

Research Article

Facilitation and Understanding in Hadith Studies

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Received : September 27, 2024

Revised : October 24, 2024

Accepted : November 04, 2024

Available online : November 16, 2024

How to Cite: Klaina, M. (2024). Facilitation and Understanding in Hadith Studies. *AL-IKHSAN: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2(2), 120-143. <https://doi.org/10.61166/ikhsan.v2i2.85>

Abstract. This study holds significant importance as it investigates the various challenges that students face in comprehending academic texts, particularly in the study of Hadith in non-Arabic speaking countries. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors contributing to students' difficulties in mastering the subject, such as weak language skills, lack of practical application, and limited access to original sources. A key issue in this context is the students' reliance on memorization rather than deep understanding. The study employs a qualitative approach, drawing on the researcher's personal experience in Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, along with observations of students at Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University. The findings reveal that insufficient Arabic language education, coupled with inadequate emphasis on discussion skills, has contributed to the difficulties in understanding the Hadith sciences. As a result, the study recommends a more balanced distribution of the curriculum across all academic years, greater use of primary sources in

teaching, and increased practical training in Hadith studies to enhance students' comprehension of the subject. Moreover, it is advised to increase the credit hours allocated to Hadith sciences and *Takhreej* to ensure better understanding.

Keywords: Facilitation, Understanding, Hadith Studies, development of Islamic education, development of university education.

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of the educational process is to effectively transfer knowledge to students, enabling them to understand the information presented to them in a timely manner and interact with it to enhance comprehension and application. Undoubtedly, creativity cannot thrive without learners receiving knowledge in a clear and comprehensive way, aiming to shape individuals capable of advancing the field of knowledge.

This concern has driven educators throughout history to seek methods to effectively convey knowledge to learners according to their varying levels and in a progressive manner. This means that complex concepts are not introduced initially; rather, simpler ideas are presented first to facilitate understanding, gradually leading students from foundational ideas to more complex topics.

Since Islamic law is fundamentally rooted in education and the dissemination of accurate, evidence-based knowledge rather than personal whims, the importance of the command to read, as revealed in the first verses to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), becomes evident. These verses emphasize that the Prophet was sent to explain what was revealed to him, serving as both a transmitter and an explainer of knowledge. The Prophet's approach to education and nurturing is evident, highlighting the principle of conveying information to people through various means.

Facilitating knowledge and understanding plays a crucial role in fostering open-minded, critical thinkers capable of developing concepts. Misunderstanding can lead to a distorted view and intellectual stagnation. In such cases, it becomes difficult to talk about any scientific advancement. Therefore, the concepts of facilitation and comprehension hold a special place in the educational process, as they contribute to structuring knowledge and effectively transmitting it. This research aims to conduct a descriptive and analytical study of the efforts made by scholars in this area, which have resulted in creating a distinguished academic environment by condensing sciences, enabling students to gain a general understanding of their field, defining terminology clearly, and using language suitable for beginners. It also identifies obstacles that hinder students' access to knowledge. Among the objectives to be achieved is to overcome these obstacles to enable students to fully grasp the subject matter and apply its content.

Given the confusion observed in many contexts regarding the concepts of facilitation and strictness in the educational process, I felt the need to study and clarify this topic by highlighting scholars' efforts in this regard. Hadith studies are known for being among the most challenging fields, requiring significant support to avoid any factors that may hinder comprehension. Though they are taught in universities, the concepts of facilitation and understanding are not sufficiently considered. Therefore, the aim of this research is to emphasize the necessity of transmitting information and facilitating its comprehension by following the methodology of earlier scholars, in addition to developing new approaches to achieve this.

This research is structured into an introduction, two main sections, and recommendations. The first section addresses facilitation in Hadith studies, while the second section explores comprehension in Hadith studies.

Section I. Facilitation in Hadith Studies

I. Defining the Meaning of Facilitation:

Facilitation comes from ease, which is the opposite of hardship, indicating difficulty and constraint. This is evident in the verse from the Qur'an: "Verily, along with every hardship is relief" (Ash-Sharh: 5).

Facilitation, in this sense, has a broad meaning, referring to making matters easy and manageable, whether the issue pertains to legal rulings or knowledge. It is generally praiseworthy in all matters, except where there is a specific exception. Severity is discouraged except in particular circumstances.

We distinguish between facilitation, strictness, gentleness, and leniency:

If facilitation means making something easy and strictness means making something difficult and unbearable, gentleness is the opposite of harshness. It involves using softness and pleasant speech, as Allah Almighty says:

"43. Go, both of you, to Fir'aun (Pharaoh), verily he has transgressed (all bounds in disbelief and disobedience and behaved as an arrogant and as tyrant). 44. And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear Allah)" (Taha: 43-44).

Here, Allah commands Moses and his brother Aaron to address Pharaoh, the tyrant, with gentleness, even though he associated others with the Creator, the Almighty.

Narrated 'Aishah, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him): A group of Jews entered upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "As-Sāmu 'Alaikum" (i.e., death be upon you). I understood it and said, "Wa- 'Alaikum As-'Sāmu wal-la'natu (death and the curse of Allah be upon you)." Allah's Messenger said, "Be calm, O 'Aishah! Allah loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters." I said, "O Allah's Messenger! Haven't you heard what they (the Jews) have said?" Allah's

Messenger said," I have (already) said (to them), 'And upon you!'" (Al- Bukhārī, 1997, No. 6024, Muslim, 2007, No. 5656).

It was narrated also from 'Aishah, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "There is no gentleness in a thing, but it adorns it, and it is not removed from something, but it mars it." (Muslim, 2007, No. 6602).

