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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HADITH "MAN SALAKA THARĪQAN YALTAMISU FĪHI 'ILMAN" ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC MOTIVATION: A CASE STUDY OF STDIIS JEMBER STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Academic motivation is a critical element influencing student success in Islamic higher education. This study examines the integration of Islamic theological values, specifically the Prophetic tradition (hadith) "Man salaka thariqan yaltamisu fihi 'ilman," in fostering academic drive based on Suratman's (2019) motivational framework. The objective of this research is to analyze the textual interpretation (sharah) of the hadith and investigate its practical implementation and behavioral implications on the academic motivation of students at STDI Imam Syafi'i Jember. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving 5 distinct subject categories: a scholarship recipient, a high-knowledge student, an average-knowledge student, a low-knowledge student, and a student organization activist, spanning from semester 4 to the final semester. Primary data collection was conducted through in-depth structured interviews, academic observations, and documentary analysis. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's iterative thematic reduction, verification, and triangulation techniques. The results reveal that a profound comprehension of the prophetic promise—which bridges the arduous pursuit of knowledge with spiritual salvation—acts as a potent intrinsic motivator across all categories, shifting the academic paradigm to an act of spiritual devotion (ibadah). Scholarship recipients are driven by accountability, while high-knowledge students aim for scholarly authenticity (itqan). Conversely, low-knowledge students highly depend on the supportive religious environment (bi'ah shalihah) to maintain their learning resilience against structural challenges like unvocalized Arabic texts. The study concludes that embedding prophetic traditions within the core culture of higher education effectively aligns religious values with academic persistence, providing a robust psychological buffer for undergraduate students.

Keywords: Hadith Implementation; Academic Motivation; STDIIS Jember.

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INTRODUCTION

From the Islamic perspective, knowledge ('ilm) occupies an exceptionally noble position because it serves as the primary means through which human beings attain ma'rifatullah (knowledge of Allah) and fulfill their honorable responsibility as Allah's vicegerents (khalifah) on earth (Dzikriyah et al., 2026). Knowledge is not merely regarded as an intellectual or empirical necessity; rather, it is considered a spiritual obligation that every Muslim is required to pursue through thalabul 'ilm (the pursuit of knowledge). One of the principal Islamic sources that comprehensively emphasizes the virtue of seeking knowledge is the Prophetic tradition (Hadith) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Widiyanto et al., 2026). Among the most well-known traditions serving as a theological foundation for knowledge seekers is the saying of the Prophet:

"*Man salaka tharīqan yaltamisu fīhi ‘ilman, sahhala Allahu lahu bihi tharīqan ilā al-jannah."*
"Whoever follows a path in pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise."

Within Islamic higher education institutions, particularly at the Imam Shafi'i Islamic Institute (STDIIS) Jember, learning activities possess unique academic characteristics and demanding educational standards. Students are required to master classical Islamic literature written in unvocalized Arabic (kitab kuning), memorize the Qur'an and Hadith, and participate in intensive halaqah (study circle) learning traditions. These academic requirements demand extraordinary levels of perseverance and resilience. Empirical observations indicate that students' success in completing this rigorous curriculum is strongly influenced by one essential determinant, namely academic motivation.

To examine students' internal motivational dynamics, this study adopts Suratman's (2019) Academic Motivation Framework, which classifies learning motivation into six measurable dimensions: (1) the desire and determination to succeed, (2) learning needs and internal drive, (3) future aspirations and expectations, (4) appreciation and recognition in learning, (5) engaging learning activities, and (6) a supportive learning environment. Although these six indicators ideally function as driving forces for academic achievement, students demonstrate diverse motivational profiles due to differences in their educational backgrounds, personal characteristics, and sociological challenges. Consequently, the internalization of the prophetic tradition and its influence on motivation varies considerably among individuals.

Previous studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between religious values and academic motivation. Zulkipli (2022) reported that the internalization of religious values significantly enhances students' learning resilience against academic burnout. Likewise, Rahman (2021) concluded that a profound understanding of Hadith concerning the virtues of knowledge cultivates stable intrinsic motivation among Islamic boarding school students. Conversely, Ananda (2023) argued that contemporary university students are increasingly influenced by extrinsic motivations associated with employment demands, thereby gradually shifting away from the original spiritual orientation of seeking knowledge.

