



Fake Hadith and How to Research Them in Digital Space

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Abstract. *This article examines the understanding of false hadith and how to research it in the digital space. Along with the rapid development of technology, hadith can be found in various digital media. However, not everyone is able to be careful in distributing hadith. It is not uncommon for wise words to be claimed as hadith when in fact they are false. This kind of phenomenon is certainly a concern, which is why this article was written. The method used in this research is a qualitative method, namely utilizing references in the form of books, journals, and other research. The results of this study show that false hadith are words, actions, and provisions that are made up and then attributed to the Prophet. Contemporary scholars say that the first forgery of hadith occurred during the time of Caliph Ali. Nowadays, hadith research can be done on digital media such as smartphones. Among digital media features in smartphone that can be utilized are the hadith application al-Jami' kutub al-Tis'ah and the dorar.net website. If the hadith being studied is indicated as a fake hadith, it certainly cannot be found in the application.*

Keywords: *digital, fake, hadith, understanding*

INTRODUCTION

Preserving the Prophet's hadith today seems no less important than preserving the hadith in ancient times. Nowadays, with the existence of *smartphones*, it is very easy for everyone to spread and receive information. It is not uncommon for hadith to be included as legitimacy for an opinion. Ironically, the hadith used is sometimes taken only from the necessary text without displaying the complete editorial, the complete chain of sanad, and the quality of the hadith. Such things are certainly a concern for hadith lovers. Because sometimes it can cause misunderstandings in understanding or assessing its quality. All scholars agree that it is forbidden to spread false hadiths unless they are given information that the nature of the hadith is false (Novera, 2022).

Among the characteristics of a fake hadith are the discontinuity of the sanad, confusion in the redaction of the hadith (*matan*), and conflict with the Quran and common sense (Mukhtar, 2017). Subhi Shalih agrees with these characteristics. However, he also added several other characteristics of fake hadith. For example, when a hadith contains strong threats about small things or vice versa, namely big promises about something trivial. Apart from that, fake hadith can be identified with the reputation of a narrator who is accustomed to creating fake hadith. Or the narrator includes a disclaimer that the hadith he narrated was only his own composition which was attributed to a friend (Sohari, 1995). As for the problem related to the first appearance of fake

hadith, the majority of scholars agree that fake hadith appeared at the same time as the Kubro slander incident during the time of the Khalifah Uthman ibn Affan and then gradually became popular (Anam, Sain, and Arifin, 2022.).

In the study of hadith, the scholars of the past paid very high attention to preventing false hadith. Scholars of hadith examine hadith in various ways. Starting from the chain of its narrators to the wording or content of the hadith. In researching narrators, a search is also carried out on the birth and death years of the narrators, the search for the teachers and students of the narrators, the birth and death places of the narrators, the political conditions of their time, and many other aspects that are still related to the narrators (Al-Khatib, 1989). Research like this in the study of hadith is called the discipline of *jarh wa al-Ta'dil*. The ultimate goal of this discipline is the predicate attached to the narrator whether he deserves to be called *thiqah* so that his hadith can be accepted or whether there is an oddity in his morality so that he is *jarh* and his narration is rejected.

Specifically in the research of false hadith, scholars pay more attention to discussing the chain of sanad compared to discussing the text of the hadith. The reason is none other than because the false hadith itself was made by narrators who did not meet the qualifications. Therefore, critics of hadith are very enthusiastic to critically examine the sanad of hadith. The efforts made by them in researching the personalities of the hadith narrators proved to be very intense. This is proven by the formulation of the science of *jarh wa ta'dil* as a science that stands alone parallel to other scientific disciplines such as the sciences of *asbab al-Wurud*, *nasikh mansukh*, *mukhtalif al-Hadis*, and so on. This step is a form of very high concern in maintaining the purity of the Prophet's hadith from false hadith.

