explained that the proposal for the report emerged following a heated debate over genealogy on social media, which was subsequently followed by the police arresting a suspect accused of forging lineage certificates in Kalideres. The process of gathering news material involved examining police reports, interviewing applicants for genealogy certificates, visiting the Rabithah Alawiyah headquarters in South Jakarta, and consulting scholars of classical Islamic history.

While gathering news material at the Maktab Daimi office, Yosea Arga stated that the institution’s administrators explained the administrative procedures for record-keeping; however, the journalist did not directly view the physical pages of the ancient master reference manuscripts or photograph the genealogy books stored in a special room. Yosea Arga also noted that his position as a non-Muslim journalist prompted him to conduct independent research into historical Islamic literature from the Indonesian archipelago to understand Arabic genealogical terminology and to present it in journalistic language accessible to the general public.

Information regarding the news production process was obtained through an in-depth interview with Riky Ferdianto, the managing editor and project leader of the Special Report on the “*Habib Title Sale*.” Riky Ferdianto explained that the editorial team adopted a comprehensive, “*helicopter view*” approach to the coverage, dividing the

report into several complementary angles, including a philological analysis of the texts, the legal case involving forged certificates, the social dynamics surrounding the veneration of “habib” in the community, and the history of the integration of people of Hadrami descent in Indonesia.

Riky Ferdianto explained that during the coverage planning meeting, the editorial team decided to verify information from various sources, including by inviting Rabithah Alawiyah officials and the genealogy manuscript review group to confirm the details. Regarding the limited access to physically examine reference books at Maktab Daimi, the editorial team noted this restriction in the report as a finding from field reporting. Regarding public reaction after the special issue was published, Riky Ferdianto stated that the editorial team of *Tempo* Magazine positioned itself as a presenter of data from the reporting and did not take sides in disputes among various groups in society.

A summary of the empirical findings obtained from interviews with the reporting journalists and the managing editor is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Interview Results with *Tempo* Magazine Journalists and Editors

Informant	Focus of Information	Key Empirical Findings	Interview Evidence
Yosea Arga	Background of the Report	The coverage began with a discussion about lineage on social media and the revelation of a case involving the forgery of genealogy certificates in Kalideres.	Review of police reports and interviews with applicants for lineage certificates
Yosea Arga	Field Investigation	Limited access to physically examine the original genealogy reference manuscripts when the journalist visited the Maktab Daimi office	Verbal statements from the institution’s administrators without direct physical examination of the ancient manuscript pages
Yosea Arga	Manuscript Processing	Research into historical literature on Islamic genealogy by a non-Muslim journalist to develop a narrative for the report	Translating technical genealogical terms into easily understandable journalistic language
Riky Ferdianto	Reporting Planning	Using a comprehensive or “ <i>helicopter view</i> ” approach to report from various perspectives	Dividing the coverage into the philological, legal, sociological, and historical aspects of the Hadrami community
Riky Ferdianto	Verification Procedures	Confirmation from genealogy administrators, manuscript reviewers, and other relevant parties	Inclusion of Rabithah Alawiyah’s right of reply alongside the views of other sources
Riky Ferdianto	Editorial Position	Statement regarding the editorial stance in presenting the	An informant’s explanation regarding the

		facts of the investigation to the public	media's limited role in presenting news data without getting involved in disputes between parties
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Table 2 summarizes direct statements from the reporting journalist and the managing editor regarding the background of the coverage, the on-the-ground verification of evidence, the process of examining reference documents, the distribution of perspectives in the article, and the editorial guidelines followed during the publication of the investigative report.

Overall, this research data includes findings regarding the content of ten subthemes in the news coverage, lexical patterns and sentence structures in the special coverage corpus, the process of fact-checking and document verification by journalists, the circumstances surrounding physical access to examine primary genealogical reference texts in the field, as well as editorial considerations regarding the distribution of perspectives in the report—all gathered through in-depth interviews with journalists and the managing editor. All of this data serves as the empirical basis for the critical discourse analysis in the Discussion section.

DISCUSSION

Textual Dimension Analysis: Linguistic Construction and Genealogical Legitimation

The choice of vocabulary and sentence structure presented by Tempo Magazine in the ten subthemes of its coverage of the “Habib Title Sale” serves as a fundamental entry point for tracing how claims of religious authority based on genealogy are constructed in the text. Based on Norman Fairclough’s framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, the analysis of the text dimension examines how language represents social experience, shapes relationships among actors, and constructs identity. (1995) In the investigative news reports, language is not merely used to chronicle the sequence of events surrounding the publication of genealogical documents; rather, it employs linguistic mechanisms that place claims of prophetic lineage within a framework of factual scrutiny. Lexical choices, the attribution of claims, the structuring of agency within clauses, the use of metaphors, and the inclusion of various textual references complement one another in constructing the genealogy issue as open to documentary verification and rational consideration.

The choice of words used in the subtheme “Recording of Ancestry Through the Maternal Line” initiates the establishment of a moral classification regarding the act of publishing unofficial genealogical documents. The use of the terms “misappropriating” and “plagiarizing” serves to categorize such actions not merely as administrative errors but as violations of legal propriety and institutional ethics. The term “mencatut” carries a negative connotation that underscores the unauthorized use of the Rabithah Alawiyah

organization's official name for economic gain. In contrast, the term “mencomot” highlights the unilateral appropriation of religious clan identities outside the recognized genealogical framework. This assessment is reinforced by the reference to the digital platform created by the perpetrator, described as a “fake website,” which directly casts doubt on the credibility of the platform used to publish the document. From a critical linguistic perspective, the arrangement of such evaluative lexicon serves to establish a clear distinction between institutions holding official mandates and the actions of individuals who misuse religious symbols (Fowler, 2013; Richardson, 2007).

