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Genealogy and Transformation of Isnād Functions in Hadith Studies: Sanad Criticism and the Traceability of Religious Knowledge Sources

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Abstract: The transformation of religious knowledge transmission in the digital age has raised concerns about source traceability, transmitter credibility, and information authenticity, bringing renewed attention to the epistemological significance of *isnād* in Hadith studies. This study examines the historical genealogy and functional transformation of *isnād* as a mechanism of hadith verification and explores its relevance to the traceability of contemporary religious knowledge. Employing qualitative library research, the study integrates historical-conceptual inquiry, comparative analysis, and content analysis of classical hadith scholarship and contemporary academic literature. The findings demonstrate that *isnād* developed from an established practice of attributing reports to their sources into an increasingly systematic framework of verification, supported by the principles of *ittiṣāl al-sanad*, *'adālah*, *ḍabṭ*, *jarḥ wa ta'dīl*, *taḥammul wa al-adā'*, and the examination of *shudhūdh* and *'ilal*. This development establishes *isnād* not merely as a chain of transmitters but as an epistemological instrument for assessing source traceability, transmission continuity, and narrator reliability. Although these principles remain relevant to contemporary religious information verification, their application requires a functional analogy rather than a direct equivalence with classical hadith authentication procedures. The study concludes that the transformation of *isnād* reflects the continued relevance and broader epistemological implications of its verification functions without altering its technical meaning within Hadith sciences.

Keywords: functional transformation; hadith criticism; isnad genealogy; religious knowledge; source traceability.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the transmission, dissemination, and reception of religious knowledge within Muslim societies. Islamic knowledge, traditionally acquired through direct teacher–student relationships, educational institutions, and established scholarly traditions, has become increasingly accessible through social media, video-sharing platforms, and various digital resources. While these developments have expanded public access to religious knowledge, they have also raised significant concerns regarding source traceability, the credibility of transmitters, and the authenticity of circulating information (Sabari et al., 2026). In digital environments, the acceptance of religious information is not necessarily determined by the reliability of its sources or the scholarly competence of those who communicate it. Instead, it may be shaped by popularity, the appeal of content presentation, and algorithmic mechanisms that govern information distribution. These developments raise fundamental epistemological questions concerning how the origins, transmission processes, and credibility of religious knowledge can be verified as the relationships between sources, transmitters, and recipients undergo substantial transformation (Istifarin & Syamsudin, 2026).

Concerns regarding source traceability are not entirely new within the history of Islamic intellectual traditions. Hadith scholarship has long established a rigorous mechanism of verification

through *isnād*, which attributes transmitted reports to their sources through identifiable chains of narrators whose reliability can be critically examined. Within this scholarly discipline, the authenticity of a hadith cannot be established solely on the basis of its textual content (*matn*). Rather, it requires a comprehensive assessment of the continuity of its chain of transmission, the moral integrity and accuracy of its narrators, and the possible presence of irregularities or concealed defects within the transmitted report. The principles of *ittiṣāl al-sanad* (continuity of the chain of transmission), *'adālah* (narrator integrity), *ḍabṭ* (accuracy of transmission), and the absence of *shudhūdh* (irregularities) and *'illah* (hidden defects) constitute fundamental criteria for determining the authenticity of hadith. Accordingly, *isnād* should not be understood merely as a sequence of names connecting a particular report to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Rather, it serves as an epistemological instrument for systematically examining the origins, historical transmission, and credibility of religious reports. This distinctive feature demonstrates that classical hadith criticism has consistently emphasized the traceability of sources and accountability in the transmission of religious knowledge (Maftuh et al., 2026).

Historically, the development of *isnād* and its functions was closely associated with the changing sociopolitical circumstances of the early Muslim community. The political upheaval following the assassination of Caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān in 35 AH, together with subsequent conflicts among emerging Muslim factions, was among the historical circumstances that intensified the need to verify religious reports. As political, theological, and sectarian interests increasingly influenced the circulation of certain narratives, Muslim scholars placed greater emphasis on identifying transmitters and assessing their credibility. The significance of this development is reflected in a statement attributed to Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (d. 110 AH), recorded by Imam Muslim in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (*Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*):

لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَسْأَلُونَ عَنِ الْإِسْنَادِ، فَلَمَّا وَقَعَتِ الْفِتْنَةُ قَالُوا سَمُّوا لَنَا رِجَالَكُمْ

> "Previously, they did not inquire about the chain of transmission. However, when the civil strife (*fitnah*) occurred, they began to demand: 'Name your transmitters to us'" (al-Ḥajjāj, n.d.).

This statement indicates an increasing emphasis on verifying the sources of transmitted reports, at a time when the credibility of religious information could no longer be taken at face value. Nevertheless, this development should not be interpreted as evidence that the practice of *isnād* originated only after the outbreak of civil strife. Rather, it signifies the growing importance of examining transmission chains as an integral component of hadith criticism.

As hadith transmission and codification developed, the verification functions of *isnād* became increasingly sophisticated through the establishment of systematic methods of criticism. Muslim scholars did not merely require the identification of successive narrators; they also developed procedures for assessing the historical plausibility of transmission relationships between teachers and students. The disciplines of *rijāl al-ḥadīth* (biographical evaluation of hadith transmitters) and *tārīkh al-ruwāt* (the history of transmitters) enabled scholars to investigate narrators' biographies, generational classifications (*ṭabaqāt*), lifespans, scholarly journeys, and teacher–student relationships. Meanwhile, *jarḥ wa ta'dīl* (narrator criticism and accreditation) provided methodological criteria for evaluating the moral integrity and precision of individuals involved in hadith transmission. The examination of methods of receiving and transmitting reports through *taḥammul wa al-adā'*, including *samā'* (direct audition), *qirā'ah 'alā al-shaykh* (reading before a teacher), and *ijāzah* (authorization to transmit), further clarified the nature of transmission relationships within the hadith tradition (Musadad & Arifin, 2024). Taken together, these scholarly instruments demonstrate that source traceability in Hadith Studies extends beyond the mere identification of a chain of narrators. It also involves historical verification, the assessment of personal reliability, and the evaluation of transmission procedures (Nasution et al., 2025).

