
CONCEPTUALIZING LIVING QUR'AN AND HADITH

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Abstract. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the study of the Qur'an and hadith beyond the emphasize on the texts, in particular, among the students and scholars of both fields in Indonesia. Terms related to these studies such as living Qur'an and hadith emerge. A few of the Qur'an and hadith scholars attempt to discuss the detailed meanings and usages of the terms. Furthermore, many of them try to implement these terms in their studies. However, the elaborations related to the origin of the living Qur'an and hadith terms, as well as their conceptualization are few. Thus, this study aims to review previous literature, discuss the origin of the living Qur'an and hadith terms, and develop the conceptualization of these terms.

Keywords. Concept, Living Qur'an, Living Hadith

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the study of the Qur'an and hadith, particularly in Indonesia has taken a significant turn. Previously, researchers of this field rely on the textual existence of the Qur'an and hadith. Their concern was for instance, to the manuscript of the Qur'an and hadith including their transmission, compilation, and canonization. Other studies were related to the texts of the Qur'an and hadith from its variant readings, translations, philological studies, analytical or thematic studies, as well as sciences related to the Qur'an and hadith. In addition, the focus of the researchers in this field was on the interpretation of the Qur'anic and hadith texts.

Recently, the scholars and researchers also give attention to the study of the Qur'an and hadith beyond their textual used, namely living Qur'an and hadith. University thesis at State University of

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Sunan Kalijaga shows that the study of living Qur'an and hadith has been increasing since 2015. Approximately, there are more than 150 titles on living Qur'an and hadith studies from 2015 to 2023. Similarly, about 200 theses related to the Qur'an and Hadith studies are on living Qur'an and hadith since the same year. Based on data derived from State Islamic University of Saifuddin Zuhri's library website, there were 5 numbers of thesis on living Qur'an written by the first graduate students of *Ilmu al-Qur'an and Tafsir* (The science of the Qur'an and Tafsir) bachelor's degree department in 2019. This number declined in 2020 due to covid pandemic. However, the number growth since 2021 until June of 2024 (See figure 1 below). A study conducted by Wahyuni about the development of living Qur'an studies among the students of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh also indicated this fact (See figure 2 below). Another study done by Assidiqi among the students of *Ilmu al-Qur'an and Tafsir* department at State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta over the period of three years from 2017 to 2019 showed a substantial growth of living Qur'an study. According to Darmalaksana et al., the turn to the study of living Qur'an and hadith arose out of the need of higher education institutions to carry out knowledge integration between Islamic and other sciences such as social.

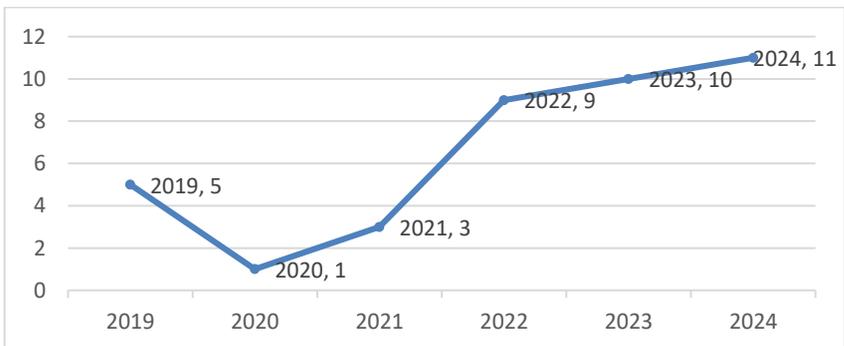


FIGURE 1. Bachelor's degree thesis at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zubri from 2019 to 2024

