



# Methodology for Compiling Hadith in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Hijri: Integrating Transmission and Practical Orientation in Ibn Sunnī's Work

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Received: 2025-10-30; Revised: 2025-11-23; Accepted: 2025-12-23; Published: 2025-12-31

**Abstract:** The development of hadith codification in the 3rd to 4th centuries of the Hijri marked an increasingly complex process of systematising the transmission of religious knowledge through various hadith compilations. However, modern hadith studies tend to focus on the criticism of the *sanad* (chain of transmission) and the evaluation of narrators' authority. In contrast, the methodological dimensions of compilation methods, thematic organisation, and the practical orientation of hadith compilations are less thoroughly analysed. This gap is particularly evident in studies of the works of 4th-century Hijri scholars who integrated the legitimacy of *sanad* transmission with the practical needs of the community. This study aims to analyse the methodology of hadith compilation in the works of Ibn Sunnī and to explain how the integration of the legitimacy of *sanad* transmission and a practical orientation shaped the structure of hadith compilations during that period. The study uses a qualitative approach, with textual analysis and the historiography of hadith, through an examination of the thematic structure of the books, the configuration of the *sanad* transmission network, and variations in hadith redaction in Ibn Sunnī's works. The results show that Ibn Sunnī's compilation methodology exhibits three main characteristics. First, the pattern of hadith transmission relies on a broad and multi-layered network of teachers that strengthens the legitimacy of the *sanad* and reflects intellectual mobility within the 4th-century AH transmission network. Second, the hadith compilation is structured thematically, with a strong orientation towards worship, prayer, and daily ethics, so that it functions as a practical guide for the religious life of Muslim communities. Third, the text's editing strategy preserves variations in hadith redactions across different transmission lines, representing the dynamics of transmission in the oral and written traditions. These findings suggest that Ibn Sunnī's compilation functioned not only as an archive of *sanad* transmission but also as a pedagogical tool that connects scholarly authority with the religious needs of the community, thus making an important contribution to the understanding of the historiography and methodology of classical hadith compilation.

**Keywords:** Hadith Compilation; *Sanad* Transmission; Ibn Sunnī; Thematic Hadith; Hadith Historiography

**Abstrak:** Perkembangan kodifikasi hadis pada abad ke-3 hingga ke-4 Hijriah menandai proses sistematisasi transmisi pengetahuan keagamaan yang semakin kompleks melalui berbagai kompilasi hadis. Namun, studi hadis modern cenderung memusatkan perhatian pada kritik sanad dan evaluasi otoritas perawi, sementara dimensi metodologis terkait cara penyusunan, pengorganisasian tematik, dan orientasi praktis kompilasi hadis relatif kurang dianalisis secara mendalam. Kesenjangan ini terutama terlihat dalam kajian terhadap karya ulama abad ke-4 Hijriah yang mengintegrasikan legitimasi transmisi sanad dengan kebutuhan praksis umat. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis metodologi penyusunan hadis dalam karya Ibn Sunnī serta menjelaskan bagaimana integrasi antara legitimasi transmisi sanad dan orientasi praktis membentuk struktur kompilasi hadis pada periode tersebut. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis tekstual dan historiografi hadis melalui penelaahan terhadap struktur tematik kitab, konfigurasi jaringan transmisi sanad, serta variasi redaksi hadis dalam karya Ibn Sunnī. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metodologi kompilasi Ibn Sunnī memperlihatkan tiga karakter utama. Pertama, pola transmisi hadis bertumpu pada jaringan guru yang luas dan berlapis yang memperkuat legitimasi sanad sekaligus merefleksikan mobilitas intelektual dalam jaringan periwayatan abad ke-4 Hijriah. Kedua, struktur penyusunan hadis disusun secara tematik dengan orientasi kuat pada praktik ibadah, doa, dan etika keseharian, sehingga kompilasi hadis berfungsi sebagai panduan praktis bagi kehidupan religius masyarakat Muslim. Ketiga, strategi penyuntingan teks mempertahankan variasi redaksi hadis dari jalur periwayatan yang berbeda sebagai representasi dinamika transmisi dalam tradisi lisan dan tulisan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kompilasi Ibn Sunnī tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai arsip transmisi sanad, tetapi juga sebagai perangkat pedagogis yang menghubungkan otoritas ilmiah dengan kebutuhan religius masyarakat, sehingga memberikan kontribusi penting bagi pemahaman historiografi dan metodologi kompilasi hadis klasik.

**Kata Kunci:** Kompilasi Hadis; Transmisi Sanad; Ibn Sunnī; Hadis Tematik; Historiografi Hadis

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## 1. Introduction

The development of hadith compilation methodology is a crucial dimension of Islamic intellectual history, determining how normative authority is transmitted and operationalised in the religious life of Muslim communities. From the 2nd to the 4th century AH, the hadith tradition underwent a methodological transformation driven by the increasing need for codification, verification of the *sanad* (chain of transmission), and the compilation of works that bridged scholarly transmission with religious practice (Kusuma et al., 2026). The 4th century AH marked a crucial phase following the canonisation of the major hadith collections of the previous century, when scholars began to develop a more systematic model of composition through thematic and functional organisation of hadith (Indah et al., 2025). These changes demonstrate that

hadith compilation aimed not only to document the transmission tradition but also to form a normative body that could guide the practice of worship, ethics, and social life.

