



# Seven Challenges for Arabic Department Students in Memorizing Hadith

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## Abstract

Memorizing hadith is an activity that cannot be separated from the routine of Islamic studies students in fulfilling the demands of the course. But in reality there are still students who have difficulty memorizing hadith. So it is necessary to conduct a study to find out these difficulties. This study aims to find out how the difficulties of students in memorizing hadith. This research uses qualitative methods with the type of case study. The research data were taken through direct interviews with eleven students at one of the Arabic language education institutions in Padang, Indonesia. All interview data were then analyzed thematically using the Miles and Huberman analysis technique. The findings of the study showed seven difficulties of students in memorizing hadith, the seven difficulties are i) not proficient in reading Arabic texts, ii) not knowing the translation of hadith, iii) not understanding the content of hadith, iv) not used to memorizing hadith, v) laziness often arises, vi) the *matan* of hadith is too long, vii) the *mufradat* in hadith is *garibab*. The findings in this study have proven that students experience difficulties in memorizing hadith. The results of this study can be used as a reference for further research in examining this discussion in other contexts.

## INTRODUCTION

The word memorization comes from the word **حفظ - يحفظ** which means to guard and protect. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word memorize comes from the word hafal, which means that it has entered the memory of the lesson or can say it outside the head without looking at books or other notes. Then it gets the prefix me- to memorize which means trying to sink into the mind so that it always remembers. Etymologically hadith has three meanings; first, new (*jadid*) as opposed to old (*qadim*). Its plural forms are hidats, hudatsa, huduts. Second, the word hadith means near (*qarib*) as opposed to far (*ba'id*). Hadith is something that comes from the Prophet, what comes from the companions, and some even think that hadith is everything that is conveyed by the *tabi'in* (Juliana, 2018). Hadith according to the term hadith experts is something that is attributed to the Prophet in the form of speech, actions, applications, characteristics or his sirah, either before prophethood or after (Eljannah et al., 2023).

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Hadith is everything that comes from the Prophet Muhammad in the form of *qaul, fi'il, taqrir*, bodily characteristics and morals which are intended by him as *tasyri'* (legislation) for Muslims. The ability to memorize hadith is the ability or proficiency of an individual in mastering an expertise in memorizing hadith spoken outside the head without seeing a book or notes from the learning material (Yuanita & Kurniawati, 2019).

Memorizing hadith is very important because the Quran and Hadith are the main guidelines for human life, by memorizing the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad will increase one's confidence to follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, someone who memorizes the hadith will be easy to show and tell the hadith which is the legal basis for an act to others. As a source of law that is determined as the second source in Islam after the Quran, therefore understanding the hadith becomes an absolute part and needs to be known, understood, and studied by Muslims, especially for those who want to explore the science of *tashri'* or who make it the basis or basis for determining the provisions of sharia (Rahma et al., 2024). In accordance with the words of Allah Quran surah An-Nisa':80

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِظًا

Meaning: *Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah. But whoever turns away, then know that We have not sent you O Prophet as a keeper over them.*

Ibn Katsir in his Tafsir says, Allah informs about His servant and Messenger, Muhammad that whoever obeys him, obeys Allah. Whoever disobeys him disobeys Allah. One of the forms of obeying the Prophet is by following his hadith and sunnah, therefore it is very important to study the hadith of the prophet in order to understand the words, actions and decrees as well as the nature and behavior of the prophet. Hadith lessons are absolutely necessary for those who are involved in the world of Islamic education.

However, students often experience difficulties learning Hadith such as material that is difficult to understand, drowsiness, difficulty in memorizing, lack of ability to write and read Arabic texts (Santoso et al., 2020). Research related to memorization difficulties has been widely studied by previous researchers in general, there are 16,200 number of articles related to the difficulty of memorizing hadith based on the author's search on digital academics on Google Scholar, as for these articles including (Akhmar et al., 2021; Arfah, 2020; Fadholi et al., 2022; Fatiatun & Majid, 2023; Fauzi et al., 2022; Firdausi, 2017; Harahap, 2023; Hidayah & Hermansyah, 2018; Khalijah et al., 2023; Khatun, 2016; Khoiri et al., 2023; Mardiyah Hayati, Aqodiah, 2020; Nasier, 2020; Rofii, 2022; Roly, 2017; Sa'adah & Muqowim, 2020; Solikhudin & Khamim, 2021; Zarnuji, 2017). However, the above research focuses on students who are still at the elementary school, junior high school, and high school levels. The fundamental difference of this study is that the researcher makes students of the Arabic language program as the object, the author tries to find the difficulties of students in memorizing hadith at one of the Arabic language educational institutions in West Sumatra, Indonesia.

## METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a type of case study (case study design), a case study is a type of research if the researcher wants to observe in depth the phenomenon or event both individually and in community groups (Arifin et al.,

2024; Engkizar et al., 2023; Jaafar et al., 2023; Nafisah et al., 2025; Qomari et al., 2022). Referring to the above opinion, related to the issues and problems that the author raises in this study, this type of research is very appropriate to use (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016; Hewitt, 2017; Martell, 2017; Murniyetti et al., 2016). Data sources were taken from eleven informants consisting of eleven students at one of the Arabic language education institutions in West Sumatra, Indonesia, namely Ma'had Ibnu Zubair Padang. Data were collected using a set of interview protocols created by the author and validated by one methodology expert. Informant selection was determined using purposive sampling technique. The selection of informants refers to four criteria, namely having the competence to understand well the problem under study, still active in the field under study, having time to provide information to researchers, and being honest in providing information according to the data and facts that occur in the field (Elkhaira et al., 2020; Engkizar et al., 2018; Kasmar et al., 2019; Rahawarin et al., 2020).

After the interviews were completed with all informants, the interview data were transcribed and themes were drawn according to the objectives and needs of the research data. Thematic analysis is one of the analytical techniques that researchers can use in analyzing interview results so that they can be seen clearly and easily understood by readers (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Engkizar et al., 2022, 2024; Oktavia et al., 2023). Thematic analysis can be done so that researchers can easily display research results (Engkizar et al., 2024; Febriani et al., 2023).

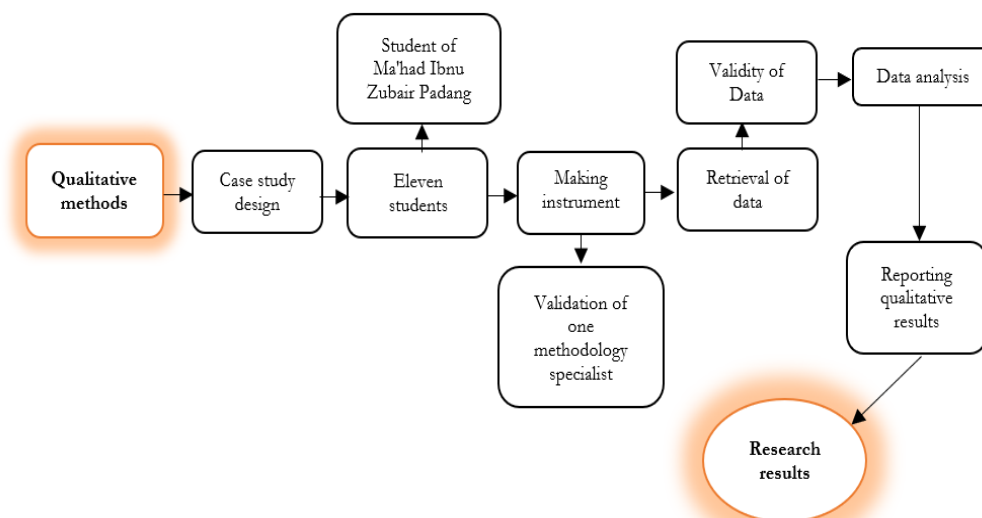


Fig 1. Steps qualitative research

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis, the researchers found seven difficulties of students in memorizing hadith, namely not being proficient in reading Arabic texts, not knowing the translation of hadith, not understanding the content of hadith, not being accustomed to memorizing hadith, often feeling lazy, the *matan* of the hadith is too long, the *mufradat* in the hadith is *garibah*. The findings can be seen in the following figure.



**Fig 2. Students' difficulties in memorizing hadith**

Research and issues related to the aspects of difficulty in memorizing hadith have been widely studied in the world of education, especially in the process of learning the Quran and Hadith. However, previous studies only focused on pre-college students, namely early childhood education, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and boarding schools. For example, the results of research on the application of the movement method for memorizing hadith in children or learning to memorize hadith using the Kauny method, the application of gamification of memorizing the Quran and android-based hadith using the scott method, the development of animated video media for the ability to memorize hadith in early childhood, the transmission and transformation of memorizing the Quran and Hadith at the Al-Aqobah Islamic boarding school, improving the ability to memorize hadith in students with lafdhiyah translation (Fathurrobbani, 2021).

