The development of Hadith Studies in Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama

Arifuddin Ahmad

Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: arifuddin.ahmad@uin-alauddin.ac.id

Erwin Hafid

Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: erwin.hafid@uin-alauddin.ac.id

Abd. Bashir Fatmal

Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: abdbashirfatmal@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines the development of hadith studies within Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in South Sulawesi, focusing on their methodological patterns, institutional roles, and contextual adaptations. The research aims to analyze how both organizations integrate classical scholarship with contemporary needs and address challenges in transmission, verification, and public engagement with hadith. Employing a qualitative approach, the findings reveal that Muhammadiyah emphasizes methodological rigor through sanad and matn criticism, supported by

the Majelis Tarjih and programs such as Pendidikan Ulama Tarjih (PUT), which integrates hadith studies into a broader curriculum without isolating it as a standalone discipline. Its model prioritizes *maqbul* hadith, thematic analysis, and contextual ijtihad to address modern socio-religious issues. In contrast, NU maintains a *pesantren*-based model rooted in *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*, combining traditional *bandongan* and *sorogan* methods with gradual progression from foundational texts to advanced hadith collections. NU selectively accepts weak hadith for devotional purposes, emphasizing the authority of kiai and integrating hadith with *fiqh* and Sufism. Both models exhibit strengths in preserving scholarly tradition while adapting to contemporary challenges; however, they face limitations in balancing tradition and critical methodology. The study contributes to the discourse on regional Islamic scholarship by highlighting the diversity and adaptability of hadith studies in South Sulawesi.

Penelitian ini mengkaji perkembangan kajian hadis dalam Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) di Sulawesi Selatan, dengan fokus pada pola metodologis, peran kelembagaan, dan adaptasi kontekstual masing-masing. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis bagaimana kedua organisasi tersebut mengintegrasikan khazanah keilmuan klasik dengan kebutuhan kontemporer, sekaligus menjawab tantangan dalam aspek transmisi, verifikasi, dan keterlibatan publik terhadap hadis. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, riset ini menemukan bahwa Muhammadiyah menekankan ketelitian metodologis melalui kritik sanad dan matan, yang didukung oleh Majelis Tarjih serta program Pendidikan Ulama Tarjih (PUT), dengan mengintegrasikan kajian hadis ke dalam kurikulum yang lebih luas tanpa memisahkannya sebagai disiplin tersendiri. Model ini memprioritaskan hadis maqbul, analisis tematik, dan ijtihad kontekstual untuk menjawab isu-isu sosial-keagamaan modern. Sebaliknya, NU mempertahankan model berbasis pesantren yang berakar pada Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, menggabungkan metode tradisional bandongan dan sorogan dengan tahapan pembelajaran bertahap dari teks-teks dasar hingga kitab hadis tingkat lanjut. NU menerapkan penerimaan selektif terhadap hadis lemah untuk tujuan-tujuan ibadah, menekankan otoritas kiai, dan mengintegrasikan hadis dengan figh serta tasawuf. Kedua model menunjukkan kekuatan dalam menjaga tradisi keilmuan sekaligus beradaptasi dengan tantangan kontemporer, namun menghadapi keterbatasan dalam menyeimbangkan tradisi dan metodologi kritis. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada diskursus keilmuan Islam regional dengan menyoroti keragaman dan daya adaptasi kajian hadis di Sulawesi Selatan.

Keywords: Hadith Studies; Muhammadiyah; Nahdlatul Ulama; Comparative methodology; Indonesian Islamic Scholarship

Introduction

Since Islam first arrived in the Indonesian archipelago, hadith has played a crucial role in the dissemination and practice of Islamic teachings among local communities. It functions not only as the second primary source of Islamic law after the Quran but also as a guide in shaping culture, social ethics, and local religious traditions.¹ Despite its centrality, hadith studies as an independent academic discipline developed more slowly than other Islamic sciences such as jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Quranic exegesis (tafsir), or Sufism (tasawwuf). Historically, early hadith transmission focused more on moral formation and practical religious instruction rather than methodological analysis and critical evaluation of *isnād* and *matn*.²

It was not until the 17th century that figures like Abdul Rauf as-Singkili began writing hadith commentaries in Malay, signaling an early effort to systematize hadith understanding in the region.³ In the 19th and early 20th centuries, hadith studies advanced significantly through the work of prominent scholars such as Nawawi al-Bantani and Mahfudz at-Turmusi. These scholars transmitted hadith knowledge to the next generation,

¹Hanief Monady, Muhammad Hasan, and Akhmad Sagir, "Building Hadith Authority: The Pioneering Role of Malay Archipelago Scholars", Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies, Vol. 23, no. 1 (2025), 73–100, https://doi.org/10.1163/22321969-20250167.

²Abd. Bashir Fatmal, Arifuddin Ahmad, and La Ode Ismail Ahmad, "Book Studies And Methods Of Understanding Hadith At The DDI Mangkoso Islamic Boarding School", *Ikhtisar: Jurnal Pengetahuan Islam*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (2024), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55062// IJPI.2024.v4i1/483/5.

