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A CRITICAL STUDY OF MISINTERPRETATIONS OF PROPHETIC HADITH ON DISABILITY

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ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Penelitian ini secara kritis menganalisis kesalahpahaman terhadap hadis-hadis terkait disabilitas, yang sering kali menyebabkan stigmatisasi terhadap penyandang disabilitas. Dengan menggunakan analisis tematik (*mawdu'i*) terhadap hadis-hadis yang berkaitan dengan kewajiban menuntut ilmu (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*) serta perlakuan Nabi terhadap orang-orang dengan disabilitas. **Tujuan;** Penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa ajaran Islam sangat mendukung pendidikan inklusif. **Hasil;** Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa hadis-hadis universal tentang ilmu pengetahuan serta penolakan terhadap penilaian berdasarkan penampilan fisik memberikan dasar teologis bagi kebijakan pendidikan inklusif. **Kesimpulan;** Temuan ini menekankan perlunya pemahaman yang benar terhadap hadis-hadis tersebut untuk membentuk kebijakan pendidikan yang inklusif dan adil di Indonesia."

Keywords:

Inclusive; Education;
Disability; Prophetic
Hadith;
Misinterpretation;
Thematic Analysis
(*Mawdu'i*); Stigma.

ABSTRACTS

Background: This study critically analyzes misinterpretations of hadiths related to disability, which often lead to the stigmatization of persons with disabilities. Using a thematic (*mawdu'i*) analysis of hadiths concerning the obligation to seek knowledge (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*) and the Prophet's treatment of people with disabilities. **Purpose of the Study;** this research reveals that Islamic teachings strongly support inclusive education. The study demonstrates that universal hadiths on knowledge and the rejection of judgments based on physical appearance provide a theological foundation for inclusive education policies. **Conclusion:** These findings emphasize the need for a correct understanding of these hadiths in order to shape inclusive and equitable education policies in Indonesia.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Misinterpretations of hadiths related to disability in Indonesian Muslim society often reinforce negative stigmas, portraying disability as a divine punishment or trial that justifies social exclusion (Billah, Muhammad, et al. 2025). This cultural-religious framing contributes to viewing persons with disabilities as burdens or less capable, thereby hindering their integration into mainstream education. For instance, while hadiths highlight the Prophet Muhammad's inclusive treatment of companions like Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum—a blind sahabah appointed as muezzin and prayer leader—these are frequently overlooked in favor of interpretations emphasizing physical "perfection" or fate, leading to reluctance among parents and teachers to accept children with disabilities in regular classrooms (Maftuhin, Arif, and Abidah Muflihati. 2022).

In educational practices, this manifests in high rates of bullying, social isolation, and inadequate support in inclusive settings, where children with disabilities are perceived as disruptive or unable to follow lessons (Afrianty, Dina. 2019). In conservative or rural Muslim communities, implicit segregation persists, directing such children toward special schools (*Sekolah Luar Biasa*) rather than integration, despite universal hadiths on the virtue of seeking knowledge (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*) and prohibitions against judging based on appearance e.g., *Sahih Muslim* No. 2564 (Rispler-Chaim, Vardit. 2007).

At the policy level, these misinterpretations slow the implementation of inclusive education regulations, such as Ministerial Regulation No. 70 of 2009, which mandates at least four inclusive schools per district/city, and Law No. 19/2011 ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Indonesia, 2009). Societal resistance, influenced by religious-cultural views of disability as "destiny," results in low prioritization of funding for accessible infrastructure, special assistant teachers (with only limited national availability), and adaptive curricula (Somad, A., S. Haryanto, and D. Darsinah. 2024). In Islamic-based schools (*madrasah*), progressive interpretations are emerging through efforts like Muhammadiyah's *Fikih Difabel* and similar initiatives by Nahdlatul Ulama, promoting theological foundations for inclusion, yet widespread adoption remains limited (Yoyo. 2025). Overall, accurate contextual understanding of hadiths—emphasizing universal access to knowledge and equality—could serve as a theological driver for more equitable policies, including Islam-based teacher training and anti-stigma campaigns in Muslim communities.

Inclusive education is a fundamental pillar in guaranteeing human rights, specifically mandated to ensure that every individual—including children with special needs (ABK) or persons with disabilities—has equal access to quality education. In Indonesia, statistical data indicate that approximately 3.3% (2,197,833 individuals) of children aged 5–19 years live with disabilities. Moreover, data published by the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (March 2024) reveal that 17.2% of persons with disabilities aged 15 and above have never attended school, while only 4.24% have attained higher education. These figures reflect systemic discrimination and the failure of the education system to provide equitable access.

According to Al-Attas, all students possess equal rights without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender, or social condition. Although Indonesia possesses a strong legal framework for inclusive education, implementation at the grassroots level is often obstructed by socio-cultural factors, particularly erroneous religious understandings. In Muslim societies, the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) carry high ethical and normative authority. Regrettably, several hadiths concerning calamity, trial, or disability are frequently misinterpreted, leading to stigmatization and the justification of educational segregation. Such narrow interpretations portray disability as a curse, punishment, or mere object of compassion rather than a natural variation of Allah's creation that demands accommodation and respect.

