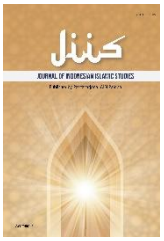
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A Study of Living Hadith: An Analysis of Hadiths Regarding Recommended Dates for Cupping Therapy at the Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) Secretariat, Medan City

Farhan Aprian Saputra[1]✉, Nurliana Damanik[2]

[1-2]Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the hadith on the timing of *ḥijāmah* (cupping therapy) and how Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) in Medan City receives it, focusing on the hadith's authority and how the meaning of sunnah (prophetic tradition) is negotiated in this context. Using a "living hadith" approach and a qualitative-descriptive design, the study gathers data by examining hadith literature and interviewing a JRA practitioner. Field evidence includes interview transcripts detailing the group's understanding, scheduling, and execution of *ḥijāmah*. The analysis is conducted both textually and contextually, linking variations in hadith narrations, religious authority, and community practices. The findings indicate that the diverse narrations regarding the dates for *ḥijāmah* do not provide a uniform textual basis for establishing any specific date as a binding requirement. Within JRA, the authority of the hadith is reinforced through training programs, guidebooks, the scheduling of sunnah days, and the actual performance of the procedure. The reception of these traditions reveals that the recommended sunnah timings are understood as guidelines for attaining greater merit, yet their implementation remains flexible, adapted to individual needs and circumstances. Thus, the sunnah status of *ḥijāmah* timing is negotiated through the interplay of hadith texts, religious authority, institutional frameworks, and practical considerations. This research illustrates how the "living hadith" perspective elucidates the relationship between textual legitimacy and the adaptation of religious practices within a community.

✉ Email Correspondent:
farhan406221015@uinsu.ac.id

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Introduction

Cupping (*ḥijāmah*) occupies a distinct position within Muslim healthcare practices, as it is understood as an intersection of therapeutic experience, medical tradition, and the transmission of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Arafah, 2024; Sulhayani et al., 2026). This practice derives religious legitimacy from various hadith—accounts of the Prophet's words or actions—that discuss cupping, its benefits, and the recommended timing for the procedure (Silvia, 2025). Within the Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) in Medan City, cupping can be examined by how members and practitioners interpret hadith about the timing of the procedure—specifically, the belief that certain dates are more auspicious, based on traditions circulated and taught within the community. Empirical investigation is essential to understand how these hadith are received, interpreted, and factored into decisions about when to perform cupping, and how religious understanding intersects with the practical experiences of those who perform it. This issue concerns not only the accuracy of the interpretation of the foundational texts, but also the process by which collective beliefs and customs are formed within a medical practice that carries religious legitimacy. The "living hadith" perspective offers an analytical framework for examining this relationship by exploring how the community receives, transmits, and actualizes hadith in practice (Dayani et al., 2026; Syarbini et al., 2025).

The problem becomes more complex when the hadith regarding the date of cupping is used as the basis for regulating practices in communities that are specifically engaged in the field of *ruqyah* and Islamic medicine (Ariansyah et al., 2025). The Secretariat of Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) Medan City is a social space where knowledge about hadith, religious authority, practitioners' experiences, and participants' decisions meet in determining the cupping time (Munandar & Harahap, 2025). The date that is considered sunnah can be accepted as a guideline to be followed, treated as a more important time, adjusted to individual conditions, or passed on as religious knowledge without re-examination of the quality of the history on which it is based. This situation raises both epistemological and social problems: to what extent the determination of the date of cupping is really derived from hadith that has an adequate historical basis, how the meaning of sunnah is understood by practitioners and members of the JRA, and how the text of the hadith is translated into practical decisions. The difference between what the text states, what is explained by the religious authorities, and what the community does is an important point of research. With this position, the question of the cupping date does not stop at the search for the "correct date", but develops into a question about the process of establishing the authority of the hadith until a history acquires the power to regulate the health-religious practices of the community.

