Method of Hadith Criticism for Fighting Hoax

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Abstract : Social media has become an impartiatly part of people life in contemporary era. All information can be obtained through social media, either politics, economics, religious life and so on. Sometimes, unfortunately, some people are trapped by hoax information. There is no awareness to verify information which they acquire. This paper explores method of hadith criticism for verifying information. In order to reach out objective of this paper, literature studies were done to obtain data required. This paper is using qualitative method as a method of analyse.Based on this study, the writer found that method of hadith criticism in *'ulūm al-ḥadīth* can be utilized to verify information which spread on social media. In addition, in this paper, the writer tries to apply the method of hadith criticism to verify information step by step.

1 INTRODUCTION

Social media is being one of the most recent developments in the field of communication and information technology. Social media has many benefits for humans. For example, this can be seen from how Van Dijk explained the characteristics of social mediathat he calls "social media logic". The first characteristic is *programmability* which is defined as the ability of a social media platform totrigger and steer users' creative or communicativecontributions, while users, through their interactionwith these coded environments, may in turn influencethe flow of communication and information activatedby such a platform; the second is *popularity*, which meanssocial media platforms have a sophisticated mechanism to filter out popular items and influential people, as well as the ability to influence or manipulate theserankings;the third is *connectivity*, which is a strategic tactic that effectively enables human connectedness while, at the same time, pushing automated connectivity; the fourth is *datafication*, meaning that social mediacan trackinstantaneous movements of individual user behavior,aggregate this data, analyze it, and subsequently translate the results into valuable information about individuals, groups, or society at large. On the other hand, social media has also negative impact on various aspects of human's life. Niki Alma Febriana Fauzi and Ayub have summarized the negative impacts into four parts, namely in sociological and communicational aspects, in the economic sector, in psychological aspects of human's life, and in the dynamics of political life. In sociological and communicational aspects, the development of social media has transformed traditional one-way communication into multi-dimensional, two-way, peer-to-peer communication. As a result of social media, face-to-face communication slowly lost its role as the main form of social interaction. Another example where social media has given the bigger negative impact is in the dynamics of political life. Recent findings reveal negative impacts of social media on political activism and participation. People who gain their political information through social media are prone to be the victims of deliberate misinformation commonly known as "fake news" or hoax information. In this regard, people of Indonesia has become victims.

Hoax information spreading on social media has gotten to the point that was dangerous. One of causes bringing to it was emerged so called "fake media" (media abal-abal). Chief of Indonesia Press Council (Dewan Pers Indonesia), Yosep Adi Prasetyo, said that there have been 43.300 fake media in Indonesia. Fake media is unofficial and not licensed media by law. Therefore it potentially serves fake news and hoax. In addition, it tends to

ignore principles and ethics jurnalism. Unfortunately, while people are seeking information, they often refer to the fake media. Lack of communication or interaction ethics in social media can lead to negative impact for people life. Possibly, we can not stop people who make hoax and fake information as a work to get wealth. At least, however, we may look for validity of information we obtain, and in turn, if it is not valid we may contribute to block spreading the hoax. Therefore, looking for validity of information on social media is most important. Some principles in *'ulūm al-ḥadīth* (sciences of hadith) can be alternative to verify information spreading on social media.

Method of hadith criticism may be defined as a branch of sciences of hadith which is used to verify hadiths for differentiating between authentic one and not.[Addumaini, t.t] The process of hadith authentication should be done as a consequence of hadith transmission which through one generation of people to others. As we know, the people are characteriscally difference; some have integrity and good personality, while some are amoral and less intelligent. In addition, it is also an effect of falsification of hadith has taken place in history of hadith codification itself. [Jokowi Pemimpin Terbaik se-Asia dan Australia Versi Bloomberg, Detickom 2016] In other words, method of hadith criticism came out as a cosequence of existence of information need to verify.Method of hadith criticism includes two aspects, which are sanad (chain of narrators) and matan (content of the hadith). Muslim scholars have constructed principles in doing hadith criticism, either sanad or matan. Some of them are relevant to be contextualized in verifying information spreading on social media. In the section that follows, it will be argued that some principles in the method of hadith criticism may be utilized to fight hoax, and I will elaborate how to contextualize them in terms of social media.

