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Paradigmatic Dynamics in Ulum al-Hadith: Classical Authentication Methods and Modern Historical-Critical Debates

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Abstract

This article examines the paradigm transformation in Ulum al-Hadīṣ through debates on hadīth authenticity in classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship. It aims to formulate an integrative epistemological framework that bridges classical hadīth criticism and modern historical-critical approaches. The novelty of this study lies in proposing a conceptual synthesis between naqd al-sanad, naqd al-matn, and socio-historical analysis as complementary approaches in assessing hadīth authenticity. This study applies qualitative library research using textual analysis of selected classical hadīth manuals and contemporary academic works on hadīth criticism. Primary data include classical works of muṣṭalah al-ḥadīṣ and modern scholarly studies, while secondary data consist of interdisciplinary literature on Islamic epistemology and authenticity discourse. Data were analyzed using descriptive, comparative, and historical approaches. The findings indicate that the classical paradigm emphasizes sanad continuity, narrator reliability, and textual consistency, whereas modern approaches focus on socio-historical reconstruction and contextual interpretation. The study identifies a possible convergence in which classical criticism provides methodological rigor, while modern analysis contributes interpretive depth. However, integration must remain epistemologically selective to prevent weakening the normative authority of hadīth. Therefore, this study proposes an integrative framework that places classical methodology as the epistemic foundation while adopting critical contextual analysis. This model strengthens the relevance and epistemological resilience of Ulum al-Hadīṣ in contemporary scholarship.

Keywords: *Ulum al-Hadīṣ; hadīth authenticity; sanad criticism; matn criticism; historical-critical approach; Islamic epistemology.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji transformasi paradigma dalam Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ melalui perdebatan autentisitas hadis dalam kajian Islam klasik dan kontemporer. Penelitian ini bertujuan merumuskan kerangka epistemologis integratif yang menjembatani kritik hadis klasik dengan pendekatan historis-kritis modern. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada sintesis konseptual antara naqd al-sanad, naqd al-matn, dan analisis sosio-historis sebagai pendekatan yang saling melengkapi dalam menilai autentisitas hadis. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan melalui analisis tekstual terhadap kitab-kitab hadis klasik terpilih dan karya akademik kontemporer tentang kritik hadis. Data primer meliputi karya muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīṣ klasik dan kajian ilmiah modern, sedangkan data sekunder berupa literatur interdisipliner tentang epistemologi Islam dan diskursus autentisitas. Data dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif, komparatif, dan historis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa paradigma klasik menekankan kesinambungan sanad, kredibilitas perawi, dan konsistensi matan, sedangkan pendekatan modern menitikberatkan rekonstruksi sosio-historis dan interpretasi kontekstual. Penelitian ini menemukan titik temu bahwa kritik klasik memberikan ketelitian metodologis, sementara analisis modern memperkaya kedalaman interpretasi. Namun, integrasi tersebut harus tetap selektif secara epistemologis agar tidak melemahkan otoritas normatif hadis. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menawarkan kerangka integratif yang menempatkan metodologi klasik sebagai fondasi epistemik dengan tetap membuka ruang analisis kontekstual kritis. Model ini memperkuat relevansi dan ketahanan epistemologis Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ dalam kajian kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ; autentisitas hadis; kritik sanad; kritik matan; pendekatan historis-kritis; epistemologi Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Hadith occupies a central position in Islamic intellectual tradition as the second primary source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an. Its authority extends beyond ritual matters to legal, ethical, theological, and social dimensions of Muslim life. Consequently, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* emerged as a foundational discipline aimed at preserving, verifying, and interpreting prophetic traditions. More than a technical science of narration, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* developed as an epistemological system that regulates how knowledge attributed to the Prophet is authenticated and transmitted across generations. Through methodological tools such as *naqd al-sanad*, *naqd al-matn*, *jarḥ wa ta'dīl*, and classification of narrators and reports, Muslim scholars established rigorous standards to distinguish authentic traditions from weak or fabricated narrations.¹

Historically, the emergence of classical hadith criticism was closely linked to socio-political developments in the early Islamic period. Following the expansion of Muslim territories, sectarian fragmentation, political conflicts, and the circulation of fabricated traditions created an urgent need for systematic verification.² In response, classical scholars such as al-Bukhārī, Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ formulated methodological principles emphasizing narrator reliability, moral integrity, precision of memory, and continuity of transmission. This framework established the classical paradigm of hadith criticism, in which sanad functioned as the principal indicator of authenticity.³

However, beginning in the nineteenth century, modern intellectual challenges emerged through orientalist and Western academic scholarship. Historical-critical studies introduced

¹ Muhammad S. Rahman, "Kajian Matan Dan Sanad Hadits Dalam Metode Historis," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 8, no. 2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.30984/as.v8i2.15>.

² Rahmat Miskaya et al., "Kajian Hadis Perspektif Suni Dan Syiah: Historisitas, Kehujahan Hadis, Parameter Kesahihan Hadis Dan Keadilan," *Jurnal Studi Hadis Nusantara* 3, no. 1 (2021): 27, <https://doi.org/10.24235/jshn.v3i1.9010>.