³Anayya Syadza Zainuddin, Kasimah Binti Kamaruddin, and Zainuddin Zainuddin, "Abd Al-Rauf's Contributions to Quranic Exegesis: Historical Context, Methodology, and Malay Translation", SINTHOP: Media Kajian Pendidikan, Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya, Vol. 3, no. 1 (2024), 9–21, https://doi.org/10.22373/sinthop.v3i1.5456.

including Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), who later incorporated hadith into the *pesantren* curriculum.⁴ As Islamic education modernized, particularly from the 1960s onward, hadith studies began shifting from traditional models toward academic frameworks, with Islamic universities formally including them in their curricula.⁵

South Sulawesi represents a region with a particularly dynamic hadith tradition.⁶ Islam entered the region in the 17th century via preachers and scholars from outside, after which the Quran and hadith became foundational to religious instruction.⁷ Initially, hadith was taught orally through traditional means—*majelis taklim*, *pesantren*, and local religious gatherings—relying heavily on the authority of teachers.⁸ Only in the latter half of the 20th century did significant transformations occur, as access to formal education increased and major Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU gained influence.⁹

Muhammadiyah and NU remain the two most influential Islamic organizations in South Sulawesi. While both uphold the importance of

⁴Syarif Firdaus and Dzulkifli Hadi Imawan, "The Intellectual Legacy of Sheikh Nawawi Al-Bantani and Sheikh Mahfudz at-Tarmasi: Contributions to Islamic Education and Modern Contexts in Indonesia", *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2024), 192–205, https://doi.org/10.22373/jpi.v4i2.25377.

⁵Yuliharti Yuliharti et al., "The Development of Hadith Study in Islamic Boarding Schools and Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia", SYAMIL: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education), Vol. 12, no. 1 (2024), 107–18, https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v12i1.8964.

⁶Abd. Bashir Fatmal, *Peta Kajian Hadis Pada Program Sarjana Di Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (PTKIN) Sulawesi Selatan*, Makassar: Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, 2024.

⁷Abd. Basir et al., "Relevance of National Education Goals to the Guidance of the Al-Quran and Al-Hadith", *Linguistics and Culture Review*, Vol. 6 (2022), 122–37, https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v6nS5.2088.

⁸Tamjidnor et al., "Transformation of Hadith Teaching as an Effort to Revitalize Islamic Science in Pesantren", *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 8, no. 1 (2025), 123–38, https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v8i1.9.

⁹Abdullah M. Al-Ansi et al., "The Islamic Organizations in Indonesia 'Muhammadiyah and NU': Social Perspective Explanation", *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, Vol. 50, no. 5 (2023), 550-64, https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v50i5.1124.

returning to the Quran and hadith, they represent distinct approaches. Muhammadiyah promotes rationality, purification, and *tajdid* (reform), encouraging direct engagement with primary sources using systematic and academic methods.¹⁰ NU, on the other hand, emphasizes transmission chains (*sanad*), the authority of scholars, and interpretation through classical texts (*turath*), maintaining traditional instructional methods in *pesantren* and scholarly circles (*halaqah*).¹¹ These approaches enrich rather than divide the field of hadith studies in South Sulawesi.

Despite their significance, little academic attention has been given to the specific contributions of Muhammadiyah and NU to hadith scholarship in this region. Both organizations possess extensive educational networks, structured cadre training, and competent Islamic scholars.¹² Numerous *pesantren*, madrasahs, and Islamic universities across South Sulawesi have also developed varied pedagogical models, curricular content, and educational goals in their hadith programs. These diverse approaches reflect both the pluralism and depth of hadith education in the region.

Public enthusiasm for Islamic learning in South Sulawesi is also notably high. This is evidenced by the proliferation of *majelis taklim*, regular study circles, and community-based learning initiatives focusing on hadith—whether thematic (*mawdu'i*) or based on well-known hadith compilations such as *Riyadh al-Salihin*, *Arba'in Nawawiyah*, and *Bulugh al-Maram*. However, challenges persist. There is a lack of contextual teaching methods, limited understanding of hadith criticism—particularly regarding *isnād* and *matn*—

¹⁰Wahyu Hidayat, "Muhammadiyah; Diantara Gerakan Modernis, Tajdid Dan Purifikasi", Jurnal Pemikiran Islam, Vol. 3, no. 1 (2023), 70–82, https://doi.org/10.22373/jpi.v3i1.18128.

¹¹Hilman Rasyid et al., "Contextualization of Classical Text Teaching in Traditional and Modern Pesantren", Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme, Vol. 6, no. 3 (2025), 373–95, https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v6i3.6743.

¹²Masruhan Masruhan and Muh. Fathoni Hasyim, "The Contribution of Muslim Scholars and Islamic Social Organizations in Developing Hadith Studies in Indonesia", *Ulumuna*, Vol. 28, no. 2 (2024), 856–81, https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i2.1007.

and uneven integration of academic methodologies into the curricula of Islamic educational institutions.¹³ Furthermore, there is a scarcity of local scholarly literature analyzing hadith studies from the perspective of contemporary Islamic organizations operating in South Sulawesi.

In response to these conditions, this study aims to comprehensively examine the roles of Muhammadiyah and NU in advancing hadith studies in South Sulawesi. It seeks not only to describe the instructional models used by each organization but also to explore the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to develop relevant and contextualized understandings of hadith. This research contributes a novel perspective by focusing on the relatively understudied local context of South Sulawesi. Rather than approaching Muhammadiyah and NU from socio-political or da'wah perspectives, the study highlights their scholarly roles in hadith development. Integrating historical analysis with *hadithological* inquiry, it constructs a methodological framework capable of capturing the nuanced dynamics of hadith education at the local level.

