

An Analysis on the Public Perceptions and Awareness Towards the Issues of the Anti-Hadith in Klang Valley

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Abstract

The existence of the anti-hadith groups in Malaysia has started since 80's. Their arrival brought misleading ideologies which seemed to have poisoned the mind of civil society in Malaysia. Although these groups have been considered as haram by the National Council, it still exists in Malaysia. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the public perception towards the anti-hadith groups. This study will also examine the public understanding and awareness about these groups. This quantitative study involved 800 residents living in the Klang Valley. The survey questionnaires were distributed through three medium; delivery by hand, postal delivery or email. The findings of the study have shown that the knowledge of Muslim society in the Klang Valley regarding the anti-hadith was at a moderately low level. Negative feelings which included their perceptions and attitudes towards the anti-hadith and their behaviour were at a moderately high level. Overall, the level of the perception of Muslims against the anti-hadith is moderately high.

Keywords: The anti-Hadith Group, Perception, Awareness.

1. Introduction

In Islam, there were two main sources should be referred by every Muslim believers which were the Qur'an (Muhaidi, Mohd Al'ikhsan Ghazali, & Siti Salwa, 2015a, 2015b) and the Hadith (Al Hafiz et, al. 2016a, 2016b). Anyone who rejected both sources could be referred as an apostate. Although this problem was clear to all Muslims, there were among those who claimed Islam but did not believe in the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Hadith as the second source after the Qur'an was rejected and denied by some individuals or groups (Siti Salwa, Mohd Al'ikhsan, Mohamad Muntaha 2015). In Malaysia, the group which has rejected the hadith was known as the anti-hadith group (Ghazali & Md. Sawari, 2014). According to a report by BAHEIS (1995), the National Fatwa Council has issued a law on the anti-hadith as an illegal movement to follow. This is because the movement is already turned away from the path of religion.

However, it was said that the anti-hadith were still engaged in a secret and hidden movement in spreading their ideologies to public people (Ghazali, Md. Sawari & Yusuf, 2015). Nowadays, through easy and sophisticated technology, the internet has contributed to the success of spreading the anti-hadith ideologies. This phenomenon enhanced the existence of the anti-hadith in Malaysia. Thus, various parties in Malaysia with high awareness has implemented various measures from grassroots to eradicate the problem of the anti-hadith in Malaysia. Authorities, especially the religious authorities, whether at the central or the state level were involved in addressing the anti-hadith issue.

Although various measures have been taken, the anti-hadith groups were still exists in Malaysia until now. Therefore, this study was conducted to find out the public perceptions towards the anti-hadith. This study will also examine the public understanding and awareness about these groups.

2. Literature Review

After more than 12 centuries, the anti-hadith ideologies re-emerged almost simultaneously in several places such as in Iraq, Egypt, India and Pakistan. The issues of the anti-hadith in 19th century were believed to be the result from the propaganda brought by Western colonialisms that were actively colonizing Muslim countries at that time. They tried to raise doubts in some of Muslims' mind, especially intellectual and influential leaders (Habeeb 2004).

Besides colonizing Muslim countries, the West also spread their misguided ideologies through missionary movements and orientalist. They also managed to buy the Muslims to become developers of their ideologies. Among misguided ideologies were the ideologies on Sunnah rejection and adequate only with the Quran alone. In fact, their goal was totally to reject the religion either the Qur'an or the hadith (al-Zahrani 1992).

The anti-hadith ideologies during modern era were based on the idea of a Jew orientalist named Prof. Dr. Goldziher. He wrote a book in a Germanic language in the year of 1890M entitled *Muhammadenische Studien*. This book has gained a lot of support from the orientalist and it was accepted as *The Holy Bible*. After half of the century, Prof. J. Schacht, an orientalist who was very active in studying the hadith, has appeared. He made a conclusion that there was no authentic hadith especially the hadith regarding to law. The book contained his research was assumed to be the second *Holy Bible* after the writing by Goldziher (Muhammad Thahir 1984).

