



Challenges and Steps in Living Quran and Hadith Research: An Introduction

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Abstract

The theme of the research on living Quran and Hadith is actually familiar among Islamic academics, especially students, even among lecturers at Islamic universities in Indonesia. The research on living Quran and Hadith is a research approach that examines how concepts, practices or errors occur in the implementation of the values of the Quran and Hadith that need to maintain the purity of their teachings, while for those that are wrong, there needs to be improvements both conceptually and practically. This article aims to analyze what are the opportunities and what steps must be taken if a researcher wants to conduct research on living Quran and Hadith. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach and content analysis, data sources are taken through interviews, from the opinions and findings of previous researchers in the form of books or scientific articles and have been published in both national and international journals. The research findings found that there are five processes or steps that must be taken by a researcher to conduct research on the living Quran and Hadith that have opportunities and will contribute to the development of theory, Islamic science and Muslim society. Because the Quran and Hadith are the main sources for Muslims in living their lives, of course these issues and topics will always be interesting and dynamic. These findings can be used as motivation for researchers to be actively involved in research on the living Quran and Hadith, as well as a guide for researchers who are interested in conducting research on the living Quran and Hadith.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the living Quran and Hadith has become an important part of academic discourse in Islamic higher education environments, especially in Indonesia, which is known as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Although this term is not entirely new, there are still many students and lecturers who do not fully understand the essence, approach, and appropriate research procedures in studying this theme (Al Fatih, 2023; Ali & Isnaini, 2024; Setiawan, 2022; Usmi & Kadri, 2021). Basically, the living Quran and Hadith refer to a research approach that does not only stop at textual analysis, but further explores how the values and teachings contained in the Quran and Hadith are lived, translated, and practiced by Muslim communities in real life. In this context, living research plays an important role as an effort to document, analyze, and critique the interaction between the sacred text and the social reality of Muslims (Hilmi et al., 2025). This is very relevant amidst the phenomenon of the rise of religious practices which, although claimed to be sourced from the Qur'an and Hadith, often experience deviations both conceptually and in implementation. Therefore, this study is present as a form of academic response to the importance of maintaining the purity of Islamic teachings while understanding the social context that surrounds it.

To strengthen the argument in this study, there are a number of relevant previous studies. First, a study entitled "Implementation of Al-Qur'anic Values in the Tradition of the Prophet's Birthday in Madura" by Rofiq (2019), using a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This study found that most of the practices of religious traditions claimed to originate from the Qur'an were mixed with local cultural elements. In conclusion, the values of the Qur'an that live in the Maulid tradition need to be reviewed so that they are in line with the original values of Islamic teachings. Second, a study by Nurdin (2021) entitled "Living Hadith in the Religious Practices of the Bugis Makassar Community", using an ethnographic method. The results show that certain hadiths are used as the basis for the formation of social behavior such as mutual cooperation and the tradition of visiting each other. The conclusion of this study confirms that the practice of living Hadith has a strategic value in the formation of local Islamic culture, although clarification is still needed regarding the appropriateness of the hadith used. Third, a study by Muna (2020) entitled "Living Quran in the Tradition of Islamic Medicine in Central Java" uses content analysis and in-depth interviews. This study reveals that many traditional medicines utilize certain verses in the Qur'an, but not all of them are based on scientific interpretation or validation by scholars. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of equipping the community with a correct understanding of the function of the verses of the Qur'an in the context of medicine, so as not to fall into heretical practices or manipulation of religion.

To strengthen the mapping of the study of the living Quran and Hadith visually and bibliometrically, an analysis was conducted using the VOSviewer tool to identify the relationship between concepts, dominant topics, and the development of themes in previous studies. The VOSviewer analysis image shown below presents a visualization of the relationship between the main keywords from a number of relevant scientific publications, such as "living Quran," "living Hadith," "religious tradition," "local culture," to "Islamic practice." This visualization provides an overview of the intellectual structure of the field of study, while also showing a map of the most frequently studied topics and potential research gaps that have not been widely touched on. Thus,

this analysis not only enriches the arguments in this study but also clarifies the position of the article in the broader contemporary research landscape as in Figure 1.

