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The Conditions for the Term *maqbul* for Ibn Hajar in his Work *Taqrib al-Tahzib*.

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Abstract

This study concerns with the condition mentioned by Ibn Hajar for one of the terms that he decided to use in his academic work entitled *Taqrib al-Tahzib*. This is carried out to see the extent of Ibn Hajar's firm decision to follow the conditions when evaluating the hadith narrators of *al-kutub al-sittah*. To realise this, the writer has adopted the qualitative methodology which is by delving into every angle required, related to all narrators characterised by Ibn Hajar as *maqbul* in his three last *tabaqahs* namely *tabaqah* no. 10, *tabaqah* no. 11 and *tabaqah* no. 12 together with all their narrations contained in *al-kutub al-sittah* and the printed *mulhaqat al-kutub al-sittah* only.

Keywords: Maqbul, Ibn Hajar, Narrators, Taqrib al-Tahzib, hadith

Introduction

One of the simple references when it comes to identifying the status of the hadith narrators of *al-kutub al-sittah* is the book *Taqrib al-Tahzib* arranged by al Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (852H). *Maqbul* is the term used by him for the sixth degree narrators of *al-kutub al-sittah*. They are divided into twelve *tabaqahs*. Every *tabaqah* refers to one generation of narrators.. The last three *tabaqahs* are specifically reserved for the generation of *taba`atba` al tabi`in* who normally died after two hundred years of hijriyyah. There are one hundred and fifteen narrators in these three *tabaqahs* regarded by Ibn Hajar as *maqbul*. This is not considering those narrators also characterised as *maqbul* but are not hadith narrators in *al-kutub al-sittah* and *mulhaqat* of *al-kutub al-sittah* or whose hadiths contained in the unprinted *mulhaqat al-kutub al-sittah*.

In the foreword of *al Taqrib*, Ibn Hajar has issued three conditions for the term *maqbul* namely:

- i. Narrators characterised as *maqbul* must be *qalil al-riwayah* (few narrative works).
- ii. There is no flaw that causes the narration to be rejected.
- iii. There is a *mutabi`* for his narration which means there is the same narrator reporting the same hadith through another source.

Among the studies related to the term *maqbul* is that of Husban (2005). His study was limited to the narrators of *maqbul* who narrated the hadith in *al-Mukhtarah li al-Diya` al-Maqdisi*. Another study was conducted by Jitan (2010). But it is only related to the *maqbul* narrators in the second and third *tabaqah*. The study should be done on the *maqbul* narrators in the other *tabaqah* to get a comprehensive decision on Ibn Hajar's escalation to the conditions of *maqbul* he has set. To fulfill this requirement, the author has done this study.

After collecting and studying the comments given by the members of *jarh wa ta`dil* towards all *maqbul* narrators in the last three *tabaqahs* also the hadiths that they have reported in *al-kutub al-sittah* and the printed *mulhaqat al-kutub al-sittah*, the writer has come to several findings as follows:

The First Condition

The study has shown that almost all of the *maqbul* narrators in the last three *tabaqahs* do not have any of the features other than few narrations, which is altogether one to three hadiths other than eleven narrators namely:

- 1- Yahya bin Qaza`ah (he has reported twenty seven hadiths)
- 2- Muhammad bin Daud al-Masisi (he has reported twelve hadiths)
- 3- Musa bin Marwan (he has reported eleven hadiths)
- 4- Harun bin Abbad (he has reported six hadiths).
- 5- Abd Rahman bin Aswad (he has reported six hadiths).
- 6- Ibrahim bin Mahdi (he has reported five hadiths).
- 7- Abd Rabbih bin Khalid (he has reported five hadiths).
- 8- Muhammad bin Sa`id (he has reported five hadiths).
- 9- Ali Bin Isa (he has reported five hadiths).
- 10- Rifa`ah bin Haitham (he has reported four hadiths).
- 11- Ahmad bin Ja`far (he has reported four hadiths).

If we were to compare the number above (11) with the number 104 indicating the number of narrators who have one to three hadiths only, it shows that this first condition *qillat al-riwayah* is very significant to *maqbul* narrators in the last three *tabaqahs*.

There are several names mentioned by Ibn Hajar in the last three *tabaqahs* that have not narrated any hadiths. Some only issue the statements given by a number of *salafus soleh* and some others are briefly mentioned in certain narrations. The narrators in *tabaqah* no. 12 are the least to be characterised as *maqbul*, which total six narrators only.