Consequently, an in-depth study is required to re-interpret these hadiths prophetically using the thematic (*mawḍūʿī*) approach. This study seeks to unite hadiths on the universal obligation to seek knowledge, the equality of human dignity before Allah, and the Prophet's exemplary interactions with companions who had disabilities (e.g., Abdullah ibn Umm Maktūm). The ultimate aim is to provide strong ethical and practical guidance for all education stakeholders in Indonesia.

B. METHOD

Thematic Mawḍūʿī Analysis of Hadiths on Disability in Islam: A Comprehensive Approach with Cross-Checking. The *mawḍūʿī* (thematic) method in hadith studies is a systematic approach developed by scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī and ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Farmāwī. In this method, hadiths related to a single theme are collected from various sources (such as the *kutub al-sittah*: Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Nasāʾī, and Ibn Mājah), then classified, their meanings analyzed, and synthesized to obtain a holistic understanding. This method involves six main phases, similar to the thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke: (1) familiarization with the hadith data; (2) initial coding; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining themes; and (6) reporting with interpretation. To ensure reliability, this research is cross-checked through triangulation: comparison with the Qurʾān (as the primary source), exegeses of scholars (such as al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr), and contemporary studies on disability in Islam. This cross-checking avoids interpretive bias and validates conclusions with *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (the objectives of the *sharīʿah*: protection of life, dignity, and equality).

The theme analyzed is disability (*al-iʿāqah* or *al-ḍarar*), encompassing physical conditions such as blindness, paralysis, or other impairments. Hadiths were collected from authentic sources such as academic studies, yielding approximately 20 relevant *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths. The analysis shows that Islam views disability not as a curse due to sin (a common misinterpretation), but rather as a merciful trial, with emphasis on inclusion and protection. Misinterpretations often arise from partial quotations without context, such as linking disability to divine punishment, whereas the hadiths emphasize equality.

1. Collection and Thematic Classification of Hadiths

Hadiths were collected from the *kutub al-sittah*, focusing on those deemed authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*). Initial coding involved labels such as “trial,” “equality,” “protection,” and “inclusion.” The main themes that emerged after clustering are as follows:

Theme 1: Disability as a Trial and Mercy from Allah (dominant in 7 hadiths).

Example: Hadith Tirmidhī narrated by al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib: "When the verse 'There is no blame upon the believers who sit [at home]' was revealed, 'Amr ibn Umm Maktūm (who was blind) asked: 'O Messenger of Allah, what is your command regarding me? My sight is impaired.' Then the verse was revealed: 'except those who are disabled.'" (Al-Tirmidhī, Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī, 1998) Cross-check: Compare with Q.S. al-Nisā':95, which exempts persons with disabilities from jihad as an act of mercy, not punishment (Ibn Kathīr's exegesis: a trial for patience).

Theme 2: Equality and Rejection of Stigma (5 hadiths).

Example: Hadith Muslim, narrated by Abū Hurayrah: "Verily, Allah does not look at your bodies or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds." (Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 1955) Misinterpretation: Some societies link it to "physical defect = defective heart," whereas the context rejects external judgment (cross-check with Q.S. al-Ḥujurāt:13 on equality based on piety).

Theme 3: Protection and Priority of Rights (6 hadiths).

Example: Hadith al-Adab al-Mufrad narrated by Ibn 'Abbās: "Allah curses anyone who misleads a blind person from his path." (Al-Bukhārī, 1988) This emphasizes protection (cross-check with Bazna and Hatab's study: Islam rejects disability stigma as a curse, viewing it instead as part of divine decree). Another example: Hadith Nasā'ī 5412 regarding lighter punishment for an adulterer who is paralyzed (Al-Nasā'ī, Sunan an-Nasā'ī, 1991)

Theme 4: Social and Religious Inclusion (8 hadiths).

Example: Hadith Muslim narrated by Ibn 'Umar: "The Messenger of Allah had two mu'adhdhins: Bilāl and 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm, who was blind." (Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 1955). This demonstrates that persons with disabilities led worship (cross-check with Sūrah 'Abasa: the Prophet's reproof for neglecting a blind person, emphasizing inclusion; al-Qurṭubī's exegesis: priority in da'wah for the disabled).

2. Detailed Analysis with Cross-Check

The in-depth thematic analysis was conducted inductively: themes emerged from the data rather than prior assumptions. Validation through cross-check:

Identification and Theme Development: From 26 collected hadiths (including variants), 80% indicate a positive view (mercy, inclusion), with only 20% neutral (e.g., descriptions of the Dajjal's blindness as a sign). Common misinterpretation: Viewing disability as punishment for sin (influenced by pre-Islamic culture), whereas hadiths such as Bukhārī 4593 show exemptions as mercy (Al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 2001) Cross-check: Rispler-Chaim's (1992) study validates that Islam sees disability as a trial, not stigma, aligning with Q.S. al-Baqarah:155 on tribulations.

Review and Validation: Themes were reviewed via triangulation. For instance, the protection theme is validated by the hadith cursing those who mislead the blind (al-Adab al-Mufrad), compared with Q.S. 'Abasa:1-10 (reproof for neglecting a blind person). Scholars such as al-Qaraḍāwī in Fiqh al-Jihād confirm inclusion as a maqṣad (objective) of the sharī'ah. Reliability: Consistency across sources (Bukhārī and Muslim often parallel), with strong chains of transmission (high grade).

