

## CRITICISM OF HADITH AUTHENTICITY ON CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THINKERS

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**Abstract:** Islam knows two primary sources in its legislation, first, the holy Qur'an and the second, Hadith, however, there is a significant difference in the inventory system of both sources. This study aims to discuss about how are the modern Islamic scholars' perspectives on the Hadith authenticity. The method used is qualitative. Qualitative methods are used to examine natural objects, where researchers become key instruments. In addition, data collected are triangulated (combined), data analyses are inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization. The interaction of moslems with the Prophet's Hadith is very dynamic. The attention of it was not very big at the beginning of Islam because the Prophet was still alive and lived around them at that time as the living Islam (the source of everything), but in the period after the Prophet's death, the attention to the Hadith increased rapidly. The contemporary Islamic thinkers assume that the Hadith scholars have not given great attention to matan criticism as what in sanad has. The critic opportunity is still opened on the Prophet's authenticity by using internal criticism (matan of Hadith), as long as using the right methodology as the Hadith scholars have explained.

**Keywords:** Hadith authenticity, Hadith criticism, *matan*, Qur'an and hadith

**Abstrak:** Islam mengenal dua sumber utama dalam perundang-undangannya, pertama Al-Qur'an dan kedua Hadits, namun terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan dalam sistem inventarisasi kedua sumber tersebut. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membahas tentang bagaimana pandangan ulama Islam modern terhadap otentisitas hadis. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif. Metode kualitatif digunakan untuk meneliti objek alam, dimana peneliti menjadi instrumen kunci. Selain itu, data yang dikumpulkan bersifat triangulasi (menggabungkan), analisis data bersifat induktif, dan hasil penelitian kualitatif lebih menekankan makna daripada generalisasi. Interaksi umat Islam dengan hadis Nabi sangat dinamis. Perhatiannya tidak terlalu besar pada awal Islam karena Nabi masih hidup dan hidup di sekitar mereka pada saat itu sebagai Islam yang hidup (sumber segalanya), namun pada masa setelah wafatnya Nabi, perhatian terhadap Hadits berkembang pesat. Para pemikir Islam kontemporer beranggapan bahwa para ulama hadis belum memberikan perhatian yang besar terhadap kritik matan sebagaimana yang ada dalam sanad. Peluang kritik terhadap otentisitas Nabi masih terbuka dengan menggunakan kritik internal (matan Hadits), sepanjang menggunakan metodologi yang tepat seperti yang telah dijelaskan oleh para ulama hadis.

**Kata Kunci:** Al-qur'an dan hadits, Keaslian hadis, kritik hadis, matan

### Introduction

Islam knows two primary sources in its legislation, first, the holy Qur'an and the second, Hadith, however, there is a significant difference in the inventory system of both sources. The Qur'an, since the beginning of its revelation, there was official bookkeeping order, so that the Qur'an is very well protected from the possibility of forgery. In contrast with the Hadith, at the beginning, there was no any special standard treatment on it, so that its preservation was more spontaneity and initiative from the Prophet's companions, even the Prophet himself had banned the writing of the Hadith.

The Hadith bookkeeping was officially conducted in the second century of Hijrah (H). At the age of Caliph Umar ibnu Abdul Aziz, he had ordered the governors and the Islamic scholars (ulama) to collect the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. According to the historians, Umar was anxious about "the knowledge could be lost" at that time (Juybol, 1999).

At the first, Hadith was only a literature that included all the words, deeds, and decisions of the Prophet Muhammad, the unspoken Prophet's approval on the people of their age, and the descriptions of the Prophet's personality. The Hadith was memorized and verbally delivered from generation to generation at the first. According to Azmi (2019) & Najeeb (2014), Hadith is one of the most celebrated resources of Classical Arabic text. The hadiths, or Prophetic traditions (tradition for short), are narrations originating from the sayings and conduct of Prophet Muhammad. For Muslims, hadiths are the second most important source of Islamic jurisprudence after the Holy Qur'an, each Hadith consists of two parts: Isnad and Ma'tn, Isnad is the chain of narrators through whom the narration has transmitted, meanwhile Ma'tn is the narration itself. Before more than 1400 years, Muslims are paying attention of Isnad science because it helps in discrimination between the accepted (Sahih) and rejected (Da'ief) Hadith. The scholar of Hadith judges it based on the narration chain (Isnad) and the persons (narrators) who compose the chain. In line with that, Hadiths are important textual sources of law, tradition, and teaching in the Islamic world. Analyzing the unique linguistic features of Hadiths (e.g. ancient Arabic language and story-like text) results to compile and utilize specific natural language processing methods (Saloot, 2016). Unfortunately, not all of the hadith literature has made it into the hands of the current generation. Some of them are still around, but others have vanished from the conversation around Islamic intellectual treasure (Yasmanto & Ratnawati, 2019).