LITERATUR REVIEW

If we look at previous studies, many other researchers have conducted similar studies. Among the studies in the form of journals are: *Emulating the Strategy of Hadith Experts in Selecting Hoax Stories* by Muhammad Agus and Abdul Karim, *Maudhu' Hadith and Its Problems* by Mukhlis Mukhtar, *Fake Hadith and Its Signs* by Sohari, *Discourse on the Typology of Hadith in Community Life* (Analytical Study of the Existence of Maudhu' Hadith) by Abd. Majid, *Unmasking Maudhu' Hadith* by Achmad, *Impressions of Maudhu' Hadith in the Practices of the Islamic Community* by Siti Marpuah and Farah Darwisyah, *Fake Hadith and Its Prevention in the Digital Era* by Farih, *The Impact of the Spread of Weak and False Hadith in the Order of Community Life* by Marlina Ratna Sari, and other research that is not in journal form.

If all of these studies are examined, it seems that none of them have discussed fake hadith and how to identify them in the digital space. Therefore, the discussion in this journal is important to discuss as an effort to educate the public, both the general public and academics, to be more selective in filtering fake hadith. In addition, this theme is very relevant to today's conditions because the information media itself is widely used by people today. This journal will explain the understanding of false hadith, the history of its emergence, and the offer of *smartphone features* that can be used to research false hadith.

METHOD

The method used in this study is the *library research method* or what is known as a literature review. The data sources used are previous studies, namely: books, journals, theses, dissertations, magazines, or other sources relevant to the object of discussion. The data analysis technique used is content analysis *where* the text content in the form of words, meanings, symbols, images, and other forms of messages are analyzed systematically (Muhajir, 1996). So in this research process, the object of study is first described clearly. After that, an analysis of the collected data is carried out before drawing a conclusion. This article will be discussed sequentially starting from the definition of false hadith, the history of its emergence, and how to identify it in the digital space.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Getting to Know More About Fake Hadith

One of the greatest fears of hadith scholars is when someone dares to falsify hadith, either with bad intentions or with good intentions. Various methods of hadith research have been formulated by them to examine the validity of hadith. False hadiths are also known as *mawdhu' hadiths*. The word *mawdhu'* is taken from the root word *وَضَعَ*. After the *qiyas*, the *maf'ul* reads *مَوْضُوعٌ* (Sati, 2018). Linguistically it has several meanings. Among them is *الإِسْقَاطُ* or put and save, *الإِيفْرَاءُ وَالْإِخْتِلَاقُ* (making things up or making things up), and *التَّرْكُ أَيْ التَّرْوُكُ* means abandoned. As for *mawdhu'* when viewed from the terminology, it is a hadith that is made up or fabricated and lied about in the name of the Prophet accompanied by intent (Febriyeni, 2022).

Another definition was also put forward by Nur al-Din 'Itr. He defined hadith *mawdhu'* as a hadith in which in its chain of chains there is a narrator who is strongly indicated to have lied in the name of the Prophet either intentionally or unintentionally, either accompanied by good or bad intentions ('Itr, 1994). If observed carefully, the difference between the two definitions above lies in the words intentionally and unintentionally in making a false hadith. Namely, Ibn Salah only mentions it accompanied by intention while Nur al-Din 'Itr mentions both intentionally and unintentionally in making it.

A different opinion also came from Mustafa Azami regarding the naming of false hadith. According to him, if a false hadith is attributed to the Prophet deliberately then it is called a *mawdhu' hadith*. Meanwhile, a false hadith that is attributed to the Prophet on the basis of a mistake or in other words without any element of intention (such as a lack of caution or due to negligence), then the hadith is called a *false hadith* (Azami, 1992). The reason behind giving the hadith the name *mawdhu'* is to remind the hadith transmitters that the hadith is fake or *mawdhu'* so it is haram to spread the hadith.

