
Hadith Criticism from the Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Education: Rereading the Hadith on a Wife's Prostration to Her Husband in Muslim Family Culture

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Article Info

Article history:

Received: November 10, 2025

Revised: February 23, 2026

Accepted: March 30, 2026

Published: June 30, 2026

Keywords:

Hadith Criticism; Contemporary Islamic Education; Muslim Family Culture; Gender Justice.

ABSTRACT

This paper revisits the hadith of the wife prostrating herself to her husband in the light of Contemporary Islamic Education and Muslim family culture. This hadith is often cited in marriage sermons, family religious gatherings, and premarital guidance, but is often taken literally, which can reinforce unequal marital relations. This study uses qualitative library research, including takhrij al-hadith, i'tibar al-sanad, criticism of the sanad, criticism of the matan, and contextual analysis. The results indicate that the hadith reported by al-Tirmidhi is hasan li dhatihi: its chain is connected, most of its narrators are trustworthy, and the weakness of Muhammad ibn 'Amr is supported by other routes. The Matan analysis shows that the wording is hypothetical and not a literal command to the wives to prostrate, but an affirmation that prostration is only for Allah. This study emphasizes the significance of hadith literacy as a basis for establishing a Muslim family on the principles of tawhid, mutual responsibility, mutual respect, and justice in the discourse and practice of Islamic education today.

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Please cite this article in APA Style as:

Husain, R. T., Wantu, H. M., Arif, M., Kaawoan, S., Laiya, F. N., Labaso, S., & Syaadah, R. T. (2026). Hadith Criticism from the Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Education: Rereading the Hadith on a Wife's Prostration to Her Husband in Muslim Family Culture. *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya*, 43(1), (82-97). <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v43i1.51153>

1. INTRODUCTION

Hadith plays a central role in shaping Islamic values, ethics, and religious practices among Muslims. Hadith is the second main source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an. It is not only a source of legal and moral guidance but also an important reference in both formal and non-formal Islamic education. Hadith is often used in the development of religious understanding in the family life framework on the husband-wife relationships, leadership in the family, responsibility, obedience, affection, and harmony in the household (Aziz, 2021; Darmalaksana, 2020). Thus, the understanding of hadiths by Muslim societies plays an important role in the formation of religious culture in Muslim families.

In the context of Contemporary Islamic Education, the family is not only the smallest social unit but also the earliest and most basic space for value education. Islamic values like faith, worship, morality, responsibility, communication, and social relations are first introduced, practiced, and internalized within the family. Islamic education in the family occurs not only through verbal instructions but also through relational styles, religious advice, exemplary behavior, and the interpretation of religious texts by family members. Thus, hadiths related to household life are important in shaping the educational culture of Muslim families (Nurhayati, 2020).

One of the famous hadiths that has been widely circulated among Muslim communities is the hadith regarding a wife's prostration to her husband. It says, "If I were to command anyone to prostrate to another, I would have commanded a wife to prostrate to her husband" (narrated by al-Tirmidhi). This hadith is frequently quoted in sermons on marriage, family circles, premarital guidance, home-life advice, religious lectures, and Islamic marriage-education literature. The popularity of the hadith is proof that it is not only available as a normative text in the hadith collection but also alive in the religious culture of Muslim society. It helps to shape people's understanding of the position of the husband, the role of the wife, the meaning of obedience, respect, and ethical relations in the household (Hakim, 2023).

But this hadith is often taken literally and partially in socio-religious practice. The phrase "a wife prostrating to her husband" is overemphasized and assumes that the husband-wife relations are naturally hierarchical and that the wife is in a subordinate position. As a matter of fact, one cannot understand a hadith by quoting its literal words. A hadith should be studied by using proper scholarly tools such as *takhrij al-hadith*, *i'tibar al-sanad*, *sanad criticism*, *matan criticism*, and contextual analysis of its educational values. If not read with adequate hadith literacy, religious texts may be disproportionately utilized and may reinforce family relational cultures that are inconsistent with the Islamic principles of justice, compassion, and public welfare (Rahman, 2021).

In this sense, Contemporary Islamic Education has an important role in developing a critical, contextual, and transformative understanding of hadith. Islamic education must not only deliver religious texts normatively but also foster the ability of learners and Muslim communities to grasp the quality, context, ethical message, and social implications of those texts. This is why Hadith literacy is a cornerstone of Islamic education, as it allows Muslims to differentiate between textual quotation and responsible understanding. Through this form of literacy, hadith is not only memorized as religious proof but also forms the foundation for character building, ethical consciousness, and the development of a just family culture.

Scholarship on hadith and on husband-wife relations can be divided into three broad contending positions. The first is a feminist-critical reading that sees popular hadiths on women as texts that run the risk of reproducing patriarchal authority when transmitted uncritically. This position is represented by Nurhayati (2020), who argues that the literal teaching of hadiths on women produces gender-biased constructions in Islamic education. Extending this line, Hidayati (2022) examines gender discourse in the hadith interpretation and calls for a critical reading of women's position in Islamic family law. The strength of this position is its sensitivity to the social effects of textual practice; its limitation, however, is that it often privileges gender critique over the classical apparatus of hadith criticism (*takhrij*, *naqd al-sanad*, *naqd al-matan*), leaving it open to the objection that it bypasses the very tools through which hadiths are conventionally evaluated.

