THE MAWDU'I METHOD IN HADITH STUDIES: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

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ABSTRACT

The thematic (mawḍūʿī) approach to hadith is a methodological framework that focuses on collecting, classifying, and analyzing prophetic traditions (ḥadīth) related to a specific theme in order to achieve a comprehensive and applicable understanding. This study employs a qualitative library research method, drawing upon primary sources such as canonical hadith collections and secondary literature in the field of ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth. The findings indicate that the thematic hadith methodology proceeds through several systematic stages: determining the research theme, exploring key concepts and vocabulary, gathering relevant hadith through *takhrīj* procedures, verifying the authenticity of isnād and matn, and analyzing the content of the traditions by considering *asbāb al-wurūd*, linguistic dimensions, and their correlation with Qur'anic verses. Furthermore, this study highlights three major interpretive techniques in thematic hadith research: (1) textual interpretation, which emphasizes the literal meaning of the hadith as expressed in its wording; (2) intertextual interpretation, which relates hadith to other narrations or Qur'anic verses with similar meanings; and (3) contextual interpretation, which emphasizes the relevance of hadith to socio-historical realities and considerations of public benefit (maṣlaḥah). A comparative analysis of these techniques reveals that each possesses its own strengths and limitations but are methodologically complementary: textual interpretation safeguards the linguistic authenticity of hadith, intertextual interpretation ensures the coherence of Islamic teachings, and contextual interpretation strengthens the relevance of hadith in addressing contemporary issues. Therefore, integrating these approaches is essential in thematic hadith methodology to produce interpretations that are not partial but comprehensive, normative, and applicable. The study concludes that the mawḍūʿī method holds significant epistemological value in advancing contemporary hadith studies across legal, ethical, educational, and socio-cultural domains.

Keywords: contextual interpretation, hadith methodology, intertextual interpretation, thematic studies

ABSTRAK

Kajian hadis maudhu'i merupakan pendekatan metodologis yang berorientasi pada penghimpunan, klasifikasi, dan analisis hadis-hadis Nabi SAW yang berkaitan dengan tema tertentu untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang utuh, komprehensif, dan aplikatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan merujuk pada literatur primer berupa kitab-kitab hadis utama dan literatur sekunder dalam bidang *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa metodologi hadis maudhu'i menempuh beberapa langkah sistematis: penentuan tema penelitian, penelusuran kosa kata dan konsep, pengumpulan hadis dari berbagai sumber melalui prosedur *takhrīj*, verifikasi sanad dan matan untuk menilai validitas riwayat, serta analisis kandungan hadis dengan mempertimbang-kan *asbāb al-wurūd*, dimensi kebahasaan, dan keterkaitannya dengan ayat al-Qur'an. Lebih lanjut, penelitian ini menyoroti tiga teknik interpretasi utama dalam kajian hadis maudhu'i: (1) interpretasi tekstual, yang menekankan makna literal hadis berdasarkan redaksi matan; (2) interpretasi intertekstual, yang menghubungkan hadis dengan riwayat lain maupun ayat al-Qur'an yang relevan; serta (3) interpretasi kontekstual, yang menekankan relevansi hadis dengan realitas sosial-historis serta dimensi maslahat. Analisis komparatif terhadap ketiga teknik ini menunjukkan bahwa masing-masing memiliki keunggulan dan keterbatasan, namun secara metodologis bersifat saling melengkapi: tekstual menjaga otentisitas bahasa hadis, intertekstual memastikan kesatuan ajaran Islam, dan kontekstual meneguhkan relevansi hadis dalam menghadapi problem kontemporer. Oleh karena itu, integrasi ketiga pendekatan menjadi keharusan dalam metodologi hadis maudhu'i agar hasil kajian tidak parsial, melainkan komprehensif, normatif, sekaligus aplikatif. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa metode hadis maudhu'i memiliki signifikansi epistemologis dalam mengembangkan studi hadis kontemporer, baik pada aspek hukum, akhlak, pendidikan, maupun respons terhadap isu-isu sosial modern.

