

# Sharia in Indonesia: Analysis of Twitter Discourse and Implications for the Government

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keyword: Sharia; Twitter; Regional regulations; Political dynamics; Government implications</p>	<p>Sharia-based regional regulations in Indonesia continue to be debated and have become a polemic in many circles. The relevance of this situation also influences public response and sentiment in Indonesia. This research aims to analyze Sharia discourse on Twitter and determine how the public responds to Sharia-based regional regulations. This research uses quantitative methods with a descriptive content analysis approach. The analysis tool used is Nvivo 12 Plus software. Significant findings from this research reflect the dominance of the political situation's influence and political elites' participation in the debate surrounding the Sharia Regional Regulations in Indonesia. The results show that this debate is influenced not only by religious aspects but also significantly by political factors. The use of social media, especially Twitter, has become an important channel that opens up new participatory spaces in shaping public discourse and sentiment regarding sharia issues. The implication is that the government needs to understand the political dynamics that influence this debate and utilize discourse analysis on social media to formulate policies that are more inclusive and responsive to people's aspirations around Sharia issues in Indonesia.</p>

## INTRODUCTION

Sharia-based regional regulations are still a controversy that continues to be debated, and this happens in a country where the majority of the population is Muslim, like Indonesia. This has encouraged discourse and sentiment towards sharia regulations in Indonesia to continue to emerge and even to be negative. Various debates or sentiments include issues of politicization, political commodities, and discrimination. The National Commission on Violence Against Women noted that in the 2009-2016 period, there were 421 discriminatory policies issued by local governments. These policies include the obligation for women to wear the hijab, a ban on going out at night, as well as restrictions on religious minorities such as the Shia and the Ahmadiyah (Wardah, 2017). As Fanani explained (2017), Sharia regulations are still considered to hurt certain communities, such as women. The Indonesian government is aware of the polemic but has not taken firm action because of political problems (Parsons & Mietzner, 2009).

So far, the urgency that is often the basis for the emergence of sharia regulations in various regions is the decline in the morality and character of the people who are increasingly far from Islamic values. Sharia is a unique study that is not only interpreted as an entity that must comply but also because of its legal position, which is in a dilemma in national law (Gazali et al., 2018; Hidayat, 2018; Jati, 2013). The basic substance of sharia regulations with conventional

regional regulations is the same because the formation of traditional provincial laws has included religious, moral, and traditional values in the rules. It's just that the addition of the word sharia in the regional regulation gives the view that the importance of the hereafter is highlighted more than the worldly value in the conventional regional rule. At the locus of the problem, the actual implementation of sharia regulations in regional autonomy itself is ambiguous; where on the one hand, the sharia regulations themselves are promulgated to improve morals and morality, while on the other hand, sharia regulations are also seen as unnecessary because they are already regulated in conventional rules (Ahmad, 2007; Harahap et al., 2023; Syamsurrijal et al., 2023).

So far, studies on the discourse of sharia regulations tend to look at problems in the public sphere contextually. There are still not many studies that show the discourse and sentiment about sharia regulations in online social networks, especially on Twitter social media. However, at least some trends from previous studies can be mapped. *First*, the discourse on regional regulations or sharia law is influenced by the identity and ideology of the community (Habiburrahim et al., 2020; Kaltenthaler et al., 2018; Muttaqin et al., 2020). *Second*, the discourse analysis of sharia regulations can be done using an oral text approach (speech) and writing (Irawan, 2017). *Third*, the development of the discourse on sharia regulations has a unique characteristic that involves involving Muslim and non-Muslim circles or communities (Yasin, 2016; Warner, 2010; Fajriyati et al., 2020). From these three trends, it appears that the analysis of discourse and sentiment related to sharia regulations is still under debate in the public sphere and still needs to be explored on online social networks such as Twitter.