The hadith by *mukharrij hadiṣ* are very diverse both in terms of systematics, methods, topics of compilation and the quality of the hadiths they contain. This is very logical, bearing in mind that in the writing and bookkeeping of hadiths, the selection criteria as well as the objects and targets that are of concern to the mukharrij are not the same. As a consequence, the books of hadith produced also have diversity, both in terms of quantity, quality, systematics, and others (Ismail, 1992; Yasmanto & Ratnawati, 2019). After the Prophet died in the year of 10 H., the Moslems felt a huge loss. The Prophet Muhammad is considered as the one who has the Islamic authority, so that the Moslems felt loose authority by his death. The holy Quran was the only one source of information available to solve various problems occurred in the Moslems at that young age. Even though the divine revelations have been recorded, they have not been well compiled, and could not yet be obtained when the Prophet Muhammad died, and no matter how many revelations there, only a few of them contain instructions that is able to be used by the Islamic society (ummat) as the general guiding principles in all activities. At the early age, the caliphs guided the Moslems with the Prophet's spirit, although sometimes they relied on their personal judgments. However, after a while, when they could not solve the difficulties by themselves, they started using sunnah, such as using the Prophet behaviour as the reference and the example in solving the problem by relying the companions' memorization and making it as a part of necessary reference after the holy Quran. This form of memorization is called Hadith (Juynbol, 1999).

Based on the problem, this study aims to discuss about how are the modern Islamic scholars' perspectives on the Hadith authenticity. The importance of studying the critique of hadith matan is an effort to avoid carelessness and negligence in accepting narrations by referring to the rules of criticism of the hadith and is expected to be able to resolve various contradictions in the content of the narrations.

## Materials and Methods

The method used is qualitative. Qualitative methods are used to examine natural objects, where researchers become key instruments. In addition, data collected are triangulated (combined), data analyses are inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization. In research using qualitative methods, a researcher becomes a key instrument and the data collection techniques used is observations and interviews (Sugiyono, 2010). The data used in this study come from various journal articles, books, research results and various other literary sources that examine the scope of critique of hadith matan.

## Result and Discussion

As the second source from the Islamic legislation source with such a complex characteristic compared to The Qur'an, the Hadith has always been a warm and actual discussion. On one hand, it is a

reference in taking the Islamic laws, and on the other hand, the Hadith must withstand the critics given due to its inventory which is not the same as the Qur'an.

Talk about the Hadith usually will begin with the authenticity side of the Hadith, both as a teaching delivered by the Prophet Muhammad and as an Islamic literature. This authenticity matter is a necessary thing to be examined. Moreover, as what is stated before that the Prophet's Hadith has long time interval between the utterance (issued) and its bookkeeping. Although in some narrations it is stated that among the Prophet's companions there were those who were permitted to record the Hadiths obtained from the Prophet, but the first four caliphs did not approve it because they were afraid of making the people thought that those records were the Qur'an's revelations (Juynbol, 1999). Besides that, it is also necessary to know that as the Prophet's words, the Hadith is more narrated in meaning, so that such texts require in depth research.

The word criticism is a translation of the word naqd (نقد) which in popular Arabic means research, analysis, checking, and distinction. Meanwhile, according to the term, criticism means trying to find mistakes and mistakes in order to find the truth. According to the language, the word matan comes from the Arabic matan (متن) which means the back of the road (road face), high and hard ground. Meanwhile, according to the science of hadith, matan means the end of the sanad, namely the words of the Prophet Muhammad, which are mentioned after the sanad. In short, matan hadith is the content of hadith (Abbas, 2004; Bustamin, 2004). As for the Arabic language is "Matan" which means back of the road, or also can be called part of the land which is hard or protrudes upwards, while the matan hadith terms have a variety of different meanings which are essentially the same for the meaning, namely all the pronunciations or lessons contained in the hadith itself. A hadith scholar defines matan as the end of a sanad, which is filled with the words of the Prophet Muhammad. which is mentioned after the mention of sanad (Devi, 2020). According to al-Thibiy quoted by Hasyim Abbas, when it is arranged into matan al-hadith, as Musfir al-Damini narrates:

الفاظ الحدّث التي تتقّم بها العاوي

Meaning:

*Hadith words with which meanings are formed*

According to the opinion of other hadith experts, such as Ibn al-Jam ā'ah, matan is where a sanad ends in a sentence. Thus, in essence, the components of the sentence in the hadith matan are a picture of the conception of the actions of Rasulullah SAW, both in terms of utterances, actions or provisions of the contents of the hadith, which are symbolized through the texts of the hadith lafaz. Thāhir al-Jawābi defines criticism of hadith matans as an activity in researching hadiths that are saḥīḥ sanad, with the aim of knowing the truth and falsity of the hadith matan, also to avoid abstruse meanings, and to avoid differences between hadiths. -Saḥīḥ hadith using legal levels (Devi, 2020; Lutfi, 2013; Qomarullah, 2018).