Interpretation and Implications: Holistically, the mawḍū'ī hadiths reject stigmatizing misinterpretations (e.g., "disability = parents' sin," similar to John 9:2 in Christianity but rejected in Islam). Instead, they promote equality (maqāṣid: ḥifẓ al-nafs, protection of life). Contemporary cross-check: Khoury (2015) concludes that Islam

encourages inclusive legal reforms for persons with disabilities. Potential bias: Local cultures often add stigma, but the *mawḍūʿī* method corrects this through historical context (*asbāb al-wurūd*).

3. Conclusion

Through thematic *mawḍūʿī* analysis with comprehensive cross-checking, hadiths on disability consistently emphasize mercy, equality, protection, and inclusion—contradicting stigmatizing misinterpretations. This supports contemporary Islamic social reforms, such as inclusive *fiqh* for persons with disabilities. Recommendation: Apply this approach to other themes to prevent misuse of hadiths.

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach through library research. Primary data comprise authentic hadiths related textually or contextually to disability, the obligation of knowledge, and Prophetic conduct. Secondary data include contemporary Indonesian *tafsir* and thematic hadith works addressing inclusion, such as *Tafsir Al-Misbah* (vol. 15) on *Sūrah ʿAbasa* and modern *fiqh* of disability literature. Data were collected through documentation of hadith texts (*matn*), chains of transmission (*isnād*), and classical and modern commentaries from the nine canonical books (*kutub al-tisʿah*). Analysis was performed using the thematic (*mawḍūʿī*) method in three stages:

(1) identification of relevant hadiths, (2) examination of the causes of revelation/transmission (*asbāb al-wurūd*), and (3) synthesis and correlation within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (objectives of Islamic law) to correct stigmatising interpretations. Data Sources The data sources in this study are classified into two categories, Primary Data Sources, Primary data consist of the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad that are textually or contextually related to disability, the obligation to seek knowledge, and prophetic attitudes. Examples include, The hadith narrated by Muslim concerning the value of the heart and deeds (“Actions are judged by intentions...” and other related hadiths that emphasize inner qualities over physical conditions), The hadith narrated by Tirmidhi regarding the test of eyesight loss (“If Allah takes away the sight of a person...”), The incident that became the *asbāb al-wurūd* (cause of revelation/descent) of *Sūrah ʿAbasa* (He Frowned), Hadiths about the blind Companion ʿAbdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm, the obligation of all Muslims—regardless of physical condition—to seek knowledge, and numerous other narrations that touch upon physical or sensory disabilities. Secondary Data Sources, Secondary sources comprise works of *tafsir* (Qurʾanic exegesis) and thematic hadith studies by contemporary Indonesian scholars that address the issue of inclusion, such as, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāḥ* (Volume 15) by M. Quraish Shihab, which contains an in-depth discussion of *Sūrah ʿAbasa* and its implications for disability and inclusive attitudes, Contemporary works on the *fiqh* of disability, such as *Fiqh Disabilitas* (Nur Kholis, 2021) and other books, Contemporary works on the *fiqh* of disability, Thematic studies on hadith and works by Indonesian *ulama* that link Islamic jurisprudence with the values of equality and social justice for persons with disabilities.

Data Collection Techniques, Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely the systematic gathering and identification of relevant hadith texts (*matn*), chains of transmission (*isnād*), and classical as well as modern commentaries (*sharḥ*). This process involved the following steps, Collecting hadiths from the nine authoritative hadith compilations (*kutub al-tisʿah*): *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Musnad*

Aḥmad, Muwatta' Mālik, and Sunan al-Dāramī. Identifying hadiths that explicitly or implicitly mention disability or that have historically been misinterpreted as justifying stigmatization or segregation of persons with disabilities.

Recording the complete sanad, matn, and degree of authenticity (ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, ḍa'īf) along with the sharḥ of classical and contemporary hadith scholars. Linking the hadiths with contemporary literature on disability and social inclusion in order to construct a more contextual and maqāṣid-oriented understanding. Data Analysis Techniques Data analysis was conducted using the mawḍū'ī (thematic) hadith analysis approach, which comprises the following stages, Identification of Relevant Hadiths All hadiths containing the main themes of "disability," "the right to knowledge," "physical limitation," and "social interaction with persons with disabilities" were collected. Special attention was given to hadiths that have historically been misunderstood or misused to justify stigmatization (e.g., the hadith about blindness or leprosy in some classical contexts).

Study of Asbāb al-Wurūd A thorough examination of the historical and social context in was undertaken in order to prevent narrow textualist interpretations that could lead to discrimination (Mohammad Takdir Ilahi, 2013). For example, the context of Surah 'Abasa and the hadith of Ibn Umm Maktūm clearly shows the Prophet's attitude of inclusion and the high value placed on spiritual quality rather than physical perfection. Synthesis and Correlation The hadiths were synthesized within an inclusive value framework (equality, justice, and compassion) based on the higher objectives of Sharī'ah (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah). This stage aimed to correct misinterpretations that have led to stigma, segregation, or the denial of educational and social rights to persons with disabilities. The synthesis was performed by Grouping hadiths according to the type of disability (visual, hearing, physical, intellectual, etc.), Comparing classical interpretations with contemporary interpretations that emphasize inclusion, Reconstructing a prophetic model of inclusive behavior that can be implemented in modern educational and social institutions. Maqāṣid-Oriented Interpretation Every hadith was re-evaluated through the lens of the five primary and secondary objectives of Sharī'ah (preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property), as well as the principle of removing harm (raf' al-ḥaraj) and facilitating ease (taysīr). This approach demonstrates that Islamic law not only permits but actually mandates the fulfillment of the right to education and full social participation for persons with disabilities without discrimination.

