

The Effect of Cultural Context on Understanding the Prophetic Hadith

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Abstract

Prophetic Hadith is the second source of Islamic legislation, and its understanding is influenced by the surrounding cultural and social context. The research aims to study the effect of cultural context on the explanation of Prophetic Hadith, with a focus on how to adapt their understanding to fit modern changes without affecting the objectives of Islamic law. The research deals with the concept of cultural context, its components such as language, customs and traditions, and how this context affects the understanding and application of texts across the ages. It also discusses the influence of cultural context in the early, medieval and modern Islamic eras, explaining how cultural and social changes affect the interpretation of Prophetic Hadith. The research concludes by emphasizing the importance of taking into account the cultural context to ensure an accurate interpretation that is in line with contemporary challenges without prejudice to Islamic values.

Keywords: *Climate Change, Human Psychology, Emotional Impact, Cognitive Responses, Bibliometric Analysis.*

Introduction

Prophetic Hadith is the second source of Islamic legislation and constitutes a fundamental reference in the life of Muslims. However, the understanding of Prophetic Hadith varies according to the surrounding cultural and social contexts, which sometimes leads to differences in the interpretation and application of the texts. These differences highlight the importance of studying the cultural context for a deeper and more accurate understanding of Prophetic Hadith. The process of understanding is influenced by prevailing environmental and cognitive factors, which makes it necessary to verify the extent to which the traditional understanding is compatible with contemporary cultural shifts. This research seeks to shed light on the effect of the cultural context on the interpretation of Prophetic Hadith, while providing illustrative models.

Importance of the Topic

The importance of this research is evident in enriching religious studies by shedding light on the impact of cultural context on understanding prophetic texts, which contributes to renewing Islamic understanding by clarifying the necessity of taking context into account when interpreting the Prophetic Hadith. This research also enhances efforts to bring together doctrines and schools of jurisprudence, by providing a deeper understanding of the cultural factors that may lead to differences in jurisprudential interpretations, thus opening the way for greater understanding and dialogue among jurists.

Research Objectives

This research aims to clarify the concept of cultural context and its relationship to understanding the Prophetic Hadith, through analyzing examples of Prophetic Hadiths that were influenced by their different cultural contexts.

Research Problem

The problem of this research revolves around the extent to which the cultural context influences the understanding and interpretation of the Prophetic Hadith, and the resulting differences in application between societies. The question is raised about how to distinguish between positive influences that contribute to the renewal of Islamic understanding, versus negative influences that may lead to the

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interpretation deviating from the objectives of Islamic law. The research also deals with the possibility of achieving a balance between the prophetic texts and the changes of the era, in a way that preserves the essence of Islamic law and responds to the renewed cultural requirements.

Research Questions

What is the concept of cultural context?

How has the cultural context influenced Muslims' understanding of the Prophetic Hadith throughout the ages?

Can the understanding of the Prophetic Hadith be adapted to suit the contemporary cultural context without compromising the objectives of Islamic law?

Research Plan

First Section: The Concept of Cultural Context and Its Impact on Understanding Texts

First Figure: Definition of the Cultural Context and its Components.

Second Figure: The Relationship between the Cultural Context and Understanding the Sharia Texts.

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Second Figure: The Impact of Taking Context into Account in Achieving a Moderate Understanding of the Prophetic Texts.

First Section

The Concept of Cultural Context and Its Impact on Understanding Texts

Cultural context is one of the main factors that affect the understanding of religious texts in general, and the Prophetic Hadith in particular. Understanding religious texts does not take place in a vacuum, but rather within a specific cultural and social framework, influenced by the customs, traditions and concepts prevailing in society. Hence the importance of studying the cultural context in interpreting the Prophetic Hadith, as this context overlaps with how the texts are interpreted and their meaning. The cultural context can contribute to interpreting the Prophetic Hadith in multiple ways, whether by supporting or restricting some meanings that may not be understood or interpreted differently in various cultures.