Thematic hadith literature, such as works on prayer, etiquette, and daily practice, reflects a tendency to integrate the validity of transmission with the practical orientation of Muslim society (Yaqub et al., 2025). One figure representing this methodological tendency is Ibn Sunnī, a 4th-century Hijri hadith scholar known for works such as *‘Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah*, which organises hadith thematically for the needs of daily religious practice. Ibn Sunnī’s intellectual position within the network of hadith scholars connected to the al-Nasā’ī tradition of transmission indicates that the compilation of hadith during this period not only maintained the continuity of the *sanad* but also developed a compositional structure that enabled the hadith to function as a guide for systematic religious practice (Novera, 2025). This condition places Ibn Sunnī’s work as an important representation for the analysis of the development of hadith compilation methodology after the canonisation phase of classical hadith literature.

Global academic attention to the hadith tradition in recent decades has demonstrated a growing interest in the manuscripts, transmission networks, and methods of codification of classical Islamic literature. UNESCO’s (2002) report on the preservation of Islamic manuscript heritage under the Memory of the World program emphasised that hadith manuscript collections constitute a vital part of the global intellectual treasury, shaping the development of legal thought, ethics, and spirituality across Muslim societies. A manuscript digitisation project conducted by the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (2016) increased access to previously under-researched classical hadith literature. However, most research still focuses on canonical hadith collections from the 3rd century AH related to the canonisation of Sunnī hadith. At the same time, the methodological dynamics that developed in the subsequent period have not received comparable attention. This disparity in research focus has led to the development of hadith literature in the 4th century AH—particularly the work of scholars who compiled hadith thematically for religious practice—not being fully analysed within a comprehensive methodological framework. This situation shows the importance of research examining how the method of compiling hadith developed after the canonisation phase and how scholars of the 4th century Hijri integrated the authority of transmission with the practical orientation of Muslim society.

Several previous studies have made important contributions to the understanding of hadith transmission and methodology, but each has its own focus and limitations,

leaving room for further research. Farooqi et al. (2024) demonstrated, using an *isnād-cum-matn* analysis approach, that the early hadith *sanad* network possessed historical complexity that enabled a more accurate reconstruction of the layers of hadith transmission. However, their study focused on verifying early hadith transmission and did not examine the compositional structure of thematic hadith works in subsequent periods. Yahya et al. (2024) analysed the process of establishing hadith authority in the Sunni tradition and showed how the canonisation of 3rd-century AH hadith collections shaped the epistemological standards of hadith science. However, their study emphasised the dimension of textual authority rather than the method of compiling thematic hadith literature. Umar et al. (2025) highlighted the shift in knowledge transmission from oral tradition to written documentation in early Islamic literature. However, their analysis focused on the dynamics of knowledge transmission in general, without specifically discussing the methodological structure of 4th-century AH hadith works.

Kusuma et al. (2025) examined the development of the institution of hadith scholars and the teacher-student networks that formed scholarly authority in the classical period. However, their research did not specifically examine how these networks influenced the methods used to compile thematic hadith works. Dutsinma (2025) examined the process of codification and classification of hadith in classical literature and provided an important mapping of the methods of hadith scholars in compiling hadith collections. However, his study primarily focused on canonical works that served as the primary standards of the Sunnī hadith tradition. The contributions of these studies indicate that hadith studies have developed significantly in the aspects of *sanad* criticism, textual authority, and the history of knowledge transmission. However, studies that specifically examine the methodology of compiling thematic hadith in the 4th century Hijri—especially in the works of scholars such as Ibn Sunnī, who integrated *sanad* transmission with a religious praxis orientation—remain relatively limited. This limitation indicates a research gap in a comprehensive analysis of the relationship among transmission networks, thematic compositional structures, and the normative function of hadith in the works of post-canonisation hadith scholars.

This research starts from three main questions: how the transmission pattern of *sanad* forms the network of hadith transmission in Ibn Sunnī's works; how thematic compositional structure is used to organise hadith in his works; and how the integration of scientific transmission and practical orientation shapes the character of hadith literature of the 4th century Hijri. The objectives of this research are to analyse

systematically the hadith transmission network used by Ibn Sunnī, examine the thematic structure of hadith compilation in his works, and explain how normative orientation and religious praxis influence the composition of hadith literature during that period. The basic argument of this research states that Ibn Sunnī's works represent an important phase in the evolution of hadith literature methodology, when the compilation of hadith was no longer limited to the collection of narrations verified through *sanad*, but also directed towards building a textual structure that could facilitate the application of hadith in daily religious practice. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in the effort to broaden understanding of the evolution of hadith compilation methodology after the canonisation phase of classical hadith collections and to enrich the perspective of hadith historiography regarding the relationship between the transmission network, textual compositional structure, and the normative function of hadith. The practical contribution of this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive analytical framework for contemporary hadith studies, enabling an understanding of how thematic hadith literature developed as a means of disseminating religious values in Muslim society.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review design, situated within the framework of a historical-textual analysis of the tradition of hadith codification in the 4th century Hijri. This approach was chosen because the research aims to reconstruct the methodological character of hadith compilation in the works of Ibn Sunnī through an examination of textual structures, the transmission patterns of the *sanad*, and the thematic orientations that shape the practical function of hadith in religious practice. Primary data consist of hadith texts in the works of Ibn Sunnī, especially *ʿAmal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah* and *al-Qanāʿah*, which were chosen because they represent hadith compilations oriented to daily religious practice. In contrast, secondary data include classical literature on hadith transmission, contemporary academic studies on the historiography of hadith codification, and studies on Ibn Sunnī. Data collection was carried out through hadith extraction from texts, recording units of analysis in the form of *sanad* and *matn* structures, compiling a narrator matrix to map transmission relations, and thematic classification based on the practical function of hadith. Data analysis was carried out in stages through identifying the pattern of book compilation, mapping the *sanad* network to assess the structure of scientific transmission, analyzing the distribution of hadith themes in chapter organization, and interpretive synthesis that integrates philological dimensions, transmission networks, and thematic orientations to reconstruct the character of the

hadith compilation methodology in the context of the development of the 4th century Hijri scientific tradition with validation through source triangulation and comparison with contemporary hadith compilations.