The relation between *Qillah Al-Riwayah* and *Al-Wuhdan*

The study outcome also shows that the narrators with students more than one total ninety four or eighty three percent (83%). From this number, forty of them are narrators who have students holding the status of hadith-screening imam (*al-Imam al-Muntaqi li al-Ahadith*).

Narrators with only one student or known as *al-Wuhdan* total twenty one or seventeen percent (17%). From this number, eleven are narrators who have students holding the status of hadith-screening imam (Refer to Diagram 1).

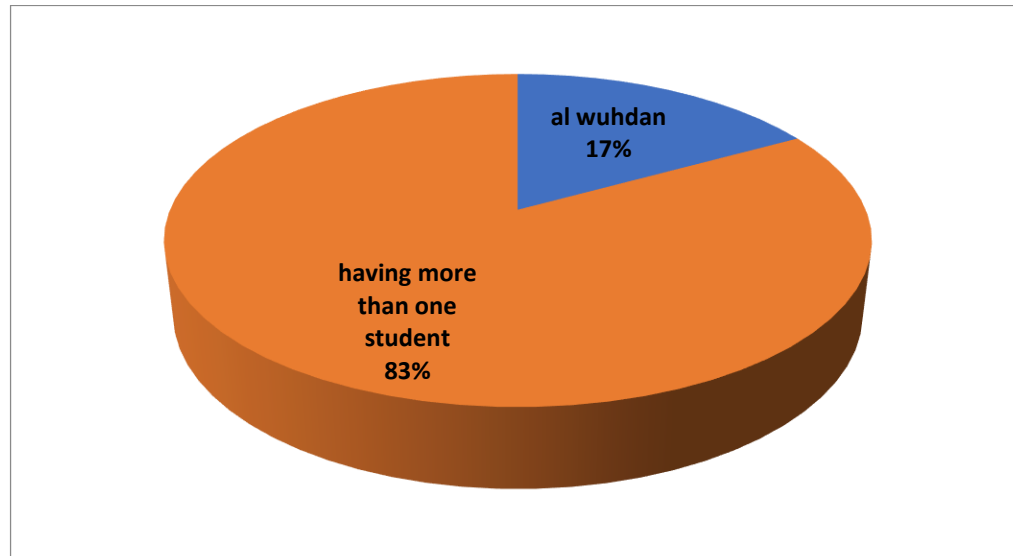


Diagram 1: The percentage of *maqbul* based on the total number of student.

The study outcome shows that there is no clear relation between *qillah al-riwayah* and *al-wuhdan*. Thus, it is imprecise to say that most of the *maqbul* narrators are *wuhdan* or in other words, *qillah al-riwayah* is not the reason behind *al-wuhdan* as claimed by al-Aniy (1999).

The second condition

The study highlights that reputable narrators (*thiqah*) total sixty eight or fifty nine percent (59%) (Refer to Diagram 2).

Among these trusted narrators, sixteen of them or twenty four percent (24%) – are narrators evaluated as endorsed by *jarh wa ta`dil* and at the same time they have their own hadith-screening students or imams (*al-imam al muntaqi*). Twenty three more students or thirty four percent (34%) are regarded as trusted by members of *jarh wa ta`dil* but without them having hadith-screening students (Refer to Diagram 3). From this number, ten of them are endorsed as trusted by *al-Zahabi* only. They are respectively from *Ibn Hibban* and *al-Haithami* and they have acknowledged one as the trusted one. Meanwhile, another one has his hadith narrated in *Sahih Ibn Hibban*. The remaining ten narrators or less than half have been evaluated as trusted by members of *jarh wa ta`dil* other than *Ibn Hibban*, *al-Zahabi* and *al-Haithami*.

There are twenty nine or forty three percent (43%) who escape any of the comments from members of *jarh wa ta`dil* but regarded by the writer as trusted by way of considering the status of the students who can screen hadiths and elevate themselves as imam (Refer to Diagram 3).

The study further shows that there are eight weak narrators, or seven percent (7%). For narrators with unknown status (*majhul*) they constitute thirty nine narrators or thirty four percent (34%) (Refer to Diagram 2).

