Hadith, Education, and Identity: An Analysis of the Integration of Imam al-Nawawi's Forty Hadith into Malaysia's National Curriculum

Hadis, Eğitim ve Kimlik: İmam el-Nevevî'nin *Kırk Hadis*'inin Malezya Ulusal Müfredatına Entegrasyonu Üzerine Bir İnceleme

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Abstract

This paper examines the integration of Imam al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* into the Malaysian national education curriculum. It examines the role of Islamic education in building national identity through the lens of hadith, focusing on the "Forty Hadith Project" (*Penghayatan Hadis 40*), which was launched in 2023 and implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year. This project is being implemented nationwide in schools affiliated with the Malaysian Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (*JAKIM*; *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*). In the conclusion section, along with evaluations regarding the impact of the project (absence of impact measurement, reflections of the implementation in the field), suggestions such as student attitude surveys, monitoring of discipline statistics, in-service evaluation of teacher competencies and development of common value-based complementary modules are presented. The scope of the study extends beyond primary and secondary education to explore the structure and methods of hadith education at various Malaysian universities, and the academic status of hadith education, as it paves the way for and contributes to this and similar projects. The aim of the research is to reveal how hadith education is used as a tool for identity and value construction, beyond simply being a teaching and learning material. The paper also analyses potential problems with this and similar projects. The study uses a qualitative research methodology, examining official reports, curriculum documents, and academic resources through document analysis. This study is perhaps the only example in the literature that comprehensively examines the relationship between the "Forty Hadith Project" and the construction of national identity.

Keywords: Hadith, Imam al-Nawawi, Forty Hadith, Malaysia, Education.

Öz

Bu makale, İmam el-Nevevî'nin *Kırk Hadis*'inin Malezya ulusal eğitim müfredatına entegrasyon sürecini incelemektedir. Makale, İslamî eğitimin ulusal kimlik inşasındaki rolünü hadis ekseninde ele almakta olup 2023 yılında başlatılan ve 2024-2025 eğitim-öğretim döneminde uygulamaya konulan "Kırk Hadis Projesi"ne (*Penghayatan Hadis 40*) odaklanmaktadır. Bu proje, *JAKIM* (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*) olarak anılan "Malezya İslam Gelişim

Dairesi"nin iş birliğiyle Malezya Eğitim Bakanlığı nezdindeki okullarda ülke genelinde yürütülmektedir. Sonuç bölümünde, projenin etkisine ilişkin (etki ölçümünün yokluğu, uygulamanın sahadaki yansımaları) değerlendirmelerle birlikte; öğrenci tutum anketleri, disiplin istatistiklerinin takibi, öğretmen yeterliklerinin hizmet içi değerlendirilmesi ve ortak değer temelli tamamlayıcı modüllerin geliştirilmesi gibi öneriler sunulmuştur. Çalışmanın kapsamı yalnızca temel eğitimle sınırlı kalmayıp Malezya'nın çeşitli üniversitelerindeki hadis eğitiminin yapısı ve yöntemleriyle bu ve benzeri projelere zemin hazırlayıp katkı sağlaması bakımından hadis öğreniminin akademik yönden ne durumda olduğu ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırmanın amacı, hadis eğitiminin bir eğitim-öğretim materyali olmasının ötesinde kimlik ve değer inşası aracı olarak kullanılma biçimini ortaya koymaktır. Bununla birlikte bu ve benzer içerikli projelerin olası problemleri de makalede analiz edilmektedir. Çalışmada yöntem olarak nitel araştırma esas alınmakta olup doküman incelemesi yoluyla resmî raporlar, müfredat belgeleri ve akademik kaynaklar incelenmektedir. Bu çalışma, "Kırk Hadis Projesi" ile ulusal kimlik inşası arasındaki ilişkiyi kapsamlı biçimde ele alan literatürdeki muhtemelen tek örnektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hadis, İmam el-Nevevî, Kırk Hadis, Malezya, Eğitim.

Introduction

In Malaysia, where the Muslim population is predominant, Islamic education has an important place in the national education system, which is integrated into it and supported by various legal and institutional mechanisms.[1] The foundation of Islamic education in Malaysia lies in the country's federal constitution,[2] which recognizes Islam as the religion of the country while guaranteeing religious freedom for all. This

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[1] Rosnani Hashim, "The Reformation of Muslim Education in Malaysia: Ensuring Relevance and Overcoming Challenges" (International Imam Hatip Symposium, Istanbul, 2013).

[2] Attorney General"s Chambers of Malaysia, *Federal Constitution of Malaysia*, art. 11; art. 12(3)–(4), accessed July 15, 2025, https://www.agc.gov.my.

constitutional provision has paved the way for Islamic education to develop as a fundamental component of the national curriculum.[3]

Islamic Religious Education (IRE), covering the Quran, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (ritual practices), Islamic history, ethics and Jawi script, was introduced into the curriculum as a compulsory subject for Muslim students at primary and secondary levels after Malaysia's independence in 1957. It increasingly integrates elements such as *critical thinking* and *technological literacy* within the context of *21st century learning skills* in order to integrate with broader national educational goals.[4] These elements are embodied specifically through the courses and practices exemplified below.

The IRE curriculum is now infused with "problem-based learning" and project-based activities. This allows students to analyse and interpret texts in depth rather than simply memorizing them. This approach encourages critical thinking, particularly in Quran, hadith, ethics, and Islamic jurisprudence courses. Furthermore, educational institutions like Universiti Malaya offer courses specifically for IRE teachers, such as "Creativity and Innovation in Islamic Education" and "Information and Communication Technology in Islamic Education." These courses aim to equip educators with both critical thinking and the effective use of technology. In line with 21st-century competencies, the IRE curriculum includes: LMS (Learning Management Systems), Google Classroom, presentations, PDFs, video content, and even "mobile seamless learning" methods, enabling students to interact with digital materials even outside of class.[5]

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[3] *Laporan Mengenai Pelaksanaan Dasar Pelajaran Terhadap Pelajaran Ugama Islam Mengikut Shor-Shor Penyata Razak 1965, Dan Jawatankuasa Menyemak Pelajaran 1960* (Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM), 1972).

[4] See: Diane F. Halpern, *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*, 5th ed. (New York: Psychology Press, 2014); International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA), *Standards for Technological and Engineering Literacy: The Role of Technology and Engineering in STEM Education* (2020), PDF, ISBN 978-1-887101-11-0, accessed August 12, 2025, https://assets-002.noviams.com/novi-file-uploads/iteea/standards/18193-00018_iteea_stel_2020_final_security-d1e2c729.pdf.

