



Comparative Methodologies in the Commentary Tradition of *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*: An Analytical Study of Selected Works

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Abstract

The tradition of commenting on *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, a seminal hadith compilation by Imam al-Tirmidhī, has generated a diverse body of scholarship that reflects multiple interpretive frameworks and methodological orientations. While these commentaries remain central to the study of hadith, systematic examinations of their underlying approaches are still limited. This study explores the methodologies employed in three major works—*Tuhfat al-Ahwazī*, *Qūt al-Mughṭazī*, and *ʿAridah al-Ahwazī*—with the aim of identifying their interpretive principles, scholarly priorities, and distinctive contributions. Employing a qualitative, document-based design, the research applies comparative content analysis to assess structural patterns, thematic emphases, and analytical strategies across the selected commentaries. The results reveal both points of convergence, such as shared reliance on linguistic and juristic reasoning, and significant divergences, including variations in emphasis on isnād evaluation, theological discourse, and juristic synthesis. These findings demonstrate the methodological pluralism inherent in *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* and highlight the epistemological breadth of hadith hermeneutics. The study not only enhances understanding of interpretive diversity within hadith commentary but also emphasizes the pedagogical and scholarly value of situating these works within their broader intellectual and historical contexts. Future research is encouraged to expand the scope of analysis to other canonical collections, thereby offering a more comprehensive picture of the evolution and complexity of hadith commentary traditions.

Keywords: comparative commentary, hadith studies, islamic hermeneutics, *jāmi'* al-tirmidhī, interpretive methodologies, *sharḥ al-ḥadīth*

Introduction

The discipline of *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* — the science of hadith commentary — occupies a pivotal place within the broader field of hadith studies. More than a mere exegetical exercise, *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* functions as the interface between raw prophetic reports (*matn*) and their interpretive, juridical, linguistic, and pedagogical deployment across Islamic

sciences. Classical and contemporary scholars have stressed that commentary on hadith serves multiple aims: clarifying linguistic nuance, resolving apparent contradictions, assessing legal implications, and situating narrations within historical chains and intellectual contexts (al-Ashrafī, 2007; Fath al-Dīn Bayānūnī, 2025). Because of this multi-dimensional role, hadith commentaries



are routinely consulted not only by specialists of hadith but also by jurists (*fuqahā'*), *mufasssīrīn* (Qur'anic exegetes), and teachers in madrasah and university curricula (Bassam Khalil Safdi, 2015; Fibrianto et al., 2023).

Despite its centrality, the practice and methodology of *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* are far from homogeneous. Commentators differ markedly in the sources they privilege (e.g., other hadiths, the opinions of Companions, views of the *Tābi'īn*), in their methodological sequence (whether they emphasize *sanad* criticism before *matn* interpretation or vice versa), and in their intended audience (specialists seeking *isnād* critique versus students seeking practical legal guidance). These differences are conditioned by authors' intellectual background, legal school orientation, local pedagogical traditions, and the historical moment in which they wrote (Amir Nabil & Tasnim Rahman, 2021; Ibn Sīdah, 1999; Rohman et al., 2023). As a result, the scholarly literature contains numerous individual studies of single commentaries but comparatively fewer systematic, comparative analyses that read several major commentaries on the same canonical collection side-by-side to surface their methodological presuppositions, complementarities, and tensions (Saprudin et al., 2023).

This study responds to that gap by undertaking a focused comparative analysis of methodologies in three influential commentaries on *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*: *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī*, *Qūt al-*

Mughtazī, and *'Āridah al-Ahwazī*. These works were selected because each (a) addresses the entirety of *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, (b) is accessible in critical published editions, and (c) exemplifies a distinct interpretive orientation – respectively: a balanced technical-juristic approach, a concise summary-oriented compendium, and a multidimensional analytical commentary that integrates linguistic, juridical, and spiritual concerns. A comparative reading of these three allows the study to move beyond descriptive cataloguing and toward an analytic mapping of methodological patterns that shape how a canonical hadith corpus is read, taught, and applied (Al-Mohammad & Nayini, 2025).