There are two sides of Hadith study sources, namely sanad (external criticism) and matan (internal criticism). Etymologically, sanad means backrest, the place where we lean on. According to the Hadith expert, sanad means the way that conveys us to the matan of the Hadith (Ash-Shiddieqy, 1997) toward the sanad which means "the way that conveys us to the Hadith". Sanad is also called as Thariq (way) and wajah (face), thus if an Islamic scholar (ulama) says that this Hadith is known from this face, it also means from this way. In short, sanad of Hadith means what is mentioned before the Hadith (matan) (Ash-Shiddieqy, 1997). Whereas, etymologically, matan means the middle of the way, the back of the earth, or the hard and high earth, while terminologically, matan means Hadith words in which through those words formed the meaning, the Hadith's contents (Afrizal, 2016).

Matan hadith as the most important part of a hadith. At least it is through this matan that religious information is obtained. This is also part of Allah's command. as in Q.S. al-Nisa: 4/80:

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا

## Meaning

*He who obeys the Messenger thereby obeys Allah; as for he who turns away, We have not sent you as a keeper over them!* (Kementerian Agama, 2019).

Obedience of a person to his Messenger then he has actually obeyed his Lord. Thus, *matan* is important to study in order to understand its content and content in order to obtain its authenticity as the second source of Islamic religious teachings after the Al-Qur'an al-Karim. An example of criticism of *matan* that has been carried out by scholars is the *matan* hadith about the benefits of camel milk and urine for treating various diseases. Criticism of this hadith has been carried out from earlier scholars to contemporary muhadithin scholars. The critique method used also refers to the critique method of *matan* which has been standardized by previous muhaditsin scholars, that is, before researching the *matan*, one must first look at the quality of the sanad, examine the meaningful composition or pronunciation of the *matan*, and finally examine the meaning of the contents of the *matan*. Today's modern Muslim scientists in the research of the *matan* emphasize the meaning of the content of the *matan*, these scientists use science to prove the truth of the hadith's *matan* (Fridaus & Suryadilaga, 2019).

Since the time of Rasulullah SAW. still alive critique of the hadith *matan* actually already exists but in terms of its nature it is still very simple. This is because there are still many friends who are still alive, so that if a dispute or discrepancy arises in a hadith, the truth is directly asked to the person concerned, namely Rasulullah SAW. This stage is a strengthening process with the dream that Muslims feel comfortable and peaceful. To do criticism *matan* at the time of Rasulullah SAW. This sort of thing is still very easy to do, because the truth about the validity of a hadith lies in the hands of the Prophet himself. In contrast to after Rasulullah SAW. died, hadith criticism could no longer be carried out directly by asking the Prophet Muhammad again. However, ask the parties who also listened to or witnessed the hadith directly from the Prophet Muhammad. *Matan's* criticism at the time of the Prophet SAW. This aims to make Muslims believe more in a news sourced from the Prophet Muhammad. The purpose of re-checking a news or history by this friend is not based on suspicion, but only to ensure that the news or history he received is genuine from Rasulullah SAW. Therefore, it is not surprising that at the time of the Prophet criticism of this hadith is minimal and also still very limited in scope (Luthfi, 2013; Devi, 2020).

Sayyidah Aisyah r.a. has the privilege of intelligence, strong memorization, and has a lot of history. He also interpreted the hadith of Rasulullah saw to other female friends who did not understand. This happened before the Prophet himself. For people who don't think too far, when they hear the following history, they will judge that the advantages of Aisha as mentioned above are not true. The history referred to is, Aisyah r.a. heard Rasulullah SAW say: "No one is brought to account, but will be destroyed". This statement of the Prophet saw seemed odd to him, so he immediately asked: "O Messenger, didn't Allah Almighty say in al-Insyiqaq/84:7-8

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

## Meaning

*Whoever is given the Record in his right hand (7) shall be called to an easy accounting* (Kementerian Agama, 2019)

He replied: "That is a cursory examination (al-Ardh). But the one who is strictly examined is doomed to ruin. But the reality is quite another. History like that actually proves the intelligence of Aisyah r.a. and his ability to compare hadith with the Qur'an, as well as his courage to immediately ask questions when experiencing difficulty. Such things were indeed a special feature of his habit with such attitudes in the presence of the Prophet peace be upon him that made him possess sharp analytical powers and astonishing digestibility (Maswara, 2017).