## 2. Results and Discussion

### *The Character of Hadith Transmission in Ibn Sunnī's Network of Narrations*

An analysis of the transmission characteristics of Ibn Sunnī's hadith reveals a reconstructed *sanad* configuration through an empirical examination of several narrations in his works, *ʿAmal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah* and *al-Qanāʿah*. The *sanad* samples show a tendency towards a relatively short transmission structure, typically involving three to five narrators between the compiler and the tābiʿīn generation. An example can be seen in the *sanad* of a narration that follows the path of Abū Bakr ibn Abī al-Dunyā → Ibn al-Sunnī → a previous generation of narrators connected to figures such as al-Zuhrī or al-Aʿmash before reaching the Companions. This pattern reflects the phenomenon of *ʿuluw al-Isnād*, namely a preference for transmission chains closer to earlier generations (Al-Ṭahḥān, 1984). An analysis of the historiography of the *sanad* shows that Ibn Sunnī did not simply reproduce the tradition of transmission but rather operated as a node in a scholarly network connected to the *muhaddithūn* community of the third and fourth centuries of the Hijri era. The integrity of the *sanad* also confirms the epistemological orientation of the classical hadith tradition, which grounds the text's authority in the continuity of transmission.

The character of Ibn Sunnī's *sanad* network can be further analysed through the distribution of *sanad* lengths and the variety of transmission lines that appear in several narrations. A sample of several hadiths shows a *sanad* structure ranging from four to five links before reaching the generation of the companions, a characteristic consistent with the pattern of hadith transmission in the fourth century, when the chronological distance between the compiler and the source was still relatively short. The variety of *sanad* lines also demonstrates the practice of *iʿtibār al-Isnād*, the process of tracing parallel transmission lines to test the consistency of the narration (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin Abī Bakr Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī, 1996). Several hadiths in Ibn Sunnī's work have supporting lines that function as both *mutābaʿāt* and *shawāhid*, so that the credibility of the narration does not rest on a single line. This pattern of *sanad* convergence reflects the classical verification method, which assesses the strength of a hadith by comparing transmission chains. The stability of the *sanad* structure shows that Ibn Sunnī's compilation of hadith is based on a fairly extensive network of

transmissions and is integrated with the tradition of *sanad* criticism that has developed since the previous generation of *muḥaddith*.

The reconstruction of the network of teachers shows that Ibn Sunnī's transmission of hadith was deeply rooted in a community of hadith scholars active since the latter half of the third century AH. Al-Dhahabī (1985) in *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* and Ibn Ḥajar (2014) in *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* note several key teachers who formed the foundation of their transmission network. Names such as Abū Bakr ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Ṣaghānī, and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī appear repeatedly in the chain of transmission. The identification of these figures demonstrates that Ibn Sunnī's access to hadith occurred through a network of *muḥaddith* who enjoyed a strong reputation within the scholarly community of the time. The teacher-student relationship not only formed a genealogical chain of transmission but also created a structure of intellectual authority that determined the legitimacy of transmission. A prosopographical analysis of this network reveals connections between centres of hadith study, such as Baghdad, Nayshapur, and Mosul, which served as spaces for scholarly mobility for *muḥaddith* and shaped the circulation of hadith knowledge across regions.

The frequency with which certain teachers appear in the *sanad* reveals a pattern of transmission preferences related to the narrator's scholarly reputation and the proximity of his intellectual network. Abū Bakr ibn Abī al-Dunyā and Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī are among the figures who appear relatively frequently in Ibn Sunnī's transmission chain (Kathīr, 1999). This dominance indicates a tendency to utilise *sanad* channels that are highly credible according to the standards of classical hadith criticism. The concept of *thiqah* of the narrator and the proximity of the *sanad* to the network of the great *muḥaddith* of the third century played a significant role in the selection process of the narrations ('Itr, 1997). This phenomenon cannot be understood as mere transmission, but rather as an indication of *sanad* curation that takes into account the narrator's quality and the historical continuity of the transmission chain. Analysis of the frequency of narrators indicates that the process of hadith compilation involved a complex selection mechanism. The preference for certain channels suggests that Ibn Sunnī utilised the most credible scholarly networks and was easily accessible through previously established teacher relationships.