When traced from a historical perspective, false hadiths are still a hot topic of debate among scholars. Ahmad Amin, Salah al-Din al-Adhabi and one of the Shia scholars named Hasyim Ma'ruf al-Husaini are of the opinion that false hadiths have most likely existed since the time of the Prophet. This can be proven by the words of the Prophet: "Whoever lies intentionally about me, his place of return is Hell." For them, this hadith is an indication that there is a great possibility

that the forgery of hadith had already occurred during the time of the Prophet. The alibi is that the Prophet could have said this because there had been a previous case (Amin, 1975). However, Mustafa al-Siba'I considered this opinion to be merely an implied reason. It does not start from historical facts or supporting data sourced from the origins of the hadith books (Al-Siba'i, 1985). Apart from Mustafa al-Siba'I, 'Ajjaj al-Khatib also questioned the opinion that said false hadith already existed during the time of the Prophet. According to him, it is impossible that the companions, who had risked their lives and wealth on the path of the Prophet, would dare to create false hadith (Al-Khatib, 1989).

Another argument was put forward by al-Adhibi that the forgery of hadith had already occurred during the time of the Prophet. He relied on the hadith narrated by al-Thahawi and al-Tabrani that once there was a man who was rejected when he proposed to a girl. Then the man admitted that he had received authority from the Prophet before leaving to propose to the woman. Not long after that, a number of friends clarified the man's confession directly to the Prophet. The Prophet also apparently did not confirm this information. According to hadith scholars, this history is *daif*, meaning it is not permitted to be used as evidence for the origin of hadith forgery. However, in his argument about the history of the emergence of false hadith during the time of the Prophet, al-Adhabi said that the false hadith came from hypocrites. So it is not impossible for it to happen considering that hypocrites themselves have a tendency to dislike the Prophet. However, the false hadiths they created were only limited to worldly matters, not religious matters (al-Dhahabi, 1994).

Other opinions come from contemporary hadith scholars such as 'Ajjaj al-Khatib, Nur al-Din 'Itr, Mustafa al-Siba'I, Muhammad Abu Syuhbah, Muhammad Abu Zahrah, and Abd al-Fatah Abu Gadah. They argue that the forgery of hadith only occurred during the caliphate of Ali ibn Abu Thalib (Lutfianto and Tohir, 2023). The origin was the feud that occurred between the Ali and Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan groups over political issues. Both parties justified various means to become winners. One of the methods used to deceive each other was by creating false hadith (Al-Khatib, 1989). The history of the forgery of hadiths continued along with the increasing number of sects or schools of thought that emerged after the feud between the Ali and Umayyad groups. Among these sects are the Khawarij, Shi'a, and so on (Armainingsih and Asrar Mabrur Faza, 2024).

Based on the various opinions of scholars regarding the history of the emergence of false hadith, it can be identified that these opinions are divided into two. The first opinion is the opinion that says that false hadith have existed since before the Prophet Muhammad died. Among the scholars who hold this opinion are Ahmad Amin, Salah al-Din al-Adhabi and one of the Shiite scholars named Hasyim Ma'ruf al-Husaini. According to their view, the signs of the emergence of hadith in the time of the Prophet can be seen from the Prophet's criticism that whoever lies in his name will get a place in hell. For them, the hadith did not appear except after there was a case. While the second opinion is the opinion of 'Ajjaj al-Khatib, Nur al-Din 'Itr, Mustafa al-Siba'I, Muhammad Abu Syuhbah, Muhammad Abu Zahrah, and Abd al-Fatah Abu Gadah that false hadith did not appear in the time of the Prophet but in the time of the Caliph Ali when there was turmoil regarding the issue of leadership.