The students of Goldziher around the world have continued their teacher's ideas in developing the anti-hadith theory. These students will teach their other students including Muslim students who were willingly came to further their studies to the highest level. They were those who spread the anti-hadith teachings to Muslim countries with the slogan "The New Arrival of Islam". With this slogan, they spread their secular and anti-hadith ideologies besides manipulating Muslim university students and corrupting their beliefs (Isa Ismail & Yusof Haji Wanjon 1996).

As a result, this newly movement has spread to Islamic countries like Egypt by Dr. Ali Hassan Abdul Qadir, Dr. Taha Husain, Dr. Ahmad Amin, Rasyad Khalifah and Abu Rayyah. Rasyad Khalifa brought these teachings to the United States of America and Europe and he became the US citizen. He stated that the hadith of the Prophet S.A.W. were created by Satan, believing in the hadith meant believing in satanic words. He was the one who introduced the principle of Code 19 (Isa Ismail & Yusof Haji Wanjon 1996).

In Egypt, a man named Ismail Adham in the year of 1653H has spread leaflets on the existence of *al-Sunnah*. The leaflets explained the total amount of hadith as in today as well as the hadith collected in authentic scriptures did not have a concrete base and foundation. Hadith according to Ismail Adham was indecisive and not genuine. In defending himself, Ismail Adham has stated that he was not alone in this belief. There were many prominent figures and Islamic scholars who have similar opinion with him such as Dr. Ahmad Amin whose the name was mentioned (MAIK 1986).

In India, the British colonialist was able to buy a group who declared themselves as Islamic scholars for the purpose of preventing Muslims to take part in a holy war equipped with weapons. Among the pioneers who called out for prevention were Syed Ahmad Khan and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al-Qadyani. This ideology has spread widely until it produced another group which called out for the rejection of hadith and relied only on the Quran alone. The pioneers for this teaching were Abdullah Jakr Alwi and Ahmad al-Din al-Amrtasri. Then, Ghulam Ahmad Perwiz has come up as the founder of an organization known as "Ahlu Al-Qur'an". He has published a monthly magazine and some books to spread his ideology (al-Zahrani 1992). As a result, this movement has entered Malaysia in the early 80s which started the existence of ideologies of this movement.

3. Methodology

This quantitative study involved 800 public people living in the Klang Valley. A survey questionnaire was distributed to them through three medium; by hand delivery, postal delivery or email. The survey questionnaire on the public responses towards the anti-hadith was the main instrument used throughout this study. Questions asked were related to knowledge, feelings (perceptions and attitudes) towards the anti-hadith. It was divided into two constructs, namely; i. Muslims' knowledge about the anti-hadith which covered seven question items, ii. Negative feelings comprised the Muslims' perceptions and attitudes toward the anti-hadith which covered eight question items.

4. Findings And Discussions

A descriptive analysis have been done to answer the research questions of this study. This study has focused on the Muslims' perceptions and feelings towards the anti-hadith. For the purpose of this study, the data have been analysed by using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

4.1 The Muslims' Responses towards the anti-Hadith and the Influence of the anti-Hadith Ideologies

The first research question focused on two areas. First, to identify to what extent the Muslims' responses towards the anti-hadith was. The second area was to identify the anti-hadith ideologies that the Muslims have on their minds. The study will involve details of each category under these two research questions.

4.2 The Muslims' Responses towards the anti-Hadith

Reviews on this response consisted of two main categories which were the Muslims' knowledge and feelings. Each category has a total of 15 items. The mean score for all major categories have been obtained through the 'compute' mean scores of all sub-categories under the main categories. Overall, the analysis of the mean scores for all categories could be divided into four score interpretations of effective behavior which were high, relatively high, relatively low and low.