Discourse analysis is a method widely used to analyze the content, socio-political significance, and interaction effects of semiotic practices, which aims to show systematically how these practices influence social processes (Dick & Nightlinger, 2020). Discourse analysis is also generally defined in two ways. *First*, discourse analysis examines the phenomenon of linguistic communication in real life. *Second*, discourse analysis views the function of language as the main thing (Maynard, 2017). Dick & Nightlinger (2020) and Maynard (2017) agree that discourse analysis is a semiotic method and practice with a content and text approach. The concept of discourse analysis is also experiencing a development trend where the study and its methodological framework make it possible to conduct discourse analysis in digital form, including relying on social media (Gredel, 2017; Baharuddin, Widayat, et al., 2021; Baharuddin, Salahudin, et al., 2021). Trends and research interests also influence the development of digital analysis as a field related to the production and acceptance of digital media (Mackenzie & Zhao, 2021). The data used in discourse analysis can elaborate on data spread on online social media platforms, such as news sites and social media (Montejo & Adriano, 2018; KhosraviNik, 2017; Sam, 2019). This shows that discourse analysis can be done based on online social networks' content and text analysis approach.

The development of sentiment analysis studies and studies is strongly influenced by the development of trends in the use of social media. This development is based on the characterization of social media, which has a fairly large amount of data (Big Data) in the form of opinions and ideas recorded in digital form, and this has influenced the development and process of sentiment analysis (Baharuddin, Widayat, et al., 2021; Jubba et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2016). Apart from that, the emergence of social media platforms such as Twitter also influences individual judgments about the broader suitability between heterogeneous perceptions of behavior and social norms as indicators of legitimacy that can be accessed and measured or analyzed (Baharuddin et al., 2022; Etter et al., 2018; Luth et al., 2023). Another supporting aspect is Twitter social media is a microblog-based social media platform that allows users to write and manage text (Budiharto & Meiliana, 2018; Karso et al., 2024).

Based on the previous description, social media impacts the development of studies related to sentiment analysis, where Twitter social media is considered quite contributive. In another explanation, sentiment analysis often uses the social media Twitter because it is considered a relatively easy platform in the data collection process. The Twitter application is the most studied and analyzed platform because data on Twitter is more easily accessed using the Application Programming Interface (API) (García-García & Trujillo, 2023; Jenkins et al., 2023; Williams et al., 2017). However, some aspects need to be considered when carrying out sentiment

analysis, namely the process of identification, recognition, or opinion mining to summarize mixed and non-sequential ideas, thus requiring quite in-depth analysis (Cambria et al., 2017).

This paper attempts to complement previous studies' shortcomings by conducting a discourse and sentiment analysis approach to the development trend of sharia regional regulation issues on Twitter. In line with this, this paper can formulate two questions: (a) how is the discussion and sentiment regarding sharia regulations on Twitter (b) what factors influence the development of discourse about sharia regulations on Twitter? The answers to these two questions make it possible to find a way to improve the socio-political situation, controversy, and debate related explicitly to the study of the preparation or implementation of sharia regulations in Indonesia. This article is based on an argument that Sharia Regional Regulations are still a matter of polemic and controversy among the public. The discourse regarding Sharia regulations has received less than a positive response because there are still debates and discriminatory issues in their implementation. At the same time, analysis of sharia regional regulations is still widely carried out in the public sphere. So, the analysis of discourse related to sharia regulations on Twitter is still considered very limited. The existence of controversy and debate in the implementation of sharia regulations in Indonesia continues to give rise to negative sentiments.

