Adaptation Of Authentic Hadith Requirements As A Method Of Determining The Authenticity Of Islamic Information Communication

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Abstract

The condition of authentic hadith is the method of 'ulum al-hadith outlined by the muhaddithīn (hadith scholars) to determine the degree of authentic hadith. This is to ensure that a hadith is protected from distortion and falsification. Knowledge such as this requirement is designed to justify the authenticity of the process of transferring hadith matan (text of hadith) through the correct sanad (chain of narration). This study found that these conditions can be adapted as determinants of the authenticity of Islamic information. Therefore, this paper has two main objectives. The first objective is to identify the requirements of authentic hadith. Meanwhile, the second objective is to analyse the requirements to be adopted in the method to determine the authenticity of Islamic information communication. Content analysis and library methods were used to address both issues. In conclusion, it is found that the elements of requirements of authentic hadith, namely continuous chain of narration, impartiality of the narrator, excellence of the narrator's memory, and there is no doubt on the sanad and matan can be used as a method to determine the authenticity of Islamic information communication..

Index Terms: Requirements of authentic hadith, authenticity of information communication, Islamic communication

1. Introduction

Communication has been a nature of human since the beginning of human creation and it keeps on growing to this day. As a proof, Allah SWT highlights His communication with human beings from the spirit of realm through His words:

Meaning: *And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ''Am I not your Lord?'' They said, ''Yes, we have testified.''*

(Al-A'raaf 7:172)

Communication is a process that involves the sender, receiver and understanding of the message [1]. These three components are interrelated to each other and cannot be viewed individually. Moreover, John Kotter said that communication is the transmission of information materials with a specific message through a channel or media to the said recipient [2]. From the Islamic point of view, there are similarities between the definition of communication according to the Muslim and western scholars in terms of the process of transmitting or disseminating the information. Only Islamic communication is more universal because it emphasises on the

relationship with Allah, the relationship between human beings and the relationship between beings, as emphasised in the Quran and hadith [3].

Hadith, on the other hand, does include the aspect of communication in general. The Islamic teachings manifested by the Prophet SAW have been conveyed to mankind via communication [4] & [5]. The history of human civilisation does acknowledge that there is no reporting process that is so strict and professional as applied by Muslims [6]. This is also acknowledged by a western scholar, William A. Graham who revealed that the system of *sanad* (chain of narration) plays a crucial role in Islam because the truth is not subject to only documentation, in fact it is the outcome of individual encounters with other individuals [7]. Looking at the organised method to regulate the authenticity of the hadith, it is advisable for the knowledge to be adopted to determine the authenticity of Islamic information.

2. Research Problems

Although many people think that communication is something that is feasible, in fact, it is difficult to practise an effective communication process and often, there are misunderstandings in communication [8] & [9]. The study conducted by Wan Abdullah, Wan Yusnee and Zaharuddin Abd Rahman stated that failure in communication stems from inefficient and dynamic communication management, lack of communicators to disseminate Islamic messages, failure to comply with the views of scholars based on the Quran and al-Sunnah, and the existing Islamic communicators have failed to live up to the demands of da'wah [10] & [11]. Consequently, the religion of Islam is tainted by dogmatic views, deemed to be absurd and there is a concern with the portrayal of Islam as a complicated and inconsistent religion in terms of practicality. Muslims are obliged to preserve integrity and be responsible to honour the task entrusted to them verbally and with action in spreading the news. However, most of the Muslims fail to digest this aspect properly [12]. As a result, there is lack of communication among the community due to the ignorance and this is getting worse.

Moreover, for decades, the field of communication study has been dominated by the western perspectives, either focusing on the Western European or North American perspectives [4]. In the first place, al-Barzinji slammed the ideology of media communication left behind by the western colonialism, and he insisted that the theory is not suitable to be practised in the Muslim world [13]. However, some of the third-class countries perceive imitating the western model will bring great benefits and outcome. But it turns out that the benefits are too little, in fact in some cases the local community and culture are compromised due to the western principles. Thus, in line with his suggestion for to implement the model of Islamic media as a new approach in the study of the Islamic world, this paper attempts to adopt the requirements of authentic hadith as the latest platform to determine the authenticity of information in Islam. Therefore, this paper aims to identify the requirements of authentic hadith and analyse those requirements to be adopted as a method to determine the authenticity of the Islamic communication of information.

3. Research Methodology

Two methods were used in this study, namely the library method and text analysis. Both methods are used systematically to facilitate the researcher in providing a clear picture and obtain the required data accurately. In this study, the researcher used sources from the early Islamic literature which is muktabar (venerable) to obtain information on the requirements of authentic hadith. Later, the thought of muhaddithīn (hadith scholars) was adjusted to create a method to determine the authenticity of Islamic communication of information.