Contemporary hadith scholarship continues to recognize *isnād* as an essential instrument for historical investigation and the methodological assessment of hadith authenticity. Employing *isnād-cum-matn analysis* (ICMA), Su (2024) investigated the origins and formation of a Sunni doctrine concerning the ten Companions promised Paradise by examining transmission networks alongside

textual variations (Su, 2024). Similarly, Kara (2026), applied this approach to narratives concerning the sanctity of Medina, seeking to reconstruct historical elements reflected in different versions of the transmitted reports (Kara, 2026). Maftuh et al. (2026), meanwhile, compared the methods of assessing hadith authenticity presented in al-'Irāqī's *al-Tabṣira wa al-Tadhkira* with those employed in ICMA (Maftuh et al., 2026). Their study identified areas of methodological convergence while emphasizing a fundamental distinction between assessing a report's probative authority in classical hadith criticism and dating traditions through ICMA. Collectively, these studies demonstrate the continued development of *isnād*-based approaches to historical reconstruction and hadith authentication, while highlighting the fact that different methods of hadith criticism do not necessarily pursue identical epistemological objectives.

Other studies have investigated the historical and methodological development of hadith criticism. Musadad and Arifin (2024) examined the status of narrators associated with heterodox tendencies within the discipline of *jarḥ wa ta'dīl*. Their findings suggest that such narrators were not invariably rejected outright; rather, their evaluation involved consideration of the nature of their doctrinal positions and their individual integrity (Musadad & Arifin, 2024). Nasution et al. (2025) explored hadith compilation methodologies during the fourth century AH through the works of Ibn al-Sunnī, focusing on the relationship between *isnād* transmission, the organization of hadith collections, and their practical religious applications (Nasution et al., 2025). Furthermore, Ananda et al. (2024), through a bibliometric analysis of hadith criticism research in Indonesia between 2016 and 2022, identified emerging research trends and patterns of scholarly collaboration (Ananda et al., 2024). These studies have contributed significantly to understanding the methodological and historiographical development of hadith scholarship. Nevertheless, further investigation is needed into the historical development of the epistemological functions of *isnād*, particularly how its verification procedures evolved into mechanisms for establishing source traceability and evaluating the reliability of transmitted knowledge.

In parallel with these historical and methodological inquiries, advances in information technology have stimulated growing scholarly interest in the relevance of hadith criticism to contemporary religious communication. Asmarita (2023), examined the authenticity of hadith in the digital age, emphasizing the continuing importance of classical authenticity criteria despite the increasing accessibility of electronic resources (Asmarita, 2023). Nikmatullah (2024) identified both the opportunities and challenges associated with the dissemination of hadith through cyberspace, particularly regarding wider accessibility, interpretation, and the risks of circulating unverified reports (Nikmatullah, 2024). Similarly, Almansour (2026), investigated hadith transmission on the internet, addressing questions concerning the authenticity and reliability of digital sources in comparison with traditional materials. These studies indicate that transformations in the media through which hadith are transmitted have generated renewed demands for source verification. Nevertheless, accessibility and authenticity must remain analytically distinct, since the widespread availability of hadith in digital formats cannot substitute for the critical procedures required to establish the reliability of transmitted reports (Almansour, 2026).

The applicability of hadith verification principles to contemporary digital information has also attracted increasing academic attention. Abdillah et al. (2025), examined the theoretical relevance of *sanad* and *matn* criticism for strengthening religious information literacy on social media (Abdillah et al., 2025). Wuqu' et al. (2026), meanwhile, proposed the ISNAD-DIG model as an information verification framework that adapts selected principles of hadith criticism to address *post-truth* phenomena and the proliferation of digital misinformation (Wuqu' et al., 2026). Both studies demonstrate the potential of hadith verification methodologies for critical information literacy and contemporary source evaluation practices. However, adapting these principles to digital communication requires a clear conceptual distinction between classical hadith transmission and modern information verification. For example, the inability to trace the origins of information circulating on social media cannot be directly classified as *inqiṭā' al-sanad* (a discontinuity in the chain of transmission) in its technical hadith-scientific sense. These two situations differ in their objects of investigation, standards of evidence, and epistemological implications.

Transformations in the transmission of religious knowledge are also closely associated with changing configurations of religious authority in digital environments. Istifarin and Syamsudin (2026) demonstrated that the circulation of prophetic traditions through social media is increasingly shaped by algorithmic systems, visual presentation, and audience engagement in determining the popularity of religious content (Istifarin & Syamsudin, 2026). Sabari et al. (2026), identified tensions between the authenticity of hadith transmission and the popularization of Islamic educational content on social media, consequently proposing a model for the reconfiguration of *living hadith* practices in digital settings (Sabari et al., 2026). Harianto et al. (2025), meanwhile, investigated transformations in spiritual authority within digital Sufism, particularly the relationships among platform visibility, spiritual lineage, and institutional recognition. Taken together, these studies suggest that digital technology has not merely altered the dissemination of religious information; it has also influenced how religious credibility and authority are perceived and legitimized (Harianto et al., 2025). Nevertheless, hadith transmission chains, scholarly lineages, and spiritual genealogies represent distinct concepts with different structures and mechanisms of legitimation. They should therefore not be treated as interchangeable categories.

Questions concerning hadith authenticity and changing religious authority have also been addressed by Hadi et al. (2026), who critically examined the assessment of weak hadith in selected works of al-Albānī and its implications for digital hadith platforms in Indonesia (Hadi et al., 2026). Their study emphasized the importance of examining hidden defects (*'ilal*), irregularities (*shudhūdh*), and multiple transmission routes, while advocating caution in accepting assessments of hadith authenticity disseminated through digital platforms. These findings demonstrate that technological advances in the circulation of hadith do not diminish the need for comprehensive *sanad* and *matn* criticism. The central concern is therefore not simply how prophetic traditions can be accessed more efficiently, but how rigorous verification procedures and accountability for sources can be maintained within continuously evolving transmission environments.