The implications of this research are very relevant for the government and other stakeholders in formulating policies related to Sharia-based regional regulations in Indonesia. Discourse and sentiment analysis on the development trend of Sharia regional regulations issues on Twitter can provide a deeper understanding of the public's views on these regulations. By understanding the various points of view and sentiments that arise, the government can take wiser steps in designing, implementing, and evaluating policies related to sharia regulations. In addition, this research can also be a basis for encouraging more open and inclusive dialogue between the government, society, and other interest groups in dealing with controversies and debates surrounding the implementation of sharia regulations. Thus, this research has the potential to support the government's efforts to develop policies that are more responsive, fair, and in line with democratic values and the diversity of Indonesian society.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a quantitative approach with descriptive content analysis. This approach describes the details of a text or message related to Sharia regulations in Indonesia. Data was analyzed and obtained from Twitter social media using the Ncapture for Nvivo feature. Twitter social media was chosen because this application is different from other applications in that Twitter is more text-based and has a hashtag feature, which tends to spread quickly and influence other users to get involved in the political discourse that develops on Twitter social media. The Twitter data is in the form of hashtags #Syariah #Perdasyariah and keywords related to Syraiah and Sharia regional regulations. This research analysis tool uses Nvivo 12 Plus software. Nvivo 12 plus software is an analysis tool that displays data in text and image form through a data coding process.

Retrieving Twitter data via Ncapture in Google Chrome aims to filter Twitter search results based on predetermined hashtags. The collected data is then transferred to an analysis tool such as Nvivo 12 Plus for further processing. In data analysis, features such as chart themes, number of references by hashtag, timeline by day, word frequency query, and identify sentiment are used to carry out the coding process and identify themes, topics, and keywords that appear significantly, as well as visual representations of the sentiment contained in the text or words that appear frequently. Several references by hashtag measure how often a particular hashtag is mentioned in the data. The coding results are then analyzed and described to understand patterns, trends, and context of the Twitter data that has been collected. Thus, this process allows a deeper understanding of people's views and sentiments toward topics or issues discussed in the context of Twitter's social media.

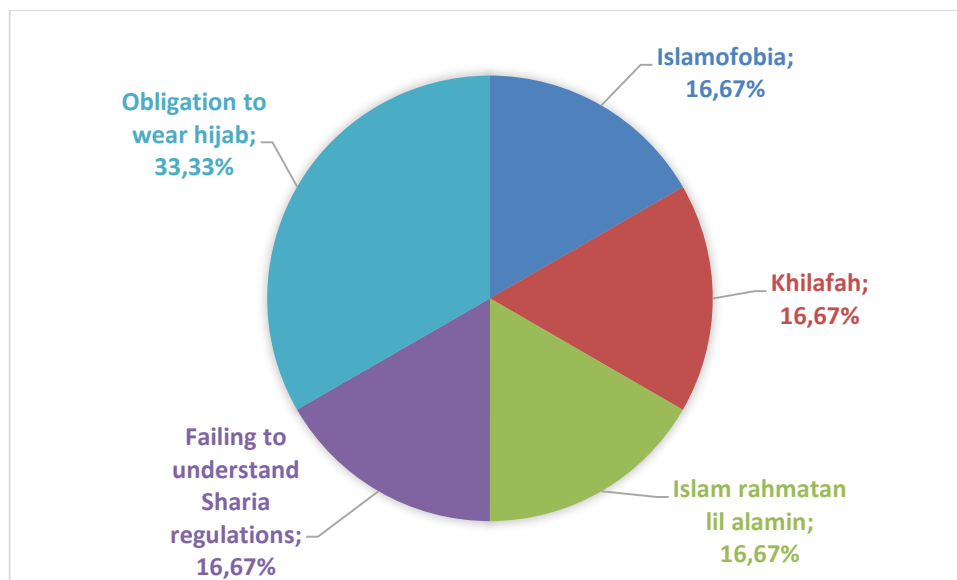
The methodological approach outlined in the research, utilizing quantitative analysis and descriptive content analysis, demonstrates a systematic and structured process for examining discourse related to Sharia regulations on Twitter. The use of Ncapture for Nvivo in retrieving