Several studies indicate that the field of "living hadith" has evolved through expanding methodological approaches and a shift in focus from the text itself to socio-religious practices. Junianto et al. (2024) identify phenomenology, the sociology of knowledge, and ethnography as primary approaches, while Fadlilah (2026) frames the study of living hadith as a significant development in Indonesian hadith scholarship, particularly in understanding how the Prophetic tradition is brought to life in society. Similarly, Harahap et al. (2025) highlight the role of living hadith in elucidating the relationship between Islamic teachings and local culture. Although their specific emphases differ, these studies collectively underscore the importance of social context in understanding the continuity of

the hadith; however, they do not adequately explain how the authority of a particular hadith is constructed through the interplay between the quality of the *riwāyah* (narration), communal understanding, and practical decision-making. This limitation becomes particularly relevant in light of Iqbal et al. (2026), which suggest that research on living hadith remains heavily focused on practices, while the transmission and transformation of the hadith itself have received insufficient attention. Meanwhile, Siregar and Munandar (2025) propose an emic-etic paradigm to bridge practitioners' perspectives with the researcher's analytical framework. While these latter studies broaden the scope—moving beyond descriptions of practice toward processes of meaning-making and the construction of authority—they do not examine how these elements intersect in religio-medical practices that use the hadith to determine the timing of specific interventions.

In light of this comparison, the research gap does not lie in a lack of studies on living hadith practices, but rather in the absence of an integrated analysis that connects the quality and configuration of the *riwāyah*, the processes by which a community receives and interprets the hadith, and the practical consequences of these factors in determining the timing for performing *ḥijāmah*. This study focuses on hadiths concerning the recommended dates for *ḥijāmah*, as well as how these hadiths are interpreted and used by the Secretariat of Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) in Medan City to determine specific dates. This research is novel in linking hadith analysis to how these accounts are received and translated into a communal decision—moving beyond a mere application of the "living hadith" approach or a general observation of cupping traditions. This novelty is supported by examining the sources and quality of the hadith accounts used, identifying the rationale behind the community's selection of dates, and comparing the textual foundations with actual practices.

This study focuses on four key issues: the configuration of hadith (prophetic traditions) that serve as the basis for determining the timing and dates for *ḥijāmah*; the construction of hadith authority within the Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) community in Medan; the reception of hadith in the practice of scheduling *ḥijāmah* sessions; and the variations in practice that reflect the adaptation and negotiation of the concept of sunnah within a contemporary religious context. This study examines these issues by integrating hadith textual criticism with a "living hadith" approach, tracing the interplay between normative foundations, the formation of religious authority, communal interpretation, and social practice. This research contributes by analyzing the relationship between the validity and interpretation of hadith and their application in religio-health practices—showing that the sunnah is not merely a set of textual prescriptions, but a concept actively received and negotiated within the life of the community.

Method

This study employs a qualitative method with a field case study design, utilizing a "living hadith" perspective to analyze the relationship between hadith texts, the construction of authority, reception, and the practices surrounding the scheduling of *ḥijāmah* at the Secretariat of Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) in Medan City. Data collection took place from February to July 2026 and involved one informant selected purposively based on their direct involvement in cupping practices, their knowledge of the underlying hadith, and their role in explaining the rationale for scheduling cupping sessions within the

JRA community. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, observation of activities, and the documentation of religious materials, activity records, and other relevant documents. Interviews were conducted to explore the informant's understanding of the hadith, sources of authority, the process of receiving these teachings, and the basis for determining cupping dates, while observations focused on the actual implementation of the practice and the application of the cited hadith. Documentation involved identifying, recording, and assessing each document's relevance to the research focus.

The "living hadith" analysis utilizes a framework examining the interplay between text, transmission, reception, authority, and practice to explain how hadith are understood, used as a reference, and manifested within community activities. Textual analysis begins with *takhrīj*—tracing the hadith through primary hadith collections, specifically the *Kutub al-Sittah* (The Six Books)—while closely examining chapters and variations in the wording of narrations concerning the timing or dates for cupping. The identified narrations are then compared based on their sources, chains of transmission, and the content of the text. A critique of the sanad is conducted by examining the continuity of the transmission chain, as well as the credibility and precision of the narrators, drawing upon *rijāl al-ḥadīth* (biographical literature on narrators) and the evaluations of hadith scholars. Meanwhile, the critique of the *matn* focuses on comparing the wording and context of the narrations, identifying potential contradictions, and assessing their alignment with other relevant religious evidence. Assessing the quality of a hadith relies on established criteria for the authenticity of its chain of transmission and its content, as well as the documented opinions of hadith scholars. These textual findings are then integrated with data from interviews, observations, and documentation—utilizing thematic coding and triangulation—to identify points of alignment or divergence, as well as the process by which the authority of a hadith is translated into the practice of determining dates for *ḥijāmah*.