Factors that Influence the Emergence of False Hadith

A fake hadith is a hadith made based on the interests of the makers. There are various reasons behind the emergence of these false hadiths. According to the majority of hadith scholars, the group that first created false hadiths was the Shi'a group. Forgery of hadith is growing rapidly because it seems that the hadith is used as the ideal alternative to strengthen each other's groups or bring down other groups. Examples of motivations for creating false hadiths include excessive understanding of *al-Din's teachings by the Sufis*, flattering or seeking the attention of rulers, trickery so that others are attracted by advice, satisfying lust, symptoms of dementia in old age, political interests such as done by the zindiq people, and there are still many other reasons (Abu Rayyah, t.th). When these factors are grouped together, they can be explained as follows:

1. Political Problems

According to some hadith scholars, the arbitration incident (dispute resolution process outside the general court) involving the Ali and Umayyad groups was the beginning of the forgery of hadith. The purpose of the forgery is to strengthen one's own group. Data states that the Shia group was the first group to start falsifying hadiths. Then followed by other groups. Here are examples of fake hadith made by Shiites:

لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ وَصِيٌّ وَإِنَّ عَلِيًّا وَصِيٌّ وَوَارِثِيٌّ

"Every Prophet has someone to get a will from. And, in fact, Ali is the person who received the will and is also my heir." (al-Dhahabi, 1994).

Ibn al-Mubarak called *rafidhah* people experts in lying, hadith experts in understanding religion, kalam experts in *ra'yi* and guessing. Ibn al-Mubarak's words were confirmed by Hammad ibn Salamah that of who *rafidhah figures* once said: if there is something good in our view, we immediately make a hadith. Al-Syafi'i also commented: "I don't see any lust-satisfiers who are more aggressive than the *rafidhah* in the matter of creating false hadiths." Apart from the *rafidhah*, Mu'awiyah followers also often created fake hadiths as a counter to fake hadiths that denigrated their group. They also often made false hadiths to uphold Mu'awiyah as a person who had high integrity in religious matters (Abu Rayyah, t.th). The Khawarij group also did something similar where they also made false hadiths to corner the Ali and Mu'awiyah groups (Alkadri, 2021). Based on this explanation it can be understood that the motive for creating false hadith in a political context is to strengthen one's own group or to corner other groups.

2. The importance of the Zindiq people

Infidels trying to destroy Islam from within by pretending to convert to Islam are called *zindiq* people. Their statement to embrace Islam is only used as a ruse so that they can destroy Islam in their own way. Let's call it like spreading slander, pitting Muslims against each other, obscuring the teachings of Islam, and creating lies and then relying on the Prophet. One of the *zindiq* figures, Abd al-Karim Ibn al-Auja', when he was about to be executed by Muhammad Ibn Sulaiman Ibn

Ali gave a confession that he had made 4,000 false hadiths. This number is not a small number of the entire false hadith made by the zindiq people. The total number of false hadiths made by the zindiq people according to Hammad ibn Zaid is not less than 12,000 hadiths. The contribution of the zindiq people in the production of false hadith is considered very disturbing. In fact, according to scholars, the actions of the zindiq at the same time became the initial trigger of discord or enmity among the Muslim community (Sulaemang, 2017). One of the false hadiths written by the zindiqs is as follows:

أَنَا خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

"I am the Seal of the Prophets. There will be no Prophet after me. God willing." (al-Dhahabi, 1994).

The hadith was made by a figure of the zindiq group named Muhammad Ibn Sa'ad al-Shana'i. In the original hadith there was no sentence *إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ* but then it was made into a fake hadith by adding *إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ* so that it changed the understanding of the previous hadith (Abdullah, t.th.).

3. Debates in Kalam Science and Fiqh

In scientific concentration, there are various schools of thought such as in theology and jurisprudence. Each sect has varying degrees of fanaticism. There are those who are naturally fanatical and there are also those who are acute fanatics. For them, making fake hadith is one of the perfect alternatives to strengthen their arguments. One of the fake hadith written by a religious scientist to support his own opinion is as follows:

مَنْ رَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ فِي الرُّكُوعِ فَلَا صَلَاةَ لَهُ

"Whoever raises both hands while bowing, then his prayer is invalid." (Al-Khatib, 1989).