Twitter data ensures a focused selection of content based on predetermined hashtags, contributing to the validity of the dataset. Moreover, using Nvivo 12 Plus software as an analysis tool allows for thorough examination and interpretation of the collected data, enabling researchers to identify patterns, themes, and sentiments prevalent in the discourse. Overall, the methodology employed in this study provides a robust framework for analyzing and understanding public perceptions and discussions on Twitter regarding Sharia regulations in Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Narrative and discussion of Sharia Regional Regulations on Twitter*

In an era where social media has become the leading platform for expressing opinions and influencing public views, including around Sharia Regional Regulations in Indonesia, there has been a significant change towards social networks such as Twitter. Twitter is a place to debate social and political issues and a forum for various views and sentiments regarding implementing Sharia Regional Regulations. In this context, analysis of narratives and discussions regarding Sharia Regulations on Twitter is essential to understanding Indonesia's dynamics, perspectives, and public responses to Sharia regulations. Developing social and political discourse greatly influences the narrative of discussing Sharia regulations on Twitter. Discourse related to sharia regulations in Indonesia was then transformed and debated on Twitter.



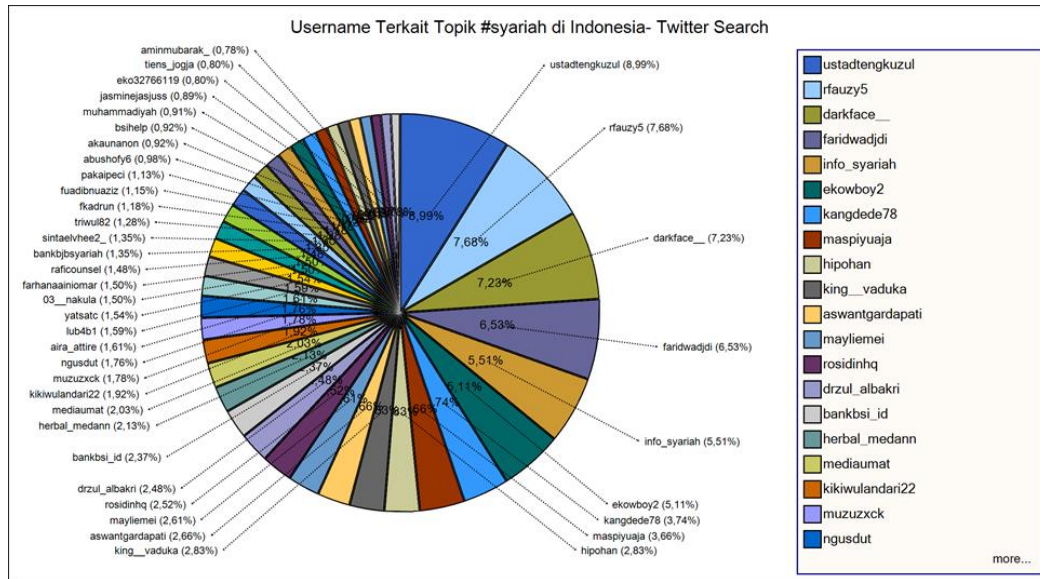
**Figure 1.** Discussion regarding Sharia Regional Regulations on Twitter

*Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2021*

Several themes or discourses that are widely discussed around Sharia regulations are Islam phobia, the Khilafah, Islam rahmatan lil alamin, failure to understand Sharia regulations, and the obligation to wear the hijab (Figure 1). This data shows that discussions around the obligation to wear the hijab are a topic that influences much public discussion. This is also due to policies that have severe political and social impacts, not only for Muslims but also for women and followers of other religions in Indonesia (Fanani, 2017). The public believes that Sharia regulations will discriminate against women. Sharia regulations can hurt women because they can have negative social impacts on women, and women are the most vulnerable to suffer from these policies.

