

Implementation of Jarh as Advice in Da'i Standardisation by MUI: An Examination of Qawa'id al-Taahdis

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of jarh as a form of advice in the process of da'i standardisation by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), with reference to the book Qawa'id al-Taahdis. This research aims to understand how jarh methodology is used as a tool of constructive criticism in assessing da'i competence and integrity, as well as its impact on the process of certification and standardisation of da'i in Indonesia. Through a qualitative approach and textual analysis of qawa'id al-taahdis, this article explores the application of the principles of jarh and shiqaq as part of the effort to maintain knowledge and public trust in da'is. This research examines the theory of Jarh, namely Jarh of a dhoif person, as a form of Advice', using a literature study in the book Qawaid Al-Taahdis. This study states that the existence of Jarh will improve the quality of da'wah, Jarh will criticise the quality of scholars with the certification of Jarh people who are dhoif (weak) is important to maintain the quality of da'wah. By applying the principle of jarh through three stages, namely Certification by involving the local community, certification by involving community leaders, and analysis and feedback with fellow MUI in the certification process, the da'i certification will be more structured and formal. The study results show that the proper implementation of jarh can improve the quality of da'i as well as being a form of constructive advice, thus supporting the creation of standardisation of da'i based on knowledge and morals.

Keywords: Jarh; Standardisadi Da'i; Qawaid al-Taahdis

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas peran jarh sebagai bentuk nasihat dalam proses standarisasi da'i oleh Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), dengan mengacu pada kitab Qawa'id al-Tahdis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana metodologi jarh digunakan sebagai alat kritik konstruktif dalam menilai kompetensi dan integritas da'i, serta dampaknya terhadap proses sertifikasi dan standarisasi da'i di Indonesia. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dan analisis tekstual terhadap qawa'id al-tahdis, artikel ini mengeksplorasi penerapan prinsip jarh dan shiqaq sebagai bagian dari upaya menjaga keilmuan dan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap para da'i. Penelitian ini mengkaji teori Jarh yaitu Jarh orang yang dhoif, sebagai bentuk Nasihat', dengan menggunakan studi literatur dalam kitab Qawaid Al-Tahdis. Penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa dengan adanya Jarh akan meningkatkan kualitas dakwah, Jarh akan mengkritisi kualitas ulama dengan adanya sertifikasi Jarh orang yang dhoif (lemah) merupakan hal yang penting untuk menjaga kualitas dakwah. Dengan menerapkan prinsip jarh melalui tiga tahapan, yaitu Sertifikasi dengan melibatkan masyarakat setempat, sertifikasi dengan melibatkan tokoh masyarakat, dan analisis dan umpan balik dengan sesama MUI dalam proses sertifikasi, maka sertifikasi da'i akan lebih terstruktur dan formal. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa implementasi jarh yang tepat dapat meningkatkan kualitas da'i sekaligus menjadi bentuk nasihat yang konstruktif, sehingga mendukung terciptanya standarisasi da'i yang berlandaskan ilmu dan akhlak.

Kata kunci: Jarh; Standardisasi Da'i; Qawaid al-Tahdis

Introduction

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) has been implementing a preacher certification programme since 2019, and to date, the programme has reached its 35th batch. In that time, more than 2,200 preachers have been certified through this programme, which aims to improve the quality of sermons in Indonesia. The latest batch, the 35th batch, graduated on 30 November 2024, with approximately 150 preachers graduated as representatives of more than 700 participants who had undergone the standardisation process throughout the year. The programme not only emphasises mastery of religious knowledge, but also equips the preachers with insights into nationalism and an understanding of Wasathiyah Islam, which is one of MUI's main focuses in its efforts to strengthen religious moderation in Indonesia.¹

However, the existence of this preacher certification cannot be separated from the pros and cons among the community. Some parties support this programme as a strategic step to standardise preachers and prevent the spread of radicalism that

¹ "MUI Cleric Certification: An Effort to Create Nonradical Clerics, With Benchmarks Considered 'Unclear'" (BBC News Indonesia, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-50486074>.

can harm society. They argue that this certification is important to create qualified and trustworthy preachers in delivering Islamic teachings. With certification, it is hoped that preachers can provide a correct understanding of Islam to the community without being influenced by deviant ideas.²