A review of the existing literature reveals three major tendencies in contemporary *isnād* scholarship. The first consists of historical and methodological studies that examine *isnād* as an instrument for hadith authentication and the reconstruction of transmission history. The second encompasses studies that adapt the principles of *sanad* and *matn* criticism to strengthen information reliability and digital religious literacy. The third focuses on transformations in hadith transmission and religious authority arising from developments in communication technology. Although these approaches have made important contributions, their analytical priorities remain differentiated between the historical evolution of hadith criticism, the contemporary adaptation of verification methods, and changing patterns of religious knowledge reception. Within the literature reviewed, limited attention has been devoted to an integrated examination of the genealogy of *isnād* functions, the formation of its epistemological principles of source traceability, and the conceptual limits of its relevance to contemporary transformations in the transmission of religious knowledge. This gap provides a basis for further investigation, not by disregarding earlier contributions, but by bringing the historical and epistemological dimensions of *isnād* into a more coherent analytical framework.

Addressing this gap, the present study re-examines the genealogy and historical development of *isnād* within the discipline of Hadith Studies, with particular attention to its evolution from a practice of attributing reports to their sources into an increasingly systematic mechanism of verification supported by historical and methodological criticism. It further investigates source traceability as a central epistemological function of *isnād* and considers its relevance to contemporary transformations in the transmission of religious knowledge. Specifically, the study addresses two interrelated questions: How did the functions of *isnād* develop throughout the history of Hadith Studies, and to what extent can its verification principles illuminate contemporary challenges relating to the traceability of religious knowledge? Drawing on a historical-conceptual approach and a comparative analysis of classical hadith literature and contemporary scholarship, the study seeks to identify continuities, functional developments, and conceptual limitations in the application of *isnād*-based verification principles. Its principal contribution lies in reconstructing *isnād* as an epistemological framework for source

verification and traceability while maintaining a clear distinction between the technical procedures of classical hadith transmission and the mechanisms through which religious information circulates in contemporary digital environments.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design based on library research and integrates historical-conceptual and comparative approaches. The historical approach is employed to trace the genealogy and development of *isnād* functions within the tradition of Hadith Studies, while the conceptual and comparative approaches are used to identify the epistemological functions of *isnād* and examine their relevance to source traceability in contemporary religious knowledge transmission (Creswell, 2009). Primary sources comprise classical works of Hadith Studies, particularly *Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, and *al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm al-Riwāyah*. Secondary sources comprise 15 selected scholarly articles that address the genealogy of *isnād*, *sanad* criticism, hadith authentication, and the transmission of religious knowledge in digital environments. The literature was selected purposively based on four criteria: thematic relevance to the research objectives, scholarly credibility, verifiability of publication details, and accessibility of full texts.

Data were collected through document analysis involving the systematic identification, examination, extraction, and classification of relevant literature (Bowen, 2009). The collected materials were organized into three analytical categories: the historical genealogy of *isnād*, its functions in source verification and traceability, and its epistemological relevance to the transmission of contemporary religious knowledge. The data were examined using qualitative content analysis to identify recurring patterns, conceptual relationships, and developments in the functions of *isnād* across the selected sources (Krippendorff, 2019). The findings were subsequently subjected to historical interpretation and comparative analysis to establish patterns of continuity, functional transformation, and the conceptual boundaries between classical *sanad* criticism and contemporary information verification practices. Analytical trustworthiness was strengthened through cross-source verification, examination of quotations within their original contexts, and consistent interpretation of evidence drawn from both primary and secondary sources.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Genealogy and Development of Isnād Functions in the Tradition of Hadith Studies

The genealogy of *isnād* within the tradition of Hadith Studies is closely associated with the need to preserve the authenticity of reports attributed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Over the course of its historical development, *isnād* evolved beyond merely attributing reports to their sources and became a fundamental instrument for establishing systematic procedures for historical verification in hadith transmission. The authenticity of a hadith cannot be determined solely by examining its textual content (*matn*); it also requires an uninterrupted chain of transmission, the moral integrity and accuracy of its narrators, and the absence of irregularities (*shudhūdh*) and hidden defects (*'illah*). These five conditions constitute the principal criteria for authentic hadith as established in classical *muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth* literature (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 2000) Accordingly, the development of *isnād* functions must be understood in relation to the gradual formation and refinement of hadith criticism as a systematic scholarly discipline within Islamic intellectual history.

During the formative period of Islam, hadith transmission occurred through direct interactions between the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his Companions, and was then passed down to the succeeding generation of the *tābi'ūn*. The transmission of prophetic reports was supported by memorization, oral instruction, and written records within emerging Islamic scholarly communities. The proximity of early generations to the original source of transmission enabled narrators to be identified through personal relationships and established learning networks. However, the territorial expansion of the Muslim community, the increasing number of transmitters, and the growing complexity of sociopolitical relations introduced new challenges to the transmission of hadith. These developments intensified the need to establish whether particular reports genuinely originated from

their attributed sources and had been transmitted through identifiable and accountable channels (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, n.d.; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986)

The sociopolitical transformations following the assassination of Caliph ʻUthmān ibn ʻAffān in 35 AH constituted an important historical context for the development of hadith criticism. Subsequent conflicts among Muslim factions generated political and theological tensions, creating circumstances in which transmitted reports could be employed to support competing interests. Against this background, the emergence of fabricated hadith and uncertainty surrounding the identities of transmitters heightened the need for rigorous examination of religious information. Nevertheless, these developments should not be interpreted as evidence that *isnād* was introduced only after the outbreak of political conflict. Rather, they indicate a growing emphasis on verifying transmission chains that had already been part of earlier hadith transmission practices.

One of the most significant historical testimonies concerning this development is the statement of Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (d. 110 AH), recorded by Imam Muslim in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (*Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*)(al-Ḥajjāj, n.d.):

لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَسْأَلُونَ عَنِ الْإِسْنَادِ، فَلَمَّا وَقَعَتِ الْفِتْنَةُ قَالُوا: سَمُّوا لَنَا رِجَالَكُمْ

> "Previously, they did not inquire about the chain of transmission. However, when the civil strife (*fitnah*) occurred, they began to demand: 'Name your transmitters to us'"

Ibn Sīrīn's statement reflects a significant shift in the emphasis placed on the reception and evaluation of hadith, particularly regarding the identification of narrators as an essential component of report verification. The demand to identify transmitters indicates that the acceptance of religious reports increasingly required more than the personal assertions of those who conveyed them. It necessitated an examination of the identities, reliability, and transmission backgrounds of the individuals involved. Consequently, *isnād* assumed increasing importance as an instrument through which reports could be traced, scrutinized, and evaluated according to their transmission histories.