Results

Hadith Configuration on Cupping Time and Date

Results from *takhrīj* using the book *al-Muʿjam* with the word index "حجم" show that a history was found that directly linked cupping to a specific date, forming a relatively limited corpus, with four main pathways repeating at the numbers 17, 19, and 21 (Wensinck, 1936). The following is a summary table of four chains of hadith regarding the recommended dates for *ḥijāmah*, based on research conducted using the *al-Muʿjam* collection:

Table 1. Takhrīj of Hadiths Regarding the Timing of Ḥijāmah

Mukharrij	Narrator Among the Companions	Hadith Number	Status of the Hadith
Al-Tirmidhī	Anas ibn Mālik	2051	*Ḥasan gharīb*
Al-Tirmidhī	Ibn ʿAbbās	2053	*Ḥasan gharīb*
Abū Dāwūd	Abū Hurayrah	3861	*Ḥasan*
Ibn Mājah	Anas ibn Mālik	3486	*ḍaʿīf*

The first narration is found in *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* through Anas ibn Mālik, with the sanad ʿAbd al-Quddūs ibn Muḥammad–ʿAmr ibn ʿĀṣim–Hammām and Jarīr ibn Ḥāzim–Qatādah–Anas. The editorial reads: *"kāna Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam yaḥtajimu fī al-akhdāʿayn wa-al-kāhil, wa-kāna yaḥtajimu li-sabʿata ʿashrata wa-tisʿata*

ʿashrata wa-iḥdā wa-ʿishrīn", i.e. the Prophet used to cupping on *al-akhdāʿayn* and *al-kāhil*, and cupping on the 17th, 19th, and 21st (Al-Tirmidhī, 1975). Al-Tirmidhī places it in the chapter *mā jāʾa fī al-ḥiyamah* and assess it *ḥasan gharīb*; he also notes the comparative line of Ibn ʿAbbās and Maʿqil ibn Yasār. The second narration is in *Sunan Abi Dawūd* through Abū Hurayrah with the sanad of Abū Tawbah al-Rabīʿ ibn Nāfiʿ–Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jumaḥī–Suhayl–his father–Abū Hurayrah. The editorial is shorter: *"man iḥtajama li-sabʿata ʿashrata wa-tisʿata ʿashrata wa-iḥdā wa-ʿishrīn kāna shifāʾan min kulli dāʾ"* (Al-Sijistānī, 1993). These two paths are important to distinguish: the Anas path describes the Prophet's habits, while the path of Abū Hurayrah gives a direct attribution in the form of healing benefits.

The third narration appears in *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* through Ibn ʿAbbās, as stated in hadith 2053, transmitted via ʿAbbād ibn Manṣūr–ʿIkrimah–Ibn ʿAbbās. The editorial contains a more explicit statement: *"inna khayra mā taḥtajimūna fīhi yawmu sabʿata ʿashrata wa-yawmu tisʿata ʿashrata wa-yawmu iḥdā wa-ʿishrīn"*, namely, the three dates are referred for as the best time to cupping (Al-Tirmidhī, 1975). Al-Tirmidhī concludes this narration with an assessment of *ḥasan gharīb* and stated that he did not know him through any other means than the narration of ʿAbbād ibn Manṣūr. Al-Dhahabī (1993) then criticizes the sanad by highlighting ʿAbbād ibn Manṣūr as a weak narrator; in *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl*, he compiled a number of *jarḥ* assessments of ʿAbbād, including those of Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd, Ibn Maʿīn, al-Nasāʾī, Abū Ḥātim, and al-Sājī, among whom he called it weak and mudallis. As for the redaction on the three cupping times in particular, al-Albānī does not consider them weak; he rather assesses them *ṣaḥīḥ* in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jamiʿ* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Li-Ghairah* in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb* (Al-Albani, 2002). Thus, these differences in assessment do not necessarily imply an absolute contradiction; rather, they should be understood in light of the specific subject of the assessment, the circumstances of the individual sanad, and the supporting chains that may elevate a hadith's status.