³ Mia Syahrina Hanifa et al., "Kriteria Kesahihan Hadis Menurut Nashiruddin Albani Dan Ahmad Al-Ghumari," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 2, no. 2 (2022): 185–203, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v2i2.17013>.

alternative methods for examining hadith by focusing on socio-historical reconstruction, textual development, and contextual analysis.⁴ Scholars such as Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht argued that a number of hadith traditions reflected later political, legal, and theological developments rather than direct prophetic transmission.⁵ These arguments challenged the normative assumptions of classical Muslim scholarship and stimulated new debates regarding the historical reliability and epistemological authority of hadith.

The encounter between classical and modern scholarship created an epistemological debate in hadith studies. The classical paradigm prioritizes normative commitment, sanad continuity, and preservation of transmission-based authority, whereas modern approaches emphasize contextual interpretation, historical reconstruction, and interdisciplinary criticism. This debate extends beyond methodology, involving broader questions about the relationship between revelation, history, objectivity, and scholarly authority in Islamic thought. Contemporary Muslim scholars have responded differently: some defend classical methodology as sufficient and internally coherent, while others advocate methodological openness toward modern analytical tools.⁶

Previous studies have examined hadith authenticity from different perspectives. Classical scholarship largely focused on sanad evaluation, narrator criticism, and textual preservation. Meanwhile, modern and contemporary studies often emphasize matn criticism, socio-historical interpretation, and interdisciplinary approaches such as hermeneutics, philology, and historiography. Several contemporary scholars have attempted to compare classical and modern paradigms; however, most studies remain polarized, either defending the traditional framework or privileging modern historical criticism.⁷

Despite these developments, a significant research gap remains. Existing studies often analyze classical and modern paradigms separately, with limited effort to construct a balanced epistemological dialogue between them. Few studies specifically examine the extent to which classical hadith criticism and historical-critical approaches may complement one another without undermining the normative authority of hadith in Islamic scholarship.

Therefore, the novelty of this article lies in proposing an integrative epistemological framework that synthesizes *naqd al-sanad*, *naqd al-matn*, and socio-historical analysis as complementary approaches. Rather than positioning classical and modern paradigms as contradictory, this study explores their possible convergence and epistemological boundaries.

Based on this background, this article aims to analyze the dynamics of paradigms in *Ulūm al-Hadīṣ* concerning hadith authenticity. It addresses three research questions: (1) How do classical and modern paradigms differ in evaluating hadith authenticity? (2) What epistemological

⁴ Ahmad Isnaeni et al., "The Minority Stigma of Niqabi in Social Communities: A Study of Living Sunnah on Niqab-Wearing Students at the Islamic State University in Lampung," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 12, no. 1 (2024): 1, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v12i1.22587>; Arwansyah Kirin et al., "Crying From a Religious Perspective and Its Impact on the Physical Health of the Public Servant Communities," *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)* 22, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.00769>; Edriagus Saputra et al., "Respect For The Red White Flag in The Understanding of Syataryah and Muhammadiyah Communities: A Comparative Study," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2022): 307, <https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v7i2.5483>.

⁵ Zahrul Fata and Fachri Khoerudin, "Tradisi Kritik Sebagai Indikator Autentisitas Hadis Nabi," *Dialogia* 18, no. 2 (2020): 252–75, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v18i2.2437>.

⁶ Mutma'inah Mutma'inah, "Al-Qabḍ Wa Al-Baṣṭ dalam Nalar 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān Menurut Abdul Karim Soroush" (Program Magister Studi Islam Pascasarjana, UIN Walisongo, 2017), 141.

⁷ Abdul Rohman et al., "PROBLEM OTENTITAS HADITS (Kritik Musthafa Azami Terhadap Pemikiran Ignaz Goldziher)," *Zawiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 7, no. 1 (2021): 183, <https://doi.org/10.31332/zjpi.v7i1.3008>.

assumptions underlie each paradigm? (3) To what extent can an integrative framework be constructed between classical and modern approaches?

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of hadith studies by offering a more balanced epistemological model that bridges classical Islamic methodology and contemporary critical scholarship. Practically, it provides a conceptual foundation for contemporary scholars to engage critically with modern analytical methods while preserving the methodological rigor and normative authority of hadith within Islamic intellectual tradition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The discourse on hadith authenticity has developed through multiple scholarly paradigms, ranging from classical Islamic criticism to contemporary interdisciplinary approaches. Within this development, at least five major strands can be identified: classical hadith criticism, orientalist criticism, responses of modern Muslim scholars, contemporary integrative approaches, and epistemological debates in hadith studies.⁸

Classical Muslim scholarship established one of the most rigorous systems of textual verification in pre-modern intellectual history. The science of *Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* was primarily built upon *naqd al-sanad* (chain criticism), *naqd al-matn* (textual criticism), *jarḥ wa ta'dīl* (evaluation of narrators), and the classification of hadith authenticity. Scholars such as al-Bukhārī, Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī emphasized continuity of transmission, narrator integrity, and textual consistency as key indicators of authenticity. This framework reflects an epistemology grounded in authority, transmission continuity, and methodological reliability. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A'Ẓamī further argues that early Muslim scholars had already developed systematic mechanisms of preservation and documentation, which significantly strengthened the credibility of hadith transmission against later skepticism.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, orientalist scholars introduced historical-critical approaches that challenged classical Muslim assumptions. Ignaz Goldziher argued that many hadiths reflected socio-political and theological developments of later Muslim communities rather than direct prophetic statements. Similarly, Joseph Schacht proposed that numerous legal hadiths were retrospectively attributed to the Prophet to legitimize evolving juridical doctrines. These arguments significantly shifted hadith studies from a transmission-based framework to a historical reconstruction paradigm. Orientalist scholarship, therefore, questioned not only the authenticity of specific narrations but also the epistemological basis of sanad-centered validation itself.⁹

Modern Muslim scholars did not respond uniformly to orientalist criticism. Some defended classical hadith methodology, while others engaged critically with Western academic methods. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A'Ẓamī strongly refuted Schacht's theory by demonstrating the existence of early hadith documentation and the methodological sophistication of sanad verification.¹⁰ Likewise, Fuat Sezgin emphasized the early codification of Islamic intellectual traditions, challenging the claim that hadith literature emerged only in later periods.