It was narrated also from 'Aishah, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), that the Messenger of Allah said: "O 'Aishah, Allah is Gentle and loves gentleness, and He rewards for gentleness what He does not reward for harshness or for anything else." (Muslim, 2007, No. 6601).

Additionally, Jaber bin Abdullah narrated that in the event where the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave his wives the choice [of staying or leaving], he started with Aisha and said:

"O 'Aishah, I want to suggest something to you, but I want you not to rush to answer until you consult your parents.' She said: 'What is it, O Messenger of Allah?' He recited this verse to her, and she said: 'Do I need to consult my parents (concerning you), O Messenger of Allah? No, I choose Allah and His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter. But I ask you not to tell any of your wives what I have said.' He said: 'None of them will ask, but I will tell her. Allah did not send me to make things hard for people in the hope that they would make mistakes, rather He sent me to teach and make things easy.'" (Muslim, 2007, No. 3690).

Leniency, on the other hand, refers to tolerance and is praiseworthy when it concerns kindness between people. However, it is condemned when it pertains to laxity in research, issuing rulings, or teaching. In such cases, errors and distorted ideas spread, and leniency in knowledge leads to a paralyzed society, dependent on others and built on unstable foundations.

For this reason, scholars criticized those who were lenient in transmitting hadith. For example, al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī has a section titled: "The Invalidation of Using as Proof Anyone Known for Leniency in Transmitting Hadith" (Al-Khatīb, n.d.(b): 152), where he discusses Abdullah ibn Lahī'ah, saying he was "poor in memory, his books were burned, and he was lenient in accepting narrations. He would narrate from any book brought to him, leading to an abundance of odd narrations." He also weakens the credibility of those who were lenient, stating: "If a narrator has sound hearing but is known for leniency in narration and carelessness, it is permissible to hear from him, but it is disliked, and his credibility is weakened for the reasons we mentioned" (Al-Khatīb, 1403, 1: 140). Similarly, ibn al-Najjār criticized "Yūnus ibn Yahya al-Hāshimī al-Qassār" for being lenient in narration (Al-Ḍahabī, n.d., 2: 767), and Ibn al-Mulaqīn remarked that Ibn al-Sakan was lenient in his book (Al-Sunan al-Sahīhah al-Ma'thūrah) (Ibn al-Mulaqīn, 2004, 3: 444 and 522).

From all this, we learn that the *Shariah* came with gentleness in interactions and facilitation in most matters. Strictness is only an occasional requirement in specific circumstances. Through gentleness, scholars endear knowledge to their students, and with it, positive relationships are built within society.

Scholars generally followed a path of facilitation, beginning with gradual education to enable students to master knowledge. The hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) guide scholars in raising the nation just as a father raises his child, gradually educating them from the basics to more advanced levels, and giving them only what they can bear, as a father does with his child's food. Indeed, human souls in relation to prophets and messengers are like children in relation to their parents, and perhaps even less so (Al-Firūz Abādī, n.d., 63).

Given the importance of gentleness in spreading knowledge and making it appealing to students, scholars emphasize good treatment. For instance, al-Rabī' ibn Sulaymān wrote to Abū Ya'qūb al-Buwaytī (Al-Shāfi'ī, n.d., 375, Abū Nu'aym, 1405, 9: 148, Al-Khatīb, n.d. (a), 14: 302, Al-Bayhaqī, 1994, 1: 376): "Be patient with strangers and treat the people of your study circle kindly, for I have often heard al-Shafi'i recite this verse:

*I humble myself to them so that they may honor me
For no self is honored that does not humble itself."*

II. Forms of Facilitation

Those who reflect on this subject will recognize several forms of facilitation:

A. *Facilitation in Shariah Rulings*

Muslims are not burdened with obligations beyond their capacity. Allah says:

"Allah burden not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us (Jews and Christians); our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Maulā (Patron, Supporter and Protector, etc.) and give us victory over the disbelieving people" (Al-Baqarah: 286).

Based on this, scholars have established a fundamental principle derived from the Qur'anic and Prophetic texts: "*Hardship begets ease*"¹. However, this facilitation

¹ Al-'Izz ibn Abd al-Salam (n.d., 2: 9), has valuable remarks on the subject, distinguishing between two types of hardship: the first is a hardship that is often inseparable from worship, meaning that it is impossible to perform the worship without it, such as the difficulty of performing ablution and washing in severe cold, or the hardship of fasting in extreme heat and long days... The second type is a hardship that is often separable from worship, meaning that the prevailing condition in acts of worship can be fulfilled without this hardship being present, and it can be classified into three

is not unrestricted but is guided by the overarching objectives of Shariah. Sometimes, strictness may be in the best interest of the individual and society, like a medical treatment that may require amputating a limb. Though severe for the individual, it is necessary for their survival.

B. Facilitation in Education:

Scholars have employed facilitation in education to develop solid understanding. This does not mean being lax in academic rigor or neglecting responsibilities. If knowledge is neglected based on flawed beliefs, it will be lost, leading to dysfunctional individuals and societies. This would be a grave shortcoming for both individuals and communities. The intended facilitation is a gradual progression in learning, from the simple to the complex, from the tangible to the abstract, following a reasonable progression in all fields.

Under this category falls:

1. **Making knowledge accessible to students who are not proficient in Arabic**, by using simple methods, vocalizing texts, and not rushing from one topic to another until it is ensured that the information has been fully understood. Repetition, when necessary, is also acceptable, as it was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would repeat his words three times to ensure they were understood. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him), "Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, (he knocked the door) thrice with greeting" (Al-Bukhārī, 1997, No. 95).
2. **Using modern programs to search for hadith information and others**, while not solely relying on them, as errors are common in such programs. While printed sources are not free from errors, caution is required, particularly when some programs incorrectly attribute books to their authors. It is essential to consult scholars for better comprehension and understanding.