The fourth line comes from *Sunan Ibn Mājah* through Anas ibn Mālik with the sanad of Suwayd ibn Saʿīd–ʿUthmān ibn Maṭar–Zakariyyā ibn Maysarah–al-Nahhās ibn Qahm–Anas. The matatu reads: "*man arāda al-ḥijāmah fa-liyataḥarra sabʿata ʿashara aw tisʿata ʿashara aw iḥdā wa-ʿishrīn"*, followed by the prohibition of letting blood "boil" to the point of endangering oneself (Ibn Mājah, 2014). Compared to the line of al-Tirmidhī from Anas, Ibn Mājah's editorial is more directive through verbs *fa-liyataḥarra*, which lexically contains the meaning of searching or choosing carefully. The strength of this narrated sanad is questioned because al-Nahhās ibn Qahm is considered weak; al-Būṣīrī (1993) explicitly states that his sanad is weak due to the existence of al-Nahhās, while Ibn Ḥajar (1990) states that the hadiths that specifically stipulate the time of *ḥijāmah* are not *ṣaḥīḥ*. Al-Albānī (1996) also considers the sanad narrated by Ibn Mājah to be very weak in *al-Silsilah al-Ḍaʿīfah*, mainly because of the weakness of the narrators in the sanad. However, in *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, al-Albānī considers that the narration is strengthened through other channels and states that the hadith can be accepted in its entirety through shahawahid.

The quality of the Abū Hurayrah line in *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* shows a similar problem. Al-Albānī (2002b) Rate it *Ḥasan*, while criticism of the sanad points to Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jumaḥī as the narrator in question in terms of memorization, although some scholars consider him to be *ṣadūq*. Al-Baghawī (1983) accept the hadith as *Ḥasan* taking into account the existence of shahawahid, while Ibn Ḥajar (1990) puts the entire history of

the determination of the cupping day in a position that does not reach the level of ṣaḥīḥ. This difference results in a methodological conclusion that should not be flattened into "hadith *ṣaḥīḥ*" or "hadith *ḍaʿīf*". Textually, the path of Abū Hurayrah supports the relationship between the three dates and the benefits of cupping; critically the sanad, the path is in the disputed area of judgment. Al-Tirmidhī's position on the path of Anas is more positive through the judgment *ḥasan gharīb*, while Ibn Ḥajar saw the existence of *ʿillah* on the path of Ibn ʿAbbās who became the syāhid for other narrations. Al-Nawawī (1996) Taking a more nuanced position: he did not establish a prohibition on cupping on a particular day because there is no strong hadith for it, while the history of the 17th, 19th, and 21st is considered to have an acceptable basis in the discussion of cupping. The differences between scholars reveal one main problem: acceptance of the primacy of a particular date is not identical to proof of the existence of an obligation or time limit.

The corpus of hadith also contains a history that actually expands the space of cupping time. Al-Bukhārī (1993) Ibn ʿAbbās, *'iḥtajama al-Nabī ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam wa-huwa ṣāʾim'*, in chapter *"ayy sāʿatin yaḥtajim"*, accompanied by a description of Abu Mūsā who cupped at night. This narration does not mention a specific date, but it has high argumentative value because it shows the Prophet's cupping practice under conditions not associated with 17, 19, or 21. Ibn Ḥajar (1990) Explaining this configuration by judging the hadiths about the right time for cupping does not reach the standard *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari*; according to him, the placement of the history of cupping at night signals the existence of a space for implementation as needed, not an absolute restriction at a certain time. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1998) Reading the history of the 17th, 19th, and 21st as the time chosen for prudence and health maintenance, whereas when the need for treatment arises, cupping is done as needed.

The history of the day of the week further makes clear the need to limit conclusions. Ibn Mājah (2014) contains the hadith of Ibn ʿUmar which mentions Thursday as a cupping day, advocating Monday and Tuesday, and avoiding Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The route is through Suwayd ibn Saʿīd–ʿUthmān ibn Maṭar–al-Ḥasan ibn Abī Jaʿfar–Muḥammad ibn Juḥādah–Nāfiʿ–Ibn ʿUmar. Al-Būṣīrī (1993) considers his sanad to be weak because of al-Ḥasan ibn Abī Jaʿfar, while Ibn Ḥajar (1990) states the *marfūʿ* version is not *ṣaḥīḥ* and records a better history as Ibn ʿUmar himself. This position makes the weekday history incompatible with the history of the 17th, 19th, and 21st without qualifications. Even if three dates are accepted as history *Ḥasan* According to some hadith scholars, this acceptance still does not produce a complete doctrine of the days of the week. The most responsible textual configuration actually shows a different layer: there is a history that connects cupping with the 17th, 19th, and 21st; there is another history that shows the practice of cupping at an unspecified time; and there is a history of weekdays whose sanad is problematic.