4. Requirements of Authentic Hadith

In epistimology, sahīh means secured and well-preserved from any dishonour and doubt [14]. On the other hand, in terms of terminology, many muhaddīthin provide their own definition in terms of the authentic hadith concept.

Among them, is Imam al-Syāfi`ī, he highlighted, ''If the hadith is narrated by a thiqah (reliable person), the narration is from the thiqah and ends to the Prophet SAW, then of course the hadith is from the Prophet SAW'' [15].

Imam Muslim stated in his preface to authentic hadith, ''hadiths that are (1) the most preserved from any form of flaws and the most virtuous as compared to other hadith are achieved by ensuring (2) the narrator shall be deemed to be in the group who are faithful to study hadith and thorough (itqan) in narration that (3) there shall be no severe contradictions and (4) dire confusion in their narrations, as have been found in most narrators and this is apparent in the narrations of their hadith'' [16].

Although each muhaddithin has their own parameters in terms of authentic hadith, Ibn Shalāh managed to sum up the definition of the authentic hadith requirements agreed upon by the scholars afterwards. It is

highlighted that an authentic hadith is a hadith in which its chain of narrators is continuous, quoted by a narrator who is impartial and dhabt (perfect in memorisation and preservation), from a narrator who is also impartial and dhabt until the end of the sanad. Moreover, it is not syāz and has no ʿillah (flaws) [17]. Based on the definition, there are five requirements of authentic hadith that are agreed upon by the scholars, namely:

1. Continuous sanad

ʿAlī Ibrāhīm Saʿud ʿAjīn mentions the 22nd Rule in the Rules of *ʿulum al-hadith*, in which ''a continuous *sanad* is one of the requirements for the hadith to be accepted'' [18].

Continuous *sanad* means a student receives hadith from his teacher directly without intermediaries via one of the methods of receiving hadith such as listening from his teacher and so on [18]. To know the authenticity of a hadith, one of the criteria is ''معرفة المتصل''. This means the continuity of the chain, that is, each narrator listens from the previous narrator to the end of the *sanad* [17].

Ittishāl al-sanad means a person takes a hadith from the sheikhs and narrates it in a chain of narrators from his sheikh with the method of receiving *tahammul*, which is *muktabar* from the perspective of hadith scholars [19]. The first characteristic of an authentic hadith is that the narrator has to narrate (mention) the hadith from his teacher, then his teacher narrates the source of the hadith from the previous recipient and this continues to the generation of *tabiʿīn*. Then, the generation of *tabiʿīn* has to narrate hadith from the companions of RA, it either stops there or the companions of RA did narrate from Rasulullah SAW [17].

2. Impartiality of narrator

Impartiality is a word borrowed from the Arabic, in which `Adalah is a word derived (*masdar*) from `adala (عدل). A person who is impartial among the members of the society is the one whose words and decisions are deemed reliable by the public [20]. From the perspective of *ʿulum al-hadith*, an impartial narrator must be equipped with these values:

2.1 Islam

A person who narrates a hadith must be a Muslim at the time of narration. If the person had listened to the hadith before being a Muslim and then narrated the hadith once he had converted to Islam, the hadith is accepted. For instance, a hadith recorded by Imam Al-Bukhārī from Abū Sufyān bin Harb RA, in which a Roman leader, Harqal had met with him and a merchant from Quraish to ask about the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The conversation took place when Abū Sufyān bin Harb had not yet embraced Islam [21].

2.2 Baligh

This is because puberty is the stage at which a person is held accountable for fulfilling the sharia matters and obligatory things. This requirement is also applicable at the time the hadith was narrated by the narrator. If he had listened to a hadith prior to puberty and narrates it after puberty, the hadith is accepted.

2.3 Sane

A person of sound mind is important for the truth and accuracy of his words to be determined. Those who are not of sound mind are unable to articulate their words properly.

2.4 Free from the elements of fasiq

Fasiq refers to someone who disregards the commandments of Allah by committing major sins and behaving wickedly [22]. From the perspective of the *muhaddithīn*, the wicked are those who have committed major sins, get used in committing minor sins and succumb to heresy. Thus, this takes into account the characteristic of the narrator. For a hadith to be accepted, the narrator must not commit major sins, does not commit minor sins repeatedly and stays away from heresy.

2.5 Preserving dignity

Dignity means self-respect and dignity [22]. The dignity from the point of view of *muhaddithīn* is the manners of human that are nurtured with good morals and nice traditions [23]. Hence, the preservation of dignity is contrary to bad behaviour and violates the societal traditions.

Perfect Memorisation

From the linguistic point of view, *dhabt* means to be conditioned to something, to stick to it, to take care of it and do not even leave it behind. *Dhabt* means an individual who remains steadfast, resolute, and firm [24].