Validity and Reliability To ensure validity, the study consistently used primary sources of hadith with strong chains of transmission and the most authoritative commentaries. Reliability was maintained through cross-checking data from multiple hadith collections and by involving the latest Indonesian scholarly works that have undergone academic peer review. The use of the mawḍū'ī method combined with the maqāṣid framework also prevents subjective or ahistorical interpretations that are common in textualist approaches. By employing this method, the present study seeks not only to clarify the authentic Islamic teachings concerning disability, but also to contribute a theoretical foundation for the development of inclusive education and inclusive society in Muslim communities, especially within the Indonesian context.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Misinterpretation of Hadiths Concerning Trials and Stigmatization

Several hadiths related to trials (musibah) or tribulations are frequently misinterpreted. One commonly misunderstood narration states that Allah expiates the sins of those afflicted with trials, including the loss of sight or blindness (Dedi S, 2023). Kristianto defines disability as a condition or limitation that hinders an individual from participating in activities considered normal within society. Disability may be physical, mental, sensory, or intellectual, and can be temporary or permanent (Ulfah Zakiyah, 2023). Such conditions affect individuals across various aspects of life. A prevalent misconception associates disability (such as blindness or paralysis) solely with punishment, sin, or a burden of suffering that must be endured (Nur Kholis, 2021).

This misunderstanding often leads to the perception that disability is a mark of divine punishment or a means of sin expiation, positioning persons with disabilities as “punished” individuals deserving pity rather than empowerment. A correct re-interpretation emphasizes that disability is a test of patience that elevates one’s rank before Allah, yet it in no way diminishes their obligations (taklīf) or rights to live a normal life and receive education. The focus must shift from viewing disability as a calamity to recognizing the potential and responsibility each individual possesses according to their capacity.

Hadiths on Inclusive Education and the Obligation to Seek Knowledge (Ṭalab al-‘Ilm) One of the most pivotal hadiths in this regard is the well-known narration:

مُسْلِمٌ كُلٌّ عَلَى فَرِيضَةِ الْعِلْمِ طَلَبُ

“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.” (Reported by Ibn Mājah, No. 224; authenticated, see Mohammad Takdir Ilahi, 2013) This hadith establishes the universal obligation to seek knowledge, encompassing all Muslims regardless of physical or mental condition. It forms the philosophical foundation of inclusive education in Islam. Furthermore, the Qur’ānic verse in Sūrah al-Isrā’ (17:70) underscores the theological principle of monotheism (tawḥīd) and equal human dignity: “And We have certainly honored the children of Adam...” This verse affirms that persons with disabilities possess the same inherent human dignity before Allah. In practical terms (fiqh), they are obligated to worship according to their ability and are entitled to equal access to quality education suited to their potential. The author concludes that the government has a crucial role in enhancing the quality of education by providing appropriate facilities, inclusive curricula, and professionally trained educators. Baasher cites the famous hadith reported by Bukhārī (No. 52) and Muslim (No. 1559): “Indeed, in the body there is a lump of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Verily, it is the heart.” This narration is highly significant because scholars and scientists often overlook fundamental religious beliefs that shape human behavior across faith traditions (Ade Iva Murty, 2021).

The author infers that this hadith affirms the noble nature (fiṭrah) of human beings. Since Allah created humanity in a state of perfection, persons with disabilities also possess equal rights. Howard Gardner, in his seminal work *Frames of Mind*, asserts the uniqueness of individual intelligence profiles: “No two people—not even identical twins—possess exactly the same profile of intelligences” (cited in Dody & Naan, 2022). Individuals also differ in interests, inclinations, and talents, which determine their social roles and future paths. Said Nursi similarly states, “The tendency toward perfection is a natural law in the universe, and this privilege has been granted to human

nature.” The driving force that leads humanity toward the most perfect, noble, and beautiful state is moral excellence (akhlaq) (Abd Muid, 2023). Thus, human beings are innately inclined to pursue religiosity, goodness, truth, perfection, and virtuous character.

From conception to old age, human development is a dynamic process of interaction between innate potentials and environmental factors. This understanding is reflected in the hadith narrated from al-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr (ra), in which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) emphasized justice among children (Lalu Muhammad Nurul Wathoni, 2020). The Prophet’s instruction to “fear Allah and be just to your children” highlights the universal principle of equity in Islam, beginning within the family unit. Thematic Analysis (Mawḍū‘ī): Reconstructing Inclusive Hadiths A thematic (mawḍū‘ī) analysis of relevant hadiths reveals that their core message is not punishment but spiritual elevation and empowerment. The synthesis yields three theological pillars supporting inclusive education: Equality of Dignity and Rejection of Stigma The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

وَأَعْمَالُكُمْ قُلُوبُكُمْ إِلَى يَنْظُرُ وَلَكِنْ، وَأَمْوَالُكُمْ صُورُكُمْ إِلَى يَنْظُرُ لَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ

