

HADITH PRESERVATION: TECHNIQUES AND CONTEMPORARY EFFORTS

Haruna Babatunde Jaiyeoba^{1a*} and Noor Mohammad Osmani^{2b}

^aInternational Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART), International Islamic University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.

E-mail: harunjaiyebab@iium.edu.my¹

^bDepartment of Quran and Sunnah, Abdulhamid Abusulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia,

E-mail: abusajid@iium.edu.my²

*Corresponding Author: harunjaiyebab@iium.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

Hadith is an important source of Islamic teachings. The method of Hadith preservation during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and after his demise has constantly been criticised by Orientalists and critics of Islam. Most of their objections emphasise that Hadith could not have been accurately transmitted orally over a century. Thus, conducting research on how Hadith has been preserved is crucial, mainly to remind the critics that Allah's (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) promise to protect His Book is not limited to the Qur'an, but also extends to the Hadith, which explains the meanings of the Qur'an. Additionally, it is crucial to discuss continuously the painstaking efforts that went into Hadith preservation, which made Muslims believe with absolute certainty that Hadith was accurately preserved. On this basis, this article discusses the multifaceted landscape of Hadith preservation by exploring the techniques employed and contemporary efforts in preserving this rich Islamic heritage. Relevant books, academic journal articles, lecture notes, and web pages were reviewed in writing this article. The three main techniques that played a significant role in preserving Hadith are memorisation, the principle of practice, and documentation. Moreover, the contemporary efforts that contributed to Hadith preservation include the massive publication of academic books and journals on Hadith, the establishment of faculties in major universities that offer Hadith studies as a specialised academic program, the increase in comparative jurisprudence studies that refer to Hadith as one of the most important references, the need to respond to Orientalist theories on Hadith, and the advent of digital technology.

Keywords: Hadith Preservation, Memorisation, the Principle of Practice, Documentation, Sanad and Matan

1. INTRODUCTION

Hadith, defined as the recorded sayings, actions, tacit approvals, and characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Ilahi et al., 2023; Osmani, 2024b), is believed by Muslims to be an authority and explains the Quran (Baloch,



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2012). In Islam, the Qur'an, the holy book, and Hadith are the two foundational sources of laws governing the belief framework, theology, jurisprudence, ethics, thought, social order, life activities, economic and finance, politics, cultural bounds, moral principles, educational norms, intellectual codes, etc. (Khan, 2010). Among his significant responsibilities, Prophet Muhammad was sent to teach the meaning of Qur'an verbally and practically. This is evident in Quran 3, verse 164, where Allah says,

“Indeed, Allah has done the believers a ‘great’ favour by raising a messenger from among them—reciting to them His revelations, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom. For indeed, they had previously been clearly astray.”

Thus, Hadith offers the most authentic commentary of the Qur'an to the extent that without it, Muslims would face great difficulties in understanding the meaning and messages of Qur'an fully. Given the importance of Hadith to the understanding of Islamic religion, Allah's promise of preserving the Qur'an also means the preservation of hadith (Madani, 2010).

In particular, the preservation of Hadith throughout history can be said to be a testament to the dedication of the Sahabah (the companions), Tabi'un (the Successors), Atba' Tabi'in (the third generation of Muslims), and subsequent generations. This preservation was achieved through the unique discipline of Hadith sciences, involving meticulous effort and a considerable amount of time to safeguard the integrity of Islamic rich heritage (Barmaver, 2021). Meanwhile, the task of preserving Hadith from the earliest periods of Islamic history to the present day is filled with techniques employed by dedicated scholars and certainly not without its challenges and complexities (Khan, 2010). In addition, the introduction of new dimensions to the preservation efforts, including modern academic institutions, the advent of technology, evolving scholarly methodologies, etc., in the contemporary era, have also contributed to the preservation of Hadith (Deraman et al., 2013; Huda, 2023). In contributing to the multifaceted landscape of Hadith preservation, this article unravels the techniques and contemporary efforts.