In terms of muhadditīn, *dhabt* is the nature of a narrator who remains vigilant and not careless in his memorisation, if he narrates hadith using his memorisation, or being particular (*itqan*) if he narrates the hadith via his writing and knows the meaning of the hadith if the hadith is not narrated via words [19], [14] & [17]. The aspect of *dhabt* of a narrator is measured via two aspects, namely memorisation by heart or in terms of writing.

3.1 Perfect memorisation by heart

This means a narrator who manages to memorise the hadith once he has listened to it and is able to convey it at any time.

3.2 Perfect writing of kitab

This means the narrator keeps his notes from being lost, stolen, altered or misappropriated, from the moment he jotted the hadith down to the time he was asked to present his notes.

4. Safe from syāz

Syāz (الشاذ) from a linguistic point of view carries the meaning of solitude and a state of seclusion [24]. A hadith narrated by a *thiqah* narrator, yet contradicts other narrators who are more *thiqah* than him [14]. *Syāz* also encompasses *thiqah* narrators as opposed to the *thiqah* narrators who are more prominent in terms of memorisation, diligence or the larger number of other *thiqah* narrators.

There are three main categories or debates about *syāz* namely (1) the contradiction between a *thiqah* narrator and those who are more reliable than him, (2) being secluded in terms of reliability and (3) the narrator had absolutely narrated the hadith alone. In other words, the hadith has only one chain of narration [19].

5. Safe from `illah

In terms of language, the meanings of *'illah* are associated with being ill and weak, and an obstruction that prevents its source, or the occurrence of a thing that prevents a person from dealing with him [20].

However, the meaning of *'illah* in the field of hadith in terms of word: "An expression that shows the hidden reasons that are vague which the hadith being criticised''. Meanwhile, hadith *mu'allal* is a hadith that has been reviewed, in which there is *'illah* for the hadith to be criticised for its authenticity but on the surface, the hadith is safe from' illah. Looking at the *isnad* (chain of authorities attesting to the authenticity of the hadith) of the narrators who are *thiqah*, in which all the requirements of authentic hadith are deemed as *al-jami'* (being gathered) on the surface [17].

5. Developing A Method To Determine The Authenticity Of Islamic Communication Of Information According To The Requirements Of Authentic Hadith

Looking at the requirements of authentic hadith being highlighted, all the requirements can be adopted to the elements of communication, especially when it comes to source and message. The requirements for a hadith to be authentic are used in communication modelling as follows:

Figure 1: An effective communication model is based on the requirements of authenticity of hadith

requirements of authentic hadith

effective communication model
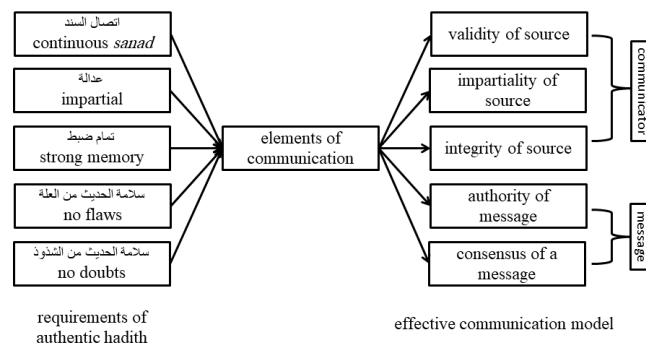
1. Authenticity of source

The first item produced is adapted the first requirement of authentic hadith, which is *sanad* (continuous chain). In the dynamics of the field of *'ulum al-hadith*, *sanad* is the chain of narration (source) that connects to the Prophet. The narration of *sanad* in the study of hadith means to transmit the hadith and its *sanad* from its source by using distinctive expressions such as *haddathanī* or *akhbaranī* or *sami'tu minhu* and others [25].

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A message is deemed acceptable when it combines the sources of the information available. The chain of *sanad* is implemented in the current academic tradition, resembling quotations or references from the previous scholars [26]. For a writing to be considered trustworthy, it has to highlight the source from which the author obtained information. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

Narrated Abdullah ibn Abbas: *The Prophet* (PBUH) *said*:*You hear (from me), and others will hear from you; and people will hear from them who heard from you.*

(Hadith narrated by Abū Dāwud, Kitāb al-ʿIlm, 4/3659)

Focusing on this aspect, a communicator must know the source of the message being delivered in which the expression is clear. This is because the reputation of a message can be affected if the transfer of the message is disrupted, depending on the degree of disruption in communication. For example, the recipient had listened to the message in a noisy environment, because this will affect the reception of the message.