The labeling through this vocabulary is closely tied to how the text limits the space of legitimacy for the forger. According to Fairclough, word choice in news discourse serves to embed value judgments without stating them explicitly as an editorial opinion (Fairclough, 1995). By attaching terms with connotations of fraud to Jane Meliawan's actions, the report positions religious titles not merely as inherently sacred statuses but as symbolic identities vulnerable to abuse for material gain. This finding expands upon Rijal's study on the commodification of symbols of piety in the public sphere (Rijal, 2020). While Rijal's study focuses on the articulation of Arabic symbols within the dynamics of the urban da'wah market, the Tempo text corpus demonstrates how investigative media use criminalistic vocabulary to dissect the commercialization of genealogical identities that occur outside the oversight of official institutions.

The framing of the degree of certainty regarding the religious status of the reported actor logically follows the characterization of actions through this lexical choice. The use of the verb “admit” in the phrase “the man who admitted to being a habib” attributes the status of “habib” solely to the reported actor's unilateral statement. At the same time, the sentence structure deliberately withholds editorial affirmation of that status as a verified fact. This epistemic distance is further emphasized by the inclusion of the adverb “allegedly” in the section describing the alleged legal violations. Within Fairclough's framework, the separation between the subject's statements and the text's assertions, along with the use of markers that limit certainty, serves to condition the speaker's degree of commitment to the propositions being conveyed. Through these strategies of attribution and certainty qualification, the news report directs readers to treat the lineage claim as a statement that requires documentary evidence before it can be accepted as factual truth (Fairclough, 1995).

This arrangement of attribution and certainty qualification has implications for the structuring of epistemic authority within the text. By withholding direct acknowledgment of the attribution of religious titles to the actors in question, the news coverage discursively distinguishes between unilateral identity claims and genealogical status that has been validly verified. This analysis reinforces Alatas's concept of relational religious authority, which underscores that the legitimacy of habaib figures depends heavily on the community's acceptance of historical ties and recognition of a verified lineage (Alatas, 2021). When media texts apply a distanced attribution to a figure facing legal issues, the media positions genealogical authority not as a dogmatic entity immune to questioning,

but as a claim that remains open to scrutiny regarding its validity based on verifiable supporting documents.

The framing of these identity claims is structurally reinforced by the division of roles in clause construction. In the subtheme “Recorders of Backline Lineage,” a transitivity analysis reveals the positioning of Janes Meliawan as the primary actor in active material and verbal processes, as seen in the clauses “Janes claimed to be a habib of the Assegaf clan” and “Janes sold the certificate for millions of rupiah to applicants.” Conversely, the genealogy-recording institution is positioned in a passive construction that performs legal actions, as seen in the sentence “the Rabithah Alawiyah administrators reported the perpetrator.” Meanwhile, the news coverage text notes the applicants' position through an active-clause construction with negation in the sentence “no applicant reported themselves as a victim of fraud.” This syntactic arrangement, drawing on the principles of transitivity outlined by Halliday and Matthiessen and Fairclough, places specific emphasis on the agency of the fraudulent act by the forger, while positioning the official organization as the party taking administrative enforcement measures through formal legal channels (Fairclough, 1995; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

This division of agency simultaneously illustrates how the parties' positions in the incident are presented to the reader. By positioning the forger as the active subject and noting the absence of reports from the applicants, the news coverage highlights that no legal complaints were filed by the recipients of the certificates, without drawing one-sided conclusions about their personal motives. This finding complements communication studies on the representation of religious figures in the mass media, which show that investigative journalism utilizes transitivity structures to highlight the actions of offenders without neglecting the institutional role of official bodies, while keeping public attention focused on the social interaction processes surrounding the document application (Megi Primagara; Lisna Agustin, 2018; Taufikurrohman et al., 2021).

The attribution of responsibility for these individual actions is then expanded in meaning through a shift in the domain of metaphorical concepts. Two prominent metaphors in the coverage corpus are the phrase “back channels” in the subtheme “Back-Channel Genealogy Recorders” and the headline “Title Sale” in the special report. According to Fairclough, metaphors are cognitive and discursive tools that transfer meaning schemes from one domain of experience to another, thereby structuring readers' understanding (Fairclough, 1995). The phrase “back channel” borrows from the spatial domain—referring to informal routes or emergency exits—to describe the process of obtaining genealogical certificates that deviate from official institutional procedures. This metaphor directly evokes associations with the illegitimacy of the procedures and the lack of administrative transparency.

In line with this spatial metaphor, the headline “degree clearance sale” transfers the domain of market transactions into the realm of religious spiritual status. The word “clearance sale” conceptually refers to the mass sale of goods at discounted prices to clear

inventory; when applied to the title “habib,” it creates a stark clash of meanings between the honor of the prophetic lineage and the potential devaluation of status that can result from commercialization. This choice of economic metaphor is closely linked to the phenomenon of symbolic commercialization identified by Rijal and by Setia and Dilawati (Rijal, 2020; Setia & Dilawati, 2024). Through the metaphors of “back channels” and “title sales,” Tempo’s coverage frames the acquisition of unofficial documents as a deviant process while simultaneously placing these religious titles within a framework of devaluation resulting from the uncontrolled circulation of identity claims.