⁸ Nanang Faisal Hadi and Nur Kholik Afandi, "Literature Review Is A Part of Research," *Sultra Educational Journal* 1, no. 3 (2021): 64–71, <https://doi.org/10.54297/seduj.v1i3.203>.

⁹ Amrullah Amrullah et al., "Persepsi Orientalis Terhadap Hadis: Kajian Epistemologi," *Al-Mustafid: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies* 4, no. 1 (2025): 20–32, <https://doi.org/10.30984/mustafid.v4i1.1208>.

¹⁰ Muh Fatkul Mubin et al., "Objektifitas Pemikiran Azami Tentang Sejarah Penulisan Hadis," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 21, no. 1 (2021): 141–64, <https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v21i1.8152>.

Meanwhile, Jonathan A. C. Brown¹¹ argued that classical hadith criticism represented one of the most sophisticated systems of textual authentication in Islamic intellectual history, while acknowledging that modern historical scholarship offers useful contextual insights.¹² These responses illustrate an evolving dialogue rather than a total rejection of modern criticism.

Recent scholarship has moved beyond binary opposition between classical and modern paradigms. Harald Motzki introduced *isnād-cum-matn analysis*, which combines sanad examination with textual-historical comparison to trace early transmission patterns.¹³ His findings suggest that several hadith traditions possess significant historical depth and cannot be dismissed as purely later fabrications.

Similarly, contemporary scholars increasingly advocate integrative approaches that combine classical hadith sciences with hermeneutics, philology, historiography, and socio-historical analysis. Such studies suggest that classical methodology can serve as an epistemic foundation, while modern analytical tools may enrich contextual interpretation.

At the epistemological level, the debate concerns the authority, methodology, and objectivity of hadith knowledge. Classical scholarship views authenticity through transmission continuity and scholarly authority, whereas modern critical studies often prioritize historical reconstruction, textual evolution, and contextual meaning.¹² Abdolkarim Soroush's distinction between "essential Islam" and "historical Islam" further opens discussion on the relationship between revelation and historical interpretation.¹³ Thus, the epistemological debate is not merely technical but concerns broader questions about how religious knowledge is validated, interpreted, and adapted within changing intellectual contexts.

Based on the reviewed literature, previous studies tend to discuss classical hadith criticism, orientalist skepticism, or modern Muslim responses separately. Although contemporary integrative studies exist, limited research systematically examines the epistemological interaction, tension, and possible convergence between classical sanad-based validation and modern historical-critical analysis within hadith authenticity discourse. Therefore, this study fills that gap by proposing an integrative paradigm of *Ulūm al-Hadīṣ* that synthesizes *naqd al-sanad*, *naqd al-matn*, and socio-historical analysis. Unlike previous studies that remain fragmented or polarized, this article focuses on paradigm transformation and epistemological synthesis as a more balanced framework for contemporary hadith studies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design based on library research.¹⁴ This approach is considered appropriate because the study focuses on textual, methodological and epistemological debates concerning the dynamics of paradigms in 'Ulūm al-Hadīṣ and the discourse of hadith authenticity. The study does not involve fieldwork, respondents, or interviews, as its data are derived entirely from written scholarly sources.

¹¹ Scott C. Lucas, "Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy by Jonathan A. C. Brown (Review)," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2015): 245–49, <https://doi.org/10.1353/isl.2015.0002>.

¹² Nur Hamidah Pulungan, "An Orientalist Today: Jonathan A.C. Brown's Thoughts on Hadith," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 2 (2023): 552–72, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v27i2.767>; Nur Hamidah Pulungan and Nur Fadhilah Syam, *Pemikiran Orientalis Jonathan Brown Terkait Penelitian Hadis*, 2023.

¹³ Umar Hadi et al., "Penanggalan Hadis Muslim: (Studi Atas Pemikiran Harald Motzki)," *PAPPASANG* 7, no. 1 (2025): 122–39, <https://doi.org/10.46870/jiat.v7i1.1523>.

¹⁴ Bahrum Subagiya, "Penelitian kepustakaan (library research) dalam penelitian PAI," preprint, August 22, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/zbc9g>.

The data consist of primary and secondary sources.¹⁵ The primary sources include classical works on ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth and hadith criticism, particularly writings related to sanad criticism, matn criticism, jarḥ wa ta‘dīl and hadith classification. The secondary sources include modern and contemporary academic works that discuss hadith authenticity, historical-critical approaches, orientalist scholarship and contemporary Muslim responses to hadith criticism. The selected literature includes works by classical Muslim scholars, modern Muslim hadith scholars, and contemporary Western academics in hadith studies.