C. Facilitation in when writing books:

Scholars have used various methods to simplify access to their works, such as:

1. **Making books more accessible to students** by explaining the methodology used in writing, adopting certain styles, such as structuring content in an

types: 1. **Severe and significant hardship**, such as fear for oneself or one's limbs, which necessitates alleviation. 2. **Mild hardship**, such as slight pain in a finger, which does not require attention. 3. **Hardships that fall between the two previous types**, varying in severity and lightness; those closer to the first type necessitate alleviation, while those closer to the second do not. (Also, see 'Azzām (2005a, 25-26), and 'Azzām (2005b, 114-115)).

organized manner to help students navigate the material without difficulty. Ibn Mākūlā, for example, stated in his book, "... I began it seeking reward for its summary, as it is the greatest aid for the student of knowledge to comprehend confusing names, lineages, and titles..." (Ibn Mākūlā, n.d., 1: 2). He arranged it alphabetically and provided explanations to aid students.

2. **Making the Prophetic Hadith Accessible for Understanding to Those Engaged in It.** Ibn Hajar noted in his discussions on hadith classifications: "... Engaging in knowledge, particularly Prophetic traditions, is among the best forms of worship... I have gathered all the hadiths from the famous books to facilitate access for those eager to learn..." (Ibn Hajar, 1998, 2: 18).
3. **Summarizing books** for easier access, particularly for travel. Al-Iraqi noted in the introduction of his book *Al-Mughnī*: "... After completing the commentary on the hadiths of 'Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn' in the year 751, I faced difficulty accessing some of its hadiths, delaying its completion. I then began the process again, producing a medium-sized work that could be easily carried during travels..." (Al-'Irāqī, 1995, 1: 3).
4. **Avoiding excess and repetition.** Imam Muslim referred to this when explaining the reason for compiling his *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon request, stating:

"Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and the (blessed) end is for those who achieve Taqwa. May Allah send blessings and peace upon Muhammad, the Seal (Last) of the Prophets, and upon all the Prophets and Messengers. You - may Allah have mercy on you - were inspired by your Creator to research and find out about the reports that have been narrated from the Messenger of Allah about the teachings, rules, and regulations of Islam, and what they say about reward and punishment, exhortations and warnings, and other issues, along with the chains of narration with which they were narrated and circulated among the scholars. You wanted - may Allah guide you - to have them written down and compiled in one place, and you asked me to write them down in a brief manner in this book, without too much repetition, because you thought that too much repetition would distract you from your goal of understanding them and deriving knowledge from them. What you asked me to do - may Allah honor you - I went back and thought about it, and the consequences of it, which are going to be good and beneficial, if Allah wills. When you asked me to take on this task, I thought that if I managed to do it, and was able to complete it, the first one to benefit from it would be myself in particular, before anyone else. This is so for many reasons, which it would take too long to explain here. But in brief, I would say that presenting a few of these reports in a proper manner is easier, than dealing with many of them. This is especially so for an ordinary man who does not have deep knowledge and would not be able to distinguish

between them except, with the help of others. As this is the case, it is better to aim at writing down a few authentic reports rather than many which are unsound. However, it is hoped that there may be some benefits in writing down a large number of reports and compiling those that are repeated, for the elite among the people, those who have been blessed with some knowledge and understanding, and the familiarity with their causes and reasons. That type of a person, if Allah wills, would be able to deal with a lot and will benefit from the compilation of a large number of reports. But for ordinary people who do not share the knowledge of the elite, there is no point in their handling a large number of Ah6dith when they are unable to understand a few" (Muslim, 1: 40).

Ibn al-Diba' al-Shaybānī (n.d., 1: 3-4) also highlighted this when discussing (*Jami' al-Usūl fī Ahādīth al-Rasūl*) by Ibn al-Jazarī and its abridgement by Razīn. He said:

"I examined both the Jami' and its abridgement and observed the excellent arrangement and preparation of both. I found that the authors of these works annotated the names of the companions narrating the hadith in the margins, and used symbols for the six collectors of hadith, which became confusing and mixed for many writers. This caused delay, confusion, and a lack of benefit for most students, leading to frustration for readers and listeners alike, making it difficult for those studying the abridgement to benefit. So, after seeking Allah's guidance, I resolved to simplify it for those seeking benefit, out of love for reviving the Prophetic Sunnah and a desire to follow the noble traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). I began each hadith with the name of the companion who narrated it, concluding with the names of the six scholars who collected it, and integrated this into the body of the text to avoid mistakes and confusion, making it easier for students to understand and accept... I named it Tayseer al-Wusūl ilā Jāmi' al-Usūl."

5. **Compiling dispersed content into a single book.** Al-Irāqī explained in *Al-Mustafād* his reason for compiling hadith content scattered across works like those of Abu Muhammad Abdul-Ghani and Ibn Bashkuāl, stating: "... I gathered these materials into a single compilation, organizing them by jurisprudential themes to simplify access for students." (Al-'Irāqī, 1994, 1: 92-93).

Within this category also falls:

- a. **Isolating the Names of Hadith Scholars with Specific Characteristics in a Book:** This method involved compiling the names of hadith scholars who possessed certain traits, while providing concise biographies. Sibṭ Ibn al-'Ajāmī mentioned this in the introduction to his book on the names of those who practiced *tadlīs* (obscuring their sources in hadith transmission), saying:

"As for what follows, this is a commentary on the names of those who practiced tadlīs, which I initially gathered in the year 792 AH in my commentary on the biography of Abū al-Fath al-Ya'morī, and then in my commentary on Sahih al- Bukhārī. Later, I transferred those names to this separate compilation. While their biographies could fill a volume, I have greatly abbreviated them to make them easier to obtain." (Şibt Ibn al-'Ajāmī, 1986, 11).