Research questions guiding the inquiry are as follows:

1. What explicit and implicit methodological principles (*usul al-sharḥ*) do each of the three commentaries employ when treating the hadith corpus of *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*?
2. How do the commentaries differ in their prioritization of sources (other hadiths, Companion/*Tābi'īn* reports, juristic reasoning, linguistic analysis), and what are the epistemological consequences of those priorities?
3. In what ways do structural form (*al-mabsūt*, *al-tawassuṭ*, *al-mujīz*), typology (analytical, thematic, tradition-based, evidentiary), and



stylistic choices (qawluhu, qāla/aqūlu, mamzūj) affect the accessibility, pedagogical utility, and scholarly function of each commentary?

4. What broader implications do these methodological differences have for contemporary hadith scholarship, pedagogy, and the use of Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī in legal reasoning?

The objectives of the study are therefore threefold. First, to describe in analytic detail the methodological architecture of each selected commentary across five diagnostic dimensions (method, orientation, structure, typology, style). Second, to compare and contrast these architectures so as to identify convergences, divergences, and complementarities. Third, to synthesize findings into recommendations for scholars and teachers who engage Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī – whether for research, legal derivation, or classroom instruction – on how to select and apply different commentarial resources according to research aims and pedagogical needs (Saprudin et al., 2023).

This study contributes to scholarship in several ways. Theoretically, it refines analytical categories for evaluating sharḥ al-ḥadīth (bridging classical *usul* with modern textual-analytic perspectives). Methodologically, it demonstrates a replicable comparative-content-analysis

procedure for studying commentarial corpora. Practically, it helps instructors and researchers to identify which commentary is most appropriate for tasks such as isnād verification, juristic derivation, linguistic clarification, or interdisciplinary teaching. Finally, by foregrounding the epistemic commitments embedded in each commentary, the study encourages more self-reflective uses of hadith sources in contemporary legal, theological, and ethical debates (Fibrianto et al., 2023)..

Scope and limitations are acknowledged explicitly. The research is limited to three full-length commentaries on Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī available in critical editions and to materials accessible through major repositories (such as al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah). It does not attempt a comprehensive enumeration of all extant commentaries, nor does it reconstruct the entire reception history of each work across regions and centuries. The comparative method privileges methodological patterns evident in the texts themselves; factors such as manuscript variants, editorial interventions in modern printings, and reception in non-Arabic traditions are noted but not exhaustively treated. The study also recognizes that content analysis of classical works involves interpretive judgment; to mitigate subjectivity, the researcher applies explicit coding criteria and cross-checks readings against recognized secondary literature (Saprudin et al., 2023).



1. Biography of al-Tirmidhī

Imam al-Tirmidhī, whose full name is widely reported as Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Sawrah ibn Mūsā ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Sulamī al-Tirmidhī, was a prominent figure in hadith scholarship. This lineage, transmitted by his student Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Maḥbūbī, is considered the most authoritative and commonly accepted version. However, alternative genealogies have also been mentioned in historical sources, including Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Sawrah ibn Shaddād and Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Yazīd ibn Sawrah al-Sakan (al-Ṭāhir al-Azhar, 2007).

The nisbah al-Sulamī refers to the tribe of Sulaim, a well-known Arab lineage originating between Mecca and Medina, whose presence dates back to the pre-Islamic era (Abdul Majid al-Ghauri, 2005). The designation al-Tirmidhī is derived from the city of Tirmidh, his place of origin, and he was popularly known by the kunyah Abū ʿĪsā. Scholars are generally in agreement about this attribution (Abdullah al-Saʿad, 2022).

Al-Tirmidhī was born in the year 209 AH. Although some historical accounts claim that he was born blind, this assertion is disputed. According to Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad al-Baghdādī, al-Tirmidhī only lost his sight in the latter part of his life. As for the date of his death, several reports exist, including

the years 275 AH, the late 270s, and even after 280 AH. Nevertheless, the most widely accepted view among Islamic scholars is that he passed away in 279 AH in his hometown of Tirmidh.

