An Analysis on the Factors Behind Misuse of Spreading Hadith in YouTube

Nurul Nasuhah Razali[1], Mesbahul Hoque Chowdury[2] & Nur Saadah Hamisan@Khair[2]

[1]Postgraduate Student, Faculty of Quran and Sunnah, Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM), [2]Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Quran and Sunnah, Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM)
Corresponding Authors Email: hahusan95@gmail.com

Abstract
Hadith serves as a vital source of guidance for Muslims, alongside the Quran. It refers to the narration about the life of Prophet Muhammad, including his sayings, actions, tacit approval, and descriptions of his physical features and moral characteristics. The importance of hadith in current era could be seen in the rapid sharing of hadith in the social media. While social media offers an accessible medium for the spread of Islamic teachings, it has also become a space where hadith can be misrepresented or falsified for various reasons, including political, theological, or personal gains. Therefore, this study examines the factors contributing to the misuse of hadith on social media, with a particular focus on YouTube. It was chosen due to its wide usage of users on long duration video learning and gaining knowledge or information which is convenient and still relevant despite of any new platform developed today such as TikTok which focusing only on 15 seconds to 10 minutes video contents. As a qualitative study, this study applies content analysis by analyzing selected documents from library research and video data in YouTube which investigates the factors behind the misuse of hadith. The outcomes highlight the implications of this issue and emphasize the need for further scholarly attention to ensure the preservation of authentic hadith teachings in the new media age.
Keywords: Misuse, Hadith, Fake News, Social Media, YouTube, Content Code.

Introduction
The Hadith, as the recorded words, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), stand as Islam's second most sacred textual foundation, shaping Muslim belief, law, and daily practice for over fourteen centuries. Islamic scholars have historically safeguarded these traditions through meticulous verification methods, scrutinizing chains of transmission and textual integrity to preserve their authenticity. Yet today, this carefully maintained tradition faces unprecedented challenges in the digital age, where platforms like YouTube—

accessed by billions—have become primary sources of religious learning for Muslims worldwide.

The democratization of religious discourse through social media, while expanding access to Islamic knowledge, has also introduced serious risks. Unlike classical scholarly circles where Hadith were transmitted under strict epistemological standards, digital platforms prioritize engagement over accuracy, allowing unverified, miscontextualized, or even fabricated narrations to spread at alarming rates. This phenomenon carries profound consequences: individual believers may unknowingly base their faith practices on unreliable sources, while communities face heightened sectarian tensions fueled by polemical content. The issue extends beyond theology—political actors, commercial entities, and ideological groups increasingly exploit religious narratives for their own ends, distorting Hadith to serve agendas far removed from traditional Islamic scholarship.

This study emerges from a pressing need to reconcile time-honored methods of Hadith authentication with the realities of digital knowledge consumption. While previous research has examined Islamic discourse online, few works have systematically analyzed how YouTube's unique ecosystem—its recommendation algorithms, monetization policies, and content moderation practices—enables and amplifies Hadith misuse. The platform's global reach demands urgent attention; what appears as a simple video-sharing service has, in practice, become a battleground for religious authority, where authentic scholarship competes with sensationalized or manipulative content for viewers' attention.

The importance of this research extends to multiple audiences. For Muslim communities, it highlights the necessity of digital religious literacy in an era where anyone can broadcast "Islamic" content regardless of qualifications. For Islamic educators and institutions, the findings underscore the imperative to adapt classical pedagogical approaches to contemporary media landscapes. Platform developers and policymakers may benefit from its insights when designing more nuanced content governance systems that respect religious sensitivities while upholding free expression. Technologists working on AI solutions for religious content verification will find valuable interdisciplinary bridges between traditional Hadith sciences and modern computational methods.

At its core, this study seeks not merely to critique current shortcomings, but to propose constructive pathways forward. By understanding how and why Hadith misuse occurs on YouTube—whether through well-intentioned but misinformed sharing or deliberate manipulation—we can develop more effective safeguards. These might include educational initiatives to help viewers critically assess online religious content, technological tools that flag potentially problematic narrations, or policy frameworks that better balance open discourse with religious authenticity. Such solutions must be rooted in both respect for Islamic scholarly tradition and clear-eyed engagement with digital media's transformative power.