Difficulties in memorizing hadith also stem from extrinsic elements, which are related to the circumstances of the hadith. Related to the difficulties of students in memorizing hadith at one of the Arabic language educational institutions in West Sumatra, Indonesia. The results of the research actually found seven difficulties of students of the Arabic department in memorizing hadith. In order to be more interesting, the author will discuss these seven difficulties based on theory, expert opinion and the results of previous studies that discuss this problem in the context and issues that are more or less the same.

The first is the inadequate ability to read Arabic texts. As stated by the informant in the following interview.

*Less understanding of letters and punctuation in Arabic, causing students to have difficulty in recognizing the difference between similar Arabic letters (informant 1), lack of regular reading practice, reading Arabic requires habituation so that the tongue gets used to the pronunciation, without consistent practice it will be difficult to improve reading skills (informant 2).*

Reading Arabic texts just like reading the Quran and hadith or other readings certainly requires habituation and this is a staple of Islamic learning. In the learning process of Islamic subjects, the ability to read the Quran properly and correctly is a very important basic ability, in addition to the ability to understand the meaning and

content of certain verses. Reading Arabic text also helps students understand the learning material. Memorization is the first step to understanding the content of knowledge that is done after the process of reading properly and correctly. The ability to read Arabic texts greatly affects the process of memorizing hadith. If students are fluent in reading Arabic texts, they will continue the second stage, namely understanding the translation and repeating the hadith until memorization, if they are still stammering then the first step is to smooth the reading.

The second is that students do not know the translation of hadith, as stated by the following informant during the interview.

*Understanding the basics of the Arabic language, especially in grammar and vocabulary often used in the hadith will greatly help in understanding the meaning of the hadith more accurately.*  
(informant 4)

Literally, translation means copying or transferring a conversation from one language to another, or in short, translating, while translation, means a copy of the language, or transfer of language from one language to another, translation, which in English is known as translation, and in Arabic literature is known as translation is an effort to copy or replace one language through another language so that it is understood by others who are unable to understand the original or original language. The Quran and hadith are the guidelines for Muslims who use Arabic, so there is no other way to know the teachings of Islam other than understanding Arabic. Understanding Arabic is part of religion, understanding Arabic will familiarize Muslims with communicating using Arabic. Knowing the translation of hadith is an easy way to memorize, people who understand the meaning and content of the verses to be memorized will find it easier to memorize them (Hakim, 2020; Muqoddasah, 2019; Putri et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2018). Referring to the above opinions and sources, it can be said that understanding the translation of hadith greatly supports the success of memorizing Hadith. Students who know the Hadith translation can record the Hadith and its translation simultaneously, this creates a systematic memorization in the minds of students.

The third is that students do not understand the content of the hadith. This difficulty was conveyed by the informant as in the following interview.

*Understanding hadith cannot be instantaneous, but requires a continuous learning process with proper guidance* (informant 3)

The Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad is in Arabic just like the Quran. Memorizing Hadith is not much different from memorizing the Quran, in the process of memorizing the Quran, a person not only reads and tries to memorize outside the head, but also tries to live and meditate on the readings he has read and memorized. There is another way that can help in the process of memorizing and remembering, namely by knowing the general content of the verse and its relationship with other verses. The most appropriate step is to read the general content of the verse using global interpretation. The difficulty of memorizing is due to the number of students who do not know the content and then memorize it. Referring to the opinions and sources above, it is clear that knowledge of the content of the Hadith greatly supports the success of memorizing Hadith. Students who know the content of the Hadith find it easier to remember the continuation of the Hadith, and if they forget it, they can relate it to its content.

The fourth is not being used to memorizing hadith. This difficulty was conveyed by the informant in the following interview.

*This is a common problem, many have memorized one hadith, but after a few days forgot*



*again. The solution to this problem is to repeat the memorization regularly because it is often repeated or read, the tongue will be more adept at pronouncing it because it is not used to memorizing hadith (informant 10)*

Hadiths have a different structure from the Quran. In general, there are three structures that make up the hadith: the *sanad*, which linguistically means backing, a place to lean on, a place to hold on to, a trusted one, a legitimate one. Whereas in terms the *sanad* is a lineage of several people (who narrate the hadith) connecting it with the *matan* of the hadith. Then the second structure is the *matan* according to the language *matan* means the back of the road (front of the road) hard and high ground. While the *matan* according to the term is the sound or sentence contained in the hadith which is the content of the narration. Whether the hadith is in the form of *qaul* (speech), *fi'il* (action), and *taqrir* (decree and so on) of the Messenger of Allah (Rahman, 2016).