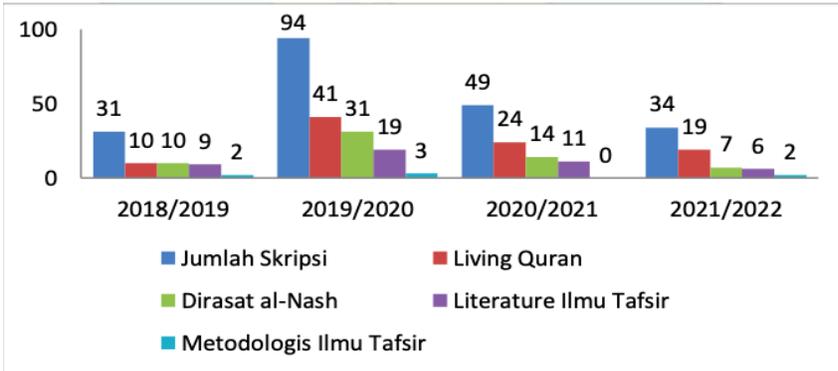


FIGURE 2. Bachelor's degree thesis at UIN Ar-Raniry banda Aceh from 2018 to 2022

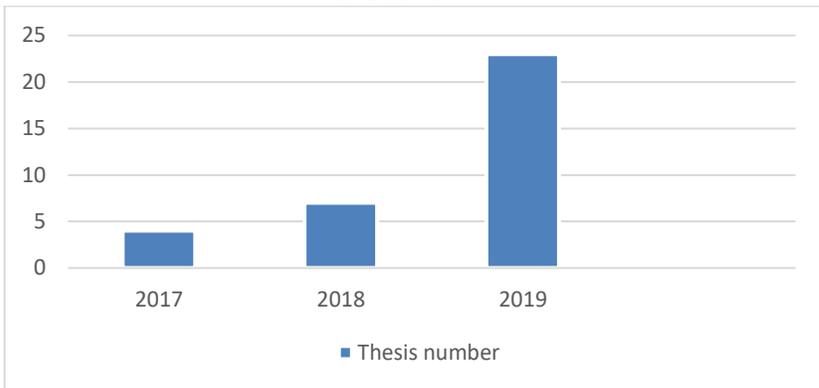


FIGURE 3. Bachelor's degree thesis at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta from 2017 to 2019

The discussion regarding living Qur'an and hadith study is believed to appear for the first time among the faculty members of Qur'anic and Hadith studies at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Religious Studies, and Islamic thought of Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic Institute in 2005. Since then, living Qur'an and hadith terms become key words in many articles, research, and literatures. What did previous literatures discuss about living Qur'an and hadith? What counts as living Qur'an and hadith? What do the terms living Qur'an and hadith mean exactly? By reviewing the studies that have been published related to the study of living Qur'an and hadith, what are the parameters of this study? What is the conceptualization of living Qur'an and hadith terms?

LIVING QUR'AN AND HADITH TERMS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned above, in Indonesia, the living Qur'an and hadith terms emerged for the first time among the scholars of this field, namely Forum Komunikasi Tafsir-Hadis se Indonesia (Indonesian Tafsir-Hadith Communication Forum) at State University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in January 2005. However, a study on living Qur'an was found before. The study was written by a university student at IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin Kalimantan titled "Fungsi Ayat-ayat al-Qur'an sebagai Syifa' (Studi Kasus pada Masyarakat Kuin Selatan Kec. Banjar Utara Kotamadya Banjarmasin)". After the informal discussion, in the same month, January 2005, Forum Komunikasi Tafsir-Hadis se Indonesia held a national conference with the topic "Living Qur'an: Al-Qur'an dalam Kehidupan Sehari-hari" at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. A few days later, some news articles were written on this topic such as written by Hamam Faizin on Jawa Pos newspaper entitled "Living Qur'an: Sebuah Tawaran" on 10 January 2005 and by Islah Gusmian with the heading "Al-Qur'an dalam Pergumulan Muslim Indonesia".

The first book discussed the living Qur'an and hadith terms was probably an edited book called "Metodologi Penelitian Living Qur'an dan Hadis" (May 2007). The book was a compilation of some articles resulted from a "Metodologi Living Qur'an dan Hadis" workshop conducted by Tafsir Hadith department of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The contributors of this book were lecturers at the department and the compilation became most cited book in the study of living Qur'an and hadith. In this book, one of the contributors, Mansyur, argued that living Qur'an came from the phenomenon of the Qur'an in everyday life, namely the real meaning and function of the Qur'an that is understood and experienced by Muslim communities. Mansyur indicated that living Qur'an study does not only cover what regarded as "Islamic", but it encompasses all social phenomena related to the Qur'an (pp. 5-9). Similarly, Yusuf in this edited book said that the study of living Qur'an does not look for religious truth through the Qur'an or provide judgment on certain religious groups whether their interactions with the Qur'an are considered correct or not, but this study focuses on social phenomena related to the Qur'an. For instance, the phenomena of reciting the Qur'an in different places on various occasions among Muslim

communities, memorizing the whole or some Qur'anic verses, using Qur'anic verses as amulets and medications, writing Qur'anic verses on building walls, invitation letters, stickers, greeting cards, and others (pp. 42-50).