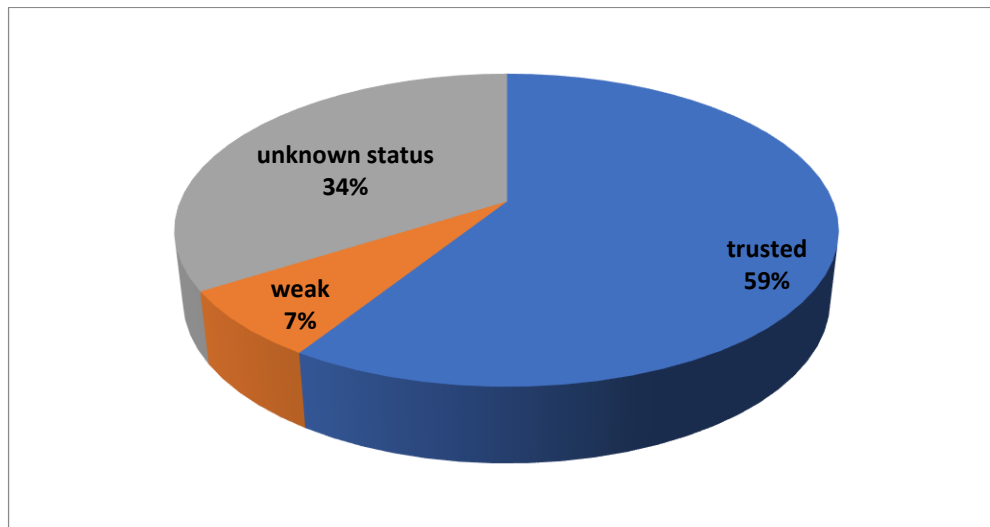


Diagram 2: The percentage of *maqbul* based on the status of every narrator

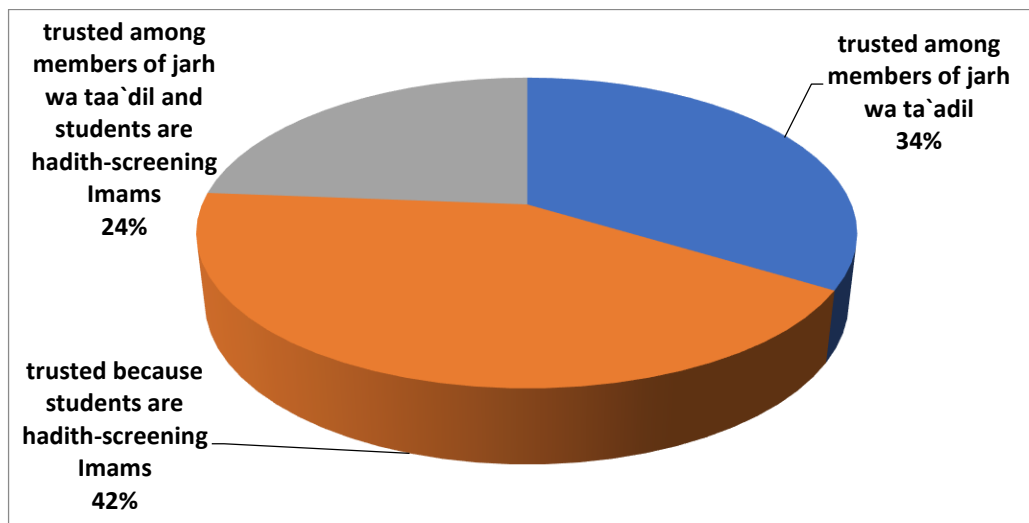


Diagram 3: The percentage of *thiqah maqbul* based on *asbab tauthiq*

In the opinion of your writer, Ibn Hajar does not consider *tauthiq* (assessment) of Ibn Hibban, al-Zahabi and al-Hathami in assessing a small fraction of *maqbul* narrators from the last three *tabaqahs*. However, he is seen to have considered the comments of al-Zahabi and Ibn Hibban in various circumstances.

This can be understood through two aspects:

- i. The relationship between *maqbul* narrators and those mentioned by Ibn Hibban in *al-Thiqat*.
- ii. The stance of al-zahabi towards *maqbul* narrators.

The Relationship between *Maqbul* narrators and narrators Mentioned by Ibn Hibban In *Al-Thiqat*.