Despite these findings, a significant research gap remains. Very few studies have specifically investigated how the Hadith “Man salaka tharīqan yaltamisu fīhi ‘ilman” functions as a psychological framework for constructing academic motivation across students with diverse academic backgrounds using Suratman's (2019) motivational indicators. Therefore, this research aims to analyze five distinctive student profiles—scholarship recipients, high-achieving students, average-performing students, low-performing students, and student organization activists—at STDIIS Jember while examining how each group internalizes the prophetic tradition within the six dimensions of academic motivation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of the prophetic tradition (Hadith) within the academic environment of an Islamic higher education institution. The research was conducted at the Imam Shafi'i Islamic Institute (STDIIS) Jember, East Java, Indonesia. In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary instrument (human instrument) responsible for collecting data, interacting directly with participants, and interpreting the meanings of their experiences objectively.

The participants consisted of five students selected through purposive sampling. The small number of participants was intentionally chosen to ensure depth, specificity, and rich qualitative data representing diverse academic backgrounds. The participants represented five distinctive categories: (1) a scholarship recipient, (2) a high-achieving student, (3) an average-performing student, (4) a low-performing student, and (5) a student organization activist. They were selected from students in the fourth semester through the final semester to represent different levels of academic experience.

Data were collected using three primary techniques. First, structured in-depth interviews were conducted with all participants to explore their academic motivation, personal interpretation of the Hadith, and specific challenges encountered during their studies. Second, passive participant observation was carried out to examine students' daily academic activities, independent study (muthala'ah), and the religious-academic atmosphere (bi'ah shalihah) within the campus environment. Third, documentation analysis was performed by examining academic transcripts, scholarship records, and organizational activity reports.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview findings were categorized according to the six dimensions of academic motivation proposed by Suratman (2019). To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and methodological triangulation were employed throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the field study indicate that the Hadith "Man salaka ṭarīqan yaltamisu fīhi 'ilman" was universally understood by all five research participants. However, its implementation manifested in distinctly different patterns of academic motivation when analyzed using Suratman's (2019) academic motivation indicators. The relationship between the motivational indicators and the characteristics of each participant is presented sequentially in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Matrix of Students' Academic Motivation Orientation

Participant Category	Indicators	Primary Motivation Type	Analysis
S-1 (BS) Scholarship Recipient	Appreciation in Learning; Learning Needs and Internal Drive	Internalized Extrinsic Motivation	Academic motivation is driven by moral responsibility toward scholarship sponsors and the obligation to maintain financial support for educational and da'wah activities.
S-2 (PT) High-Achieving Student	Desire to Succeed; Engaging Learning Activities	Pure Intrinsic Motivation	Learning is motivated by the pursuit of scholarly excellence (itqan), authentic Islamic knowledge, and critical engagement with classical Islamic texts.
S-3 (PS) Average-Performing Student	Future Aspirations; Supportive Learning Environment	Pragmatic–Spiritual Motivation	Academic motivation reflects a balanced orientation between realistic graduation goals and continuous improvement in personal worship and religious commitment.
S-4 (PK) Low-Performing Student	Supportive Learning Environment; Future Aspirations	Mediated Extrinsic Motivation	The religious academic environment (bi'ah shalihah) serves as an academic support system, enabling students to overcome challenges in understanding classical Arabic texts.
S-5 (AO) Student Organization Activist	Desire to Succeed; Learning Needs and Internal Drive	Integrative (Dual-Focused) Motivation	Academic responsibilities are effectively integrated with leadership duties within student organizations while maintaining commitment to seeking knowledge.

Table 2. Characteristics of Participants and the Manifestation of the Hadith Implementation in Academic Motivation