“Verily, Allah does not look at your appearances or wealth, but He looks at your hearts and deeds.” (Reported by Muslim, No. 2564; Nur Kholis, 2021)

This hadith explicitly invalidates stigma based on physical condition. Disability does not diminish human dignity; hence, persons with disabilities must be treated equitably in all spheres, including education (Dedi Supriyadi, 2018). Inclusive education is the practical manifestation of this prophetic principle. Spiritual Reward and Motivation for Persons with Disabilities The story of ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūh, a lame companion who fought and was martyred at Uhud, illustrates divine compensation. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said he saw him walking in Paradise with a healed leg (Reported by Ahmad, No. 22553; Ahmad Bahrul Hikam, 2023). Such narrations provide profound spiritual motivation without negating worldly rights. Universal Access to Knowledge The obligation to seek knowledge is reiterated in various forms, including the hadith: “Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim...” (Ibn Mājah). Linguistic and exegetical analysis of related Qur’ānic terms (ṭalaba, darasa, ta’allama) further reinforces the imperative of education for all (Arbain Nurdin & M. Uzaer Damairi, 2021).

Neuroscience supports this Islamic view: at birth, a child possesses approximately 100 billion brain cells, but synaptic connections develop rapidly through environmental stimulation, reaching around 1,000 trillion synapses by age three (Erwin Hafid, 2017). This underscores the critical importance of early, inclusive educational intervention. International human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 6, 12–14, 17, 28–31), affirm every child’s inherent right to life, development, education, and cultural participation (Lusia Palulungan et al., 2020). The author emphasizes that while legal frameworks exist, greater practical sensitivity and application are required, particularly for children with disabilities. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) remains the ultimate exemplar in education. Mu’āwiyah ibn al-Ḥakam testified that he never encountered a better teacher. Among the Prophet’s methods were teaching creed and monotheism, instilling Islamic manners, using humor, giving rewards, commanding prayer, fostering trustworthiness, avoiding public shaming, and encouraging open discussion (Abu Hafizhah Irfan, 2022).

Critique of Hadith Authenticity (Naqd al-Sanad) Critique of the chain of transmission (sanad) is essential to establish authenticity. The hadiths cited—particularly “Allah does not look at your forms...” (Muslim) and “Seeking knowledge is obligatory...” (Ibn Mājah)—are ṣaḥīḥ (authentic) according to rigorous standards of ḥadīth criticism. **Conclusion and Practical Implications** The hadith “Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim” is the strongest textual foundation for inclusive education. The phrase “every Muslim” admits no exceptions based on disability. Consequently, providing accessible educational facilities becomes a religious and legal obligation (reasonable accommodation).

The incident of Sūrah ‘Abasa (80:1–10) and the Prophet’s interaction with Abdullah ibn Umm Maktūm, the blind companion, constitute the most powerful proof-text against discriminatory educational practices. Allah’s gentle rebuke of even the Prophet for momentarily turning away from a blind seeker of knowledge underscores that physical impairment must never reduce access to learning. Thereafter, Ibn Umm Maktūm was honored as a mu’adhdhin and led prayers in the Prophet’s absence—clear evidence of full inclusion. Hadiths promising Paradise for those who patiently endure loss of sight or limb serve to elevate spiritual motivation and dignity, not to justify pity or exclusion.

In light of these authentic texts, inclusive education is not merely a modern policy preference but a religious imperative rooted in the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Governments, communities, and families are duty-bound to remove barriers, provide professional training, adapt curricula, and foster environments where every child—regardless of ability—can pursue knowledge and realize their God-given potential. (Word count: 2,506) results obtained from the research have to be supported by sufficient data. The research results and the discovery must be the answers, or the research hypothesis stated previously in the introduction part.

Discussion

Discussion on Direct Examples of Erroneous Interpretations Affecting Students with Disabilities in the Indonesian Educational Environment. Erroneous interpretations of hadiths regarding disability, such as viewing it as a “curse for sin” or divine punishment, often stem from partial understanding without the context of maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah the objectives of Islamic law, which emphasize mercy and equality (Ghaly, Mohammed, 2010) In Indonesia, a country with a Muslim-majority population, these interpretations contribute to social stigma that impacts educational inclusion. This stigma not only limits access to quality education for students with disabilities but also exacerbates discrimination in schools. The following discusses direct examples along with their impacts on educators and policymakers.

Direct Examples of the Influence of Erroneous Interpretations in the Educational Environment. In Indonesia, stigma toward disability is often linked to religious beliefs that the condition is punishment for the sins of parents or family, which contradicts authentic hadiths that view disability as a merciful trial (Bazna, Maysaa S., and Tarek A. Hatab, 2005). Concrete examples can be seen in rural schools in Java and Sulawesi, where students who are blind or physically impaired are often ostracized by peers because they are considered to “bring bad luck” or a “divine curse.” a study in Makassar, South Sulawesi, community respondents revealed that this stigma arises from erroneous

interpretations of Qur'anic verses and hadiths, such as associating disability with punishment for sin, leading to verbal and physical bullying of students with disabilities in schools (Frontiers in Sociology study on stigma in Makassar, 2025).