While a stream of research relating to the preservation of Hadith has been conducted, an extensive review of the literature suggests that a comprehensive study, such as this article, that discusses the techniques and modern preservation efforts is rare. For example, Imam Ali-Agan (2012) discusses the great enthusiasm displayed by the Sahabah when recording and preserving Hadith, particularly to respond to the divergent comments on Hadith. Noor (2020) analysed historical documents to examine Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani's view on Sanad and its significance in modern times with a particular focus on both authenticity and preservation of Hadith tradition. Noor finds that the Sanad circulation in the modern period is not for theological or legal argument but to preserve Islamic tradition and spread spirituality.

In response to the critics of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), such as Robert Spencer, who is an American author and famous for his criticism of the Prophet of Islam, Akhtar (2018) conducted a study to prove that Hadith were painstakingly preserved through various techniques and to shed light on the reasons for the fabrication of Hadith. Akhtar finds that Hadith was scrupulously preserved as a reliable source of Shari'ah.

Based on the above studies, it can be suggested that the preservation of Hadith is widely acknowledged in the literature. However, extant studies have mainly offered partial explanations, especially with a lack of study with a specific focus on Hadith preservation techniques and contemporary efforts. Building on the existing studies, this article unravels the methodological frameworks underpinning Hadith preservation to contribute to this critical discussion within the religious and academic spheres. Since Hadith is crucial for Islamic teachings and practices, this study will provide an avenue for future Muslim generations to have access to accurate information about relevant issues on how Hadith was preserved (Abdul Majid et al., 2024). Here, this article will strengthen ongoing efforts toward safeguarding the integrity of Hadith for generations to come. Besides, this article will also add to the body of knowledge in Sunnah studies by elucidating Hadith preservation techniques and contemporary efforts (Hamid, 2023). Thus, it could serve as complementary learning material for scholars, educators, and students.

The rest of this article is structured as follows: The next section reviews pertinent literature on Hadith preservation. This is followed by a brief discussion of the scope and methodological approach adopted in conducting this study. The subsequent section comprehensively discusses Hadith preservation techniques. Following this is a section on contemporary efforts to preserve Hadith. The final section concludes this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews pertinent literature on Hadith preservation. Hadith preservation refers to the meticulous techniques used by early Islamic scholars to ensure the accurate transmission, authentication, and protection of Hadith. Beginning from the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the process of preserving Hadith, which includes the collection and compilation of Hadith, the verification of the reliability of the chains of narrators (Isnad), and the critical analysis of the content (Matan), has continued throughout Islamic history. These efforts aim to ensure that Hadith are accurately transmitted through generations, providing a trustworthy source of guidance for Muslims worldwide (Madani, 2010). To assure Muslims and remind critics of Islam that Hadith was accurately preserved, several studies have been conducted in this field. In response to critics of Islam, such as Robert Spencer, known for criticising Islam and the Prophet of Islam, Akhtar (2018) conducted a study

to prove that Hadith was accurately preserved through appropriate techniques. He finds that the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) have been scrupulously preserved over time.

In the same vein, Imam Ali-Agan's (2012) study was conducted to respond to critics who believe that Hadith could not have been orally transmitted over a century with great accuracy. On this basis, Imam Ali-Agan argues in favour of the Sahabah and other early Muslim scholars' great efforts in recording and preserving Hadith. He concludes that it is incontestable that Hadith were accurately preserved through memorisation, practice, and documentation. Noor (2020a) This paper examines al-Fadani's view of Sanad (chains of narrators) and its importance in modern times, specifically regarding authenticity and preservation. It was discovered that Sanad circulation in the modern period is mainly maintained to preserve Islamic tradition and spread spirituality, but not for theological or legal argument purposes.