The second position is a traditional-apologetic reading that defends the authoritative status of the household hadiths and emphasizes the structure of obedience they seem to prescribe. This position is very close to classical hadith methodology and to established formulations of marital ethics, but tends to treat the *matan* literally and acontextually, with little attention to the rhetorical structure of the wording or to the social conditions in which the hadith is taught and received. It is unable to distinguish between hyperbolic or hypothetical expressions and normative commands, and thus legitimizes asymmetrical family relations, which is its blind spot from the perspective of Islamic education.

A third, more recent position is a *maqasid*-reformist reading that seeks to mediate between the first two by combining classical hadith criticism with a *maqasid al-shari'ah* orientation toward justice, mercy, and family welfare. Rahman (2021) elaborates this orientation in terms of the concept of hadith literacy, which requires hadiths to be accepted only after the verification of the quality of *sanad* and historical context. Munir (2023) extends it to the realm of premarital education. He argues for the contextualization of household-ethics hadiths so that the Islamic teachings are not conveyed in a one-sided manner. This position does not fall into the methodological thinness of pure gender critique or the textual literalism of the apologetic reading, but it has been voiced more strongly at the methodological level than at the level of concrete case studies of individual popular hadiths.

This third stream is the context of this present study and aims to address the void left by all three. Its argument is grounded in the full apparatus of classical hadith criticism, not solely on gender critique, in contravention of the feminist-critical reading. It contends that the traditional-apologetic interpretation, that the linguistic and *matan* analysis does not in fact prove that the hadith about a wife prostrating herself to her husband establishes a normative command. And in extension of the *maqasid*-reformist reading, it presents a worked example of how a specific popular hadith can be re-read through the combined lens of hadith criticism and Contemporary Islamic Education, thus translating the *maqasid*-based method into a concrete model for the educational culture of Muslim families.

There is still an academic gap despite the three positions described above. None of them has yet examined a single popular hadith about husband-wife relations in a manner that uses the classical apparatus of hadith criticism, considers the linguistic structure of the *matan*, and follows how the hadith functions in the quotidian educational culture of Muslim families. In other words, it is still necessary to relate hadith criticism to Contemporary Islamic Education through concrete textual analysis, especially to examine how popular hadiths are understood, taught, and used to shape the culture of husband-wife relations in Muslim society (Suryani, 2022).

This study adopts an integrative approach that bridges Hadith criticism and Contemporary Islamic Education to address this academic gap. The hadith about a wife's prostration to her husband is examined not only from the aspect of the validity of the sanad and matan, but also as a religious text that lives in the Muslim family culture. This approach does not aim to dismiss the hadith as a source of Islamic teaching. But rather, it seeks to ensure that the hadith is understood proportionally, contextualized, and according to the basic principles of Islamic education, which consist of the formation of human beings who are faithful, ethical, just, responsible, and able to build beneficial social relations.

The novelty of this research that attempts in reading the hadith of the wife's prostration to her husband through two layers of analysis. Firstly, it uses the hadith criticism of *takhrij*, *i'tibar al-sanad*, *naqd al-sanad*, and *naqd al-matan* to evaluate the quality and basic meaning of the hadith. Secondly, it employs the lens of Contemporary Islamic Education to analyze the implications of the hadith to the educational culture of Muslim families, especially in the construction of ethical, reciprocal, and just husband-wife relations. Therefore, this hadith is discussed not only in terms of legal or marital ethics but also as part of value education within the culture of the contemporary Muslim family.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the quality of the sanad and matan of the hadith of a wife prostrating to her husband as narrated by al-Tirmidhi, find the values of Islamic education contained in the hadith, and formulate implications for the development of contemporary Islamic family education. The contribution of this study is to strengthen hadith literacy in Islamic education, develop a more contextual understanding of husband-wife relations, and emphasize that Muslim family education should be built on the principles of *tawhid*, responsibility, mutual respect, compassion, and justice.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research. This approach was selected because the primary object of the study is a hadith text concerning a wife's prostration to her husband, which requires an in-depth examination of both its authenticity of transmission and its educational meaning within contemporary Muslim family culture. Therefore, this study treats hadith not merely as a normative religious text but also as a religious discourse that is quoted, taught, interpreted, and practiced within Muslim family education (Miles et al., 2020).

Methodologically, this study combines two analytical approaches. The first is the classical approach to hadith criticism, which includes *takhrij al-hadith*, *i'tibar al-sanad*, *naqd al-sanad*, and *naqd al-matan*. This approach is used to assess the quality of the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband, particularly in relation to the source of narration, the continuity of the chain of transmission, the credibility of the narrators, variations in the wording of the text, and the conformity of its meaning with the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings (Darmalaksana, 2020).

The second approach is contextual analysis from the perspective of Contemporary Islamic Education (Bowen, 2020). This approach examines the educational values in the hadith and their relevance to Muslim family education, particularly regarding husband-wife relations, family responsibility, hadith literacy, mutual respect, and gender justice. Through this approach, the hadith is not only analyzed in terms of its narrational status, but also interpreted as a source of

educational values that contributes to the formation of ethical and just family relations (Soetari, 2020).