On the other hand, there are criticisms that this certification may not fully reflect the ability and character of a preacher. Some argue that the certification process may create an exclusive impression, where only certified preachers are deemed fit to preach, while non-certified preachers may be ignored despite their abilities. In addition, there are concerns about the potential separation between certified and non-certified preachers, which could create tension in the community.³

Several parties, including major civil society organisations such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), have rejected the discourse on preacher certification. They consider this programme to be a form of discrimination that is not in line with the current conditions of society. This rejection is based on the view that preacher certification could limit religious freedom and intervene in preaching practices that have been carried out independently by preachers. Muhammadiyah and NU also argued that preachers should not need to go through a certification process that is considered irrelevant to existing preaching practices. They are concerned that this policy could stigmatise preachers who are not registered in the certification programme, and reduce the diversity of preaching approaches in society.⁴

In the context of the pros and cons described earlier, the author would like to offer a new approach to the preacher certification programme conducted by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). This approach aims to make the certification process more formal and structured through the application of negative criticism or jarh to prospective preachers. The process of hadith transmission plays an important role in the Islamic scholarly tradition.⁵ As is well known, hadiths began to be disseminated since the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.⁶ Although during the time of the Companions themselves, there were some studies

²"MUI Cleric Certification: An Effort to Produce Nonradical Clerics, With Benchmarks Considered 'Unclear.'"

³Abd Munib, "Media Framing of Dai Certification News," *Peurawi Journal: Media for Islamic Communication Studies* 3, no. 2 (2020): 27-45.

⁴Munib, 45.

⁵ Mahmud Tahan, *TAISIR MUSTOLAH AL -HADIS* (Riyad: Maktabah Al-Ma'arif, n.d.).

⁶ Radinal Mukhtar Harahap, "Hadith During the Time of the Prophet Muhammad and the Companions," *Al-Bukhari: Journal of Hadith Science* Vol. 1, no. No. 1 (2020), <https://journal.iainlangsa.ac.id/index.php/bukhari/article/view/441>.

that became a problem in the study of hadith.⁷ Every narrator (rawi) must be tested and traced for integrity before a tradition can be accepted and used as proof. The concept of jarh and ta'dil becomes the main foundation in assessing the credibility of a narrator.⁸ In the study of jarh wa ta'dil, hadith scholars also have some special vocabulary that they use.⁹ A tsiqoh (trustworthy) narrator will be accepted while a majruh (despicable) narrator will be rejected.¹⁰ Although the determination of the quality of the hadith must also go through the path of finding supporting traditions, not only on the study of the narrator.¹¹

Jarh, which is a form of negative criticism given by hadith scholars from the time of the Prophet onwards, has the main purpose of assessing the validity and credibility of the hadith narrated by the narrators. Thus, it can be said that jarh serves as an effective tool to determine what is good and what is bad in the context of da'wah. The purpose of jarh and the certification of preachers have a strong relationship with maqashid sharia. MUI aims to produce preachers who are moderate and have integrity. The jarh process serves to identify preachers who truly understand Islamic teachings well, so that they can maintain the purity of religion in accordance with the principles of maqashid shari'ah.¹²

There are several writings that discuss the issue of da'i certification, which provide valuable insights into this issue from various perspectives. One of them is a research conducted by Abd Munib entitled "Media Framing of Da'i Certification News". This research focuses on analysing news coverage in online media, such as Tempo.co, Medcom.id, and BBC.com, related to the issue of da'i certification and its impact on public perception. Through this analysis, Abd Munib explored how the media framed the issue of da'i certification and how this framing affected the public's view of da'i. In addition, there is another research conducted by Azizah Nur Haliza entitled 'Discourse on Da'i Certification in Online Media'.¹³ In her research, Azizah analysed how Liputan6.com covered da'i certification with a discourse analysis approach. This research aims to understand the formation of narratives around the issue of da'i certification and how these narratives can

⁷ Nurul Husna, "Hadith History and Companion Problems," *Al-Bukhari: Journal of Hadith Science* 1, no. 2 (2018): 267-80.

⁸ Mahmud Tahan, *TAISIR MUSTOLAH AL -HADIS*, 31.

⁹ Arinal Husna, "RUMOURS IN KITAB HADIS AND RIJAL AL-HADIS," *Al-Bukhari: Journal of Hadith Science* 2, no. 1 (2019): 282.

¹⁰ Mahmud Tahan, *TAISIR MUSTOLAH AL -HADIS*, 31.