2. Impartiality of source

Impartiality of source refers to the nature of a narrator, who should be impartial in receiving and conveying the hadith. *Al-ʿadalah* means balanced, a pure heart that rejects wickedness and there is no doubt that the person is being honest [24]. *ʿAdalah* in mustalah al-hadith means the habits that cause someone to stick to the values of taqwa and dignity. Taqwa means a narrator has been aware to stay away from the sins of shirk, wickedness, and heresy. The act of preserving dignity is a behaviour that is deemed good from the social perspective and Islamic religion such as being generous, act accordingly, being truthful, besides avoiding shameful and dirty acts [27].

Therefore, effective communication needs to be evaluated from the aspect of source impartiality. Source impartiality means the communicator of the message has to be credible. This matter covers the aspects of piety and morality of the communicator, such as not committing major sins and does not repeat minor sins. This is in line with what Allah SWT says:

Meaning: *O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is [fully] Aware of what you do.*

(Al-Maaidah 5:8)

3. Integrity of Source

Adapted from the concept of *dhabt*, a narrator has to be capable to preserve the hadith either through memorisation or notes [2]. An effective communicator is able to narrate the message as it has been received. The concept of *dhabt* includes several things [28] such as:

3.1 The narrator's memory.

A narrator is deemed *thiqah* when he manages to memorise well. Therefore, a communicator who strives to preserve the message being delivered can reinforce the authenticity of the message.

3.2 Mukhalafah

The integrity of a narrator is also assessed through his nature, whether his opinions are being disagreed upon or being debated a lot. Differences in opinion and futile debates can tarnish the credibility of a communicator.

3.3 Waham

Waham in general refers to a narrator who often makes mistakes and his memorisation gets mixed up with other things [23]. The reputation of a narrator is compromised when his memorisation or writing is mixed up with other things. In contrast to the *mutqin* (trusted) narrator, not all hadith from the waham narrator are accepted, except in the chapters of *targhīb* and *tarhīb*, *zuhud* and manners. Therefore, communicators who often make mistakes in conveying the message, the messages from him are not taken into account, except for certain things only. Matters related to religion and facts will be reviewed in advance.

3.4 Mistakes and scrutiny

There is no doubt that a narrator is just an ordinary human being who is not free from mistakes. However, when it comes to hadith, mistakes in the aspect of memorisation or notes must be avoided for a narrator to achieve the level of *thiqah*. Likewise, for a message to be adapted, if the mistake is so great as to change the original context, the message must be rejected. In fact, even the small mistake in writing or conveying the

message shall be prevented even if the error is due to the aspect of language, this can cause the public to question the credibility of a communicator if he keeps making mistakes.

4. Authority of message

Majority of scholars highlight one of the requirements for a hadith to be deemed authentic is the absence of *'illah*, that is, the hadith does not have any hidden flaws that are difficult to verify unless after deliberate research. [3]. Likewise, if a communicator is conveying the knowledge, the knowledge does not only contain information but it must be free from the elements of ignorance and prejudice influenced by the devil, this lead to the higher level of piety from a communicator to his Creator, Allah SWT. Knowledge is associated with absolute good deed and truth. Imam al-Syāfi`ī once mentioned that knowledge is deemed as light and will not be granted to those people who commit evil [30]. The difference between knowledge and information is mentioned in the Quran, Allah SWT says:

Meaning: *O you who have believed! O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.*

(Surah al-Hujurat, 49:6)

Therefore, effective communication shall be in line with truth and the validity and authenticity of the information have to be assessed.

5. Consensus of a message

A hadith is also not deemed authentic if there is an element of *syāz* in terms to the hadith materials. No *syāz* means that the hadith conveyed by a narrator is not odd or contradictory with other hadith narrated by a narrator who is more *thiqah* than him [29]. When it comes to communication, there is a reference frame element which means the scope of experience and knowledge that can be shared between the source and the recipient about the communication topic. Communication does not take place successfully when the recipient and the source do not have the similar reference frame [31]. Islam cautions how dangerous it is when fitnah (slander) is spread among the public. Any information or news received must be verified by the authorities before being made public.

Any issues encountered in understanding the information in a bigger picture also lead to disputes. Therefore, to avoid such a situation, Islam recommends that every information obtained must be validated by the authorised party so that the truth of the news communicated can be further refined and agreed by all the communities involved [30]. Allah SWT says:

Meaning: *And when there comes to them something [i.e., information] about [public] security or fear, they spread it around. But if they had referred it back to the Messenger or to those of authority among them, then the ones who [can] draw correct conclusions from it would have known about it. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except for a few.*

(Surah al-Nisa', 4:83)

Therefore, Muslims are accountable to verify the truth of any news or information once they have received it. Individuals who make their own assessment of the information received should be ascertained or referred to the source or authority so that truth can be reached and agreed upon.

6. Acknowledgments

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