Using qualitative methodological approaches, including interviews and observations, a study conducted by Arif Yahya et al. (2017) aims to introduce a practical method of Hadith memorization, similar to the process adopted during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), mainly to facilitate the teaching and learning process. They found that students of the Hadith subject from the Faculty of Islamic Studies adopted various techniques in memorizing the texts of Hadith. Following this finding, the Hadith memorization techniques proposed by the authors include assigning specific memorization tasks, providing Hadith text content through lectures and discussions, applying the jigsaw method in teaching and learning to give students opportunities to gather, discuss, share, and memorise Hadith texts, as well as using service-learning, audio aids, repetition, and online sources.

Materu et al. (2023) explicate the classification of Hadith based on the authenticity of the Sanad (chain of narrators) and the Matan (content), with a specific focus on the role of Sanad in evaluating the authenticity of Hadith. Library materials were used to investigate the historical context of Hadith transmission and preservation. Materu et al. observed that Hadith scholars adopted different approaches when evaluating narrators. While some Hadith scholars applied stringent criteria, others adopted a more lenient approach, leading to varying judgements on the same narrators. Ilahi et al. (2023) The authors examine several mobile applications used today to preserve and expedite Hadith's learning. They also investigate how simple it is to verify and authenticate a Hadith using these applications in this modern era. The quantitative analysis of their data showed that mobile application features are advantageous to learning and preserving Hadith.

Noor (2020b) examines the main factors behind the revival of Hadith studies in the modern era by elaborating on how and why the study successfully recaptured the attention of Islamic scholars after centuries of neglect. Having qualitatively analysed

the data retrieved from historical literature and biographical dictionaries, it was observed that internal and external factors caused the revival of the Hadith study in modern times. These include the influence of reformist ideas to liberate the Muslim world from the state of ignorance and foreign occupation, the acceptance of the printing press after centuries of rejection, which led to the rise of the Islamic book industry, and the need to repudiate destructive views on Hadith offered by Western orientalisks that oppose the traditional stance.

In summary, while the reviewed literature indicates that studies have been conducted in this domain, specific studies that discuss how Hadith was preserved, including the techniques adopted and contemporary efforts, are hard to find. Our literature search suggests that this study is probably the first to comprehensively discuss the techniques used and contemporary efforts in preserving Hadith up to the modern era.

3. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The article reviews extant literature to discuss the techniques and contemporary efforts in preserving the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The scope of this article covers two important aspects of Hadith preservation: the traditional techniques used by early Islamic scholars and the modern approaches employed by contemporary scholars. Specifically, this article reviews the evolution of Hadith preservation techniques over time, covering memorisation, the principle of practice, and documentation. Additionally, the article discusses contemporary approaches that have enhanced Hadith preservation, including the massive publication of academic books and journals on Hadith, the establishment of faculties in major universities that offer Hadith studies as a specialised academic programme, the increase in comparative jurisprudence studies that refer to Hadith as one of the most important references, the need to respond to Orientalist theories on Hadith and the advent of digital technology. By discussing the historical techniques and contemporary efforts that contribute to the preservation of Hadith today, the authors aim to offer a comprehensive understanding of the strategies employed to preserve Hadith and their significance in ensuring the authenticity and continuity of Islamic teachings.

Meanwhile, the methods adopted in writing this article include reviewing relevant published books, articles, lecture notes, and websites. Some of the books consulted in the course of writing this article include Madani (2010), Barmaver (2021), Abdulah and Manas (2009), Brown (2018), Falahi (2017), Khan (2010), and related others. Interestingly, these books help to build a strong foundation for this article. Besides, related academic journal articles sourced from various popular databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Emerald, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, etc., were comprehensively reviewed and incorporated into this study. Among others, Mahdi (2018), Arif Yahya et al. (2017), Materu et al. (2023), Deraman et al. (2013), Djoghlaif (2006) are some of the academic journal articles consulted in writing this article.