The third structure is the *rawi*, the *rawi* is the one who conveys or writes down in a book what he has heard and received from someone (his teacher). The plural is *ruwah* and the act of conveying a hadith is called narrating a hadith. A hadith reaches a person in the form in which it has been registered in the hadith councils through several narrators and *sanad*. An author when he wants to corroborate a tradition that has been transmitted from a book of hadith generally affixes the name of his last narrator at the end of the text of the tradition. As in the following fragment of the hadith.

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ عَنْ مَالِكٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي صَعْصَعَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرَ مَالِ الْمُسْلِمِ غَنَمٌ يَتْبَعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ الْقَطْرِ يَفِرُّ بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ (رواه البخاري)

Meaning: *Abdullah ibn Maslamah reported to us from Malik reported to us from Abdur-Rahman ibn Abdur-Rahman ibn Abu Sha'Sha'ah reported to us from his father reported to us from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "There will come a time when the best of a Muslim's wealth will be the goats that he grazes on the mountain tops and in the most secluded places, and he will go away with his religion for fear of being fitnah (temptation) (HR. Bukhari)*

Referring to the results of the interview, the difficulty of memorizing the hadith encountered by the informant is in the hadith *sanad* section, a long section consisting of the names of the narrators, the series of hadith narrators (*sanad*) spread out to be more and longer, Indonesians are not accustomed to memorizing names like this, in contrast to Arabs who are accustomed to memorizing the *nasab* (family tree), this is also relevant according to the statement and who said that after the Prophet Muhammad died, the *takbrij* hadith activity was important because the *sanad* genealogy was getting longer. Therefore, it would be difficult for people to memorize the complete hadith with its *sanad* up to the prophet Muhammad.

Fifth is the frequent onset of laziness. Students of the Arabic department have difficulty in memorizing hadith because of their laziness. This statement was conveyed by the informant as in the following interview.

*Laziness in memorizing hadith is a common challenge experienced by many people, the cause can come from a lack of motivation to the temptation of the environment, to the method used is not appropriate (informant 9)*

Lazy is a plural and frequent mistake, lazy sometimes also arises from positive energy that is not channeled properly, feeling lazy in humans is an instinctive attitude but can cause problems if lazy is sustainable, and laziness can hinder the development of memorization. Therefore, for a student, we must really keep the word lazy away in undergoing lecture activities in addition to expecting rewards, students must also get grades in hadith lessons (Agustina et al., 2020). Referring to the opinions and sources above, we cannot deny the emergence of laziness in us, not only in learning but in all activities, but we cannot make this a reason to stop trying to do the best we can.

The sixth is that the *matan* of the hadith is too long. As the following informant stated during the interview.

*Hadiths that are long usually have a lot of information in a series of sentences, so they require special focus and strategy in memorizing them (informant 5), even though the matan of the hadith is long, it does not mean that it should be shortened in the memorization process if we only memorize part of the hadith without understanding its overall relationship, there is a risk of losing the important meaning contained in it (informant 6).*

It is known that the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad are numerous and vary in the number of words in the *matan*, some consisting of only one or two sentences.

حُبُّ الْأَنْصَارِ آيَةُ الْإِيمَانِ وَبُغْضُهُمْ آيَةُ النِّفَاقِ (رواه مسلم)

Meaning: *Loving the Ansar is a sign of faith, and hating them is a sign of hypocrisy* (HR. Muslim)

Until it consists of ten or more sentences:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمًا بَارِئًا لِلنَّاسِ فَأَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْإِيمَانُ قَالَ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلِقَائِهِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْأَخِرِ قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْإِسْلَامُ قَالَ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَتَقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ الْمَكْتُوبَةَ وَتُؤَدِيَ الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْإِحْسَانُ قَالَ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَا تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَتَى السَّاعَةُ قَالَ مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ وَلَكِنْ سَأَحْدِثُكَ عَنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا إِذَا وَلَدَتْ الْأُمَةُ رَبَّتَهَا فَذَلِكَ مِنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا وَإِذَا تَطَاوَلَ رِغَاءُ الْعَنَمِ فِي النَّبِيِّانِ فَذَلِكَ مِنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا فِي خَمْسٍ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَتَلَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ { إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَادَّا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ } الْآيَةَ (رواه ابن ماجه)