4. Story Maker

One of the uses of false hadith according to a number of groups is persuasion. This was done by some scholars in an effort to attract the attention of the laity. So that their studies would be considered important and interesting by their listeners, they dared to create stories and rely on the Prophet. Moreover, at that time, the end of the reign of Caliph Harun al-Rasyid and afterward was very popular with storytellers. One example is the following hadith:

مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ طَائِرًا لَهُ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ لِسَانٍ لِكُلِّ لِسَانٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ لُغَةٍ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لَهُ

"Whoever says La Ilaha Illa Allah then Allah will create for him a bird that has seventy thousand languages and ask for forgiveness for him." (Abdullah, t.th.)

5. Increase the Zeal of Worship

The motivation to falsify hadith to increase passion in worship is often done by some Sufis. For them, making fake hadith is one way to get closer to Allah. Generally, these hadiths have the dimension of worship or *tarhib* (advice to avoid bad things) and *targhib* (advice to do good things). Although the intention is for good, the actions of these Sufis are still reprehensible because they are basically falsifying hadith.

6. Licking or making faces at the authorities

The factors behind the creation of false hadith are very diverse. On average, these factors are oriented towards religion. But there are also those whose goals are for worldly purposes. Namely, creating false hadiths to be close to the ruler (Armainingsih and Asrar Mabur Faza, 2024). The way to do this is by creating a hadith that discusses things that the ruler likes. This also includes hadith that are linked to fiqh (At-Thahhan, t.th). Among the examples of fake hadiths created for the purpose of gaining face with the authorities is the hadith created by Giyas, one of the followers of Caliph al-Mahdi during the Umayyad era. At that time Giyas faced the caliph. Giyas found the caliph fighting pigeons. Giyas then created a fake hadith to gain face with the caliph. The following is the fake hadith:

لَا سَبَقَ إِلَّا فِي نَصْلِ أَوْ خُفٍّ أَوْ حَافِرٍ أَوْ جَنَاحٍ

“There is no competition except in archery, camel racing, horse racing, or fighting a bird.”

After Giyas made the hadith, the caliph then gave al-Mahdi a radiant look so he took out 10,000 dirhams to give to Giyas as a gift. The sentence in the hadith above that made the caliph happy is *جناح* which means a bird. As if to convey the meaning that the Prophet supported his people to fight a bird.

7. A burning passion for doing good without being equipped with religious knowledge

Apparently, false hadiths are not only an alternative for scholars, but also a choice for pious people whose knowledge of religion is still very shallow. They create fake hadiths to get closer to Allah (Armainingsih and Asrar Mabur Faza, 2024). Among the examples of hadith they made are the following: “This world is haram for the people of the afterlife and the afterlife is haram for the people of this world. While this world and the hereafter are haram for Allah's experts.” (Al-Albani, 1983).

Regarding the hadith al-Albani commented that the hadith was made by Sufis. The purpose is to plant the seeds of Sufi belief which is considered to educate the soul. However, the purpose is contrary to their own actions which often make things lawful that have been forbidden by God.

If all the explanations about the motives for making fake hadith are concluded, then it can be understood that in general the creators of fake hadith dare to falsify hadith based on personal interests according to the circumstances they are experiencing. Some falsify hadith because of political interests, upholding their own group and demeaning other groups, influencing others to

follow their understanding in theology and Sufism , and seeking favor in front of the ruler (Sati, 2018).

