Islamic Legal Approach in Preventing Women's Involvement in Spreading Hoaxes on Social Media

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Abstract: This article discusses preventing women from being involved in hoaxes on social media using an Islamic legal approach because women are one of the groups that are vulnerable to being exposed to and spreading hoaxes on social media. This research aims to find out how to prevent women from being involved with Islamic law but with an Islamic legal approach. Data was collected with documentation related to analyses by Islamic law experts and the media. Apart from that, interviews were also conducted with female journalists about women's involvement in social media and how to anticipate it, then it was analyzed using a reduction process, presented, and concluded. The results of the research show that the Islamic legal approach can be used as a basis for preventing women from committing hoaxes on social media, if the principles of Islamic law in those media are implemented, among these principles are *tabayun*, responsibility and always adhering to stick of caution.
Keywords: Social Media; Women; Hoaxes; Islamic Law.

Introduction

$\mathcal{T}$ he development of social media has made humanity global, as it allows people to interact widely, transcending regional, national, and continental boundaries (Zhang & B. Albarran, 2018). Almost all our private spaces are invaded by social media (Clapp, 2022). One thing we cannot ignore is that social media has become an integral part of everyday human life and a global symbol that empowers human civilization. Social media offers various benefits in terms of communication, information, and entertainment, making it difficult to separate social media from global humans (Carr & Hayes, 2015). However, social media platforms have also become a means of spreading false information or hoaxes that can harm individuals, society, nations, and even the world. Its presence is like a double-edged sword; on one side, it is very beneficial, and on the other, it threatens human civilization by being used to spread hoaxes. Lee (2020) states that hoaxes not only threaten public trust but can also cause social, ethnic, economic, educational, political, and even religious practice damage.

Women are a significant group of social media users, not only in Indonesia but also in the world (Lim, 2017). Moreover, women are also one of the groups vulnerable to the spread and reception of hoaxes on social media (Halpern et al., 2019). Women's involvement in spreading hoaxes on social media is influenced by various factors, including economic, political, and educational factors (Ilahi, 2019). Therefore, various institutions and related agencies often provide education to women to avoid involvement in and exposure to hoaxes on social media.

In addition, preventive education is urgently needed to prevent women from getting involved in hoaxes on social media, one of which is through the Islamic legal approach. This is very feasible because Islamic law offers a comprehensive ethical and legal framework that can be used to address the issue of

spreading hoaxes on social media (Shuhufi et al., 2022). The principles of Islamic law explain the importance of honesty, justice, and social responsibility, which can serve as the basis for overcoming the spread of hoaxes (Hamim, 2021; Susilowati et al., 2019). Moreover, Islamic law has normative guidelines and offers preventive mechanisms, such as clear sanctions against spreading hoaxes. Therefore, the Islamic legal approach is crucial in preventing women from being involved in spreading hoaxes on social media, as it has educational and preventive powers relevant to human social comfort, welfare, and life.

Meanwhile, Khatab's research found Islamic legal principles that can be applied to regulate social and digital media content, because Islamic values such as truth, justice, and verification can be used to overcome the problem of spreading false information and hoaxes on digital platforms (Shuhufi et al., 2022). These values were developed by social media activists such as Muslim journalist groups to counter hoaxes on social media, one of which is by strengthening social media ethics with Islamic principles and values. Likewise, Mansoori's research on The Role of Sharia in Preventing the Spread of Misinformation in the Digital Age, found that Islamic law, especially the concepts of *tabayun* and *ijtihad*, can be used to prevent the spread of false information in the digital era, due to the application of the principles- Islamic principles in the context of social media can increase awareness about information verification (Tohari et al., 2022).

Apart from that, Al-Hasan's research related to Islamic ethics and social media: navigating the challenges of misinformation, found that in using social media there are indeed ethics that are adhered to, these ethics are strictly required by Islam because in Islam it is related to orderly life (Wahidin et al., 2024). Because there are ethics that are implemented and maintained, one thing that must be done to establish order and overcome hoaxes on social media is to strengthen controls with the existing ethics outlined by Islam, such as an ethic of honesty, an ethic of responsibility, and so on. Adjacent research has also been carried out by Al-Faruq related to sharia compliance in digital information management: a case study on Islamic social media practices where social media practices comply with Islamic law and the ethics that regulate them (Zaid et al., 2022). Social media users must ensure that in digital information management and how this is done, the principles of humanity and truth must be strengthened because these principles can help prevent the spread of hoaxes and incorrect information.