The cultural context includes a set of factors such as language, social and historical beliefs, which may affect an individual's understanding and application of texts. Therefore, these factors cannot be ignored when studying the Prophetic Hadith, as understanding the texts must be consistent with the reality of society and its developments, in a manner consistent with the objectives of Islamic law and contributing to renewing religious understanding in a manner that is compatible with the times

To study this topic, it can be divided into two figures as follows:

First Figure: Definition of the cultural context and its components.

Second Figure: The relationship between the cultural context and understanding the religious texts.

First Figure

Definition of the Cultural Context and its Components

The cultural context is the environment in which texts and phenomena are understood and interpreted, including cultural and social factors that influence the way people perceive events and texts. In the religious context, this concept is determined by the extent to which customs and traditions, language, beliefs, and social and political circumstances influence the interpretation of religious texts. Religious texts are not understood in isolation from these factors, but rather interact with them to form an understanding that reflects the reality in which the individual lives.

With regarding to the components of the cultural context, they are diverse and include several aspects:

Language: Language is one of the most important components of the cultural context, as each word or sentence in the text carries special guidance, that may differ according to the social or temporal context. For example, the meaning or use of a word may change from one society to another or from one era to another. This is evident in the Hadiths of the Prophet, which may need careful interpretation in light of the development of language and culture.

Customs and Traditions: Understanding texts is influenced by the social customs that may prevail in society. Sometimes, the social practices and traditions that people follow influence how they interpret religious texts. This is evident in the interpretation of some Prophetic Hadiths that are linked to social standards that differ between generations and societies.

Historical and Political Circumstances: The political and historical circumstances that Muslims experienced affected how texts were understood and interpreted. In certain cases, the interpretation of the Prophetic Hadith was influenced by the political circumstances that prevailed at that time.

Religious Evidence: Among the Religious evidence that confirms the importance of cultural context in interpreting the Prophetic Hadith is what was stated in the verse: “And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them,” (Ibrahim: 4), as this verse shows that the messenger was sent in the language of his people, which means that the texts must be understood in light of the language and culture of each people.

The Prophetic Hadiths themselves also highlight the need to take into account the context, such as the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “Deeds are to be judged by intentions, and a man will have only what he intended” (Bukhari), which is understood in the context of the general understanding of intentions in the society of Mecca and Medina at that time, which allows it to be interpreted in a way that is consistent with contemporary reality.

Second Figure

The Relationship between the Cultural Context and Understanding the Religious Texts

The relationship between cultural context and the understanding of religious texts is a close one, as the cultural context constitutes the framework within which religious texts are interpreted and applied. Religious texts are not understood in a vacuum, but rather in a cultural and social context that reflects the conditions and traditions of society. Accordingly, the cultural context contributes to determining the meanings of texts and directing their interpretations in ways that are consistent with lived reality.

On the one hand, the cultural context shows how collective and historical understanding can influence the interpretation of religious texts. For example, in the early Islamic society, the cultural context was characterized by a focus on social values related to solidarity and justice. In later eras, cultural changes led to the development of some interpretations in line with those changes.

On the other hand, the cultural context affects the practical application of Islamic rulings. Rulings that were revealed in a certain period may need to be reinterpreted in light of cultural, economic and political changes. For example, dealing with issues such as contemporary economics or women's rights may require a new understanding of the texts, so that they are in line with cultural and societal developments.

Therefore, taking into account the cultural context helps in a deeper understanding of Islamic texts, which enhances their application in line with the times and the rapid changes in societies.

Second Section

Historical Models of the Effect of the Cultural Context on Understanding the Prophetic Hadith

The cultural context is one of the decisive factors in interpreting the Prophetic Hadith, and this interpretation has been influenced throughout the ages by the cultural and social conditions that prevailed in each period. By studying historical models, we can observe how these factors affect the understanding and applications of the Prophetic Hadith. This topic reflects how the difference in cultural and social environments has contributed to the diversity of interpretations of the Prophetic Hadith throughout history, whether in the early ages of Islam or in the Middle Ages and the modern era. Through these models, the influence of the cultural context on the understanding and application of the Prophetic Hadith is clearly evident.