¹¹ Cut Fauziah, "I 'Tibār Sanad in Hadith," *Al-Bukhari: Journal of Hadith Science* 1, no. 1 (2018): 124.

¹² Kholishuddin Kholishuddin, "USING THE MAQASID SHARI'AH APPROACH AS A CONTEXTUALISATION INSTRUMENT OF HADITH MEANING," *Nabawi: Journal of Hadith Studies* 1, no. 1 (2020).

¹³ Nurhaliza Azizah, "WACANA CERTIFICATION DA'I IN MEDIA ONLINE (WACANA ANALYSIS OF NORMAN FAIRCLOUGH ON LIPUTAN6. COM)" (IAIN Purwokerto, 2021).

influence people's understanding and attitudes towards the certification programme proposed by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI).¹⁴

Furthermore, research by Mohammad Kamaludin entitled 'Polemics over the Dai Certification Programme: Critical Discourse Study in Mass Media' focuses on investigating the discourse exchange between policy makers and policy recipients in the context of preacher certification. This research aims to analyse the power relations and influences that emerge in religious education, as well as how these dynamics affect the implementation of the preacher certification programme.

The method used in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis, which allows researchers to understand the patterns of power relations formed through various factors, including transparency, communication, and politicisation. Using this approach, Kamaludin explores how discourses developed in the mass media can reflect and influence the preacher certification policy, as well as how this contributes to the formation of public opinion and public perception of the programme.¹⁵ While these three studies have made important contributions to understanding the perceptions and social impacts of the programme, they have not touched on the epistemological aspects of evaluating preachers themselves, particularly using hadith science approaches such as jarh wa ta'dil.

The weakness of previous research is the absence of integration of authoritative concepts from hadith science in the selection and evaluation mechanism of preachers. In fact, in the classical Islamic scientific tradition, the process of verifying the integrity and capability of individuals is very strong through the theory of jarh wa ta'dil. This theory not only applies in the criticism of hadith narrators, but can also be used as a normative approach in assessing the credibility of religious messengers, including contemporary preachers.

The urgency of this research seeks to offer a new approach in the preacher certification programme by integrating the principles of jarh (negative criticism) from hadith science into the preacher evaluation process. The author refers to the book *Qawa'id al-Tahdīs* by Muhammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, as a normative foundation to explain how the concept of jarh can be utilised in ensuring the integrity and validity of a preacher. This book is one of the important works in the field of ulum al-hadith that compiles the rules of criticism and validation of hadith narrators systematically.

The Relevance of Jarh in Da'i Standardisation

Negative criticism or Jarh of hadith narrators is essential in the study of hadith science, as stated by Imam Nawawi as follows:

¹⁴ Azizah.

¹⁵ Mohammad Kamaludin, "Polemics over the Dai Certification Programme: A Critical Discourse Study in Mass Media," *Lenvari: Journal of Social Science* 2, no. 1 (2024): 25-41.

قال الإمام النووي: اعلم أن جرح الرواة جائز، بل واجب بالاتفاق للضرورة الداعية إليه لصيانة الشريعة المكرمة، وليس هو من الغيبة المحرمة، بل من النصيحة لله تعالى ورسوله والمسلمين ولم يزل فضلاء الأئمة، وأخبارهم، وأهل الورع منهم يفعلون ذلك". وقد تكلم الإمام مسلم على جماعة منهم في مقدمة صحيحه، وقدمنا في مبحث الضعيف تحت ترجمة قول مسلم أن الراوي عن الضعفاء غاش آثم جاهل زيادة على ذلك فارجع إليه¹⁶

Imam Nawawi asserts that negative criticism (jarh) is not only permissible but also an agreed obligation in order to maintain the authenticity of Islamic law. This aims to protect the religious heritage from misuse and error.

Imam Nawawi also explains that this action cannot be considered as forbidden gossip but rather as a form of sincere advice to Allah, His Messenger and the Muslims. Prominent scholars and scholars, including Imam Muslim, have expressed their opinions regarding narrators considered weak in their works, which shows that this criticism is an integral part of the discipline of hadith science.