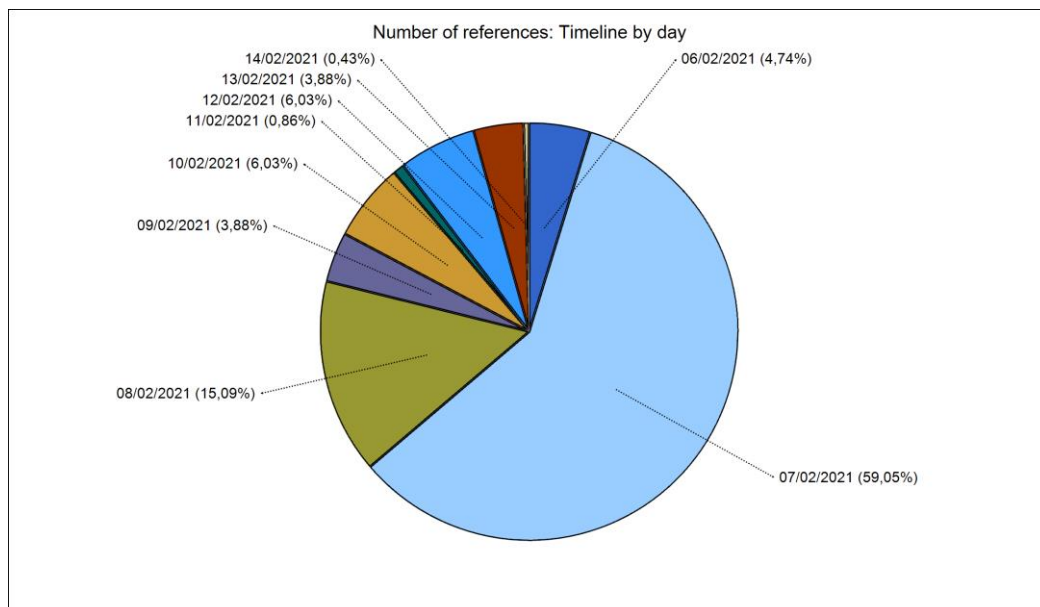
The discourse of the discussion above also relies heavily on Twitter social media users. The tendency for accounts involved in this discourse includes users relatively well known to many people and other general users. Twitter users who are relatively well known contribute

more to influencing other social media users to get involved in the Sharia Regional Regulation discourse (Figure 2). Thus, the narrative of Sharia regulations is influenced by developing discourse and is also very dependent on the networks of other Twitter users.



**Figure 2.** Network of Twitter users on Sharia topics  
 Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2021

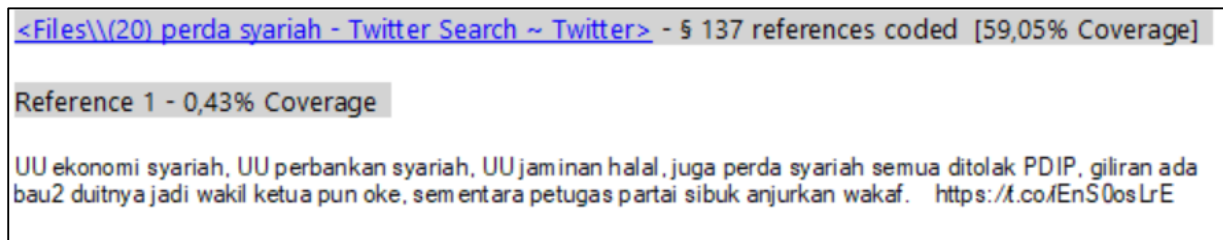
Figure 2 relates to the network of Twitter users or accounts involved in the discourse or narrative of Sharia regulations on Twitter. This data was obtained by coding based on the Twitter user's username. The @ustadtengkuzul account is influential because it is well-known to many other Twitter users. The discourse on sharia regulations on Twitter networks has significant differences compared to media in the public space. Twitter has the potential and intensity to build discourse following Sharia regional regulations issues (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Intensity of discussion of #perdasyyariah on Twitter 2021  
 Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2021