2 METHOD OF HADITH CRITICISM: FORMAL CRITERIA AND SUBTANTIAL CRITERIA

The authenticity of hadith has been a concern of classical Islamic scholars since the early days of Islam. To do that, they make benchmarks to analyze which hadiths are valid and not. These benchmarks or criteria include external criteria (*al-khārijī*) and internal (*al-dākhilī*). Ibnu Shalah said that the authentic hadith is "the one which has a continuous isnad, made up of reporters of trustworthy memory from similar authorities, and which is found to be free from any irregularities (i.e. in the text) or defects (i.e. in the isnad)". This definition described by IbnShalah is a definition that was chosen by many scholars.However, the definition is not without criticism. The criticism does not only come from Western scholars, but also from contemporary Muslim scholars. It is because the criteria are considered - although they cover two criteria - only emphasize to external criteria, and tend to ignore internal criteria.This is actually understandable because indeed classical Islamic scholars when testing the internal validity of hadith put more emphasis on the matan format; is there an addition (*ziyādah*), insertion (*idrāj*), reversal (*iqlāb*) or subtraction (*nuqshān*) which can result in a contradiction in the hadith or among hadith, which in turn it will impact the hadith to be weak. They (classical Islamic scholars) paid less attention - to say no at all - to the substance of the hadith which is actually no less important for testing. Looking at these criticisms, contemporary Islamic scholars do not remain silent, and then try to formulate a method (*manhaj*) to examine the internal aspects of a hadith, especially in terms of their substance. This internal testing of the hadithin its development, is commonly referred to as the criticism of the matan hadith. Ṣalāḥuddīn al-Adlabī and Musfir ad-Dumainī are two of contemporary Islamic scholars who try to formulate rules to test the internal validity of the hadith. Their two works in sequence are Manhaj Naqd al-Matn a inda 'Ulamā' al-Ḥadīṡ an-Nabawī and Maqāyīs Naqd Mutūn as-Sunnah.Al-Adlabī in his work explained that the substance of a hadith must not conflict with (a) the Qur'an, (b) the hadith which has been proven authentic, (c) reason, and (d) history. In addition, it must also indicate that the hadith is the word of the Prophet. While ad-Dumainī distinguishes between the criteria possessed by hadith and fukaha experts. According to him, among the hadith experts a hadith would be weak (dha'if) because it contained an element of incoherence, which is contrary to (a) the Qur'an, (b) hadith or sunnah which has been proven authentic, (c) hadith or sunnah that has been established, (d) correct Arabic, (f) historical facts, fixed sharia principles and rules, and (g) common sense. Whereas according to jurists, the matan hadith is accepted if it is coherent, and vice versa it is rejected if it conflict to (a) the Qur'an, (b) hadith that has been proven authentic, (c) ijmak, (d) practice of *shahabah*, (e)

qiyas, (f) general principles of shari'ah, and (g) prevalence in common cases. Referring to the criticism of the matan hadith above, Syamsul Anwar then classify into two preferences, namely; formal criteria of the authenticity of matan and subtantial criteria of the authenticity of matan. According to Syamsul Anwar, the criteria included in the formal criteria of the authenticity of matan are two of the criteria for the validity of the hadith that have been made by the scholars, namely free from syāż (anomaly) and 'illah. What "free from syāż" means is it has three elements; (a) free from opposition, (b) free from pollution, and (c) free from error. While what "free from 'illah" means is it includes some elements; (a) free from internal contradictions, and (b) free from social interpenetration (mixing one matan with another). Therefore, as a whole the elements of the formal criteria of the Matan criticism are five: three are elements that are free from shāż and two are elements that are free from 'illah.

The substantial criteria for authenticity of the matan referred to by Syamsul Anwar in this case is the liberation of a matan hadith from incoherence. What "free from incoherence" means is emerging the harmony of meaning among the hadith, and the substance of its meaning is free from incoherence with a number of meanings that have been accepted and acknowledged.Free from incoherence is also actually included in one of the free elements of 'illah. This criterion is more related to the substance and meaning that is the content of the hadith than it relates to the format of matan. If in formal criteria, the hadith is more seen in terms of the format of the matan such as whether the matan of hadith is reversed in order or not, is it different from other similar matan of the hadith, whether there are additions or there are written errors and so on, then in substantial criteria, hadith is seen in the substance of meaning contained in it.

Looking for the True Information
From the explanation above, it appears that there are similarities between hadith and news. The similarity is that both are information about something or someone.In this section, the author, thereforewill explain how the true of information can be identified.In epistemological philosophy, several truth theories have been developed to test a proposition or statement (report) whether it is valid or not. According to Syamsul Anwar, there are two theories that are considered relevant, namely correspondence theory and coherence theory.