Kata kunci: hadis maudhu'i, metodologi, interpretasi tekstual, intertekstual, kontekstual

A. Introduction

The study of ḥadīth, as the second principal source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an, encompasses a range of methodological approaches. Among these, the *mawḍūʿī* method has emerged as a significant framework, characterized by the collection and examination of traditions on the basis of specific themes. This approach assumes particular importance

in light of the Muslim community's growing need for systematic thematic studies—both as a means of addressing classical religious questions and as a response to contemporary issues. In contrast to traditional *musnad* or *mukhtalaṭ* compilations, the *mawḍūʻī* methodology emphasizes coherence in presentation as well as the thematic relevance of the ḥadīth discourse.

Conceptually, the *mawḍūʻī* method in ḥadīth studies bears notable similarities to the *mawḍūʻī* approach in Qur'anic exegesis. According to al-Sibāʻī (1999), this methodology developed as a scholarly response to the demand for more structured thematic inquiry. Prominent scholars such as Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, Maḥmūd al-Ṭaḥḥān, and Muḥammad Abū Shuhbah have delineated its practical steps of application. In the Indonesian academic context, this approach has increasingly been employed in thematic ḥadīth research at higher education institutions, particularly within the fields of Islamic law, ethics, and daʻwah.

This study adopts a qualitative design employing the library research method. Data were collected from primary sources, including the canonical ḥadīth compilations—such as the *Kutub al-Sittah*, *Musnad Aḥmad*, and others—as well as from secondary literature comprising works on *ʻUlūm al-Ḥadīth* and relevant journal articles. The data analysis was conducted through a descriptive-analytical approach, aimed at elucidating the procedural steps of the *mawḍūʻī* ḥadīth methodology and contrasting them with alternative approaches.

B. Result and Discussion
Definition of Thematic Ḥadīth Studies

The *mawḍūʻī* method, also referred to as the thematic method, derives from the Arabic term موضوع (*mawḍūʻ*), which is the passive participle (*ism mafʻūl*) of the verb وضع(*waḍaʻa*), meaning "to place" or "to designate an issue or subject matter." Etymologically, *mawḍūʻī* signifies "placing something in its proper position" or "lowering it," which stands in contrast to the term *al-rafʻ* (to elevate). Within the context of ḥadīth studies, the *mawḍūʻī* method is understood as an approach that collects ḥadīth reports from various canonical compilations according to a specific theme or issue under investigation[1].

Muṣṭafā Muslim emphasizes that *mawḍūʻī* literally signifies "placing something in its proper position." Methodologically, the *mawḍūʻī* approach is

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[1] Syahrul Gufron, 'Pengertian Hadis Tematik Dan Sejarah Pertumbuhannya' 2020, 2020.

The Mawḍuʻī Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

defined as the systematic process of collecting Qur'ānic verses or Prophetic traditions relevant to a particular theme or objective, and subsequently organizing them in accordance with their occasions of revelation or transmission. This process is accompanied by explanatory notes, critical analysis, and in-depth interpretation aimed at providing comprehensive insight into the issue under examination[2].

According to al-Farmawī, as cited by Maizuddin in his work *Metodologi Pemahaman Hadis*, the *mauḍūʻī* method is understood as an approach that entails collecting ḥadīth reports related to a specific theme, subsequently arranging them in light of their *asbāb al-wurūd* (contexts of transmission), and analyzing them through explanation, elaboration, and interpretive engagement with the issue under consideration[3]. Within this framework, the *mauḍūʻī* approach serves to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of ḥadīth by examining other narrations relevant to a given topic and by considering the interrelationships among them, thereby yielding a holistic interpretation. In line with this, Arifuddin Ahmad explains that the *mauḍūʻī* method constitutes a form of commentary or analytical study of ḥadīth organized around a particular thematic issue—whether encompassing ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions, or focusing on only one of these aspects[4].

Furthermore, a number of contemporary scholars have also articulated definitions of the *mauḍūʻī* ḥadīth method, among them al-Qannās, al-Zayyān, al-Syarman, and Haifa'. According to al-Qannās, *al-ḥadīth al-mauḍūʻī* refers to the endeavor of collecting ḥadīth texts from primary sources that pertain to a specific theme, classifying them systematically, examining them through a thematic perspective, and subsequently correlating them with Qur'ānic texts as well as contemporary realities.