The literature was selected based on three criteria.¹⁶ First, the source must directly discuss hadith authenticity, hadith criticism, or the epistemology of ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth. Second, the source must represent one of the major paradigmatic positions in the debate, namely classical Muslim scholarship, modern historical-critical scholarship, or contemporary integrative approaches. Third, the source must contribute to the discussion on sanad, matn, historical formation, or methodological transformation in hadith studies. Sources that only discuss general Islamic studies without direct relevance to hadith authenticity were excluded from the analysis.

Data were collected through documentation by identifying, reading, classifying, and interpreting relevant literature. The collected data were then organized into thematic categories, including classical authentication methods, modern historical-critical criticism, contemporary Muslim responses, and integrative epistemological approaches. This classification enabled the study to map the main patterns, assumptions, and debates within the discourse of hadith authenticity.

The data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical, historical, and comparative methods. The descriptive-analytical method was used to explain the main concepts, arguments, and methodological principles found in the selected literature. The historical method was used to trace the development of ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth paradigms from the classical period to the contemporary academic context. The comparative method was used to identify similarities, differences, tensions, and possible points of integration between classical and modern approaches.

To ensure analytical trustworthiness, this study applies source triangulation by comparing classical Muslim sources, modern Muslim scholarship, and contemporary Western academic studies. The analysis also considers different scholarly positions to avoid one-sided interpretation. The study is limited to the epistemological and methodological debate on hadith authenticity. It does not conduct technical tahrīj of specific hadiths or assess the authenticity of individual narrations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Classical Paradigm of Hadith Authenticity in Ulūmul Ḥadīṣ

The classical paradigm of Ulūmul Ḥadīṣ represents a highly sophisticated epistemological system within Islamic intellectual tradition aimed at safeguarding the authenticity of prophetic traditions. It is grounded in the principle that the validity of hadith is determined primarily through the integrity of its transmission chain (sanad) and the reliability of its narrators. Within this framework, hadith is understood as a transmitted knowledge system that must undergo strict methodological verification before being accepted as an authoritative source of Islamic law and moral guidance. The central assumption is that religious truth can be preserved through controlled

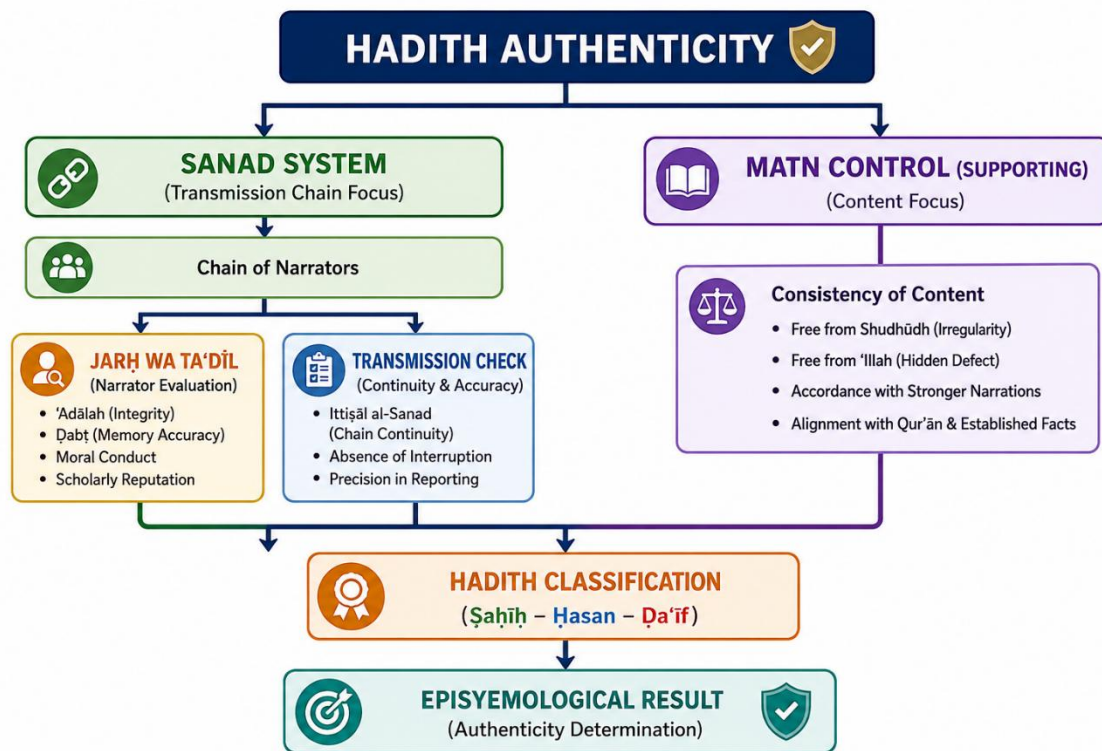
¹⁵ Ardiansyah et al., “Teknik Pengumpulan Data Dan Instrumen Penelitian Ilmiah Pendidikan Pada Pendekatan Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif,” *Jurnal IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2023): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v1i2.57>.