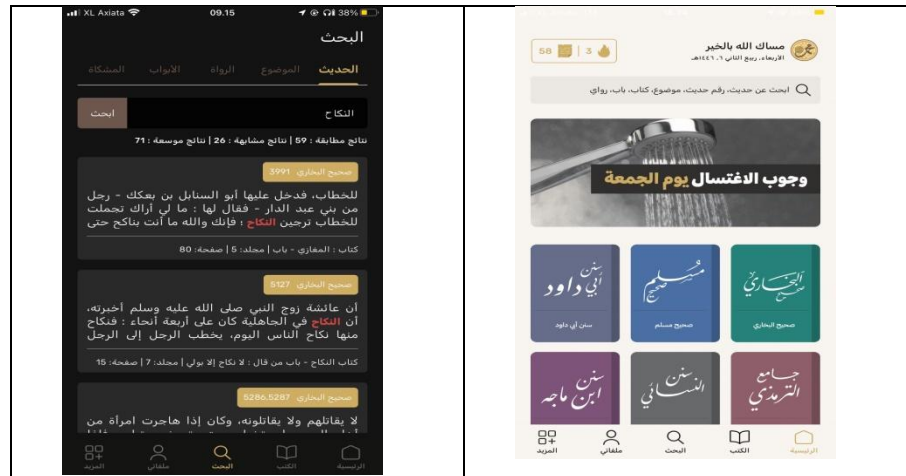
How to Research Fake Hadith on Digital Media

An example of the digital media referred to here is a smartphone. Smartphone is an internet-based electronic media that are currently widely used by people all over the world (Ghafur, 2014). According to research conducted by Retalia in its journal, *the influence of smartphone use on adolescent social interactions*, it is said that the Data books survey of *smartphone users* in 2025 will reach 89% of the population (Retalia, 2022). This statement shows that *smartphones* are an urgent need because they are equipped with various application facilities, websites, and other features that can pamper everyone. Hadith is one of the contents that is often found on various *smartphone social media*. Just mention *YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram* and so on. Everyone can share hadith, but not everyone can understand the hadith itself. Finally, it requires good understanding to know which hadith are authentic or not.

According to research (Bizawie, 2018), the purpose of spreading fake hadith on social media can vary. One of them is to influence public opinion or the views of Muslims about an issue, whether in the form of legitimizing opinions, special agendas and the like. Apart from that, false hadith are spread to divide the unity of the Muslim community, the political interests of a party, and the ideology of a group. Among all kinds of hadith, the one that has a dangerous impact is the false hadith (*mawdhu'*). Because in addition to defaming the Prophet, false hadith can also be misleading. So it is very important to be able to identify the false hadith.

In this case, there is an offer of a hadith verification method by utilizing features in *smartphones*, including the following:

1. Browsing the hadith through the *al-Jami' kutub al-Sittah application*
al-Jami'kutub al-Sittah application is one application that can be used by hadith researchers to find out the existence of a hadith in the books of nine Imams: Imam Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasa'I, Ibn Majah, Malik, Ahmad, and al-Darimi. Here is a picture of the application:



The above application is an excellent alternative to find the existence of a hadith in the book of the Nine Imams (*kutub al-Tis`ah*). The image on the right above shows the start page before entering the hadith search menu. Meanwhile, the image on the left shows an image after a hadith search was carried out using the keyword النكاح. These keywords are given a red font to make it easier for researchers to identify the existence of hadith in the *al-Tis`ah* pole. The application is considered complete because it is supported by the *takhrij* feature, hadith commentary, and even sanad criticism for each narrator listed in the sanad chain of hadith. These features are very helpful for researchers to identify fake hadith. In other words, if the keyword for a hadith fragment entered into the search menu does not provide any results, then there is a possibility that the hadith is not authentic or even fake, so further research is needed in books other than *Kutub al-Tis`ah*.