In general, al-Zayyān explains that *al-ḥadīth al-mauḍūʻī* refers to a scholarly discipline that examines various themes within the Sunnah of the Prophet with specific purposes and meanings, accomplished through the process of collecting thematically related ḥadīths from one or more primary sources. Al-Syarman, on the other hand, defines *al-ḥadīth al-mauḍūʻī* as a scientific inquiry into a particular theme based on the Prophet's traditions or through the exposition of a specific topic from the perspective of the Sunnah. Meanwhile, according to Haifā', thematic ḥadīth studies constitute an in-

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[2] Lailatul Fadilah, 'PENGANTAR STUDI HADIS TEMATIK'.
[3] Maulana Ira, 'Studi Hadis Tematik', *Al-Bukhari: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis*, 1.2 (2018), pp. 189–206.
[4] M Maizuddin, 'Metodologi Pemahaman Hadis' (Hayfa Press, 2008).

The Mawduʻi Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

depth investigation of a given theme on the basis of Prophetic traditions, ultimately aimed at achieving a comprehensive and holistic understanding [5].

The *mawḍū'ī* method is not only applied in Qur'ānic studies but also extends to the study of ḥadīth. In the context of ḥadīth research, however, this method necessitates verification of the authenticity of the narrations— whether *ṣaḥīḥ* or otherwise—whereas in the Qur'an such scrutiny is unnecessary, as its authenticity is absolutely established as the word of Allah (SWT). Within ḥadīth studies, the term "*mawḍū'ī* method" represents a translation of *al-manhaj al-mawḍū'ī fī sharḥ al-ḥadīth*. Prior to its wider recognition, the dominant approaches were the *taḥlīlī* and *muqāran* methods. The *taḥlīlī* method focuses on providing detailed commentary on ḥadīth, examining it from multiple perspectives in accordance with the sequence of *matn* presentation in a given compilation. By contrast, the *muqāran* method entails comparative analysis—juxtaposing a ḥadīth with other narrations, relating it to Qur'ānic verses, or contrasting the scholarly interpretations concerning its content.[6].

In practice, the application of the *mawḍū'ī* method involves collecting all ḥadīths that share a common or related theme. Beyond mere compilation, this approach facilitates the clarification of ambiguous matters (*shubuhāt*) through explicit narrations (*muḥkam*), the restriction of general provisions (*muṭlaq*) by those that are qualified (*muqayyad*), and the interpretation of broad meanings in light of specific reports. Consequently, the findings of such studies yield interpretations that are more lucid, contextually grounded, and free from internal contradiction.

The Urgency of Thematic Ḥadīth Studies

In contemporary scholarship, the *mawḍū'ī* method has become a dominant approach within ḥadīth studies. This prominence rests upon its methodological significance, as the Sunnah is regarded as a practical response to the multifaceted challenges of human life. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī underscores that compiling thematically related ḥadīths is an essential step toward preventing misinterpretations of their meanings. He illustrates this through the case of the Prophetic tradition prohibiting garments from extending below the ankles. Some individuals have taken this narration as a definitive injunction to shorten trousers or robes above the ankles, even using it as a basis to criticize those who do not conform. However, when

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[5] Miski Miski, 'Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian Hadis Tematik' (Maknawi, 2021).
[6] Miski, 'Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian Hadis Tematik'.

The Mawḍu'i Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

other relevant ḥadīths are gathered and examined comprehensively—together with the interpretive insights of scholars—a broader, more contextualized understanding emerges, one that transcends narrow literalism and avoids restrictive interpretations[7].

Thus, the *mawḍūʿī* method holds significant value in strengthening ḥadīth studies through the systematic collection of thematically related traditions. Moreover, it functions as an instrument for the advancement of ḥadīth scholarship as a dynamic scientific discipline, responsive to the needs of society, while simultaneously reaffirming the status of ḥadīth as an integral component of divine revelation[8].

The application of the *mawḍūʿī* method is likewise relevant in addressing the ongoing development of the Islamic sciences and in fulfilling the intellectual needs of the Muslim community across diverse fields of knowledge. Through this approach, the interconnections among various disciplines can be harmonized, thereby complementing one another in the pursuit of shared objectives.