- b. Compiling the Rules of Hadith Scholars in a Book:** As far as we know, the first to do this was Ibn al-Salah (d. 643 AH) in his introduction. Hadith scholars were ahead of Qur'anic scholars in this practice, as the latter only began to compile the principles of Qur'anic sciences with Badr al-Din al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH) in his book *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'an*. Writing separate works on each branch of knowledge is another matter, and this practice preceded both by some time. However, the aim here was to facilitate hadith studies for students by compiling its rules into one book, rather than leaving them dispersed across individual works on specific issues, which would require considerable time to master. Gathering these rules in one place makes it easier for students to understand the methodology of hadith scholars in a comprehensive way.
6. **Reorganizing Books for Easier Access:** When Ibn Balbān explained his reasoning for compiling *Al-Iḥsān* by reorganizing *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān, he praised its excellence but added:
- "However, due to its brilliant composition and firm structure, it became difficult to access its scattered treasures, and thus challenging to derive its benefits. I saw it necessary to facilitate its accessibility, seeking closeness to Allah through its refinement and reorganization, and making it easier for students to benefit from it." (Ibn Balbān, 1993, 1: 95-96).*
7. **Facilitating Memorization, and Perhaps Understanding as Well:** Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, when discussing hadith compilations, said: *"They were abridged to make their understanding easier."* Mullā Alī al-Qārī, commenting on this, said: *"It seems more appropriate to say: 'to facilitate memorization,' since abbreviation typically aids memorization, which often leads to easier understanding. Lengthy works tend to scatter one's thoughts and complicate the grasp of the intended meaning. The real goal, after all, is understanding".* Mullā Qāsim al- Ḥanafī, a student of the compiler, added: *"I heard from the compiler that the goal of abbreviation is to facilitate memorization, not understanding!"*. He further clarified that the intention was to achieve a deep and lasting understanding, since if the material is condensed, it is easier to memorize, which in turn aids understanding. This is not the case with lengthy works, whereby the

time one reaches the end, the earlier parts may have been forgotten (Al-Qārī, n.d., 143-144).

- 8. Avoiding Student Fatigue:** Hearts grow weary, and to alleviate this, Abu Khalid al-Wali said: *"We used to sit with the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and they would recite poetry and recall their pre-Islamic days."* (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 1978, 1: 105). Similarly, 'Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz said: *"Discuss the Book of Allah and gather around it. But when you grow weary, turn to stories of men, for they are good and beautiful"* (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, n.d., 1: 116, and Klaina, 2002, 29). This is a form of facilitating the endurance of learning.

In conclusion, facilitation can take many forms, such as summarizing, compiling rules into a single book, or providing explanations to clarify difficult passages. The methods vary depending on needs and circumstances. From all of this, it becomes clear that hadith scholars, from an early period, recognized the need for facilitation to make knowledge more accessible. Thus, it is not surprising that we discuss the necessity of facilitation in teaching Islamic studies and hadith studies in particular, so that students can both master and understand the material. This does not mean that scholars in other disciplines did not care for this issue, but since the topic is focused on hadith studies, I chose to emphasize it.

Chapter II. Comprehension in Hadith Studies

I. Defining the Meaning of Understanding and Comprehension

Comprehension is the most important goal sought by the educational process, as it aims to create understanding in the student, enabling them to progress in knowledge and science. Mere rote learning without actual understanding of the material does not bring about any transformation or intellectual improvement.

Understanding is a condition for accountability, and therefore, a person's status is dependent on it. It has been said in the interpretation of the term "al-Hikmah" (wisdom) in the verse: *"We made his kingdom strong and gave him al-Hikmah (Prophethood) and sound judgment in speech and decision"* (Sad: 20), that Ibn Abbas said: "Understanding was granted". Additionally, regarding the verse: "He grants Hikmah to whom He pleases, and he, to whom Hikmah is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember (will receive admonition) except men of understanding" (Al-Baqarah: 269), that wisdom is understanding (Al-Tabarī, 1405, 3: 90).

In a letter from 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī regarding judiciary matters, he advised: "...understand thoroughly what crosses your mind that is not mentioned in the Qur'an or Sunnah, and identify similarities and parallels, then measure the matters accordingly..." (Al-Bayhaqī, 1994, 10: 115, No. 20134, and 10: 150, No. 30324). Al-Bukhārī also titled a chapter in his Sahih, under the Book of Knowledge: "(14) CHAPTER. (The superiority of) comprehending knowledge." (Al-Bukhārī, 1997, 1: 98).

II. The Meaning and Importance of Understanding and Comprehension:

Al-'Aynī defined understanding as "the sharpness of the mind, and the mind is a faculty that captures forms and meanings, encompassing both intellectual and sensory perceptions" (Al-'Aynī, n.d., 2: 39).

It is a stage between receiving knowledge and memorization. In this regard, al-Bayhaqī narrated from Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, who said: "The first step of knowledge is listening, then understanding, then memorization, then action, and then spreading [the knowledge]" (Al-Bayhaqī, 1990, 2: 289, No. 1797).