As this paper will demonstrate, the stakes extend far beyond academic debate. In an increasingly digitized Muslim world, where young believers often encounter their faith through screens rather than scholarly circles, ensuring the reliable transmission of Prophetic

teachings has become one of the most urgent challenges facing contemporary Islam. This research aims to contribute meaningfully to that vital endeavor.

Misuse of Hadith Factors
Misuse of hadith on YouTube occurs in several forms and circumstances, such as ignoring the principles of narration, hadith dissemination principles (i.e. without references) or without *sanad*, misinterpretation, incomplete *matan*, adding personal explanations to *dalil* or exaggeration.

Analysis was conducted on previous studies and field studies to identify general and specific factors in the misuse of hadith on YouTube. Based on the data obtained, the author rearranged and divided the factors into two main parts, namely general factors and specific factors.

General Factors
There are several divisions of science of hadith which is the science of hadith narrators (*Ulum Ruwat al-Hadith*), the knowledge about narrating hadith (*Ulum Riwayat al-Hadith*), and the knowledge of acceptance and rejection of hadith (Baru, 2017). The scope of a hadith is based on the origin, cause, *asbab* and, *musabab*. This study identifies YouTube as an independent variable, its related environment is indirectly involved in the discussions on the misuse of hadith factors.

Media Influence Factors (Operator)
YouTube is one of the new media platforms developed by Google in the form of an application and it is an independent variable. YouTube facilities are used by the public for various purposes in social media and a platform for anyone to present their ideas, thoughts or knowledge, and it makes it feasible and convenient for Internet users to access videos (Wen-Yu, 2019). Additionally, users' perceptions of a post's usefulness influence their preferences for information technology usage (Bhattacherjee & Premkumar, 2004). Among the main purposes of using YouTube is communication, namely sending and receiving messages visually, audio and textually. Modality refers to the different kinds of presentation, such as audio and video (Siapera, 2018). It provides an opportunity for the dissemination of hadith to take place widely. Any user around the world can produce videos or become a content creator in YouTube or nowadays it is called 'YouTuber'.

Users as Content Creator/Producers Account Operators
In media studies, the term "UCC," or user-created content, describes the type of material that users purposefully create, typically with the aim of other users consuming it (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013). Users as content creators can publish or share information by uploading video footage of coverage, replays, reacting to productions and also becoming broadcasters of video content worldwide. Distributors earn revenue from YouTube operators/developers based on the analytic data calculation system through the number of views, likes and subscriptions by the audience. Therefore, content creators will ensure that their accounts are always growing by providing a variety of creative content on a specific topic. Someone who creates and posts films, music, sounds, pictures, and text online is more active and appears to be a producer or 'produser' (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013).

Figure 1 below shows the rough flow of YouTube content, which explains the process from the perspective of a user (content creator) to the result of uploading Hadith content in YouTube.
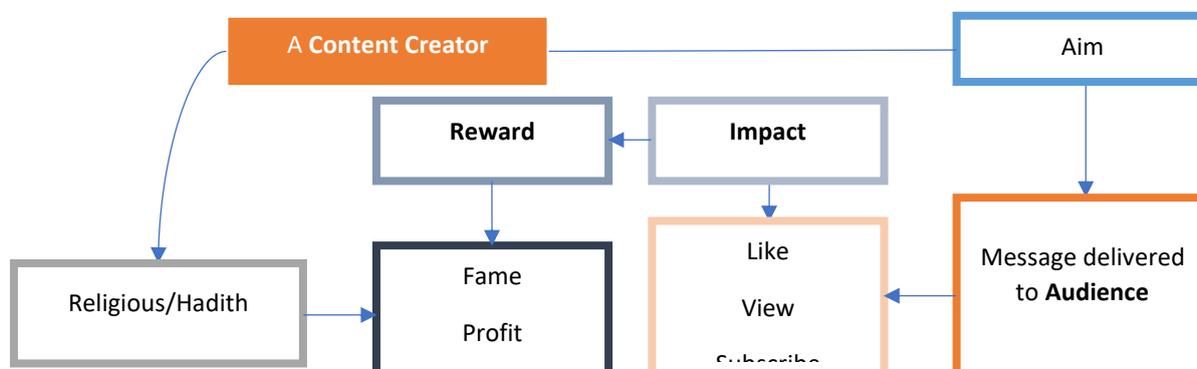