Moreover, the *mawḍūʿī* method is regarded as an effective means of resolving apparent contradictions within ḥadīth literature. Divergent understandings of certain reports often give rise to doubt and confusion within the community. By gathering narrations that outwardly appear contradictory and subjecting them to thematic analysis, the likelihood of identifying points of reconciliation becomes significantly greater[9].

In addition to these aspects, the urgency of the *mawḍūʿī* method is also evident in the determination of ḥadīth authenticity. While some individuals rely exclusively on *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* narrations while disregarding *ḍaʿīf* reports, others circulate ḥadīths without due regard for their validity. Through the thematic approach, the authenticity of narrations pertaining to a given issue can be assessed, while also clarifying whether their content carries binding authority or not. This underscores the universal character of the Prophetic traditions, whose guidance transcends both time and space. [10].

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[7] Muhammad Dirman Rasyid, M A St Aisyah Kara, and M Sabir Maidin, 'Metodologi Pemahaman Hadis', *Skripsi. Makassar: Ulumul Hadis UIN Alauddin*, 2016.

[8] Nurul Abror, 'Pengantar Studi Hadis Tematik', *Jurnal UIN Sultan Hasanudin Banten.*

[9] Muhammad Syarifudin and Masruhan Masruhan, 'Interpretasi Hadis: Antara Hermeneutika Dan Syarh Al-Hadits (Studi Komparatif)', *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 20.2 (2021), pp. 373–400.

[10] Nazia Durrotun Aisyah, 'Metode Tematik Dalam Kajian Hadits."', *Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Hasanudin Banten (Nd).*

The Mawḍuʿī Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

Paradigms and Principles of Thematic Ḥadīth Studies

In its simplest sense, a paradigm may be understood as a framework of thought or a particular lens through which issues are perceived. It is not static but rather evolves in accordance with the progression of time and the socio-intellectual conditions of society. What may have been regarded as true in one historical period can be perceived differently in another. Hence, paradigms are subject to continual shifts, shaped by the historical contexts of human life. The divergence in religious understanding between the past and the present offers a concrete example of how paradigms exert a significant influence on the interpretation of religious realities.

In the context of contemporary thematic ḥadīth studies, at least two major paradigms can be identified. The first is the paradigm of integration–interconnection, which emphasizes the interrelatedness of different branches of knowledge. This paradigm proceeds from the assumption that no single discipline can stand independently without the support of others. For instance, a thematic ḥadīth study that selects ṣaḥīḥ or ḥasan narrations cannot be separated from the discipline of al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl, which evaluates the reliability of ḥadīth transmitters. Similarly, the method of takhrīj al-ḥadīth is indispensable for tracing the primary sources of a narration, while the science of mukhtalif al-ḥadīth is necessary to resolve apparent contradictions between reports. Beyond these, ḥadīth studies cannot remain isolated but must be integrated with other disciplines such as Qur'ānic exegesis, theology, kalām, jurisprudence, sociology, and anthropology. Such integration not only enriches the dimensions of analysis but also ensures the continued relevance of ḥadīth scholarship in addressing contemporary social issues.

The second is the dimensional paradigm, an approach that emphasizes the multifaceted roles and functions of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) in the transmission of ḥadīth. As Syuhudi Ismail observes, ḥadīths did not originate solely from the Prophet in his capacity as Messenger, but also from his positions as head of state, military commander, judge, and even as a private individual. Consequently, the interpretation of ḥadīth must take these diverse dimensions into account. Ḥadīths may be approached textually, contextually, or through a combination of both. Yet, since not all ḥadīths are accompanied by explicit asbāb al-wurūd (contexts of occurrence), certain narrations may appear outwardly contradictory. In such cases, rigorous, critical, and comprehensive scholarly engagement is required to achieve a holistic understanding. The dimensional paradigm thus

The Mawduʿi Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application

Zainuddin

underscores that the text of ḥadīth embodies multiple layers of meaning which cannot be reduced to a single perspective.

In thematic ḥadīth studies, two foundational principles serve as the main points of reference: the ethical-theological principle and the critical-academic principle.