4.2.1 The Muslims' Knowledge about the anti-Hadith

Descriptive analyses of the categories of Muslims' knowledge about the anti-hadith are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Muslim Knowledge on Anti-Hadis Group

Code/Items	Item	Frequency & Percentages (N=800)							
		SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	SD	Level
A1	Defination anti-hadis	40 (5%)	43 (5.4%)	189 (23.6%)	295 (36.9%)	233 (29.1%)	3.8	1.074	High
A2	Identify article	171 (21.4%)	160 (20%)	401 (50.1%)	62 (7.8%)	6 (0.8%)	2.47	0.937	Low
A3	Recognize Ideologies	142 (17.8%)	159 (19.9%)	315 (39.4%)	160 (20%)	24 (3%)	2.71	1.070	Low
A4	Recognize advertisement	35 (4.4%)	68 (8.5%)	379 (47.4%)	273 (34.1%)	45 (5.6%)	3.28	0.865	High
A5	Know individual	129 (16.1%)	167 (20.9%)	367 (45.9%)	124 (15.5%)	13 (1.6%)	2.66	0.978	Low
A6	Know reject Qur'an	75 (9.4%)	166 (20.8%)	408 (51%)	95 (11.9%)	56 (7%)	2.86	0.982	Low
A7	Misguided	22 (2.8%)	52 (6.5%)	245 (30.6%)	231 (28.9%)	250 (31.3%)	3.79	1.042	High
Overall							2.50	0.588	Low

Table 1 shows three items that have moderately high mean score which were item A1 (know the definition of the anti-hadith), item A2 (identify articles of the anti-hadith) and A3 (the view that the anti-hadith is misguided). On the other hand, the other four items have a relatively low score. These items were item A2 (recognize the anti-hadith advertisement), item A3 (recognize the anti-hadith ideologies), item A4 (recognize the anti-hadith-minded) A5 (Know individual) and A6 (know that the anti-hadith also rejected the Qur'an). The table also shows that there were 528 respondents (66%) who agreed and strongly agreed that they knew the definition of the anti-hadith (A1), 189 (23.6%) responded to uncertain and the remaining 83 respondents (10.4%) were disagreed and strongly disagreed that they knew the anti-hadith definition. The item 'have read the anti-hadith advertisements' (A2) has found that 68 respondents (8.6%) agreed and strongly agreed, 401 respondents (50.1%) were not sure and 331 respondents (41.4%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. For the item 'recognize the anti-hadith ideologies' (A3), it has been found that 184 respondents (23%) agreed and strongly agreed, 315 respondents (39.4%) were not sure and 301 respondents (37.7%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. For the item 'know the articles of the anti-hadith ideologies' (A4), it has been found that 318 respondents (39.7%) agreed and strongly agreed, 379 respondents (47.4%) were not sure and 103 respondents (12.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. For the item 'recognize the anti-hadith-minded individual' (A5), it has been found that 137 respondents (17.1%) agreed and strongly agreed, 367 respondents (45.9%) were not sure and 296 respondents (37%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. The item 'know that the anti-hadith also rejected the Qur'an' (A6), it was found that 151 respondents (18.9%) agreed and strongly agreed, 408 respondents (51%) were not sure and 241 respondents (30.2%) disagreed and strongly agreed. For the item 'the anti-hadith is misguided' (A7), it was found that 481 respondents (60.2%) agreed and strongly agreed, 245 respondents (30.6%) were not sure and 74 respondents (9.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Knowledge is fundamental to all things. Perfection of life in this world and in the hereafter depends on knowledge. Knowledge is essential for a servant to obey the order of Allah s.w.t. The importance and advantages of knowledge are something clear in Islam. Many Qur'anic verses and the hadiths of the Prophet s.a.w. clarify the matter. Allah s.w.t. says (Al-Qur'an, al-Mujadalah 58:11):

Meaning: O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, (spread out and) make room:

(ample) room will Allah provide for you. And when you are told to rise up, rise up: Allah will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted Knowledge. And Allah is well-acquainted with all you do.

This verse according to al-Qurtubi (1988), he stated that the rewards given to those who believe and knowledgeable are rewards in the hereafter, and glory in the world. Believers and knowledgeable people are appointed to a higher position than those who do not believe and do not have knowledge. The rating is not the same among those who learnt with those who do not learn, explained again by Allah s.w.t (Al-Qur'an, al-Zumar 39.9):

Meaning: Say: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition".