Additionally, lecture notes of Osmani (2024a, 2024b) “Preservation and Compilation of the Sunnah” and “Sunnah Studies: Basic Terms” were reviewed, and the information extracted contributed to the success of this study. Furthermore, pertinent websites, including Whyislam (2024), were also consulted while writing this article.

4. RESULT AND FINDING

4.1 *Hadith Preservation Techniques*

When people read about the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), the question that may likely strike in their mind is, are these things genuinely said, acted, or approved by the Prophet of Islam? Recognising the unique position of Hadith in Islam as well as the need to preserve them for guidance on a wide range of issues, including matters of faith, ethics, and Muslim Lifestyle, the Sahabah and early Muslim scholars went through painstaking efforts to clear this doubt (Whyislam, 2024). While Sanad (chain of narrators) and Matan (text) play crucial roles in determining the genuineness of narrations and confirming the authenticity of Hadith (Materu et al., 2023), Madani (2010), in agreement with Osmani (2024a), documents the three methods used to preserve Hadith. According to him, these techniques are memorisation, the principle of practice, and documentation. These three Hadith preservation techniques are subsequently discussed here.

4.1.1 *Memorisation Technique*

According to Madani (2010) the first technique of Hadith preservation is memorisation. In the pre-Islamic and early stages of Islamic development, the use of oral tradition for knowledge transmission was widely practised and passed from generation to generation. Although emphasis was placed on Qur’an memorisation during the time of the Prophet, some of the companions, such as Abdullah bin ‘Amru bin al-‘As, were permitted to write and memorise hadith. Following the footsteps of Sahabah, their successors used the same method to comprehensively memorise Hadith from the texts to the chains of transmitters (Arif Yahya et al., 2017) Besides, Arabs were renowned for their ability to memorise long poems, their authors’ biographies, poets’ forefathers and their lineages, and the lineage of their horses.

This simple technique of memorisation was crucial for the preservation of Hadith, especially given what transpired between Abu Huraira (Radiyallahu 'Anhu) and Marwan, who was the first governor of Damascus and the first emir of the Umayyad Dynasty, as recorded by Imam Bukhari. Abu al-Za’za, the secretary of Marwan, narrates that Marwan once called Abu Huraira to his court because he doubted the large number of Hadith memorised and frequently narrated by Abu Huraira. Before the arrival of Abu Huraira, Marwan instructed Abu al-Za’za to hide behind a curtain

with a pen and paper. He said, "I am going to ask Abu Huraira to narrate some Hadith; while he narrates, I want you to pen all the Hadith down." Upon the arrival of Abu Huraira, Marwan asked him about some Hadith, and Abu Huraira narrated them for a long time with no idea he was being tested and recorded.

While writing his narrations, Abu al-Za'za discovered that he had written an extensive collection of Hadith on his papers. As Abu Huraira left, Marwan kept the scrolls of the Hadith secretly recorded. He waited a year later and again invited Abu Huraira to his court. As before, he instructed his secretary to hide behind the curtain with the papers containing Hadith previously written. He said, "I will repeat the same questions I asked last year. Check and see if it coincides with the Hadith of the previous year." Abu al-Za'za says, "I sat quietly behind the curtain. As he put the questions, I looked into my papers. He did not add to or subtract from even one word of a Hadith" (Madani, 2010). Madani also documents a similar incident between Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri and Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik during the same period.

Meanwhile, memorisation as a technique for Hadith preservation involves systematic approaches and rigorous practices with several regular sessions of recitation and revision to ensure that Hadith was accurately memorised. These practices help maintain Hadith integrity across generations and contributed to the enduring legacy of Hadith literature (Ahmad et al., 2021). In addition, the exceptional memory capabilities of Sahabah played a significant role in preserving Hadith as they continuously memorised Hadith by hearth from the early period of Islam until the beginning of the Umayyad dynasty (Osmani, 2024a). The dedication of Sahabah to preserve the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) laid the foundation for successive generations, such as Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, Abu Dawud al-Sijjistani, Muhammad ibn Isa al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb an-Nasaa'i, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad bin Yazid, and several others (may Allah be pleased with them) who later compiled different books of Hadith (Awan, 2020).