Figure 1: Flow of YouTube Content

Public as User/Viewer Account Operator (Audience)
Generally, users of this application who act as recipients/viewers obtain information by browsing and watching videos to get information, or entertainment only. In addition to being informative, the YouTube social media application also has interactive features such as providing a reaction space in the web interface of videos being watched (discussion/comment section, like button, share button, etc). All of these features of the YouTube application are the main attraction and concentration of users with widespread dissemination (viral). The material produced by their users is the sole reason that many social media platforms, such as Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube, to mention a few, exist. These websites, which are more services or "platforms" than genuine content creation locations, profit off the sale of attention, which is acquired by the social and creative labour of its users (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013). *YouTube* is one of the most popular social media among Gen Zers and is expanding for that demographic. It is also the second-largest social network where Millennials gather, despite slightly declining usage among Millennials (Jarboe, 2023). It is one of the general factors in the dissemination of hadiths in social media.

Dissemination/Sharing of Hadith Topics
Among the topics used as content are related to the universal pattern of life such as religion, politics, science, education, economy, development, current issues, etc. The broadcasting genre has no limits, opening up space for the audience to determine their choice. Due the use of YouTube has received a tremendous response from audiences around the world, many recordings and coverage covering various topics and issues have been uploaded, resulting in an unfiltered data storage. *YouTube* offers a platform for sharing videos with a variety of themes and lengths, including short, medium, and long. This causes the audience to favor its use in specific contexts (Abdul Rahman, 2024).

Hadith is one of the topics that is widely used in various broadcasts due to the high number of viewings. Al-Qur'an and Hadith knowledge on social media portrays something different than in the books. The difference can be in the form of appearance, presentation style or language used, so that the Al-Qur'an and Hadith on social media seem to be more appealing

than the books and easier to understand. Social media is a very effective media in conveying something (Jamal &Sawaluddin, 2018). From a religious perspective, in particular, video coverage or replays that discuss hadith are also posted online (uploaded) by certain parties. The overflow of videos about hadith is too much and makes it difficult for agencies or authorities to control such activities. Especially when the videos are uploaded not only from within the country but also from around the world.

Therefore, broadcasters/content creators focus on dissemination and broadcasting efforts. Some of the broadcasters/content creators consist of groups with a background in hadith knowledge and some are from the general public. According to Bhattacherjee & Sanford (2006), the perceived usefulness of posts, as regards relieving or educative benefits, is related to the perceptions derived from personal or professional judgments of such posts. Understanding the *hadith* must have sufficient knowledge. The aspects and variations of *hadith* texts should also be fully understood. In addition, other aspects such as, related to the Prophet's function when delivering a *hadith*, and the reasons behind its appearance should also be taken into consideration in understanding the *hadith*. Understanding the *hadith* in order to achieve the correct meaning as required by Islamic teachings which should require qualified knowledge and a wise attitude (Ikhrom, 2015).

Specific Factors
Apart from discussing the relationship between the environment and the broadcasting site and its policies, the involvement of visual broadcasting consisting of organizers, broadcasters and presenters are among the individuals responsible for producing a production. Against the backdrop of the Muslim community, hadith is the basis for a support for a scientific message that is broadcast as argument for a debate. Finding the right argument actually requires two key components: first, it must be true; second, the methodology for identifying the true argument must be based on three criteria: (i) understanding that is error-free; (ii) safe from opposition; and (iii) safe from copying (Salim Bazmul, 2014). The subject of Hadith knowledge and its underpinnings is the first point. The principles of Hadith interpretation are the subject of the second point. Limiting knowledge and its fundamentals is crucial for comprehending the Prophet PBUH's Hadith.