Ibn Sīrīn's statement also distinguishes between reports transmitted by *ahl al-sunnah* and those associated with *ahl al-bida'*. This distinction reflects early scholarly concerns about the potential influence of theological positions and sectarian affiliations on the reliability of hadith transmission. Nevertheless, the evaluation of narrators associated with theological innovation should not be understood as an unconditional rejection of all their transmissions. Musadad and Arifin (2024) demonstrate that classical hadith critics considered the degree of doctrinal deviation, personal integrity, and the possible influence of theological commitments on the reliability of transmitted reports (Musadad & Arifin, 2024). This interpretation is further supported by Alkadri and Hadari (2026), whose examination of critical assessments of ʻAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʻānī indicates that differences in theological orientation did not necessarily invalidate a narrator's recognized scholarly reliability (Alkadri & Hadari, 2026). These findings suggest that hadith criticism developed into a more nuanced evaluative framework than one based solely on religious or sectarian classification.

The development of verification practices was not uniform across the various centers of hadith transmission. Mukhlis and Siregar (2026), in their investigation of transmission networks in Basrah during the pre-codification period, demonstrate that even highly regarded transmission chains required careful scrutiny for *tadlīs* and possible ambiguities in narrator relationships (Mukhlis & Siregar, 2026). Their findings suggest that a transmission network's reputation did not automatically guarantee the authenticity of every report circulating through it. Scholars therefore needed to examine the methods by which reports were received, the wording used in transmission, and the availability of corroborating chains before reaching conclusions about their reliability.

These historical developments indicate that the strengthening of *isnād* functions emerged from an increasing need to verify both the sources and the transmission pathways of hadith. At an earlier stage, *isnād* enabled the identification of a report's provenance, while its subsequent development involved more systematic assessments of narrator reliability, continuity between successive generations, and the accuracy of transmission procedures. The history of *isnād* therefore reflects not

merely changes in transmission practices but also the formation of an epistemological awareness that emphasized source traceability and accountability as fundamental principles of Hadith Studies.

The importance of *isnād* as an instrument of verification was repeatedly emphasized by classical hadith scholars. Their statements demonstrate that *isnād* was regarded as essential for safeguarding the legitimacy of reports attributed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW and distinguishing knowledge supported by identifiable transmission from claims lacking verifiable sources.

ʻAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 AH), as recorded in *Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, stated(al-Ḥajjāj, n.d.):

الْإِسْنَادُ مِنَ الدِّينِ، وَلَوْلَا الْإِسْنَادُ لَقَالَ مَنْ شَاءَ مَا شَاءَ

"The chain of transmission is part of religion. Were it not for the chain of transmission, anyone could say whatever they wished"

Ibn al-Mubārak's statement emphasizes that the transmission of religious information is inseparable from accountability for its sources. Without established procedures for attributing and verifying reports, individuals could readily ascribe statements to the Prophet without sufficient evidence of their transmission. *Isnād*, therefore, functions as a mechanism for preventing fabrication, misattribution, and the misuse of authority in the transmission of prophetic traditions. From this perspective, *isnād* is not merely a formal feature accompanying a hadith; rather, it provides the evidentiary basis upon which the origins of a report can be critically investigated.

The relationship between the preservation of knowledge and the continuity of its transmission was similarly emphasized by al-Awzāʻī (d. 157 AH):

مَا ذَهَابُ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا ذَهَابُ الْإِسْنَادِ

"The disappearance of knowledge is inseparable from the disappearance of the chain of transmission."

This statement is cited in literature concerning the historical transmission of Islamic knowledge, including Ibn ʻAbd al-Barr's *al-Tamhīd*. It suggests that the preservation of knowledge depends not only on the continued availability of texts but also on the continuity of the transmission pathways through which such knowledge is communicated. Within the context of hadith transmission, this continuity provides an essential basis for investigating the historical connections linking particular reports to their sources. The disappearance of *isnād*, therefore, can be understood as the loss of a fundamental instrument for ensuring the traceability and historical accountability of transmitted knowledge.

Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124 AH) also emphasized the importance of *isnād* through the analogy of a ladder. Al-Dhahabī, in *Siyar Aʻlām al-Nubalāʼ*, records that when al-Zuhrī was asked to narrate a hadith without mentioning its chain of transmission, he replied(al-Dhahabī, 1985):

أَتَرْقَى السَّطْحَ بِلَا سُلَّمٍ؟

"Would you climb onto a roof without a ladder?"

This analogy illustrates the function of *isnād* as a means of connecting a transmitted report to its original source. Just as a ladder provides access to an elevated position, *isnād* enables scholars to trace the successive relationships through which a hadith has been conveyed. When these relationships cannot be identified or adequately established, the historical verification of a report's attribution becomes problematic. Al-Zuhrī's analogy thus underscores the genealogical function of *isnād* as a foundation for critically examining the provenance of transmitted information.

Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161 AH) employed a different analogy to express the protective function of *isnād*. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī records the following statement in *Sharaf Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*:

الْإِسْنَادُ سِلَاحُ الْمُؤْمِنِ، فَإِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ مَعَهُ سِلَاحٌ، فَبِأَيِّ شَيْءٍ يُقَاتِلُ؟

"The chain of transmission is the believer's weapon. If one has no weapon, with what can one fight?" (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 1971).

This statement highlights the protective function of *isnād* against the fabrication and misattribution of religious reports. Through *isnād*, scholars are equipped to question the origins of transmitted information and assess the reliability of those who convey it. Nevertheless, such protection does not arise automatically from the mere existence of a chain of transmission. It depends on the application of critical procedures to examine both the transmission pathway and the report's quality. Accordingly, *isnād* operates as an instrument of verification within the broader methodological framework of hadith criticism.