Throughout his scholarly journey, al-Tirmidhī studied under a vast network of teachers. Some biographical accounts report that he studied with over 200 scholars. Among his most notable teachers were Ishāq ibn Rāhawayh, Qutaybah ibn Saʿīd, al-Dārimī, al-Bukhārī, and Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Dhuhālī. He was also a respected teacher himself, with al-Mizzī recording nearly 30 of his students. Among the most prominent were Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Maḥbūbī and al-Haytham ibn Kulayb al-Shāshī (al-Ṭāhir al-Azhar, 2007).

Al-Tirmidhī was universally recognized by both classical and contemporary scholars as an authoritative figure in the fields of hadith and jurisprudence. Al-Bukhārī once remarked to him, “I have benefited more from you than you have from me” (al-Khalīlī, 1989), a testament to his scholarly depth. Ibn Ḥibbān praised him in al-Thiqāt, stating that Abū ʿĪsā was known for compiling, recording, memorizing, and revisiting critical hadith discussions. Al-Dhahabī gave a conclusive recognition of his status by writing, “Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn Sawrah al-Ḥāfiẓ of knowledge, Abū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, author of al-Jāmiʿ, is unanimously regarded as trustworthy by Islamic scholars” (al-Dhahabī, 1985).



These tributes clearly reflect the high regard in which al-Tirmidhī is held within Islamic scholarship, particularly in the domain of hadith sciences (Shofaussamawati et al., 2025).

2. Overview of al-Tirmidhī's Work: Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī

Al-Tirmidhī's renowned hadith compilation has been referred to by various titles across manuscript traditions, including al-Jāmi', Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ, al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, and al-Jāmi' al-Mukhtaṣar, among others. These names appear throughout different manuscript versions, reflecting the reception and transmission history of the text. Among the many titles, two in particular are most consistent with the structural and methodological features of the work:

a. Al-Jāmi' al-Mukhtaṣar min al-Sunan 'an Rasūlillāh SAW wa Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa al-Ma'lūl wa Mā 'Alayhi al-'Amal

This comprehensive title appears in several manuscript copies and accurately captures the compilation's emphasis on authentic traditions, critical analysis, and legal applicability.

b. Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr

Also found in several early sources, this title highlights the breadth of hadith collected by al-Tirmidhī from a wide range of companions and narrators (al-Ṭāhir al-Azhar, 2007).

A closer examination of the work's structure and content reveals that it is not merely a hadith collection but a scholarly synthesis that integrates narration, legal analysis, and hadith criticism. The compilation contains 4,318 hadiths, organized into 48 books and 2,150 chapters. Of these, approximately 2,017 narrations deal explicitly with legal rulings and practical jurisprudence (Abdullah al-Sa'ad, 2022). Al-Tirmidhī not only transmits hadith but also incorporates extensive discussion on juristic opinions and schools of thought (Rohman et al., 2023)..

A defining feature of Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī is its integration of hadith criticism, especially through discussions of 'ilal al-ḥadīth (hidden defects). In many instances, al-Tirmidhī engages in analytical critique, whether independently or through consultation with leading authorities such as Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī and al-Dārimī. These critical insights are often echoed in his other significant work, al-'Ilal al-Kabīr (Al-Mohammad & Nayini, 2025).

Al-Tirmidhī himself clarified the motivation behind this compilation. He stated that the work was designed to include juristic discourse and hadith analysis ('ilal), in response to repeated requests from scholars and students. Though its completion was delayed, he emphasized that the final product was meant to benefit the wider Muslim community.



Over time, *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* has gained wide acceptance and is now regarded as one of the six canonical hadith collections (al-Kutub al-Sittah). Scholars have lauded its clarity, structure, and educational value. For instance, Abdullah ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī remarked that al-Tirmidhī's compilation was more beneficial than Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, as the latter two were primarily accessible to experts, whereas *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* could be understood and utilized by scholars and laypeople alike (al-Ṭāhir al-Azhar, 2007).

Ibn al-Athīr described the work as the most beneficial and aesthetically arranged of all hadith collections. He praised its minimal repetition, the inclusion of juristic debate, discussion on evidentiary methods, and its explanation of hadith classifications such as ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, and gharīb. Furthermore, the text offers insight into narrator evaluation (al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl) and the science of hidden defects. According to him, al-Tirmidhī successfully compiled an exceptional body of knowledge (Abdullah al-Sa'ad, 2022).