[5] "Critical Thinking in Islamic Religious Education: A 21st Century Skills Approach in Malaysian Schools", *International Journal of Arts and Social Science* 7/No. 12 (2024); Asyraf Isyraqi Bin Jamil - et al., "From Integrated to Standard: Reformation of the Islamic Religious

Interest in these practices and curriculum reforms is not limited to course content but is also evident in academic studies in the field of Islamic education in Malaysia. These studies have generally focused on the historical development of Islamic education field, its relationship with state policies and institutional structures. Mohd Roslan, Mohd Nor, and Wan Termizi Wan Othman (2011) examine Islamic education in Malaysia through a historical perspective, mapping the transformation from *pondok* to madrasah to SMKA, the processes of institutionalization, and the role of state institutions (KPM/JAKIM); thus, demonstrating how religious education is positioned at the national level. Asyraf Isyraqi Jamil et al. (2024) relate current reforms in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum to learning outcomes, a competency-based structure, and an assessment-evaluation approach; they explain how the curriculum aligns with teacher training and in-service development, and how implementation tools are used within this framework. Firdaus Fatah Yasin and Mohd Shah Jani (2019) explore the place of tafsir and hadith within the modern education system through the logic of transmission between classical sources and contemporary curricula. They link course objectives/outcomes, text selection, and institutional placement (school-university) to the historical context, thus making disciplinary continuity visible. Although there are studies examining the relationship between education policies and religious pluralism, identity construction and social harmony, studies focusing on the integration process of Imam al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* into the national curriculum are quite limited. This article aims to contribute to the literature by addressing the emergence, implementation and social reflections of the "Forty Hadith Project", an original initiative in this field.

The study first examined the historical background and government policies of the Islamic education system in Malaysia, followed by an analysis of the institutional structures and curricular approaches to hadith education, particularly at the university and secondary school levels. The study was based on a documentary review (literature review) method, directly examining official reports, academic articles, ministry documents, and the course curricula of

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Education Curriculum and Teacher Training in Malaysia", *Global Agendas and Education Reforms: A Comparative Study* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 171–193.

relevant universities. Furthermore, current implementation reports and media statements related to the "Forty Hadith Project" were used as data sources.

In this study, a critical evaluation of the integration of Imam al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* into the national curriculum in Malaysia is undertaken. This project as a teaching module was started in 2023 and officially implemented in the 2024–2025 academic year. This project is regarded as a significant breakthrough in the field of religious education and demonstrates Malaysia's commitment to advancing Islamic values in the formative years of education.

The Forty Hadith literature has functioned not only as a scholarly tradition in Islamic cultural history but also as a pedagogical tool for conveying religious and moral principles to broad segments of society. As Ahmet Yücel has noted, this collection fulfilled a similar role to an *ilmihal* (a catechism-like manual of Islamic practice), concisely conveying fundamental principles as a guide for daily life.[6] This function is crucial for understanding the centuries-long popularity of Imam Nawawi's *Forty Hadith* collection and the background to its integration into educational systems in many different regions, including Malaysia.

The outstanding feature of al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith* selection is its richness in the context of values education. The fact that the hadiths focus not only on legal matters but also on fundamental moral principles such as faith, benevolence, justice, compassion, and responsibility makes them unique from a pedagogical perspective. Indeed, academic studies reveal that al-Nawawi shaped his choices with a consciousness that directly guided the development of an individual's character.[7] Therefore, the "Forty Hadith Project" in Malaysia constitutes a contemporary example demonstrating the potential of a classical work for the transmission of values in contemporary education.

The study's central thesis is that Imam al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* are used in Malaysia not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a tool for constructing

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[6] Ali Sever, "Türkiye"de Çağdaş Hadis Tartışmaları" Paneli ["Contemporary Hadith Discussions in Turkey" Panel], presented at the Bilim ve Sanat Vakfı, Istanbul, 25 November 2017, published in *Journal of Namik Kemal University Faculty of Theology* 3, no. 2 (2017): 412, accessed August 31, 2025.

[7] Ayşegül Köstü, "İmam Nevevî"nin "Kırk Hadis" Adlı Eserinde Değerler Eğitimi", *Akademik Platform İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi* 3, no. 2 (August 2019): 180.

national identity and reinforcing the state's religious discourse. Consequently, this integration process has significant implications for both educational policies and the development of religious affiliation, moral values, and identity within society.

1. Historical Trajectory of Islamic Education in Malaysia: Dynamics of Integration into the National Curriculum

Malaysia is a federal state with a constitutional monarchy, where the monarch fulfils a largely symbolic role within the framework of parliamentary democracy. Of the fourteen states that make up the federation, nine are ruled by Sultans who also serve as the "guardians of Islam and Malay tradition." In this context, these traditional Malay leaders possess significant authority as protectors of elements such as the Islamic faith.[8]

The formalization of Islamic education in Malaysia began during the British colonial period[9] when the education system was divided into national schools (Malay and English vernacular schools) and religious schools (*madrasa*s, called *pondok*s).[10] In pre-colonial Malaysia, Islamic education began informally in the homes of Islamic scholars known as *ulama* and later spread to mosques, *surau* (smaller places of worship, *masjid*s) and *madrasa*s.[11] The teachers of religious schools, often Malays educated abroad, advocated the integration of Islam into

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8 Mehmet Özay, "Malezya"da Din-Devlet İlişkisine Kısa Bir Bakış: Dr. Mahathir Mohamad Dönemi İslamlaştırma Politikaları ve Yansımaları", *Turkish Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 2/1 (2013), 111.

9 From 1786 to 1914, the British gradually established influence in various parts of the Malay Peninsula. In 1826, Penang, Malacca, and Singapore became direct colonies. After 1874, they expanded into the interior. With the 1909 Treaty of Bangkok, almost all of present-day Malaysia came under British influence. See: Barbara Watson Andaya - Leonard Y. Andaya, "The Making of "British" Malaya, 1874–1919", *A History of Malaysia*, Macmillan Asian Histories Series (London: Palgrave, 1982).

10 Rosnani Hashim, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2011).

11 Abdurrahman Aslan, "Sejarah Perjalanan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Di Malaysia", *Journal Ta"limuna* 8/1 (2019), 29–45; Abu Bakar Ishak, *Pendidikan Islam Dan Pengaruhnya Di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1995); Mior Jamaluddin, "Sistem Pendidikan Di Malaysia: Dasar, Cabaran, Dan Pelaksanaan Ke Arah Perpaduan Nasional", *Sosiohumanika* 4/1 (2011), 33–48; Mohd Nor et al., "Sejarah Dan Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam Di Malaysia", *Jurnal At-Ta"dib* 6/1 (2011), 1–20.