Thus, these studies provide a relevant and concrete view, that the Islamic legal approach can be a tool for overcoming hoaxes on social media because the principles of Islamic law can be applied to overcome the problem of spreading false information and hoaxes. Therefore, to prevent women from carrying out hoaxes on social media, the principles of Islamic law can be applied. The principles of Islamic law in using social media are important for responding to the development of social media and the involvement of women in using social media.

Literature Review

Islamic Law and Information

Islamic law is one of the guiding frameworks for global society in organizing orderly living, as it encompasses principles of humanity, social conduct, economics, and politics, all aimed at achieving human well-being (Abou El Fadl, 2017). Islamic law is not merely a set of rules governing individuals based on religious teachings; it is also highly sensitive to the protection and betterment of human civilization. The contribution of Islamic law to the advancement of human civilization has been evident since the advent of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used Islamic legal approaches to structure society in religious, state, and other contexts (Lewis, 2014). Moreover, Islamic law demonstrates flexibility in addressing the problems faced by humanity by accommodating the contextualization of changing times (Saeed, 2014).

The existence of Islamic law is significantly influenced by its primary sources: the Quran and Sunnah, which guide salvation in this world and the hereafter. Additionally, Islamic law employs representative methods to accommodate the needs and demands of contemporary developments, making it universal. When using social media, we are also guided by the source of Islamic law, so that people can maintain their attitudes and actions as regulated by that source of law (Arisandy et al., 2022).

According to Rahman Islamic law critiques and bridges the uncertainties and doubts of Muslims by providing directions and support for decision-making (Mahfuh, 2022). Hence, it is not incorrect to regard Islamic law as a universal system that has consistently contributed to humanity throughout time, being a dynamic and adaptable legal system.

Islamic law universally protects human values, emphasizing justice, public welfare, social justice, and well-being (Nawawi, 2023). Therefore, all human actions should adhere to these principles, including the use of communication media. (Faris & Abdalla, 2017) assert that Islamic teachings emphasize building communication based on the principle of truth (*as-sidq*), prioritizing the importance of honesty and accountability. The Quran repeatedly advises Muslims to avoid falsehood and slander, as highlighted in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6.

Islamic law also instructs against slander and gossip (*ghibah*) (Yusuf & Aliyu, 2022), prohibiting the spread of false information and harmful talk about others, as mentioned in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 12. Furthermore, Islamic law emphasizes social responsibility in all actions and behaviors. Islamic teachings strongly urge the preservation of others' honor and the avoidance of actions that could damage individual or societal reputations (Nasab et al., 2023). This social responsibility fosters a secure, civilized society and nation (Hopkins, 2012).

Based on these principles and values, Muslims must adhere to Islamic law when utilizing information facilities, ensuring their actions align with these principles. There is no justification to deviate from these principles. In Islam, adhering to these principles is a form of responsibility towards oneself and society. By maintaining a commitment to these principles, Muslims can ensure that their contribution to the dissemination of information will support the common good and prevent harm. It also reflects integrity and commitment to Islamic values and contributes to the development of a just and harmonious society.

Moreover, in the dissemination of information, acting within the guidance of Islamic law is crucial. False information can disrupt life systems and tarnish human reputations. Information is an essential bridge connecting people, so it must contribute positively to human advancement. In Islam, useful information is a form of kindness that can bring benefits to people and prevent loss or harm among fellow humans. Therefore, adhering to the principles of truth, honesty, and responsibility in using social media contributes to the creation of a just and dignified society.

For information to be beneficial and useful, it must uphold fundamental principles, coming from credible origins, evidence-based, accurate, precise, transparent, and balanced. These principles align with Islamic law's tenets in fostering good interaction and information exchange on Earth. These principles are very much in line with the teachings of Islamic law, which emphasizes the importance of truth, justice, and responsibility in every aspect of life, including social interactions and the exchange of information. Islam teaches us to always verify (*tabayun*) the truth of information before spreading it, to prevent slander and harm to other people. This is part of efforts to create a good, just, and harmonious social order on earth.