4.1.2 The Principle of Practice Technique

The second method and the most potent system of Hadith preservation is the "principle of practice" (Brown, 2018; Madani, 2010). This technique entails the practical application of the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him). Two such things that contributed to the practice of Hadith are the "love and respect" that Sahabah has for Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him). As Madani (2010, p. 17) put it, "In fact, even most of the Muslims of today cannot understand the love of the Sahabah for the Blessed Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), their adherence to his habits or the unique relationship between them and the Blessed Prophet (peace be upon him)." The Sahabah and early community's deep affection and reverence for the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) significantly contributed to the

preservation and transmission of Hadith. By memorising and integrating Hadith into their religious practices, Sahabah and early Muslims could ensure that the Prophet's teachings were remembered and a living tradition deeply embedded into the communal and individual consciousness (Brown, 2018).

Before his conversion to Islam, Urwa ibn Mas'ud Thaqafi (Radiyahallahu 'Anhu) closely observed the Sahabah during the treaty of Hudaibiya and finally said, "Oh people! I have visited the courts of kings on many occasions. I have met with the emperor of Rome, the king of Persia and Negus of Abyssinia. However, by Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala), I have not seen a people revere their king the way I saw the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) revere him. By Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala), if he spits as much as he spits, it is rubbed on the hands, face, and body of one of the companions before it hits the ground. He does not order, but they run to fulfil it. He performs ablution, and the companions compete to take the dripping water. When he talks, they quell their voices. They cannot look at him fully out of awe for him" (Madani, 2010).

This statement confirms how Sahabah's deep love for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) helped preserve every aspect of his life, including how he worshipped, slept, ate, worked, talked, settled disputes, etc. Sunnah (traditions of Prophet Muhammad) serves as the basis for acceptable behaviour during the early stage of Islam. During this period, Muslims found joy in emulating the Prophet's actions in their daily routines, prayers, and ethical conduct, serving as a dynamic form of Hadith preservation. Moreover, the practices of Hadith among Muslims during this period also facilitated intergenerational transmission of Hadith in which children and young generations learned Hadith through observation and participation (Brown, 2018). This approach to learning Hadith helps preserve Hadith through generations practically and authentically. Hence, its widespread application daily solidified Hadith preservation.

4.1.3 Documentation Technique

Documentation emerged as the third technique for Hadith preservation. Although early Muslim scholars relied heavily on memorisation and oral transmission to preserve Hadith, recognising the importance of accurate preservation and potential human error in oral transmission necessitated the documentation of Hadith in written form. The documentation of Hadith began in the first century, with some even written during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Madani, 2010). For instance, al-Sahifah al-Sadiqa (The Authentic Scroll) contains Hadith compiled by Abd Allah ibn Amr ibn al-As during the time of Prophet Muhammad and serves as a reliable source of the Prophet's teachings (Mahdi, 2018). He said, "I wrote whatever I heard from the Blessed Prophet (peace be upon him) and memorised it. Some members of Quraish discouraged me from recording the Hadith. They said, "Do you

write whatever you hear from the Prophet? He is a man; sometimes he jokes, and sometimes he gets angry like any other person” (Madani, 2010, p. 19).

While not everyone could write down the Hadith during the early stage of the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), those who were allowed with his permission wrote Hadith down (Imam Ali-Agan, 2012). However, this restriction was abrogated towards the end of his life when he gave permission for everyone to write his Hadith down. Even at that, some of the Prophet’s companions were active in amassing, memorising, and writing down Hadith than others. Most prolific collectors and transmitters of Hadith among the companions are Abu Huraira with 5,300 Hadith, Abdallah bin Umar with 2,600 Hadiths, Anas bin Malik with 2,300 Hadith, Aisha, the Prophet’s wife, with 2,200, and Ibn Abbas with 1,700 Hadith (Brown, 2018). According to Materu et al. (2023), the official efforts to document Hadith started during the reign of 'Umar bin Abd al-'Aziz. Meanwhile, the efforts of these and several other scholars during the first century of Islam laid the groundwork for the subsequent scholars in the second and third centuries of the Islamic calendar (Falahi, 2017).