Taken together, these evaluations underscore the esteemed position of *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* in Islamic scholarship. The work continues to be a critical resource for students, scholars, and researchers dedicated to the study of hadith and its methodologies.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, deemed the most

suitable framework for exploring the interpretive methodologies employed in three prominent commentaries on *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*: *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī* (al-Mubārakfūrī), *Qūt al-Mughṭazī* (al-Suyūṭī), and *'Āridah al-Ahwazī* (Ibn 'Arabī al-Mālikī). The qualitative design enables the researcher to investigate not only the explicit content of these works but also the intellectual orientations and epistemological foundations underlying each commentary.

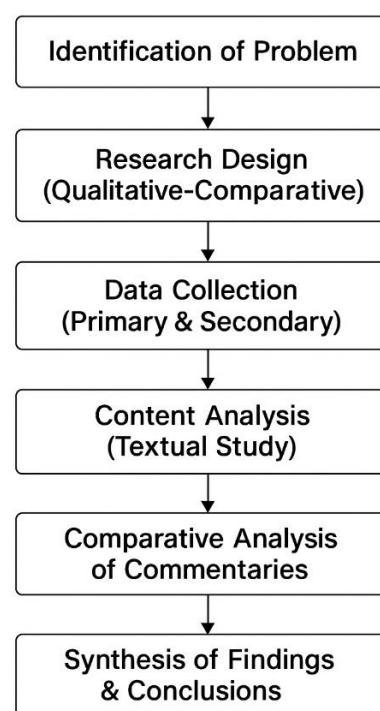


Figure 1. Research Flow

Figure 1 illustrates the sequential flow of this study. Beginning with the identification of the research problem – the diversity of methodologies in *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* – the design was set as qualitative-comparative. Following this, data collection ensured a robust corpus of texts. Content analysis enabled a



structured examination of each commentary, while comparative analysis provided the means to highlight their differences and overlaps. Finally, the process culminated in a synthesis of findings, presenting a holistic understanding of interpretive diversity within the tradition of hadith commentary.

1. Research Design

The study follows a descriptive-comparative design. The descriptive element focuses on providing a detailed account of the methods, structures, and orientations of each commentary, while the comparative aspect systematically identifies similarities and divergences between them. This dual approach ensures that the study does not merely present isolated descriptions but situates each commentary within a broader scholarly dialogue.

2. Sources of Data

The study draws on both primary and secondary sources:

- a. **Primary Sources:** The core texts of the three commentaries under study. The versions used are those published by *Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah* (for *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī* and *‘Āridah al-Ahwazī*) and *Umm al-Qurā University* (for *Qūt al-Mughtazī*). These editions were chosen because they are widely circulated, critically edited, and easily accessible in digital

repositories such as *al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah*.

- b. **Secondary Sources:** Supporting materials including peer-reviewed journal articles, doctoral dissertations, master's theses, and reference works on the science of ḥadīth commentary (*‘ilm al-sharḥ*). These materials provide theoretical frameworks and comparative insights necessary for the analysis.

3. Data Collection

Data collection was carried out through documentary analysis involving several steps:

- a. **Inventory:** Identifying and gathering all relevant primary and secondary texts.
- b. **Classification:** Organizing the materials into categories based on methodology, structure, and interpretive orientation.
- c. **Filtering:** Selecting the most relevant materials to maintain focus on the research objectives, while excluding tangential or redundant content.

This process ensured that the study focused on the methodological dimensions of each commentary rather than tangential aspects such as biographical details of the authors.

4. Data Analysis

The research applies content analysis as its principal tool. This technique involves a systematic reading and interpretation of texts to identify



recurring patterns, thematic emphases, and methodological structures. The analysis proceeded in three stages:

- a. **Individual Analysis:** Each commentary was examined independently, focusing on how it applies the five dimensions of hadith commentary (method, orientation, structure, typology, and style).
- b. **Comparative Analysis:** The three works were then compared to highlight convergences and divergences. For example, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi*'s balanced use of multiple methods contrasts with *Qūt al-Mughtazī*'s heavy reliance on summarizing earlier authorities.
- c. **Synthesis:** The findings were synthesized into a broader framework that explains the intellectual diversity in hadith commentary and identifies the scholarly contributions of each work.