To study this topic, it will be necessary to divide it into two figures as follows:

First Figure: Models from the Early Ages of Islam.

Second Figure: Models from the Middle Ages and the Modern Age.

First Figure

Models from the Early Ages of Islam

In the early eras of Islam, the cultural and social context played a pivotal role in understanding and interpreting the Prophetic Hadith, as the Arab environment in Mecca and Medina was characterized by tribal customs and traditions and a Bedouin lifestyle based on oral language and community traditions. This greatly influenced the interpretation of the Prophetic Hadith.

One of the most prominent examples that reflects the influence of the cultural context on understanding the Prophetic Hadith in the early eras is the Hadith reported in Sahih Muslim from the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace: "You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another." This Hadith was in the context of a tribal society that relied on social solidarity and strong relationships between members of the tribe. The common meaning of the Hadith at that time was related to social unity and cooperation among Muslims.

The Prophetic Hadith reported in Sahih Al-Bukhari from the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace: "He who does not give priority to people will not be deceived by them" also reflects the culture of solidarity and mutual support that prevailed in the society of Medina. Social interaction between individuals contributed to understanding this Hadith as a call for active participation in society.

Regarding the discussion of **Zakat** (Poor dues), there are many Prophetic Hadiths that urge the payment of Zakat from money, and the interpretation of these hadiths was linked to an economic and social context

in which society relied on simple commercial transactions and agriculture. In this context, the understanding of Zakat was linked to the concept of social and economic solidarity among Muslims.

These examples illustrate how the cultural and social context in the early ages of Islam contributed to shaping the understanding and interpretation of the Hadiths of the Prophet in a way that was consistent with the reality of society at that time.

Second Figure

Models from the Middle Ages and the Modern Age

In the Middle Ages and the modern era, the cultural and social context continued to influence the understanding of the Prophetic Hadith, but it differed significantly compared to the earlier eras. During these periods, the Islamic world witnessed major transformations at the political, economic, and social levels, which were reflected in the interpretation and application of the Prophetic Hadith.

In the Middle Ages, jurists and commentators often relied on cultural and political traditions and customs that were prevalent in Islamic society. For example, in light of the major political disputes between the Abbasid and Fatimid states or between different schools of jurisprudence, the interpretation of some Hadiths was influenced by political and intellectual divisions. One of the most prominent Hadiths influenced by this context is the Hadith “The Sultan is the shadow of God on earth,” which was sometimes understood as support for the political and legitimate authority of princes and caliphs at a time when political authority was considered part of religion itself, which was sometimes misinterpreted to reinforce worldly authority.

In the modern era, with the spread of globalization and cultural and scientific developments, Islamic societies have witnessed significant changes in their social and economic values, which have affected the interpretation of the Prophetic Hadith. For example, in light of contemporary economic transformations, the issue of usury has emerged in the Prophetic Hadiths on financial transactions. In the modern era, scholars are studying how to apply the Hadith “There is no usury among Muslims” in light of contemporary financial transactions, such as Islamic banking and e-commerce, which requires a new understanding that is compatible with global economic challenges.

Another example from the modern era is the interpretation of the Hadith “He who cheats us is not one of us” in light of societal changes, as it has come to be understood within the framework of combating corruption and commercial manipulation in light of the spread of the globalized economy. These cultural and economic changes have imposed the need to review the interpretations of the Hadiths in line with contemporary challenges.

These examples illustrate how the cultural and social context in the Middle Ages and the modern era has led to changes in the interpretation of the Hadiths, reflecting the major transformations that the Islamic world has undergone.