Eminent scholars, such Imam Malik (93-179 AH), who compiled Muwatta Malik, and other great collectors of Hadith, like Imam Bukhari (194-256 AH), who compiled the “Sahih Bukhari,” Imam Muslim (204-261 AH), who compiled the “Sahih Muslim,” Abu Dawud (202-275 AH), who compiled the “Sunan Abi Dawud,” Abu 'Isa Muḥammad ibn 'Isa ibn al Ḍaḥḥak al-Sulami at-Tirmidhi (209-279 AH), who compiled the “Jami` al-Tirmidhi,” Imam Ahmad an-Nasa'i (215-303 AH), who compiled the “Sunan an-Nasa'i,” Imam Muhammad bin Yazid bin Mājah (207-273H), who compiled the “Sunan Ibn Majah,” and several others, played crucial roles in preserving Hadith through documentation (Baloch, 2012; Osmani, 2024a). The six books of Hadith compiled by these scholars, better known as al-Sihah al-Sitta (the six authentic books of Hadith), are Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Nasa'i, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah (Madani, 2010).

When compiling Hadith, scholars employed Sanad (chain of narrators) and Matan (text) to identify the sources and origins of various Hadith and to gain a deeper understanding of the history and development of the traditions. Based on these approaches, the Hadith grading system was developed to grade the level of Hadith authenticity. The most reliable Hadith with a robust chain of transmission, reliable sources, and multiple transmitters is graded Sahih or authentic Hadith. A reliable Hadith that is not up to the level of Sahih is graded Hasan or acceptable Hadith. Hadith with a weaker chain of transmission or transmitted by a single source is graded as Daif, or weak Hadith (Whyislam, 2024).

Furthermore, Hadith were also classified into different branches according to the chain, including Muttasil (Hadith with a complete chain of narrators), Munqati

(Hadith with one or more narrators missing from a chain of narrators), Mu'dal (Hadith with two or more narrators missing from one area of the chain), Mu'allaq (Hadith with a missing narrator at the beginning of the chain. The final one is Mursal (the Hadith with a narrator between the first successor and the Prophet is missing, and the Hadith is narrated by the first successor) (Madani, 2010). In summary, the preservation of Hadith began with memorisation. The memorised Hadith were preserved through the principle of practice. This was followed by documentation by dedicated Muslim scholars. Finally, the Hadith was compiled in book form.

4.2 Contemporary Efforts in Preserving Hadith

In addition to the techniques used in the early Islamic era to preserve Hadith, contemporary Muslim scholars and governments have also contributed to preserving this rich Islamic heritage, especially following more than five centuries of stagnation before the 20th century. Accordingly, the literature review has identified five main factors that contributed to Hadith preservation in the modern era. These five factors that contributed to Hadith preservation in the modern era include the massive publication of academic books and journals on Hadith, the establishment of faculties and centres in significant universities that offered Hadith studies as a specialised academic programme, the increase in comparative jurisprudence studies that refer to Hadith as one of the most important references, the need to respond to Orientalist's theories on Hadith, and the advent of digital technology (Huda, 2023; Noor, 2020b). While the first three factors are considered internal, the remaining two are external.

Specifically, the effort to embark on massive publication of academic books and journals on Hadith among Muslim scholars is one of the important steps that contributed to Hadith preservation in the modern era. Through this effort, Muslims, researchers, scholars, and the public can access a wide range of Hadith literature, thereby contributing to the knowledge and understanding of Hadith. In addition, this effort has also contributed to the realisation of the role of Hadith in Islamic jurisprudence and spirituality. Such books and publications include the work of Barmaver (2021), Khan (2010), and Madani (2010).