These two approaches are not applied in parallel but integrated within a single analytical framework. The findings of classical hadith criticism (the quality of sanad and matan) determine the textual ground on which the educational reading then operates: a hadith assessed as *hasan li dhatihi* is treated as a religiously valid source whose meaning, however, must still be reconstructed through linguistic analysis of the matan and through maqasid-oriented reflection. Conversely, the educational reading does not override the verdict of classical hadith criticism; it interprets that verdict for the formation of values within contemporary Muslim family culture. The framework thus moves from authenticity to meaning to educational implication, with each stage constraining the next.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the main hadith collection, particularly Sunan al-Tirmidhi, which contains the hadith examined in this study. This research also traces other relevant narrations, especially those found in the works of Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the variations in sanad and matan. The secondary sources include works of *rijal al-hadith*, hadith criticism literature, hadith commentaries, and contemporary academic studies on Islamic education, Muslim family education, gender relations in Islam, and Muslim religious culture (Al-Mizzi, 2022).

Data were collected through documentation of hadith texts, chains of transmission, narrator biographies, variations in matan wording, and relevant academic literature. The data collection process began with the tracing of the hadith using keywords related to the term “prostration” (*sujud*) in hadith literature. The study then identified the sources of the hadith, the compilers, the structure of the sanad, the narrators involved, and the wording variations found in different transmission routes. Information on the credibility of narrators was collected from *jarh wa ta’dil* and *rijal al-hadith* literature, while contextual data were obtained from works on Islamic education, Muslim family studies, and religion-culture studies (Ismail, 2022).

The data analysis was conducted in several stages. The first stage was *takhrij al-hadith*, namely tracing the source of the hadith to identify its location, compiler, wording, and chain of transmission. The second stage was *i’tibar al-sanad*, namely collecting and mapping the transmission routes in order to identify the presence of supporting narrations, such as *syahid* and *mutabi’*. The third stage was *naqd al-sanad*, which involved assessing the continuity of the chain, the integrity of the narrators, and their accuracy of transmission based on the principles of *jarh wa ta’dil*. The fourth stage was *naqd al-matan*, namely analyzing the wording and content of the hadith to identify possible irregularities (*syadh*), hidden defects (*‘illah*), or contradictions with the Qur’an, stronger hadiths, and universal Islamic values (Al-Asqalani, 2020).

After examining the quality of the sanad and matan, the study proceeded with contextual analysis from the perspective of Contemporary Islamic Education. At this stage, the hadith was interpreted as a source of educational values within Muslim family culture. The analysis focused on identifying the educational messages in the hadith, including *tawhid*, family responsibility, mutual respect, the balance of rights and obligations between husband and wife, and the importance of hadith literacy in Islamic education. This contextual reading also considered the realities of contemporary Muslim families, including changing gender roles, household

communication dynamics, and the need for more dialogical and justice-oriented premarital education (Auda, 2020).

The validity of the data was maintained through source triangulation by comparing information from hadith collections, rijal al-hadith works, hadith criticism literature, hadith commentaries, and contemporary academic studies. The credibility of the analysis was strengthened by applying established principles of hadith criticism within the Islamic scholarly tradition and by employing contextual interpretation informed by *maqasid al-shari'ah*, Islamic educational values, and the contemporary realities of Muslim family culture. Through this method, the study aims to produce an interpretation of the hadith that is methodologically accountable, educationally relevant, and socially meaningful for the development of critical, ethical, and just Islamic family education (Al-Tirmizi, 2020).

In sum, the analytical framework of this study proceeds in three sequential stages, each constraining the next. The first stage establishes textual authority through classical hadith criticism: *takhrij* locates the hadith and its transmission routes, *i'tibar al-sanad* maps supporting narrations (*syahid* and *mutabi'*), *naqd al-sanad* assesses narrator integrity and continuity of transmission, and *naqd al-matan* tests the wording against the Qur'an, stronger hadiths, and universal Islamic values. The second stage reconstructs textual meaning through linguistic analysis of the *matan* — examining the rhetorical form of the wording, the *asbab al-wurud* where available, and the conformity of the resulting meaning with *maqasid al-shari'ah*. The third stage translates the verified meaning into educational implication, reading the hadith as a value-bearing text within the everyday culture of Muslim families. The first stage thus underwrites the second by providing a religiously valid text to interpret, and the second underwrites the third by providing a defensible meaning to teach. The Results section that follows reports the outcome of each stage in turn.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

The hadith of a wife prostrating to her husband is in a prominent position in the discourse of Muslim family education in this study. The hadith is not only found in the hadith collections as a normative religious text, but is also widely used in various spaces of Islamic education, such as marriage sermons, family religious gatherings, premarital guidance, household advice, and Islamic marriage education literature. Therefore, the results of this study are not only to verify the authenticity of the hadith, but also the educational meaning and implications of the hadith on the culture of husband-wife relations in today's Muslim families (Hidayati, 2022).