Personal Interest
Using hadith for personal interest in order to gain support or profit, in other terms (unofficial) it is called *religious rider*. "Riding" religion has the dual effects of confusing and creating misunderstandings about religion in the community, in addition to defaming religion (Noordin, 2023).

Power of Influence or Gaining Support from Muslim Followers
The misuse of hadith is clearly evident when a hadith is used on a personal debates which is not aligned with the stand of Islam. The priority of the goal in gaining support to expand influence through the concept of persuasion often ignores the principles of the method in delivering hadith, narration and also the interpretation of hadith. Examples of visual forms based on such factors are as follows.

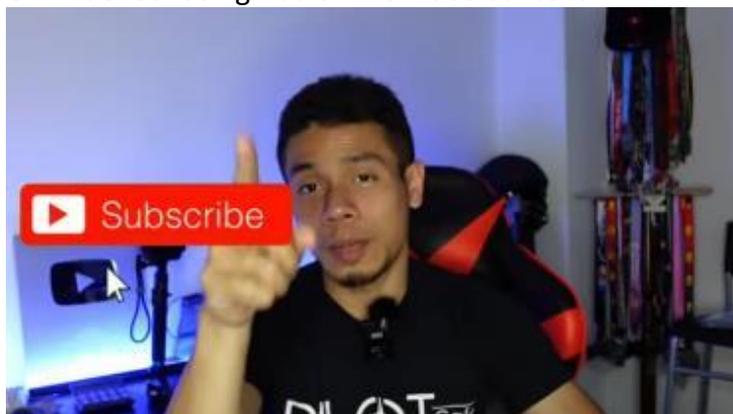Figure 2: Example of influencer using Hadith in a video content.

Figure 3: Example of the same influencer asking the viewers to subscribe.

Business Advertising or Donation

There are even those who falsify hadiths to advertise their merchandise (Razak & Rais Lathief, 1966). The use of specific hadiths in advertising on YouTube has also attracted attention. It has been gazetted as a prohibition in the MCMC guidelines because it can cause harm from other aspects. In 4.3 (b) of Content Code (2022), under the Act of Decency and Sensitivity; Advertisements shall not contain statements, audio or visual presentations that are offensive to the standards of decency prevailing among those who are likely to be exposed to them. Subject to sensitivities relating to religion and ethnicity, the fact that a particular product is offensive to some people is not sufficient grounds for objecting to an Advertisement for it.

The use of Islamic attributes in marketing and labelling of products is increasingly popular and widespread in the Malaysian market (Osman, 2020). Advertising requires a fleeting nature and persuasive techniques, making relying on hadiths only an attraction factor for Muslims to buy a product. Osman asserts that whatever it is said as the efficacy of the Qur'an, so many believe that without prior inspection. Examples of visual forms based on such factors are as follows:

Figure 4: Example of Avertising using Hadith.

Figure 5: Example of donation campaign using advertisement in YouTube.

Distortion
The following distortion factor means interpretation based on a perspective mixed with manipulation to the point of distorting the true interpretation.

Missionary Propaganda Threats
The agenda to damage hadith does not only occur on hadith in the form of fabrication, but also in the form of interpretation that threatens the personality of the prophet. The distortion factor in the misuse of hadith on YouTube is clearly evident when it occurs in the form of challenges to scholars. Examples of visual forms based on factors like this are as follows:

Figure 6: Example of missionary video that distorts the personality of Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

Heretical Teachings
Interpreting a hadith according to the need to support teachings according to a school without looking at the interpretation method that has been outlined by famous scholars such as the method of abrogated manuscripts, hadith studies, *Mustalah al-Hadith* or *Syarah al-Hadith* is an irresponsible act. It is clearly evident when a hadith is interpreted without reference and only according to one's own understanding.

Figure 7: Example of discussion about hadith by heretical movement.

Educational Factors and Level of Knowledge
Careless information gathering due to limited knowledge of hadith will cause the misuse of a hadith to continue to spread on YouTube. Due to not being proficient in the discipline of hadith, users will spread sharing according to logic without assessing the level of thinking.