Drawing on a qualitative approach supported by longitudinal surveys, this study aims to provide a critical, data-driven account of hadith scholarship in South Sulawesi. Through field observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, the research not only enriches academic discourse on hadith in Indonesia but also offers strategic insights for developing more contextual, responsive, and sustainable approaches to hadith instruction—particularly in regions with distinct socio-cultural characteristics such as South Sulawesi.

Hadith Studies in Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912 by KH. Ahmad Dahlan, has evolved into a reformist Islamic movement committed to aligning religious teachings

¹³Fatmal, Ahmad, and Ahmad, "Book Studies...

with contemporary realities.¹⁴ In South Sulawesi, its presence has been instrumental in shaping Islamic scholarship through a network of schools, universities, health institutions, and socio-religious organizations.¹⁵ Among its many contributions, the development of hadith studies stands out as a critical element of Muhammadiyah's intellectual growth in the region.

A key turning point came with the establishment of the Majelis Tarjih in 1927, which introduced a more rigorous and systematic approach to Islamic scholarship. Prior to this, hadith studies within Muhammadiyah were largely limited to foundational knowledge, without extensive engagement in technical methodologies. The Majelis Tarjih facilitated an epistemological shift, and establishing isnad (chain) and matn (text) criticism as core components of religious research. According to Mr. Ambo Asse, (Chairman of Muhammadiyah's Regional Board in South Sulawesi):

"It was only after the establishment of Majelis Tarjih that we began to explore areas such as isnad and matn criticism. Later, with the influence of figures like Mr. Syuhudi Ismail, additional methodological principles were introduced."

The influence of national scholars like Mr. Syuhudi Ismail was crucial in advancing hadith methodology, moving it beyond literalist readings to incorporate contextual and thematic analysis. This shift enabled Muhammadiyah scholars in South Sulawesi to view hadith as dynamic guidance, interpreted through the Quran and relevant to modern social contexts. The integration of critical methods strengthened Muhammadiyah's credibility in a region where traditionalist and reformist

¹⁴Masruhan and Hasvim, "The Contribution of Muslim Scholars...

¹⁵Irwan Abbas Darmawijaya, "Sejarah Muhammadiyah Di Sulawesi Selatan 1926-1942", *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, Vol. 12, no. 2 (2014), 465–78, https://jurnallekturkeagamaan.kemenag.go.id/index.php/lektur/article/view/44.

¹⁶Ahwan Fanani et al., "Muhammadiyah's Manhaj Tarjih: An Evolution of a Modernist Approach to Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (October 28, 2021), https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6942.

currents often intersect.

Despite these advances, Muhammadiyah in South Sulawesi has not developed dedicated institutions devoted solely to hadith research. Instead, hadith remains embedded in a broader curriculum of Islamic sciences. As Mr. Ambo Asse explains: "In Muhammadiyah, hadith is indeed a subject of study, but it is not treated as a separate or specialized discipline. It is integrated within our broader educational and religious instruction."

This integrative approach reflects Muhammadiyah's epistemology, which resists compartmentalizing Islamic sciences. By teaching hadith alongside tafsir, fiqh, and akhlaq, Muhammadiyah ensures students acquire comprehensive religious literacy and understand hadith in its proper Quranic and jurisprudential context.¹⁷ This structure also safeguards against fragmented interpretations that might arise from isolating hadith from other sources of Islamic law.

In practice, hadith studies are disseminated across multiple platforms—schools, universities, sermons, *majelis taklim*, and scholarly seminars. This broad dissemination strategy embeds hadith knowledge into the daily religious life of the community. Mr. Ambo Asse notes:

"Our scholars do not conduct hadith studies in isolation. All Islamic sciences are taught in an integrated manner, because we believe that the Quran and hadith must be understood together, in mutual reinforcement."

One important institutional effort supporting this development is the Pendidikan Ulama Tarjih (PUT) program, which aims to produce scholars with deep mastery of both the Quran and hadith, grounded in

¹⁷Ummu Afifah Nuriyatu Zahroh, Tasman Hamami, and Samsul Bahri, "Integrative-Interconnective Model: Implementation in Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development in Muhammadiyah Schools", *International Journal of Social Service and Research*, Vol. 3, no. 2 (2023), 577–84, https://doi.org/10.46799/ijssr.v3i2.278.

Muhammadiyah's theological and methodological principles.¹⁸ Mr. Ambo Asse affirms: "The PUT program is expected to contribute significantly to the development of hadith and Quranic studies."

The PUT initiative demonstrates Muhammadiyah's strategic commitment to ensuring that future scholars are equipped with critical, context-aware methods while remaining faithful to the movement's reformist ethos. ¹⁹ By combining academic rigor with social responsibility, Muhammadiyah fosters scholars who are capable of addressing contemporary challenges without compromising textual authenticity.

Analytically, the development of hadith studies in Muhammadiyah South Sulawesi shows several notable features. First, the introduction of systematic criticism through Majelis Tarjih created a methodological foundation that continues to shape scholarly output in the region. Second, the influence of key scholars—both local and national—ensured that Muhammadiyah's approach incorporated both classical scholarship and modern academic methods. Third, the choice to integrate rather than isolate hadith studies reflects a strategic pedagogical philosophy: to produce well-rounded religious leaders who can interpret prophetic traditions within a comprehensive framework of Islamic knowledge.