None of the *Maqbul* narrators from *tabaqah* twelve has been mentioned by Ibn Hibban in *al-Thiqat*. The total number of *Maqbul* narrators from *tabaqah* ten and eleven mentioned by Ibn Hibban in *al-Thiqat* are forty four people or thirty eight percent (38%). This means that the remaining *Maqbul* narrators from both *tabaqahs* or sixty two percent (62%) are not mentioned by Ibn Hibban in *al-*

Thiqat. It can be concluded that most of the narrators labelled as *maqbul* (which is also another term for *majhul* in *Taqrib al-Tahzib*) y Ibn Hajar in the last three *tabaqahs* are narrators not mentioned by Ibn Hibban in *al-Thiqat* (Refer to Diagram 4).

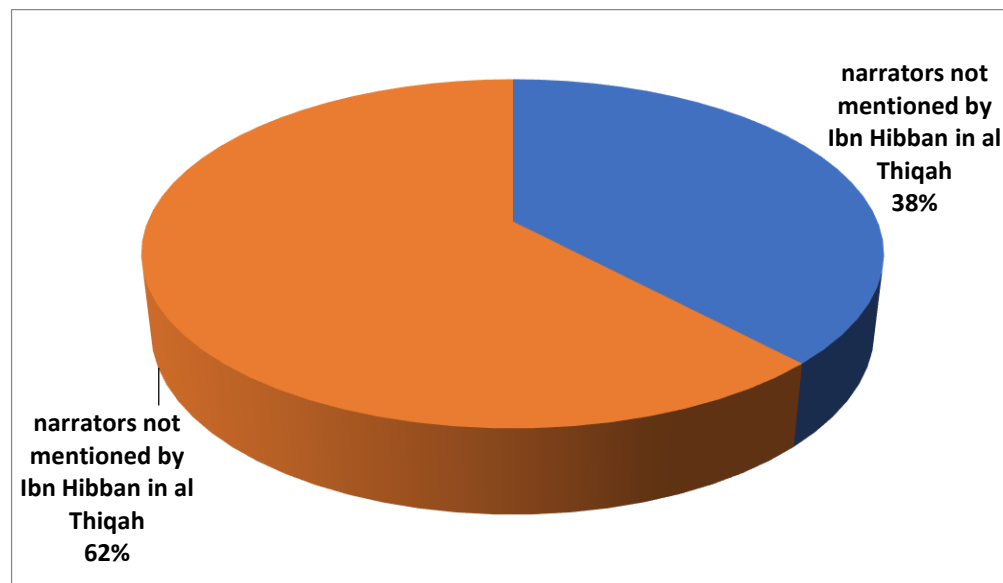


Diagram 4: The percentage of *maqbul* based on *al-Thiqat* Ibn Hibban.

The Stance of Al-Zahabi Towards Maqbul narrators

Al-Zahabi has some diverse opinions on Maqbul narrators. Some of them have been assessed by him as trusted. Some others have been assessed by him as weak. Some are assessed as *majhul*. Some are of the opinion that he is not consistent. Nonetheless, most Maqbul narrators in the last three *tabaqahs* are devoid of al-Zahabi's commentary. These are the details:

Narrators assessed as *thiqah* by az Zahabi = twenty three (20%)

Narrators assessed as weak by az Zahabi = three (3%)

Narrators assessed as *majhul* by Az Zahabi = thirteen (11%)

Narrators of whom the opinions of az Zahabi keep changing = one (1%)

Narrators on whom az-Zahabi's stance is not mentioned= seventy four (64%)

There is a narrator mentioned by Az Zahabi and he states that Imam Muslim has narrated his hadith in a *maqrūn* manner (Refer to Diagram 5).