Jarh and Criticism of Antiquity

Etymologically, the term "jarh" comes from the word "jaraha," which means to injure or affect something with a weapon. This concept reflects an action that is critical and has the potential to damage, both in terms of physicality and reputation. While in the terminological context, "jarh" describes a broader meaning, namely the identification of defects or weaknesses in a narrator, indicating that the criticism given is not trivial, but is based on an in-depth analysis of the credibility and reliability of the narrator in narrating the hadith. (Sayid Abdul Majid al Ghauri n.d.) So the main focus of jarh is to assess the bad personality of a person. At the time of the Prophet there was already Jarh or negative criticism, as evidenced by the hadith:

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ: نَزَلْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْزِلًا، فَجَعَلَ النَّاسُ يَمْشُونَ فَيَقُولُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "مَنْ هَذَا يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ؟ فَأَقُولُ: فُلَانٌ، فَيَقُولُ: "نِعَمَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ هَذَا"، وَيَقُولُ: "مَنْ هَذَا؟ فَأَقُولُ: فُلَانٌ، فَيَقُولُ: "بِئْسَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ هَذَا"، حَتَّى مَرَّ خَالِدُ

¹⁶ Muhammad Jamaluddin Al Qosimi, *Qowaid Al-Tahdis Min Fununi Mustalah Al Hadith* (Bairut, 1AD).

بُنُّ الْوَلِيدِ، فَقَالَ: "مَنْ هَذَا؟" فَقُلْتُ: هَذَا خَالِدُ بْنُ الْوَلِيدِ، فَقَالَ: "نِعْمَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ خَالِدُ
بُنُّ الْوَلِيدِ، سَيْفٌ مِنْ سُيُوفِ اللَّهِ"¹⁷

kutaibah reported: al-Laits reported: Hisham ibn Sa'id reported: Zayd ibn Aslam reported: Abi Hurayra reported: We were travelling with the Messenger of Allah in a place and people were passing by us, and the Messenger of Allah said: "Who is this man, Abu Hurayra?", and I said: "so-and-so", and the Messenger of Allah said: "Indeed, he is the best of Allah's servants", and he continued to ask: "Who is this man", and I said: "so-and-so".", and I replied, "so-and-so", so the Messenger of Allah said, "verily he is the best of the servants of Allah", and he continued to ask again, "Who is this person", and I replied: "so-and-so", so the Messenger of Allah said again, "verily the worst of the servants of Allah is he",. At the end, Khalid bin Walid passed by and he said: who is he? I replied, "Khalid bin Walid", then he said again, "indeed, the best servant of Allah is Khalid bin Walid and he is one of the many swords of Allah".

At the time of the Prophet, negative criticism or jarh already existed, but the Prophet delivered it in an applicative manner, as evidenced in the above hadith. In the hadith, the Prophet ﷺ shows how he assessed the character of the people who passed before him. By giving a positive or negative assessment of each individual, it shows that criticism, in a constructive context, is an important part of fostering a better society, where such assessments serve as a guide for the people to recognise a person's qualities and personality.

After the death of the Prophet, the practice of jarh or negative criticism of hadith narrators was intensified. This was due to the increasing number of false traditions circulating in the community. Although before this period (companions) false traditions existed, they were not as complex and numerous as in the tabi'in period. During the time of the Companions the narrators were generally regarded as trustworthy hence there was little need to criticise them. However, with the emergence of many traditions of doubtful authenticity after the time of the companions, scholars found it necessary to apply stricter standards in assessing the credibility of narrators in order to preserve the purity of Islamic teachings and prevent the spread of misinformation.¹⁸

For example, Umar bin Al-Khattab, when he heard the news that the Prophet divorced his wife from a neighbouring friend, did not immediately accept the news. Instead, he took a careful step by ensuring the truth of the information. Umar then asked directly to the person who was with the Prophet during his lifetime to get clarification. This action shows Umar's commitment to verification

¹⁷ Muhammad bin 'Isa bin Saurah bin Musa bin Adh-Dhahhak, *Sunan Al-Timidzi* (Egypt: Syirkah Maktabah wan Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, n.d.), 688.

¹⁸ Aliyya Shauma Raffi'u, Tajul Arifin, and Dadah Dadah, "JARH WA TA'DIL: HISTORY AND URGENCY IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA," *Muàsarrah: Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2023): 10-21.

of information and careful judgement before drawing conclusions,¹⁹ In this context too, Umar had applied communication and discussion to ascertain the truth of the hadith by meeting people who were closer to the Prophet.