To conclude, this study found five findings. First, the hadith about a wife prostrating to her husband has several recognizable chains of transmission in the major hadith collections. Second, the chain of transmission in al-Tirmidhi's narration is connected, and the majority of its narrators are considered reliable, except for one narrator who has a weakness in memorization. Third, from the perspective of *matan* criticism, the hadith does not literally command a wife to prostrate before her husband, but rather uses a hypothetical expression to affirm the principle of *tawhid*. Fourth, the hadith contains many educational values, such as *tawhid*, family responsibility, ethical obedience, mutual respect, and the balance of rights and obligations. Fifth, this hadith must be understood through hadith literacy in the context of contemporary Muslim family culture, so that

it does not become a justification for the subordination of women but rather serves as the basis for ethical, proportional, and just family relationships (Nurhayati, 2020).

3.1.1. Mapping the Sources and Transmission Routes of the Hadith

Based on the process of *takhrij al-hadith*, the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband is found in several hadith sources, particularly in the narrations of al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, and Ibn Majah. This indicates that the hadith does not stand on a single isolated route, but has several related chains of transmission. In this study, the narration of al-Tirmidhi is used as the main focus because its wording is the most popular and frequently quoted in the context of family education, household religious lectures, and marriage advice (Al-Tirmidzi, 2020).

The wording of the hadith narrated by al-Tirmidhi is as follows:

"If I were to command anyone to prostrate to another, I would have commanded a wife to prostrate to her husband."

The chain of transmission of the hadith may be mapped as follows:

Table 1. Chain of Transmission of the Hadith Narrated by al-Tirmidhi

No	Narrator	Position in the Chain
1	Al-Tirmidhi	Compiler of the hadith
2	Mahmud ibn Ghailan	Teacher of al-Tirmidhi
3	Al-Nadr ibn Shumayl	Teacher of Mahmud ibn Ghailan
4	Muhammad ibn 'Amr	Narrator from Abu Salamah
5	Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman	Tabi'i
6	Abu Hurairah	Companion of the Prophet
7	Prophet Muhammad	Source of the hadith

Table 1 shows that the hadith has a clear and traceable chain of transmission. Structurally, the chain is connected from al-Tirmidhi to the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the hadith has a narrational basis that can be further examined through sanad and matan criticism.

3.1.2. Findings of I'tibar al-Sanad: Supporting Routes of Transmission

The process of *i'tibar al-sanad* shows that this hadith has several supporting narrations from other routes. At the level of the Companions, similar narrations are found from Qais ibn Sa'd, Aishah, and Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa. The presence of several Companions who narrated reports with similar meanings indicates that the substance of this hadith was not known through only one transmission route (Al-Mizzi, 2022).

At the level of the Tabi'in, supporting routes are also found through al-Sha'bi, Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab, and al-Qasim al-Shaybani. These routes function as *mutabi'*, strengthening the transmission of the hadith. Meanwhile, at the level of hadith compilers, the hadith is found in several collections, especially those of Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah (Ibn Majah, 2020).

The findings of *i'tibar al-sanad* may be summarized as follows:

Table 2. Corroborating Narrations and Sanad Support for the Hadith

Grade of Supporting Sanad	Supporting Narrations	Function
Mostly hasan; some routes (e.g. Qais ibn Sa'd in Abu Dawud) are graded sahih li ghayrihi by later scholars ¹	Qais ibn Sa'd, Aishah, Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa	<i>Syahid</i>
Varied; routes through al-Sha'bi and Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab are generally regarded as strong (hasan to sahih)	Al-Sha'bi, Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab, al-Qasim al-Shaybani	<i>Mutabi'</i>
Authentic transmission within each compiler's own collection; grade follows that compiler's standard	Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah	Supporting evidence from hadith collections

Table 2, findings are significant because they show that the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband is not isolated in the tradition of hadith transmission. As the fourth column indicates, most supporting routes are graded hasan², and several — particularly the narration of Qais ibn Sa'd in Abu Dawud — are regarded by later scholars as sahih li ghayrihi. The presence of syahid and mutabi' of this quality strengthens the position of the al-Tirmidhi narration, since they compensate for the single point of weakness in its sanad and thereby reinforce its classification as hasan li dhatihi³ (Al-Tirmizi, 2020).

3.1.3. The Quality of the Sanad: Hasan li Dhatihi

The sanad criticism indicates that most narrators in the chain of al-Tirmidhi are reliable. Al-Tirmidhi is known as a trustworthy Imam of hadith. Mahmud ibn Ghailan is evaluated as *thiqah*. Al-Nadr ibn Shumayl is also known as an imam in Arabic linguistics and hadith, and received positive evaluations from hadith scholars. Abu Salamah is a reliable Tabi'i, while Abu Hurairah is a Companion of the Prophet who is widely recognized as one of the most prolific transmitters of hadith (Al-Tirmizi, 2020).

The main focus of this chain is Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn 'Alqamah. He is considered truthful, but has a weakness in memorization. Some scholars described him as *laisa bi qawi al-hadith*, while others still considered him acceptable. Thus, his weakness is not related to moral integrity, but to the strength of his memorization, which does not fully reach the level of a *thiqah* narrator (Al-Mizzi, 2022).