Women and Social Media

Social media has become an integral part of daily life for many individuals worldwide, including women (Kadeswaran et al., 2020). According to Tuten (2023), women's use of social media spans various purposes, from social connections and entertainment to activism and marketing. Social media can be used to explore information globally. Additionally, it can influence women in various aspects, including self-representation, mental well-being, gender identity, and social power (Toffoletti & Thorpe, 2018).

Social media has become a symbol of global civilization, as it can rapidly provide information and is supported by various captivating and engaging features. Consequently, social media has become an inseparable part of many people's lives, including women, who are influenced to use it for various purposes, such as political, economic, educational, cultural, and more (Agustina et al., 2023).

Given social media's significant role in human life, women, as one of the groups using it, must represent themselves well on social media. Unhealthy use of social media can trigger negative behaviors. (Umami, 2021). Unhealthy social media use can adversely affect life, including women's social lives, leading to issues such as body image and self-esteem problems. Women may experience online

harassment, body shaming, and fitspiration (Hanafi et al., 2024). Therefore, women and everyone else must use social media healthily to avoid its detrimental impact on social life, society, nations, and countries.

Regarding healthy social media use, Islamic teachings instruct humans to be agents of salvation and benefit in life. If women lack healthy ethics on social media, they can harm societal well-being. However, social media can also be used for women's welfare. For example, it can serve as a platform for education across ages, religions, cultures, and more (Kumar et al., 2020). Additionally, it can be used to increase income through commerce, promotion, and commercial activities.

Hoaxes on Social Media

A hoax is a term that describes falsehoods perpetrated by an individual or group. This term is believed to have emerged around 1808 with the advent of industrialization worldwide (Pakpahan et al., 2017). Hoaxes are spread for various purposes, including economic, political, and entertainment interests, and they influence the perceptions, enthusiasm, and desires of many people. Besides being spread for various purposes and orientations, hoaxes are sometimes disseminated unconsciously by individuals seeking sensation or merely extending unclear and unverified news.

Hoaxes can quickly spread due to the presence of media, especially social media, which has become a trend in rapid information dissemination and is used by almost everyone globally (Iskandar et al., 2023). Moreover, the rapid spread of hoaxes on social media is influenced by the lack of education and public awareness about responsible social media usage, making social media a catalyst for the swift spread of hoaxes. In this context, it is very important to anticipate the spread of hoaxes on social media, so that social media does not become a part that quickly destroys the dynamics of human life.

Additionally, the spread of hoaxes on social media is significantly influenced by the prevailing cultural practices in society. In Indonesia, for example, there is a culture of gossiping (Erfina Fuadatul Khilmi et al., 2021), where people share stories without verifying their truthfulness. With the rise of social media, this gossip culture has shifted online, allowing unverified stories to spread more widely. Since social media has become a global trend, it has become a major platform for the dissemination of hoaxes.

Method

Two types of data are necessary to address the Islamic legal approach in preventing women's involvement in spreading hoaxes on social media. First, literature data can be gathered through reviews of studies and research related to women's involvement in spreading hoaxes on social media. Second, interview data is used to understand the existence of Islamic legal approaches in preventing women's involvement in spreading hoaxes on social media (Hanani, 2023). This study is conducted within the context of Indonesia, as Indonesian society is one of the highest users of social media in the world and has the largest Muslim population. Therefore, the Islamic legal approach is highly applicable for preventing the spread of hoaxes on social media in this context. The collected data, both from literature and in-depth interviews with experts representing knowledge about Islamic law and social media, female press practitioners and Muslim journalists, were analyzed using the methods of Miles and Huberman. This involves data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Based on this method, a theoretical conclusion can be constructed.

Results and Discussion

Indonesia, with its large Muslim population, also ranks among the top users of social media globally, with a significant portion of this use attributed to women. According to several research reports, such as those by Finance Online, women dominate social media, showing a consistent trend of increased usage compared to men. Data comparing female and male social media usage in Indonesia, as reported by (Raković & Dakić, 2024), reveals that women tend to use various social media platforms more than men, as illustrated in Table 1.