Third Section

The Importance of Considering the Cultural Context in Understanding the Prophetic Hadith

Considering the cultural context when understanding the Prophetic Hadith is crucial to ensuring that the interpretation is accurate and relevant to contemporary realities. The cultural context includes not only social customs and traditions, but also developments in language, beliefs, and economic and political changes that may affect the understanding of the texts. If the cultural context is absent, the Hadiths may be misunderstood or interpreted in a way that is inconsistent with the objectives of Islamic law. By considering the cultural context, scholars and jurists can interpret the Hadiths in a way that is consistent with the requirements of the modern era, helping to renew Islamic understanding and provide practical solutions to contemporary challenges without compromising Islamic principles.

First Figure: Regulations for Understanding the Prophetic Hadith in Light of Cultural Changes.

Second Figure: The Impact of Taking Context into Account in Achieving a Moderate Understanding of the Prophetic Texts.

First Figure

Regulations for Understanding the Prophetic Hadith in Light of Cultural Changes

In light of the cultural changes witnessed by the Islamic world in modern times, it has become necessary to define precise controls for understanding the Prophetic Hadith in a manner consistent with these changes, without compromising the objectives of Islamic law. The importance of these controls lies in ensuring that the Hadiths are interpreted in a manner consistent with the reality of the era while preserving the authenticity of the texts and their basic values.

Considering the objectives of Islamic law: The understanding of the Prophetic Hadith must be governed by the objectives of Islamic law, which are to preserve religion, life, mind, wealth, and offspring. The interpretation must reflect the lofty goals of Islam in achieving justice, equality, and social solidarity, thus the Hadith is linked to current circumstances without deviating from these objectives.

Examining the temporal and spatial context: Hadiths must be interpreted within the context of the time and place in which the texts were revealed. Although Hadiths may have general meanings, examining the context in which they were said helps to understand their meaning correctly. In modern times, it requires reconsidering texts that were understood in different historical contexts, and to provide contemporary interpretations that are consistent with modern developments.

Considering the development of Islamic jurisprudence: The development of Islamic jurisprudence must be taken into account when interpreting Hadiths. Islamic law scholars have developed methodologies for interpreting texts in a manner that is consistent with changing realities. Therefore, jurists must use modern scientific tools such as comparing Hadiths and employing a jurisprudential perspective based on balancing texts and social data.

Considering the opinions of contemporary scholars: The efforts of contemporary scholars who have the ability to link religious texts with the requirements of the era must be utilized. These scholars have the insight to understand the impact of cultural changes on the interpretation of Hadiths, ensuring that solutions are provided that are consistent with Islamic principles.

Interpretation with jurisprudential flexibility: In light of cultural changes, interpreters should show jurisprudential flexibility in interpreting Hadiths in a manner that is consistent with social developments, while taking into account the legal constants that cannot be compromised.

By following these controls, the Prophetic Hadith can be understood in a deep and balanced way that keeps pace with contemporary challenges while preserving the religious constants.

Second Figure

The Impact of Taking Context into Account in Achieving a Moderate Understanding of the Prophetic Texts

Taking into account the cultural and social context in interpreting prophetic texts plays a crucial role in achieving a moderate understanding that balances between preserving the authenticity of religious texts and adapting to contemporary developments. Moderate understanding does not mean neglecting or extremism in religion, but rather it is an approach that relies on a deep interpretation of texts while taking into account the greater objectives of Islamic law, in a manner that is consistent with different social, economic and cultural contexts.

Balancing constants and variables: By taking context into account, a balance can be achieved between timeless religious constants and cultural and social variables. The Prophetic texts are characterized by their deep meaning and comprehensiveness, but their optimal application requires a precise understanding of the context in which they were issued. For example, in the issue of treating women in the prophetic hadith, we find many Hadiths that were directed to a tribal society that treated women differently from contemporary societies. By understanding these contexts, these hadiths can be reinterpreted in a way that is consistent with women's rights in the modern era, achieving a moderate understanding that enhances the status of women without compromising the principles of Islam.