This integrated model also helps Muhammadiyah navigate the religious landscape of South Sulawesi, where multiple Islamic traditions coexist. By grounding hadith interpretation in both Quranic exegesis and contemporary realities, Muhammadiyah can engage in religious discourse that is both theologically sound and socially relevant. This has

¹⁸Muhammad Ali Bakri and Muhammad Khalifah Mustami, "Institutional Transformation of the Al-Birr College as a Form of Regeneration Scholars in University of Muhammadiyah", Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, Vol. 6, no. 7 (2019), https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.67.6753.

¹⁹Vritta Amroini Wahyudi and Najwa Yanya Santiworakun, "Urgency and Opportunities for Muhammadiyah in the Global Halal Ecosystem: A Strategic Outlook", *Jurnal Muhammadiyah Studies*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (2025), 11–23, https://doi.org/10.22219/jms.v10i1.40503.

enhanced the organization's role not only as a guardian of textual integrity but also as an active participant in shaping public morality and policy. Nonetheless, the absence of dedicated research centers for hadith means that methodological innovation depends heavily on individual scholars and existing educational institutions. While the PUT program offers a promising avenue for future growth, broader institutional investment could accelerate the depth and reach of Muhammadiyah's hadith scholarship in the region.

Hadith Studies in Nahdlatul Ulama

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)—one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations—has played a major role in shaping the religious identity of Muslim communities in South Sulawesi. Since its establishment in 1926, NU has become both a guardian of traditional Islamic scholarship and a driver of religious education rooted in the principles of Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah.²⁰ In South Sulawesi, NU's influence is visible in both its formal organizational structure (*NU Struktural*) and in the wider cultural-religious practices of its members and sympathizers (*NU Kultural*). These two dimensions—formal administration and cultural expression—are not separate entities but interact in sustaining NU's presence in local religious life.

The development of hadith studies within NU South Sulawesi is best understood as part of an integrated educational tradition rather than as an independent, specialized discipline.²¹ While NU recognizes the centrality of hadith alongside the Quran and fiqh, it has not yet established a dedicated institution for advanced hadith research. Instead, hadith is taught as one

²⁰Ahmad Zainul Hamdi, "Constructing Indonesian Religious Pluralism: The Role of Nahdlatul Ulama in Countering Violent Religious Extremism", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 15, no. 2 (2021), 433, https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2021.15.2.433.464.

²¹Abdul Gaffar and Akbar Akbar, "Hadith Studies in Eastern Indonesia: Futurology Analysis on Hadith Sciences Department in Islamic Higher Education", *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian*, Vol. 19, no. 1 (2024), 50, https://doi.org/10.31332/ai.v0i0.8714.

of the core subjects within pesantren and NU-affiliated schools, embedded in a curriculum that balances scriptural study, jurisprudence, and Arabic language mastery.

Mr. Najmuddin H. Abd Safa, who is former Rais of PWNU South Sulawesi, emphasized this integration: "If someone wants to become a capable *ulama*, there are three fields that must be strengthened: the Quran and its exegesis, hadith, and Arabic. Without Arabic, it is difficult to understand the Quran and hadith correctly."

This statement reflects NU's understanding that hadith scholarship cannot stand apart from a broader framework of Islamic sciences. As a result, hadith studies progress in tandem with other disciplines, shaped by the pesantren's gradual and holistic teaching approach.

One characteristic of NU's hadith development in South Sulawesi is its inclusivity toward multiple hadith collections. Rather than prioritizing only Sahih Bukhari or Sahih Muslim, NU pesantren draw from the *al-Kutub al-Tis'ah* as a whole. ²² Weak (*dha'if*) hadith are not excluded outright, particularly when used to encourage virtuous acts (*fadail al-a'mal*). Senior NU figure Mr. Abustani Ilyas explained: "In NU, all the *al-Kutub al-Tis'ah* are important. Even weak hadiths are still considered, especially when related to encouraging worship."

This openness has preserved the richness of classical hadith literature in NU's teaching tradition. However, it also means that works containing disputed narrations—such as *Durratunnasihin*—remain in use and are valued more for their moral and spiritual content than for strict academic reliability. In this way, the development of hadith studies in NU South Sulawesi remains closely tied to its devotional and community-oriented purposes.

Another factor influencing hadith study development is the authority structure within pesantren. The role of the *kiai* is central in determining

²²Yuliharti et al., "The Development of Hadith Study...

how hadith is taught and transmitted. Students often accept hadiths quoted by their teachers without questioning their classification, reflecting a deep respect for scholarly authority rooted in NU's tradition of *adab* toward teachers.²³ While this reinforces stability and continuity in religious transmission, it can also limit critical engagement at the grassroots level.

From an analytical perspective, this pattern has two main implications for the evolution of hadith scholarship in the region. First, the absence of a specialized institutional framework has allowed flexibility in teaching methods, enabling hadith studies to adapt naturally within the pesantren system. This flexibility has ensured that hadith remains accessible and relevant to community needs, supporting NU's role in maintaining a moderate and inclusive religious tradition. Second, the reliance on *kiai* authority sustains community trust in religious knowledge but may slow the introduction of modern critical methodologies in broader NU contexts outside of higher education institutions.