The variety of transmission paths that appear in several hadiths demonstrates the branching and intersecting structure of the *sanad* network. This characteristic can be explained through the concept of *i'tibār al-Isnād*, which functions to compare various

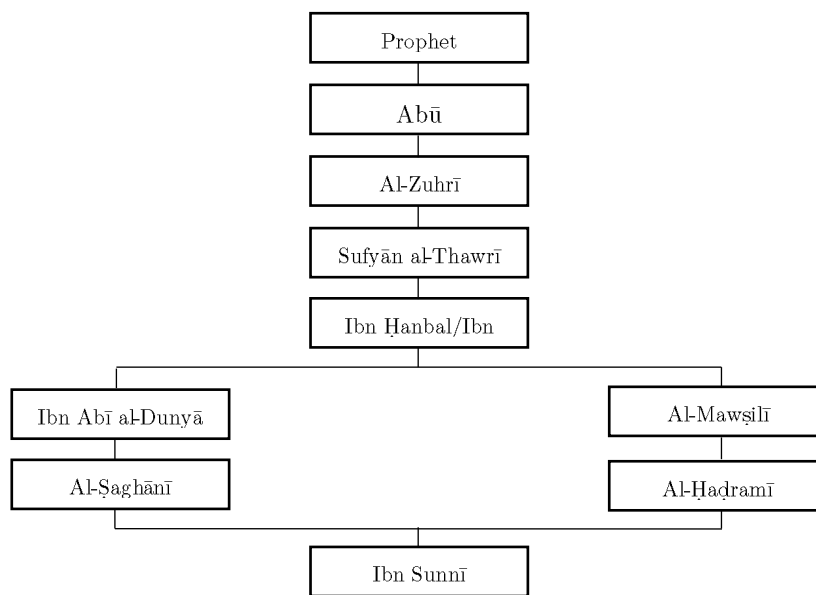
transmission paths to identify the consistency of the hadith's wording (Al-Ṭaḥḥān, 1991). According to Ibn Sa'ad (1990), several narrations in Ibn Sunnī's works demonstrate the existence of additional paths that act as *mutāba'āt* or *shawāhid*. This mechanism strengthens the validity of the hadith because the consistency of the narration's content can be verified through several independent transmission paths. This structure of *sanad* convergence is characteristic of the classical hadith tradition, which relies on the reproduction of transmissions across networks. Network analysis shows that Ibn Sunnī did not record a single transmission path, but rather represented the diversity of paths that developed within the *muḥaddith* community. This practice positions hadith compilation as a space for documenting the dynamics of the *sanad* network and demonstrating the intellectual connections between generations of hadith scholars.

Ibn Sunnī's position within the hadith transmission network can be understood through comparison with third-century *muḥaddith* such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn. This generation built the foundations of *sanad* criticism by examining the reputations of narrators and verifying transmission lines (Al-Idlibī, 1983). Ibn Sunnī inherited this methodological framework and integrated it into his fourth-century practice of compiling hadiths. The *sanad* structure in his works demonstrates continuity with the transmission network established in the preceding period. Historiographical comparisons indicate that Ibn Sunnī's position occurred during the consolidation phase of hadith literature, when the *sanad* network had become relatively stable, and the compilation process had become more systematic. His works served as a bridge between the early generation of *sanad* criticism and the development of thematic hadith literature in the fourth century AH. This role made Ibn Sunnī a transmission node, maintaining the continuity of the *sanad* while expanding the distribution of narrations to subsequent generations of scholars.

The following representation of the *sanad* network illustrates the basic structure of hadith transmission, connecting the prophetic authority with Ibn Sunnī's hadith compilations through several main teacher lines recorded in the biographical literature of hadith scholars.



Figure. 1. Sannad



The structure of this network demonstrates Ibn Sunnī's position at the hub of transmission, receiving hadith through multiple *sanad*. The branching of these channels through teachers such as Abū Bakr ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Ṣaghānī, and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī demonstrates a mechanism for verifying narrations through diverse transmission channels. This convergence of *sanads* strengthens the legitimacy of hadith, as the consistency of the narration's content can be verified through multiple independent transmission channels. This network reflects the scholarly practice of the muhaddith community, which places *sanad* as the foundation of textual legitimacy. Ibn Sunnī's compilation of hadith serves not merely as a collection of narrations but as a concrete representation of a transmission network that connects the prophetic tradition with the dynamics of hadith scholarship in the fourth century AH.

### ***Thematic Structure and Practical Orientation in the Compilation of Hadith***

The thematic structure that frames Ibn Sunnī's compilation of hadith demonstrates a methodological orientation that positions hadith as a guideline for religious practice directly related to the Muslim experience of worship. The book *'Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah* presents hadiths through themes related to daily worship activities, such as prayers upon waking, dhikr after prayer, prayers while traveling, and practices related to the human life cycle (Al-Sunnī, 1989). According to 'Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb (1989), this organizational pattern demonstrates the application of the *taṣnīf al-Abwāb* strategy, which is not primarily directed at the classification of *fiqh* laws, but rather at the compilation of systematic ritual guidelines. This structure demonstrates that hadith is

positioned as a normative source that facilitates concrete religious practice. This approach shifts the function of hadith compilation from mere documentation of transmission to an operational form of worship pedagogy. Analysis of the book's chapters shows that each group of hadiths forms a thematic unit directly related to a particular ritual action, so that the reader can trace the practice of worship through a series of hadith texts arranged functionally (Al-Sunnī, 1989).

The systematic arrangement of Ibn Sunnī's hadith demonstrates an organizational logic that follows the sequence of human ritual experience, rather than the order of the *sanad* or the chronology of transmission. The book's structure presents a series of chapters on daily worship activities, from waking up to nighttime activities, so that the thematic pattern forms a ritual flow that represents the religious life of Muslims (Al-Sunnī, 1990). This arrangement indicates that the compilation of hadiths was intended to facilitate their practical use. Readers can find hadith related to specific acts of worship without having to navigate the complex legal arguments seen in *fiqh*-based hadith works. This structure also indicates that the book's pedagogical function is a deliberate methodological element. The hadith is not merely positioned as data for the transmission of the *sanad*, but as an easily accessible guide to ritual actions. This organizational framework demonstrates the integration of the authority of hadith and the performative experience of worship, so that the book's structure functions as a practical guide for fostering religious life.