Considered together, these statements reveal four interrelated dimensions of *isnād*. Ibn al-Mubārak emphasizes accountability for sources; al-Awzā'ī highlights the continuity of scholarly transmission; al-Zuhrī illustrates the importance of genealogical connections; and al-Thawrī underscores its protective function against unreliable reports. These dimensions demonstrate that the significance of *isnād* in classical Hadith Studies extends beyond documenting sequences of narrators. It encompasses source traceability, reliability assessment, and accountability in the transmission of religious knowledge.

The development of *isnād* functions became increasingly evident through the establishment of systematic methods of hadith criticism. Within Hadith Studies, the concepts of *sanad*, *isnād*, narrator (*rāwī*), textual content (*matn*), and hadith compiler (*mukharrij*) constitute interconnected elements in the identification and critical evaluation of transmitted reports. *Sanad* denotes the sequence of narrators connecting a hadith to its attributed source, whereas *isnād* refers to the attribution of a report through that transmission chain. The narrator is the individual whose integrity and accuracy are subject to examination, while *matn* refers to the wording or content of the transmitted report. The *mukharrij*, meanwhile, is responsible for compiling and recording hadith together with their transmission chains. These elements collectively enable scholars to undertake an integrated assessment of source attribution, transmission continuity, narrator reliability, and textual integrity (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 2000).

One of the major developments in this system was the emergence of *rijāl al-ḥadīth* and *tārīkh al-ruwāt* as specialized disciplines concerned with the historical investigation of hadith narrators. These fields provide biographical information relating to narrators' identities, lifespans, generational affiliations, scholarly journeys, geographical locations, and teacher-student relationships. Such information enables scholars to determine whether the transmission relationships recorded in a particular chain possess a historically plausible foundation. Hadith criticism, therefore, extends beyond identifying successive names to reconstructing the networks through which reports were transmitted and establishing the possibility of direct or indirect transmission between narrators.

Alongside historical verification, classical scholars developed *jarḥ wa ta'dīl* as a systematic method for evaluating narrator reliability. Assessments primarily focused on moral integrity (*'adālah*) and accuracy (*ḍabṭ*) in receiving, preserving, and transmitting hadith. In practice, narrator evaluation could involve biographical investigation, examination of memorization, assessment of written records, comparison of transmitted reports, and consultation of earlier critical judgments. Consequently, a narrator's reliability could not be established solely on the basis of religious reputation; it required a critical assessment of their competence and dependability in transmission (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, n.d.; Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, 1987)

The development of systematic hadith criticism was also closely associated with advances in the compilation and codification of prophetic traditions. Nasution et al. (2025), in their examination of Ibn al-Sunnī's works during the fourth century AH, demonstrate that hadith compilation involved extensive scholarly networks, thematic organization, and the preservation of textual variations through different transmission routes (Nasution et al., 2025). Their findings suggest that codification was concerned not only with preserving reports but also with maintaining information about their sources and facilitating their use in religious practice. The development of *isnād*, therefore, accompanied broader processes of documentation, instruction, and the application of prophetic traditions within Islamic intellectual life.

Within the historical development of hadith epistemology, Kurdian et al. (2026) demonstrate that the systematization of hadith disciplines emerged through the contributions of successive scholars, including

al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, who helped establish classifications and methodological frameworks for hadith analysis. Their study indicates that Hadith Studies developed from the recognition and classification of transmission-related issues into an increasingly structured system of critical inquiry (Kurdian et al., 2026). This development further demonstrates that *isnād* did not operate in isolation but was part of an interconnected network of scholarly disciplines concerned with assessing the quality of transmitted reports.

The analytical functions of *isnād* have also been extended within contemporary hadith scholarship through *isnād-cum-matn analysis* (ICMA). Su (2024) employed this approach to reconstruct the formation and dissemination of reports concerning the ten Companions promised Paradise by comparing transmission networks with textual variations (Su, 2024). Similarly, Kara (2026) applied ICMA to narratives concerning the sanctity of Medina, examining the relationships between transmission chains, textual variants, and the historical development of particular traditions (Kara, 2026). Both studies demonstrate that *isnād* can serve as a valuable source of historical evidence for reconstructing the transmission and development of hadith traditions.

Nevertheless, the use of *isnād* in modern historical approaches differs from classical methods of hadith authentication in its objectives. Maftuh et al. (2026) identify methodological convergence between classical hadith criticism and ICMA, particularly in their comparison of transmission routes, examination of textual variations, and identification of transmission-related problems. However, these approaches do not necessarily produce identical epistemological conclusions. Classical hadith criticism is primarily concerned with evaluating the reliability and probative authority of transmitted reports, whereas ICMA places greater emphasis on historical reconstruction and the dating of hadith traditions (Maftuh et al., 2026). This distinction highlights the importance of differentiating between the assessment of authenticity and the reconstruction of transmission history in contemporary *isnād*-based research.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the historical development of *isnād* involved the progressive strengthening of verification practices through the establishment of chain criticism, narrator evaluation, textual examination, and systematic documentation. The transformation did not entail replacing its original function; rather, it involved refining and expanding the procedures by which sources, transmission continuity, and narrator reliability could be examined. In this respect, *isnād* developed from a practice of attributing transmitted reports to their sources into an integral component of a verification system grounded in historical evidence, methodological criteria, and increasingly sophisticated epistemological principles.

3.2. Isnād as a Mechanism for Tracing Sources of Religious Knowledge

One of the fundamental epistemological functions of *isnād* in the tradition of Hadith Studies is to establish the traceability of transmitted reports. Source traceability involves identifying the origins of information, determining the individuals involved in its transmission, and examining the historical relationships connecting a particular report to its attributed source. From this perspective, *isnād* is not merely a sequence of narrators' names but constitutes an instrument of historical verification through which the legitimacy of a hadith's attribution can be critically assessed. This function operates through the integration of several methodological procedures, including the examination of transmission continuity, narrator reliability, methods of receiving and conveying reports, and the identification of irregularities and hidden defects (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986).