Nonetheless, the picture is not one of static tradition. In NU-affiliated universities and advanced pesantren programs, hadith criticism is part of the curriculum, exposing students to classical *musthalah al-hadith* as well as contemporary scholarly tools.²⁴ This represents a gradual broadening of the hadith study framework, suggesting that the development of NU's hadith scholarship in South Sulawesi is a process of layered adaptation—retaining core traditions while incorporating selective elements of modern academic practice.

It is also important to note that NU's dual presence—structural and cultural—means that its hadith teaching indirectly reaches audiences far

²³Hasep Saputra, "Genealogi Perkembangan Studi Hadis Di Indonesia", AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis, Vol. 1, no. 1 (2017), 41, https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v1i1.164.

²⁴Darul Siswanto, "The Paradigm Of Matn Hadith Criticism And Its Transformation In The Modern Era", *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam*, Vol. 21, no. 1 (2020), 130, https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v21i1.8936.

beyond its formal membership. Community gatherings such as *maulid*, *tahlilan*, and routine study circles in villages continue to serve as informal spaces where hadith is disseminated, even if not subjected to critical textual analysis. This blending of formal education and grassroots religious culture ensures that hadith remains a living source of guidance in both urban and rural contexts.

The Model of Hadith Studies in the Muhammadiyah

The hadith study model within Muhammadiyah in South Sulawesi is distinguished by a methodological orientation that integrates the classical disciplines of hadith scholarship with the demands of contemporary contexts. This approach is not limited to a literal understanding of hadith texts; rather, it situates hadith within a contextual framework that addresses modern challenges. Its epistemological foundation is firmly rooted in the Quran and *al-Sunnah al-Maqbulah* as the highest sources of Islamic law, as outlined in Muhammadiyah's foundational documents such as the *Mukaddimah Anggaran Dasar Muhammadiyah*, the *Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-Cita Hidup Muhammadiyah*, and the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (HPT).²⁵

A defining feature of this model is the emphasis on *musthalah al-hadith* as the initial stage of instruction. Understanding hadith categories, the quality of isnād, and the validity of matn is cultivated as a foundational competency. This serves to equip Muhammadiyah cadres with the scholarly tools necessary to authoritatively verify hadith authenticity. Key reference works, such as *Paradigma Memahami Hadis Nabi Muhammad saw.* by Arifuddin Ahmad are used in a summarized form to ensure that core concepts are effectively grasped.²⁶ This strategy underscores

²⁵Central Board of Muhammadiyah, "A Treatise on Progressive Islam: The 48th Muktamar of Muhammadiyah Solo 2022," 2023.

²⁶Arifuddin Ahmad and Muhammad Zain, *Paradigma Baru Memahami Hadis Nabi: Refleksi Pemikiran Pembaruan Prof. Dr. Muhammad Syuhudi Ismail*, Renaisan, 2005.

Muhammadiyah's commitment to preventing the dissemination of weak or spurious hadith, particularly in the digital age, where unverified religious information proliferates.

A subsequent stage in this model is hadith criticism (naqd al-hadith), which encompasses both isnād and matn analysis. While Muhammadiyah's approach—reflected in its codified tarjih principles—appears to place greater emphasis on isnād criticism, it also incorporates matn analysis. It is particularly invoked when assessing a hadith's consistency with the Quran and fundamental Islamic principles. This approach is markedly hadith-centric, yet it operates under stringent selection criteria: only those hadith classified as sahih, hasan, or meeting the broader maqbul (accepted) standard are accepted. Weak (da'if) hadith are admissible only if supported by multiple corroborating chains, not in conflict with stronger texts, and accompanied by contextual evidence (qarinah) indicating the authenticity of the original report.²⁷

Fiqh al-hadith constitutes another critical pillar of the Muhammadiyah model. Here, the interpretative process is contextually oriented, ensuring that the legal rulings derived from hadith remain relevant to contemporary social realities. Ijtihad is conducted with due consideration for the sociocultural environment of South Sulawesi, producing rulings that are both textually valid and socially beneficial. The maudu'i (thematic) method dominates this process: hadith are assembled under thematic categories and analyzed to formulate adaptive legal responses to emerging issues.

In practice, hadith teaching in Muhammadiyah South Sulawesi also incorporates classical literature, such as *Bulugh al-Maram*. This text is taught through a combination of *tahlili* (analytical), *ijmali* (global), *maudu'i*

²⁷Ayub Ayub, "Matn Criticism and Its Role in The Evaluation of Hadith Authenticity," *IJISH* (*International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*). Vol. 1, no. 1 (2018), 69–75, https://doi.org/10.26555/ijish.v1i1.136.

(thematic), and *muqaran* (comparative) methods. This multi-method approach allows participants to engage deeply with hadith content while also comparing various scholarly opinions. However, in advanced stages of instruction, the thematic method becomes predominant, especially when addressing contemporary phenomena and socio-religious challenges.²⁸ This reflects Muhammadiyah's attempt to balance fidelity to the Islamic scholarly tradition with the necessity of methodological renewal.