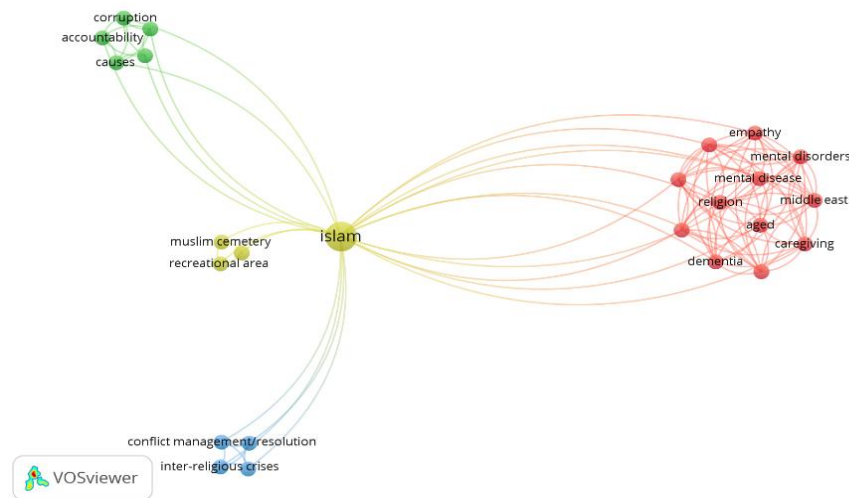


Fig 1. Bibliometric analysis of keywords living Quran and Hadith

The VOSviewer visualization image above presents a bibliometric mapping of keywords associated with the central theme of Islam in various scientific publications. From the image, it can be seen that the term Islam is the central node that connects several main thematic clusters that are relevant to the context of living Quran and Hadith research. The red cluster (right) shows the relationship between Islam and contemporary social issues such as mental disorders, religion, the Middle East, to caregiving and empathy. This shows that religious practices in Islam are often studied in relation to social dynamics, mental health, and psychosocial aspects, which are one of the challenges in living research, namely how sacred texts are lived in the context of complex and multidimensional modern life. Meanwhile, the green cluster (top left) highlights the issues of corruption, accountability, and causes, which shows that Islamic studies are also often associated with the discourse of social ethics and public morality. This is in line with one of the focuses of living Hadith which highlights how the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW are applied in forming just and responsible social behavior. The blue cluster (bottom left) reflects the issue of inter-religious crises and conflict management, which emphasizes the importance of studying the living Quran in a multicultural and religious plurality context, a major challenge for researchers to interpret the universal teachings of Islam in a pluralistic society.

The initial findings of this study indicate that living Quran and Hadith are not only an academic trend, but also an urgent need in fostering Muslim society to be able to practice Islamic teachings correctly and contextually (Muttaqin et al., 2025). Amidst the challenges of globalization, value disruption, and plurality of religious understanding, this kind of research plays a role as a guardian of the authenticity and relevance of Islamic teachings. Moreover, living research is not only an academic field rich in field data, but also a means to reshape the relationship between text and people, between revelation and history, between tradition and change. With the right understanding and steps, young researchers are expected to not only be able to study social phenomena that occur in the name of Islam, but also contribute to strengthening the methodology of Islamic

studies based on reality and the needs of the times. Therefore, this article is expected to be an initial motivation as well as a practical guide for academics and researchers who want to seriously pursue and develop the study of living Quran and Hadith as a strategic and transformative field of science in the context of the contemporary Islamic world.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design and content analysis techniques, to examine in depth the reality of practices and challenges in implementing the values of living the Quran and Hadith in the midst of Muslim society (Fikri, 2023; Firmansyah, 2024; Raodatul, 2024). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand social phenomena comprehensively in their original context, emphasizing the subjective meaning of religious experiences and religious practices of Muslims. Meanwhile, the phenomenological approach is used to explore how individuals and groups understand and live the teachings of the Quran and Hadith in everyday life, both in the form of worship practices, social traditions, and responses to cultural and modern challenges. In order to strengthen the validity and depth of the analysis, this study also utilizes content analysis techniques on various relevant documents and literature (Engkizar et al., 2023).