Besides, establishing faculties and centres in major universities, such as International Islamic University Malaysia, Al-Azhar University, Islamic University of Madinah, Al-Madinah International University, and several others, offered Hadith studies as a specialised academic programme. These institutions serve as vital hubs for the training of future scholars in Hadith studies who will help bring academic rigour to the study of Hadith literature. Through these institutions, lecturers, researchers, and students can explore diverse topics, including the science of Hadith, the authentication of Hadith, the biographies of Hadith narrators, etc. (Deraman et al., 2013; Noor, 2020b).

In addition, the rise in comparative jurisprudence studies that refer to hadith as one of the most important references is another contemporary effort that contributed to the preservation of Hadith. The need to constantly consult with Hadith as scholars engaged in comparative analyses of legal rulings inevitably helped to preserve Hadith. As a result, Hadith are constantly studied, referenced, and revisited as one of the primary sources of Islamic law. Given the interdisciplinary nature of comparative jurisprudence studies, scholars of different disciplines, including Islamic law, Hadith studies, history, and theology, can engage in dialogue that helps strengthen Islamic legal traditions (Bakry, 2020; Bowen, 1998).

Furthermore, another effort that contributed to Hadith preservation is the need to respond to Orientalist's theories on Hadith and other critics of Islam (Abd. Qohin & Siti Kasiyati, 2020; Noor, 2020b). Apart from defending the integrity of Hadith literature, the need to respond to the Orientalist theories on Hadith and criticisms of Islam by Muslim scholars play an essential role in preserving Hadith. While issuing rebuttals, scholars meticulously present their arguments to dismantle unfounded claims that help reaffirm authentic Hadith and dismiss fabricated ones. This process helps to safeguard the purity of the Hadith tradition against scepticism or manipulation (Noor, 2020b).

Finally, the advent of digital technology has also preserved Hadith (Huda, 2023). Several Hadith digital archives, such as Sunnah.com, Hadith collection, Daily Hadith Online, Sunnah, etc., have been developed in this modern era to provide extensive libraries of Hadith texts accessible from anywhere. Similarly, search engines, such as Google, and Artificial intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, now provide easy search for Hadith (Chowdhury et al., 2017) These digital technologies have preserved Hadith and helped safeguard it against physical deterioration. Overall, contemporary efforts have tremendously contributed to its preservation in this era.

5. CONCLUSION

This article discusses the multifaceted landscape of Hadith preservation with a specific focus on the techniques and contemporary efforts in preserving this rich Islamic heritage. Due to a lack of understanding of Islam, the technique employed to preserve Hadith has constantly been attacked by the Orientalists and critics of Islam. Their main objections to Hadith centred around how Hadith could have been accurately orally transmitted over a century. As such, research that addresses the painstaking effort that went into the Hadith preservation that makes Muslims believe with absolute certainty that the Hadith were accurately preserved is crucial. In writing this article, relevant books, academic journal articles, lecture notes, and web pages were reviewed to produce a fundamentally sound study.

As discussed, early Muslim scholars used three crucial techniques to preserve Hadith:

memorisation, the principle of practice, and documentation. In addition, the contemporary efforts that contributed to Hadith preservation, as earlier discussed, include the massive publication of academic books and journals on hadith, the establishment of faculties and centres in significant universities that offered Hadith studies as a specialised academic programme, the increase in comparative jurisprudence studies that refer to hadith as one of the most important references, the need to respond to Orientalist's theories on hadith, and the advent of digital technology. Given that this article has mainly reviewed relevant studies to address its research interest, future studies may employ qualitative or quantitative research to investigate the techniques used by contemporary scholars to preserve Islamic heritage.

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