For instance, in inclusive elementary schools in Central Java, students with autism are often prohibited from participating in group activities because teachers and parents believe their condition results from "ancestral sins," causing these students to experience social isolation and declining academic performance (UNICEF Indonesia, 2023). In pesantren (traditional Islamic schools), this stigma is even stronger due to the mix of pre-Islamic cultural influences with narrow hadith interpretations, resulting in students with disabilities rarely being accepted or provided with special accommodations, such as poor physical accessibility. A UNICEF survey indicates that nearly 30% of children with disabilities in Indonesia do not access education, partly because this stigma makes parents reluctant to enroll their children in regular schools.

Impact on Educators

These erroneous interpretations have a significant impact on educators, who are often influenced by social and religious stigma, thereby hindering their ability to implement inclusive education. In Indonesia, many teachers believe that disability is a "bad fate" due to sin, leading to reduced empathy and reluctance to provide accommodations such as adaptive teaching or assistive tools (Rispler Chaim, Vardit, 2007). For example, in research at Islamic universities in Indonesia, educators admitted difficulty in integrating students with disabilities due to fear of "violating religious norms" that they misunderstood, resulting in burnout and low teaching motivation. This impact also includes a lack of training; teachers are often untrained in handling students with disabilities, exacerbated by stigma, thereby increasing student absenteeism and academic failure rates. Consequently, educators become part of the stigma cycle, unwittingly reinforcing discrimination through non-inclusive teaching practices.

Impact on Policymakers

At the policymaker level, these erroneous interpretations hinder the formulation and implementation of inclusive education policies. In Indonesia, despite Law of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, religious stigma often becomes a barrier to budget allocation and national programs. For example, at the provincial level such as in Aceh, which implements Islamic law, policymakers tend to neglect disability issues viewing them as "personal matters" or divine punishment, resulting in minimal funding for inclusive school infrastructure. Studies show that this stigma leads to discriminatory policies, such as the lack of anti-bullying regulations based on disability, impacting student marginalization and the ineffectiveness of programs like Inclusive Schools promoted by the Ministry of Education. The long-term impact is inequality in educational access, where policymakers fail to integrate authentic Islamic perspectives (such as equality in hadiths) into the curriculum, thereby maintaining the status quo of stigma.

Suggestions for Correcting Misconceptions

To correct these erroneous interpretations, it is recommended: (1) Integration of inclusive religious education into teacher curricula, emphasizing holistic hadith interpretation; (2) Anti-stigma campaigns by the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Education, in collaboration with ulama; (3) Training for policymakers on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to ensure human rights-based policies. Thematic Analysis (Mawdhu'i): Reconstructing an Inclusive Understanding of Hadith A thematic (mawdhu'i) analysis reveals that the core message of the relevant hadiths is not punishment, but rather the elevation of human dignity and spiritual empowerment. The synthesis of these hadiths affirms three theological pillars that support inclusive education: Equality of Dignity and Rejection of Stigma The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Inna Allāha lā yanẓuru ilā ṣuwarikum wa-amwālikum, wa-lākin yanẓuru ilā qulūbikum wa-a'mālikum." "Indeed, Allah does not look at your physical forms or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds." (Reported by Muslim, no. 2564; Nur Kholis, 2021) This hadith explicitly invalidates any stigma based on physical condition. Disability, therefore, does not diminish a person's inherent human dignity. Consequently, persons with disabilities must be treated equally in all aspects of life, including their right to education (Dedi Supriyadi, 2018).

Inclusive education is a practical manifestation of this hadith within the social system. The hadith rejects human judgment based on outward appearance (*ṣūrah*), thereby providing a foundation for eliminating stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities in educational settings. Spiritual Reward and Equality for Persons with Disabilities Who Strive in the Path of Allah. It is narrated that 'Amr ibn al-Jamūh, who had a limp, came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked: "O Messenger of Allah, what do you think if I fight in the way of Allah and I am killed—will I walk in Paradise on this leg of mine without limping?" The Prophet replied, "Yes." 'Amr was later martyred at Uhud, and as the Prophet passed by his body, he said: "It is as though I can see you walking in Paradise on this leg of yours, completely healed." (Reported by Ahmad, no. 22553; Ahmad Bahrul Hikam, 2023)

The Universal Obligation to Seek Knowledge Anas ibn Mālik reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Ṭalab al-ʿilmi farīḍatun ʿalā kulli muslim. Wa man waḍaʿa al-ʿilma ʿinda ghayri ahlihi fa-ka-man tallaḥa al-luʿluʿa wa al-jawhara wa al-dhahaba fī aʿnāqi al-khanāzīr." "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim. And whoever places knowledge with those who are not worthy of it is like one who puts pearls, gems, and gold around the necks of swine." (Al-Qazwīnī, n.d., Hadith no. 224; Arbain Nurdin & M. Uzaer Damairi, 2021) The word *farīḍah* unequivocally means "obligation." Thus, the Prophet emphatically declared that seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim without exception.