The model is further reinforced by Muhammadiyah's detailed tarjih guidelines, which stipulate conditions for accepting *mawquf*, *mursal*, and *da'if* hadith. These are not merely technical rules but reflect a cautious and rational scholarly stance. For instance, *mawquf* reports without marfu' indications are rejected; *mursal* reports are only accepted if supported by corroborating evidence; and *da'if* hadith require both multiplicity of chains and alignment with Quranic or sahih hadith principles.²⁹

Critically, this model excels in two primary aspects: methodological discipline and contextual relevance. Its strong foundations in hadith classification and criticism safeguard textual integrity, while its context-sensitive application ensures that hadith remain operational and beneficial in addressing the lived realities of Muslim communities. Nonetheless, the tendency to prioritize isnād criticism over matn analysis could be a limitation, particularly when encountering sahih isnād reports that raise substantive interpretive concerns.³⁰

In sum, the Muhammadiyah hadith study model in South Sulawesi represents a synthesis of classical methodology and reformist orientation.

²⁸Fanani et al., "Muhammadiyah's Manhaj Tarjih...

²⁹Fithri Istiqomah et al., "The Legal Status of Mauquf Hadith According to Muhammadiyah", *Islam in World Perspectives Symposium*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (2020), 91–100.

³⁰Bahar Agus Setiawan, "Manhaj Tarjih Dan Tajdid: Asas Pengembangan Pemikiran Dalam Muhammadiyah," *TARLIM: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (2019), 35, https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v2i1.2068.

It is preventive in guarding against hadith misuse, proactive in linking text to context, and responsive to the challenges of modernity. This model not only sustains Muhammadiyah's internal scholarly authority but also makes a meaningful contribution to the broader discourse of hadith studies in Indonesia, particularly in bridging the gap between textual orthodoxy and the evolving dynamics of Muslim society.

The Model of Hadith Studies in the Nahdlatul Ulama

The hadith study model developed by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in South Sulawesi represents a distinctive approach that integrates the authority of classical Islamic scholarship with the socio-cultural realities of the local context, while addressing the demands of contemporary life. Epistemologically, this model is grounded in NU's guiding principle, *almuhafadzah 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah*—preserving established traditions that are deemed good while adopting new practices that are considered better. This principle informs the selection of hadith sources, pedagogical methods, and interpretative orientations within NU's pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in the region.

First, in terms of literature, NU in South Sulawesi employs a stratified curriculum that corresponds to students' intellectual maturity and scholarly progression. The introductory stage begins with *Arbain Nawawi*, which offers a foundational understanding of Islam's core ethical and theological principles. Students then proceed to *Bulugh al-Maram* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, which provides a juristic framework rooted in hadith evidence, followed by *Riyad al-Salihin*, which addresses a broader range of ethical, devotional, and social teachings. At the advanced level, students

³¹Intan Nur Aini, Imam Sopingi, and Athi' Hidayati, "Al-Muhafadzah Bil Qadim Al-Shalih Wa Al-Akhdzu Bil Jadid Al-Ashlah in Education Perspective of Hadrotus Syaikh KH Hasyim Asy'ari", Al-Munawwarah: Journal of Islamic Education, Vol. 1, no. 1 (2025), 91–100, https://doi.org/10.38073/almunawwarah.v1i1.2685.

engage with the *Kutub al-Sittah*, particularly *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, which demand rigorous engagement with both sanad (chain of transmission) and matn (text) criticism.³² This progression demonstrates a deliberate methodological awareness that mastery of hadith requires a gradual process involving intellectual formation, spiritual refinement, and technical competence in hadith criticism.

Second, the pedagogical framework combines traditional modes, such as *bandongan* and *sorogan*, with more contemporary, interactive methods. Traditional techniques ensure the preservation of scholarly transmission chains, while modern pedagogical strategies foster critical dialogue, comparative study, and contextual analysis.³³ This balance safeguards the authority of classical scholarship while cultivating analytical thinking among students.

Third, NU applies a structured classification of hadith—mutawatir, sahih, hasan, daʻif, and mawdhuʻ—and adopts a nuanced approach toward weaker traditions. While daʻif hadith are acknowledged for their limitations, they remain permissible for use in fada'il al-aʻmal (virtuous deeds) under the stringent conditions outlined by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani. Conversely, fabricated (mawdhuʻ) hadith are categorically rejected.³⁴ This

³²Doni Saputra, Novizal Wendry, and Ahmad Taufik Hidayat, "A Study of Nusantara Arba⁵in Hadith Literature: Genealogy, Characteristics, and the Dynamics of Its Composition", *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah*, Vol. 22, no. 1 (2025), 179–201, https://doi.org/10.22373/jim. v22i1.29931.

³³Rifqi Silfiana, "A Traditional and Modern Education System of Pondok Pesantren in Perspective Philosophy of Education", *Islamadina : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 21, no. 1 (2020), 43, https://doi.org/10.30595/islamadina.v0i0.6894.

³⁴Rafiqatul Anisah and Abdillah Afabih, "Contradiction Of Using Hujjah With Daif Hadith In Fadail A'mal: Analysis of the Book of Al-Targib Wa Al-Tarhib", *Al-Bukhari: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (2023), 92–105, https://doi.org/10.32505/al-bukhari.v6i1.5349.but it is uncertain which type of da'if hadith can be used as evidence. Although previous researchers have conducted numerous studies on this topic, this paper aims to discuss the validity of using da'if hadiths as evidence for Fadail al-a'mal by examining the types, conditions, and replacement hadiths of da'if narrations. The conclusions presented in this paper are based on the opinions of hadith scholars, taking into account both the advantages and disadvantages.

critical position distinguishes NU from both those who reject all weak hadith indiscriminately and those who employ them without rigorous selection.