The difference in editorial ultimately determines the limits of the conclusion regarding the sunnah. Anas's narration in *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* uses *kāna yaḥtajim*, a construction that primarily records the Prophet's habits or practices: The Prophet used to cupping at certain places and on the 17th, 19th, and 21st. The narration of Ibn ʿAbbās uses *khayr mā taḥtajimūna fīhi*, so that the content is closer to preference or virtue. Ibn Mājah's narration uses *fa-liyataḥarra*, which is more clearly in the form of instructions to the person who wants to cup. This verbal difference results in normative gradations: "The Prophet did" is

not automatically identical to "The Prophet commanded"; "Best time" is stronger than just a habitual report, but it remains not synonymous with obligation; whereas the command to search for a specific date depends on the validity of its sanad.

The Construction of Hadith Authority in Determining the Date of Cupping in JRA

Ustadz Zain's statement shows the position of the hadith regarding the cupping date as knowledge that has been institutionalized through the JRA's internal education path, not just information obtained by individual members. He stated explicitly, "people who practice this practical practice are indeed taught about the basics of cupping abilities, sunnah days, benefits, and hadith that are the foundation. The material does not stop at oral delivery during training, because the hadith about cupping is also included in the cupping guidebook, totok, gurah used in the JRA environment" (IF-UZ, 2026). This pattern shows the process of knowledge transmission that has two layers: pedagogical transmission through training and textual transmission through written teaching materials. Hadith gains authoritative power because the text is placed in a learning structure that determines what knowledge needs to be mastered by practitioners. The position of hadith as a normative source is then reproduced through the organizational education process.

The figure of the administrator as well as the practitioner occupies an important position as a mediator between the hadith text and the understanding of the members. Ustadz Zain does not just mention the existence of the hadith, but translates its meaning into operational categories in the form of "sunnah days", the recommended time, and the conditions that according to JRA practice are not suitable for cupping. His explanation shows that the process of translating the text into a guideline for action: the day that is considered sunnah is used as a momentum for the implementation of cupping, even JRA provides a cupping service without a tariff on that occasion, while the implementation outside the sunnah day is subject to a service fee (IF-UZ, 2026). The position of the administrators becomes stronger because the knowledge of hadith is received by members in the pedagogical relationship between the party who controls the practice and the party who is learning. The authority of the teacher here should not be understood as a substitute for the authority of the hadith, but as a social mechanism that makes the text recognizable, explained, and applied. The results of the interviews also show the existence of other senior figures such as Ustadz Munandar and Ustadz Abdi in the JRA network, although Ustadz Zain positions himself as a party with a different level of seniority from Ustadz Munandar. This kind of relational structure shows the existence of a network of authority that is not completely centralized on one individual.

The acceptance of the hadith does not take place through the quality of the *sanad* and *matn* by each member, but through the credibility of the transmission channels available to the community. The results of the interviews do not show that any members or practitioners independently verify the status of the hadith in the hadith books before practicing them. On the contrary, Ustadz Zain stated that the hadith has been conveyed in seminars, trainings, and guidebooks, and then practiced in cupping activities on the day called sunnah (IF-UZ, 2026). This condition shows the difference between the epistemic authority of the text and the social authority of its bearer. In the framework of living hadith, hadith lives when the text enters a network of practice, teaching, and social acceptance; its authority is formed through a process that connects the text with actors who are trusted

to convey its meaning (Ahmad et al., 2026). Such a mechanism explains why the status of hadith in the community can function practically without requiring the mastery of the science of hadith criticism by all users.

The strengthening of authority takes place when textual legitimacy meets the experience of the practitioner. Ustadz Zain does not stop at the claim of the existence of sunnah, but connects it with professional experience regarding the condition of the body when cupping is done on a date that is considered sunnah. He explained the differences according to his observations on blood circulation, blood viscosity, ease of blood exflowing, and the effectiveness of the cupping process (IF-UZ, 2026). This explanation shows a shift from textual legitimacy to empirical legitimacy that comes from the experience of the practitioner. The hadith provides the reason why a certain date is chosen, while the experience of the practitioner provides an explanation that is considered to support the choice.

The negotiation between the authority of the sunnah date and the patient's needs is evident when Ustadz Zain explains the situation of patients who cannot wait until the date that is considered sunnah. He admitted that many users ask for cupping based on the time they want because they have certain complaints, while some are willing to wait until the day of the sunnah (IF-UZ, 2026). Ustadz Zain explained that patients with urgent sick conditions can still be cupped up, but the number of cupping points can be reduced; if the situation allows to wait, he suggests delaying it until the condition is considered more appropriate (IF-UZ, 2026). This practice is in line with the opinion of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1998) who read the history of the 17th, 19th, and 21st as the time chosen for prudence and maintenance of health, whereas when the need for treatment arose, cupping was done as needed.