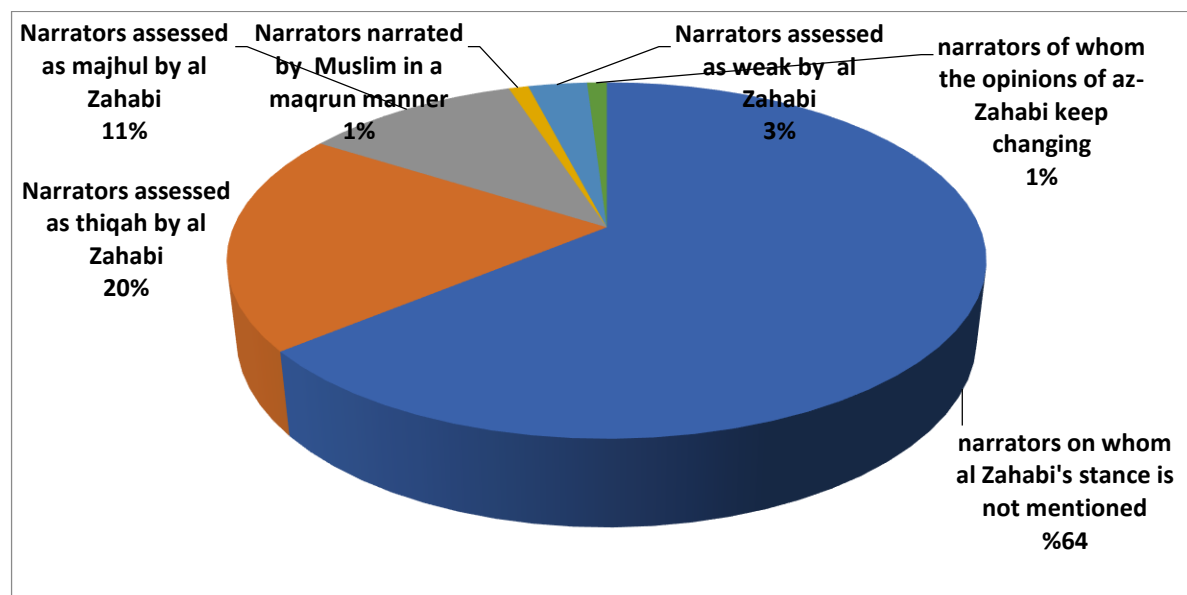


Diagram 5: The percentage of *maqbul* based on the assessment of *al-Zahabi*

In the writer's view, Ibn Hajar does not assess the Maqbul narrators in the last three *tabaqahs* as *thiqah* alone, due to the fact that their students or scholars are hadith-screening Imams. In turn, he has characterised themselves as *maqbul* if there is no *ta'dil* from members of *jarh wa ta'dil*. Meanwhile, *maqbul* in *Taqrib al-Tahzib* also means *majhul* (Helimy, 2018). If their total number is added to the number of narrators who are indeed *majhul*, there will be sixty eight people or fifty nine percent (59%). This still shows that there is a consistency between this second condition with the comments of Ibn Hajar towards Maqbul narrators in the last three *Tabaqahs*.

The Third Condition

Narrators with the line of narration supported (*mutaba`ah*) constitute ninety three persons or eighty one percent (81%). Meanwhile, for narrators whose line of narration is not supported but the meaning of hadiths is supported (or mentioned as *syahid*) they make up five persons or four percent (4%). Narrators who are not supported (in terms of the narration and meaning of hadiths) constitute seventeen people or fifteen percent (15%). The outcome shows that there is a consistency between this condition and the commentary made by Ibn Hajar towards the narrators. It can become a strong basis to support Al-Jitan's opinion (2010), stating that *mutaba`ah* determined by Ibn Hajar serves as *maqbul* condition or which means *mutaba`ah* according to the term used by hadith members. This conflicts with the opinion of al-Husban (2005) stating that *mutaba`ah* in *Taqrib al-Tahzib* also includes *syawahid*. The study outcome is also opposing the opinion of al-Aniy (1999) where it states that *mutaba`ah* is not part of the *maqbul* condition to Ibn Hajar (Refer to Diagram 6).