Criticism of narrators, even if there are indications of gossip, damaging the reputation of a Muslim, and causing discomfort, and other aspects that are prohibited by Shari'ah. This is done in an effort to preserve the authenticity of the Shari'ah from distortion and falsehood because if the practice of criticism is not allowed, it will be difficult to distinguish between individuals who are truthful (shadiq) and those who lie (kadzib), between those who have integrity (adil) and those who do not, and between those who are meticulous (dzobit) and those who are careless. As a result, the authentic traditions may be mixed with the weak and the false, so that the truth will merge with falsehood. This potentially provides an opportunity for those who want to undermine the teachings of the Islamic Shari'ah to spread misconceptions, making it part of the basic principles in the evaluation of hadith.²⁰

Not all of the previous scholars arbitrarily criticised other individuals. There are certain conditions that must be fulfilled by someone who wants to criticise, including:

1. Someone who is going to critique must be painstaking and meticulous.
2. Someone who is familiar with the terms used by scholars.
3. It must come from individuals who are dzobit (strong in memorisation) to avoid contradictions.
4. Must be a pious person with reasons to criticise.
5. Must understand the definitions of speech in Arabic.
6. Far from being fanatical about a particular madhhab.
7. Do not get carried away in criticising.
8. One must be gentle and patient so as not to be offended by the words of others. One who has calmness and patience so as not to get angry at the words of the scholars.²¹

The Usefulness of Jarh in Hadith Studies

The main benefit of *jarh* (criticism of narrators) in the science of Jarh wa Ta'dil is to assess the credibility of hadith narrators, especially in terms of their fairness and accuracy. With this method, scholars can sort out which traditions are authentic and which are weak based on the quality of the sanad, not just the content. In addition, jarh also serves to maintain the purity of Islamic teachings

¹⁹Raffi'u, Arifin, and Dadah.

²⁰Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Suwailem Abu Shuhbah, *Al-Wasith Fi 'Ulum Wa Mustalah Al-Hadith* (Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, n.d.).

²¹Sayid Abdul Majid al Ghauri, *Al Madkhol Ila Dirosati Ulumul Hadis* (Bairut, n.d.).

from the infiltration of false narratives, provides guidelines on the classification of narrators (such as *tsiqah*, *maqbul*, or *matruk*), and is an important basis for assessing the status of traditions. The practice of *jarh* reflects a form of scientific accountability in the Islamic scholarly tradition as it is done systematically rather than subjectively or impugning a person's honour without a valid reason.²²

Understanding Da'i Standardisation by MUI

The term standardisation can also be called certification, derived from the English *certification*, which includes meanings such as information, endorsement, diploma, certificate, brevet, and diploma. According to the *International Institute for Environment Development* (IIED). Standardisation is a procedure whereby a third party provides written assurance that a particular product, process, or service has met a set standard, based on an audit conducted according to agreed procedures. It can be concluded that Standardisation is a written guarantee given based on the terms of an audit by an institution that is competent in its field. The aim is to ensure that individuals who get standardisation meet the applicable standards and are guaranteed in terms of their abilities and competence. Meanwhile, *da'i* is a term in Islam for people whose job is to invite and encourage others to follow and practice the teachings of Islam. A *da'i* is involved in *da'wah*, which is the activity of broadcasting, calling out, and inviting people to believe, pray, or live life according to Islamic teachings. Therefore, *da'i* are also known as preachers. According to the KBBI, *da'wah* is defined as broadcasting, propaganda, or spreading religion in society, as well as calls to embrace, study, and practice the teachings of Islam.²³

Since Minister of Religious Affairs Lukman Hakim Saifuddin introduced the discourse on the implementation of the Standardisation and Certification of Preachers in 2017, the issue has generated controversy in the community. Some people think that the standardisation and certification is a political move to monitor (filter) preachers by the government, similar to the practice during the New Order era.²⁴ On the other hand, there are those who see it as an attempt to maintain the integrity of *da'wah* and improve the quality of preachers. Some groups, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), support the government's proposal, with the view that the implementation of

²²Ahmad Maigari Dutsima, "THE SCIENCE OF HADITH CRITICISM (AL-JARH WA AL-TA 'DIL): A NOBLE SCIENCE FOR A NOBLE COURSE," *Al-Risalah: Journal of Religious Studies and Islamic Thought* 16, no. 1 (2025): 319-27.