The institutional dimension becomes more evident through the practice of providing free cupping services on days that are considered sunnah. Ustadz Zain explained that JRA opens services without tariffs on sunnah days, while services outside that time are subject to payment in lieu of practical materials and equipment needs (IF-UZ, 2026). This policy transforms hadith knowledge into a collective action that can be observed and repeated. Members do not simply hear the hadith about the cupping date, but see the date as produced as an institutional momentum through joint activities. Mass cupping at the headquarters or mosque on sunnah days strengthens this mechanism because the practice is carried out collectively by practitioners and worshippers. Such a situation results in what can be called the institutionalization of hadith reception: the choice of date acquires additional legitimacy because it is practiced by the organization openly and repeatedly. The repetition of activities at the same time has the potential to make a particular date a common knowledge that feels established, even for members who do not know the hadith arguments in detail. This kind of social mechanism explains how a teaching acquires continuity through institutional routines.

Tension of authority arises when the practice of JRA combines sunnah claims with time restrictions derived from the practitioner's knowledge. Ustadz Zain stated that there are times when according to the practitioner's learning it is not recommended to cupping after 22.00 and certain conditions related to an air-conditioned or fan-conditioned environment (IF-UZ, 2026). The source of legitimacy for this provision is not explained as part of the hadith in the interview, but as part of "our practitioners we study". This

distinction of sources shows the plurality of authority in the community: the hadith provides legitimacy for the sunnah day, while the knowledge of practice provides operational limits on when cupping should be performed. When the two considerations meet, the practitioner's decision does not always follow the absolute date. Patients who are in dire need of cupping can still be served by modification of the cupping point, while patients whose conditions allow it are directed to wait. This pattern shows the existence of a situational hierarchy in the application of knowledge. The authority of the hadith remains a reference, but its implementation is negotiated through the authority of the practitioner and the conditions of the user.

The transmission patterns found show the JRA's position as a production space as well as a reproduction of hadith authority. Hadith is introduced through training, seminars, manuals, and collective practices; teachers or practitioners then translate it into operational terms such as "sunnah days"; institutions strengthen it through the implementation of cupping at a certain momentum; users respond to it through the choice of waiting or cupping based on need. This series shows the difference between "hadith as a normative source" and "hadith authority as a socio-religious construction". The normative source is in the narration attributed to the Prophet, while social authority is formed through the process when the narration is taught, believed, explained, scheduled, and practiced.

Hadith Reception in the Practice of Determining the Cupping Date

The practice of cupping in the JRA environment of Medan City shows the process of receiving hadith that moves from textual knowledge to concrete implementation timing. Information about days that are considered sunnah does not stop as teaching material, because it is translated into service patterns that can be observed in community activities. Ustadz Zain explained that the hadith about cupping is taught to practitioners through seminars and training, included in the guidebook, and then applied when JRA organizes cupping activities on days that are considered sunnah (IF-UZ, 2026). This form of reception shows a stage of concretization: knowledge about a certain date is transformed into a momentum of service that has practical consequences for anyone who wants to participate in the activity.

The choice of participants shows a more flexible reception than the model of adherence to the date as a fixed provision. Ustadz Zain described the service experience by distinguishing between users who come for health needs and those specifically seeking sunnah days. Most of the people who are met by practitioners ask for cupping at the time they want because they are sick or have certain needs; offers to wait for the sunnah time are sometimes rejected when the distance is considered too long. Others choose to wait until the day that is considered sunnah, then come to the headquarters or follow the implementation of cupping at the mosque (IF-UZ, 2026). The variation shows three forms of reception: following the recommended date, choosing another time due to need, and postponing implementation until the momentum is considered more important.