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all aspects of life and were instrumental in the spread of religious thought.[12] In the early 20th century, many students from Malaysia were sent to countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia to pursue Islamic studies.[13] These Malay scholars who studied abroad not only had the opportunity to directly experience the classical Islamic tradition of knowledge but also contributed to the development of the educational system with various reform proposals upon their return to their home countries.

After Malaysia gained independence in 1957, Islamic education became more structured and organised, and the government introduced it as a core subject in national schools.[14] Although the first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, (d. 1990) advocated a secular line, his successors (Abdul Razak, Hussein Onn, Mahathir Muhammed) integrated Islamic values into state programmes.[15] One of those who pioneered the acceleration of Islamization policies at the state level was Anwar Ibrahim, who joined UMNO[16] with Mahathir's support and is currently the prime minister. Institutions such as International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), Islamic banking and insurance systems were established as part of the Islamization agenda.[17] In addition, Sharia courts were strengthened and Islamic practices such as headscarves and halal food were promoted in public life.[18]

IIUM, founded in 1983, aimed to blend Islamic values with modern sciences;[19] institutions such as ISTAC (International Institute of Islamic Thought and

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[12] Hashim, "The Reformation of Muslim Education in Malaysia: Ensuring Relevance and Overcoming Challenges".

[13] William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), 238.

[14] *Laporan Mengenai Pelaksanaan Dasar Pelajaran Terhadap Pelajaran Ugama Islam Mengikut Shor-Shor Penyata Razak 1965, Dan Jawatankuasa Menyemak Pelajaran 1960.*

[15] Yusuf Oktan, "Malezya"da Son Dönem Hadis Çalışmalarının Serencamı", *Modern Dönemde Hadis ve Babanzâde Ahmed Naîm* (İstanbul: Dîvân Kitap, 2022), 301.

[16] "United Malaysia National Organisation", *Britannica* (28 April 2025).

[17] Mauzy et al., "The Mahathir Administration in Malaysia: Discipline through Islam", *Pacific Affairs* 56/4 (1983), 617–648.

[18] Oktan, "Malezya"da Son Dönem Hadis Çalışmalarının Serencamı", 303.

[19] S. M. Zaman, "International Islamic University of Malaysia — Salient Features.", *Islamic Studies* 24/2 (1985), 255–263.

Civilization), founded in 1987,[20] and IKIM (Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia), founded in 1992, contributed to the development of Islamic thought.[21] These developments intensified especially during Anwar Ibrahim's term as Minister of Education and were supported by projects such as the "national philosophy of education."[22]

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a compulsory subject for Muslim students in both primary and secondary schools in Malaysia.[23] It aims to develop knowledgeable, pious and morally upright individuals through the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. It covers various areas including Quranic studies, Hadith, devotional practices, Islamic History, ethics, the Malay language (Bahasa Melayu) with Arabic script (Jawi),[24] and has undergone significant changes to align Malaysia's broader educational goals the fact that, including the new approaches such as constructivism, and collaboration with *STEM* (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).[25]

Malaysia's Islamic educational system is supported by teacher training programs offered by universities such as Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and the Malaysian Institutes of Teachers Training (IPGM).[26] These programs aim to give educators the knowledge, skills, and

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[20] "History of ISTAC, International Islamic University Malaysia", *International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)* (Accessed 14 July 2025).

[21] "Introduction: Establishment of IKIM", *Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (IKIM)* (Accessed 15 July 2025).

[22] Abdul Razak Dzulkifli, "With a New PM, It"s Time for Education to Undergo a Real Change", *IIUM Newsroom* (Accessed 14 July 2022).

[23] Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM), *Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013–2025* (Putrajaya: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2013); Legal Research Board Malaysia, *Akta Pendidikan 1996 (Akta 550), Peraturan-Peraturan & Kaedah-Kaedah Terpilih (Hingga 10 June 2021)* (Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services, 2021).

[24] "Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan", *Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM)* (Accessed 28 April 2025).

[25] Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM), *Buku Penerangan Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (Semakan 2017)* (Putrajaya: Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum KPM, 2016); Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM), *Buku Penerangan Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah* (Putrajaya: Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum KPM, 2016).

[26] Jamil - et al., "From Integrated to Standard: Reformation of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum and Teacher Training in Malaysia", 172.

professionalism they need to teach IRE effectively.[27] By combining traditional Islamic teachings with modern pedagogical approaches, Malaysia's Islamic education system aims to produce individuals who can uphold Islamic values and make constructive contributions to society.[28]

While this study primarily focuses on the integration of al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* into the Malaysian secondary school curriculum, hadith teaching in Malaysia is not limited to secondary education. It has been also being conducted at the university level, both scientifically and methodologically, and this field is developing as an independent discipline. The section below is intended to provide a general framework for how the research topic can be integrated with other levels of the education system.

This historical trajectory makes visible the theoretical link between education policies and religious identity: Education functions as a "pedagogical apparatus" that regulates the circulation of identity and values within the legitimate cultural authority of the state; while curricula, assessment, evaluation, and teacher training are selection and organization mechanisms that determine which religious knowledge enters public circulation. In the Malaysian context, the Sultans' role as "guardians of Islam" and federal policy governance ensure the transmission of religious knowledge at both symbolic (ritual, public visibility) and institutional (school, court, university) levels. Therefore, religious education is goes beyond a site of knowledge transmission to a site of socialization where a sense of citizenship and belonging are generated; the balance between the discourse of national unity and a pluralistic social structure is also established here. The incorporation of the "Forty Hadiths" into the curriculum raises the question of "which values are codified as common values" and how these are pedagogically framed; choices in practice, content, and teacher training shape the public interpretation of religious identity. Thus, the meaning of the project emerges not only in the course content but also in how identity, authority, and social harmony are conceived.

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[27] Jamil - et al., "From Integrated to Standard: Reformation of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum and Teacher Training in Malaysia", 182.

[28] "Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan".