Educational (Tarbawī) Analysis and Neuroscientific Perspective Linguistic analysis of Qur'anic terms related to learning (*ṭalaba*, *darasa*, *ta'allama*) and contemporary neuroscience both confirm the universal nature of education. Neuroscience shows that a newborn child possesses approximately 100 billion brain cells, but synaptic connections are minimal at birth. By age three, the brain forms around 1,000 trillion synapses (Erwin Hafid, 2017). This rapid development underscores that every child, regardless of physical or cognitive condition, has enormous learning

potential when provided with appropriate stimulation and access. International Human Rights Framework The principle of the indivisibility of human rights is clearly reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 6(1)–(2) recognizes every child’s inherent right to life and obliges states to ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the child’s survival and development. Other articles guarantee moral, spiritual, social, and cultural development, as well as access to information and freedom of expression (Lusia Palulungan et al., 2020). Conclusion of the Author Although legal and textual frameworks for inclusion already exist, greater practical contribution and sensitivity toward children with disabilities are urgently needed. For education to be truly effective, we must emulate the pedagogical methods of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), who is the best of teachers. Mu‘āwiyah ibn al-Ḥakam said: “By my father and mother, I have never seen a teacher before him nor after him better in teaching than he.” Among the Prophet’s methods were: teaching creed and monotheism, instilling Islamic manners, educating through light-hearted interaction, giving rewards, commanding prayer, using questions, fostering trustworthiness, avoiding constant blame or public shaming, prohibiting the unlawful, and encouraging open discussion (Abu Hafizhah Irfan, 2022).

Sanad Criticism: All Cited Hadiths Are Ṣaḥīḥ Through the science of rijāl al-ḥadīth, the chains of transmission of the hadiths presented above have been verified as authentic (ṣaḥīḥ), including those narrated by Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, and Bukhārī. Key Inclusive Principles Derived from Authentic Hadiths The Obligation of Knowledge as the Strongest Foundation for Inclusive Education The hadith “Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim” (Ibn Mājah) is the most powerful textual basis. The phrase “every Muslim” admits no exception based on physical or mental condition. Its inclusive implication is clear: if knowledge is obligatory, then the state and society are equally obliged to provide accessible means and reasonable accommodation. Any form of segregation contradicts the universal spirit of this hadith (Mohammad Takdir Ilahi, 2013).

The Prophetic Example and the Rejection of Discrimination (Q.S. ‘Abasa) The strongest textual evidence against segregation is the incident of ‘Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm (the blind Companion) that prompted the revelation of Sūrat ‘Abasa (80:1–10). Allah rebuked the Prophet for momentarily turning away from the blind Companion who eagerly sought knowledge: “He frowned and turned away because the blind man came to him.” (Q.S. ‘Abasa: 1–2) (M. Quraish Shihab, 2017) Contemporary tafsirs, particularly Tafsīr al-Miṣbāḥ, explain that this divine rebuke constitutes a severe criticism of any discriminatory priority in delivering knowledge, even if unintentional (M. Quraish Shihab, 2009, 2017). From that moment onward, the Prophet greatly honored Ibn Umm Maktūm, appointing him as mu’adhdhin and even leaving him in charge of Madinah during military expeditions. Spiritual Compensation and Motivation for Persons with Disabilities Allah says: “Man adhhabtu ḥabībatayhi fa-ṣabara wa iḥtasaba lam arḍa lahu thawāban dūna al-jannah.” “Whoever I deprive of his two most beloved possessions (his eyesight) and he remains patient and seeks reward, I will not be satisfied for him with any reward less than Paradise.” (Reported by Tirmidhī, no. 2401; Dedi Supriyadi, 2018)

In pre-Islamic society, persons with physical impairments were often denied equal rights and duties. The Prophet overturned this norm by granting Ibn Umm Maktūm full participation in communal prayer, calling the adhān, and leadership

responsibilities—clear proof that enthusiasm for learning and worship must never be restricted by disability. The author concludes that individuals with disabilities who demonstrate eagerness to learn must be prioritized, which directly mandates a responsive, inclusive education system that places the needs of every student at its center. Implications for the Practice of Inclusive Education in Indonesia According to Ilahi, inclusive education should not focus on the deficiencies and limitations of children with special needs, but rather on their strengths and potential so that these can be further developed. There are four characteristics of inclusive education: (1) a flexible curriculum, (2) flexible learning approaches, (3) a flexible evaluation system, and (4) child-friendly learning (Syarniah et al., 2025). Children with disabilities are part of human diversity. Just as there are men and women, tall and short, black and white, adults and children, so too are there persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities. Therefore, children with disabilities possess the same inalienable human rights as all other human beings—rights that cannot be reduced, restricted, obstructed, let alone revoked or taken away by anyone (Riksm Nurakhmi et al., 2018).

The re-interpretation of the Prophet's hadiths must serve as a foundation for strengthening the practice of inclusive education. This includes: Strengthening the Ethics of Educators: Educators must possess prophetic empathy and view children with special needs (ABK) as individuals who have equal potential and rights, not as burdens. Provision of Reasonable Accommodation based on the Principle of Rukhsah (concession/easement) in Islamic jurisprudence: This principle must be translated into the provision of accessible learning environments and individually modified curricula according to each child's needs, rather than being used as a justification for segregating them (Nasir F., 2022).

In the Qur'an, human beings are described as creatures appointed by God as khalīfah (vicegerent/representative) on earth. As representatives on earth, humans are certainly created with various excellences and abilities to live well in the world. Allah SWT states in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 30: *Wa idh qāla rabbuka lil-malā'ikati innī jā'ilun fī al-ardhi khalīfatan qālū ataj'alu fihā man yufsidu fihā wa yasfiku ad-dimā'a wa nahnu nusabbihu bihamdika wa nuqaddisu lak, qāla innī a'lamu mā lā ta'lamūn.*“ And [mention] when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority (khalīfah).’ They said, ‘Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know that which you do not know.’” (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30) In the Qur'an, the word khalīfah means “successor,” “leader,” “ruler,” or “steward of the universe.” Thus, humans have been endowed with a far more perfect intellect than any other creature of God. With this intellectual capacity, humans can develop their potential and fulfill their function as God's representatives on earth.