The data sources in this study come from two channels: in-depth interviews and literature review. Interviews were conducted with six selected informants who were selected purposively, namely experts and specialists in the field of Qur'an and Hadith studies who have experience in conducting research or direct observation of the phenomenon of the living Quran and Hadith (Engkizar et al., 2024). The interview technique used was semi-structured so that researchers could explore the views and understanding of informants in depth, flexibly, but still focused on the research topic. In addition, secondary data was obtained through literature studies sourced from scientific books, national and international journal articles, and previous research publications that were relevant to the topic of study (Engkizar et al., 2025). This literature was used as a basis for strengthening interpretations, comparing field findings, and tracing scientific developments in the study of the living Quran and Hadith. All data were analyzed using thematic content analysis techniques, which were carried out through the stages of data reduction, theme categorization, interpretation of meaning, and drawing conclusions. The analysis was carried out by combining the results of interviews and literature data, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and steps needed in conducting research on the living Quran and Hadith (Engkizar et al., 2022). This analysis process aims to formulate findings that are not only descriptive, but also reflective and constructive for the development of Islamic science and social practices of Muslims contextually. The entire flow of this research can be seen in Figure 2.

Six steps in Research Methods

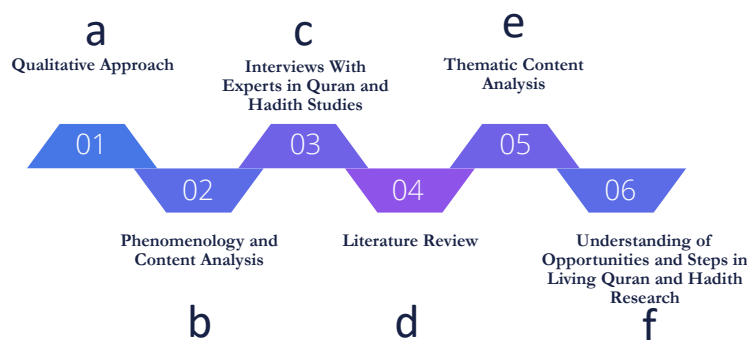


Fig 2. Flow of Methods in Research

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the living Quran and Hadith approach has a strategic position in building a bridge between the text and the social reality of Muslims (Sitorus et al., 2021). Amidst the complexity of heterogeneous Muslim society, various forms of religious expression have emerged that are often claimed to originate from the Quran and Hadith, although in practice there is a mixture of local values, culture, and even myths. In this context, the living approach becomes very important, not only as a documentation tool, but also as a means of clarification, correction, and religious guidance based on empirical data. To ensure the quality and validity of living Quran and Hadith research, researchers need to go through five main steps that are interrelated and form a systematic methodological flow. Each of these steps will be explained separately in the following discussion (Hasnahwati et al., 2023; Husna, 2021; Laili, 2021; Lubis et al., 2021; Mustaghfiroh, 2020).

First Steps to Identify Religious Phenomena

The first step in the research of the living Quran and Hadith is to accurately identify the religious phenomena that are alive and developing in society. These phenomena can be in the form of religious practices, ritual symbols, customary traditions, social behavior, or even statements that contain normative religious elements and are believed to originate from the Quran and Hadith. This identification process should not be carried out carelessly or hastily, because not all forms of Islamic expression that exist in society truly come from Islamic teachings. Many are also the result of cultural acculturation, ancestral heritage, or even the result of reinterpretation that is not based on valid Islamic disciplines. Therefore, researchers need to use broad scientific insight, cultural sensitivity, and caution in sorting out which phenomena are worthy of being studied from the perspective of the living Quran and Hadith and which are merely cultural expressions without a strong theological basis. This process is the initial foundation that determines the direction of the validity and relevance of research to the next stage.