Ibn Sunnī's selection of hadith demonstrates compilation criteria that consider the relevance of worship practices. The dominance of hadith on prayers and dhikr indicates that the compiler prioritized texts that have direct implications for ritual actions. According to Jonathan Brown (2009), this selection of hadith does not mean ignoring the authority of the *sanad*, but rather demonstrates thematic priority given to hadith that serve as guidance for spiritual practice. Analysis of the distribution of the book's themes shows a concentration on hadiths related to daily worship activities, such as morning and evening dhikr, prayers for meals, prayers for travel, and prayers for human existential conditions, such as illness or hardship (Al-Sunnī, 1989). This character indicates a form of hadith literature that can be called a devotional hadith collection. This selection strategy reflects the compiler's sensitivity to the religious needs of the Muslim community, which requires hadith references for daily worship practices.

The book's thematic orientation can be understood in the context of the development of devotional literature in the fourth century of the Hijri era, during

which hadith works on prayer and dhikr grew. This period witnessed the emergence of various compilations that served as guides to spiritual practice, reflecting the community's growing need for systematic devotional literature (Abdullah et al., 2025). The scholarly *riḥlah* activities of the *muḥaddith* also expanded the transmission network so that hadith collections functioned not only as documentation of the *sanad* but also as a means of religious guidance (Kusuma et al., 2025). Ibn Sunnī's work reflects this dynamic by presenting hadith in the form of an easy-to-use devotional guide. This intellectual context is closely related to the tradition of hadith education he received from his teachers, such as al-Nasā'ī and Abū Ja'far al-Ṭaḥāwī, which shaped his methodological approach to hadith transmission and selection (Al-Mizzī, 1980). This scientific tradition allows for integrating the accuracy of the *sanad* and spiritual orientation, so that the structure of the book not only maintains the authority of transmission but also guides the use of hadith in society's religious practices.

A comparison with other hadith compilation models reveals the distinctive character of Ibn Sunnī's method. *Musnad* models, such as *Musnad Aḥmad*, organize hadiths by the names of the narrators, thereby centering the book's structure on the *sanad* transmission network (Al-A'zami, 1990). This approach emphasizes documenting transmission without providing a thematic framework directly related to specific religious practices. *Sunan* models such as *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* employ a *fiqh* chapter structure that supports the process of establishing law (Syuhbah, 1981). This structure is oriented toward the normative classification of Islamic law. Ibn Sunnī's compilation method occupies a different position because the book's themes do not systematically follow *fiqh* categories or the *sanad* organization. The thematic structure focuses on religious practices such as prayer, dhikr, and ritual etiquette. These differences demonstrate that hadith compilation methods exhibit methodological variations that reflect different intellectual goals, ranging from documentation of the *sanad* to legal classification to fostering the spiritual practices of the community.

The methodological character of Ibn Sunnī's work is also evident in the grouping of hadith into a coherent set of worship practices. The hadith are not presented as separate textual units but as part of a thematic structure that forms a practice guide. Each group of hadith relates to a specific ritual action, providing the reader with an understanding of the sequence of worship practices that can be carried out in daily life. This organizational pattern demonstrates that the thematic structure serves as a pedagogical mechanism that connects the hadith text to religious action. This approach

also demonstrates an understanding that the hadith has a performative dimension, realized through worship practices. Thematic groupings establish a direct link between text and action, enabling the book to function as a systematic guide to practice. This method demonstrates that the compilation of hadith not only preserved the transmission of the Prophet's tradition but also helped establish a standardized pattern of religious practice.

The relationship between the book's structure and the reader's religious experience is evident through its ease of access to specific devotional themes. Thematic organization allows readers to find hadith related to specific religious situations without requiring complex legal analysis. The book's structure facilitates the use of hadith as a direct guide to ritual actions, thus enabling the hadith text to function as an authoritative source that continues to operate in the religious life of the community. This relationship demonstrates that hadith compilation has a pragmatic dimension related to community devotional practices. Thematic organization enables integration between hadith transmission and the ritual needs of the Muslim community. Thus, the book becomes not only an archive of transmission traditions but also a tool for spiritual development, establishing a connection between hadith texts and everyday religious practices.

A methodological analysis of the thematic structure of Ibn Sunnī's works demonstrates the integration of the authority of transmission and the orientation of religious practice. The organization of hadiths by daily devotional themes demonstrates that hadith compilation was intended to establish a systematic guide to spiritual practice. A comparison with the *Musnad* and *Sunan* compilation models reveals that this method fosters a distinct approach that emphasizes the devotional function of hadith. The thematic structure serves as a methodological mechanism that allows hadith to serve as a user-friendly guide to worship for the Muslim community. This approach demonstrates that the classical tradition of hadith compilation encompasses a wide range of methodological approaches, from documenting the *sanad* to shaping religious practices. The method developed by Ibn Sunnī demonstrates that hadith transmission is concerned not only with preserving the authority of the Prophetic tradition but also with establishing a pedagogical framework that allows hadith texts to shape Muslims' religious life directly.