Correspondence truth theory is the most accepted theory by realist groups. This truth theory says that a statement (news) is true if the statement is in accordance with the facts; and vice versa, if it is not in accordance with the facts, then the statement is incorrect. The essence of the theory of truth correspondence is the emphasis on the equivalence of truth to reality or fact. John Hospers said,
"A proposition is true if it corresponds with a fact; for instance, if it is a fact that you have a pet leopard, and if you say that you have a pet leopard, your statement is true because it corresponds with the fact. Truth is corresponds with fact."

As for the theory of truth coherence, the benchmark of the truth of a statement (news) is its coherence with previous statements that have been accepted as truth. This theory of truth is very popular with idealist groups. Robert C. Solomon in his book,*Introducing Philosopy; A Text with Integrated Readings*, writes about definition of the theory of truth coherence,

"The coherence theory of truth: which says that a statement or a belief is true if and only if it "coheres" or ties in with other statements and beliefs."
These two theories of truth can be used to help tracking correct or true information.

Contxetualizing Method of Hadith Criticism fo Fighting Hoax
One of principles of sanad criticism was relevant is knowing definitely narrators. It means narrators of information are not unknown person (*majhul*), either its identity, personality or credibility. While sanad of hadith contains of such an unknown person, it would be considered as weak hadith. This principle may be applied while getting information through social media. In term of social media, which may be considered as narrators are media sites. While information brought by "unknown media sites", we can not directly trust without looking for identity and credibility of the media cites. In the sciences of hadith, looking for identity and credibility of narrators may be done by refering to history books on them (the books of *Rijāl and Tārīkh al-Ruwāh*). These books are convinced by Muslims as the most authoritative sources for looking identity and credibility of hadith narrators.
The question, then, is how to look for "credibility" of media sites? To do that, we are able to refer to authoritative data about list of media sites that Indonesia Press Council has. Currently they have

verified media sites in their official site, whether the cites have been verified or not. This way may effectively goes for fighting hoax because among its sources are fake media and unknown media sites have not been verified either factually or administrative. First step is visiting Indonesia Press Council's site at *dewanpers.or.id*, and then choosing word "Data Pers". After that, just write site's name will be checked in search. In case the site's name does not appear in search, it means that the site has not been verified.

In addition of sanad criticism, matan criticism is also relevant to be applied in looking for validity of infomation spreading on social media. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Adlabī, one of contemporary Muslim scholars, argued that authentic hadith should not contradicts al-Quran, hadiths have been proven authentic, reason, and history. An example of hadith which contradict al-Quran is hadith on the corpse was tortured because of the cries of his family, namely:

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ الله عَنْهُمَا عَنْهُمَا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ قَالَ الْمَيِّتُ يُعَذَّ بُ فِي قَبْرِهِ بِمَانِيحَ عَلَيْهِ

"From Ibn Umar, from his father, The Prophet Shallallaahu'alayh wa Sallam said: The deceased is tortured in his grave for the wailing done over him (weeping accompanied by shrieking and saying which show that they reject their destiny)" (Collected by Bukhari no. 1292).

Muslim scholars argued that the hadith has been ever rejected by Aishah who quoted a verse of the al-Quran, namely:

وَ لَا تَزِ رُوَا زِرَ ةُّوزِ رَ أُخْرَى

"And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another." (al-An'am: 164).

Concerning hadith which contradicts hadith which have been proven authentic, al-Adlabi explains two conditions in which the hadiths can be considered as contradictory; namely: (1) the hadiths can not be compromised, and (2) the hadits have same degree in *dalalah*. An example of hadith which contradict the hadith has been proven authentic is following hadith:

عَنْ سَلْمَانَ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ: مَنْ غَدَا إِلَى صَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ غَدَا بِرَايَةِ الْإِيمَانِ، وَمَنْ غَدَا إِلَى السُّوقِ غَدَا بِرَايَةِ إِبْلِيسَ

"It was narrated that Salman said : I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: Whoever goes to the Morning prayer first thing in the morning, he goes out with the banner of faith but whoever goes out to the marketplace first thing in the morning, he goes

out under the banner of Iblis (Satan)" (Collected by Ibnu Majah).

According to al-Adlabi, this hadith clearly contradicts other hadiths which tell the virtues of honest traders and two people who buy each other and they advise each other. For example, as the following hadith:

عن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم: « التَّاجِرُ الأَمِينُ الصَّدُوقُ الْمُسْلِمُ مَعَ الشُّهَدَاءِ – وفي رواية: مع النبيين و الصديقين و الشهداء – يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ » رواه ابن ماجه والحاكم والدارقطني وغيرهم

"From Abdullah Ibn 'Umar -may Allah be pleased with him- that Allah's messenger -peace and prayer of Allah be upon him- said, "The trustworthy, honest Muslim merchant will be with the Prophets, the honest men, and martyrs on the Day of Resurrection." (Collected by Ibnu Majah, al-Hakim, al-Daruquthni and the others).