People who know their position is different from those who do not know as they utilize their knowledge into practice. Those who do not utilize their knowledge into practice, their position are similar to the position of people who do not know (al-Qurtubi 1988). Rasulullah s.a.w. has also stated that the benevolence of a person is dependent on his knowledge. He said: The best of them in the day of jahiliyyah is the best of them in the period of Islam if they understand (about knowledge).¹

Besides elevating man to a higher position, knowledge is also necessary to save him from Allah's prohibitions. According to Sidek Baba (t.th), understanding and appreciating knowledge in managing oneself will provide human with inner strength and interaction with factors outside themselves will be established securely. Hassan Langgulong (1987) also emphasized on the importance of internalizing or appreciating knowledge and changes in inner self as the most important factor for the process of establishing a high quality character of a person. Without knowledge, one is easily slipping into things forbidden by Allah s.w.t. including conspiring with the wrong movement of Islam.

Regarding the Muslims in relation to knowledge about the anti-hadith, this study has found that more than half (66%) of the respondents acknowledged that they recognized the anti-hadith in terms of its definition. While the remaining (44%) admitted that they did not know or were not sure with the definition. During data collection process, the researcher has met with some people who did not know about the anti-hadith. Their ignorance about the anti-hadith in general clearly showed that they also did not recognize it in details such as knowing whose leaders were behind this movement for instance, Kassim Ahmad.

The religious authorities have disseminated information that the anti-hadith was still active and engaged in secret (Jakim t.th.), the respond of 68 respondents (8.6%) that they have read advertisements or publicity which invited them to attend the anti-hadith programs reinforced this assumption. Their web sites continued to function through new articles available on the web sites. Such sites gained their popularity continuously through articles submitted or e-mailed by their visitors. The researcher has met with two men who have followed discussions organized by the anti-hadith. According to them, the anti-hadith were having their discussions more actively from house to house. They also spread their movements widely to the workplace whether at the offices, companies, governmental departments or private sectors.

The anti-hadith have carried out their propaganda in private. This study have found that their activities were not known by almost all respondents. According to those who have been involved with the anti-hadith discussions, they said that this movement did not choose everyone as their target. The anti-hadith began their teachings by luring certain people with certain issues that have been hold by the anti-hadith. If they found that the person has a tendency to favour them, they will influence their thoughts into the mind of that person.

The respondents' knowledge regarding the definition of the anti-hadith which was at a moderately low level was similar to their level of knowledge on the anti-hadith ideologies. The study has revealed that only a few of them acknowledged the anti-hadith. Most of them did not know the anti-hadith ideologies. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents also could not recognize the anti-hadith articles in books, newspapers or local magazines. Most respondents also did not recognize individuals with the anti-hadith thought. During the study, the researcher has asked some men whether they recognized Kassim Ahmad or not. The result has shown that many of them did not recognize him.

The researcher believed that Muslims in the Klang Valley were still confused with the actual position of the anti-hadith. They were unable to acknowledge the fact that the anti-hadith has also rejected the Qur'an. Through this study, the researcher found that only a few of the respondents were able to do so. Even more surprising and frustrating, less than half of the respondents were unable to express the anti-hadith's fault. Similarly, there were among the Muslims who argued that Kassim Ahmad was actually not gone astray. This opinion has been agreed by Astora Handshake (Mingguan Malaysia, June 15, 2001).

¹ Al-Bukhari, *sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.6, p.446 and Muslim, *sahih Muslim*, vol.15, p.132.

4.2.2 The Muslims' Feelings towards the anti-Hadith

Descriptive analyses for the category of the Muslims' feelings towards the anti-hadith are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Muslims' feelings towards the anti-hadith Group