A person who possesses understanding is praised by scholars because they grasp what they hear, and it shows in their actions. Abū Nasr al-Kalabādī, a renowned memorizer, was praised by Abū Abdullah al-Hākim as having "excellent understanding and knowledge" (Al-Ḍahabī, 1958, 3: 1027, No. 956). Similarly, al-Ḍahabī spoke of Imam Muhammad ibn Makhlad ibn Ḥafs, describing him as having "written an innumerable amount, along with understanding, knowledge, and corrected book" (Al-Ḍahabī, 1984, 15: 256).

On the other hand, a person who lacks proper understanding is criticized. For example, 'Affān ibn Muslim Abū 'Uthmān al-Ṣaghār was described by Sulaymān ibn Ḥarb, as narrated by ibn 'Adī: "...he was slow, with poor memory and slow comprehension" (Ibn 'Adī, 1988, 5: 384, No. 1550). Ibn al-Najjār also mentioned Ahmad ibn Tāriq al-Karkī: "...I have heard much from him, but he had little knowledge, was far from understanding, though he had accurate transmission" (Ibn Hajar, 1971, 1: 188, No. 579).

Scholars have long cared about the quality of understanding and comprehension, composing various works that address educational behavior in study circles to ensure students develop a good understanding (See: Ibn Abdel Barr, al-Khatīb, al-Kinānī and Klaina).

From this, we recognize the importance of this topic in religious sciences in general, and in the sciences of hadith in particular, as they are of paramount importance due to their connection to two essential matters:

1. The transmission-based methodology and its role in examining narrations and critiquing them to differentiate between the authentic and the weak.
2. Understanding the meaning of the transmitted text to apply it in practice and implement it, as it serves as legislation for Muslims.

Indeed, one cannot discuss hadith studies in terms of authenticating, weakening, critiquing hadiths, or assessing narrators unless the scholar possesses the understanding necessary to grasp these matters. For this reason, scholars have established the principle: "If you are transmitting, verify its authenticity; if you are claiming, provide evidence."

Due to the significance of hadith studies, they must be given full attention in terms of study, teaching, and application. This is why hadith scholars, from the

earliest times, have paid close attention to proper comprehension, understanding, and practice.

In this research, our primary goal is to highlight the current state of this subject among students, identify the obstacles that hinder the educational process, and propose ways to facilitate it for them. Undoubtedly, finding something difficult can lead to its abandonment, if not to outright aversion.

This topic has occupied my mind for a considerable amount of time, whether while teaching my students, when noticing mistakes in postgraduate research, or when hearing a preacher delivering a Friday sermon, who is not well-versed in the field, citing a hadith and commenting that it was reported by Ibn al-Jawzī in his collection of fabricated narrations, unaware that this book is specifically for forged hadiths.

The issue that occurred with these individuals can be traced back to the nature of their education and a misunderstanding of certain topics, the effects of which have become evident. I am often reminded of what happened to *al-Hāfidh* Abū Abdullah al-Hākīm in some of his narrations of the hadith of Ismā'il ibn 'Ayyash on Mut'im ibn al-Miqdām al-Ṣan'ānī, as Ibn al-Qaysurānī pointed out when explaining the reason for writing his book (*Al-Mu'talif wal-Mukhtalif*). He said, after noting: "This was narrated by the Syrians from the Yemenis," and thought that this al-Mut'im was from San'ā, Yemen, while he was from Sana'a, a village near the gates of Damascus where many Companions had settled. Abū 'Amr al-Awza'ī said about him: "The people of Syria suffered a great loss with the death of al-Mut'im ibn al-Miqdām al-Ṣan'ānī" (Ibn al-Qaysurānī, 1991, 23-24).

What happened to al-Hakim was not due to a lack of knowledge, but rather to mere oversight. Who is free from that? Knowledge of the lineages of narrators is among the types of hadith sciences that a *muhaddith* cannot do without, and a lapse in this area can lead to discrediting a trustworthy person or validating a discredited one!

Is this not sufficient reason to reflect deeply on how to transmit the sciences of hadith, which represent the Islamic methodology for preserving the authenticity of hadith and ensuring its proper understanding? This methodology has influenced other fields such as tafsir, *Fiqh*, *Usūl*, Creed, Literature, language, Grammar, and History. The Western society is actively facilitating and disseminating knowledge through specialized books (for eg. Books: QUE SAIS-JE?), yet if we look back at the work of the early scholars, may Allah have mercy on them, we find that they made significant efforts to facilitate hadith sciences for students. They spread knowledge in academic gatherings, even if some were exclusively for those dedicated to this field. They authored works that enriched the Islamic library in general and the hadith library in particular.

Thus, it is no surprise that hadith scholars became passionate about summarizing lengthy works and compiling scientific principles from comprehensive

books, to make it easier for students to access knowledge. This was because it was impossible for them to study everything at once from the many books that had been written in each branch of hadith sciences.

In every era, new needs arise that require special attention from scholars. In our time, we are compelled to rethink how we transmit knowledge in general, and the sciences of hadith, which are among the most complex disciplines, in particular.

Given the importance of this issue, we need to examine all aspects of the educational process, benefit from the efforts of the early scholars in the educational domain and propose possible solutions to alleviate the challenges related to understanding and teaching.

III. Understanding the Prescribed Text – Obstacles and Suggestions

In any scholarly discipline, understanding the prescribed text is a crucial step towards deeper analysis and meaningful engagement with the material. However, this process often faces obstacles that can hinder clear interpretation and accurate comprehension. This section seeks to address these challenges by exploring the difficulties encountered when approaching prescribed texts and offering potential suggestions for overcoming these barriers. By navigating through the complexities, the aim is to enhance the clarity of understanding and ensure a more effective utilization of the text in both academic and practical contexts.

A. Obstacles to Understanding the Prescribed Text

The student is considered one of the key components of the educational process. Without their active participation, it is impossible to speak of understanding and comprehension, as these can only be achieved after the educational impact becomes apparent.