As for the study of living hadith, I found some descriptions proposed by two contributors of the edited book above. The first discussion provided by Suryadilaga. He concluded that living hadith study focuses on community traditions based on hadith (p. 115). Najwah in another part of this book added that living hadith includes research on a social phenomenon related to the Prophet Muhammad or his hadiths with a clear source or is believed to exist. On the contrary, the social phenomena in which people do not base their practices on hadith texts, they are not included in the scope of living hadith studies (p. 134). Faisal in his book "Living Hadis Versus Dead Hadis" stated that living hadith study includes all practices found among Muslim societies which are believed to be originated from hadith. He argued that the hadith can be interpreted in many ways. Nevertheless, as long as the practices produced by the various interpretations are in line with Islamic norms, they can be regarded as diversity of hadith practices (Faisal 2022, p. 45).

Another book I found is written by Hasbillah (2019) "Ilmu Living Qur'an-Hadis: Ontologi, Epistemologi, dan Aksiologi". Hasbillah mentioned that living Qur'an and hadith study means an effort to obtain solid and convincing knowledge of a culture, practice, tradition, ritual, thought or behavior in society that is inspired by Qur'anic verses or Prophetic hadith. Hasbillah's understanding of the living Qur'an and hadith is not very much different from his predecessors. Nevertheless, one of his comments in this book implicitly indicated that the study of living Qur'an and hadith should not contradict with the the Qur'an and hadith values. For instance, he commented on the book written by Geoghegan "The Living Qur'an: In Word and Images", and said "Unfortunately, this book is still stereotypical, does not reflect the scientific study of the living Qur'an-hadith. His content depicts great sentiment towards the Qur'an, so he displays the Qur'an in inappropriate words and images" (p. 52). Rafiq (2021) in his study identified three expressions related to the meaning of living Qur'an: living the Qur'an, lived Qur'an, and the living Qur'an. The first expression "Refers to an act of a subject who makes the Qur'an alive or who enlivens the Qur'an. In this context, there is

a subject, namely humans, who actively makes the Qur'an, the object, alive through their understanding or through their practices." This understanding of living Qur'an is closely related to the way Muslim practice the Qur'an based on their 'correct' understanding of its text. The second expression "Gives more emphasis on the Qur'an as an object, which receives an act that makes it alive (...) In this context, the living character of the Qur'an comes from a subject external to the Qur'an, not from the Qur'an itself." The third expression means that the Qur'an does not only regarded as a passive object that is alive through the understanding and practices of Muslim community, instead, it participates in defining meanings and shaping the community's practices (pp. 471-472). Rafiq argued that the third expression is able to contain the character of the Qur'an as a subject and object. This study covers cultural phenomena in which humans accept and interact with the Qur'an. In addition, it concerns not only with textual forms of the Qur'an, but with its function as scripture among its community (p. 474).

The previous literature give insights into the definition or meaning of the living Qur'an and hadith study. Many of them agree that living Qur'an and hadith study concerns social phenomena related to the Qur'an and hadith among Muslim society. This study does not look at the texts of the Qur'an and hadith. However, a few of them such as Hasbillah indicated implicitly that the study of living Qur'an and hadith should not contradict with the values of both texts.

FROM LIVED RELIGION TO LIVED (LIVING) QUR'AN AND HADITH

In this section, I would like to attempt another way to conceptualize living Qur'an and hadith. As Ali (2015) argued the study of living Qur'an and hadith is part of the study of lived religion, practical religion, popular religion, lived Islam. This study aims to explore how humans and society understand and practice their religion without only focusing on religious elites (thinkers, religious authority figures, preachers, and others) (p. 50).