Interpretation and Personal Understanding
Cognition carries a certain connotation of understanding until it produces personal perception. Cognition refers to a range of mental processes relating to the acquisition, storage, manipulation, and retrieval of information (Subedi, 2022). Most people watching or

listening to the presentation of hadith on YouTube will create personal thoughts until they are able to express their own opinions.

However, the discipline of hadith requires references and interpretation guidelines such as the epistemology of hadith in understanding hadith because specific hadith could carry various meanings.

Figure 8: Example of video that interprets Hadith by personal understanding**.**

Differences in Knowledge Background
From the perspective of expertise, not all social media users or preachers know the entire branch of knowledge in Islam. Due to different understanding of the manners of a certain knowledge, enlightenment about a hadith takes place on the basis of the logic of language interpretation to the extent that is known or learned by the personnel.

Da'wah Factors Demanding Islamic Teachings
Human Weaknesses - Religious Experts/Speakers/Preachers
Forget, unaddressed, or unknowing is the common weaknesses as a human being. It is also normal for Muslims to listen to lectures through knowledge gatherings. Due to the enthusiastic response in YouTube platform, the preachers or speakers would try to create video lectures as many sessions as they can for viewers. The perfection of a presentation depends on readiness, the preparations such as references to the content of the lecture, training, notes, emotions, energy, etc is indeed needed.

Goodness in Ignorance
In this factor section, it is divided into those who want to be good by getting religious information from YouTube and those who want to do good by preaching. The validity of the hadith has been disputed by Islamic preachers who lack a solid foundation in religion, are ignorant of religion, or have a limited understanding of it (Ahmad Shah, 2016). Public users who are less knowledgeable about hadith fully accept the information they browse, while because users feel that sharing knowledge is also one of the virtues and da'wah, the video continues to be spread.

This study found that all of these factors are the cause of the misuse of hadith on YouTube today. In other words, whether good or bad factors are not exempt from being exposed to issues.
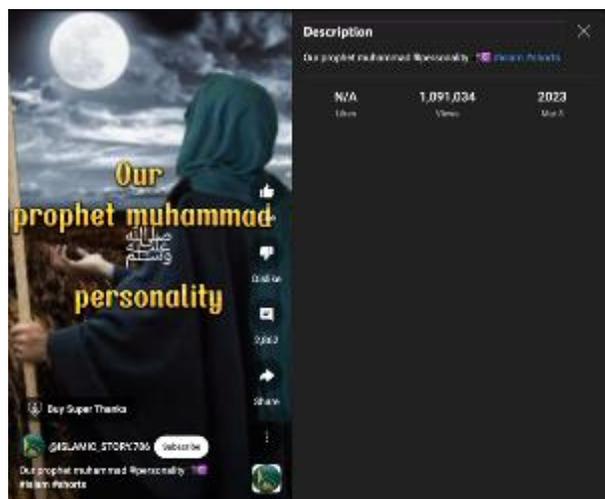

Figure 9: Example of content that spread the personality of Prophet Muhamamd PBUH without sanad and matan of hadith

Social Media and Publication Usage Guidelines
Guideline for the use of YouTube have been set by the developer. However, the terms and conditions set do not all meet the requirements for social media usage for every country due to differences in laws, religion, race and others. In Malaysia, in particular, the government has taken the initiative to provide a Content Code as a guideline and compliance for the use of social media.

Developer Guidelines
To increase the response to usage by the audience, the developer has ease the terms and conditions to a minimum level. Punitive actions such as account removal or video deletion by the developer for misconduct or abuse of the content creator will only be carried out based on reports and objections from viewers or authorities.