5. Analytical Criteria

To maintain consistency and depth, the analysis was structured around five key dimensions:

- a. **Method of Commentary:** Whether the commentator relies on other ḥadīth, statements of the Companions, opinions of the Ṭabī'īn, or independent reasoning and linguistics.
- b. **Interpretive Orientation (Manhaj):** The dominant lens, such

as legal (fiqhī), theological ('aqidī), spiritual (ṣūfī), or linguistic.

- c. **Structural Form:** Whether the commentary is expansive (*al-Mabsūt*), intermediate (*al-Tawassuṭ*), or concise (*al-Mujīz*).
- d. **Typology:** Analytical, thematic, comparative, tradition-based, general, evidentiary, or curriculum-oriented.
- e. **Writing Style:** Structured around phrases such as *qawluhu*, direct authorial remarks (*qāla/aqūlu*), or integrated commentary (*mamzūj*).

Results and Discussion

1. Origins of Sharḥ al-Ḥadīth

Within the Islamic tradition, scholars of hadith have always placed equal emphasis on both the authenticity and the comprehension of prophetic reports (Anas Razak & Arif Nazri, 2024). This dual concern gave rise to the development of a specialized discipline known as sharḥ al-ḥadīth, the science of hadith commentary. Linguistically, the term sharḥ denotes the act of clarifying or unfolding meaning. It carries connotations of explaining something obscure or hidden (al-Rāzī, 1987), as seen in the Qur'anic verse from Surah al-An'ām:

“So whoever Allah wills to guide – He opens his heart to Islam” [al-An'ām: 125].

According to al-Munāwī (2016), the core function of sharḥ is to elucidate meanings that are not immediately apparent, a definition that closely aligns with the objectives of hadith



commentary (Fath al-Dīn Muḥammad & Sayuthi Abdul Manas, 2022). Al-Ashrafi (2007) describes sharḥ in technical terms as the process of unpacking the linguistic elements of a ḥadīth and explaining its intended meaning.

The word ḥadīth, on the other hand, has been extensively discussed in classical works on muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth. Linguistically, it means "something new" or "a report." In technical usage, it refers to any statement, action, approval, or characteristic attributed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, his companions, or the generation of successors (Muḥammad bin 'Alawī, 2003).

As a composite discipline, sharḥ al-ḥadīth refers to the science concerned with uncovering the Prophet's intended meaning behind his statements by applying linguistic tools and the foundational principles of Islamic law. According to al-Arnīqī (1978), this science seeks to interpret the Prophet's words in light of the linguistic structure of Arabic and the objectives of Sharī'ah, within the capacity of human understanding. Meanwhile, Muḥammad bin 'Umar Bazmūl (2009) defines it as a process of discerning thematic and legal frameworks that aim to clarify the legal reasoning and implications of the prophetic narrations. The discipline is also known by related terms such as fiqh al-ḥadīth, ma'ānī al-ḥadīth, and uṣūl tafsīr al-ḥadīth.

The roots of ḥadīth commentary can be traced back to the earliest generations of Muslims, beginning with

the Prophet himself, who would clarify certain words or phrases that were misunderstood by his companions. This interpretive tradition continued with the Companions and the Successors, who played a key role in explaining, contextualizing, and deriving legal rulings from prophetic traditions. Notable figures in this tradition include 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr, the Mothers of the Believers, Ikrimah (the servant of Ibn 'Abbās), Mujāhid, 'Aṭā', al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Zuhri, Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Anṣārī, Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, and Hisām ibn 'Urwah, among others.