Second Step of Primary Data Collection through Observation and Interviews

Once the phenomenon is identified, the second step is collecting primary data through direct observation and in-depth interviews. Observation

aims to record real practices that occur in the social context of the community, while interviews aim to explore the understanding, perceptions, and beliefs of the community or practitioners of the religious practice. In this context, interviews are not only aimed at obtaining factual information, but also exploring the deep meaning of the practitioners for the practices they carry out. Researchers need to take a polite and open approach so that respondents feel comfortable expressing their views honestly and completely. Informants in this study generally include local religious figures, practitioners of tradition, religious teachers, ulama, or academics who understand the cultural roots and sharia foundations of the observed practices. Data validity is highly dependent on the quality of communication between researchers and informants, as well as on the researcher's ability to manage field dynamics, especially if the practices studied are sensitive or controversial.

The Third Step of Secondary Data Collection through Literature Review

The third very important step is to conduct a critical and comprehensive literature review. The literature used must include classical and contemporary tafsir books, hadith commentary books, fatwas of scholars, scientific articles from reputable journals, and other official religious documents. The main purpose of this step is to compare and assess whether the practices found in the field have a strong theological basis or not. For example, if a traditional ruqyah practice is found with a certain verse reading, researchers must refer to the interpretation of the verse, studies of medical fiqh, and the opinions of authorized scholars regarding the legality and ethics of ruqyah. This literature review should not be done piecemeal, but must be comprehensive so that researchers do not get caught up in subjectivity or cultural bias. By combining field data and scientific references, researchers can build strong and valid arguments regarding the position of a practice within the framework of the living Quran and Hadith.

Step Four Thematic and Reflective Analysis of Data

The fourth step is the data analysis process carried out with a thematic and reflective approach. Thematic analysis aims to find patterns, meanings, and tendencies that emerge from field data and literature. Meanwhile, reflective analysis is used to evaluate the extent to which the practices found are in line with or contradict the values contained in the Qur'an and Hadith. At this stage, the researcher acts as an interpreter and balancer, namely by weighing the values of normative texts and sociological realities proportionally. Researchers must be able to map the relationship between revelation (nash) and culture (urf), and distinguish between the form of mahdhah worship (pure ritual) and ghairu mahdhah worship (social ritual) which has interpretive flexibility. A mature analysis will produce a new understanding that is contextual but does not deviate from the essence of Islamic teachings. In addition, this stage is also important for raising further questions that can be developed in subsequent research.

Step Five Drawing Conclusions and Making Recommendations

The final step in the research process is the preparation of conclusions and recommendations that are both academic and practical. The conclusion must reflect the main findings of the research in clear, argumentative, and scientific language. The conclusion not only answers the formulation of the problem, but also confirms the position of the practice studied within the framework of the living Quran and Hadith: whether the practice is valid, needs

to be criticized, or even revised. On the other hand, recommendations are aimed at three groups: (1) the general public, to be more critical and knowledgeable in carrying out religious practices; (2) academics and students, to be interested in developing similar research with a broader approach; and (3) Islamic religious and educational institutions, to prepare curricula and training based on scientific and down-to-earth values of the living Quran and Hadith. Good recommendations will make this research not stop as an academic product, but become a real contribution to strengthening the understanding of moderate, inclusive, and revelation-based Islam.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the living Quran and Hadith approach is a highly relevant scientific strategy for studying the dynamics of Muslim religious practices amidst the ever-evolving social reality. This approach not only explains how the values of the Quran and Hadith are practiced in everyday life, but also offers a reflective space to assess the suitability between text and context. The main findings in this study include two important aspects: first, the great opportunity to develop the study of the living Quran and Hadith as an interdisciplinary research field that continues to be relevant and dynamic; second, the formulation of five systematic steps in this study, namely identification of phenomena, primary data collection, literature review, thematic analysis, and preparation of conclusions and recommendations. However, this study has limitations, namely it has not studied in depth one case of a particular living practice in a local community ethnographically, and is limited to the views of six expert informants. Therefore, further research is recommended to focus on case studies of the living phenomenon in a particular region or community so that the results are more applicable. In addition, a collaborative approach between nash studies (tafsir and hadith) with field ethnography methods has great potential to be developed. Researchers are also encouraged to design modules or methodological guides for the living Quran and Hadith that can be used in the research learning process at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, in order to expand the scientific and practical impact of this approach.

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