Code Items	Itema	Frequency & Percentages (N=800)							Level
		SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	SD	
A8	Prevented	16 (2%)	62 (7.8%)	174 (21.8%)	213 (26.6%)	335 (41.9%)	3.99	1.062	High
A9	Not Improved Knowledge	11 (1.4%)	48 (6.0%)	227 (28.4%)	192 (24.0%)	332 (40.3%)	3.96	1.024	High
A10	Endangers	30 (3.8%)	31 (3.9%)	153 (19.1%)	207 (25.9%)	379 (47.4%)	4.09	1.073	Very High
A11	Prohibiting	18 (2.3%)	23 (2.9%)	127 (15.9%)	217 (27.1%)	415 (51.9%)	4.24	0.970	Very High
A12	Not affected	11 (1.4%)	8 (1.0%)	125 (15.6%)	308 (38.5%)	348 (43.5%)	4.22	0.842	Very High
A13	Concern	71 (8.9%)	197 (24.6%)	168 (21.0%)	170 (21.3%)	194 (24.3%)	3.27	1.308	High
A14	Not Sympathize	56 (7.0%)	105 (13.1%)	198 (24.8%)	146 (18.3%)	295 (36.9%)	3.65	1.284	High
A15	Report	14 (1.8%)	40 (5.0%)	314 (39.3%)	275 (34.4%)	157 (19.6%)	3.65	0.909	High
Overall							3.28	0.694	High

Table 2 shows that there were three items which have higher mean scores which were A10 (the anti-hadith endangers Muslims), A11 (prohibiting the anti-hadith) and A12 (will not be affected by the anti-hadith). The other 5 items have moderately high mean scores. These items were item A8 (the anti-hadith teaching should be prevented), item A9 (the anti-hadith thoughts do not improve knowledge), item A13 (concern on the issue of the-anti hadith), item A14 (do not sympathize with the anti-hadith) and A15 (prepare for a report).

The table also shows that a large number of respondents agreed (26.6%) and strongly agreed (41.9%) to hinder the freedom of the anti-hadith in spreading their ideologies. On the other hand, some of them disagreed (7.8%) and strongly disagreed (2%). The remaining (21.8%) were not sure. For item A9 (the anti-hadith thoughts do not enhance knowledge), it was found that a large number of respondents have agreed (24%) and strongly agreed (40.3%). Besides that, some of them disagreed (6%) and strongly disagreed (1.4%). The remaining (28.4%) were not sure. For item CA10 (the anti-hadith endangers people), it was found that a large number of respondents agreed (25.9%) and strongly agreed (47.4%). Some of them however disagreed (3.9%) and strongly disagreed (3.8%) and the remaining (19.1%) were not sure. For item C31 (efforts to curb the spread of the anti-hadith), it was found that most respondents agreed (27.1%) and strongly agreed (51.9%). Some of them disagreed (2.9%) and strongly disagreed (2.3%) and the remaining (15.9%) were not sure. For item C32 (not affected by the anti-hadith) most respondents have agreed (38.5%) and strongly agreed (43.5%). Some of them disagreed (1%) and strongly disagreed (1.4%). The remaining (15.6%) were not sure. For item A13 (concern on the issue of the anti-hadith) almost half of the respondents agreed (21.3%) and strongly agreed (24.3%). Less than half of them disagreed (24.6%) and strongly disagreed (8.9%). The remaining (21%) were not sure. For item A14 (do not sympathize with the anti-hadith), more than half of the respondents agreed (18.3%) and strongly agreed (36.9%). A few of them disagreed (13.1%) and strongly disagreed (7%) while the remaining (24.8%) were not sure. For item A15 (preparing for a report towards the anti-hadith), more than half of the respondents agreed (34%) and strongly agreed (19.6%). Some of them disagreed (5.0%) and strongly disagreed (1.8%) while the remaining (39.3%) were not sure.

A study on the feelings of the Muslims towards the anti-hadith meant their negative feelings towards the group. These negative feelings included Muslims' perceptions and attitudes towards the anti-hadith. According to this study, the respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards the anti-hadith were in a moderately high level although they somewhat did not know the anti-hadith. The relationship between Muslims' knowledge about the anti-hadith and their negative feelings towards this group although significant ($p = 0.00$, $R = 0.241$), was very weak.