The findings of sanad criticism can be summarized as follows:

¹ On the grade of Qais ibn Sa'd's route, see al-Albani, *Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud* (Maktabah al-Ma'arif, 2002), no. 2140; cf. al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma' al-Rijal* (Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 1980), vol. 24, pp. 65–68 on Qais ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah.

² On the routes through al-Sha'bi and Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab, see Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1994), vol. 5, pp. 65–69 (al-Sha'bi) and vol. 4, pp. 84–88 (Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab); al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, vol. 14, pp. 28–40 and vol. 11, pp. 66–75 respectively. Specific grade depends on the immediate transmitters; the assessment given here reflects the dominant evaluation among later muhaddithun.

³ On Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn 'Alqamah, see Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, vol. 9, pp. 333–336: *saduq lahu awham*; al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, vol. 26, pp. 212–218. His weakness in memorization is the basis for the al-Tirmidhi narration being classified as hasan rather than sahih li dhatihi, while the supporting routes raise its overall standing accordingly.

Table 3. Narrator Reliability in the al-Tirmidhi Transmission Chain

Narrator	Scholarly Evaluation	Main Finding
Al-Tirmidhi	<i>Thiqah, hafiz</i> , imam of hadith	A credible compiler
Mahmud ibn Ghailan	<i>Thiqah</i>	No significant criticism found
Al-Nadr ibn Shumayl	<i>Thiqah</i> , imam	Strong in hadith and Arabic linguistics
Muhammad ibn ‘Amr	<i>Saduq</i> , but weaker in memorization	The critical point in the chain
Abu Salamah	<i>Thiqah</i> , imam	A prominent Tabi‘i
Abu Hurairah	Companion, <i>hafiz</i>	Accepted Companion narrator

Table 3, Based on this analysis, the sanad of the hadith does not reach the full level of *sahih* due to the weakness in the memorization of Muhammad ibn ‘Amr. However, this weakness is not severe and is supported by other transmission routes. Therefore, the hadith can be categorized as *hasan li dhatihi*, meaning that it is acceptable and may be used as evidence, although its rank is below that of a *sahih* hadith.

Methodologically, the classification of this hadith as *hasan li dhatihi* has direct implications for its *hujjiyyah* (probative force) within *usul al-fiqh*. In the methodology of the majority of jurists, a *hasan* hadith — whether *li dhatihi* or *li ghayrihi* — is accepted as religious evidence in matters of law and ethics, even though it does not reach the rank of *sahih*. This means that the hadith concerning a wife’s prostration to her husband may legitimately be drawn upon in Islamic legal and educational discourse. The point of attention, however, is not whether the hadith is *hujjah*, but how that *hujjiyyah* is to be operationalized. Acceptance of *hujjiyyah* does not authorize literal application; it obliges the interpreter to determine the precise content of the obligation through the standard *usul* tools — analysis of the wording (*dalalah al-lafz*), the rhetorical form of the *matan*, the *asbab al-wurud*, and conformity with the *maqasid al-shari‘ah*. The discussion that follows, therefore, turns from the question of authenticity to the question of meaning: what, given that the hadith is *hujjah*, does its *matan* actually require?

3.1.4. Linguistic Analysis of the *Matan*: The Hypothetical Form

A closer reading of the *matan* shows that the meaning of the hadith cannot be detached from its linguistic form. The Arabic wording transmitted by al-Tirmidhi opens with the construction *law kuntu ‘amiran aḥadan an yasjuda li-aḥadin* (“if I were to command anyone to prostrate to another”). The key element here is the particle *law*, which in classical Arabic grammar is identified as *ḥarf imtiā‘ li-imtiā‘* a conditional particle indicating that the apodosis (the second clause) is negated precisely because the protasis (the first clause) is itself unrealized. Ibn Hisham, in *Mughni al-Labib*, explains that *law* in this construction marks a counterfactual condition: the speaker presents a hypothetical situation in order to deny its actualization rather than to command it. Al-Baydāwī gives a similar explanation in his *tafsir*, treating *law* as a particle that affirms one proposition by negating another.

Applied to this hadith, the structure functions as follows. The protasis — “if I were to command anyone to prostrate to another” — is a hypothetical that the Prophet immediately marks as unrealized: he is not, in fact, issuing such a command. The apodosis — “I would have commanded a wife to prostrate to her husband” — is therefore equally unrealized; it does not establish a normative obligation. Grammatically, the sentence is closer to a rhetorical device (*uslub al-mubalaghah*) used to emphasize the gravity of the husband’s rights than to a declarative legal command. The illocutionary force is therefore exhortative and hyperbolic, not prescriptive.

This linguistic reading is consistent with the conclusions of Matan criticism: the hadith's wording does not establish prostration to a husband as an Islamic legal norm, but rather affirms, by way of counterfactual emphasis, that prostration belongs exclusively to Allah. Recognizing the construction law ... la- as a counterfactual conditional is therefore not merely a grammatical observation; it is the linguistic basis on which the contextual and educational readings developed later in this study rest. Without this linguistic anchor, a purely lexical translation "I would have commanded a wife to prostrate" — can be misread as an attenuated command, which is precisely the misreading that the present study seeks to address.