Figure 3 relates to the intensity of discussion of sharia regulations on Twitter in early 2021. Data is coded based on the Number of References and the Timeline by Day. This period was

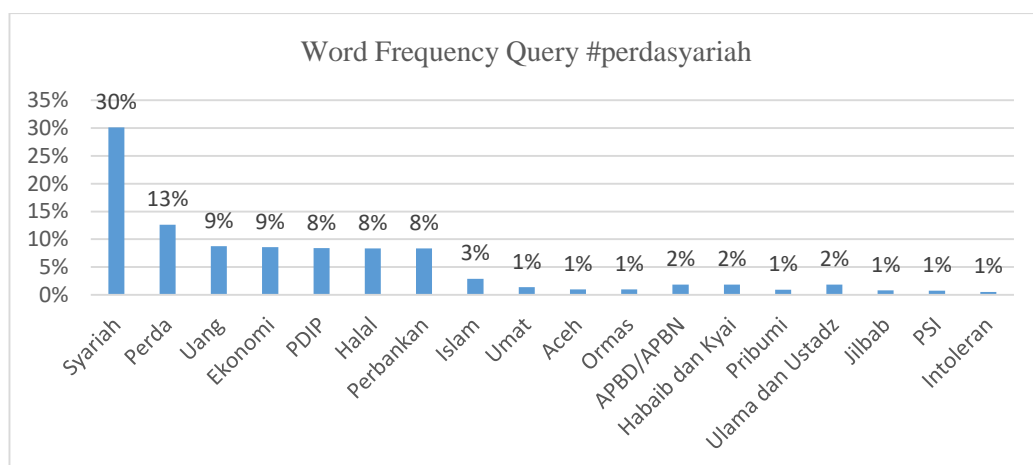
chosen because the intensity of tweets experienced developments at the beginning of the year by developing issues. This intensity is influenced by tweets (Figure 4), and text frequency (Figure 5) influence this intensity.



**Figure 4.** Sample of Tweets that influence the intensity of discussion of Sharia Regional Regulations

Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2021

Figure 4 shows a sample of Tweets related to Shariah regional regulations in Indonesia for 2021. This period was chosen because the intensity of Tweets experienced developments at the beginning of the year by developing issues. Samples of tweets include Sharia economic laws, Sharia banking, and halal guarantees. Where the sample relates to the response of the PDIP political party. The frequency of keywords used also influences the discussion of Sharia regulations.



**Figure 5.** Total frequency of keywords and text of Sharia Regional Regulations

Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2021

Figure 5 shows that apart from the sample of influential tweets, other things influence the intensity of discussion regarding Sharia regulations, namely the number of keywords and text. So, this shows that the use of Twitter can influence the development of socio-political discourse specifically related to Sharia regulations in Indonesia. Sharia discourse is now no longer debated in public spaces but also in digital spaces such as Twitter. This aligns with van Dijck and Poell (2015), who argue that commercial mechanisms in online networks, including social media, will reshape public communication.

A deeper analysis of the influence of Twitter in the development of socio-political discourse related to Sharia Regional Regulations in Indonesia reveals an essential phenomenon in the transformation of public communication. As one of the major social media platforms, Twitter facilitates instant exchange of ideas, views, and information among connected users. This creates a broader, more open discussion space where various views and arguments can be expressed and debated directly without geographical limitations. Thus, Twitter has become