1. The Ethical-Theological Principle

This principle is grounded in the conviction that ḥadīth constitutes a source of guidance that is *ṣāliḥ li-kulli zamān wa makān*—relevant across all times and places. Ḥadīths are believed to embody universal values that can be applied within diverse contexts of human life. Accordingly, their interpretation must take into account the historical circumstances of time and place in which they were transmitted. Within this ethical-theological framework, several derivative principles may be identified: **Openness** – The ḥadīth scholar is required to remain open to insights from other disciplines and to recognize the historical distance between the Prophet's era and the contemporary context. Hence, absolute claims of finality regarding the outcomes of ḥadīth studies must be avoided; **Honesty** – Researchers are obliged to present sources, references, and data accurately and transparently. Such integrity is essential to uphold scholarly credibility and to prevent academic misconduct, including manipulation and plagiarism; **Meticulousness** – Thematic ḥadīth research demands rigorous inquiry, as the chosen themes often encompass numerous narrations with complex chains of transmission. The researcher must therefore exercise patience and precision in tracing both the *isnād* and *matn* of the traditions.

2. The Critical-Academic Principle

This principle emphasizes a scientific and analytical approach in the study of thematic *ḥadīth*. It comprises the following elements: **Objectivity** – The study of *ḥadīth* must remain free from personal or partisan interests so that the outcomes are genuinely grounded in the available data; **Methodology** – Research should be conducted systematically, logically, and rationally, in accordance with established scholarly standards. A well-defined methodology ensures that the findings are both reliable and accountable; **Contextual-Realistic Orientation** – *Ḥadīth* did not emerge in a vacuum but within concrete socio-historical realities. Therefore, its understanding cannot be confined to textual analysis alone; rather, it must also take into account the historical and social contexts in which the traditions were transmitted; **Differentiation** – Scholars must remain aware of the diversity in the nature of *ḥadīth*. Some are general in scope while others are specific to the Prophet; some are literal whereas others are metaphorical; and some pertain to metaphysical realities. Such

The Mawduʻi Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

differentiation is essential to prevent simplistic or reductionist interpretations.

Upon closer examination, the paradigms of integration-interconnection and dimensionality prove to be mutually complementary. The paradigm of integration-interconnection ensures that the study of ḥadīth does not fall into scholarly isolation but remains open to insights from other disciplines. Conversely, the dimensional paradigm safeguards against the reduction of ḥadīth meaning to a single aspect of the Prophet's role. The synthesis of these two approaches produces a comprehensive intellectual framework in which ḥadīth is understood not merely as a normative text, but also as a socio-historical reality endowed with multiple layers of meaning.

Meanwhile, the ethical-theological and critical-academic principles together constitute a coherent methodological foundation. The ethical-theological principle emphasizes morality, integrity, and religious consciousness in the study of ḥadīth, whereas the critical-academic principle underscores methodological rigor, objectivity, and contextual awareness. The integration of these two principles is crucial to ensure that thematic ḥadīth studies avoid falling into two extremes: (1) a purely normative-dogmatic approach devoid of methodological grounding, or (2) a critical-academic approach stripped of ethical and spiritual values.

Thus, these paradigms and principles may be regarded as the epistemological foundation of modern thematic ḥadīth studies. They enable scholars to present understandings that are more relevant, accurate, and contextually grounded, without compromising normative foundations or scholarly integrity.

Steps in Thematic Ḥadīth Studies: A Methodological Analysis

Thematic ḥadīth study (*mauḍūʿī*) constitutes one of the significant approaches in ḥadīth scholarship, aimed at attaining a comprehensive understanding of a given theme. Thematic ḥadīth study (*mauḍūʿī*) represents one of the significant approaches in ḥadīth scholarship, designed to attain a comprehensive understanding of a particular theme derived from the Prophetic traditions (ḥadīth of the Prophet, peace be upon him). According to Haifa, there are three principal models within thematic ḥadīth studies: (1) thematic studies based on specific keywords, (2) thematic studies focusing on particular texts with a more analytical orientation, and (3) conceptual thematic studies. Among these three, the present research adopts the conceptual *mauḍūʿī* method, as formulated by Miski.[11]

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[11] Miski, 'Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian Hadis Tematik'.