Tabel 1. Social Media Users in Indonesia by Gender in 2023

Platform	Women (%)	Men (%)
Facebook	54.8	45.2
Instagram	52.4	47.6
Twitter	50.6	49.4
TikTok	60.7	39.3

Source: author, 2023

The high number of women using social media also implies a potential for them to become involved in spreading hoaxes. This trend is consistent with global data, where women dominate platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok, as reported by the Pew Research Center (2024). Consequently, women are particularly vulnerable to both being exposed to and spreading hoaxes on social media.

Survey results from the Indonesian Telematics Society show that women are more likely to be involved in hoaxes on social media than men. It was revealed that the involvement of women spreading hoaxes on social media was 54%, while that of men was 46% (Gelgel et al., 2020). This was also confirmed by Media Matters for America's analysis that women can have a high level of involvement in disseminating false information, especially when the information is related to emotional social, or political issues. Meanwhile, according to a study by the Center for Internet and Society, women are involved at a higher rate than men in health and social issues. Meanwhile, a Pew Research Center report found women can be more active in sharing false information, especially in cases involving viral news or highly emotional issues.

If you look at the trends reported by several survey institutions, in the future women will be one of the groups whose involvement in hoaxes on social media is quite high, because issues that cause women to be more influenced by spreading hoaxes are also inseparable issues. In social media. Apart from that, it is also known that women are the group with the highest use of social media, where women use the internet more for social media purposes than for communicating. Veranita found that 38.7% were used for social media purposes and 34.4% were used for communication (Sarjito, 2023).

To address this issue, it is essential to implement measures that prevent women from becoming involved in the dissemination of hoaxes on social media. Islamic law plays a crucial role in this context, as it provides a preventive framework that encourages individuals to be mindful of their actions on social media. These steps are Islamic legal approaches that directly or indirectly contribute to building civilized social media.

Strengthening the Principle of *Tabayun*

Islamic law places great emphasis on caution in all actions and behaviors, and this principle should also be paramount for anyone, including women when using social media. Caution in this context specifically means being careful when receiving and disseminating information on social media. According to the informant, the low level of *tabayun* attitude among women or social media users provides the potential for unhealthy social media, because social media users easily carry out hoaxes or attitudes that do not prioritize the truth in using social media. Usually, this low *tabayun* attitude is influenced by the low level of digital literacy, so that they do not search for the truth of news, they even emotionally understand and spread news without verification and accept the news so easily. In general, women's involvement in hoaxes is more dominantly influenced by the level of digital literacy and lack of building on *tabayun* principles in using social media.

This rigorous caution can be observed through the emphasis on the importance of *tabayun,* or verification of information, for any content obtained or posted on social media (Nazaruddin & Alfiansyah, 2021). Verification is crucial in receiving and transmitting information because unverified information can lead to the spread of hoaxes, which can severely damage the fabric of human life, society, and the nation.

One of the prominent Islamic scholars who stressed the importance of *tabayun* in social media is Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1926-2022) (Jones, 2019). According to him, the negligence of social media users in

verifying information can result in slander and gossip, both of which are strongly prohibited in Islam due to their harmful effects on human life.

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi was particularly concerned about the issue of hoaxes on social media, and in various instances, he urged and emphasized to Muslims the importance of caution in receiving and spreading information, especially for women. Strengthening the principle of caution by implementing *tabayun* on social media is a crucial step that should be reinforced by everyone, including women, when accessing the increasingly abundant information on social media.

According to (Berliyanto & Santoso, 2018), there are two keyways to ensure that social media users adhere to the principle of *tabayun*. First, increasing literacy awareness, which involves reading and analyzing every piece of information obtained and received, rather than immediately sharing it. Second, cultivating a sense of caution and fear of making mistakes in life, which prevents one from acting on information that has not been verified for its truthfulness.

The Qur'an clearly educates everyone to be intelligent in media use and information management, as reflected in the words of Allah: "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate it, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful" (Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6). The command to investigate and verify in this verse explicitly signifies that anyone receiving information must ensure its truthfulness.