### ***Variations in Hadith Redaction and Text Editing Strategies***

The phenomenon of *ikhtilāf al-Alfāz* (textual differences) occupies a crucial position in the analysis of hadith transmission because it reveals the dynamic relationship between

the *sanad* and the textual content that shaped the history of its dissemination. Early narrations demonstrate that a single hadith can emerge through multiple *sanad* chains with varying wording, while maintaining its primary meaning (Nuraini, 2024). Classical hadith criticism has addressed this situation through the concepts of *riwāyah bi al-Lafẓ* (narrate according to the text) and *riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā* (narrate with meaning), which explain the possibility of a narrator transmitting a hadith literally or through semantic paraphrasing (Kamali, 2005). Ibn Sunnī's work, which focuses on prayer and dhikr, clearly demonstrates this phenomenon, as liturgical hadith have greater linguistic flexibility than legal hadith. Analysis of several prayer narratives in the compilation reveals variations in sentence structure, differences in phrase order, and the addition of supplications that emerge through different *sanad* channels. The *sanad-matn* analysis framework used by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (2011) and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (1986) allows such variations to be understood as a normal consequence of rote-based transmission that maintains fidelity to the basic meaning of the hadith.

A textual study of the hadiths on prayers compiled by Ibn Sunnī reveals a close relationship between the structure of the *sanad* and the form of wording that reached the compiler. Each transmission path presents the possibility of linguistic variation because each narrator has a different level of memorization precision and a different habitual use of language. A parallel analysis of several narrations of prayers shows that wording changes often occur through synonymous substitutions, expansion of the object of the request, or the addition of explanatory phrases that do not alter the core meaning of the hadith (Al-Sunnī, 1989). Classical hadith criticism methodology views such variations as a valid form of transmission as long as the *sanad* remains acceptable and the substance of the meaning remains unchanged (Itr, 1997). This approach aligns with the analysis of textual transmission in modern academic studies, which assesses the plurality of wordings as an indicator of the history of hadith circulation (Alkadri, Arifin, & Anwar, 2023). A comparison of specific *sanad* paths reveals that narrators from different geographical settings tend to maintain different patterns of prayer expression, allowing variations in wording to be read as a historical trace of the spread of hadith traditions within a broad transmission network.

Further analysis of the presentation structure of hadith in Ibn Sunnī's compilation reveals an editorial tendency to maintain a plurality of wordings without homogenizing the text. Some hadiths about prayers recur across different *sanads*, with variations in wording, and are presented separately rather than condensed into a single standard form (Al-Sunnī, 1989). This presentation pattern suggests that the compiler viewed

each narration as an independent representation of a particular transmission channel. This methodological choice reflects an awareness of the *sanad* documentation principle, which places greater emphasis on the integrity of the narration than on simplifying the text. Al-Suyūṭī (1993) explains that the plurality of wordings can strengthen the authority of a narration when the *sanad* channels support one another. This approach to compilation demonstrates that Ibn Sunnī did not simply collect hadith for the practical needs of worship but also recorded the diversity of transmission traditions circulating within the scholarly community of hadith. This editorial stance demonstrates a conservative orientation that maintains a close connection between the *matn* and the history of its transmission.

A comparison with other hadith compilation methods highlights the distinctive character of Ibn Sunnī's approach. According to Brown (2009), canonical hadith compilers often employed a more stringent selection of wording, preferring the strongest *sanad* or the most concise *matn*. The tradition of compiling prayers in some later works even demonstrates a tendency to standardize wording for liturgical purposes. Ibn Sunnī's method demonstrates a different approach, as wording variations are maintained as long as the *sanad* maintains a legitimate transmission. This approach demonstrates that the function of compilation is not limited to providing practical guidance for worship but also serves as an archive of hadith transmission. The parallel presentation of narrations allows readers to trace the relationship between the *sanad* and the variations in wording that emerge from it. Such practices can be understood as a form of scholarly curation of the hadith transmission tradition, striving to maintain transparency between the source of transmission and the form of the text that reaches the reader.

The thematic character of prayers and dhikr in Ibn Sunnī's compilation provides an important context for the emergence of redactional variations. Prayer has a performative nature that allows for diverse linguistic expressions as long as the meaning of the supplication remains consistent (Wahdana, Rasyidin, & Putri, 2025). The hadith tradition shows that the Companions and the Tābī'īn often narrated the Prophet's prayers using slightly different sentence structures without altering the primary spiritual message (Al-Jauziyyah, 2019). Analysis of several prayer narrations reveals variations in the order of phrases, the expansion of the supplicatory object, and the use of synonyms that enrich the meaning of the request for safety and goodness. These variations demonstrate the flexibility of early Islamic liturgical practices, which were not always tied to a single textual formula. The plurality of redactions even

broadened the scope of worship practices, as several forms of prayer could be used interchangeably without losing the legitimacy of the hadith. This phenomenon demonstrates that redaction diversity is not simply the result of the philological process of transmission but also reflects the spiritual and linguistic dynamics of the early Muslim community that kept the prayer tradition alive through various transmission channels.

The relationship between wording variations and *sanad* structure becomes clearer through a comparative analysis of several transmission lines that convey the hadith of prayer with non-identical wording. Each *sanad* may include minor changes in sentence structure that reflect how the narrator understood and conveyed the text. Ibn Abī Ḥātim (1952) explained that some narrators are known to narrate hadith through meaningful paraphrases as long as the substance remains unchanged. This perspective explains why differences in wording are not always considered a weakness in the narration. Analysis of variation patterns shows that wording changes are usually limited to additional elements or word substitutions that remain within the same semantic field. This condition demonstrates that a plurality of wordings can strengthen the validity of the hadith, as the presence of multiple *sanad* lines provides cross-confirmation of the narration’s basic meaning. The *sanad-matn* criticism approach allows researchers to read these variations as evidence of the dynamics of transmission that enrich the hadith tradition.