The principle of *ittiṣāl al-sanad*, or continuity of the chain of transmission, constitutes one of the fundamental conditions for establishing hadith authenticity. This principle requires demonstrable continuity between successive narrators and the individuals from whom they received their reports, thereby enabling the entire transmission pathway to be historically traced. Such continuity cannot be established merely by listing the names of narrators in a chain. Rather, it requires an examination of the historical possibility and available evidence of transmission between the individuals concerned. Accordingly, the evaluation of a transmission chain must consider historical relationships, individual circumstances, and the forms of communication through which reports were transmitted (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986).

In classical hadith criticism, the continuity of transmission is examined through information concerning narrators' lifespans, teacher-student relationships, geographical locations, scholarly

journeys, and methods of receiving hadith. The concept of *al-muʻāṣarah* refers to chronological coexistence between two narrators, while *al-liqāʼ* indicates an actual encounter between them. *Al-samāʻ*, meanwhile, denotes the direct reception of a report through hearing it from a teacher. These concepts constitute important indicators for evaluating transmission relationships, although their evidentiary significance differs. Differences in the emphasis placed on chronological coexistence and documented encounters are particularly evident in classical discussions of *muʻanʻan* reports and the requirements for establishing the continuity of transmission chains (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 2000).

The examination of historical relationships is essential because the fact that two narrators lived during the same period does not necessarily establish that they met or transmitted reports to one another. Similarly, the existence of a recognized teacher–student relationship does not automatically demonstrate that every report attributed to that relationship was received through direct audition. This issue becomes particularly significant when a narrator is known to have practiced *tadlīs*, a form of transmission that may obscure the circumstances of reception or conceal an intermediary within the chain. Mukhlis and Siregar (2026) demonstrate that *tadlīs* practices within Basran transmission networks require more rigorous examination of transmission formulas, modes of reception, and corroborating chains. Their findings reinforce the argument that the authenticity of a transmission chain cannot be established solely on the basis of the reputation of its narrators or scholarly network (Mukhlis & Siregar, 2026).

Within classical hadith methodology, discontinuities in transmission chains are classified into several categories, including *irsāl*, *inqiṭāʻ*, *iʻḍāl*, and *taʻlīq*. Each category possesses distinct characteristics depending on the location and circumstances of the omitted narrator (s). These classifications demonstrate that classical hadith scholars developed a detailed analytical framework for identifying different forms of transmission discontinuity. Consequently, the examination of *sanad* is not limited to determining whether a source can be identified; it also seeks to establish whether the pathway connecting a report to its attributed source satisfies the methodological requirements of acceptable transmission (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 2000)

The foregoing analysis indicates that source traceability through *ittiṣāl al-sanad* encompasses two interrelated dimensions: genealogical and verificatory. The genealogical dimension concerns identifying successive narrators who connect a report to its source, whereas the verificatory dimension involves establishing the historical possibility and evidentiary basis of the relationships among those narrators. Together, these dimensions demonstrate that source traceability is essential to the historical examination of hadith. Nevertheless, the existence of a traceable transmission pathway does not, in itself, establish authenticity without further scrutiny of narrator reliability and the overall condition of the transmitted report.

Although continuity of transmission is a fundamental requirement in hadith authentication, it does not, by itself, establish the authenticity of a report. An uninterrupted chain may still contain narrators whose moral integrity or accuracy is questionable. Classical hadith scholars therefore developed systematic procedures for evaluating narrator reliability through the principles of *ʻadālah* and *ḍabṭ*. These criteria occupy a central position in *sanad* criticism because the reliability of transmitted knowledge depends not only on the traceability of its transmission pathway but also on the credibility of the individuals involved (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, n.d.; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986)

The principle of *ʻadālah* concerns a narrator's moral integrity and suitability to be trusted in transmitting hadith. In contrast, *ḍabṭ* refers to the capacity to preserve and accurately communicate received information, whether through memorization (*ḍabṭ al-ṣadr*) or the proper maintenance of written records (*ḍabṭ al-kitāb*). The distinction between these criteria demonstrates that moral integrity and accuracy are complementary rather than interchangeable qualities. A narrator may possess commendable moral character without demonstrating sufficient accuracy in memorization, just as technical precision in transmitting information cannot compensate for a failure to satisfy the requirements of moral integrity (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 2000).

Through the discipline of *jarḥ wa taʻdīl*, classical hadith critics established methods for evaluating the reliability of narrators by examining biographical information, the accuracy of memorization, the

quality of written records, and consistency across transmitted reports. Such assessments were not always straightforward, since a narrator's reliability could be affected by declining memory, advanced age, inaccuracies in written materials, or questions concerning personal integrity. In this regard, Alkadri and Hadari (2026), in their investigation of ʻAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʻānī, demonstrate the importance of considering the relationship between scholarly reputation, transmission accuracy, and potential sectarian bias in narrator criticism. Their findings indicate that assessments of reliability cannot be reduced to judgments based on religious or sectarian affiliation but must instead consider evidence concerning the narrator's actual performance in transmission (Alkadri & Hadari, 2026).

Beyond examining narrator integrity and accuracy, hadith authentication also requires investigating the possible presence of *shudhūdh* and *ʻillah*. These forms of criticism involve comparing different transmission routes, examining variations in wording, and identifying problems that may not be apparent during an initial assessment. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (1987) emphasizes the importance of examining differences among transmitted reports and understanding the methods employed by hadith critics to identify concealed defects. This demonstrates that even an apparently continuous chain consisting of reliable narrators does not necessarily establish the authenticity of a hadith if other factors compromise the transmitted report (Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, 1987).

Contemporary scholarship further reinforces the importance of this integrated approach. Maftuh et al. (2026) demonstrate that classical methods of hadith criticism employ comparisons of transmission chains and textual variants to identify transmission-related problems, although their epistemological objectives differ from those of modern historical approaches. Their findings confirm that *sanad* criticism cannot be separated from a broader examination of the transmitted report. Source traceability provides the foundation for verification, while assessments of narrator integrity, transmission accuracy, and potential defects determine the extent to which the report can be regarded as reliable (Maftuh et al., 2026).