For the student to engage and interact with this process, they are expected to possess a certain level of awareness, enabling them to grasp a portion of the material presented and to express it clearly and fluently in a way that conveys the intended meaning.

To what extent can students today achieve this given the general education system they undergo? In addition, to what extent do they show engagement with the subject of hadith sciences in particular?

To answer these two questions, I will first draw on my experience in higher education in Morocco, the UAE, and Qatar, and I will reflect on what I have personally observed regarding the students of Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University, as follows:

1. Severe weakness in language, grammar, and spelling skills:

This is largely because the students in Brunei are not native Arabic speakers. Arabic is considered a foreign language since it is not the official

language of the country². Not all students received Arabic education, and those who did often studied in schools lacking proper methodology and qualified teachers. Many of the teachers are non-Arabs who do not have a strong command of Arabic and do not adhere to classical Arabic during instruction. Furthermore, these schools do not emphasize conversation and dialogue skills, relying instead on rote memorization. Those who do not continue their education in higher-level Arabic institutions tend to forget what they have learned since they do not use the language. Instead, they default to using their national language, Malay, which hinders the development of their Arabic language skills (Ibrāhīm, 2010, 1: 372-384). The impact of this linguistic weakness on students' comprehension is clear and undeniable, as language is the key to understanding discourse. As Jalal al-Din al-Suyūṭī said when speaking of the sciences he was blessed with:

"Along with the knowledge Allah has bestowed upon me, such as tafsir, which helps to understand the Noble Book, and its sciences, which I recorded in concise writings, and Fiqh, without which one cannot achieve distinction, and the language upon which understanding of the Sunnah and Qur'an depends, and grammar, without which one is prone to many errors—and improper speech does not benefit hadith—along with the other sciences of meanings and eloquence that clarify the eloquence of the Book and the hadith" (al-Suyūṭī, 1972, 1: 39).

2. Students largely limiting themselves to the assigned textbook:

Most students do not attempt to broaden their understanding by reading additional sources or familiarizing themselves with them, which affects their overall level and confines them within a narrow scope. Ideally, they should be encouraged to do so, following the example of hadith scholars and others who sought multiple teachers, considering it an essential educational practice. Those who lack such exposure are criticized, as noted by Imam al-Shātibī when

² The use of Arabic in the Sultanate of Brunei dates back approximately a century, based on a document of a Friday sermon preserved in the Islamic Da'wah Center, attributed to the era of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddeen II (1829-1852) and Sultan Abdul Mumin (1852-1885). However, it was not used officially; rather, it was utilized during specific occasions for dhikr (remembrance of Allah), reciting the Shahadah (testimony of faith), and intentions. Later, a group emerged that focused on the Arabic language in the country, leading to the establishment of schools dedicated to teaching Arabic. This information comes from a study by Sulayman Bin Sulayman Penguiran, titled "Teaching Arabic Language in Brunei Darussalam: Challenges and Expectations," which was presented at the International Conference on the Arabic Language titled "Arabic Language Between Extinction and Development: Challenges and Expectations," held at Al-Azhar University in Indonesia, Jakarta, from July 22-24, 2010, pp. 359-371.

explaining why ibn Hazm was so sharp-tongued (Al-Shātibī, n.d., 1: 93-95, Klaina, 1988, 1: 69-82). Returning to books, even if they do not replace teachers, can reduce the severity of the weaknesses students face.

3. Relying on summaries made by fellow students, further compounding the problem:

If a student summarizes a book, they may not correct what they write. When another student misses' class, they rely on a peer's notes from the teacher's explanation, trusting them even though they may contain misunderstandings, mistakes in transcription, or errors in word usage. Such mistakes spread and become widespread, which is particularly problematic when it comes to hadith terminology, where mistakes are even more severe due to the students' unfamiliarity with the terms. It is well-known that the knowledge of narrators' names and hadith terminology in general requires direct transmission from teachers and cannot be fully understood through personal effort and independent reading alone.

4. Students not consulting their professors in their offices to clarify what they do not understand out of shyness:

While modesty is part of faith, there is no modesty in seeking knowledge. Those who are too shy to ask questions in the pursuit of knowledge will never learn. In this regard, 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "How good the woman of the *Ansār* were! They did not let shyness prevent them from understanding their religion properly." (Muslim, 2007, No. 750).

B. Suggestions to Improve Understanding of the Prescribed Text:

- 1. Student admission to the college should be based on passing an exam that assesses their language proficiency at a minimum.** Those who are unable to pass this exam successfully should be required to take a special course in Arabic. It is unreasonable to study a subject when one does not understand what is written in it. This deficiency in students' Arabic language skills must be addressed at lower educational levels before reaching university. This can be achieved by assigning the teaching of Arabic to those proficient in the language and adopting robust curricula that encourage students to use the language, rather than merely memorizing texts.
- 2. Encouraging them to return to primary sources and engage with scholars to showcase their talents.**
- 3. Organizing training courses in hadith and its sciences, along with competitions in this field, like those for memorizing and reciting the Qur'an.**

In conclusion, understanding the prescribed text is not without its obstacles, but through proactive engagement and strategic improvements, both students and

educators can overcome these challenges. By addressing language deficiencies, promoting a broader approach to learning, and encouraging the active participation of students in their educational journey, it is possible to enhance their comprehension and application of the material. Ultimately, fostering an environment that values critical thinking and ongoing dialogue will lead to a more profound and meaningful understanding of the prescribed texts, ensuring their continued relevance and impact in both scholarly and practical settings.