As for the hadith that contradicts reason is hadiths about giving the name of a child by the name of Muhammad. The hadiths about this are many, among of them:

عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ ، قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، يَقُولُ : هَلِ امْرَأَةٌ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ حُبْلَى ؟ قَالَ رَجُلٌ : نَعَمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ ، امْرَأَتِي حَامِلٌ ، قَالَ : إِذَا رَجَعْتَ إِلَى بَيْتِكَ فَضَعْ يَدَكَ عَلَى بَطْنِ زَوْجَتِكَ ، وَقُلْ : بِسْمِ اللهِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسَمِّيهِ مُحَمَّدًا ، فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي بِهِ رَجُلًا .

"From Sa'ad bin AbiWaqash said: I heard the Messenger of Allah say to someone: Is your wife pregnant. The man answered: Yes, O Messenger of Allah, my wife is pregnant. Then the Prophet said: when you go back to your house, hold your wife's stomach while praying: In the name of Allah, O Allah, I actually named this child by the name of Muhammad. Then really God will give a son to you."

عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيِّبِ ، قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : لَا يَدْخُلُ الْفَقْرُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ اسْمِي.

"From Sa'id bin al-Musayyab said: The Messenger of Allah said: Poverty will not come into the house in which there is my name (Muhammad)."

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ الْبَاهِلِيِّ ، قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " مَنْ وُلِدَ لَهُ مَوْلُودٌ فَسَمَّاهُ مُحَمَّدًا تَبَرُّكًا بِهِ كَانَ هُوَ وَمَوْلُودُهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ."

"From Abu Umamah al-Bahili said: The Messenger of Allah said:who has children, then named him Muhammad because of expecting blessings, then his parents and children will go to heaven."

According to al-Adlabi, these hadiths contradicted reason, because the naming of Muhammad could not

determine the sex of the child to be born, could not prevent or invite poverty, and could not determine the fate of someone whether to go to heaven or not. However, what can determine the sex of the child is God, preventing poverty by working hard and trusting in Allah, and whether someone enters into heaven is due to faith and good deeds.

Lastly, concerning the hadith which contradicts the historical facts is a hadith about the age of the prophets when appointed as a prophet. The hadith is as follows:

ما من نبي نبئ إلاّ بعد الأربعين

"No prophet was appointed as a prophet except after the age of 40"

Ibn al-Jauzi considers this hadith to be false, because it contradicts historical facts. The historical fact is that there was the Prophet Isha who he was appointed as a Prophet at the age of 33.

What has been explained above shows one important thing thatthe core of the principles of matan criticism is measuring coherency of information with other established sources/postulates. The extent to which information may be valid depends on coherency of information with others. According to the author, this coherency may be traced through methods, i.e. clarification, confirmation, and comparison.

Method of clarification may be applied by clarifying or looking for validity of information spreading on social media to whose authority. On news that their validity was still doubted and involving prominent figure or others, for instance, we may clarify or look for the validity to them directly. This method was utilized to ensure coherency of information with fact.

Method of confirmation may be applied by tracing origininal source of citation on which information was quoted by media. An example is news on president Jokowi became the best president of Asia-Australia 2016 as reported on several days ago. Indonesian media cited the news from Bloomberg. After checking it at Bloomberg, it has been founded that the news is incorrect. There is distortion there. The fact is Bloomberg informed that Jokowi bacame a president who has most positive performance than other seven leaders who were in list of assessment. In other words, the news in Indonesian media is not confirmed by Bloomberg, the original source of the news. In this regards, method of confirmation

applied to make sure coherency of information with other established information/sources.

Method of comparison may be done by comparing news of a media with news of another media. In case the difference is found, validity of the news is reasonable to be questioned. This calls people to be wise in receiving information on social media. At least, people do not trust and sharing them without clarifying.

3 CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed method of hadith criticism for fighting hoax. It has explored the method to be contextualized in order to verify information spread on social media. The method of hadith criticism either sanad (chain of narrators) or matan (content of hadith) has contributed to this study. The first step has to be done to identify hoax is by valuating media cites contains the news. It may be conducted by contextualizing theoy of sanad criticism on unknown narrators (majhul). After that, the next step is measuring coherency of information in news by some methods, namely clarifiacation, confirmation, and comparison.

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