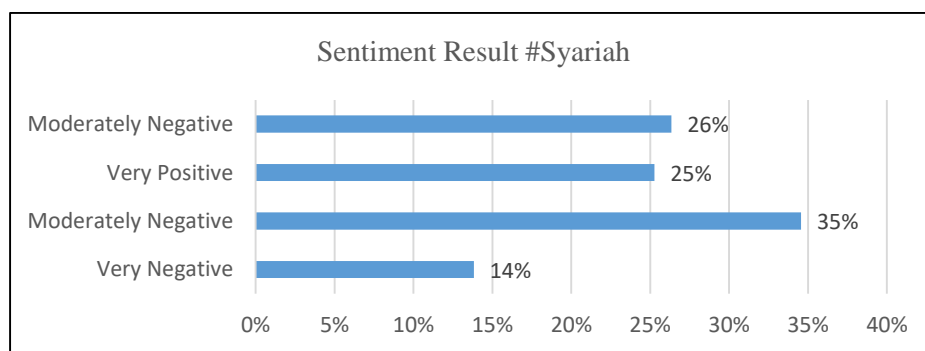
essential for voicing and influencing public opinion on social and political issues, including Sharia Regional Regulations.

The importance of the debate about Sharia Regional Regulations on digital platforms such as Twitter highlights a shift in the dynamics of public communication. Commercial mechanisms and online interactions in social media create an environment that is dynamic and responsive to contemporary issues. Thus, conventional public spaces are the main stage for social and political discussions, and digital spaces such as Twitter have a significant role in shaping opinions and the direction of public debate. This emphasizes the importance of understanding the role and influence of social media in shaping and directing narratives and public responses to sensitive issues such as Sharia Regional Regulations.

The implications of the discourse analysis of Sharia Regional Regulations on Twitter show that social media, especially Twitter, has a significant role in shaping and influencing public narratives and discussions regarding socio-political issues, such as Sharia Regional Regulations in Indonesia. These findings provide a deeper understanding of how discourse and sentiment are formed, developed, and influenced by interactions between Twitter users. The main implication is that the government and other stakeholders must pay attention to and understand the socio-political dynamics that occur on social media, especially Twitter, to formulate responsive and inclusive policies. Concrete steps, such as increasing communication and dialogue with the public through digital platforms, can help reduce polarization and increase shared understanding of sensitive issues such as Sharia Regional Regulations. Apart from that, this research also shows that social media can be an effective platform for expanding the space for public participation in the decision-making process so that the government can be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of society as a whole.

**Twitter sentiment as response and criticism**

Social media can shape and influence responses and opinions on social and political issues related explicitly to sharia topics in Indonesia. The response to sharia issues in Indonesia still tends to be controversial and is still debated by many parties. Likewise, when sharia issues or discourse are transformed on the Twitter social network. The results show that Sharia issues also receive negative sentiment.



**Figure 6.** Sentiment results regarding Sharia issues  
 Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2021

Figure 6 is the result of sentiment towards sharia issues in Indonesia. This negative sentiment is the result of debate over the information being spread. Aspects that influence sentiment are based on their relationship to the involvement of political elites in Sharia discourse in Indonesia, as in Figure 5 previously. Therefore, the involvement of elites or political actors in Sharia discourse has influenced public responses and sentiment on Twitter. In line with this, public responses or sentiments towards sharia discourse are seen as acts of criticism on social media. This criticism is a form or part of the public's distrust of the political elite. This also shows that Twitter's social media has changed the pattern of criticism, which was previously

conservative. The existence of Twitter social media encourages participatory patterns related explicitly to sharia discourse in Indonesia. This attitude of participation is undoubtedly different from the pattern in the public space. Participation patterns in public spaces seem more closed, in contrast to social media, which is relatively open. Social Media is a medium for the transformation of the public sphere (van Dijck & Poell, 2015). In addition, social media has facilitated the growth of human interaction, political participation, and civic engagement (Balakrishnan et al., 2014; Effing et al., 2011; Enikolopov et al., 2020).

A deeper analysis of sentiment towards sharia issues in Indonesia, as depicted in Figure 6, reveals complexity in the dynamics of public communication. Various factors, including different understandings, wrong interpretations, and dissatisfaction with the performance of the government or political elite, often trigger negative sentiments that emerge in online discussions. The involvement of political actors in Sharia discourse, as observed from Figure 5, appears to be one of the main factors influencing public responses and sentiment on Twitter social media. Moreover, the public's criticism of political elites reflects a deep distrust of institutions and the resulting policies. This phenomenon marks a change in the previously more conservative pattern of public criticism, which has become more open and bold in expressing their dissatisfaction via social media.