¹⁶ Ahmad Rijali, “Analisis Data Kualitatif,” *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 17, no. 33 (2019): 81, <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v17i33.2374>; Muhammad Wahyu Ilhami Wiyanda Vera Nurfajriani, *Triangulasi Data Dalam Analisis Data Kualitatif*, September 30, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.13929272>.

and continuous transmission, which leads to the development of rigorous mechanisms for evaluating narrators and transmission chains.¹⁷

At the core of this system lies sanad as the core of authentication, where authenticity depends on the uninterrupted chain linking narrators back to the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Each transmitter is required to meet strict standards of reliability, precision, and continuity, since any weakness in the chain directly affects the validity of the narration regardless of its content. This principle resulted in the systematic documentation of narrator biographies across generations.¹⁸ The methodological structure is strengthened through *jarḥ wa ta'dīl* as epistemological instrument, which functions as a dual mechanism of criticism (*jarḥ*) and validation (*ta'dīl*). It evaluates narrators based on moral integrity, memory accuracy, consistency, and scholarly reputation, forming one of the earliest structured systems of academic verification. These mechanisms are complemented by a systematic classification of hadith into *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, and *ḍa'īf* based on transmission integrity and textual consistency¹⁹.

Figure 1. Structure of Classical Hadith Authentication System



Source: synthesized from classical *Ulumul Ḥadīṣ* methodology

¹⁷ Muhyidin Muhyidin and Nashihin Nashihin, “Methodology of Hadith Research Critical Study of the Tradition of Criticism of Sanad and Matan Hadith,” *Darajatuna: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2025): 67–85, <https://doi.org/10.55352/darajatuna.v1i1.1671>; Muhammad Anshori, “Kajian Ketersambungan Sanad (Ittiṣāl Al-Sanad),” *Jurnal Living Hadis* 1, no. 2 (2016): 294, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2016.1123>.

¹⁸ Acep Dani, “Hadith Selection Methods in the Study of Sirah Nabawiyah (An Analysis of Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah by Akram Dhiya al-â€™Umari),” *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 5, no. 2 (2018): 154–73, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v5i2.1741>; Muhyidin and Nashihin, “Methodology of Hadith Research Critical Study of the Tradition of Criticism of Sanad and Matan Hadith.”

¹⁹ Muhammad Rizky Romdonny and Agung Danarta, “Muṣṭafa Al-Sibā’r’s Views on the Dynamics of Hadith: Ideas and Discourse on Hadith Studies,” *Al-Mu’tabar: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis* IV, no.2 (2024): 41–58; Ayub Ayub, “Matn Criticism and Its Role in The Evaluation of Hadith Authenticity,” *IJISH (International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities)* 1, no. 1 (2018): 69–75, <https://doi.org/10.26555/ijish.v1i1.136>.

The figure illustrates that classical hadith authentication operates through an interconnected system in which sanad analysis, narrator evaluation, and classification work together to determine epistemological validity. This structure reflects a highly disciplined methodology that prioritizes transmission reliability as the foundation of religious authority. Although highly rigorous, this paradigm focuses primarily on structural authenticity rather than contextual interpretation. Its strength lies in methodological consistency and preservation of prophetic traditions, while its limitation is the relatively limited engagement with socio-historical dimensions. Nevertheless, it remains a foundational framework in Islamic scholarship and continues to influence contemporary studies of hadith authenticity.

Modern and Historical-Critical Approaches to Hadith Authenticity

Modern and historical-critical approaches to hadith studies represent a shift from the classical focus on sanad authenticity and narrator reliability to a broader contextual analysis. In this view, hadith is understood not only as a normative religious text but also as a historical product shaped by transmission processes and early Islamic socio-political dynamics. Authenticity is no longer limited to chain verification but includes historical plausibility, social and political context, linguistic development, intertextuality, and the functional role of hadith in early Muslim society. The historical-critical method further examines textual variations, ideological influences, and scholarly traditions across regions, viewing hadith as dynamic products of historical development rather than fixed texts. To further illustrate this methodological shift, the following table summarizes key contributions of major scholars in modern hadith criticism:

Table 1. Key Contributions in Modern Hadith Criticism

Scholar	Main Idea	Methodological Basis	Contribution
Ignaz Goldziher ²⁰	Hadith reflects later sectarian development	Historical skepticism	Socio-political reading of hadith
Joseph Schacht ²¹	Legal hadith projected backward	Legal-historical analysis	Theory of backward projection
G.H.A. Juynboll ²²	Isnad and common link theory	Transmission network analysis	Reconstruction of transmission structure