3.3. Taḥammul wa al-Adāʼ as a Mechanism of Accountability in Hadith Transmission

The function of source traceability in Hadith Studies is also closely associated with the methods through which reports are received and subsequently transmitted, collectively known as *taḥammul wa al-adāʼ*. In classical hadith terminology, *taḥammul* refers to the process of receiving a hadith from its source, whereas *adāʼ* denotes the subsequent transmission of that report to others. The systematic regulation of these processes demonstrates that classical scholars were concerned not only with identifying the individuals involved in transmission but also with establishing the procedures through which information was acquired and communicated. Accordingly, *taḥammul wa al-adāʼ* constitutes an essential component of accountability in hadith transmission (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986).

Classical hadith scholars identified several recognized methods of receiving transmitted reports, including *samāʻ min lafẓ al-shaykh* (directly hearing a report from a teacher), *qirāʼah ʻalā al-shaykh* (reading a report before a teacher), *ijāzah* (authorization to transmit), *munāwalah* (the handing over of written materials), *mukātabah* (written correspondence), *iʻlām* (notification), *waṣiyyah* (bequest), and *wijādah* (obtaining written material without receiving it directly from a teacher through an established transmission procedure). These methods are governed by different requirements, conditions, and degrees of acceptance within hadith methodology. Their distinctions demonstrate that transmission relationships cannot be evaluated solely through the presence of a *sanad*; the specific procedure through which a report was received and communicated must also be considered.

The importance of clearly identifying transmission methods is reflected in the use of transmission formulas, or *ṣīghat al-adāʼ*, such as *ḥaddathanā*, *akhbaranā*, *samiʻtu*, and *ʻan*. These expressions are associated with particular modes of receiving and transmitting reports, although their usage may vary according to scholarly conventions and methodological interpretations. Consequently, examining transmission formulas is an important means of determining the nature of the relationship between a narrator and their teacher. In certain circumstances, formulas that do not explicitly establish direct audition require additional scrutiny, particularly when the narrator is known to have practiced *tadlīs* (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 2000; Mukhlis & Siregar, 2026)

Advances in communication technology have also introduced new media through which certain practices of hadith transmission may be conducted. Akmaluddin (2021), in a study of *musalsal* hadith authorization through virtual learning sessions on Facebook, demonstrates that *ijāzah* may be granted through digital communication when relevant information concerning the teacher, recipient, transmission chain, transmitted material, and conditions of authorization is documented. This study suggests that technological developments can facilitate the continuity of established scholarly transmission practices, provided that the relationships between those granting and receiving authorization remain identifiable and accountable. The findings are particularly significant because they demonstrate that digital technology does not necessarily displace traditional *sanad* practices; under particular conditions, it may provide an additional medium through which certain forms of scholarly transmission can take place(Akmaluddin, 2021).

Nevertheless, participation in digital learning activities does not automatically satisfy the technical requirements of *taḥammul wa al-adā'* within Hadith Studies. The validity of a particular mode of hadith reception continues to depend on compliance with its methodological conditions, the clear identification of the individuals involved, and the applicable conventions of transmission. Accordingly, attending online religious lectures, participating in virtual learning communities, or obtaining educational certificates cannot be directly equated with receiving hadith through *samā'*, *qirā'ah*, or *ijāzah*.

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that *taḥammul wa al-adā'* extends the function of source traceability beyond the identification of transmitters to include the procedures through which reports are received and conveyed. Clearly established transmission methods enable scholars to examine the relationships among teachers, students, and transmitted materials in greater detail. This principle illustrates that accountability in the transmission of hadith rests on the continuity of scholarly relationships supported by identifiable and methodologically appropriate procedures of reception and transmission.

3.4. The Contemporary Relevance of Isnād-Based Source Traceability in Religious Knowledge Transmission

The expansion of digital technology has broadened the channels through which religious knowledge is transmitted and reshaped the relationships among sources, communicators, and audiences. Hadith and other forms of Islamic knowledge can now circulate through social media, digital applications, short-form videos, and online communication platforms, allowing audiences to access religious information without directly interacting with its transmitters. While these developments have expanded access to religious resources, they have also raised concerns regarding the transparency of references, accuracy of presentation, and credibility of those disseminating religious information.

Nikmatullah (2024) demonstrates that the circulation of hadith through cybermedia offers significant advantages in terms of accessibility and information dissemination, while simultaneously presenting challenges involving textual distortion, the circulation of fabricated reports, and the use of hadith to advance particular interests. These findings indicate that changes in transmission media do not automatically guarantee the authenticity of the information conveyed (Nikmatullah, 2024). Accordingly, the convenience of accessing hadith through digital platforms must be distinguished from the process of authentication, which continues to require consultation of primary sources and the application of established methods of hadith criticism.

Changes in transmission media have also affected patterns of learning and the reception of hadith knowledge. Dewi and Lubis (2026), in their examination of the reception of al-Tirmidhī's *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyyah* in Indonesian cybermedia, identify a shift from learning environments centered on direct teacher–student relationships toward digital networks that provide broader access to religious materials. However, this transformation has also generated tensions between the depth of traditional scholarly engagement and the tendency to present religious knowledge in shorter, more accessible formats. Their findings suggest that the transformation of learning environments affects not only how information is communicated but also the relationships among authoritative sources, interpreters, and audiences (Dewi & Lubis, 2026).

Within the context of digital religious authority, Harianto et al. (2025) demonstrate that platform visibility, the intensity of content circulation, and audience engagement can influence public perceptions of the credibility of spiritual teachers. Their research identifies relationships among digital popularity, institutional recognition, and continuity of scholarly traditions in the formation of religious authority. Although their investigation focuses on spiritual lineages within digital Sufism, its findings provide a comparative perspective on changing foundations of religious legitimacy. Nevertheless, spiritual lineages and hadith transmission chains remain conceptually distinct, particularly in their objects, functions, and mechanisms of authorization, and should therefore not be treated as technically equivalent (Harianto et al., 2025).