Meaning: *One day when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was among the Muslims, a man came and asked: "O Messenger of Allah, what is faith?" He replied: "You believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, His meeting, and you believe in the resurrection on the last day." He asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is Islam?" he replied: "You worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, establish the obligatory prayers, pay the obligatory zakat, and fast in the month of Ramadhan." He asked again: "O Messenger of Allah, what is ihsan?" he replied: "You worship Allah as if you see Him. If you do not see Him, He sees you." He asked again: "O Messenger of Allah, when is the Hour?" He replied: "The one who is asked does not know better than the one who asks. But I will tell you about the signs; when a slave girl gives birth to her master's child, that is one of the signs. In these five (keys to the unseen) no one knows except Allah." Then the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recited the verse: "Verily, Allah, with Him alone is the knowledge of the Hour; and it is He Who sends down the rain, and knows what is in the womb. And no one can know (with certainty) what he will do tomorrow. And no one can know on which earth he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing."*

Based on the results of the interviews, the difference in the length of the hadith *matan* affects the informants' motivation in memorizing Hadith. The informants experienced boredom when memorizing hadith that had a long *matan*, while for relatively short hadith, the informants claimed to have no problems in memorizing them.

Seventh is the *mufradat* (vocabulary) in Hadith *Garibah*, the Arabic language continues to develop along with the times, even the Arabic language at the time of the Prophet Muhammad was different from the time of the writing of books or books of Hadith commentaries, so they find it difficult to understand some of the meanings of the Hadith and the words contained in the Hadith texts are not popular among them. This challenge was conveyed by the informant in the following interview.

*Some of the mufradat in gharibah hadith are difficult to find in other classical texts, so the interpretation is more difficult (informant 7), The mufradat in gharibah hadith are often a challenge in the study of hadith because of dialectal differences, changes in the meaning of words, and the use of terms that are rarely used and the interpretation is more difficult (informant 8), Lack of mufradat is one of the factors of difficulty in translating hadith, so many mufradat are needed in order to translate hadith (informant 11)*

The Arabic language has undergone acculturation with non-Arabic languages due to the large number of non-Arabs who converted to Islam, this event occurred when the companions of the Prophet Muhammad spread throughout the countries of Islamic rule. As a result of this acculturation, many Arabic vocabulary words that were popular during the early generations have become rare and even no longer used in the community after them. This fact has an impact on the interpretation of the Quran and the understanding of Hadith. The scholars, seeing the phenomenon that occurred at that time, took the initiative to create a book explaining the unfamiliar words of many traditions with the aim of making the traditions easy to understand. Words that are difficult to understand are known as *garib* (foreign), these words exist in the Quran (*garib Alquran*) and also in the hadith (*garib al-Hadis*), while the science that discusses foreign words is known as *garib al-hadis* or *garib Quran*. It is undeniable that the presence of this *mufradat garibah* adds to the twists and turns of the hadith memorization process. In addition to having to have its own knowledge to understand it, *mufradat garibah* as the name implies, is foreign to the ears of students even though they have studied Arabic, this vocabulary has never been used in daily lessons and conversations.

## CONCLUSION

Memorizing hadith is a must for students studying Islam. This should not be avoided or disliked because the hadith is the second source of law for Muslims. The seven difficulties in memorizing hadith are a portrait of the earnestness of knowledge seekers in preserving the legacy of the Prophet. The seven challenges are not being proficient in reading Arabic texts, not knowing the translation of the hadith, not understanding the content of the hadith, not being accustomed to memorizing the hadith, often arising laziness, the motto of the hadith is too long, the *mufradat* in the hadith is *garibah*. With the findings of this study, the author suggests to future researchers to multiply related studies on this issue so that the literature of academics and the public will be richer and more diverse.

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## DECLARATIONS

### Author contribution

**Wulandari:** Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation, **Syaza El Millah:** Writing-Reviewing and Editing, **Torkis Lubis:** Visualization, Conceptualization, **Zainul Arifin:** Supervision, Formal analysis, Methodology, Validation.

### AI Statement

The data and the grammatical structure in this article have been validated and verified by English language experts and no AI-generated sentences are included in this article.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that this research was conducted without any conflict of interest in the research.

### Ethical clearance

The research company has agreed to carry out the research and is willing if the results of this research are published.

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