Being Smart in Social Media

Order is the principle of advancing civilization, where order must be based on legal references, for Muslims of course the Al-Quran and Hadith. The Qur'an and Hadith are two primary sources of Islamic law that guide human life to adhere to principles, serving as navigators for a wise life in various aspects, including being smart in social media (Rustan, 2021). The lack of intelligence in social media is actually what causes hoaxes to proliferate, including on platforms like social media, as evident in various cases where social media hoaxes are primarily influenced by this lack of social media intelligence. This lack of intelligence can be seen in the unfamiliarity of social media users, both men and women, in analyzing and seeking the truth in reported information

Being smart in social media is largely determined by an individual's level of education, as education correlates with behavioral intelligence, thus influencing how individuals behave and act. Social media users with lower education levels are more susceptible to exposure to and dissemination of hoaxes, as education significantly affects a person's critical thinking abilities. Women with lower education levels are particularly vulnerable to spreading hoaxes. The low education level of social media users also contributes to lower levels of social media literacy.

Therefore, women, who constitute a majority of social media users compared to men, must build principles of being smart in social media. Being smart in social media can be seen in the life principles of the Prophet Muhammad, who always analyzed every incoming information, as exemplified when he received a letter from Emperor Heraclius expressing interest in Islam (Guillaume & Ibn-Isḥāq, 1955). The Prophet carefully examined and verified the letter by sending a delegation to verify its authenticity and Heraclius's actual interest in Islam.

Islamic law prioritizes the principles of analysis and the search for truth because something built on truth will lead to justice (Fadel, 2008) Hence, if falsehood prevails in human life, it will certainly be far from justice. Therefore, being smart in social media is actually upholding justice. This principle is in line with Islamic teachings which emphasize integrity and honesty in all aspects of life. Awareness of using social media that is based on justice can help create a more just and harmonious society. This principle must be adhered to firmly in using social media so that social media can be expected to become a supporter for accelerating the progress of civilization.

Being smart in social media can be seen in the caution built, firstly by avoiding uncertain issues (*gharar*). Accepting and spreading uncertain issues clearly leads to slander and damages human relationships. Secondly, maintaining an attitude of not gossiping on social media, as gossiping reflects human ignorance in building ethical attitudes on social media. Ideally, social media should be a cultural

medium for humanity, but conversely, social media can destroy humanity and its culture if it lacks ethics. Anything lacking ethics will bring harm.

Therefore, being smart in the media is a consequence of the principle of Islamic law "*La Darar wa La Dirar*," which teaches not to cause harm or harm others, as hoaxes on social media directly or indirectly harm or sacrifice others (Faleh, 2021). Hoaxes on social media, directly or indirectly set back human civilization, whereas social media is expected to advance that civilization. In this context, Islamic law emphasizes a form of ethics in using social media, so that in using social media, humans do not become a group that misleads and destroys the order of life.

The importance of women maintaining a stance against contamination and not participating as hoax spreaders on social media is crucial because it contradicts justice and the principles of human well-being. These negative impacts are consistently cautioned against in the Qur'an, as stated in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 12. This verse emphasizes the importance of maintaining good social relations by avoiding unfounded allegations, fault-finding behavior, and gossip or slander. All of this is relevant in the context of social media use, where unethical behavior such as spreading hoaxes or slandering other people often occurs. Islam requires its followers to maintain the honor of others and build trust by behaving fairly and correctly.

Awareness of Responsibility

Social media for women has become an extension of the gossip culture prevalent in Indonesian society. Gossip, as a form of communication, often disregards the distinction between truth and falsehood but undoubtedly strengthens interaction and communication. However, since the advent of social media, this gossip culture has also transitioned onto these platforms, thereby filling social media with gossip. This cultural shift has contributed to increased irresponsibility in social media usage.

Irresponsible social media behavior is a form of societal disruption in human life, community, nation, and state, as misinformation can set a harmful precedent impacting various aspects of life. Therefore, anyone, including women, using social media without responsibly handling information violates their responsibilities to their creator, themselves, their families, their communities, their fellow beings, and their country.

Emphasizing awareness of responsibility must be firmly upheld by women when using social media for various purposes, ensuring that it does not lead to misuse and damage to various aspects of life (Deliani et al., 2019). Thus, women journalists and activists have initiated movements to build awareness among women about responsible social media use, as seen in the efforts of the Indonesian Women Journalists Forum. This awareness of social media responsibility has been directly and indirectly exemplified by prominent female journalists in Indonesia, such as Rohana Kuddus (1884-1972), Rasuna Said (1910-1965), Sariamin Ismali (1909-1995), Ani Idrus (1918-1999), and others. These efforts highlight how responsible media use can empower women to influence the progress of their nation and country (Silfia Hanani, 2018).