The representation of actions, the attribution of claims, and the shift in the value of religious status are ultimately structured within an intertextual framework that brings together various discursive sources. In the subtheme “The Clash of Texts: The Ahlul Bait Lineage and Rabithah Alawiyah Are Not Exclusive Organizations,” the text employs a manifest intertextual structure by presenting direct quotes from parties with different institutional, methodological, and social backgrounds. The text presents a statement by Ahmad Ramzy Ba’abud, Chair of the Rabithah Alawiyah’s Legal Department, regarding the strict procedures for verifying genealogical manuscripts. This institutional statement is juxtaposed with the content of a philological treatise by KH Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, which examines classical historical manuscripts, as well as the sociological perspective of RMAIL Abbas on the dynamics of cultural relations between the habaib and the santri community within the pesantren environment.

The inclusion of diverse voices within a single news space broadens the spectrum of perspectives available to readers regarding the genealogical controversy. Within Fairclough’s framework, manifest intertextuality—which incorporates various cited sources—enables comparisons between positions of authority within the text (Fairclough, 1995). The institutional position of Rabithah Alawiyah regarding the documentation and verification of genealogies is not presented as the sole, definitive reference but is juxtaposed with philological critiques of manuscripts and independent sociological analyses. This demonstrates that the Tempo report represents the genealogical debate not as an internal matter of belief immune to scrutiny, but as a public discourse open to the comparison of historical data and scholarly considerations (Setia & Dilawati, 2024).

Table 3. Synthesis of Textual Dimension Analysis in the Special Report on the “Habib” Title Sale

Textual Evidence	Linguistic Category	Interpretation	Implications for Legitimacy or Authority
Words such as “admit,” “plagiarize,” “steal,” “fake website,” and “back channels”	Lexical Choices	Use of evaluative vocabulary to characterize the manipulation of genealogical docu-	Establishing a clear distinction between official institutional mandates and individual actions that exploit religious symbols

		ments as a legal violation	
The verb “admit” in the clause “the man who claimed to be a habib,” and the adverb “allegedly”	Modality and Attribution	Attribution of status claims to the actor’s statements and the limitation of the degree of certainty regarding propositions.	Treating lineage claims as unilateral propositions that require documentary evidence before their truth can be acknowledged
Active clauses: “Janes admitted” and “Janes sold”; passive constructions: “reported by Rabithah officials”; and the negation: “no applicant reported”	Syntactic Transitivity	Focusing agency of active action on the forger, positioning the institution as the reporter, and documenting the applicant’s position	Emphasizing the forger’s agency in the offense and positioning official organizations in a law enforcement role
The phrase “back channels” and headlines about the “diploma sale”	Conceptual Metaphors	The transfer of the spatial domain of deviance and the domain of market transactions into the realm of religious titles	Identifying the acquisition of unofficial documents as a deviant process and associating titles with a loss of value due to commercialization
Juxtaposition of quotations from Ahmad Ramzy Ba’abud, KH Imaduddin Utsman al Bantani, and Rumail Abbas	Intertextuality	Integrating institutional legal quotations, philological studies of classical texts, and sociological perspectives on pesantren	Expanding the spectrum of perspectives and framing the genealogical debate as a discourse open to public exchange of arguments

A series of textual analyses reveals that the linguistic structures in *Tempo Magazine’s* Special Report are interlinked in shaping representations of the genealogical controversy. The choice of evaluative vocabulary and the attribution of distanced claims establish the boundaries of the validity of identity statements; the arrangement of transitivity centers accountability on the offending individual; metaphors of commercialization shift perceptions of the value of titles; and intertextuality opens space for comparison between arguments. These linguistic patterns demonstrate that the issue of genealogical legitimacy in the corpus is presented not only through factual information about genealogy but also through the positioning of claims, actors, actions, and sources

of knowledge within the text. To understand how these patterns of textual representation are formed, further analysis needs to explore the dimensions of discursive practices, including the dynamics of journalistic work, editorial considerations, the selection of sources, and the reporting team's approach to the limitations of access to verification data in the field.

Analysis of Discursive Practices: News Production and Verification Negotiations

The linguistic choices found in the textual dimension—such as the attribution of claims, the structuring of transitivity, and the presence of various types of references—become more fully understood when traced through the news production process within the newsroom. Drawing on Norman Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, the dimension of discursive practices examines the sociological stages encompassing the production, distribution, and reception of texts. In the context of the Special Report on the "Habib Title Sale," in-depth interview data with reporter Yosea Arga and managing editor Riky Ferdianto provide a contextual foundation for how issues of religious lineage were identified, formulated into an investigative reporting project, and produced through a series of field data-gathering processes. This examination of discursive practices helps explain how journalistic considerations underpin the patterns of linguistic representation analyzed in the previous textual dimension.