The views and legal judgments (ijtihādāt) of the Companions became key reference points in interpreting legal texts and were treated as authoritative in Islamic jurisprudence. As the tradition matured, the practice of commenting on ḥadīth expanded into a formal discipline. Over time, scholars developed various methodologies to systematically analyze and interpret ḥadīth. According to Ahmad Amir Nabil and Tasnim Abdul Rahman (2021), these methodologies laid the groundwork for a coherent intellectual framework that integrated interpretive insight (fiqh al-ḥadīth) with critical evaluation. This evolving body of knowledge continues to serve as a dynamic and comprehensive field of ḥadīth scholarship.



Foundational Principles in the Science of Hadith Commentary

The discipline of *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* is governed by essential principles that must be observed by any scholar seeking to engage in the interpretation of prophetic traditions. According to al-Akfānī (1994), the foundational rules of hadith commentary (*uṣūl al-sharḥ*) represent a core component of *‘ilm al-ḥadīth al-dirāyah*, or the science of critical hadith analysis. These principles provide a structured framework that guides the interpretive methods found in classical and contemporary hadith commentaries.

To assess the methodology employed by a commentator, scholars have identified five key dimensions that serve as benchmarks for evaluating a work of hadith commentary. These include:

1. Method of Commentary

Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar Bazmūl (2009) outlines four primary methods that should be systematically applied by qualified scholars when explaining hadith. These methods ensure that commentary remains faithful to both linguistic accuracy and juristic insight. The four approaches can be summarized in the following table 1.

2. Interpretive Orientation (Manhaj al-Sharḥ)

In the science of hadith commentary, scholars often employ specific interpretive frameworks, or *manāhij*, when explaining prophetic traditions. These approaches typically reflect the

commentator’s area of expertise. For instance, jurists may adopt a legalistic interpretive lens (*manhaj fiqhī*), focusing on deriving rulings from hadith, while theologians and mystics may approach hadith from doctrinal (*manhaj ‘aqīdī*) or spiritual (*manhaj ṣūfī*) perspectives respectively (Umar Abdul Aziz, 2007; Muhammad Ishaq, 1998). Each interpretive orientation shapes the structure, depth, and focus of the commentary, contributing to the diversity within the hadith commentary tradition.

3. Structural Forms of Hadith Commentaries

Hadith commentaries (*kutub al-sharḥ*) may also be classified according to their structural depth and methodological scope. Ahmad Amir Nabil and Tasnim Abdul Rahman (2021) identify three main forms:

a) Al-Mabsūṭ (Expansive Commentaries)

These works offer detailed and comprehensive explanations of hadith. They often include extensive analysis of the chain of narration (*isnād*), the text (*matn*), jurisprudential implications, and scholarly discourse across classical and contemporary periods.

b) Al-Tawassuṭ (Intermediate Commentaries)

These commentaries strike a balance between brevity and detail. While not as voluminous as *al-Mabsūṭ*, they provide sufficient elaboration on the meaning of hadith, address variant narrations, and



discuss legal implications in a structured and accessible manner.

c) Al-Mujiz (Concise Commentaries)

Typically in the form of marginal notes or brief glosses, these works present succinct explanations of hadith vocabulary and summarize key legal rulings or practical benefits without delving into extended discussion.

4. Typologies of Hadith Commentary

Over the centuries, Muslim scholars have developed a variety of commentary types, each serving different scholarly purposes. Ahmad Amir Nabil and Tasnim Abdul Rahman (2021) propose a framework that captures these diverse typologies. The following table 2 summarizes the major types of hadith commentary found in Islamic scholarship.

5. Stylistic Approaches in Hadith Commentary

The writing style employed in hadith commentaries generally falls into three main categories, as outlined by Fath al-Dīn Muḥammad and Sayuthi Abdul Manas (2022):

a) Commentary using the phrase “qawluhu”

This style introduces commentary by referencing specific phrases from the hadith using the formula “qawluhu” (his statement is...), followed by an explanatory note. It is widely used in classical commentaries to maintain clarity and structure.

b) Commentary using direct expressions such as “qāla” or “aqūlu”

In this style, the commentator speaks directly, using expressions like “qāla” (he said) or “aqūlu” (I say), which reflect the author’s personal engagement with the text and interpretive stance.

c) Integrated or blended commentary (sharḥ mamzūj)

This method combines the original text (matn) and commentary in a seamless flow, often interweaving explanation within the hadith narration itself. While this approach can make for smoother reading, it may also require greater attentiveness from the reader to distinguish between the original text and the commentary.