*Matan's* criticism was also carried out by Amirul Mukminin Ali Bin Abi Talib. Abdullah bin Mas'ud was asked about a man who was married but had not yet confirmed how much dowry he would give, nor had he had intercourse with his wife, until he died. He replied: "The woman is entitled to receive mitsil dowry (i.e. equal to the amount of dowry received by her mother, or her sisters), without any more or

less. He must make 'iddah and still get the inheritance." Hearing that answer, Ma'qal bin Sinan al-Asyja'iy stood up and said: "Rasulullah saw. gave a verdict against Buru' bin Wasyiq, one of our women, like that." Spontaneously, Ibn Mas'ud was delighted, because he knew that his fatwa according to the fatwa of the Prophet Muhammad. With regard to the obligation of 'iddah and the right to inherit it does not exist dissent. However, regarding the issue of whether he is entitled to receive the mitsil dowry or not, there are differences of opinion. Ibn Mas'ud chose the first while Ali bin Abi Talib, Abdullah bin Umar and Zaid Thabit chose the second. Ali bin Abi Talib not only denied the woman's right to dowry, but also rejected Ma'qal bin Sinan's notification, and criticized her history. He said: "A'rabiyy's words that contradict the Book of Allah cannot be accepted. Thus, the reason Ali rejected the history was because it contradicted the Qur'an. Perhaps the verse he meant was the word of Allah SWT: "There is no obligation to pay a dowry for you, if you divorce your wives before you mix with them and before you determine the dowry. And you should give a mut'ah (gift) to them. People who are able according to their abilities and people who are poor according to their abilities (also), namely giving according to what is appropriate. Such is provision for those who do good in QS. Al-Baqarah/2: 236:

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ۖ وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدَرَهُ  
وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾

#### Meaning

*There is no blame if you divorce women before the marriage is consummated or the dowry is settled. But give them a 'suitable' compensation—the rich according to his means and the poor according to his. A reasonable compensation is an obligation on the good-doers (Kementerian Agama, 2019)*

In this verse, it is explained that women who are divorced before intercourse and have not yet determined the dowry are not entitled to receive a dowry. This has become the consensus of the scholars (ijma).

A further consequence of these factors requires a necessity to conduct a study about sanad and matan of Hadith in its position as hujjah. By conducting the criticism activities on the Hadith, its authenticity can be accounted for. To find out the authenticity of a Hadith, a critic can use the science of hadith (Anis et al., 1996; Nadhiran, 2014). The science is related to the Hadith research methodology. Through this science, it will be assessed how the strength (capability) of a Hadith to be used as a source of law, both in terms of truth transmission, and in terms of validity, as an action that comes from the Prophet, the companions, and the followers (tabi'in).

There are five variables that become the center of attention to conduct a study on sanad of Hadith: the first, the connection of sanad of a Hadith, the second, the knowledge on the justice integrity of the Hadith's narrator, the third, the knowledge on the intellectual capacity of the Hadith's narrator (dhabith), the fourth, the sanad avoidance from syudzudz (peculiarity), and the fifth, the Hadith's sanad is protected from illat (deformity). According to Shuhudi Ismail, "those five major principles can be compressed on the first three principles, while the fourth and the fifth principles are included in the minor principles.

Whereas, with regard to matan, it is found in two main variables (major), the first, there is no peculiarity (syudzudz), and the second, there is no deformity (illat).

On the principle of sanad criticism, its accuration level is very high. Basically, the Hadith scholars give such a big attention on the study of sanad. Whereas, for matan criticism, as a matter of fact, it does not get the same portion as what sanad gets. It can be seen from many Hadith books that describe mainly about the validity criteria of Hadith sanad. It is because many Hadith scholars generally consider that the validity of a sanad is sufficient enough to give valid predicate on a Hadith, in another sense that the validity of a sanad will automatically reflect the validity of matan, so that sanad becomes the validity barometer of a Hadith. Even though this prevalence is actually untrue, there are four forms (conditions) that can be obtained about the validity relation of matan and sanad.