The selection of the reporting topic is closely tied to the growing discourse on the validity of religious genealogy on social media, which subsequently gained empirical grounding through legal developments on the ground. As explained by Yosea Arga, the idea for this special report originated from the heated debate over lineage in the digital sphere, which was intertwined with the revelation of a case in which police officers forged lineage certificates in the Kalideres area. According to Yosea Arga, the arrest of suspect Janes Meliawan served as one of the starting points for the investigation, directing the coverage toward the broader issue of lineage. The transformation of a legal incident into an in-depth investigative report demonstrates how the media selects factual events as entry points to examine the circulation of religious documents and symbols in the public sphere (Fairclough, 1995). This production context helps explain why the news text positions the Kalideres case as a key focal point in analyzing the circulation of genealogical documents.

Coverage planning that links individual cases to broader socio-religious issues is achieved through a well-defined editorial strategy. Riky Ferdianto explains that the editorial team employs a comprehensive coverage approach—or "helicopter view"—to map out genealogy-related issues from various interconnected dimensions. The editorial team divided the coverage into several perspectives, ranging from philological analysis of classical manuscripts and the enforcement of laws against document forgery to the dynamics of respect for religious figures within the community and historical accounts of the integration of the Hadrami Arab community into national social and political life. Dividing the coverage into these various aspects allowed the genealogy issue to be

mapped through a broad scope. Within the framework of Fairclough's discursive practices, the organization of these coverage themes can be understood as part of an institutional process in text production that enables connections between the ten subthemes within the corpus (Fairclough, 1995).

This comprehensive editorial planning provides context for the mechanisms of source selection and the inclusion of various references in news texts. During coverage planning meetings, the editorial team established guidelines for fact-checking by gathering information from various parties representing different institutional, methodological, and social positions. This step was carried out by providing an opportunity for confirmation and the right of reply to the Rabithah Alawiyah genealogy-recording institution, examining philological study manuscripts by scholars such as KH Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, and interviewing independent observers from the Nahdlatul Ulama community, such as Rumail Abbas (Al-Bantani, 2022). The collection of diverse sources is a journalistic practice aimed at broadening the range of information and strengthening the evidentiary basis for reports on issues of public concern (Fairclough, 1995). This source selection process serves as the contextual foundation for intertextuality in the report, in which institutional perspectives are juxtaposed with the results of manuscript analysis and sociological examination.

During the investigative fieldwork, the data verification process unfolded in its own way as the journalism team examined primary genealogical documents. Yosea Arga explains that when visiting the Maktab Daimi Rabithah Alawiyah office in South Jakarta, the institution's administrators provided an oral explanation of the record-keeping procedures; however, the journalist did not directly view the physical pages of the ancient primary genealogical manuscript or take photographs of the genealogical text. Limited access to primary reference documents is one of the field challenges journalists face, requiring reporters to rely on verbal statements from administrators, reviews of legal case files, interviews with relevant parties, and factual documentation of reporting conditions (Muntholib, 2025).

The editorial team addressed the limited access to physical examination of these primary reference manuscripts by documenting the reporting situation as a field finding and presenting it to the public. As explained by Riky Ferdianto, the editorial team published a report on the investigation at the Maktab Daimi office under the subtheme "The Secret Book of Maktab Daimi," based on the journalist's firsthand experience during the reporting process. The editorial decision to document these limitations on access to documents reflects how journalism transparently manages constraints on field data. It is precisely this limited access to physically verify the source documents that provides the contextual foundation for understanding the findings in the preceding text, particularly regarding the use of attribution verbs for claims and the limitations on epistemic certainty when the text presents information that journalists in the field have not yet been able to physically verify.

The production process for this report also involved processing and translating complex religious material into a journalistic presentation accessible to the general public. Yosea Arga explains that research into the historical references of Islam in the Nusantara and Arabic genealogical terms was conducted to accurately understand the context of the issue so that it could be incorporated into a news narrative easily understood by a broad readership. The transformation of discourse from the technical realm of religion into popular news language is an important part of discursive practice that connects specialized knowledge with the public sphere (Fairclough, 1995). This journalistic practice of processing information provides context for how the text translates the technical concepts of genealogy and the circulation of lineage documents into a narrative accessible to a broad audience.

Regarding public response following the publication of the special report, *Tempo Magazine*'s editorial considerations were grounded in affirming the media institution's independence. Riky Ferdianto stated that the editorial team limited its journalistic responsibility to presenting the factual findings of an investigation that had undergone verification and did not take a stance on disputes between parties unfolding in society. This account illustrates how the editorial team positions its journalistic function in presenting the results of its coverage to the public. The process of presenting the text focuses on providing factual information to the public sphere, while further evaluation and discourse fall within the realm of public response and the dynamics of ongoing socio-religious debates.

A summary of the analysis that synthesizes the dimensions of discursive practices—including topic selection, planning coverage angles, source selection, data verification, and manuscript editing—is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Synthesis of the Analysis of Discursive Practices in the Production of Coverage on the “Habib” Title Sale

Interview Evidence	Production Practices	Negotiated Issues	Relationship to Text Construction
An Investigation into the Certificate Forgery Case in Kalideres and Discussions of Genealogy on Social Media	Establishing topics and identifying legal events as entry points for coverage	Linking individual legal violations to a broader social context	Providing a contextual framework for the presence of the forger as a central focus of the event in the text
Planning a comprehensive coverage perspective or “helicopter view” -during planning meetings	Categorizing coverage themes into philological, legal, sociological, and historical aspects	Mapping genealogical issues through the diversity of discussion dimensions	Related to the formation of a configuration of ten complementary coverage subthemes