Fourth, the model in South Sulawesi uniquely integrates hadith studies with the spiritual tradition of Sufism. Traditions concerning moral conduct, inner purification, and spiritual development occupy a central place, ensuring that hadith learning extends beyond legal formalism toward the shaping of character and ethical sensibilities.³⁵ This prevents hadith scholarship from becoming a purely legalistic or doctrinaire exercise and enhances its moral and spiritual resonance.

Fifth, contextual interpretation is an essential feature. Students are encouraged to move beyond literal readings and to consider the historical, social, and cultural settings in which a hadith emerged. This interpretive approach ensures that the application of hadith in modern contexts remains faithful to its core teachings while avoiding the instrumentalization of texts for narrow agendas. In the culturally rich environment of South Sulawesi, such an adaptive method allows hadith to interact meaningfully with local traditions without compromising doctrinal integrity.³⁶

Finally, the NU model exhibits epistemological openness. While grounded in the framework of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, NU in South Sulawesi does not confine itself to a single source or methodology. Public religious activities such as regular study circles, seminars, and open forums extend hadith scholarship beyond the confines of the pesantren,

The researcher employs an analytical study method, focusing on the da'if hadiths compiled in the book \"Targhib wa At-Tarhib\" in the chapter on Thaharah (purification

³⁵Muh Yusuf, "Integration of Islamic Law into Local Governance: The Impact of Datuk Tellue's Da'wah in South Sulawesi", *NUKHBATUL 'ULUM: Jurnal Bidang Kajian Islam*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (2024), 317–34, https://doi.org/10.36701/nukhbah.v10i2.1493.

³⁶Alwi Shobri, Fahrur Razi, and Ananda Prayogi, "Reinterpretation Of Asbāb Wurūd Al-Ḥadīth (Analysis of Socio-Cultural Approach and Its Implementation in the Cultural Context of Indonesia)", *Journal of Islamic Civilization*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (2024), 79–94, https://doi.org/10.33086/jic.v6i1.5931.

embedding it in broader community practice.

In conclusion, the NU hadith study model in South Sulawesi embodies a tripartite structure: (1) a tiered curriculum tailored to students' intellectual and spiritual development, (2) a pedagogical balance between traditional transmission and critical inquiry, and (3) an application-oriented interpretation that integrates Sufism and local culture. Its strength lies in maintaining the authority and authenticity of hadith while adapting to evolving societal needs. However, the principal challenge remains striking a sustainable balance between openness and methodological rigor, avoiding both excessive syncretism and rigid formalism.

The impact of Hadith Studies on socio-religious dynamics

The development of hadith studies within Muhammadiyah and *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) in South Sulawesi shapes not only academic orientations within educational institutions but also the broader socio-religious landscape of the region. Both organizations present distinct methodological approaches, yet each plays a vital role in shaping patterns of thought, religious practice, and community responses to contemporary Islamic issues. Muhammadiyah in South Sulawesi tends to emphasize a critical-analytical approach with strong attention to the verification of both the *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (text), integrated with *fiqh* al-hadith to address legal and social matters. This epistemological stance directly impacts the growing awareness among members—particularly educated cadres and congregations—of the need for authoritative evidence before accepting or practicing particular hadith. This is evident in Muhammadiyah's cautious use of hadith in public preaching, which ultimately reduces the potential spread of popular but weak or unverified narrations.

Another significant effect is the emergence of a more rational orientation toward religion, accompanied by an openness to legal reform. For instance,

in discussions on professional zakat, Muhammadiyah's thematic approach to hadith not only shapes its internal policy but also serves as a reference for some leaders across different Islamic organizations. Such contributions demonstrate that Muhammadiyah's hadith methodology expands the scope of ijtihad in South Sulawesi, helping the Muslim community avoid rigidly literal readings of the texts. NU, on the other hand, in South Sulawesi, preserves a pesantren-based model of hadith study that emphasizes the continuity of transmission, respect for teachers, and the broad acceptance of *dha'if* (weak) hadith in the context of *fadail al-a'mal* (virtuous deeds). This approach fosters a religious culture that prioritizes spirituality, reverence for tradition, and emotional attachment to the authority of ulama. Its influence is evident in the persistence of religious traditions such as *maulid*, *tahlilan*, and *manakiban*, which remain resilient amid modernization.

The use of *dha'if* hadith within clear sharia boundaries has provided space for communities to feel spiritually connected to the Prophet's teachings without the burden of rigorous academic verification. However, this approach also carries the potential risk of preserving narrations that are academically weak, leaving them vulnerable to being used as justification for practices lacking strong foundations in primary sources. From a social perspective, these methodological differences influence how the community perceives scholarly authority. Muhammadiyah builds its authority through collective and institutional frameworks, where religious decisions are based on formal rulings from the *Majelis Tarjih*. This creates a more impersonal yet consistent standard of verification. NU, in contrast, constructs its authority through personal relationships with kiai,

³⁷Muhammad Jufri, "Kajian Hadis-Hadis Tentang Dakwah Kultural Nahdlatul Ulama Dan Muhammadiyah Di Sulawesi Selatan (Analisis Pendekatan Hadi s Tarbawiy)", *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan*, Vol. 14, no. 1 (2019), 49–62, http://repository.iainpare.ac.id/551/.

creating strong emotional bonds between teacher and student.³⁸ While this strengthens social cohesion, it can also hinder the development of academic critique at the grassroots level.