The Mawdu'i Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

The conceptual *mawḍūʿī* method generally positions social reality as the point of departure for analysis, subsequently linking it to the perspective of the ḥadīth. Accordingly, this approach does not merely concentrate on the textual dimension of the ḥadīth; rather, it seeks to present meanings that are contextually relevant to contemporary circumstances. This process necessarily entails a series of systematic research stages, ensuring that the outcomes of the study are valid, coherent, and academically accountable.

In detail, the procedural steps of the *mawḍūʿī* ḥadīth study may be outlined as follows. First, the researcher must determine the research theme, which should be derived from pressing contemporary issues that require resolution from the perspective of ḥadīth. The selection of this theme is crucial, as it delineates the scope and prevents the study from digressing beyond its central focus. Second, the researcher conducts a semantic analysis of the topic across various linguistic formulations, thereby obtaining a broader spectrum of meaning and a more comprehensive understanding. Third, the concept must be rigorously delimited to ensure that the study remains consistent and maintains its analytical focus.

The subsequent stage involves compiling the ḥadīths relevant to the chosen theme through the procedure of *takhrīj al-ḥadīth*. This collection is carried out using the methods of *iʿtibār*, *mutābiʿāt*, and *shawāhid* in order to ascertain the reliability of the transmission chains. Moreover, the scope of this research is delimited to the primary corpus, namely the *kutub al-tisʿah*, so as to maintain analytical focus. Once the relevant ḥadīths have been gathered, a process of verification and validation (*taḥqīq al-ḥadīth*) is undertaken, encompassing both the scrutiny of the *isnād* and the *matn*. The examination of the *isnād* addresses the continuity of transmission, the moral integrity (*ʿadālah*), and the precision of memory (*ḍabṭ*) of the transmitters. Meanwhile, the analysis of the *matn* concentrates on identifying possible *ʿillah* (hidden defects) and *shudhūdh* (anomalous deviations) that may compromise the credibility of the ḥadīth[12].

In addition, the dimension of *asbāb al-wurūd* must be examined in order to elucidate the historical background of the ḥadīth, as historicity constitutes a crucial element in grasping the intended meaning of the text. Further identification is also carried out on the *matn* of the ḥadīth through a linguistic approach, such as interpreting the *mutashābih* in light of the *muḥkam*, reconciling the *muṭlaq* with the *muqayyad*, or delimiting the scope of the *ʿām* by reference to the *khāṣṣ*. This process also involves transitions

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[12] Miski, 'Pengantar Metodologi Penelitian Hadis Tematik'.

from connotative to denotative meaning, from the ambiguous (*mushkil*) to the explicit (*ṣarīḥ*), and from the figurative (*majāzī*) to the literal (*ḥaqīqī*). Such linguistic analysis enables the researcher to uncover the core idea of a ḥadīth with greater objectivity, rather than relying merely on the chapter headings or topical classifications found in the ḥadīth compilations.

The subsequent step involves examining the ḥadīth in relation to the Qur'ānic verses, which constitute the primary source of Islamic law. This process ensures that the ḥadīth functions as an elucidation, reinforcement, or even specification (*takhsīs*) of the Qur'ānic text. At the same time, integration with contemporary scientific theories is required in order to attain a broader and more contextualized understanding. In this way, the ḥadīth is not merely positioned as a static text, but rather as a dynamic source that remains vital and relevant to the lived realities of the contemporary Muslim community.

Historical analysis of the *matn* of ḥadīth constitutes an essential component of *mawḍūʿī* studies. First, many ḥadīth transmitted during the era of the Companions were often shaped by the prevailing political circumstances; hence, it is necessary to examine the consistency of transmission and apply critical validation (*jarḥ wa taʿdīl*). Second, a sound understanding of ḥadīth requires analysis of the political background of the *rijāl al-ḥadīth*, including the Prophet's own Companions. Third, the possibility of abridgment or omission of certain parts of the *matn* by transmitters must be addressed through comparative research. Fourth, careful investigation of the *asbāb al-wurūd* is indispensable, as the historical context serves to uncover the authentic intent of a given ḥadīth.