Providing an opportunity for Rabi-tah Alawiyah, manuscript reviewers, and academics to confirm their views	Selection of sources and implementation of procedures to ensure balanced information	Gathering diverse perspectives from institutional representatives, manuscript researchers, and observers	Providing the contextual background for the presence of various voices in the text
Limitations on permission for physical examination and photographic documentation of reference manuscripts at Maktab Daimi	Verification of primary documents and recording of facts gathered in the field	Addressing limitations on document access by prioritizing data from reporting experiences	Helping to explain the use of attribution claims and the limitations of epistemic certainty
Conducting historical and genealogical literature reviews to construct a narrative that is accessible to readers	Translating technical religious knowledge into accessible journalistic language	Simplifying technical genealogical terms so the general public can understand them	Providing context for translating genealogical concepts into journalistic narrative language
Affirming editorial independence by limiting the role to the presentation of facts resulting from reporting	Determining the media outlet's institutional stance after the investigative report is published	Separating the media's role in presenting information from its involvement in social conflicts	Providing context for the editorial stance in presenting the results of the investigation to the public

Overall, an analysis of the discursive practice dimension reveals that the “Special Report: The Habib Title Sale” text was produced through a journalistic process involving comprehensive editorial planning, the selection of sources from various perspectives, and the management of limited access to verification documents in the field. Various considerations that took place in the newsroom—ranging from determining the angle of coverage to handling technical genealogical terms—provide a contextual explanation of how the text's linguistic structure was formed. However, these production practices take place within a broader social and institutional environment. Therefore, the relationship between media production processes and religious authority must be situated within the context of social practices, which will be the focus of the following discussion.

Analysis of Social Practices: Religious Authority, Power Relations, and the Contestation of Genealogical Legitimacy

The connection between the linguistic structure of the text and the dynamics of investigative reporting production takes on deeper analytical significance when situated within the social practices that surround it. Drawing on Norman Fairclough's framework

of Critical Discourse Analysis, the dimension of social practice examines how discursive events interact with broader social structures, ideological formations, and power relations (Fairclough, 1995). In the context of the “Habib Title Sale” Special Report, investigative media coverage does not merely reflect legal events and editorial routines but also serves as a mediating arena where various bases of legitimacy interact within Indonesia's Islamic socio-religious landscape. These discursive events bring together claims of genealogical legitimacy with various bases of institutional, philological, and journalistic legitimacy, as well as demands for public accountability regarding the transparency of evidence and the verification of documents.

Recognition of the Ba'alawi community's religious authority within the social space represented by media coverage does not operate mechanically based solely on the possession of genealogical documents, but is built through the sustained maintenance of social relationships. As explained by Alatas, the religious authority of the habaib is a form of relational work that connects the articulation of prophetic teachings and ritual practices to the formation of communal bonds (Alatas, 2021). Empirical findings on the subthemes “The Ba'alawi Clan's Praise and Worship” and “The Sayids' Seekers of Blessings” demonstrate how this cultural recognition is sustained through traditions of social reverence, requests for blessings (*tabarruk*), and the special social status accorded to habib figures within the santri community and majelis taklim. These social practices demonstrate that lineage-based symbolic capital is rooted in traditional religious cultural structures as a form of religious reverence passed down through generations (Azra, 2004).

However, symbolic capital based on claims of genealogical continuity faces vulnerabilities when religious symbols enter the realm of social and economic circulation. In line with Rijal's analysis of the commodification of symbols of piety, religious identity can intersect with motives of material gain when the prestige of social status is bought and sold outside official governance (Rijal, 2020). The subtheme “Back-Channel Lineage Registrars” and the headline “Habib Title Sale” reflect a phenomenon in which unofficial actors exploit genealogical symbols to issue paid lineage documents. The reported cases demonstrate how the symbolic appeal of lineage is exploited in specific economic exchanges, which in turn draws public attention to the validity of the documents and the institutional oversight mechanisms of lineage registrars (Setia & Dilawati, 2024).

Social acceptance of the cultural status of religious figures within traditional social spaces can be understood through the perspective of hegemony (Fairclough, 1995; Gramsci, 1971). From a hegemonic perspective, symbolic power operates by forming a cultural consensus that establishes a particular social order as a widely respected norm. In the context highlighted by the corpus of news coverage, the reproduction of symbolic authority is maintained through the normalization of ritual reverence, communal recognition of the primacy of lineage, and the role of institutions that safeguard genealogy. *Tempo Magazine's* coverage serves as a discursive event that opens space to question this symbolic status quo by bringing to light the issue of certificate forgery, limited access to physical verification of reference documents, and philological

disagreements before a broad audience. By presenting data from investigative reporting, the mass media facilitated a discursive negotiation regarding forms of legitimacy that had previously been firmly accepted within the religious-social sphere.

This discursive intervention reflects the encounter and contestation between various competing regimes of legitimacy in the public sphere. This contestation cannot be reduced to a binary opposition between tradition and modernity, given that institutions such as Rabithah Alawiyah, through its Maktab Daimi, also maintain systematic procedures for document verification, master registry maintenance, and tracing family witnesses. What emerges in the coverage discourse is the intersection of several bases of legitimacy: institutional genealogical legitimacy grounded in the continuity of internal record-keeping traditions; critical philological legitimacy championed by manuscript scholars such as KH Imaduddin Utsman al-Bantani, who emphasize the continuity of contemporary classical historical manuscripts; and journalistic legitimacy, which prioritizes factual verification and public information transparency (Muntholib, 2025). The subtheme “The Debate Over the Genealogies of the Ahl al-Bayt and the Rabithah Alawiyah: Not an Exclusive Organization” illustrates how the validity of genealogies is no longer merely an internal discourse among those holding genealogical authority but is debated through methodological evidence and the openness of historical data.