III. Understanding the Curriculum – Obstacles and Suggestions:

The curriculum plays a pivotal role in shaping the learning experience and guiding students toward achieving academic objectives. However, interpreting and effectively engaging with the curriculum often presents challenges, such as ambiguous content, misalignment with students' needs, or a lack of clarity in its objectives. This section delves into the common obstacles encountered in understanding the curriculum and offers thoughtful suggestions for overcoming these challenges. By addressing these hurdles, we aim to foster a deeper comprehension of the curriculum and create a more effective learning environment for both educators and students.

A. Obstacles to Understanding the Curriculum:

The curriculum imposed on students should consider their academic level and the time allocated for it. However, the following issues have been observed:

- a. The extent of the teacher's experience, mastery of the subject, and responsiveness to students:** There is no doubt that the teacher's experience and skill equip them to deliver the material effectively. Thus, students who struggle with weak foundational knowledge require a seasoned teacher more than others. While the teacher may not possess the seal of Solomon, they will exert their utmost effort to alleviate the problem.
- b. The degree of commitment to the Arabic language:** Preserving the Arabic language is one of the most important duties.
- c. The teacher's specialization in the subject they teach:** A significant flaw in education is assigning subjects to those who lack expertise, especially in hadith sciences.
- d. The extent to which the teacher benefits from new technologies:** Some teachers see little value in these tools. While it is essential to learn directly from scholars, this does not preclude the combination of both traditional and modern methods, which can provide benefits and save time in understanding. Utilizing computers in the study of hadith and its sciences greatly aids students when used appropriately, allowing for direct engagement with hadith sources alongside technological resources. Otherwise, their knowledge remains partial, limited to what they specifically sought. Direct research in books can yield a wealth of knowledge that they may not have considered. Moreover, many

software programs related to Islamic studies contain numerous errors and inaccuracies, undermining their utility and necessitating a reevaluation of such projects aimed at serving the field of knowledge. Therefore, I recommend establishing working agreements in this area with specialists and seeking advisors in this field.

- e. **Overburdening the teacher with more working hours than necessary:** The contracting body may believe that this maximizes the teacher's expertise, but in reality, it leads to burnout, diminishing their productivity and resulting in outcomes contrary to expectations. Individuals excel in their work when given suitable opportunities and favorable conditions.
- f. **Assigning the teacher to teach a fixed curriculum without deviation:** This approach may not meet educational needs and could involve scientific inaccuracies or outdated information that does not align with current research developments. Consequently, the teacher ends up merely repeating others' words rather than utilizing their expertise. Instead, the teacher should be an active researcher. When hadith scholars teach a work, they do not simply convey its contents; they explain, contextualize, and elaborate on the material, enriching the learning experience with critical insights. This practice fosters students' analytical reading and the writing of commentaries and annotations, which can serve as the foundation for new works. Scholars may also compile the sayings of their teachers into a book, thereby participating actively in the educational process. The hadith library is filled with such works, including the inquiries of Muhammad ibn 'Uthman to Ali, the questions of Abū 'Ubaid to Abū Dāwūd, the questions of Ibn Abi Shaiba, and the commentaries produced by scholars on the books they taught, along with their annotations in prose or poetry. The explanations of Ibn al-Ṣalāh's introduction are also well-known, as are the poetic forms created by scholars for this purpose, which are undeniably valuable, recognizing that every era has its own scholars.

B. Suggestions to Enhance Understanding of the Curriculum

1. **Organizing training courses on modern techniques** to keep up with contemporary developments and to use them in teaching.
2. **Assigning the subject of hadith sciences specifically to a qualified specialist.**
3. **Reducing the number of working hours** so that the teacher can provide quality instruction; otherwise, they may become just a lecturer with no time for research.
4. **Allowing the teacher the space to innovate and publish their work.** Why not teach using a variety of sources to broaden student's perspectives, while also allowing them to benefit from the teacher's expertise?

5. Utilizing visual aids and modern technologies to communicate with students. In this regard, it would be beneficial to create a dedicated website for the teacher to interact with them.

IV. Understanding the Assigned Textbook—Barriers and Suggestions:

Textbooks are central tools in academic learning, providing structured content and guiding students through the core concepts of any subject. However, understanding the assigned textbook is not always straightforward. Students may face several barriers that affect their comprehension, ranging from difficulties in language proficiency to over-reliance on simplified summaries. This section will explore the common challenges encountered when engaging with the assigned textbooks and propose practical solutions to overcome these obstacles. By addressing these barriers, the goal is to ensure a more effective and enriched learning experience through better interaction with the textbook.

A. Barriers to Understanding the Assigned Textbook

In this context, we highlight several reasons that indicate a pressing need to introduce new approaches and make modifications at the level of authorship:

1. Most existing texts on hadith sciences follow the same style as the classical scholars. While this approach may benefit distinguished researchers, it is presented to students who often have weak foundational knowledge, particularly in non-Arabic speaking countries. This necessitates a simpler style to enable students to grasp the content, while simultaneously enriching their vocabulary and understanding of structures and terminology.
2. Many available hadith studies lack diacritical markings. While this may be acceptable in Arabic-speaking societies, it is not the case in non-Arabic countries, as it complicates students' ability to recognize and understand the material effectively.
3. Some contemporary authors rely solely on referencing other works without returning to the original sources. Consequently, if one makes a mistake, that error is likely to propagate among those who reference them. Knowing that even the early scholars made mistakes when relying solely on transmission underscores the necessity of consulting primary sources whenever possible.
4. Most books in this field focus only on theoretical aspects, while the target audience is students who need to connect the material to practical applications for better comprehension.