²³Nasiruddin Zuhdi, "Encyclopaedia of Religion: Arabic-Indonesian Foreign Interpretation Words" (Jakarta: Republika Publishers, 2015).

²⁴"Implemented Since 2019, MUI Dai Standardisation Has Graduated 2,200 Alumni" (jakarta: MUI digital, 2024), <https://mui.or.id/public/baca/berita/terlaksana-sejak-2019-standardisasi-mui-telah-luluskan-2200-alumni>.

standardisation and certification of preachers should be the authority of Islamic community organisations, not the government.

In addition to continuing the preacher release programme, the Ministry of Religious Affairs under Minister Fachrul Razi continues the idea of Standardisation and Certification of Preachers previously initiated by Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is seriously designing a standardisation and certification programme for preachers, which is planned to be implemented in September 2020 with a target of 8,200 certified preachers. For the initial stage, Director General of Islamic Guidance Kamaruddin Amin stated that the Ministry of Religious Affairs is targeting 200 preachers to attend a three-day briefing. This certification is in the form of a workshop and is not mandatory which has an impact on funding (honorarium), and is not a professional certification, but only a recommendation.²⁵

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Religious Affairs changed the term Standardisation and Certification of Da'i to Technical Guidance (Bimtek) for da'i and religious instructors under its auspices. Islamic community organisations such as MUI, NU, Muhammadiyah, and others routinely carry out standardisation and certification for da'i with their own methods. They view that the implementation of standardisation and certification of preachers should be the authority of Islamic organisations, not the government. MUI itself began the implementation of standardisation and certification in November 2019, which includes debriefing, competency improvement, and the granting of certificates to da'i deemed fit to preach.

The first batch was attended by preachers and senior figures from various Islamic organisations. The participants received certificates as recognition and legality from MUI, which has the potential to increase public trust.²⁶ The da'i standardisation programme has several objectives, including improving the quality and professionalism of da'i. Building awareness and understanding of the true religion. Improving the da'i's ability to deliver religious messages. Building public trust in da'i. Thus, the programme is expected to improve the quality of religious message delivery and build religious awareness in the community.²⁷

MUI applies three main standards, namely: first, scientific qualifications that include mastery of religious knowledge in the context of ahlusunnah wal

²⁵"MUI Cleric Certification: An Effort to Produce Nonradical Clerics, With Benchmarks Considered 'Unclear.'"

²⁶Agung Sasongko, "MUI Introduces Dai Standardisation Program" (Jakarta: Republika, 2015), <https://republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-nusantara/15/05/27/nozlhq-mui-perkenalkan-program-Standardisasi-dai>.

²⁷Muhamad Zen Apdil Abdilah and Fatmawati Fatmawati, "Marketing Strategy for Standardisation of DAI MUI and PP Addai in Improving DAI Competence in the Digital Era," *ULIL ALBAB: Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal* 3, no. 8 (2024): 369, <https://doi.org/10.56799>.

jamaah; second, national insight; and third, the ability to carry out preaching, including the ability to preach fiqh, methodology, and preaching that is oriented towards rahmatan lil alamin and washatiyah Islam. The process of standardisation and certification of preachers by MUI is carried out by religious leaders and preachers from various Islamic mass organizations, including celebrity preachers who deliver da'wah through television media. This process is voluntary and has no financial impact. Recognition of legality from MUI is only given to preachers who follow the established standards.²⁸

MUI then reviews the results of the exam and interview to determine the eligibility of the da'i candidate. If declared eligible, MUI will issue a certificate stating accreditation. This can increase legitimacy and public trust in the da'i's ability. In addition to issuing certificates, MUI is also committed to providing ongoing coaching for accredited da'i as well as conducting supervision to ensure that they stick to the correct teachings of Islam. The da'i programme usually has a certain validity period, so da'i are required to follow a re-standardisation process after the validity period expires, which is similar to the initial process, with an emphasis on updating knowledge and skills. Through this process, MUI seeks to improve the quality of da'wah in Indonesia, ensuring that Islamic teachings are delivered effectively and in accordance with established principles.²⁹

The success of this standardisation programme can also be seen in the development of more effective and professional da'wah. With clear standards and comprehensive training, da'i can take a more strategic approach in their da'wah activities. They are equipped with adequate management skills to plan and implement religious activities, so as to optimise the reach and impact of da'wah. This is especially important in the context of modern challenges, where da'i need to adapt to various social, political and technological issues. Furthermore, the da'i standardisation programme contributes to the creation of a more harmonious and constructive da'wah environment. Da'i who have been standardised tend to have a better understanding of the importance of tolerance and interfaith harmony.