The debate over these genealogical manuscripts essentially concerns epistemic power relations in determining standards of truth. The central question is not merely the validity of a lineage, but rather which party has the authority to set standards for valid evidence, what methods are used to verify that validity, and to what extent reference documents are open to external scrutiny. The position of Maktab Daimi, which manages internal reference archives, is pitted against demands for transparency raised by critical manuscript scholars and journalists covering the story. This tension reveals the dynamics that arise when an institution with authority over the management of genealogical knowledge faces demands for scholarly accountability and open scrutiny of evidence in the public sphere.

Within this dynamic, Tempo Magazine positions itself as a mediating forum that brings together various parties with differing viewpoints into a single space for discourse. The mass media does not act as the arbiter of a genealogy’s doctrinal validity but rather functions as an institution that translates genealogical debates—originally confined to Islamic boarding schools and genealogy scholars—into issues of transparency and accountability accessible to the general public (Fairclough, 1995). By juxtaposing the official clarification from the Rabithah Alawiyah leadership, philological critiques of the manuscripts, and independent sociological analyses, the investigative coverage provides a space for the public to compare the various arguments at play. This demonstrates the media’s role as a space for articulation that mediates encounters among genealogical traditions, historical knowledge, and demands for accountability in the public sphere.

The contestation over the legitimacy of this genealogy takes on deeper significance when linked to the historical context of the integration of the Hadrami Arab community into Indonesia. As outlined in the subtheme “Hadrami in Search of Nationalism” and supported by the historical analyses of Azra and Ho, the Hadrami community has traversed a long historical trajectory encompassing cultural assimilation, the transmission of Islamic scholarship, the formation of national consciousness through the Indonesian Arab Union in 1934, and active involvement in national social and political life (Azra, 2004; Birchok, 2008). The symbolic status attached to the *habaib* is part of a socio-historical process rooted in the distant past. This historical context helps situate the lineage controversy within a broader history of the identity, integration, and social standing of the Hadrami community in Indonesian society.

The dynamics documented in *Tempo Magazine*’s Special Report do not indicate the collapse of traditional religious authority, but rather reveal a process of renegotiating the basis of religious legitimacy in the public sphere. Within the discursive space represented by this coverage, claims of genealogical continuity are juxtaposed with demands for ethical integrity, scientific validation, and transparency of information (Alatas, 2021; Setia & Dilawati, 2024). This transformation demonstrates that the sustainability of religious authority in society requires a dialogue between respect for genealogical traditions and the fulfillment of publicly accountable verification standards.

A summary of the synthesis of the analysis of the dimensions of social practice—including cultural context, symbolic commodification, hegemony, contestation of authority, and historical dynamics—is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Synthesis of the Analysis of Social Practices and the Contestation of Religious Authority

Research Evidence	Social Structure or Power Relations	Basis of Legitimacy	Interpretation
Practices of social reverence and seeking blessings (<i>tabarruk</i>) in the subthemes “Worship of the Ba’alawi Clan” and “The Sayids as Seekers of Blessings”	Cultural relations between the <i>santri</i> community and <i>Habib</i> figures in religious traditions	Genealogy, ritual veneration, and communal recognition	Affirming the existence of relational authority maintained through cultural recognition within specific social spaces
The Issuance of Unofficial Lineage Certificates under the Subtheme “Recorders of Backline Lineage” and the Heading “Title Sale”	Commodification of symbols of religious identity by parties outside the institutional system	The exchange of symbolic religious status for material gain	Highlighting the vulnerability of genealogical symbols when exploited in informal socioeconomic transactions

Management of genealogical archives and the right of reply under the subtheme “The Secret Book of Maktab Daimi and Rabithah Alawiyah”	Institutional relationships among genealogy recorders in responding to demands for information transparency	Institutional authority in the recording and internal verification of genealogies	Illustrating the position of institutions managing genealogical knowledge in the face of public verification
Cross-examination of classical manuscripts under the subtheme “The Debate Over the Lineage of the Ahl al-Bayt”	Discursive contestation between defenders of genealogy and critical historical text scholars	Philological methodological validation and the openness of contemporary historical manuscripts	Marking the intersection of genealogical legitimacy and demands for philological proof in the public sphere
The history of national integration under the subtheme “Hadr-ami in Search of Nationalism”	The Socio-historical Position of the Hadr-ami Community within Indonesian Society	Historical recognition of cultural integration and civic equality	Positioning the genealogical controversy as part of a long process of negotiating social and communal identity

Overall, the analysis of the social practice dimension reveals that the genealogical controversy in *Tempo Magazine’s* Special Report reflects a complex process of negotiation between traditional genealogical authority, institutional procedures, philological studies, and demands for public verification. Linguistic choices in the textual dimension and fact-finding strategies in the discursive practice dimension gain sociological significance when understood as part of the mediation of shifts in these relations of religious authority. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this study's findings, the results of the analysis of the textual, discursive, and social practice dimensions need to be synthesized into a single, coherent conceptual framework in the following section to highlight the novelty and scientific contributions of this research.