The presence of social media, especially Twitter, has opened up new participatory spaces in social and political discourse, including discussions around sharia issues in Indonesia. Participation patterns on social media are often more inclusive and diverse than in conventional public spaces. Social media is not only a place for the exchange of opinions but also a tool for people to organize themselves, voice their interests, and criticize policies that are considered unfair or inappropriate. Thus, social media is a communication tool and a transformational medium that encourages broader political participation and civic engagement in opinion formation and community development.

This analysis concludes that social media Twitter has become an essential forum for the public to articulate criticism and responses to Sharia issues in Indonesia. The transformation of increasingly open and participatory patterns of criticism on social media reflects new dynamics in the country's socio-political dynamics. The implication is that the government and political elites must pay more serious attention to the responses and criticism emerging from Twitter social media and utilize this platform to strengthen dialogue, build trust, and increase public participation in policy-making. Thus, this conclusion emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the role of social media in formulating policies that are more inclusive and responsive to the diversity of views and aspirations of society.

Overall, analysis of sentiment and responses to Sharia issues in Indonesia, especially those on Twitter social media, illustrates that the government has significant challenges in responding to developing socio-political dynamics. The negative responses and criticism often emerge from the public via social media indicate dissatisfaction and distrust towards government policies and actions regarding Sharia issues. This indicates the need for the government to increase communication, transparency, and participation in the policy-making process, as well as ensure that the decisions made reflect the interests and aspirations of society more broadly.

The government must also be able to listen and respond wisely to growing criticism and sentiment and pay attention to the dynamics of public opinion on social media as part of forming more inclusive and sustainable policies. By understanding and accommodating various existing perspectives and interests, the government can strengthen the legitimacy and public trust in the decision-making process and create an environment that is more harmonious and responsive to the diversity of socio-political values and aspirations in Indonesia. Thus, sentiment analysis and responses to Sharia issues on Twitter social media provide benefits in helping the government understand the views and aspirations of the community, strengthen dialogue, and increase transparency in making more inclusive policies.

## CONCLUSION

A dominant aspect influences the intensity of public involvement in entering and participating in the Sharia Regional Regulation debate in Indonesia, namely due to the political situation and the involvement of political elites. This shows that the debate is not only based on religious aspects. Political actors' political situation and involvement in Sharia discourse in Indonesia also have implications for patterns of public interaction and participation on Twitter social media. This situation is supported because the Twitter network facilitates a new, more open, participatory space. Participatory and open debates and discourse development on social media have influenced people's political interests. This differs from the public space, which is still relatively exclusive and closed to other public members to show their political interests related explicitly to Sharia regulations and issues surrounding Sharia in Indonesia. In line with this, the discourse on sharia regulations on Twitter has contributed to forming a new perspective in viewing the development of sharia in Indonesia. The contribution of this research can at least be a reference for interest groups in creating and implementing Sharia-based regional regulations in Indonesia by considering the discourse and sentiment developing on the Twitter social network.

The implication of this research for the government is the need to pay attention to political dynamics and the involvement of political elites in Sharia Regional Regulation debates, as well as increasing transparency and participation in developing more inclusive policies. In addition, the government needs to utilize discourse analysis on social media, especially Twitter, as a source of information to formulate policies that are responsive to the aspirations and views of the community regarding Sharia issues in Indonesia. The limitations of this study lie in the research method, which only uses specific data sources, namely Twitter and social media. So, further research is needed to explore other social media data sources such as Facebook and Instagram or other online social networks. In line with this, it is hoped that future research will be able to maximize discourse analysis related explicitly to sharia issues in Indonesia in order to make a maximum contribution.

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