A textual comparison of several prayer narratives shows how word variations emerge across different chains of transmission, yet still convey the same meaning of the request. These variations can be seen in changes to the verb in the request, the addition of an object of prayer, or the expansion of the sentence structure. The following diagram illustrates the pattern of word variations across different transmission paths.

<i>Sanad</i> Line	Hadith Editorial	Main Word Variations
Buraydah al-Ḥuṣayb	اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ هَذِهِ السُّوقِ وَخَيْرِ مَا فِيهَا، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ هَذِهِ السُّوقِ وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهَا.....	Using the word <i>hadhi-hi al-Sūqī</i>
‘Āishah	اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ هَذِهِ الْأَرْضِ وَخَيْرِ مَا جَمَعَتْ فِيهَا، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا جَمَعَتْ فِيهَا.....	Using the word <i>hadhi-hi al-Arḍ</i>
Al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib	اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ، وَخَيْرِ مَا بَعْدَهُ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ.....	Using the word <i>hadha al-Yawm</i>

This comparison demonstrates that each *sanad* maintains the same core meaning, while variations in wording enrich the dimensions of the supplication expressed. The management of wording variations in Ibn Sunnī's compilation demonstrates a documentation strategy that maintains a close relationship between the text and its transmission history. Narrations with different *sanads* are often placed sequentially so that the reader can observe the wording variations directly. This presentation technique demonstrates methodological awareness of the importance of transparent transmission. The compiler did not combine all variants into a single standard form, but rather preserved each wording according to the accompanying narration line. This approach demonstrates the function of hadith books as textual archives that preserve the historical traces of the circulation of narrations. This presentation structure also allows for comparative analysis of linguistic changes that emerged along the *sanad* network. This documentation practice aligns with the tradition of hadith criticism, which views the diversity of narrations as a rich source of knowledge, rather than as a problem to be eliminated through textual standardization.

### ***Integration of Transmission and Practical Orientation in the Methodology of Hadith Compilation***

The integration of *sanad* transmission and practical orientation is a methodological characteristic that shapes the structure of Ibn Sunnī's hadith compilations. This methodology does not simply position the *sanad* as an instrument of historical verification. However, it serves as the epistemological foundation supporting the normative authority of the hadith as a guideline for religious practice. This perspective shows that the compilation of hadith aims not only to archive the tradition of transmission but also to connect the scientific legitimacy of the narration with the practical needs of the community's religious life. This framework aligns with the view developing in contemporary hadith studies, which positions the *sanad* as a mechanism for establishing scientific authority and a means of normative transmission of the prophetic tradition, as discussed in modern hadith historiography (Akib, 2025). Consequently, the methodological integration between the *sanad* and practical orientation does not exist as two stand-alone elements. However, it operates through a process of selection, thematic organization, and presentation of the narrations that simultaneously considers the credibility of the transmission and the relevance of the religious practices generated by the hadith.



The hadith selection criteria evident in Ibn Sunnī's compilation demonstrate a methodological interplay between the authority of the *sanad* and the needs of religious practice. The selection process was not directed solely at accumulating a broad chain of transmission, but rather focused on hadith that served an operational function in the daily practices of worship, prayer, and the etiquette of the Muslim community. This orientation is evident in the dominance of narratives related to daily ritual activities that the reader can directly practice. However, this practical orientation did not lead to a neglect of the principle of transmission validity. Each hadith is presented through a chain of transmission that maintains the *isnād* structure as an indicator of the narration's credibility. The tradition of hadith scholarship shows that narrations related to *fadā'il al-A'māl*, or devotional practices, often accepted varying levels of *sanad* quality as long as the transmission path remained known and traceable (Al-Nawawī, 1998). This pattern indicates that Ibn Sunnī's selection mechanism combined epistemological considerations of the *sanad* with normative considerations regarding the hadith's religious benefits for the practice of the community's life.

The thematic organization of Ibn Sunnī's hadith compilations demonstrates a methodological strategy that bridges the scholarly transmission dimension and the practical function of hadith. The chapter structure does not follow the technical classification of *sanad* as seen in works focused on narration criticism, but rather is structured around the sequence of religious activities that constitute the Muslim worship routine. This thematic arrangement guides the reader to understand hadith as a guide to concrete religious action, rather than simply as material for scholarly documentation. Analysis of the chapter structure reveals a predominance of themes related to prayer, dhikr, and the practice of worship that occurs throughout the daily life cycle. Each narration is accompanied by a *sanad* that links the hadith to the chain of previous narrators (Al-Sunnī, 1989). This pattern demonstrates that the thematic organization was not intended to replace the scholarly transmission framework but to mediate the relationship between the narration's authority and its normative function. This integration allows hadith to function simultaneously as a source of religious knowledge and an easily accessible guide to religious practice.