Media Mediation and the Negotiation of Genealogical Legitimacy

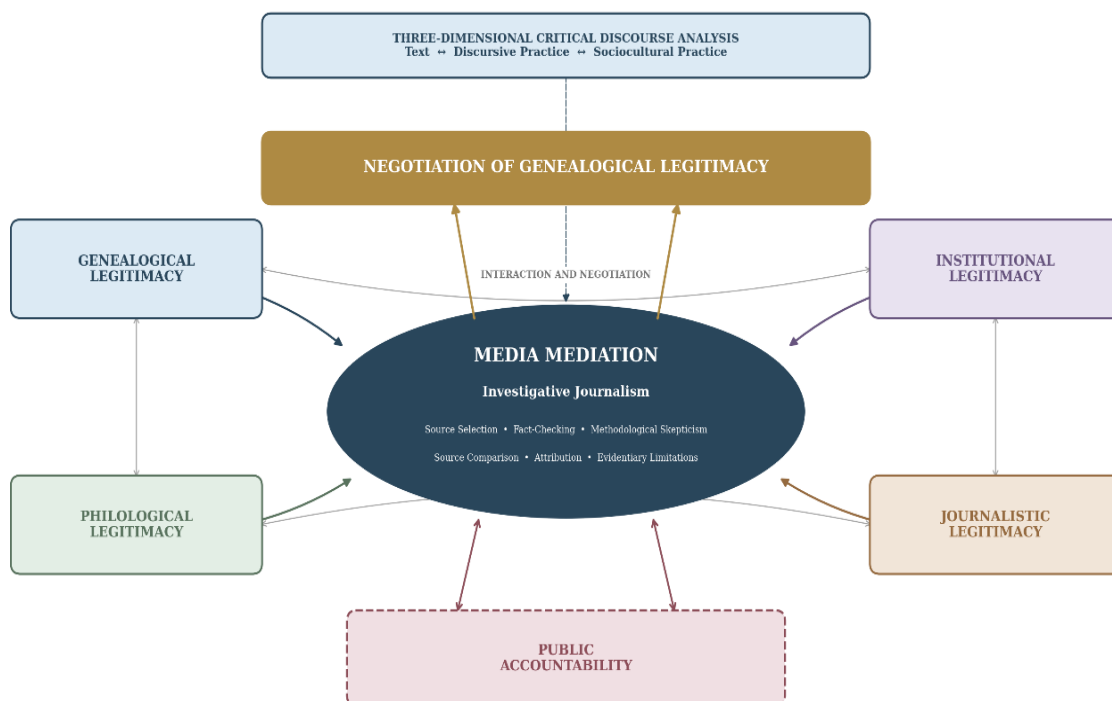
The dialectical relationship between the textual, discursive, and socio-cultural dimensions reveals that genealogical legitimacy within the discursive space is produced and negotiated through a process of mediation that brings together various bases of legitimacy (Fairclough, 1995). In the coverage analyzed, genealogical claims are not represented as the sole, self-contained source of legitimacy but are positioned alongside institutional verification procedures, philological analysis of manuscripts, and journalistic verification practices (Alatas, 2021; Rijal, 2020). The construction of news texts that present debates over the validity of lineage is rooted in editorial mechanisms that prioritize verification and cross-referencing of sources, which in turn are intertwined with the dyna-

mics of epistemic power and demands for transparency of information within the religious social sphere represented by the coverage (Alatas, 2021; Azra, 2004; Fairclough, 1995).

The textual dimension reveals how claims to truth, actors' status, and historical documents are represented through lexical choices, modality, and transitivity structures. These linguistic representations are shaped by discursive practices such as editorial decisions, the formulation of investigative perspectives, the selection of sources, and efforts to manage limited access to classical manuscripts. These journalistic production practices are intertwined with socio-cultural practices, particularly the symbolic capital of lineage, the authority of genealogical record-keeping, and power relations that underpin recognition of genealogical authority (Alatas, 2021; Birchok, 2008; Fairclough, 1995). These three layers mutually shape one another and provide the context for the circulation of religious discourse in news reporting.

The dialectical interconnection among textual representations, news production practices, and these power relations requires an analytical framework that maps how media mediation brings together various bases of legitimacy within the discursive events under study. This conceptual model is necessary to explain the discursive mechanisms at work when claims of religious tradition are brought into the arena of investigative journalism, as articulated in the following visualization.

Figure 4. Conceptual Visualization of Media Mediation and the Negotiation of Genealogical Legitimacy



The conceptual model in Figure 4 illustrates the discursive dynamics in which five bases of legitimacy converge and mutually condition one another through the interactions

of actors and institutions in the public sphere. Identity claims rooted in genealogical legitimacy engage in dialogue with the administrative procedures that underpin the institutional legitimacy of genealogical record-keeping institutions. Debates over manuscripts introduce a philological basis of legitimacy that emphasizes proof through contemporary manuscripts and historical-critical methods (Setia & Dilawati, 2024). Within these discursive events, the journalistic basis of legitimacy manifests through the practices of fact-checking, methodological skepticism, and cross-referencing of sources. These five bases are intertwined with demands for public accountability, which situate claims and their evidentiary foundations in a space accessible to and evaluable by readers (Fairclough, 1995; Rijal, 2020). These five bases do not form a linear sequence but rather intersect to determine how genealogical claims are questioned, verified, and granted legitimacy within the news sphere.