Source: synthesized from modern hadith studies literature

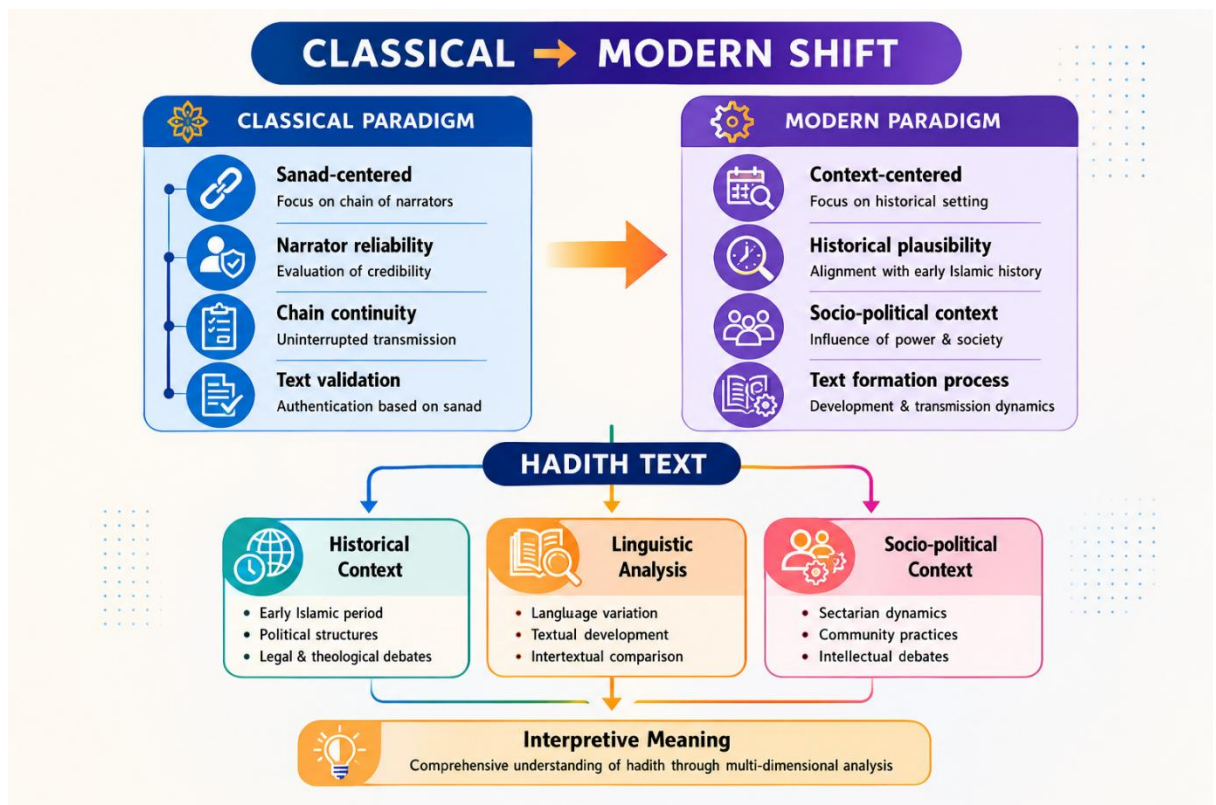
The table shows that modern criticism introduces diverse methodological tools that move beyond classical transmission analysis, focusing instead on historical formation and socio-intellectual dynamics of hadith literature.

Figure 2. Epistemological Shift and Modern Analytical Layers

²⁰ Fitria Apriyani et al., “Kritik Al-Maraghi Atas Pendapat Ignaz Goldziher Dalam Buku Introduction To Islamic Theology And Law,” *TAJIDID: Jurnal Ilmu Usbuluddin* 22, no. 1 (2023): 52–77, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v22i1.334>.

²¹ Latifah Anwar, “Hadis Dan Sunnah Nabi Dalam Perspektif Joseph Schacht,” *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Ilmu al-Qur’an Dan Hadist* 3, no. 2 (2020): 174–94, <https://doi.org/10.35132/albayan.v4i2.91>.

²² Muhammad Syachrofi, “Hadis Dalam Pandangan Sarjana Barat: Telaah Atas Pemikiran G.H.A. Juynboll,” *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur’an Dan al-Hadits* 15, no. 1 (2021): 91–110, <https://doi.org/10.24042/al-dzikra.v15i1.7970>.



Source: conceptual synthesis of modern hadith analysis

The figure illustrates an epistemological shift from sanad-based analysis to contextual interpretation in hadith studies. Modern approaches examine not only chains of transmission but also the social, historical, political, and intellectual contexts that shape hadith traditions. As a result, authenticity is understood not only through sanad validity but also through historical plausibility.

Historical-critical approaches offer interdisciplinary analysis and encourage academic dialogue, yet they are also criticized for potential subjectivity and the lack of consistent verification standards. Overall, modern approaches enrich *Ulūmul Ḥadīṣ* by providing broader perspectives on the formation, transmission, and meaning of hadith.

Comparative and Integrative Analysis of Classical and Modern Paradigms

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the classical and modern paradigms in *Ulūmul Ḥadīṣ* differ not only in methodological procedures but also in their epistemological orientation, analytical scope, and conceptualization of hadith authenticity. These differences reflect two distinct yet interconnected approaches to validating hadith as a source of Islamic knowledge. The classical paradigm is primarily grounded in sanad-based authentication, emphasizing transmission continuity, narrator reliability, and textual consistency through methodological instruments such as *jarḥ wa ta'dīl* and *naqd al-matn*. Within this framework, authenticity is constructed through structural verification, where certainty is derived from authoritative and uninterrupted transmission. In contrast, the modern paradigm adopts a historical-critical orientation that expands the analysis beyond sanad verification. It emphasizes historical plausibility, socio-political context, textual development, and interpretive reconstruction. Rather than viewing authenticity solely

through transmission reliability, this approach evaluates hadith within broader historical and intellectual contexts.²³

Despite these methodological and epistemological differences, both paradigms share a common scholarly objective: the validation and understanding of hadith traditions. The classical paradigm contributes strong methodological rigor and systematic verification, while the modern paradigm provides contextual depth and interdisciplinary interpretation. However, each remains limited when applied independently. The classical approach tends to underemphasize socio-historical dimensions, whereas modern criticism may introduce interpretive subjectivity due to the absence of universally standardized verification criteria.