Moderate understanding respects cultural diversity: By studying the cultural context, the understanding of the Prophetic texts can be facilitated across different Islamic cultures, whether in the East or the West. Muslim communities in countries such as Saudi Arabia may have a particular vision of the Prophetic Hadith related to their traditions, while in Western societies an interpretation may be required that is in line with the cultural and social values there. By adopting a contextual approach, intermediate interpretations can be found that take into account cultural diversity and achieve unity of meaning in Islam without conflicting with the cultural challenges in each environment.

Moderate Understanding Helps Avoid Extremism and Radicalism: Considering the cultural context helps reduce the chances of falling into the trap of extremism and radicalism in interpreting Hadiths. Misunderstanding some Prophetic texts can lead to extremist interpretations, especially when the cultural and temporal context in which the Hadith was revealed is ignored. For example, on the subject of jihad, if the context of Hadiths relating to fighting in certain periods of Islamic history is not examined, the Hadith may be understood as a call for violence in the modern era, while the original goal in the Prophetic context was self-defense and protection of the Muslim community.

Promoting a contemporary understanding of Islam: By taking context into account, a contemporary understanding of Islam can be promoted in line with shared human values such as justice, equality, and human rights. The moderate understanding allows scholars and jurists to use contemporary jurisprudential tools, such as collective Jurisprudential judgment and legal objectives, to interpret Hadiths in a manner consistent with contemporary developments and needs.

Promoting Islamic Unity: The moderate understanding of the Prophetic texts also helps to promote unity among Muslims. Often, extreme or narrow interpretations lead to divisions between Islamic sects, while taking into account the cultural context allows for flexible interpretations that contribute to the convergence of positions and opinions, and thus enhance cohesion between the various groups in the Islamic world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research shows that taking into account the cultural context in understanding the Prophetic Hadith is a basic foundation for achieving an accurate and fair interpretation of the Prophetic texts. The cultural and social context is the factor that determines how the Hadiths are understood and applied to contemporary reality. By researching the impact of the cultural context in different eras, it was concluded that the correct understanding of the Hadiths depends on taking into account the temporal and spatial circumstances in which they were said, in addition to the requirements of the current era.

We have shown that the accurate interpretation of the Prophetic texts must be flexible and renewable, so that it is in harmony with contemporary challenges without contradicting the objectives of Islamic law. The moderate understanding that respects the cultural context contributes to promoting moderation and limits intellectual deviations such as extremism and radicalism, thus contributing to providing realistic solutions that meet the needs of the Muslim community.

Therefore, the scholars' effort to understand the Prophetic hadiths in light of the cultural context is of utmost importance, and this effort must continue to ensure that Islamic law interacts with the changes of the era in a way that preserves its constants and achieves the interests of the Islamic nation in all times and places.

Research Findings

The impact of cultural context: We found that cultural context is a crucial factor in understanding and interpreting the Hadiths in a way that is consistent with social, economic and cultural variables. It has been shown that the correct understanding of texts can only be achieved by taking into account the circumstances in which they were said, as well as the cultural influences that were prevalent at the time.

Moderate Understanding: It has been shown that taking into account the cultural context contributes to achieving a moderate understanding of the Prophetic texts, which enhances moderation and reduces extremism. It also contributes to applying the Hadiths in a manner consistent with modern requirements without being lax or strict.

Recommendations

Encouraging contemporary jurisprudence: It is necessary to encourage scholars and jurists to continue their contemporary jurisprudence to interpret the Hadiths of the Prophet in light of cultural changes, while preserving the basic principles of Islamic law.

Emphasis on teaching the cultural context: The subject of cultural context should be included in the curricula of studying jurisprudence and Islamic law in Islamic institutes and universities, so that students and scholars can understand the Prophetic texts more deeply and accurately.

Interaction with contemporary issues: It is necessary for scholars to continue to interpret Prophetic texts in a manner consistent with contemporary issues, such as human rights and equality, in a way that achieves a balance between adherence to legal constants and the requirements of contemporary reality.

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