Participant Category	Characteristics	Implementation of the Hadith and Its Impact on Academic Motivation
S-1 (BS) Scholarship Recipient	Required to maintain a satisfactory GPA and fulfill moral accountability regarding scholarship funding.	The Hadith transforms the extrinsic anxiety of losing the scholarship into intrinsic motivation to uphold the trust (amanah) of the scholarship providers and to continue pursuing knowledge sincerely for the sake of Allah and the advancement of da'wah.
S-2 (PT) High-Achieving Student	Outstanding academic performance (Mumtaz) and a high level of independent study (muthala'ah).	The Hadith suppresses feelings of pride (ujub) and reinforces the understanding that knowledge is an act of worship requiring scholarly excellence (itqan), humility, and sincerity in seeking Islamic knowledge.
S-3 (PS) Average-Performing Student	Average academic performance with realistic expectations for graduation.	The phrase "yaltamisu fīhi 'ilman" is interpreted as an encouragement to pursue knowledge patiently and consistently. This understanding fosters perseverance and continuous improvement in both academic performance and personal religious practice.
S-4 (PK) Low-Performing Student	Experiences difficulties in reading classical Arabic texts without diacritical marks and frequently requires remedial learning.	The Hadith prevents academic frustration by encouraging perseverance. Cognitive difficulties are overcome through participation in small halaqah study groups and the support of a bi'ah shalihah (a righteous learning environment). Academic struggles are viewed as part of the blessed journey (salaka ṭarīqan) in seeking knowledge.
S-5 (AO) Student Organization Activist	Actively involved in student organizations with demanding leadership responsibilities and limited study time.	The Hadith motivates the participant to balance organizational leadership (qiyādah) with formal academic responsibilities while maintaining learning as the primary path toward attaining Allah's pleasure and Paradise.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of how the interpretation of this prophetic tradition functions as a psychological framework across different student profiles, the discussion is organized according to Suratman's (2019) six operational indicators of academic motivation.

1. Desire and Aspiration to Succeed

   This indicator was examined by exploring how participants interpreted the phrase, "Allah will make easy for him the path to Paradise," in relation to their academic goals. For the scholarship recipient (S-1), the desire to succeed initially originated from the necessity of maintaining the minimum GPA required to retain the scholarship. However, understanding the hadith transformed this external pressure into intrinsic awareness, leading the participant to regard the scholarship as a trust from Allah that should be honored through academic excellence.

   The high-achieving student (S-2) demonstrated purely intrinsic motivation. Achieving the distinction of Mumtaz (excellent graduate) was not merely intended to obtain academic recognition but rather to practice itqan (academic excellence) as a form of devotion to Islamic knowledge.

   Conversely, for the low-achieving student (S-4), the aspiration to succeed functioned as a psychological defense mechanism. Despite repeated remedial examinations caused by difficulties in reading classical Arabic texts, the participant believed that enduring these

challenges constituted part of "walking the path" toward knowledge as promised in the hadith. This belief strengthened resilience and prevented withdrawal from academic life.

2. Learning Needs and Internal Drive

The demanding curriculum at STDI Imam Syafi'i Jember requires students to develop strong independent learning habits (muthala'ah) beyond formal classroom sessions. The high-achieving student (S-2) demonstrated the highest level of this motivational indicator. For this participant, studying classical Islamic literature was no longer merely an academic assignment but had become a spiritual necessity to protect oneself from misunderstanding religious knowledge.

In contrast, the low-achieving student (S-4) developed the motivation to learn from an honest awareness of personal cognitive limitations. The participant stated:

"At first, it felt like nothing more than an ordinary university obligation. However, after realizing my limited understanding of religious knowledge, I became aware that learning was an urgent necessity to improve myself."

Meanwhile, the student organization activist (S-5) faced significant time constraints due to organizational responsibilities. Consequently, the participant developed an effective and strategic learning pattern by utilizing short periods of free time between leadership activities to conduct independent study while maintaining academic performance.

3. Future Expectations and Aspirations

Long-term aspirations served as a major driving force behind students' academic persistence. For the scholarship recipient (S-1), future aspirations were closely connected to the commitment of returning to the participant's hometown after graduation to spread authentic Islamic teachings in accordance with the scholarship agreement. This theological orientation supports Rahman's (2021) finding that a profound understanding of the virtues of knowledge produces a stable learning ethic focused on long-term spiritual benefit rather than temporary material gain.

The student organization activist (S-5) envisioned becoming a leader of an Islamic educational institution, foundation, or community organization capable of managing society through modern leadership grounded in Islamic principles.

Meanwhile, the average-performing student (S-3) and the low-achieving student (S-4) expressed more modest yet noble aspirations: to become beneficial individuals for their families and communities by teaching fundamental Islamic knowledge in their hometowns.