The importance of responsibility in media, directly or indirectly, has been clearly directed by classical and contemporary scholars (*fuqaha*) (Muhammadin & Wahab, 2018).. For example, Imam Abu Hanifa (699-767 AD) stressed the importance of responsibility in behavior and action as integral to justice, urging honesty and maintaining integrity in speech. Similarly, Imam Malik (711-795 AD) emphasized responsibility in social media in his work "*Al-Muwatta'*", focusing on how responsibility helps individuals avoid slander and defamation by maintaining honesty and integrity (Noureddine, 2016).

Imam Shafi'i (767–820 AD) also emphasized the importance of responsibility in behavior as a fundamental part of human life, because humans are given reason and intellect to consider their actions (Hamim & Abdillah, 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to use reason in these actions, including in social media use. At the very least, in social media, this form of responsibility is evident through the practice of *tabayun* or verification of received information.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (780–855 AD) also addressed social media responsibility in his views on the ideal human behavior, which must adhere to the Quran and Sunnah as explained in his monumental

work, *Al-Musnad*. According to him, a true Qurani person is honest, trustworthy, and respects the honor of others (Wahyono et al., 2019). Thus, in responsible social media use, these qualities of honesty, trustworthiness, and respect for others' honor should be implemented.

Contemporary scholars have also emphasized social media responsibility. For instance, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1926-2022 AD), in his contemporary fatwas, highlighted the need for honesty and trustworthiness in social media to avoid slander and gossip (Baroudi, 2023). Of course, this is the basis that in using media, anyone must pay attention to the context of honesty, trust, and responsibility, if not, in using social media, they will convey something that is prohibited by religion. In terms of social media, it is hoped that it can become a communication tool that makes it easier for humans to interact and communicate widely.

Even Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, an Islamic scholar residing in the United States, has stressed to Muslims that despite the extensive freedom offered by social media, responsible behavior and actions are crucial. Therefore, digital ethics are needed to ensure users take responsibility for their actions on social media. With the development of information technology, an emphasis on ethics is very necessary, as is having digital ethics. This ethics is a tool of human control in building order in real life and as a form of accountability to God, humans, and the environment.

Hence, the awareness of social media responsibility is an obligation that should be heeded not only by women but by all social media users. If the principles of responsible social media use are followed, issues like hoaxes can be minimized. In connection with this, as social media continues to develop and communication technology becomes increasingly sophisticated, the principles of healthy social media must be of concern to everyone, otherwise, social media will become a destroyer of the order of human life and can even degrade human civilization. Principles such as verifying information before sharing, maintaining communication ethics, and understanding the impact of each upload are important parts that everyone must adhere to when using social media.

Conclusion

The development of social media is unstoppable, as it represents an innovation in human life. However, many misuse it, leading to the spread of hoaxes on social media. The impact is profoundly detrimental to various aspects of human life, society, the nation, and the state. Women are one of the vulnerable groups exposed to and spreading these hoaxes. Therefore, it is very necessary to have a healthy understanding of social media using various approaches, including Islamic legal approaches, because, after all, this approach can contribute to guiding people to responsible and ethical social media. When responsibility for social media does not exist, it is predicted that social media will become a destroyer of human life, national and state life, and even religion. Therefore, preventive measures are crucial to prevent women from engaging in spreading hoaxes on social media. One effective approach is through Islamic law principles, which emphasize responsibility, justice, trustworthiness, and avoiding slander and backbiting. By adhering to these values, women can cultivate ethical behavior on social media and refrain from spreading hoaxes. Thus, if this Islamic legal approach becomes the basis for using social media, then social media can contribute widely and well to the progress of human civilization, because humans using social media do not easily lead to bad things, such as carrying out hoaxes and other things. Recirculating information so that untruths occur that are detrimental to national, state, and religious life.

Acknowledgement

Conflict of Interest

This research has no interest conflict with any party.

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