Thus, although the *mawḍūʿī* method may appear straightforward, its application requires rigorous, procedural, and interdisciplinary research. A systematically conducted *mawḍūʿī* study of ḥadīth can yield an understanding that is not merely textual but also contextual, thereby providing relevant responses to both religious and social issues faced by contemporary society.

Interpretive Techniques in *Mawḍūʿī* Ḥadīth Studies

Interpretation of ḥadīth refers to the methodological approaches employed in understanding and elucidating the sayings of the Prophet (SAW). Fundamentally, this process focuses on the analysis of the *matn* of the ḥadīth, whether at the level of vocabulary, phrase, clause, or complete sentence. Within *mawḍūʿī* (thematic) ḥadīth studies, several interpretive techniques may be employed, namely textual, intertextual, and contextual

interpretation. Each of these techniques possesses its own characteristics, epistemological foundations, and methodological orientations, thereby generating diverse understandings of the Prophet's traditions.

1. Textual Interpretation

Textual interpretation refers to the understanding of ḥadīth based solely on the explicit wording of the text, without taking into account external dimensions such as the time of transmission, the circumstances of its occurrence (*asbāb al-wurūd*), or the socio-historical context underlying the tradition. Consequently, the meaning derived through this approach is universal in scope and absolute in character. The foundation of this technique lies in the conviction that every statement, action, and tacit approval attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) constitutes a form of revelation conveyed through textual expression. Accordingly, the ḥadīth text is regarded as possessing sufficient authority to elucidate its intended meaning without recourse to external references.[13]

The approach commonly employed in textual interpretation is the linguistic approach, which encompasses the analysis of *mufradāt* (vocabulary), the sciences of *naḥw* (syntax) and *ṣarf* (morphology), as well as the tools of *balāghah* (rhetoric). Through these instruments, the literal meaning of the ḥadīth can be comprehensively understood, ensuring that interpretation remains firmly grounded in the linguistic structures employed by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

2. Intertextual Interpretation

Intertextual interpretation emphasizes the understanding of ḥadīth by establishing connections with other ḥadīths that address similar themes, as well as with related Qur'ānic verses. This technique is also known as *munāsabah*, referring to the effort of discerning coherence and continuity of meaning among various religious texts.

The epistemological foundation of this interpretive approach lies in the premise that the ḥadīth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) does not stand in isolation but rather represents his conduct in harmony with the Qur'ān. This is affirmed in Sūrat al-Naḥl (16:44), which states that the Messenger of Allah was entrusted with the mission of clarifying the Qur'ān, a task that is manifested through the corpus of ḥadīth. Consequently, the interpretation of any given ḥadīth requires consideration of its interrelation with the Qur'ān as

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[13] Muhammad Asriandy, 'Metode Pemahaman Hadis' (Ekspose).

The Mawdu'i Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

well as with other ḥadīths that may convey synonymous, parallel, or even seemingly contradictory meanings.

The methodological approach employed in this technique is predominantly theological-normative, emphasizing the unity of the Islamic doctrinal system grounded in its two authoritative sources: the Qurʾān and the ḥadīth. Accordingly, intertextual interpretation facilitates the construction of a more comprehensive understanding of the normative messages embedded within the ḥadīth.[14]

3. **Contextual Interpretation**

Contextual interpretation seeks to understand the ḥadīth by taking into account the conditions and circumstances surrounding its emergence, whether historical, social, or cultural. This interpretive approach rejects an understanding that relies solely on the textual dimension; rather, it insists on considering the contextual factors that gave rise to the ḥadīth in order to grasp its intended meaning more accurately.

In its application, contextual interpretation considers several essential aspects: **First**, the form and scope of the ḥadīth's guidance, such as *jawāmiʿ al-kalim* (concise yet profound expressions), *tamthīl* (parables), *ḥiwār* (dialogues), as well as the classification of the ḥadīth in terms of whether it is universal, temporal, or local in nature. **Second**, the capacity and position of the Prophet ﷺ in his various roles—as Messenger of God, head of state, military leader, father, husband, or companion. **Third**, the historical background and the circumstances of the ḥadīth's emergence (*asbāb al-wurūd*), including the intended audience or addressee. **Fourth**, the presence of an *ʿillah* (underlying legal rationale) that can be derived from the ḥadīth, with due consideration of dimensions of utility and public interest (*maṣlaḥah*).