Scholars use various terms to refer to lived religion such as everyday religion, popular religion, vernacular religion, as well as living religion. Referring to Ammerman (2016) and Bender (2003), Knibbe and Helena pointed out that lived religion is focusing on the way religion is practiced, the way it is encountered and experienced in

various contexts, whether official or unofficial, sacred, secular, or religiously neutral. Lived religion emphasizes on the activities and interpretations of individuals (2020, p. 159). It is an approach to study what people consider as religious or spiritual. Furthermore, Knibbe and Helena indicated that lived religion includes all religious phenomena such as practices, beliefs, rituals, norms and values, doctrines, objects, and institutions. McGuire (2008) said that lived religion means distinguishing the practices of religious individual from the beliefs and practices as prescribed in texts (p. 12). However, Ammerman, warned that lived religion is not only limited to study ordinary people, private setting, everyday places, mundane activities, and everyday life, but it encompasses also the study of religious experts and what happen in the context of religious institutions, public life, religious places, and in particular events (2007, p. 5; 2016, pp. 86-88). We place the study of lived religion in two big pictures: In all social practices and the different areas and situations that the practices take place. Therefore, we have to pay attention to the theories about the way people act in social world. In addition, we should think that practices in different places are influenced by cultures and laws, so they may differ from one place or person to another (Ammerman 2021, p. 12).

Now, we turn to lived, living, or everyday Islam. For Reinhart (2020), lived Islam is always local Islam. The contexts people live always shape their practices including their expressions related to Islam. He said, “Elements unique to localities, elements unique to scholars, and elements shared among diverse Muslim groups together make up the Lived Islam of a given community.” (p. 10). Marsden (2005) stated that living Islam focuses on the study of what means to live a Muslim life. It is included in the study of the anthropology of Islam (p. 8). Regarding the study of the anthropology of Islam, Asad argued that Islam is a discursive tradition which relates itself to the founding texts of the Qur’an and hadith. A practice is part of Islam when it is authorized by Islamic discursive tradition and is taught by an *alim*, a *khatib*, a *sufi syaikh*, or an untutored parent (Asad 2009, pp. 20-21). Islam is always being reshaped in different contexts.

The above description about lived religion and Islam revealed some theoretical foundations for the study of living Qur’an and hadith. First, living Qur’an and hadith is a concept, a field of study, an approach, or all. We can use various terms to refer to the study of

living Qur'an and hadith such as lived Qur'an and hadith, living Qur'an and hadith, or everyday Qur'an and hadith. Second, the substance of living Qur'an and hadith is to study the social phenomena and expressions related to the Qur'an and hadith such as practices, beliefs, rituals, norms, objects, institutions. Third, the study of living Qur'an and hadith encompasses ordinary people as well as elites, within or outside religious institutions, in public or private settings, mundane acts or on a particular occasion. Fourth, the diversity of living Qur'an and hadith expressions is part of Islamic discursive tradition. They are Islamic when they are authorized by Islamic discursive tradition and taught by an *alim*, a *kebatib*, a *sufi syaikh*, or an untutored parent as Asad argued. Fifth, the etic and emic perspectives should be considered in the study of living Qur'an and hadith. The etic perspective focuses on the external and objective perspective, while emic perspective refers to insider and subjective perspectives.

CONCLUSION

The previous literature give insights into the definition or meaning of the living Qur'an and hadith study which is the study beyond the Qur'anic and hadith texts. It studies social phenomena related to the Qur'an and hadith among Muslim society. Nevertheless, a few authors indicated implicitly that the study of living Qur'an and hadith should not contradict with the values of both texts. Considering the study of living Qur'an and hadith as part of the study of lived Islam as well as lived religion, I made some notes on the concept of living Qur'an and hadith. First, living Qur'an and hadith is a concept, a field of study, and an approach. We can use various terms to refer to the study of living Qur'an and hadith such as lived Qur'an and hadith, living Qur'an and hadith, or everyday Qur'an and hadith. Second, the substance of living Qur'an and hadith is to study the social phenomena and expressions related to the Qur'an and hadith such as practices, beliefs, rituals, norms, objects, institutions. Third, the study of living Qur'an and hadith encompasses ordinary people as well as elites, within or outside religious institutions, in public or private settings, mundane acts or on a particular occasion. Fourth, the diversity of living Qur'an and hadith expressions is part of Islamic discursive tradition. They are Islamic when they are authorized by Islamic discursive tradition and taught by an *alim*, a *kebatib*, a *sufi syaikh*,

or an untutored parent as Asad argued. Fifth, the etic and emic perspectives should be considered in the study of living Qur'an and hadith. The etic perspective focuses on the external and objective perspective, while emic perspective refers to insider and subjective perspectives. What is left? This short introduction to the concept of living Qur'an and hadith should be further discussed and developed including how to conduct the living Qur'an and hadith research.

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