In sum, sharḥ al-ḥadīth is a rigorous discipline founded upon clearly defined principles and methods. These include structured interpretive methodologies, the adoption of specific scholarly frameworks (manāhij), the classification of commentary formats based on depth and content, the identification of various commentary types developed by scholars across generations, and distinct stylistic approaches in presenting commentary.

Understanding these five dimensions equips the reader or researcher with the necessary tools to critically assess the approach and strengths of any given hadith commentary. This awareness not only enhances the evaluation of a commentary’s scholarly authority but



also facilitates a clearer, more systematic reading of the interpretive content. For students and scholars alike, such insights are essential for navigating the vast corpus of hadith literature with depth, precision, and contextual sensitivity.

Comparative Analysis of Methodologies in Commentaries on Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī

To facilitate a comparative study of the methodologies adopted by commentators of Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, this research focuses on three major works: Tuhfat al-Ahwazī by al-Mubārakfūrī, Qūt al-Mughtazī by al-Suyūṭī, and 'Āridah al-Ahwazī by Ibn 'Arabī al-Mālikī. These commentaries were selected based on a set of rigorous criteria designed to ensure both relevance and accessibility for scholarly analysis.

The first criterion requires that the commentary must cover the entire compilation of Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī. As such, works like al-'Araf al-Shādhī by al-'Irāqī were excluded, as they do not provide full commentary. Second, the selected works must be available in published, printed form rather than limited to manuscript collections. For this reason, Sharḥ Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī by al-Baghawī was omitted due to its unavailability outside of manuscript archives.

Third, the commentary must exclusively focus on Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī without incorporating or merging content from other hadith collections.

Based on this, Injāz al-Wa'd al-Wafī by Ibn al-Mulaqqīn was excluded since it focuses only on the zawā'id (additional narrations) found in Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī. The fourth criterion mandates that the commentary be an original work, not a supplementary continuation of a previous commentary. Consequently, Takmilah al-Nafḥ al-Shādhī by al-'Irāqī was excluded, as it serves to complete the original commentary by Ibn Sayyid al-Nās. Lastly, the selected commentary must be easily accessible in both physical and digital formats, ensuring ease of reference and citation.

Based on these filters, the study identified three principal works: Tuhfat al-Ahwazī, 'Āridah al-Ahwazī, and Qūt al-Mughtazī. The editions referenced in this study are those published by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah for the first two works, and by Umm al-Qurā University for the latter. These editions were chosen primarily due to their availability on the digital platform al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah, which significantly facilitates repeated referencing and content verification during analysis.

Following the selection, the study undertook a detailed comparative analysis of these works to identify both methodological similarities and differences. The evaluation of each commentary's methodology was structured around five analytical dimensions previously outlined in the theoretical framework. The following table 3 presents a comparative overview of these commentaries.



The three hadith commentaries examined in this study, namely *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī*, *‘Āridah al-Ahwazī*, and *Qūt al-Mughtazī*, each display distinct methodological structures and

interpretive directions. These variations are evident across five core dimensions: the method of commentary, interpretive orientation, structural form, type of commentary, and writing style.

Table 1: Methods of Hadith Commentary

No. Method of Hadith Commentary	Description
1. Commentary using other hadith	• This is considered the most authoritative method. • It carries the lowest risk of interpretive error. • The supporting hadith must not be excessively weak or fabricated.
2. Commentary using the words of the Companions	• This is the second preferred method. • When multiple Companion views exist, the most accurate opinion may be selected. • The attribution must be verified for authenticity.
3. Commentary using the words of the Tābi‘īn	• This method ranks third in the hierarchy. • The Tābi‘īn must be recognized authorities in hadith scholarship.
4. Commentary through independent reasoning and Arabic linguistics	• This is the final method to be applied. • The commentator must possess strong expertise in Arabic and hadith sciences. • Cross-referencing views of established scholars is essential.