2. Hadith Studies in Malaysian Universities

Hadith education in Malaysia gained a more systematic structure in 1995, when the Malaysian Ministry of Education officially introduced Islamic Religious Education into secondary school. This step paved the way for hadith courses to gain institutional status, particularly in the secondary school curriculum.[29] However, hadith education existed at the undergraduate and graduate levels before this date. For example, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), established in 1983, has offered programs in hadith studies since its inception. Today, hadith education has been further developed and institutionalized at universities such as *Universiti Malaya* (UM), *Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia* (UKM), *International Islamic University Malaysia* (IIUM), *Universiti Sains Malaysia* (USM), and *Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia* (USIM).

Malaysian universities have come up with different ways to teach Hadith studies in higher education so that they fit in smoothly. These programs, which are based on traditional Islamic learning, usually try to combine classical academic material with new ways of teaching. This section looks at how undergraduate Hadith courses are set up at well-known Malaysian universities that offer degrees in Islamic studies.

Universiti Malaya (UM): "The Department of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith" offers undergraduate and postgraduate studies. At UM, there are two undergraduate degrees in this department: Bachelor of *Quran and Hadith* and Bachelor of *Usuluddin*. For postgraduate students, the department offers two modes of learning i.e "research" and "coursework and research" related to the Quran and Hadith.[30] As can be seen in other universities in Malaysia, Quran and Hadith studies are under the same department.

UM has stated the aim of the department as "to introduce the sciences of the Quran and Hadith through quality education based on the Islamic tradition of knowledge and contemporary scientific methods for the benefit of the nation and humanity." The undergraduate period is 7 semesters (3.5 years) and the

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[29] Firdaus binti Fatah Yasin et al., "The Development of "Ilm Tafsir and Hadith in Malaysian Educational System", *Journal of Islam in Asia* 16/1 (2019), 263.

[30] "Al-Quran & Al-Hadith", *Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya* (Accessed 22 May 2025).

total credits of the courses are 129. 12 of the course credits consist of the courses applied in each department of the university, 10 of the general courses of the faculty, 66 of the courses determined as compulsory by the department, 21 of the elective courses in the department, 12 of the elective courses of the faculty and finally, 8 of the courses called "Student Holistic Empowerment (SHE)"; compulsory for all undergraduate students and aiming to equip students with 21st century skills.[31]

In addition, in the program called "Al-Hadith Study Course (KPAH)", run by the Faculty of Islamic Sciences at UM and aimed at Malaysian citizens with a high school or equivalent graduation degree, hadith methodologies are taught and participants are introduced to important hadith sources.[32]

It is also seen that the University of Malaya has made significant contributions to hadith studies through Malay manuscripts. The Za'ba Memorial Library and UM Central Library Special Collections contain 326 Malay manuscripts written in the Jawi script. These manuscripts contain texts in many fields, including Islamic sciences, and are open to research.[33] UM also carries out projects to digitize Malay manuscripts and make them available to researchers through online learning platforms.[34]

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM): At UKM, hadith courses are taught as part of the "Bachelor of Islamic Sciences" (Quran and Sunnah). *ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth* is a compulsory course in the first year. In the second year, students follow the *Manāhij al-Muḥaddithīn* (Methodology of Hadith Scholars). In the third year, the curriculum becomes more specialized with courses such as "Jurisprudential Commentaries on Hadith Texts," "*Takhrīj al-ḥadīth*" (Source Identification of Hadiths), "Textual Analysis of Hadith Collections from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*," "Textual Analysis of the *Sunan al-Arbaʿah*

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[31] "Bachelor of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith", *Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya*, no date.
[32] "Kursus Pengajian Al-Hadith / Al-Hadith Study Course (KPAH)", *Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya*, no date.
[33] "Collection by Library", *Universiti Malaya Library* (22 May 2025); M. Z. A. Abdullah - et al., "Collaborative Digital Learning Platform for Malay Manuscript Studies", *MATEC Web of Conferences* 150 (2018).
[34] Siti Hawa Tahir, *Digital Learning of Malay Manuscript Studies* (arXiv, no date) (Accessed 22 May 2025).

Collections," "Textual Analysis of Hadiths on *Fitān and Malāḥim*," "Analysis of Weak and Fabricated Narrations," "*Ricālu'l-ḥadīth*" (Analysis of Hadith Narrators), "Analysis of the Reasons for Revelation and Narration" (*Sabab al-nuzūl* and *Sabab al-wurūd*), and "Analysis of the Deeds of Narration" (*Dirāsāt al-Asānīd*)—many of these are offered as electives. In the final year, students can take two elective courses, namely "Deviations in Hadith" and "Contradictory Hadiths" (*Mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*). The language of instruction is Malay only.[35]

UKM's approach to the study of hadith is characterized by a balance between traditional scholarship and modern academic methodologies, and by emphasizing interdisciplinary studies, students are encouraged to explore the role of hadith in social and scientific contexts. The curriculum includes detailed analysis of hadith texts, criteria for the authenticity of hadith, and the historical development of hadith scholarship.

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM): IIUM's "AbdulHamid Abusulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences" offers hadith courses in the Department of *Quran and Sunnah Studies*. It offers an undergraduate program that focuses on developing Arabic proficiency, understanding of Islamic theology and law, and critical thinking skills.

The required course "Ulūm al-Ḥadīth" (The Sciences of Hadith) teaches the basics of Hadith in the first year of college. In the following year, the course "Tārīkh al-Dirāsāt al-Hadīthiyyah" is taught, which looks at how hadith studies have changed over the centuries. In the third year, "Dirāsāt fī Sharḥ al-Ḥadīth" (Studies in Hadith Commentary) focusses on how to read and understand hadiths. A compulsory course in the same year, "al-Ḥikam wa'l-Aḥkām fī al-Ḥadīth" (Wisdoms and Rulings in Hadith), emphasises the scientific wisdom and legal rulings extracted from hadiths. In the last year, "Ittijāhāt fī Dirāsat al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah" (Trends in the Studies of the Prophetic Sunnah) addresses modern orientations in Sunnah research. The last compulsory hadith course, given in the fourth year, is "Takhrīj al-Ḥadīth wa Āliyyātuh" (The Referencing of Hadith and Its Methodology), which examines the methods of

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[35] "Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah Studies (Undergraduate)", *Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)*, no date.

validation of hadith in detail. Three credits are allocated for each of these courses.[36] This means that the total credit ratio of hadith courses among compulsory courses is 20%. Students can also take additional elective courses related to hadith as part of their departmental elective courses.

This curriculum creates a structured learning process that extends from basic knowledge to advanced methodologies and contemporary trends in hadith studies. In this respect, it can be said that IIUM aims to train scholars who can approach hadith literature from a traditional and critical perspective, particularly through the courses "Takhrīj al-Ḥadīth wa Āliyyātuh" and "Ittijāhāt fī Dirāsat al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah." These courses emphasize methods of transmission and textual criticism, comparison of different narrations, and critical analysis of contemporary hadith debates.