In South Sulawesi, these approaches shape the dynamics of Islamic outreach (*dakwah*). Muhammadiyah, with its evidence-based sermons and rational explanations, resonates more with urban and educated segments of society. NU, with its warm, culturally embedded style, tends to thrive in rural communities and in contexts with deeply rooted Islamic traditions. Ultimately, these differences have created a diverse religious ecosystem in which people have access to two distinct yet complementary models of hadith authority. Another noteworthy impact is how both models respond to the challenges of the digital era. Muhammadiyah, with its methodological rigor, is relatively well-equipped to filter out weak or fabricated hadith circulating on social media; yet, it still faces the challenge of effectively communicating verification results to a broader audience.³⁹ NU, with its expansive social networks, can rapidly disseminate religious messages, but this is not always accompanied by adequate validation processes at the grassroots level.

The combined strengths of both could form an effective public education mechanism, provided that coordination and synergy are achieved. Notably, it is essential to recognize that these methodological differences sometimes lead to divergent stances on religious issues. For example, differing views on the merits of certain devotional acts or the forms of Islamic commemorations often reflect contrasting standards

³⁸Hanifah Kusumastuti et al., "Concepts of Ijtihad Bayani, Ta'lili, and Istislahi on Muhammadiyah and Qauli Approach to NU," Conference: International Conference on Islamic and Muhammadiyah Studies (ICIMS), 2022, https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220708.010.

³⁹Nur Rifqah Nadiyah and Muh. Nur Rochim Maksum, "Dinamika Dakwah Islam Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Di Era Digital: Perspektif Nahdlatul Ulama Dan Muhammadiyah", ATTAWASUL, Vol. 3, no. 2 (2024), 90–101, https://doi.org/10.51192/ja.v3i2.1032.

of hadith acceptance. On the one hand, this diversity enriches the community's religious heritage; on the other, without healthy scholarly dialogue, it risks generating internal friction.⁴⁰ Thus, the development and methodologies of hadith studies in Muhammadiyah and NU in South Sulawesi have profound implications for the religious orientations of local communities.

Muhammadiyah fosters a critical, rational, and measured approach to accepting narrations, while NU cultivates a spiritual, tradition-oriented, and culturally cohesive community. When integrated into a cooperative framework that respects differences, these models could produce a hadith study paradigm that is academically robust yet grounded in the lived realities of South Sulawesi's Muslim society.

Conclusion

The comparative examination of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in South Sulawesi reveals that hadith studies serve not merely as a scholarly discipline but as a dynamic framework for shaping communal identity, religious authority, and the adaptation of tradition in contemporary life. While both organizations uphold the Quran and Sunnah as foundational sources, Muhammadiyah advances a reformist, critical-analytical methodology, integrating rigorous sanad and matn verification with fiqh al-hadith to address legal and social issues. This institutionalized approach—anchored in bodies like the Majelis Tarjih—promotes textual precision, doctrinal integrity, and a readiness to confront emerging challenges, such as filtering unauthenticated narrations in the digital sphere. NU, in contrast, sustains a pesantren-based tradition where the authority of the kiai and the continuity of transmission remain central.

⁴⁰Tasman Hamami, "Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Education: Two Main Pillars of National Education in Indonesia", *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, Vol. 18, no. 2 (2021), 307–30, https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2021.182-06.

Its selective acceptance of weak (*dha'if*) hadith for non-legal purposes reflects a priority on spiritual enrichment and moral formation, preserving devotional practices like *tahlilan* and *maulid* that strengthen communal bonds and cultural continuity, albeit with slower methodological adaptation.

These differing orientations produce contrasting forms of authority: Muhammadiyah's structured, collective decision-making yields consistency and institutional accountability, whereas NU's trust-based teacher-student relationships foster deep loyalty and social cohesion. Within South Sulawesi's religious ecosystem, this has resulted in complementary spheres of influence–Muhammadiyah's evidence-based rationalism resonating more with urban, educated segments, and NU's tradition-rich, culturally embedded pedagogy thriving in rural and conservative contexts. Both, however, face the common challenge of addressing the rapid spread of unverified religious content online: Muhammadiyah possesses the methodological rigor to authenticate hadith but needs broader public dissemination, while NU's expansive networks require stronger verification mechanisms to safeguard credibility. The potential synergy between Muhammadiyah's epistemic discipline and NU's communicative reach offers a path toward a hadith study model that is both methodologically robust and socially pervasive.

In essence, the development of hadith scholarship in South Sulawesi reflects a broader trajectory in Indonesian Islam—balancing fidelity to tradition with responsiveness to modern realities. The coexistence of Muhammadiyah's critical approach and NU's tradition-centered pedagogy illustrates that methodological diversity can enrich, rather than divide, the Muslim community. The future vitality of hadith studies in the region will depend not on one model's dominance but on constructive dialogue, mutual enrichment, and the capacity to jointly address the ethical,

intellectual, and spiritual needs of society. Such collaboration holds the promise of producing a paradigm that is academically sound, culturally resonant, and capable of guiding the community through the evolving challenges of the contemporary era.

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