3.1.5. Islamic Educational Values Contained in the Hadith

This study finds that the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband contains several important values in Islamic education. These values are not limited to husband-wife relations, but also relate to the character formation of Muslim families.

First, the hadith affirms the value of tawhid. The central message of the hadith is not a command to prostrate to the husband, but an affirmation that prostration belongs only to Allah. In the context of family education, this value is essential in shaping the awareness that no human being should occupy a sacred position beyond the limits of humanity.

Second, the hadith contains the value of awareness of rights and obligations. The hadith illustrates the importance of the husband's rights, but those rights cannot be separated from the husband's obligation to be just, protective, caring, and responsible toward his wife. Therefore, Islamic family education should not only emphasize the wife's obligations, but must also teach the husband's responsibilities.

Third, the hadith teaches the value of obedience in goodness. A wife's obedience to her husband is not absolute and unlimited. Obedience is valid only in matters that are good and not contrary to Islamic teachings. Therefore, obedience within the family must be framed of morality, compassion, consultation, and public welfare.

Fourth, the hadith teaches mutual respect. Islamic family education should not only form an obedient wife, but also a trustworthy husband. The relationship between husband and wife in Islam should ideally be built upon mutual respect, mutual protection, and shared responsibility.

Fifth, the hadith contains the value of family character education. Husband and wife are both subjects of education within the family. Both have roles in building a household atmosphere characterized by *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. Therefore, this hadith should be read as a source of character education, not as a basis for the domination of one party over another (Hidayati, 2022).

3.1.6. Contextual Finding: From One-Sided Obedience to Reciprocal Responsibility

In Muslim family culture, the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband is often quoted to emphasize the wife's obedience. The findings of this study show that such a reading requires a more comprehensive understanding. If the hadith is quoted only partially, it may be understood as legitimizing one-sided obedience. However, when read through sanad criticism, matan criticism, and the perspective of Contemporary Islamic Education, the hadith leads to the formation of family relations based on reciprocal responsibility.

Contemporary Islamic Education needs to shift the orientation from merely saying "a wife must obey" to emphasizing that "husband and wife are both responsible." This shift does not eliminate the roles of husband and wife within the family, but places both of them within an

ethical partnership. The husband has a leadership responsibility, but this leadership must be exercised with trustworthiness, compassion, and justice. The wife has responsibilities in the family, but these responsibilities must not be interpreted as the loss of her dignity and rights as a human being.

This finding is important in the context of contemporary Muslim families, which face social change, increasing educational attainment among women, complex family economic dynamics, and growing awareness of domestic violence. In such a situation, Islamic family education needs to develop a model of learning that is not only normative, but also dialogical, critical, and contextual (Hakim, 2023).

3.1.7. Hadith Literacy as a Key Finding in Contemporary Islamic Education

One of the important findings of this study is the need to strengthen hadith literacy in Contemporary Islamic Education. Hadith literacy does not merely mean the ability to read or memorize hadith, but also the ability to understand the quality of a hadith, its context, its linguistic structure, its ethical message, and the social impact of how it is taught.

In the case of the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband, hadith literacy functions to prevent three misunderstandings. First, it prevents a literal reading that ignores the hypothetical form of the expression. Second, it prevents the use of the hadith as a basis for the domination of husbands over wives. Third, it prevents the separation of the husband's rights from the husband's obligations and the wife's rights within the family.

Thus, hadith literacy can serve as an instrument for transforming the educational culture of Muslim families. It changes a culture of "merely quoting hadith" into a culture of "understanding hadith responsibly." In the context of Contemporary Islamic Education, hadith literacy should be included in premarital education, family religious gatherings, Islamic education curricula, and training programs for preachers and religious educators.

3.2. Discussion

Whereas the Results section above presented the textual findings of sanad, matan, and linguistic analysis stage by stage, this Discussion section interprets those findings as an integrated argument and draws out their implications for Contemporary Islamic Education. Some themes from the Results — tawhid, hadith literacy, the shift from literal to contextual reading — necessarily reappear here, but in a different register: in the Results, they were reported as findings, while here they are read together with one another and with the wider scholarly debate. The findings of this study indicate that the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband cannot be understood merely as an isolated normative text. It needs to be read through two interrelated layers of interpretation. First, it must be examined as a hadith text whose authenticity and meaning require verification through sanad and matan criticism. Second, it must be understood as a popular religious text that lives within Muslim family culture and shapes how society understands husband-wife relations (Hakim, 2023). Therefore, the discussion of this hadith should not stop at whether it can be used as religious evidence, but must also address how it is understood, taught, and applied within Contemporary Islamic Education.

3.2.1. Popular Hadith as a Living Educational Text in Muslim Family Culture

The hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband is an example of a popular hadith that does not only exist in hadith collections, but also circulates widely in Muslim socio-religious spaces. It frequently appears in marriage sermons, family religious gatherings, household advice,

premarital guidance, religious lectures, and digital Islamic preaching. In these spaces, hadith functions not only as a textual proof, but also as an instrument of value education that shapes people's understanding of the husband's position, the wife's role, obedience, respect, and the ideal Muslim family (Syamsuddin, 2021).