IIUM requires students studying in fields other than Islamic studies to attend courses in Islamic Revelation Knowledge, including Hadith Sciences (ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth). In this way, it is aimed to provide students with the competence to evaluate information and facts from the perspective of the Quran and Hadith.[37]

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM): The Islamic Studies program at USM offered at the postgraduate level (MA and PhD) as research programs in Islamic Studies within the Faculty of Humanities (*Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Kemanusiaan*, PPIK). It is not available at the undergraduate level. In order to address current issues and intellectual advancements, the program uses an interdisciplinary and research-focused framework that enables students to engage with a variety of Islamic Studies traditions.[38]

There are two specialisation courses in Hadith in the Islamic Studies program. The first is "Quran and Hadith Studies" (*Pengajian al-Qur'an dan Hadith*), which focuses on the analytical and contextual interpretation of core Islamic

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[36] "RKQS Proposed Study Plan by Semester", *Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences*, no date.

[37] Yasin et al., "The Development of "Ilm Tafsir and Hadith in Malaysian Educational System", 272–273.

[38] "Senarai Bidang Penyelidikan Pascasiswazah Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Kemanusiaan 2025", *School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia*, no date.

texts. The other is "Medicine of the Prophet" (*Perubatan Nabawi*), which is known in the literature as "Ṭibb al-Nabawī" and examines medical practices and health guidance in the Prophetic tradition.[39]

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM): Hadith courses are taught under the *Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies*, which was established in 2000. In addition, two programmes, the Bachelor of *Quran Studies and Multimedia* and the Bachelor of *Sunnah Studies and Information Management*, which were established in 2005, are offered as educational programmes in collaboration with the *Faculty of Science and Technology* at USIM, with the aim of integrating the study of the Quran and Sunnah with other fields.[40] All USIM students studying Islamic sciences are required to take Hadith Sciences (*ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*), and discussion groups are one way that theoretical courses are supported.[41] USIM utilizes information technology and multimedia tools to support the teaching of classical Islamic sciences such as hadith. However, this technological support does not replace the classical structure of hadith; it merely enriches the teaching process with contemporary methods.

The table below presents the pedagogical differences in hadith education among Malaysian universities:

UNIVERSITY	CURRICULUM&APPROACH	DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
UM	UG & PG programs; 3.5 years; blends classical Islamic tradition with contemporary scientific methods; compulsory, elective, and holistic skills modules; Malay & English instruction	Public Hadith methodology program (KPAH); 326 Malay manuscripts digitized for research
UKM	UG only; Malay instruction; progressive from basic Hadith	Wide range of electives; connects Hadith

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39 "Senarai Bidang Penyelidikan Pascasiswazah Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Kemanusiaan 2025".

40 "Overview", *Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)*, no date.

41 Shumsudin Yabi et al., "Students" Perception on Teaching and Learning of Ulum Hadith: A Comparative Study in Malaysian Higher Public Educational Institutions", *Journal of Xi"an Shiyou University, Natural Science Edition* 16/12 (2020), 1–8.

	Sciences to advanced textual and thematic studies; emphasis on textual criticism and inter-disciplinary links	to social and scientific contexts
IIUM	UG & compulsory Hadith courses for all faculties; Arabic & English; structured from ba-sics to advanced authentication and modern trends; integrates Arabic, theology, law	Focus on *isnād* criti-cism, comparative narration; critical and traditional methods combined
USM	PG only; Malay & English; re-search-based and interdiscipli-nary; specializations in Quran & Hadith Studies and Prophetic Medicine	No UG Hadith pro-gram; advanced the-matic analysis and contextual interpreta-tion
USIM	UG only; Malay & English; combines classical Hadith Stud-ies with IT/multimedia tools; compulsory Hadith sciences for Islamic studies	Interdisciplinary inte-gration (e.g., multime-dia, info manage-ment); discussion-based learning

While the hadith curricula of Malaysian universities are generally based on the classical traditions of Islamic studies, they have attempted to achieve a certain standardisation and systematic structure to adapt to the expectations of the modern university system. Institutions such as IIUM and USIM, in particular, maintain traditional epistemology (narration, acumen, chain of narration criticism, etc.) in Islamic studies while also aiming to integrate the methodologies of contemporary academic disciplines (critical reading, interpretation, applied analysis). The primary goal of these curricula is to provide students with access to classical sources while also providing them with a multidisciplinary perspective that can connect hadith studies to modern disciplines such as social sciences, law, and education. This structure can be considered an attempt to strike a balance between the traditional "transmission"-focused education in

Islamic sciences and the promotion of a research-based, critical, and applied approach.

At the university level, hadith education is considered to contribute to the *Forty Hadith* and similar projects through three main channels:

i. Teacher pipeline and in-service support: Hadith/Quran-Sunnah programmes at UM, UKM, IIUM and USIM nurture the content and methodological competencies of prospective teachers through methodology (ʿulūm al-ḥadīth, *takhrīj*, *isnad* criticism), textual reading and contemporary discussions; graduates carry this knowledge into IPGM and school practice.

ii. Curriculum and content standardisation: Basic/advanced hadith courses in the lesson plans and departmental curricula provide the methodological framework for the selection, commentary, and activity design to be used in the module (e.g. textual criticism, contextualisation, interdisciplinary reading).

iii. Resource and technology ecosystem: Manuscripts, digitization and multimedia-supported teaching (examples of USIM/UM) enable the production of classroom materials and technology integrated.

Combined, these channels are expected to ensure that the field implementation of the "Forty Hadith" module is not limited to content delivery alone; teacher competencies are strengthened through methodological consistency and material quality. However, there is no data on the extent to which these outcomes are achieved.

The primary focus of this study is the process of institutionalizing hadith education through the state through the *Forty Hadith* Project. However, to provide a more robust discussion of the topic, the historical trajectory of hadith education in Malaysia, as reflected in the curricula of its universities, is also briefly presented. The national initiative, known publicly as the "Forty Hadith" Project, will be discussed in the next subheading together with the aims of the project, its implementation process and its far-reaching effects.