The challenges of source traceability have become increasingly complex with the emergence of generative artificial intelligence. Hidayah et al. (2026) demonstrate that such technologies can generate religious information that imitates the voices of religious figures, incorporates recognizable religious symbols, and creates an appearance of authority without a verifiable connection to legitimate scholarly sources. These developments illustrate that the credibility of digital religious information cannot always be determined through its presentation, popularity, or resemblance to established religious authorities. Their study underscores the importance of examining the provenance of religious information and maintaining accountability for sources in response to contemporary forms of religious disinformation (Hidayah et al., 2026).

From the perspective of Hadith Studies, these challenges can be examined through the continuing epistemological relevance of *isnād* as an instrument of source verification and traceability. The principle of *ittiṣāl al-sanad* emphasizes the continuity of transmission relationships, while *'adālah* and *ḍabṭ* demonstrate that the reliability of information is closely associated with the integrity and accuracy of its transmitters. Similarly, *taḥammul wa al-adā'* directs attention to the procedures through which knowledge is received and communicated, whereas the examination of *shudhūdh* and *'illah* highlights the importance of investigating irregularities and problems that may remain concealed during preliminary assessments. Together, these principles offer epistemological perspectives through which contemporary challenges concerning the traceability of religious knowledge may be critically understood.

Nevertheless, the contemporary relevance of these principles does not imply that classical *sanad* criticism can be directly applied as a comprehensive authentication procedure for all forms of digital information. Hadith transmission chains concern reports attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and are evaluated according to methodological conventions developed within classical Hadith Studies. By contrast, the digital transmission of religious knowledge encompasses diverse forms of information, communication technologies, and social relationships that do not necessarily correspond to classical hadith transmission structures. Consequently, the relationship between these contexts should be understood in terms of functional correspondence at the epistemological level rather than technical equivalence between their verification procedures.

On this basis, the functional correspondence between the principles of *sanad* criticism and contemporary challenges of religious knowledge traceability can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Functional Correspondence between Isnād Principles and Source Traceability in Contemporary Religious Knowledge Transmission

Principles of Hadith Studies	Functions in Hadith Transmission	Contemporary Analytical Relevance	Conceptual Limitations
Ittiṣāl al-sanad	Examining the continuity of transmission chains	Tracing the origins of information and relationships among its sources	Digital source traceability does not establish technical *ittiṣāl al-sanad*
'Adālah	Evaluating the moral integrity of narrators	Emphasizing integrity and accountability among information communicators	The integrity of a communicator is not equivalent to *'adālah al-rāwī*

Ḍabṭ	Assessing the precision and accuracy of transmission	Ensuring accuracy in quoting, preserving, and communicating information	Content accuracy does not automatically satisfy the technical criteria of *ḍabṭ*
Taḥammul wa al-adā'	Establishing methods of receiving and transmitting hadith	Promoting transparency in the acquisition and communication of knowledge	Digital learning does not automatically constitute technical *taḥammul* of hadith
Shudhūdh* and *'illah	Identifying irregularities and concealed defects in transmitted reports	Encouraging comparative examination of information and its transmission context	Errors in digital information are not technically equivalent to *shudhūdh* or *'illah*

Source: Analytical synthesis based on Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (1986), Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (2000), Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (1987), Akmaluddin (2021), Maftuh et al. (2026), and Hidayah et al. (2026).

As illustrated in Table 1, the principles of *sanad* criticism demonstrate functional correspondence with contemporary requirements for verifying religious knowledge, particularly regarding source traceability, transmitter credibility, information accuracy, and transparency in transmission procedures. Nevertheless, each correspondence has specific conceptual limitations that must be maintained to prevent an unwarranted extension of technical terminology from Hadith Studies into contexts governed by different forms of evidence and verification.

The findings indicate that the contemporary transformation of *isnād* functions is more appropriately understood as an expansion of their epistemological relevance than as a modification of the technical meaning of hadith transmission chains. The principles underlying the verification of prophetic reports can provide an analytical perspective for understanding the traceability of contemporary religious knowledge. However, they cannot replace the established rules of hadith authentication developed within the classical scholarly tradition. Thus, the continuity of *isnād* functions lies in the persistent importance of source verification and accountability, while the distinctions between classical and contemporary contexts concern their respective objects, procedures, and epistemological consequences.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that *isnād* developed from a practice of attributing reports to their sources into a systematic mechanism of verification supported by historical and methodological criticism. This development produced a framework of source traceability involving the examination of transmission chains, narrator reliability, methods of receiving and conveying reports, and the quality of transmitted information. Within contemporary transformations in the transmission of religious knowledge, these functions remain relevant as epistemological principles that emphasize the importance of identifiable sources and accountable communication. Nevertheless, their applicability must remain within the boundaries of functional correspondence in order to preserve the methodological integrity and terminological precision of Hadith Studies.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the development of *isnād* within the tradition of Hadith Studies is a historical process shaped by the growing need to verify the sources and transmission pathways of prophetic reports. Originally serving to attribute reports to their sources, isnād gradually developed into a more systematic instrument of verification, particularly in response to concerns about narrator reliability and the fabrication of hadith. This development was characterized by the establishment and refinement of critical methodologies, including *ittiṣāl al-sanad*, *rijāl al-ḥadīth*, *jarḥ wa ta'dīl*, *taḥammul wa al-adā'*, and the examination of *shudhūdh* and *'illah*. These findings confirm that the functions of *isnād* extend beyond documenting transmission lineages to encompass an epistemological framework for establishing source traceability, transmission continuity, narrator reliability, and the authenticity of transmitted reports within the Islamic scholarly tradition.

In the context of contemporary transformations in the transmission of religious knowledge, the principles underlying isnād remain epistemologically relevant, particularly in emphasizing source transparency, information accuracy, and accountability among those responsible for transmitting it. Nevertheless, this relevance operates at the level of functional correspondence and does not imply that

contemporary digital information verification can be technically equated with classical *sanad* criticism. The principal contribution of this study lies in reconstructing the relationship between the historical genealogy of *isnād*, the development of its verification functions, and source traceability as a defining feature of its epistemological significance, while clarifying the conceptual boundaries of its contemporary application. Future research should empirically investigate how these epistemological principles are reflected in the transmission of religious knowledge within Islamic educational institutions, scholarly communities, and digital preaching platforms.

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