Table 2. Comparative and Gap Analysis of Classical and Modern Hadith Paradigms

Aspect	Classical Paradigm	Modern Paradigm	Identified Gap
Primary Method	Sanad verification, <i>jarh wa ta'dil</i> , <i>naqd al-matn</i>	Historical criticism, socio-textual analysis	Lack of methodological integration
Epistemology	Certainty and authority-based	Interpretive and reconstruction-based	Absence of unified epistemology
Main Focus	Transmission reliability	Historical plausibility and context	Fragmented analytical scope
Objective	Authenticity validation	Historical reconstruction	Lack of synthesis between validation and interpretation
Strength	Methodological rigor and consistency	Contextual and interdisciplinary depth	Need for complementary analytical framework
Limitation	Limited socio-historical engagement	Potential interpretive subjectivity	Incomplete when applied separately

Source: obtained from primary data

The table demonstrates that the primary challenge in contemporary hadith studies is not the inadequacy of either paradigm, but the fragmented nature of their methodological application. Both approaches offer significant scholarly contributions, yet neither independently provides a sufficiently comprehensive framework for addressing authenticity, interpretation, and contextual relevance.

Therefore, the analysis identifies a critical epistemological gap: the absence of an integrative model that bridges structural verification and contextual interpretation. This finding suggests that classical and modern paradigms should not be positioned as mutually contradictory, but rather as complementary frameworks capable of generating a more balanced and multidimensional understanding of hadith authenticity in contemporary scholarship.

Epistemological Mapping, Convergence–Conflict, and Integrative Paradigm of *Ulūmul Ḥadīṣ*

The analysis identifies two dominant epistemological orientations in *Ulūmul Ḥadīṣ*, namely the classical paradigm and the modern paradigm, both of which offer distinct approaches to understanding hadith authenticity. These paradigms differ not only in methodological procedures, but also in their assumptions regarding authority, interpretation, and the nature of epistemic

²³ Suryadi Suryadi, “Rekonstruksi Kritik Sanad Dan Matan Dalam Studi Hadis,” *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16, no. 2 (2015): 177–86, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v16i2.996>.

validation. The classical paradigm constructs authenticity through structural reliability, where sanad continuity, narrator integrity, *jarh wa ta'dil*, and textual consistency function as the principal criteria for verification. Within this framework, hadith is understood as preserved authoritative knowledge, and epistemic certainty is derived from controlled transmission and methodological rigor. This paradigm emphasizes continuity, reliability, and the preservation of prophetic traditions through disciplined scholarly verification. In contrast, the modern paradigm approaches authenticity through historical plausibility, emphasizing socio-political context, textual development, chronology, and interpretive reconstruction. Rather than relying exclusively on sanad verification, this paradigm examines hadith as historically transmitted texts shaped by broader intellectual and social developments. Accordingly, authenticity is evaluated not only through transmission reliability, but also through contextual coherence and historical validity.²⁴

This epistemological mapping demonstrates a major methodological shift from authority-based certainty toward context-based interpretation. While the classical paradigm prioritizes structural preservation, the modern paradigm stresses analytical reconstruction. The core difference therefore lies in the criteria used to determine authenticity and interpret religious knowledge.²⁵

Despite these differences, the analysis reveals that the relationship between both paradigms is marked by both epistemological conflict and methodological convergence. Several tensions are evident. First, the classical paradigm treats sanad as the primary criterion of authenticity, whereas modern criticism questions whether sanad verification alone is sufficient to establish historical truth. Second, classical scholarship generally positions hadith as preserved authoritative knowledge, while modern studies tend to regard hadith as historically evolving texts shaped by social, legal, and political circumstances. Third, the classical approach is largely certainty-oriented, whereas modern criticism is interpretation-oriented and reconstructive in nature.²⁶

However, these tensions do not imply complete contradiction. Both paradigms share significant points of convergence. Each employs systematic analytical methods, seeks scholarly rigor, and aims to validate as well as understand hadith traditions. Although their epistemological assumptions differ, both are fundamentally concerned with establishing reliable knowledge and interpretive legitimacy within hadith scholarship. This suggests that the two paradigms should not be understood as mutually exclusive, but as partially complementary frameworks.

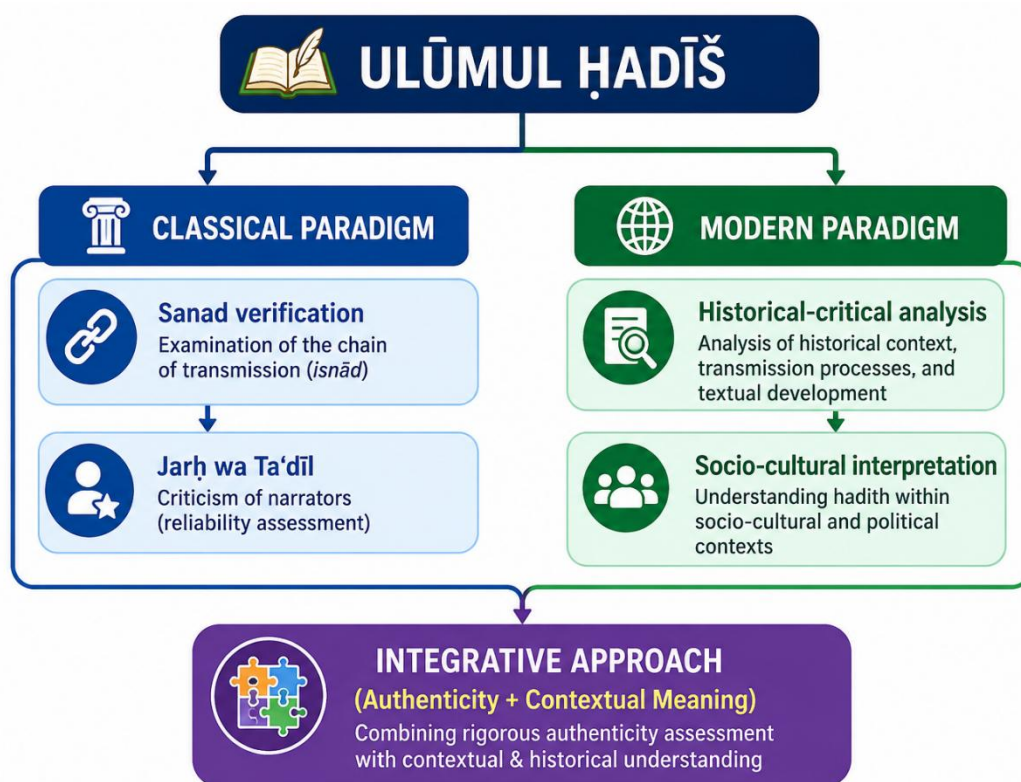
Based on this comparative and epistemological analysis, the study proposes an integrative paradigm of hadith authenticity that synthesizes structural verification and contextual interpretation.