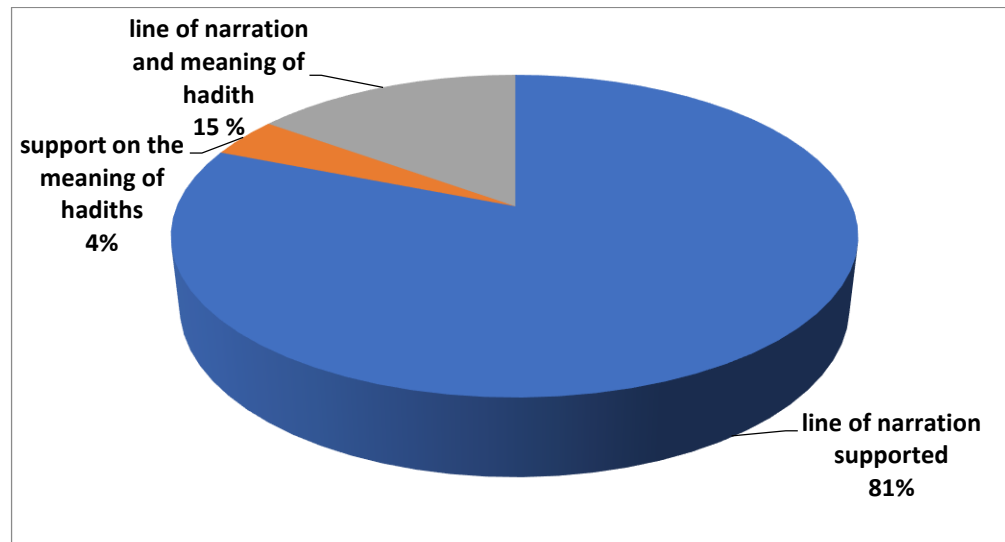


Diagram 6: The percentage of *maqbul* based on *al-Mutaba'at* and *al-Syawahid*

The Number of Hadiths for Maqbul Narrators

The number of hadiths narrated by all *maqbul* narrators of the last three *tabaqahs* total two hundred and nineteen hadiths. From that number, *sahih* hadiths constitute one hundred and twenty nine or particularly fifty nine percent (59%) out of the total number of hadiths. *Hasan* hadiths make up thirty nine hadiths or eighteen percent (18%). *Daif* hadiths total fifty one hadiths or twenty three percent (23%). The study outcome shows that most of the hadiths narrated by *maqbul* narrators can serve as an argument in *Syara'*. If we are to add the number of *sahih* and *hasan* hadiths, the number of hadiths that can serve as *shara'* are one hundred sixty eight hadiths or seventy seven percent (77%) (Refer to Diagram 7).

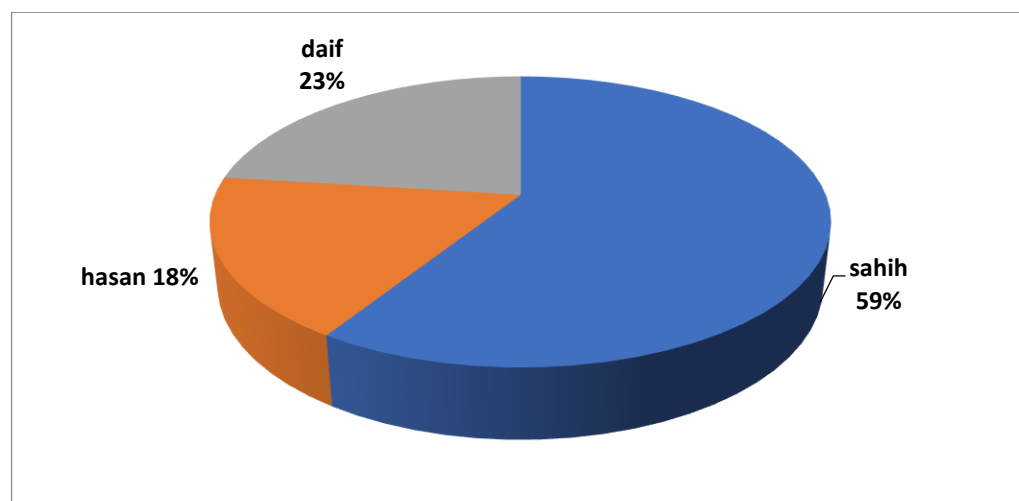


Diagram 7: The percentage of hadiths from *maqbul* narrators based on the status of every hadith.

Conclusion

Qillah al-riwayah is a significant feature of all *maqbul* narrators in the last three *tabaqah*. It can not be attributed consistently to *tafarrud* and *wuhdan*. Although there are some narrators are *thiqah* among the *maqbul* narrators of the last three *tabaqah*, but their majority are *majhul*. There is a strong

influence from Ibn Hibban and al-Zahabi's writings on Ibn Hajar's assessment, particularly in the last three *maqbul* narrators. All of the studies show the consistency between the *maqbul* conditions in *Taqrib al-Tahzib* and Ibn Hajar's comment on the *maqbul* narrators in the last three *tabaqahs* with quite a significant percentage. This illustrates that Ibn Hajar is someone who is very consistent in his views and he is also highly credible in *al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*. The authors recommend that qualitative studies be continued against the *maqbul* narrators in *tabaqah*-*tabaqah* that have not been conducted any study or have done but not in detail so that a comprehensive and accurate decision on Ibn Hajar's invasion of its terms can be found.

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