3. State Influence in Hadith Education: The *Forty Hadith Project* in Malaysia's National Education System

The initiative to include Imam al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths as a teaching module in Malaysia's national curriculum was started in 2023 and officially implemented in the 2024–2025 academic year. This project is a teaching module implemented by the Ministry of Education. It demonstrates that the transmission of Islamic values through institutional education from an early age is being restructured at the state policy level and that Malaysia views religious education as a tool for national identity construction.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) says that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim came up with the idea for the Forty Hadith initiative. The MOE's Strategic Development Plan for 2024–2030 includes the project.[42] The goal is to help Muslim students learn moral values and ethical ideals based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

Starting from the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, the activity of appreciating the *Forty Hadiths* of Imam al-Nawawi has been extended to all educational institutions affiliated with the MOE, including schools, Malaysian Institute of Teacher Training (IPGM), vocational colleges (KV) and matriculation colleges. The program has helped over 120,000 students and 12,000 teachers throughout Malaysia at 61 national religious secondary schools (Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama; *SMKA*), 185 government-supported religious secondary schools (Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan; *SABK*), and 43 SABK primary schools.[43]

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[42] "Imam Al-Nawawi 40 Hadith Module for Implementation Beginning 2024/2025 School Session – MoE", *Bernama* (22 January 2024).

[43] "MOE Launches 40 Hadith Appreciation Module", *Bernama* (20 August 2023).
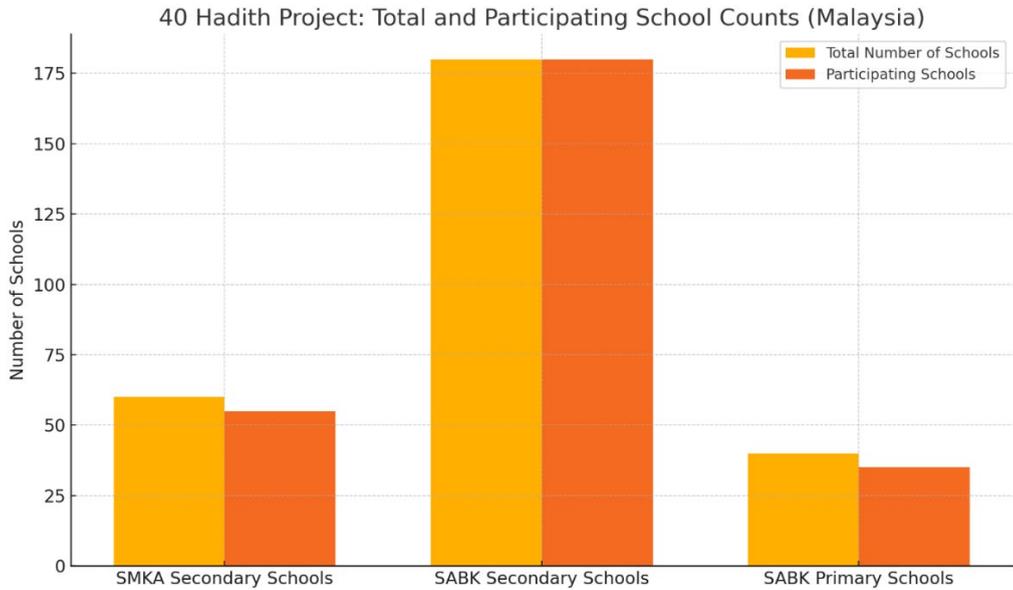
Source: Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA)*, https://www.moe.gov.my/sekolah-menengah-kebangsaan-agama-smka and *Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan (SABK)*, https://www.moe.gov.my/sekolah-agama-bantuan-kerajaan-sabk, accessed 15 July 2025.

As of 2023, there were 60 SMKAs in Malaysia. However, the Forty Hadith Project reportedly included 61 SMKAs. This small difference is believed to be an error due to new school openings or data updates, but the project is being implemented at nearly full capacity in SMKA schools. Among SABK schools, 186 of the 229 schools are secondary schools and 43 are primary schools. 185 SABK secondary schools (99.5%) and 36 SABK primary schools (83.7%) actively participated in the project.[44]

Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths stands out as one of the most widely accepted and widely influential works in this field, among thousands of examples. In this compilation, al-Nawawi has brought together 42 hadiths that touch upon

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[44] "Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan (SABK)", *Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM)*, no date (Accessed 24 May 2025); "Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA)", *Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM)* (Accessed 24 May 2025).

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fundamental concepts such as Islamic ethics, social responsibility, worship, and social balance.[45] The work has been considered both a scholarly authority and a pedagogical force, and has been widely used in education, particularly in madrasahs and public education, for centuries. Therefore, it seems appropriate to choose this selection of al-Nawawi's for this project implemented in Malaysia, due to its fundamental Islamic principles and ethical emphasis.

The identification and interpretation of these hadiths was coordinated in collaboration with the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (*JAKIM*) to ensure that they are appropriate for the students' level of understanding and the socio-cultural context of Malaysia.[46] While this project has not yet reached its final stages, the ongoing process and the planned second phase demonstrate that religious education policies in Malaysia are undergoing a transformation that targets not only instruction but also moral and character building. The integration of the *MADANI* approach (an acronym representing Sustainability, Care & Compassion, Respect, Innovation, Prosperity, and Trust) in this process, in particular, can be considered a concrete demonstration of Malaysia's policy of harmonizing Islamic values with the modern education system.[47] This study argues that such projects are part of a more holistic approach to religious education in Malaysia, one that aims not only at individual knowledge transfer but also at social integration and value creation. Even the project's current structure, while not yet complete, clearly demonstrates this transformation.

Within the module, each hadith is presented with its meaning and the values it aims to impart, and is then reinforced through in-class and out-of-class activities. For example, the hadith "Actions are judged by intentions" is covered through weekly *usrah* meetings[48] and short readings after prayers, while the

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45 Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 351–352.

46 "Aktiviti Penghayatan Hadis 40 Imam Nawawi Diperluas Ke Semua Institusi Pendidikan KPM", *Majlis Keselamatan Negara* (Accessed 5 April 2024).

47 Prime Minister"s Office of Malaysia. *Malaysia MADANI.* https://malaysiamadani.gov.my/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2025; Ministry of Education Malaysia. *Pelan Strategik KPM 2024–2030.* https://www.moe.gov.my/pskpm20242030.