4. Appreciation and Rewards in Learning

Academic rewards carried different meanings for each participant. For the scholarship recipient (S-1), academic achievement primarily represented administrative requirements necessary to maintain scholarship funding. In contrast, the high-achieving student (S-2) regarded the highest form of appreciation as receiving constructive criticism and intellectual validation from lecturers during scholarly discussions of classical Islamic texts. A particularly meaningful perspective emerged from the low-achieving student (S-4), who stated:

"*For me, simply hearing someone say, 'You have made progress,' whether from a lecturer or a friend, is enough to inspire me. Good academic achievement reflects perseverance, but refusing to give up is also a form of honoring knowledge."*

This response demonstrates that psychological appreciation may serve as a stronger source of motivation than numerical academic achievement alone.

5. Engaging Learning Activities

The learning environment at STDI Imam Syafi'i Jember, which emphasizes hadith criticism, chain-of-transmission analysis, and critical methodology, provides intellectually stimulating learning experiences. The high-achieving student (S-2) particularly enjoyed discussions involving differences of opinion among Islamic schools of thought (ikhtilaf), requiring critical reasoning and supported by the use of mind mapping techniques to simplify complex classical texts.

For the low-achieving student (S-4), large formal classes often generated academic anxiety. To overcome this challenge, the participant preferred participating in small halaqah groups, where classical texts could be discussed in a more relaxed atmosphere without fear of making mistakes. The scholarship recipient (S-1) also expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to study free of charge, explaining:

"*Studying the wording of classical texts written by great Islamic scholars makes me feel truly grateful for this educational opportunity. I enjoy creating systematic summaries and placing them on my study desk.*"

Consistent with Ananda (2023), adaptive and varied learning activities are essential in preventing academic burnout caused by repetitive learning routines.

6. A Conducive Learning Environment

The religious-academic environment (bi'ah shalihah) at STDI Imam Syafi'i Jember emerged as one of the most influential factors in maintaining students' academic consistency, particularly among academically vulnerable students. For the scholarship recipient (S-1), the high-achieving student (S-2), and the student organization activist (S-5), regularly observing fellow students reading classical Islamic texts throughout the campus functioned as a form of social control and continuous reminder to prioritize the pursuit of knowledge. For the low achieving student (S-4), however, this environment represented much more than social support it became a psychological safety net. The participant explained:

"*This environment has truly saved me. Whenever my faith or motivation weakens, seeing my friends reviewing their memorization encourages me to rise again. Without supportive friends, I might have given up long ago.*"

From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to the development of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Conventional SDT argues that intrinsic motivation is supported by competence, autonomy, and relatedness. However, this study demonstrates that students with limited academic competence can compensate for these weaknesses through strong theological beliefs inspired by prophetic traditions and reinforced by a supportive religious environment.

These findings are consistent with Suryadi (2020), who argued that the internalization of prophetic traditions in Islamic educational institutions serves not only as knowledge transmission but also as a mechanism for strengthening self-discipline and self-regulation. Likewise, the present findings reinforce Zulkipli's (2022) conclusion that theological values function as an effective protective factor against academic burnout among university students.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that understanding and internalizing the prophetic tradition "Man salaka thariqan yaltamisu fihi 'ilman" has a significant and transformative influence on the academic motivation of students in the Hadith Studies Program at STDI Imam Syafi'i Jember across all participant categories. This positive influence was found to be inclusive and adaptive, benefiting scholarship recipients in maintaining the sincerity of their intentions, students with varying levels of academic ability (high, average, and low) in responding to their academic performance, as well as student organization activists in balancing leadership responsibilities with academic commitments from the fourth semester through the final semester. The internalization of the hadith interpretation successfully transformed students' learning motivation from a predominantly pragmatic and materialistic orientation into an intrinsic and transcendental motivation. As a result, students developed stronger psychological resilience, enabling them to persevere in their academic journey while pursuing the prophetic promise of attaining ease on the path toward Paradise. Based on these findings, Islamic higher education institutions are encouraged to continuously strengthen an academic culture founded upon the internalization of the values contained in the Sunnah beyond formal classroom instruction. Future researchers are recommended to conduct comparative studies employing quantitative approaches to measure more precisely the magnitude of the influence of hadith literacy on students' academic achievement and academic stress across various higher education institutions.

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