They are able to convey messages that support peace and unity, and avoid provocations that could divide the community. This is particularly important in the context of the plurality of Indonesian society, where religious and cultural diversity must be respected and nurtured. Overall, MUI's da'i standardisation programme has made a significant contribution to the development of quality

²⁸ Fuji E Permana, "3 Aspects of MUI Dai Standardisation and Its Rationalisation" (Jakarta: Republika, 2019), <https://khazanah.republika.co.id/berita/q1isxv320/3-aspek-standardisasi-dai-mui-dan-rasionalisasinya>.

²⁹ Yana, "Committed to Improving Professionalism, LPPOM MUI Organises Training on Understanding International Standards" (Central Jakarta: LPPOM MUI, 2023), <https://halalmui.org/sukseskan-akreditasi-lppom-mui-selenggarakan-pelatihan-pemahaman-sni-iso/>.

da'wah in Indonesia. The programme not only increases public trust in da'i, but also ensures that Islamic teachings are delivered in a professional, effective and relevant manner. Through this effort, MUI is committed to continuously improving the capacity of da'i, so that they can play a more active role in building a better and peaceful society.

Although MUI's da'i standardisation programme has shown many benefits, there are some polemics and criticisms that have emerged along with its implementation. One of the main issues is accessibility for prospective da'i from various backgrounds. Some consider that the standardisation process can be an obstacle for individuals who want to preach, especially those who come from remote areas or lack access to formal education. This could lead to inequality in the distribution of trained and accredited da'i across Indonesia. Another polemic relates to standardisation in the delivery of Islamic teachings. Some critics argue that standardisation can create homogeneity in the way da'i deliver da'wah, potentially ignoring the diversity of thought and practice within Islam.³⁰

In the diverse context of Indonesia, an overly standardised approach could diminish the rich traditions and interpretations that already exist in different regions. There are also concerns about the politicisation of da'wah. Some feel that this standardisation programme could be influenced by political interests, where standardised da'i may be more inclined to deliver messages that align with a particular agenda, instead of providing a more neutral and objective perspective. This could lead to unbalanced messaging, potentially creating tension in the community. In addition, the issue of cost is also a concern. The standardisation process is often costly, which can be a burden for aspiring da'i, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds. This can reduce participation from individuals who actually have the potential to preach but are hampered by economic factors.³¹

On the other hand, Muhammadiyah has rejected the standardisation programme proposed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs from the beginning. Deputy Chairman of PP Muhammadiyah, Dadang Kahmad, argues that standardisation and certification programmes have long been implemented by mass organisations in various forms and methods, such as coaching, education, training, and mudzakah. According to him, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' version of standardisation and certification is only relevant for preachers within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, not for all mass organisations. Anwar Abbas even stated that it is wrong if the standardisation and certification of preachers is associated with radicalism, which can create suspicion of Muslims.

³⁰ Kamaludin, "Polemics over the Dai Certification Programme: A Critical Discourse Study in Mass Media."

³¹ Umdatul Hasanah and Nur Asia Tawang, "Da'wah Policy Controversy: A Case Study of Discourse on Standardisation and Certification of Da'i in Indonesia," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 16, no. 1 (2022): 135-54.

This could exacerbate the polarisation between clerics who are recognised by the government and those who are not. Given that da'wah is a religious calling and the call of the people, the pattern of standardisation and certification applied by the government has the potential to cause discrimination.³² A similar opinion was also expressed by Habib Novel Alaydrus, leader of the al-Raudhah assembly in Surakarta, who believes that MUI needs to first define what is meant by ulama. He argued that not everyone who speaks in public can be considered an ulama, and standardisation should take into account clear educational background and experience.³³

Jarh Solution for Da'i Standardisation

The da'i standardisation programme designed by MUI is expected to have a positive impact on society, especially in improving the quality of da'wah and preventing the spread of radicalism. However, there is a sceptical view from some people regarding the lack of clarity in the selection process and implementation of da'i standardisation. In this context, the author would like to offer a solution based on the constructive criticism (jarh) approach to narrators, which has become an important method in hadith studies. In the context of scholarly certification, the application of jarh can be done in the following ways:

1. Certification with Community Involvement

One important aspect of jarh is character assessment, which serves to assess the integrity and credibility of prospective da'is. In the context of the standardisation of ulama conducted by MUI, this process becomes crucial to ensure that the standardised preachers not only have adequate religious knowledge, but also good and trustworthy character.³⁴ MUI can involve the community in the process of assessing the character of prospective preachers in several effective ways.