From the perspective of Contemporary Islamic Education, this shows that Islamic education does not take place only in schools, madrasas, or universities. It also takes place in everyday religious culture through sermons, family advice, community study circles, majelis taklim, and digital media. Popular hadiths therefore have strong educational power. They can shape character, religious imagination, and family relational culture. However, this educational power can become constructive when hadith is understood comprehensively, and problematic when it is understood partially (Wantu, 2020).

In the case of the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband, the main issue does not lie in the existence of the hadith itself, but in the way it is quoted and explained. When the hadith is reduced to the phrase "a wife prostrating to her husband," people may assume that Islam places the wife in a position of absolute submission to her husband. However, the findings of matan criticism show that the hadith uses a hypothetical expression rather than a literal command. This is where Contemporary Islamic Education becomes important: it must present a reading of hadith that is not merely textual, but also contextual, critical, and oriented toward the formation of ethical family relations.

3.2.2. Tawhid as the Foundation for Understanding the Hadith

One of the important findings of this study is that the hadith actually affirms the principle of tawhid. The phrase "if I were to command anyone to prostrate to another" indicates that prostration to human beings is not commanded in Islam. In other words, this hadith is not an instruction for wives to prostrate to their husbands, but an affirmation that prostration belongs only to Allah (Nurhayati, 2020).

This reading is important because, in certain family cultures, the authority of the husband is sometimes understood excessively. The husband is positioned not only as the leader of the family, but almost as the center of absolute obedience. Such an understanding can shift family relations from a relationship of responsibility into a relationship of power. In this context, the hadith concerning a wife's prostration may be misused to provide religious legitimacy for male domination.

Theologically, however, tawhid limits the absolutization of human authority over other human beings. No human being deserves absolute servitude, including the husband. A husband may have rights and responsibilities within the family, but those rights cannot be transformed into unlimited authority. A wife may have obligations in household life, but those obligations must not be interpreted as the loss of her dignity, rights, and voice as a human being.

Thus, this hadith may be read as a critique of the sacralization of power within the household. A hadith that is often used to emphasize the husband's rights actually contains a theological reminder that no human being, regardless of social or familial position, may be placed in a position resembling an object of worship. This is a crucial point for Contemporary Islamic Education: hadith should not only be taught as a text of obedience, but also as a text that forms awareness of tawhid, ethics, and responsibility.

3.2.3. From Literal Understanding to Contextual Understanding

The findings of this study show that this hadith has the status of *hasan li dhatihi* and can be accepted as religious evidence. However, accepting the hadith does not mean that it may be understood literally without considering its linguistic structure, context, and ethical message. In the Islamic scholarly tradition, understanding hadith requires attention to *sanad*, *matan*, *asbab al-wurud*, *maqasid al-shari'ah*, and their conformity with the general principles of Islamic teachings.

A literal understanding of this hadith may create bias in family education. If the hadith is taught only as a proof of the wife's obedience, Islamic family education may become a one-sided education of compliance. However, the goal of Islamic education is not merely to produce obedient individuals but to form human beings who are faithful, ethical, just, responsible, and capable of building beneficial social relations.

A contextual reading does not mean rejecting the hadith. Rather, it means placing the hadith proportionally. In this context, the hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband should be understood as a reminder of the seriousness of family responsibility, not as a justification for domination. The hadith uses an extreme illustration to emphasize awareness of rights and obligations in household life. Yet this illustration must not be separated from the Islamic principles of justice, consultation, compassion, and respect for human dignity.

Contemporary Islamic Education must therefore develop the ability of learners and Muslim communities to distinguish between the wording of a text, the linguistic structure of a text, and the moral message of a text. Hadith should not only be translated; it must also be explained through responsible scholarly tools. In this way, Muslim society can move from merely quoting hadith to reading hadith critically and ethically (Qudamah, 2021).

3.2.4. Islamic Family Education: From One-Sided Obedience to Reciprocal Responsibility

One of the key issues in discussing this hadith is the need to shift the orientation of family education from one-sided obedience to reciprocal responsibility. In many religious teachings on household life, the theme of the wife's obedience often receives strong emphasis. This emphasis may have a basis in Islamic teachings, but it becomes problematic when it is separated from the husband's obligations, the wife's rights, communication ethics, and shared responsibility within the family (Aziz, 2021).

The hadith concerning a wife's prostration to her husband should not be reduced to a single message about the wife's obedience. It must be understood within a broader relational framework, namely, the relationship between husband and wife as a moral partnership. Husband and wife are both subjects of education within the family. Both have rights, obligations, and responsibilities that must be carried out proportionally. The husband is not only entitled to obedience but is also obliged to act justly, uphold trust, protect, guide, and treat his wife well. The wife not only has obligations, but also has the right to be respected, heard, protected, and treated with dignity.

In Contemporary Islamic Education, the ideal Muslim family should be built upon the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, drawing on the Qur'anic vision in QS al-Rum:21 that He created spouses so that you may find tranquility (*litaskunu*) in them, and placed between you love (*mawaddah*) and mercy (*rahmah*). These values cannot be realized if family relations are built upon domination by one party. *Sakinah* requires tranquility, *mawaddah* requires love and closeness, while *rahmah* requires compassion and protection. Therefore, Islamic family education should place obedience within the framework of ethics, not within the framework of power.