48 "Usrah/weekly usrah" is a term used primarily in Islamic educational institutions in Malaysia. It refers to weekly study circles with religious/moral content where students meet regularly in small groups to discuss Islamic knowledge, values, and lifestyle. This approach

hadith "Islam, faith (*īmān*), and excellence (*iḥsān*)" is discussed through scholarly circles and group work. The hadith "The Creation of Man" is further illustrated through activities such as visits to nursing homes, videos on the process of creation, and cemetery visits. The module generally recommends activities such as reading the hadith after prayers, creating a "hadith corner" in the classroom, sharing hadiths at school assemblies, community service activities, visiting religious institutions, and participating in social assistance campaigns. This approach allows students to internalize hadiths not only as theoretical knowledge but also as a way of behaviour and lifestyle.[49]

This overview also shows the legal-institutional basis for 'state-focused Islamic pedagogy': Article 3 of the Constitution defines Islam as the religion of the Federation, while Article 12(2) explicitly provides for the provision of Islamic religious instruction through public resources, thus creating an incentive framework for curriculum content selection and public financing. In contrast, Article 11 and Articles 12(3)–(4) set limits on implementation based on principles such as freedom of religion, non-discrimination, and parental consent.[50] The Education Act 1996 (Act 550) institutionalized the selection-organization-

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aims to foster both individual development and a sense of community. See: N. Ibrahim, "Understanding the Islamic Concept of Usrah and Its Application to Group Work," *Journal for Specialists in Group Work* 40, no. 2 (2015): 163-186; and for examples of its application at IIUM, Nik Md. Saiful Azizi Nik Abdullah and Awang Abdul Muizz Awang Marusin, *The Implementation of Usrah in the International Islamic University Malaysia and Its Contributions to Holistic Student Development*, preprint, September 2018, doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.16744.52485/1.

[49] Ministry of Education Malaysia. *Modul Penghayatan Hadis 40 Imam Nawawi*. 2nd ed. Putrajaya: Bahagian Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2024. Accessed August 12, 2025.
https://fliphtml5.com/zkfpa/azwq/MODUL_PENGHAYATAN_Hadis_40_Imam_Nawawi/; Ministry of Education Malaysia. *Surat Siaran KPM Bil. 5 Tahun 2024: Pelaksanaan Aktiviti Penghayatan Hadis 40 Imam Nawawi di Institusi Pendidikan Bawah KPM Mulai Tahun 2024*. Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 18 Mar. 2024. Accessed 12 Aug. 2025. http://bit.ly/4oywwsm.

[50] "Malaysia 1957 (rev. 2007) Constitution." *Constitute Project*. Accessed 12 Aug. 2025. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Malaysia_2007. constituteproject.org; "Laws of Malaysia: Federal Constitution." *Asian Parliamentary Assembly*. Accessed 12 Aug. 2025.
https://www.asianparliament.org/uploads/Country/Members/malaysia/malaysia%20const.pdf.

assessment cycle by codifying Islamic education for Muslim students as a constituent component of the national curriculum. The position of the rulers as the 'head of Islam' in the states and the coordination of the JAKIM at the federal level embody this legal empowerment at the level of governance. Thus, constitutional and legal provisions produce a pedagogical apparatus that both makes the content of teaching 'publicly legitimate' and determines the limits of practice through a regime of pluralism and rights.

This framework offers a theoretical framework for explaining 'state-focused Islamic pedagogy'. The Constitution's provisions defining Islam as a federal religion and enabling Islamic religious education to be supported by public resources create incentives for the selection and financing of curricular content. Concurrently, provisions regarding religious freedom, non-discrimination, and parental consent limit the scope of application and define the target audience. Within this dual mechanism, the *Forty Hadith* module exemplifies the public circulation of religious knowledge through the state's pedagogical tools (curriculum, teacher training, assessment and evaluation) and its simultaneous governance within constitutional boundaries.

The module's broad implementation has generated both support and controversy. The Ministry of Education has officially stated that the module is exclusively for Muslim teachers and students in response to concerns raised by interfaith organisations that it might violate the constitution and disrupt secular education.[51]

Despite Malaysia's multi-religious and multi-ethnic makeup, students in public schools generally attend the same classes. However, religious education classes—such as Islamic Religious Education (IRE)—are exclusively for Muslim students, and during these class periods, students of other faiths attend their own religious or moral education classes or are directed to an alternative activity.[52]

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[51] "Only for Muslims: Education Ministry Clears the Air Over Hadith Module", *MalaysiaNow* (25 August 2023).

[52] Jamil - et al., "From Integrated to Standard: Reformation of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum and Teacher Training in Malaysia", 175.

The Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Taoism (*MCCBCHST*) has described the project as potentially violating the constitution and said it has sparked debates about religious freedom and national unity.[53] The debates about this project are grounded in concerns over Articles 11 and 12 of the Malaysian Federal Constitution, particularly the provisions safeguarding freedom of religion and protecting students from compulsory religious instruction against their beliefs.[54]

This educational module initiative also demonstrates the importance of centralized religious control. The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) was tasked with ensuring that the interpretations and practices of the *Forty Hadiths* were in line with current Islamic teachings.[55] Thus, JAKIM's intervention not only provided textual clarifications but also played a concrete role in content control, monitoring, and reducing the risk of radicalization. This centralized structure reflects the general trends in Malaysia's Islamic education policy, where state institutions assume the function of directing and monitoring the production and transmission of religious knowledge.

The Forty Hadith's incorporation in the Malaysian curriculum can be viewed as a component of a plan to advance "Islamic moral capital." The state seeks to inculcate ideas like discipline, respect, and social responsibility from a young age by incorporating the teachings of the Prophet into Muslim students' everyday educational routines. This is done to align universal ethical principles with the Islamic worldview and to encourage religious literacy. This endeavour can also be seen as a preventative measure to counter extremist tendencies and radical nationalist discourses that are based on misrepresenting Islamic literature.[56]

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[53] "Accused of Being Unconstitutional, Education Ministry Says Imam Al-Nawawi"s 40 Hadith Module Only for Muslims", *Malay Mail* (24 August 2023).

[54] "Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 11; Article 12(3) and (4)", *Attorney General"s Chambers of Malaysia* (Accessed 15 July 2025).

[55] *The Star*, "JAKIM to Monitor Interpretation of "40 Hadith" Modules in Schools, Says Education Ministry" (17 October 2023).

[56] Moh. Erfan Soebahar et al., "Islamic Devotion in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand as a Deterrent Against Religious Extremism", *HTS Teologiese Studies* 79/1 (2023).