According to this study, more than half of the respondents viewed that the anti-hadith should not be given the freedom to deliver their teachings. However, there were still few among the respondents who agreed that the anti-hadith should be given the freedom to teach and they acknowledged that the existence of the anti-hadith thoughts enhanced Islamic knowledge. The anti-hadith ideologies were not considered as knowledge in a real sense. Knowledge, according to Ibn Qayyim r.h.m. (1991) is the accuracy of understanding and a light from Allah s.w.t to the heart of his servant to enable him to distinguish between true and false, right and wrong, guidance and lost and between detour and guidance aided by the right intentions, trying to find the truth and piety in a clear or concealed situation. He also stated that the destroyers of knowledge are those who are following lusts and desires, choosing world above anything, looking for people's admiration and leaving piety. Therefore, the anti-hadith ideologies which do not come from Allah s.w.t. and are not something that could be used as a guidance to identify the right and the wrong should not be considered as knowledge in a real sense. The existence of the anti-hadith ideologies is not considered as enhancing knowledge.

High negative perceptions of the respondents towards the anti-hadith were clearly shown when most of the respondents agreed that the anti-hadith endangered Muslims. However, there were still few respondents who did not acknowledge its harm. Therefore, they also disagreed with any effort to stop the spread of the anti-hadith ideologies. There were only a few of the respondents, who sympathized towards the anti-hadith. Similar attitude was shown through e-mail sent by visitors of the e-reading website. There were also respondents who mourned because the website was opposed by many parties. They also challenged Islamic scholars, religious teachers and the Arab-speaking intellectuals to answer the challenge made by the web author to publish a translation of the Qur'an without including any hadith.

From Islamic point of view, though sympathizing or feeling pity is praiseworthy attitudes, they could not be practiced in all circumstances. Being sympathetic towards something wrong is wrong. There is no sympathy or compromise towards things that are wrong and misleading. The Prophet himself said, "If Fatimah Muhammad has stolen something, for sure I will cut off her hand" (Bukhari).

The study found that most respondents have a great positive attitude in which they believed that they would not be affected by the anti-hadith ideologies. High commitment in everything is needed as a first step to achieve what we want. Hence, Islam teaches its followers to correct their intentions at the beginning of doing any action. Therefore, Muslims must be willing and determined to be a true Muslim as well as intend to avoid all malpractices including being influenced by the teachings of heresy. Intention and determination in early stage are also helpful to increase one's reward. The Prophet s.a.w. has said (Bukhari):

Verily Allah s.w.t. replies every good and bad thing that one made. Anyone who intends to do good and does not do it, Allah will give him a reward. If he intends to do good and then he actually does it, Allah will give him ten to 700 rewards and even doubled. Similarly, anyone who intends to do bad thing and does not do it, Allah will give him a reward. If he intends to do bad thing and then actually does it, Allah will give him a penalty.

Although their attitudes have shown high probability of not being influenced by the anti-hadith, unfortunately more than half of the respondents were still not interested in any anti-hadith issue. They chose to be neutral, did not want to get involved in questioning the anti-hadith. This may reflect that the Muslims in the Klang Valley were individualistic and not sensitive to other people's problems. They just wanted to save themselves from being influenced by the anti-hadith without concerning on what happened to other Muslims. This assumption was further strengthened through the result which has shown that less than half (46.1%) of the respondents were not willing to make any report to the authorities about the anti-hadith. The researcher's conversation with JAKIM, JAWI and JAIS officers has proven on the negative attitudes of the Muslims. The officers said that there were no recent reports made on the anti-hadith movement. All reports were old and recorded in files in the office, while the anti-hadith was still actively engaged in newspaper, magazine and internet.

By having a high or moderately high level of negative feelings towards the anti-hadith, it does not necessarily mean that they could save themselves from the anti-hadith. Through cross testing between feelings and the influence of the anti-hadith ideologies, it has been found that a few (101 respondents or 14.6%) of the total respondents (692 respondents) who were having negative feelings at a moderate or high level were influenced by the anti-hadith ideologies.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the Muslims' perceptions towards the anti-hadith were their knowledge on the anti-hadith, negative feelings which included their perceptions and attitudes towards the anti-hadith and Muslims' behaviour towards the anti-hadith. This study has found that the Muslims' knowledge in the Klang Valley about the anti-hadith was in a moderately low level. Their negative feelings which included their perceptions and attitudes towards the anti-hadith and their behaviour were in

a moderately high level. Overall, the Muslims' perceptions on the anti-hadith were in a moderately high level.

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