The presentation of the *sanad* in Ibn Sunnī's compilation demonstrates an editorial approach that maintains scholarly legitimacy without obscuring the work's practical orientation. The chain of transmission is explicitly presented, allowing exploration of the relationship between the hadith text and the previous transmission network. This presentation differs from works that place the criticism of the *sanad* as the primary

focus, allowing for a more extensive and analytical discussion of the *isnād* structure. Ibn Sunnī's compilation presents the *sanad* in a more concise form while maintaining continuity of transmission. This editorial strategy demonstrates that the *sanad* serves not merely as a historical tool but also as a symbol of normative legitimacy, affirming that the recommended religious practices have an authoritative basis in the prophetic tradition. This mechanism connects the scholarly authority of the narrators with the practical needs of the community seeking references for religious practice. By presenting the *sanad* in a way that remains intact yet not excessive, the hadith compilation maintains scholarly credibility while remaining accessible to practice-oriented readers.

The historiographical context of the development of hadith scholarship in the fourth century of the Hijri era provides an intellectual backdrop that explains the emergence of compilation patterns such as those of Ibn Sunnī. This period marked a phase of consolidation of the hadith tradition, following the emergence of canonical works that emphasized the verification of the *sanad* and the authentication of the narrations (Umar et al., 2025). The canonization of hadith in the previous century established a strong methodological foundation for the discipline, thereby legitimizing the issue of transmission authority within the Muslim scholarly community (Brown, 2007). This intellectual environment enabled the emergence of more thematic and functional forms of compilation, as the validity of the *sanad* had acquired a relatively stable methodological framework. This situation prompted some hadith scholars to develop compilations focused on the practical uses of hadith, without abandoning the principles of scientific transmission. Ibn Sunnī's methodology reflected this dynamic by capitalizing on the consolidated authority of the *sanad* while orienting the compilation structure toward the more operational religious needs of Muslim society.

A comparison with other hadith compilation patterns reveals the methodological position of Ibn Sunnī's work within the spectrum of hadith compilation traditions. Compilations oriented toward legal discourse typically position hadith as the basis for *fiqh* argumentation, thus allowing the chapter structure to follow systematic legal categories. Works emphasizing the transmission of the *sanad* tend to focus on documenting the transmission network and analyzing the credibility of the narrators (Syuhbah, 1981). Ibn Sunnī's methodology does not fully follow either pattern. The compilation's structure is closer to the thematic hadith genre, which focuses on worship and devotional practices, but still maintains the presentation of the *sanad* as the basis for scholarly legitimacy. This approach results in a compilation that balances historical

and normative dimensions. Hadith are not merely argumentative evidence in legal discourse or objects of narrative criticism, but authoritative sources that provide direct guidance for the community's religious practices.

The interaction between the transmission dimension and the practical orientation produces a dual function that shapes the methodological character of the hadith compilation. The first function concerns preserving scholarly authority by presenting a *sanad* linked to the networks of transmission of previous hadith scholars. The existence of a *sanad* ensures that each narration remains within the epistemological framework of the hadith tradition, which emphasizes the verification of sources. The second function concerns providing accessible guidance on religious practice for the Muslim community. The thematic structure, which focuses on daily worship activities, makes the hadith readily usable as a practical reference. The relationship between these two functions is mutually reinforcing. The credibility of the *sanad* confers normative legitimacy on the religious practices recommended in the hadith. At the same time, the practical orientation ensures that the transmission of the narration does not remain merely scholarly documentation separate from the religious life of the community.

The methodological contribution of Ibn Sunnī's compilation demonstrates that the tradition of hadith compilation could develop a synthesis between the discipline of transmission and the orientation of religious practice without sacrificing either. This integration demonstrates a compilation model that combines the scientific legitimacy of the *sanad* with the normative needs of the Muslim community, which requires operational guidance for worship. This approach provides an important perspective for the historiography of hadith because it shows that the development of hadith methodology did not stop at the stage of verifying transmissions, but also included efforts to actualize the social function of hadith as a source of religious practice. The compilation structure that connects the authority of the *sanad* with this practical orientation demonstrates that hadith functions as a living tradition that continues to interact with the community's spiritual needs. This integrative character positions Ibn Sunnī's methodology as an important development in the history of hadith compilation, particularly in demonstrating the possibility of synthesizing the scientific legitimacy of transmission with the orientation of religious practice within a coherent methodological framework.

### 3. Conclusion

The development of hadith compilation methodology in the 4th century Hijri demonstrates the maturation of a scholarly tradition that combines the authority of the *sanad* transmission with a practical orientation in the presentation of hadith. Ibn Sunnī's work presents an integrative model through three main mechanisms: the maintenance of a *sanad* network strongly connected to previous generations of teachers, the organization of hadith material through a thematic structure focused on prayer, ethics, and devotional practices, and the management of variations in hadith redaction (*ikhṭilāf al-alfāz*) through the selection and arrangement of narrations that maintain the accuracy of transmission while enhancing the readability of the text. Analysis of the transmission network reveals the dominance of teacher-student relationships that reproduce the scholarly authority of the hadith tradition, while thematic patterns position hadith as a normative guide for daily religious practice. The integration of transmission mechanisms, thematic organization, and redaction editing demonstrates a shift in hadith compilation from mere *sanad* preservation to pedagogical and ethical functions. These findings enrich the methodological mapping of classical hadith historiography and offer an analytical framework for thematic hadith studies and for hadith teaching grounded in religious practice. The limitations of this study lie in its focus on a single work and the lack of a prosopographical mapping of the *sanad* and a systematic textual comparison with contemporary hadith compilations. Further research needs to develop an analysis of the *sanad* network across works from the 4th century Hijri and a comparative study of the thematic structure of devotional hadith literature to clarify the methodological dynamics of classical hadith compilations.

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