Laws/Constitutions
MCMC (2022) states that in Part 2 of Content Code from MCMC:

3.13:   Religious broadcasting aims to respect and promote spiritual harmony and meet the religious needs of the community. Broadcasters must ensure that their religious content is not used to convey attacks on any race or religion or is likely to cause any disharmony.
3.14:   All religious content must be in accordance with relevant national religious authorities and/or certified scholars before being sent.
3.16:   Wrong, bigoted, critical, and insulting content of any religion is not allowed.
3.17:   The broadcaster must ensure that any Islamic preacher or speaker featured in religious content about Islam must have accreditation from a nationally recognized religious authority, e.g. Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), a State Mufti department.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (Malaysia), or MOHA, has also released "Guidelines for Writing and Publishing Hadith Texts" in Malay. In "Method of citing Hadith from original reference sources" in section 3.3, it is mentioned that "all Hadith writings should only be referred to the books categorized as *Hadith al-Masadir al-Asliyyah* (original reference source) and the book categorized as *al-Masadir Ghayr al-Asliyyah* (unoriginal reference source) should be mentioned with a clear reference information."
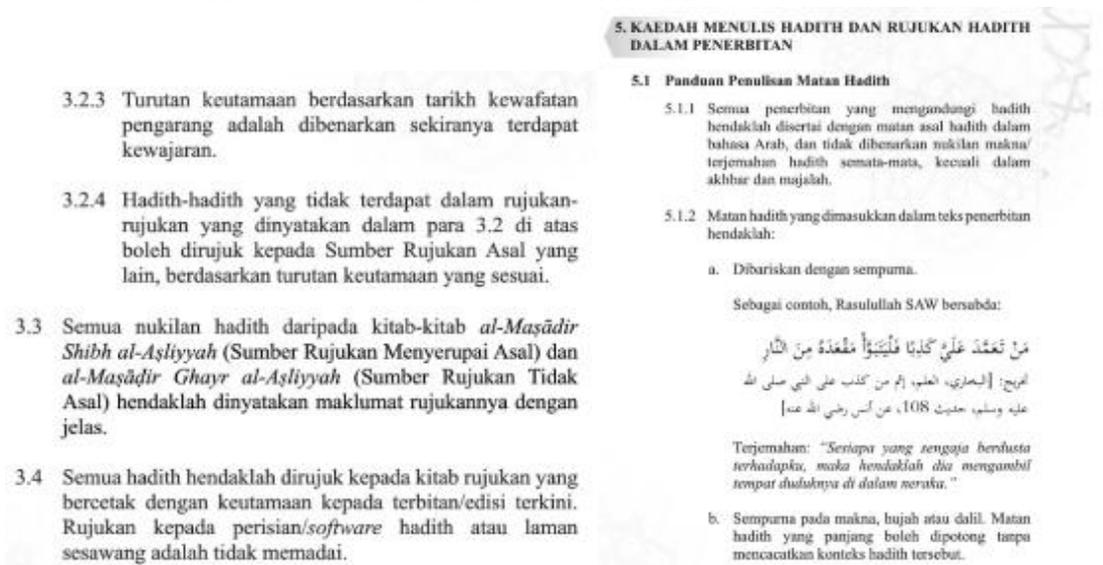

Figure 10: Method of Quoting Hadith from Original Reference Sources
Source: Guidelines for Writing and Publishing Hadith Texts, MOHA

In addition, there are also methods for writing Hadiths and Hadith references in publications. Guideline No. 5 states that all publications containing Hadith must be accompanied by the original text of the Hadith in Arabic and simply quoting the meaning is not permitted. Translation of Hadith, except in newspapers and magazines. In 5.1.2 it mentioned that the *Matan* of Hadith contained in the publishing text must be: perfectly aligned, perfect in meaning, Hujjah or Dalil. Long Hadith texts can be edited out without distorting the context of the Hadith (Lajnah Tahqiq Hadith, 2018). These guidelines should be able to curb misuse of hadith. However, it cannot be completely eradicated if enforcement is not implemented or is not uniform in all countries.