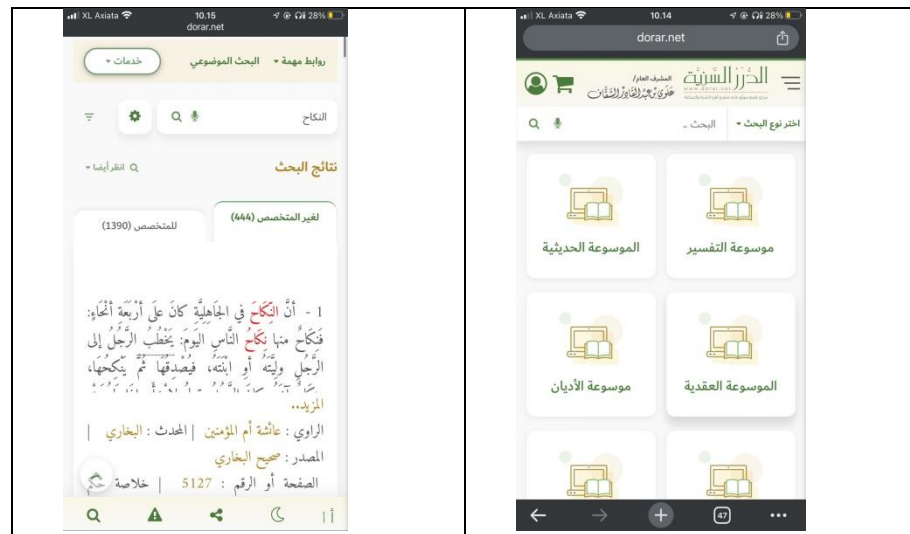
2. Browse on the site <https://dorar.net/>

The site <https://dorar.net/> was initiated by Sheikh Alwi ibn Abd al-Qadir Assegaf where the original name of the site is a-Durarus Saniyyah. The benefits that can be taken from this site are to make it easier for Islamic scholars to find references to Arabic books ranging from historical encyclopedias, fiqh, tafsir, hadith and so on. Specifically in searching for hadith, the following steps can be taken:

For example, the hadith that will be examined for its validity is the hadith about the sleep of a fasting person. So the researcher did the following :

- Enter the site <https://dorar.net/>
- Select the al-Mawsu'at al-Hadithiyyah column
- When the column *Bahth Sari' fi al-Mawsu'ah al-Hadithiyyah* was found , the researcher included a piece of the hadith editorial, namely the phrase al-Sha'im or the phrase 'Ibadat'
- Several boxes of choices will appear, namely the box with green lines stating the number of hadiths obtained; and the box with blue lines stating the grouping of hadiths based on books. while the column with red lines stating the explanations of the scholars including the status of the hadith being searched for.

Here is an image from the hadith site <https://dorar.net/> when accessed:



The picture on the right shows the initial menu where on the menu there is a choice of hadith, interpretation or other books. At The same time, the picture on the left shows the results of the hadith search after using the keyword **النكاح**. Based on the entire explanation of the procedure for researching false hadith using *a smartphone* as explained above, it can be understood that the *al-Jami'u kutub al-Tis'ah* application and the <https://dorar.net> site are two ideal alternatives to use in searching for hadith via *smartphone*. Among the advantages of the two alternatives are easy access and practicality because they only use a mobile phone so the activity of researching false hadith can be done anytime and anywhere. In addition, the features offered by the two alternatives are quite satisfying because they are equipped with the needs of researchers such as hadith takhrij, hadith syarah, and hadith sanad criticism.

CONCLUSION

False hadith in the term of hadith science is called hadith *mawdhu'*. False hadith according to Nur al-Din 'Itr is a hadith in which in its chain of sanad there is a narrator who is strongly indicated to have lied in the name of the Prophet either intentionally or unintentionally, either with good or bad intentions. The beginning of false hadith according to contemporary scholars was the time of the Khalifah Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abu Thalib. Namely, after there was a feud between Ali and Mu'awiyah's group, so that Muslims were divided into several sects. The largest group of fake hadith creators according to research by scholars is the Shiite group. The factors behind the creation of fake hadith are very diverse, ranging from political interests, upholding their own groups and demeaning other groups, fawning and approaching the ruler, attracting the attention of others to be enthusiastic in worship, and so on. There are two ways to research fake hadith through *smartphone* digital media. Namely through the *al-Jami'u kutub al-Tis'ah*

application and the site <https://dorar.net/>. An indicator that shows that a hadith is a fake hadith is that the hadith cannot be found after a search is carried out on the application or site.

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