The practitioner's experience illustrates how specific dates translate into physical bodily interventions. Ustadz Zain associates the sunnah days—dates recommended by religious tradition—with a distinct physiological state; based on his experience, the body's condition on these days differs from other days, particularly in blood circulation and blood flow during *ḥijāmah*. He asserts that blood is thinner on sunnah days, which renders the

cupping process easier and more effective (IF-UZ, 2026). This experience informs the practitioner's decision-making when scheduling sessions. When cupping is performed outside these sunnah days, the practitioner uses preparatory measures to facilitate blood flow, especially when clots might otherwise impede the process. While this experiential knowledge shares some points of comparison with clinical research, it cannot be taken as direct evidence for the practices within the JRA community. For instance, Benli and Sunay (Benli & Sunay, 2017), examined the outcomes of wet cupping therapy for migraine patients in relation to lunar phases, while Ali et al. (2026) investigated variations in haematological and coagulation parameters across different lunar phases to evaluate recommendations regarding the timing of *ḥijāmah*. These studies differ from the experiences of JRA practitioners in their study populations, research designs, and measured outcomes; consequently, their findings do not necessarily prove that sunnah dates change blood viscosity or enhance the effectiveness of cupping within this specific community. Although blood flow characteristics are linked to hemorheological parameters, including blood viscosity (Arruda et al., 2021), this relationship is insufficient to confirm a specific physiological effect of sunnah dates.

Individual decisions are increasingly visible when the sunnah time is faced with the physical condition of the user. Ustadz Zain explained that he does not always apply all the cupping points that are considered sunnah when the patient experiences an urgent need. Patients who really want to cupping due to illness can still be served, but the points used can be reduced to one or two points, especially in the kahil part; if the conditions allow to wait, the practitioner suggests a delay until the situation is considered more prepared (IF-UZ, 2026). This mechanism shows an adaptive reception, because the hadith is not applied as a single procedure that ignores the patient's condition. The choice of time interacts with the consideration of the condition of the body, while the final decision is in consultative practice between the user and the practitioner. The response of the user who continues to ask for cupping even though the time is considered inappropriate is not constructed as a rejection of the teaching. The practitioner accommodates it through a change in the number of cupping points. On the contrary, the user who is able to wait is directed to postpone.

The collective pattern provides another form to the reception of hadith through the implementation of mass cupping. Ustadz Zain said that cupping activities on sunnah days can take place at JRA headquarters or mosques, with the involvement of several practitioners and worshippers (IF-UZ, 2026). Such activities make the date a social time, because its implementation gathers practitioners and users in the same momentum. The religious calendar then acquires an organizational function: a specific date becomes a shared opportunity to carry out actions that are believed to have sunnah values. The collective reception is different from the decision of the user who comes due to individual needs. In mass activities, the date serves as a point of community coordination; in individual services, the date serves as one of the considerations in determining when cupping is carried out. Sunnah days can be a shared momentum when JRA organizes them, as well as a personal choice when users determine their own service time.

The meaning of sunnah dates acquires a ritual dimension when Ustadz Zain explains the relationship between the implementation of cupping on a date that is considered sunnah and the acquisition of rewards. He states that a person receives a reward for performing cupping as part of the Prophet's teachings while performing it at a time that is

considered sunnah (IF-UZ, 2026). This statement shows the change in the function of dates from mere information of time to a symbol of religious values that affect the motivation for action. Users who wait for sunnah dates are not just waiting for service opportunities, but associate their choice of time with worship orientation. The meaning of dates then works in two realms at once: the realm of health through the implementation of cupping and the religious realm through belief in sunnah values. This relationship helps explain why some users are willing to wait until a certain momentum, as stated by Ustadz Zain when distinguishing users who pursue immediate needs from those who specifically seek sunnah days. The reception of hadith at this point is no longer in the form of mechanical adherence to the calendar, but rather the giving meaning to time. Hadith comes to life through the act of choosing, waiting, implementing, and connecting the cupping time with the purpose of healing and religious orientation.

Discussion

Negotiation of the Meaning of Sunnah in the Practice of Cupping JRA

The textual status of the hadith, community authority, and the practice of JRA cupping show three layers of meaning that are not entirely intertwined. The textual layer indicates a history of cupping on a given date, but the strength of that history and its editorial form do not provide a uniform basis for equating all reports with an obligation to choose a specific date. The institutional layer of the JRA instead turns hadith knowledge into operational guidelines through training, manuals, and the implementation of services on the "sunnah day". The practice layer shows a more flexible response: some service users wait for the time considered sunnah, while others ask for cupping immediately because of health needs. This difference shows that sunnah does not function as an absolute binding calendar rule. Its normative meaning shifts through selection: the sunnah date remains the most important time, while cupping can still be performed when individual needs demand more immediate action. This kind of position results in a distinction between "sunnah" as a claim of virtue and "sunnah" as a temporal obligation. The JRA maintains the former in practice without making the latter an absolute condition of service.