Conclusion

This study has systematically examined the complex factors contributing to the misuse of hadith content on YouTube, revealing a multifaceted phenomenon that requires nuanced intervention. The analysis demonstrates that while platform architecture and algorithmic amplification significantly enable dissemination of unverified hadith, these technical factors intersect with genuine user engagement and religious devotion. The findings suggest that simplistic regulatory approaches may prove ineffective or even counterproductive, potentially compromising the sanctity of prophetic traditions while failing to address root causes. The research establishes three key insights: First, the phenomenon reflects both systemic platform dynamics and human factors including varying levels of religious literacy among content creators. Second, current content moderation systems are inadequate for addressing theological nuances in hadith transmission. Third, any sustainable solution must balance preservation of religious authenticity with the realities of digital media consumption patterns. In order to address these challenges, this study proposes a two-pronged approach:

(1) development of specialized verification tools leveraging natural language processing and established hadith databases (Mustalah al-Hadith), and (2) collaborative governance frameworks involving religious authorities, platform developers, and policy makers. Such interventions aim to empower users with verification capabilities while respecting platform ecosystems.Future research should investigate implementation challenges for these technical solutions and examine cross-cultural variations in digital religious content moderation. This study contributes to emerging scholarship at the intersection of Islamic epistemology and digital media studies, highlighting the urgent need for interdisciplinary approaches to preserve religious authenticity in increasingly algorithmically-mediated knowledge environments.

References

Ahmad Shah, F. (2016, June). *Penyebaran Hadith palsu dalam media massa dan media sosial: Realiti dan cabara* [Unpublished manuscript].

Andariati, L. (2020). Hadis dan sejarah perkembangannya. *Diroyah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis, 4*(2), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.15575/diroyah.v4i2.4680

Abdul Rahman, M. Z. N. (2024). *Usage of Al-Quran and Hadith in YouTube advertisement from Islamic perspective* [Master's thesis, Islamic Science University of Malaysia]. ResearchGate. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22491.58401

Bazmul, M. U. S. (2014). *Syarah ilmu Hadith*. JAHABERSA.

Elgazzar, M. M. (2018). Hadith web browser verification extension. *MALTESAS Multi-Disciplinary Research Journal (MIRJO)*.

Fathi, S. (2018). [ظاهرة انتشار الأحاديث الضعيفة والموضوعة عبر مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي The phenomenon of spreading weak and fabricated Hadith through social media]. *Journal of the College of Fundamentals of Religion and Da'wah, 36*, 1–25. Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University.

The Holy Quran.

Ikhrom, M. A. (2015). *Pengantar ulumul Hadits*. Karya Abadi Jaya.

Jamal, K., & Sawaluddin. (2018). Qur'an and Hadith in social media: Messages of the Qur'an and Hadith in using social media. *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Recent Innovations (ICRI 2018)*, 1864–1871. https://doi.org/10.5220/0009936618641871

Lajnah Tahqiq Hadith. (2018). *Garis panduan penulisan dan penerbitan teks Hadith*. Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA).

Mahmood, A. Q. Z. (2015). Role of social media in the light of Islamic teaching. *Al-Qalam Research Journal, 20*(2), 45–60.

Mamun, A. A., & Bhuiyan, M. I. K. (2023). Social media in the light of Quran and Hadith: An analytical study. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Technology, Innovation, and Islamic Studies (TIA-RS)*. https://proceedings.radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/lc-TiaRS/article/view/752

Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). (2022). *The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code 2022*. https://www.mcmc.gov.my

Noordin, M. F. (2023, January 15). Agamawan ekstrem. *Sinar Harian*. https://www.bharian.com.my/rencana/lain-lain/2023/01/1057753/agamawan-ekstrem-penunggang-agama-punca-umat-islam-berpecah

Noordin, M. F., & Rahim, N. N. (2015). Islamic perspective exploratory review: Creative multimedia technology as an innovative tool for da'wah dissemination. *International*

Journal of Creative Future and Heritage (TENIAT), 3(2), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.47252/teniat.v3i2.327

Osman, S. (2020). Misuse of Islamic attributes in food products labelling and marketing in Malaysia. *International Journal of Islamic Business, 5*(1), 59–67.

Razali, N. N. R. (2025). *Misuse of Hadith in social media: A study of YouTube* [Master's thesis, Islamic Science University of Malaysia].

Subedi, K. (2022). *Cognition in the psychological perspectives*. ResearchGate. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29414.70720

Usman, A. H., & Wazir, R. (2018). The fabricated Hadith: Islamic ethics and guidelines of Hadith dispersion in social media. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication (TOJDAC)*, 804–808.