Thus, the more appropriate concept to develop is not merely “the wife’s obedience,” but “the ethical responsibility of husband and wife.” A wife’s obedience within the family should be understood as part of a commitment to goodness, not as servitude to a human being. The husband’s leadership should also be understood as a trust, not domination. This is the direction of Islamic family education that is more relevant to the challenges of contemporary Muslim society (Suryani, 2022).

3.2.5. Hadith Literacy as a Necessity in Contemporary Islamic Education

The discussion of this hadith illustrates the importance of hadith literacy in Contemporary Islamic Education. Hadith literacy is not just reading or memorizing hadith but knowing the quality of hadith, context of transmission, structure of matan, message of ethics, and social implications. Hadith literacy renders Muslim communities more cautious in the acceptance, citation, and transmission of hadith.

The hadith about a wife prostrating to her husband is an example where hadith literacy is important to avoid oversimplification of meaning. This hadith has the status of *hasan li dhatihi*. Muslim communities need to understand this, but they also need to understand that the wording of this hadith is hypothetical. They also need to understand that this hadith is not to be read in isolation, but in conjunction with the principles of *tawhid*, justice, family ethics, and respect for human rights.

In the digital age, Hadith literacy is more important than ever. Common hadiths were often disseminated in the form of short quotations, preaching posters, short videos, or sermon excerpts. These formats allow for a more widespread religious message, but also may remove the context. A hadith can be popular, but it is not necessarily well understood. Therefore, Contemporary Islamic Education needs to prepare the Muslim communities to read the religious texts comprehensively.

Within the domain of family education, hadith literacy can become a means of cultural change. It turns a culture of “just quoting” into a culture of “comprehending.” It turns passive acceptance into responsible reading. It also redefines family education from the simple transmission of normative advice to the development of ethical and spiritual consciousness (Munir, 2023).

3.2.6. Contemporary Muslim Culture and the Challenge of Gender Relations in the Family

Contemporary Muslim families are experiencing complex social changes. Women are more educated, women are more involved in public life, family economics have changed, and there is a greater awareness of domestic violence. In this case, Islamic family education cannot simply repeat old patterns of advice without critical reinterpretation (Hidayati, 2022).

The hadith concerning a wife prostrating to her husband needs to be taught with sensitivity to these social changes. If the hadith is read literally, it can be interpreted as an endorsement of patriarchal culture. But with a critical and contextual interpretation, it can serve as a starting point for discussions on *Tawhid*, the limits of human authority, the rights and obligations of spouses, and the importance of just family relations.

This reading does not mean to subordinate Islamic teachings to modernity. Rather, it shows that Islamic teachings have ethical principles that can meet the challenges of the time. Contemporary Islamic Education should strike a balance between the fidelity to religious texts and the sensitivity to social realities. Thus, the hadith continues to be respected as a source of

Islamic teaching, but its interpretation has to remain linked to justice, public welfare, and compassion as the higher objectives of Islamic law.

In contemporary Muslim culture, the family is no longer considered a hierarchical structure. It should be understood also as a space for the collaboration of values, where husband and wife learn from one another, strengthen one another, and share responsibility. So the hadiths on family should be taught in a dialogical and not monological way. Islamic family education must create room for communication, consultation, empathy, and dignified conflict resolution (Nurdin & Jamila, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the status of Hadiths is *hasan li dhatihi*, because the chain of transmission is connected and the majority of its narrators are reliable, and the weakness in the memorization of Muhammad ibn ‘Amr is compensated by the supporting routes from other collections. Matan’s criticism shows that the hadith is not a literal command for a wife to prostrate to her husband, but a hypothetical expression affirming that prostration is only for Allah. The overriding message is not the subjugation of wives, or the absolute authority of husbands, but ethical responsibility, mutual respect, and consciousness of rights and obligations in married life. In the light of Contemporary Islamic Education, this hadith should be taught contextually so as to shape Muslim families grounded in *tawhid*, justice, compassion, and reciprocal responsibility.

The contribution of this study is the integrative reading of the criticism of hadith, Contemporary Islamic Education, and Muslim family culture. It shows that popular hadiths can still be authoritative, but can be read proportionally, critically, and in socially relevant ways. Hadith literacy is the key instrument that moves Muslim communities from quoting texts to understanding the quality, context, and ethical meaning of texts in premarital education, family religious gatherings, Islamic education curricula, and digital dakwah. But two limitations must be acknowledged. It is worth noting that the analysis of sanad and matan is mainly conducted on the narration of al-Tirmidhi. The chains of Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah are only used to determine the supporting routes (*syahid* and *mutabi*) and are not analyzed in detail. Second, this study is based on text and library research and does not use empirical data on how the Muslim community in Indonesia understands, teaches, and practices this hadith in everyday family life. Future research could supplement the present textual analysis with ethnographic, sociological, or classroom-based studies – for example, examining how preachers, premarital educators, and religious teachers cite and explain this hadith and how lay audiences receive and internalize it – to test and refine the educational implications suggested here.

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