The choice to continue to refer to a certain date as "sunnah day", even when the user does not always obey it, shows a negotiation of meaning, not just non-compliance with norms. Negotiation takes place when the principle of the virtue of hadith is met with health needs, availability of time, and the practitioner's assessment of the patient's condition. Ustadz Zain explained that when a person urgently needs cupping due to illness, the action is still carried out by reducing the cupping points to one or two; if the situation allows, the patient is encouraged to wait (IF-UZ, 2026). This pattern shows a hierarchy of decisions at the practice level. The sunnah of dates is not removed when it is not carried out; it is treated as a preference that can be postponed for practical reasons or individual conditions.

Claims about the physiological benefits of sunnah dates show a more complex expansion of meaning because the practitioner's experience also gives the term sunnah substance. Ustadz Zain attributes the sunnah day to a state in which, according to his experience, the blood is thinner, the body is hotter, blood excretion is easier, and recovery is faster (IF-UZ, 2026). This claim cannot be treated as a medical finding or a direct consequence of the hadith because it reflects only the practitioner's personal opinion and

offers no clinical testing to verify it. Its analytical value lies in how practical experience expands the horizon of the meaning of sunnah. The date, originally legitimised by history, then gains additional rationality through bodily experience as perceived by the practitioner. This process forms a reciprocal relationship: the hadith provides a framework of legitimacy for the date, while practical experience provides an empirical reason that is believed to explain its primacy.

The configuration of JRA authority shows that the hadith does not stand alone. Ustadz Zain stated that the hadith regarding cupping and sunnah days are taught in seminars and trainings, included in guidebooks, and then realized through free cupping activities on sunnah days and tariffed services outside those days (IF-UZ, 2026). This series shows the transformation of texts into institutions: hadith does not remain religious information, but takes material form through curricula, books, service schedules, and financing mechanisms. Scholars and practitioners then function as mediators, determining how the text is applied in concrete circumstances. The institutional structure is also not singular because informants mention a network of practitioners and senior figures who develop through shared experiences in JRA. In this case, the social power of hadith comes from the combination of texts, scientific transmission, institutions, and practitioners' experience. This structure also explains why the quality of history does not automatically determine its social applicability. Once the hadith enters institutional training and practice, the authority of the teacher, the institution that regulates it, and the community's experience of repeating it strengthen its legitimacy.

JRA's findings also expand and test the explanation of the study of living hadith on the relationship between text and practice. Qudsy and Dewi (2018) Placing reception as a door is important to read how hadith is received and present in social life, as well as emphasizing the relationship between practice, reception, text, and transmission as a field of research that allows the distance between normative texts and community practices to be observed more openly. Alfatih Suryadilaga (2012) Previously, it distinguished the interaction of hadith through written, oral, and practical traditions, a framework that helps explain how the hadith moves from textual sources to social action. The JRA case shows that the shift is not linear. The text gives initial legitimacy, the institution chooses the form of transmission, the practitioner adapts its application, and then the user's needs determine whether the guidelines are followed, postponed, or adjusted.

Conclusion

The research findings indicate that the understanding and practice of *ḥijāmah*—based on hadith concerning specific dates recommended (sunnah) for the procedure—within the Medan City chapter of Jam'iyyah Ruqyah Aswaja (JRA) are shaped by the interplay between the quality of the hadith narrations, religious authority, institutional mechanisms, and the needs of the users. Although hadith narrations on the timing of *ḥijāmah* suggest specific dates, the quality and textual variations of these accounts are insufficient to establish such dates as absolute prerequisites for the procedure. In the context of JRA Medan, this understanding is reinforced through training programs, guidebooks, instruction by practitioners, and scheduling services on days deemed sunnah. In practice, these recommendations are interpreted in various ways—from strictly adhering to the sunnah dates to choosing timing based on individual health needs. Consequently,

this study addresses issues concerning the hadith foundations, the authorities that shape their interpretation, the forms of community reception, and the negotiation between religious recommendations and practical requirements. Theoretically, these findings suggest that the study of "living hadith" must distinguish between the textual validity of a hadith and its application within social practice, while recognizing that both are inextricably linked to the formation of authority and community reception. The implications of these findings are limited to the context of JRA Medan and cannot be generalized to JRA communities in other regions. The study's limitations include its geographic scope, reliance on a single primary informant, and its reliance on interviews. Future research should incorporate a more diverse range of informants and compare practices across different regions to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of hadith reception.

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