The Forty Hadith module initiative can be considered a conscious and strategic effort by the Malaysian government to integrate religious values into education, particularly for Muslim students, and thereby strengthen Islamic moral values in building national identity. Although it is emphasized that this module only applies to Muslim teachers and students, non-Muslim entities in Malaysia continue to express concerns about the role of religious authority and inclusivity in public education.[57]

Prof. Haslinda Abdullah, an academic participant, said the *Forty Hadith Module* is a deliberate effort to strengthen Islamic morals and promote national unity among Muslim youth. Despite early concerns about religious inclusivity raised by non-Muslim groups, Abdullah argues that the module promotes universal values like respect, honesty, and compassion that benefit all communities. The curriculum was developed in partnership with *JAKIM* and is based on the principles of *Rukun Negara*, the national philosophy of Malaysia. Haslinda Abdullah emphasises that a correct understanding of religion is essential to preventing extremism and that early moral education can produce well-rounded individuals. She supports comprehensive teacher training to ensure the module is delivered effectively. Additionally, she believes that the module has the potential to significantly improve interfaith harmony and social cohesion in Malaysia's multifaith society if it is implemented correctly.[58]

At this point, the definition of "universal values" is understood as "moral principles such as justice, respect, and compassion that are widely accepted across different faiths and cultures." This renders the above view controversial; the Forty Hadith module was designed solely for Muslim students and does not directly apply to members of other religions. In such a case, the "universal value" narrative contradicts the application's intended audience. If these values are claimed to be universal, counter-arguments might arise that students of different religions should also have similar educational opportunities based on

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[57] *UCA News*, "Malaysian Education Sinks Deeper into Islamization" (14 September 2023); "Nawawi"s 40 Hadith Module: MOE Clarifies It"s for Muslim Students Only", *Malaysiakini* (23 August 2023).

[58] Haslinda Abdullah, "Modul Hadith 40: Pembentukan Perpaduan Dan Karakter Generasi Muda Malaysia", *Institut Pengajian Sains Sosial (IPSAS), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)* (25 July 2024).

their own beliefs. Given Malaysia's multi-religious nature and the presence of Chinese and Tamil schools in its education system, the term "universal" appears problematic in terms of ascribing broad meanings to a practice specific to Islamic education.

4. Conclusion: The Malaysian Model in Hadith Education and Instruction

The integration of Imam al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* into Malaysia's national curriculum demonstrates how Islamic education is not only a field of individual development but also instrumentalized in the construction of national identity and the state's strategy to reproduce Islamic values. This project, launched in 2023 and officially implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year, clearly demonstrates the orientation of Malaysia's education policies toward religious and moral values.

The active role of the Ministry of Education and JAKIM, central state institutions, in the process of integrating hadith into national education, once again demonstrates the state's decisive role in the production and transmission of Islamic knowledge in Malaysia. This demonstrates the positioning of religious education as a central element of both individual morality and social order. However, this process has sparked public debate regarding religious pluralism and constitutional rights, and some representatives of religious minorities have criticized it for overstepping constitutional boundaries. The Malaysian government, however, maintains that it maintains the constitutional framework by emphasizing that this practice applies only to Muslim students and teachers.

The main thesis of this study is that Imam al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadiths* are both pedagogical material in Malaysia and also an ideological tool used by the state to strengthen Islamic identity and moral discourse. In this context, the project sheds light on the relationship between religious education policies, national identity, and social cohesion. Furthermore, this practice demonstrates that religious education is conceived not only as a means of imparting knowledge but also as a tool for contributing to national unity through the moral construction of individuals and the reproduction of social values.

At the primary and secondary school levels where the Forty Hadith Project is implemented, the pedagogical goal is to foster the adoption of fundamental

moral values and provide students with character education based on Islamic morality. Advanced pedagogical approaches such as critical thinking, digital literacy, and an interdisciplinary perspective are more prevalent in hadith teaching at the university level. Therefore, at the basic level, this project focuses more on memorization and moral awareness. Developing the project in a way that considers the sensitivities of the multi-religious structure of society and contributes to social peace is critical for religious harmony.

In conclusion, the Forty Hadiths Project provides an important example for understanding the transformation of Islamic education in Malaysia and the state's strategies in the relationship between religion and politics. Whether the project will serve long-term goals such as preventing religious radicalization, strengthening moral capital, and consolidating national unity will depend on its impact on the ground and its social repercussions.

This project both reproduces the functionality of classical literature and offers a model for transmitting values in contemporary education. Al-Nawawi's hadith selections serve as a practical and guiding resource, much like the catechisms, while also integrating with the values education perspective, which aims to foster students' moral development. This demonstrates that the project is not limited to teaching religious knowledge but also contributes to the building of identity and character.

Despite the lack of accurate research on teacher and student involvement, the Ministry of Education claimed that the *Forty Hadith* project was actively being participated in by the participating schools. Students participated in a variety of activities designed to aid in their internalisation of the hadith's lessons, and teachers were instrumental in planning the program.[59] However, no comprehensive evaluation of the program's impact on student behaviour and academic performance has been released as of yet.

While the available official documents -*Surat Siaran KPM Bil. 5/2024* and *Modul Penghayatan Hadis 40 Imam Nawawi (Edisi Kedua)*- detail the program's purpose, scope, and types of activities, no pre-test/post-test or other

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[59] "Aktiviti Penghayatan Hadis 40 Imam Nawawi Diperluas Ke Semua Institusi Pendidikan KPM".

experimental/quasi-experimental "impact evaluation" measuring change in students' knowledge/attitude/behaviour outcomes at the program level has been published. Similarly, the relevant KPM announcements/pages focus on implementation procedures and scope and do not report "quantitative learner outcomes". Academic secondary sources also mention the module's purpose and implementation but do not provide a publicly available "impact measure".

This study proposes a data-based monitoring and evaluation framework at the policy level to ensure the lasting impact of the "Penghayatan Hadis 40" implementation. The long-term success of the project should be measured through student attitude surveys administered at least annually, statistical tracking of in-school disciplinary incidents, regular in-service evaluations of teachers' module implementation competencies, and social cohesion indicators such as inter-school cultural interaction programs. Findings should be reported periodically at the school and ministry levels, and content, methods, and teacher training should be updated cyclically based on the results. Furthermore, developing complementary educational modules that align with the multi-religious social structure, centre on shared values, and appeal to all students will increase the program's inclusiveness and impact on social cohesion.

Future academic research should examine the effectiveness and broader implications of integrating Hadith education into national identity-building strategies. It could also explore the impact of this module on student behaviour, the effectiveness of teacher training, and public perception among different religious communities in Malaysia. In conclusion, Malaysia's experience with the *Forty Hadith Project* provides important insights into how modern Muslim-majority states navigate religion, education, and politics in today's world of accelerating globalization.

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