B. Suggestions to Enhance Understanding of the Assigned Textbook

1. Efforts should be made to author books on hadith sciences that prioritize facilitation. Historical practices of hadith scholars, who wrote comprehensive texts and later summarized them, provide a valid precedent. An example is Al-

Nawawī, who titled his work in hadith sciences *Al-Taqrīb wa al-Taysīr* (Rapprochement and Facilitation), indicating scholars' attention to making hadith sciences accessible according to perceived needs and preferences. Through this approach, we can foster a culture of hadith knowledge that extends beyond students of religious sciences.

2. Terminology should be defined as articulated by its original authors to avoid confusion among different scholars' uses of terms. Students should be alerted to the risks of misapplying these terms, as this can distort understanding.
3. Progression from easier to more complex material should be gradual and manageable.
4. A connection should be established between theoretical knowledge and practical application.
5. Hadith sciences should be studied within thematic units to ensure comprehension and retention.
6. Establishing a prize for the best book authored by a researcher or a group of researchers aiming for novelty and ease of understanding would encourage quality contributions.

In this section, we have examined the barriers students face in understanding assigned textbooks, particularly in the field of hadith sciences. These obstacles range from the complexity of the classical writing style, the lack of diacritical markings, and the over-reliance on secondary sources, to the disconnect between theory and practice. Addressing these issues requires a shift towards simplified, accessible materials that also respect academic rigor. Suggestions for improvement include authoring textbooks that prioritize clarity, defining terminology accurately, and ensuring a gradual progression from basic to complex concepts. Furthermore, connecting theoretical content with practical application and introducing incentives for innovative and accessible textbooks are essential steps toward fostering a more effective learning environment.

V. Understanding the Curriculum—Barriers and Suggestions:

The curriculum plays a crucial role in shaping the educational experience and guiding students towards mastery of a subject. However, in designing a curriculum, it is essential to consider both the academic level of the students and the time available for instruction. This section will explore some of the barriers that hinder effective understanding of the curriculum, particularly in the field of hadith sciences, and offer suggestions for improving its structure and delivery. By addressing these challenges, we can create a more coherent and efficient educational process that promotes deeper comprehension and long-term retention of the material.

A. Barriers to Understanding the Curriculum

When establishing the curriculum for students, consideration must be given to their academic level and the time allocated for study. However, several observations emerge in this area:

1. The length of the curriculum often leaves the teacher torn between completing the material, often hurriedly, and adequately explaining the content for which they are responsible, leading to negative outcomes.
2. The absence of hadith sciences in the first and third years, where it is only taught in one term, causes students to forget the material, only to encounter related subjects like *al-Takhreej* (hadith sourcing) in the fourth year. This subject is closely tied to hadith sciences, like the relationship between *Usūl al-Fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). When students engage with it, they find they have forgotten much of what pertains to hadith sciences, necessitating that the teacher reminds them, resulting in a significant loss of time.
3. The lack of practical application in hadith sciences requires intensive reliance on libraries to engage directly with sources, which demands considerable time to achieve the desired objectives.

B. Suggestions to Support Understanding of the Curriculum:

1. It is essential to distribute topics in hadith sciences across all years of study. This ensures ongoing engagement and understanding.
2. The content of the curriculum should be appropriately matched to each term so that it is neither too extensive nor too brief, and at a level that corresponds to students' understanding.
3. A dedicated room for *al-Takhreej* should be established, equipped with all necessary sources.
4. Increasing the number of credit hours allocated to hadith sciences and *al-Takhreej* is essential.

In any case, the Islamic sciences have their unique characteristics. Adopting Western educational methods has adversely affected the level of education, as we now award degrees based on years of study and student success rather than on mastery of Islamic sciences. Therefore, the formation of accredited scholars necessitates a change in educational policy, as the Western model may be suitable for its sciences, which can be confined to a specific timeframe, unlike the expansive field of Islamic sciences.

In conclusion, the curriculum in hadith sciences faces several significant barriers that affect students' ability to engage meaningfully with the material. Issues such as the mismatch between curriculum length and time constraints, lack of continuity in subjects, and insufficient practical application highlight the need for substantial reforms. By spreading topics across all years of study, aligning content

with students' capacities, and providing the necessary resources for practical application, the curriculum can be transformed into a more effective educational tool. Ultimately, this requires reevaluating educational methods to ensure they support deep mastery of Islamic sciences.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that facilitation and understanding in hadith studies are fundamental to the process of knowledge transmission and education. Through this research, we have highlighted the importance of these principles in enhancing a deep understanding of hadith content and demonstrated how hadith scholars have engaged with these principles throughout history, resulting in scholarly works characterized by clarity and precision.

Our study revealed that facilitation goes beyond mere simplification of information; it extends to presenting knowledge in a way that allows students to absorb and apply it in various aspects of their lives. We showed that some of the difficulties faced by students stem from multiple factors, including their proficiency in the Arabic language, which is a crucial factor in understanding hadith texts, as well as their psychological and cognitive readiness to accept new concepts. Objective influences, such as the experience of teachers and the suitability of curricula, also play a significant role in shaping the learning experience.

The results we have reached highlight the urgent need to develop teaching and assessment methods that align with students' needs, ensuring the achievement of educational objectives. Therefore, we recommend enhancing interaction between students and teachers, providing necessary support for students facing learning difficulties, and employing innovative teaching strategies that focus on deep understanding rather than superficial memorization.

In conclusion, through this research, we aim to contribute to creating an educational environment that encourages exploration and critical thinking, ultimately fostering a generation capable of achieving further accomplishments in the field of hadith studies. Achieving this goal requires collaboration among all stakeholders, including educational institutions, teachers, and the students themselves.

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