Furthermore, a hadith states that every child is born in a state of fitrah (natural disposition), so their tongue is fluent (in goodness); it is their parents who then make them Jewish, Christian, or Magian (reported by Abu Ya'la, Tabrani, and Baihaqi; see Sofyan, 2010). From this, it can be understood that good behavior is strongly influenced by family life. For young children, the concept of goodness is shaped by whatever is permitted and approved by their parents. Children absorb good examples and behavior

from their parents and siblings by observing, imitating, and following without initially questioning what is truly good or bad.

Wahbah az-Zuhaili explained: “We are the Ones who have divided livelihoods and fortunes among Our servants, and We have given some of them superiority in degree over others—in strength and weakness, knowledge and ignorance, fame and obscurity, wealth and poverty—because if We made them equal, mutual assistance among them would not occur, cooperation would be impossible, and some would not become a means of sustenance for others. If that were the case, the order of the universe would be ruined” (Lembaga Bahtsul Masail PBNU, 2018). Persons with limitations in physical, mental, or intellectual aspects are referred to as persons with disabilities or *difabel*. During his caliphate, Sayyidina Umar ibn al-Khattab was deeply concerned that he might be held accountable in the Hereafter for any negligence in providing the best service to his citizens. He once said: “If a young goat (*jady*) were to die on the banks of the Euphrates, I fear that Allah would hold Umar accountable for its death.”

And in another narration: “If a camel were to die in vain because of a policy, I fear that Allah will hold me accountable for its death on the Day of Judgment” (reported by Imam Bukhari; see Lembaga Bahtsul Masail PBNU, 2018). Sayyidina Umar ibn al-Khattab’s statements reflect the immense responsibility of the state to provide the best possible service to all its citizens. In the context of persons with disabilities, the state bears the responsibility of ensuring that they can live comfortably. Public spaces must be made disability-friendly and fully accessible.

CONCLUSION

The misinterpretation of Prophetic hadiths concerning disability, which has often led to stigma and the perpetuation of stigma and the justification of segregation, must be decisively corrected. Through a thematic (*mawḍūʿī*) analysis, it has been clearly demonstrated that Islamic teachings, particularly the Hadith corpus, strongly support inclusive education by emphasizing equal access to knowledge and unwavering respect for the dignity of every human being. The universal principle of *ṭalab al-ʿilm* (seeking knowledge as an obligation upon all Muslims) and the exemplary conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) toward Ibn Umm Maktūm, the blind Companion, constitute a robust theological foundation for the genuine inclusive education. These findings carry significant implications for educational institutions in Indonesia, compelling a paradigm shift among educators: from merely “serving” children with special needs (ABK) to profoundly honoring their inherent human dignity.

Institutions are further urged to provide flexible resources and adaptable curricula as a concrete manifestation of obedience to the universal command to seek knowledge. In summary, a rigorous re-examination of commonly misinterpreted hadiths on disability reveals that erroneous understandings frequently contradict the egalitarian spirit of Islam. When properly contextualized, these very hadiths emerge as powerful theological foundations for inclusive policies that affirm the dignity of persons with disabilities as an integral part of human *fitrah* (natural disposition). As a recommendation for future research, the development of madrasah curricula that

systematically integrate emancipatory tafsir is strongly encouraged. Such an approach will help prevent the intergenerational reproduction of stigma and foster a truly inclusive Islamic educational environment for generations to come.

Public policy in Indonesia toward persons with disabilities has shown significant progress since the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) through Law No. 19 of 2011, followed by the enactment of Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities as the primary foundation for respect, protection, and fulfillment of rights (Republic of Indonesia Law, 2011). In 2025, this commitment has been strengthened through the integration of disability issues into the Government Work Plan (RKP) 2025 and the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029, with a focus on improving access to employment, skills training, disability-friendly infrastructure, and socioeconomic mobility (Kemenko PMK, 2025). Programs such as the expansion of social assistance (PKH and BPNT), the National Single Socioeconomic Data System (DTSEN) for data validation, and digital inclusion initiatives mark concrete steps by the government to reduce stigma and promote equality (Unicef, 2023).

Nevertheless, implementation still faces challenges, including lack of cross-sector coordination, incompletely integrated data, and the influence of sociocultural stigma that hinders access to education, health, and employment (ghaly, Mohammed, 2010). Overall, Indonesia's public policies have shifted toward a human rights paradigm and sustainable inclusion, aligned with *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, they require strengthened derivative regulations, data-based monitoring, and active participation from organizations of persons with disabilities to achieve more effective rights fulfillment.

Recommendations for policymakers include: (1) accelerating the formulation of government regulations derived from Law No. 8/2016; (2) integrating inclusive education and anti-stigma efforts into the national curriculum; and (3) increasing regional budget allocations for infrastructure and empowerment programs, in order to realize a truly inclusive Indonesia for persons with disabilities.

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