Figure 3. Integrated Model of *Ulūmul Ḥadīṣ* Paradigms

²⁴ Tuan Mohd Sapuan Tuan Ismail et al., "The Matan and Sanad Criticisms in Evaluating the Hadith," *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 21 (2014): p152, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n21p152>.

²⁵ Hamzah Saputra et al., "Kritik Sanad Dan Matan Dalam Penentuan Kesahihan Hadis," *Jurnal SAMBAS (Studi Agama, Masyarakat, Budaya, Adat, Sejarah): Journal Of Religious, Community, Culture, Costume, History Studies* 8, no. 2 (2026): 71–82, <https://doi.org/10.37567/sambas.v8i2.5008>.

²⁶ Masyhuri Rifa'i et al., "Studi Komparasi Manhaj Al-Syaukani (Fawaid Al-Majmu'ah Fi Al-Ahadis Al-Maudu'ah) Dan Al-Idlibi (Naqd Al-Matn; 'Inda 'Ulama Al-Hadis An-Nabawi)," *Zanijyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 7, no. 1 (2021): 101, <https://doi.org/10.31332/zjpi.v7i1.2900>.



Source: *Conceptual synthesis of paradigmatic analysis.*

The proposed model consists of three interrelated dimensions. The first is structural authenticity, which focuses on sanad continuity, narrator reliability, *jarḥ wa ta'dīl*, and internal textual consistency as the classical foundation of hadith verification. The second is historical authenticity, which incorporates socio-political plausibility, chronology, and textual development to assess historical coherence. The third is functional authenticity, which evaluates ethical relevance, interpretive significance, and social applicability, thereby positioning hadith as a meaningful epistemic source within broader normative and historical contexts.²⁷

This layered framework demonstrates that authenticity should not be reduced to a single criterion, but should instead be understood through multidimensional validation. The model bridges the fragmented methodological divide between classical verification and modern contextual analysis, thereby addressing a major gap in previous hadith studies, namely the absence of a unified analytical framework capable of integrating structural reliability, historical plausibility, and functional relevance.

The implications of this finding are significant for contemporary hadith studies. Theoretically, this article contributes by redefining authenticity as a multidimensional epistemological construct, rather than limiting it to sanad-based certainty alone. Methodologically, it expands *Ulumul Ḥadīš* from a predominantly classificatory discipline into a broader interdisciplinary analytical framework that incorporates historical criticism, hermeneutics, and socio-cultural interpretation without abandoning classical methodological rigor.

From the perspective of academic practice, the integrative paradigm offers a more balanced approach for scholars dealing with issues of hadith verification, legal interpretation, and epistemic authority in Islamic studies. It enables researchers to preserve methodological

²⁷ Muhammad Taufiq Firdaus And Muhammad Alfatih Suryadilaga, "Integrasi Keilmuan Dalam Kritik Matan Hadis," *TAJID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 18, no. 2 (2020): 153–76, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v18i2.96>.

consistency while critically engaging with historical context and interpretive relevance. Therefore, this study positions *Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* not as a static classificatory science, but as a dynamic and evolving epistemological discipline capable of bridging normative religious concerns and contemporary academic inquiry. Through this integrative paradigm, hadith studies can move beyond fragmented methodological debates toward a more coherent, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary scholarly framework.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* reflects two major paradigms in understanding hadith authenticity, namely the classical and modern approaches. The classical paradigm emphasizes structural verification through sanad continuity, narrator reliability, and systematic classification, while the modern paradigm expands authenticity assessment through historical and contextual interpretation. The analysis shows that although both paradigms differ in epistemological orientation, they share a common objective in establishing reliable understanding of hadith traditions.

The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that classical and modern paradigms should not be viewed as entirely contradictory, but as complementary epistemological frameworks that can enrich contemporary hadith studies. Theoretically, this finding reinforces the understanding of authenticity as a multidimensional construct that includes structural, historical, and interpretive dimensions. Practically, it provides a balanced analytical perspective for scholars in evaluating hadith within both normative and contextual frameworks.

This study is limited by its conceptual and library-based nature, which focuses on theoretical comparison without empirical examination of specific hadith cases. Therefore, future research may apply this integrative framework to selected hadith texts or case-based studies in order to further evaluate its analytical relevance and methodological applicability in contemporary Islamic scholarship.

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