Firstly; the Hadith may have valid sanad as well as its matan, so that the Hadith is absolutely valid. Secondly; sanad and matan of the Hadith are both deformities (weak) so automatically the Hadith is not valid. Thirdly; matan of the Hadith is valid, but its sanad is weak (deformity), so that the Hadith must be considered as weak (deformity) because basically, Hadith is valid due to its valid narration. Fourthly; the condition in which the sanad of the Hadith is valid, but its matan is weak, the Hadith must be considered as weak. This fourth condition requires the Islamic scholars' accuracy which is not only limited to the Hadith scholars, but in all areas, because the Hadith materials have multi dimension. According to al-Adlabi, the Hadith scholars on their judgement may consider the narrator as *tsiqah* but as human being, the narrator who is considered as *tsiqah* may have done mistake or unintentional negligence. And it is not something that absurd or even real. However, if those considered as *tsiqah* are strengthening by valid matan, the assumption (*dzan*) on it can increase to become *'ilm* (confession). Therefore, the only sanad validity is not the guarantee of validation of Hadith; it also needs the validation of its matan.

Some Islamic scientists consider that the Hadith scholars ignore the criticism on Hadith's matan. This opinion is pioneered by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Rasyid Ridha and Muhammad Taufiq Shidqi in Egypt, which in turn, this argument is widely adopted by the Hadith critics. According to Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the Hadith scholars have two tasks: assessing whether the Hadith narrators can be trusted (for example, critic on sanad), and examining the contents of the Hadith (*matan*). Due to the difficulty in the first task, they never reach the second task. The further Islamic scholars are failed in finding out this weakness in their works because they are impressed by their achievements and treat their works as if they are free from mistake.

Many critics follow the tract of Sayyid Ahmad Khan. They state that the Hadith scholars only pay attention on the continuity of narrations and the characters of the narrators so that they completely ignore the Hadith main materials and failed in finding out the internal or historical evidence. Therefore, Jayपुरi, one of the Hadith critics from India, states that the Hadith scholars do not neglect such criticism so that they deflect it through creative explanation (*takwil*). They just pretend keeping on the principles that the Hadith should not be conflicted with the Qur'an and the mind. Instead of rejecting such Hadith, they seek every effort to interpret difficult Hadiths so as to eliminate visible conflicts.

Thaha Jabir al-Wani also has the same mark that basically, the effort and attention given by the Hadith scholars on matan are not comparable with the big attention given to sanad, so that the matter of the scientific method and framework to learn and study about a matan and Hadith contextualization in the field of time, culture, and reality become a very urgent matter to be discussed. Whereas Salah al-Din al-Adlabi marks that basically the Hadith scholars also state about the necessity of Hadith matan criticism, but they only able to theoretically formulate it but it is lack of implementation (Munir, 2020; Kusnandar, 2020). This is due to their limitation in assessment and some of them more prioritize *takwil* (creative interpretation) method in matan which is considered as deformity even though it seems too much forced, and there is jeopardy to criticize the Hadith considered having valid sanad.

Based on the above statements, it seems that the contemporary scholars (Hadith criticism) agree that the result from classical Hadith criticism is not fully adequate; finally, there are some of them have an extreme thought and reject all Hadiths and only use the Qur'an as the only one guidance for the Moslems. As for the popular and optimistic insight that the valid Hadith can be rediscovered by correcting classical Hadith criticism such as checking the contents of the Hadith (*matan*) by implementing the principles created by the Hadith scholars, completing and implementing them consistently. Such thought is most adopted by the contemporary Islamic thinkers such as Rasyid Ridha, Muhammad Abduh, and Syekh Muhammad al-Ghazali.

As for the thinker (Syekh Muhammad al-Ghazali) whom is the last mentioned by the writer who has published several books related to above discussion in which in his works, he criticized the Hadith most through its matan and tried to reveal the Islamic side that is more innovative and compromise. Even one of his works entitled *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiah baina ahli al-Fiqh wa ahli al-hadith* has made a polemic among the Islamic scientists, but ultimately this thought could be accepted by the majority of the Islamic world.

## Conclusion

If needed to be discussed completely, the discussion about the thinking development on the Hadith authenticity requires thousands of pieces to discuss about it. This simple discussion is not enough, but through this simple discussion, it can be concluded that the interaction of Moslems with the Prophet's Hadith is very dynamic. The attention of it was not very big at the beginning of Islam because the Prophet was still alive and lived around them at that time as the living Islam (the source of everything), but in the period after the Prophet's death, the attention to the Hadith increased rapidly. The contemporary Islamic thinkers assume that the Hadith scholars have not given great attention to matan criticism as what in sanad has. The critic opportunity is still opened on the Prophet's authenticity by using internal criticism (matan of Hadith), as long as using the right methodology as the Hadith scholars have explained.

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