Within this framework, a ḥadīth may be more appropriately understood through textual, intertextual, or contextual interpretation, depending on its substance and the circumstances surrounding its transmission. The methodological foundation of this technique rests on the awareness that the Prophet ﷺ serves as a universal exemplar (*uswah ḥasanah*) and as a mercy for all creation. The approach employed is holistic and multidisciplinary, engaging historical, sociological, anthropological, hermeneutical, and philosophical perspectives. In this way, contextual interpretation provides a broader space for apprehending the relevance of the ḥadīth to the dynamics of historical change as well as to the challenges of contemporary life.

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[14] Aisyah, 'Metode Tematik Dalam Kajian Hadits.'".

A comparative analysis of the interpretive techniques reveals that each possesses its own focus and distinct strengths. Textual interpretation emphasizes the literal meaning of the ḥadīth as inscribed in its wording, while intertextual interpretation highlights the continuity of meaning across texts, both among different ḥadīth and in their relation to Qur'ānic verses. Contextual interpretation, on the other hand, orients itself toward the interplay between the text and the socio-historical realities surrounding the emergence of the ḥadīth. From a methodological perspective, these three techniques are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Textual interpretation safeguards the authenticity of the prophetic language, intertextual interpretation ensures the unity of Islamic teachings, and contextual interpretation reaffirms the relevance of the ḥadīth in the evolving dynamics of Muslim life. Accordingly, within the methodological framework of ḥadīth mawḍū'ī, the integration of these interpretive techniques becomes indispensable, ensuring that the understanding of ḥadīth is not partial but instead comprehensive, normative, and applicable.

The following presents a comparative overview of the techniques of hadith interpretation (textual, intertextual, and contextual) in the form of an academic table for the sake of clarity and comprehensibility."

Table: Comparison of Hadith Interpretation Techniques in Thematic Studies (Maudhu'i)

Aspect	Textual Interpretation	Intertextual Interpretation	Contextual Interpretation
Main Focus	Literal meaning of the hadith text (matan)	Correlation of one hadith with other hadiths and relevant Qur'anic verses	Relationship of the hadith text with its social, historical, and cultural context
Epistemological Basis	Hadith as revelation sufficient to be understood directly from its text	Hadith as an integral explanation of the Qur'an	Hadith emerged within specific circumstances that must be taken into account

The Mawdu'i Method in Hadith Studies:
Conceptual Framework and Practical Application
Zainuddin

Methodological Approach	Linguistic analysis (vocabulary, grammar, rhetoric)	Theological-normative (unity of Qur'an and Hadith)	Holistic-multidisciplinary (historical, sociological, anthropological, hermeneutical)
Strengths	Preserves the authenticity of the hadith's language	Reinforces the unity of Islamic teachings	Ensures the relevance of hadith in contemporary contexts
Limitations	Tends to be rigid and ahistorical	May appear apologetic if connections are forced	Risk of subjectivity without a clear scientific framework
Implications	Literal, absolute, universal understanding	Normative and comprehensive understanding within the framework of revelation	Contextual, applicable, and relevant understanding for modern society

C. Consclusion

The *mawḍūʿī* (thematic) methodology in ḥadīth studies represents a strategic approach oriented toward the collection, verification, and analysis of ḥadīths on specific themes to produce a comprehensive, normative, and applicable understanding. This method holds considerable significance in preserving the authenticity of ḥadīth texts, resolving apparent contradictions in the narrations, and affirming the relevance of the Sunnah to the dynamics of contemporary life. By employing the paradigms of integration–interconnection and dimensionality, and grounded in both ethical-theological and critical-academic principles, *mawḍūʿī* ḥadīth studies can make a substantial contribution to the development of Islamic sciences. The integration of textual, intertextual, and contextual interpretive techniques enables this methodology to maintain the unity of Islamic teachings while addressing pressing societal issues, rendering it highly relevant for application in the fields of law, education, ethics, and contemporary social concerns.

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