First, the community can provide feedback through surveys designed to gather information about the candidate's behaviour and attitudes in everyday life. These surveys could include questions regarding the candidate's integrity, ethics, and social contributions, all of which are important elements in a jarh assessment.³⁵

Secondly, interviews or discussion forums can be held to provide an opportunity for the community to express their views directly. In these forums, the

³²Rini, "Reasons Muhammadiyah Refuses to Join Certified Preacher Programme," *Tribunnews.Com*, 2024, <https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2020/09/19/alasan-muhammadiyah-tolak-bergabung-dengan-program-penceramah-bersertifikat>.

³³"MUI Cleric Certification: An Effort to Produce Nonradical Clerics, With Benchmarks Considered 'Unclear.'"

³⁴Mahmud Tahan, *TAISIR MUSTOLAH AL -HADIS*.

³⁵Shuhbah, *Al-Wasith Fi 'Ulum Wa Mustalah Al-Hadith*.

community can share their experiences interacting with da'i candidates, as well as provide a more in-depth assessment of their character and attitude. This not only provides a clearer picture of the da'i candidates, but also creates a space for the community to actively participate in the standardisation process. By involving the community in character assessment, MUI can obtain more comprehensive and objective information about da'i candidates. This assessment will help MUI in determining whether da'i candidates meet the set criteria, as well as ensuring that they deserve to be recognised as trustworthy and qualified preachers. This process is in line with MUI's goal to create da'i who are moderate and do not spread ideologies that can harm society.

2. Involving Community Leaders

Environmental supervision is an important aspect in the standardisation process, where the community around the da'i candidate acts as a supervisor who provides information about their daily activities and behaviour. By involving community leaders or individuals who have a good reputation, MUI can obtain a more objective and comprehensive assessment of the da'i candidate's character.³⁶

This process not only helps in identifying potential problems or questionable behaviour, but also provides an opportunity for the community to actively participate in maintaining the quality of da'wah. If there are indications of behaviour that is not in line with expected religious values or ethics, the information can be used as a basis to perform jarh on the da'i candidate.

3. Data Analysis and Feedback

Data analysis and feedback is a crucial stage in the preacher certification process. After data collection is conducted through environmental monitoring and discussion forums, the next step is to analyse the information that has been collected. This analysis process involves a discussion between MUI members regarding the da'i candidates' character data, which includes an assessment of their integrity, ethics, and social contributions. This discussion aims to evaluate whether the da'i candidates fulfil the predetermined criteria, as well as to ensure that they have characters that are in line with the expected religious values. The results of this analysis will be the basis for determining the candidate's eligibility for the certification process.³⁷

Conclusion

Jarh as a method of negative criticism of hadith narrators has strong historical roots from the time of the Prophet to the scholars after him. This method is used

³⁶ Anna Berti Suman, "The 'caring Community': Recognising and Shielding Civic Environmental Monitoring," *Psychology in Society*, no. 64 (2022): 5-20.

³⁷ "MUI Cleric Certification: An Effort to Produce Nonradical Clerics, With Benchmarks Considered 'Unclear.'"

to maintain the authenticity and credibility of hadith narration. In the contemporary context, the jarh principle can be adapted as an evaluative mechanism for the credibility and scientific capacity of preachers, especially in the da'i certification programme by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI).

This research offers a novelty by shifting the focus of jarh studies from a historical critique of hadith narrators to a normative approach in assessing da'i qualifications today. While most previous research addresses da'i certification in terms of policy, media, or social response, this article presents the perspective of hadith epistemology—specifically the concept of jarh in *Qawā'id al-Tahdīs*—as a theoretical foundation to strengthen the certification process.

The practical contribution of this research is realised in three implementative stages: first, involving community participation as a form of social verification, similar to the practice of the Companions in checking the credibility of narrators. Second, including community leaders as local assessors who understand the character and track record of da'i candidates. Third, final analysis and evaluation by MUI, which ensures the process is objective and transparent.

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