The convergence of these various bases of legitimacy broadens the issue of lineage from a question of the accuracy of genealogical records to a matter of authority to set standards of proof. Debates in news coverage revolve around who has the authority to determine the validity of documents, what methods are considered appropriate for verifying historical texts, who is given a platform to express their views, and how evidence is presented to the public. Investigative journalism does not position itself as a judge determining the validity of genealogies or as a substitute for religious authorities; rather, it brings issues regarding documents and internal recording mechanisms into the journalistic discursive space, thereby enabling methodological scrutiny (Alatas, 2021; Fairclough, 1995; Setia & Dilawati, 2024).

The mass media thus function as a mediating arena that brings together actors with different authoritative backgrounds. Investigative media bring the debate over ancient manuscripts into the news sphere, making the verification process and limitations on access to documents part of the journalistic narrative and expanding readers' discursive access to opposing positions (Alatas, 2021; Fairclough, 1995). This role creates space to compare arguments about genealogical claims—which previously took place primarily within specific communities and institutions—without positioning the media as the sole arbiter of each position's validity.

From this configuration, it is evident that genealogical legitimacy is not only related to claims of ancestral continuity but also to recording procedures, the types of evidence accepted, verification methods, the distribution of speaking space, and accountability mechanisms within the news sphere. This analysis expands the study of religious genealogy, which in several studies has been situated within the framework of historical transmission, diaspora networks, and political articulation (Alatas, 2021; Azra, 2004; Birchok, 2008; Rijal, 2020). At the same time, this study brings together research on media representation, the news production process, and epistemic contestations regarding historical documents. Thus, the issue of religious authority can be understood not only through genealogical status but also through the social processes that determine how

claims are substantiated, who has the authority to verify them, and how such knowledge gains space in news coverage.

This interpretation simultaneously expands the application of Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model to the study of Islamic communication and media sociology. The relationship between micro-linguistic choices, news production practices, and the structure of social relations demonstrates that the construction of religious legitimacy occurs at more than one level of analysis. In this case study, the three-dimensional model provides a framework for understanding how the negotiation of epistemic authority is linked to the media's selection of sources, management of evidence, and positioning of various claims within a single discursive space. At the empirical level, the integration of a corpus of ten subthemes with interviews of journalists and editors concretely demonstrates how genealogical issues are managed through fact-checking, source balance, and negotiations regarding limited access to documents in the news production process.

This configuration offers practical considerations for managing sensitive religious information, particularly through accurate attribution, caution in using philological evidence, clear verification procedures, and a balanced use of sources in news reporting. For institutions managing genealogical records, these findings highlight the importance of clear procedures and information on the basis for verification when responding to public inquiries. For media readers, these findings provide a basis for paying attention to sources, evidence, attribution, and the context of news production when evaluating reports on religious controversies.

Media mediation in this case does not eliminate differences in sources of authority. Still, it brings them together in a single discursive space that allows standards of legitimacy, the validity of evidence, and the authority of knowledge to be questioned and negotiated. From this perspective, the genealogical controversy emerges not merely as a debate over lineage but as an encounter between claims of tradition, institutional procedures, historical evidence, journalistic verification practices, and demands for transparency.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that genealogical legitimacy in the media-mediated public sphere does not operate solely through claims of the validity of lineage, but is negotiated through a non-linear configuration of various bases of legitimacy. In investigative reporting, claims of lineage interact with and mutually condition the concept of institutional legitimacy from genealogical record-keeping institutions, the philological legitimacy of historical manuscript evidence, and journalistic legitimacy based on fact-verification methods—all of which are confronted with demands for public accountability. This dynamic reveals that genealogical controversies extend beyond the historical determination of right or wrong to become a contestation of epistemic authority. The debate encompasses questions regarding which institutions have the authority to set

standards of proof, what criteria make a document recognized as valid, which manuscripts meet the principles of historical criticism, which parties are granted a platform for expression, and how a community's internal archives are presented and evaluated openly before the public.

Theoretically, the application of Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis demonstrates how the micro-linguistic choices of a text, institutional practices of news production, and the structure of socio-cultural power relations are intertwined in the formation and negotiation of religious legitimacy. Investigative journalism does not act as a judge determining genealogical truth or as a substitute for religious authority; rather, it operates as an arena of discursive mediation that brings together various forms of documentary evidence, institutional procedures, verification methodologies, and limitations on access to source materials within a public sphere of scrutiny. The conceptual framework developed explains that media mediation opens a space for comparing claims of tradition without reducing the complexity of the authority relations surrounding them. These findings affirm that religious authority in genealogical controversies cannot be understood solely as a static, inherent status, but rather as a relational phenomenon that is continuously produced, verified, attributed, and accounted for through a series of social and discursive practices in the public sphere.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author was responsible for structuring the manuscript, designing the research framework, and conducting the study. The second author performed the proofreading of the manuscript and provided financial support for the publication. Both authors read and approved the final version.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

During the preparation of this work, the authors utilized GEMINI to assist in language editing, grammatical corrections, and improving the writing style. The authors reviewed and edited the content after using this tool and take full responsibility for the integrity of the published article.

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