In terms of commentary method as shown in Table 1, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī* demonstrates a balanced application of all four established methods. These include interpreting hadith through other hadiths, statements of the Companions and Tābi‘īn, as well as independent reasoning rooted in Arabic linguistics. In contrast, *‘Āridah al-Ahwazī* prioritizes the latter three methods, placing particular emphasis on explanations drawn from the Companions, Tābi‘īn, and juristic analysis. *Qūt al-Mughtazī* relies primarily on the fourth method, often citing the opinions of earlier scholars. As a result, its commentary tends to

function more as a reflective summary of previous views rather than an original analytical effort.

With regard to interpretive orientation, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī* focuses on the technical aspects of hadith and engages deeply with legal analysis. It gives limited attention to theological and mystical subjects. In contrast, *‘Āridah al-Ahwazī* adopts a more comprehensive approach. It incorporates detailed linguistic discussion and addresses matters of fiqh, theology, and Sufism with greater depth. *Qūt al-Mughtazī* emphasizes linguistic interpretation and provides brief legal commentary, with limited reference to hadith technicalities



or theological matters, unless contextually necessary.

From the perspective of structural format, all three works offer commentary based on specific chapters or thematic units within *Jāmi' al-*

Tirmidhī. However, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī* provides more detailed discussions and covers multiple hadiths within a single chapter. In contrast, *Qūt al-Mughtazī* presents the briefest and most concise explanations among the three.

Table 2: Types of Hadith Commentary

No.	Type of Commentary	Description
1.	Thematic Commentary (al-Sharḥ al-Mawḍū'ī)	A commentary that focuses on thematic understanding (mawḍū'), exploring the meanings of specific phrases, chapters, or books of hadith based on subject matter.
2.	Analytical Commentary (al-Sharḥ al-Taḥlīlī)	A detailed and comprehensive exposition that presents in-depth discussions of hadith texts from various angles.
3.	Comparative Commentary (al-Sharḥ al-Muqāran)	A commentary that analyzes and compares specific segments or passages of hadith.
4.	General Commentary (al-Sharḥ al-Ijmālī)	A concise commentary offering brief explanations of hadith texts.
5.	Tradition-Based Commentary (al-Sharḥ bi al-Ma'thūr)	A commentary based on transmitted reports (athār), authentic narrations, and linguistic or poetic references drawn from the Companions, Tābi'īn, Arabic expressions, poetry, and prose.
6.	Legal Evidentiary Commentary (al-Sharḥ li al-Istidlāl)	A commentary that explains the evidentiary reasoning (fiqh al-dalīl), legal methodologies, and derivation of rulings (istinbāt).
7.	Curriculum-Based Commentary (al-Sharḥ al-Madrasī)	A commentary designed to meet the pedagogical needs of students in institutional or university-level Islamic studies programs.

In terms of commentary type as show in Table 2, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī* combines analytical and tradition-based approaches, offering in-depth analysis supported by transmitted reports and scholarly views. *'Āridah al-Ahwazī* primarily follows an analytical style, while *Qūt al-Mughtazī* employs a general or summary-based format, focusing on direct meaning without extensive elaboration.

Regarding writing style, both *Tuhfat al-Ahwazī* and *'Āridah al-Ahwazī* adopt a thematic writing approach, aligning their explanations with specific subjects present in the hadith. *Qūt al-Mughtazī*, however, does not include the full hadith texts in its presentation. Instead, it delivers commentary alone, making the work function more as an explanatory summary rather than a classical line-by-line commentary.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Methodologies in Selected Commentaries on *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*



No. Cat.	Works			Remarks
	Tuhfat al-Ahwazī	‘Āridah al-Ahwazī	Qūt al-Mughtazī	
1. Method of Hadith Commentary	Applies all four methods in a balanced manner.	Prioritizes methods two to four.	Primarily relies on the fourth method, often quoting other scholars.	Tuhfat al-Ahwazī occasionally combines all four methods in a single hadith. Qūt al-Mughtazī leans heavily on referencing scholarly opinions.
2. Interpretive Orientation (Manhaj)	1. Emphasizes hadith technicalities. 2. Gives minimal attention to theological issues. 3. Detailed legal (fiqh) analysis. 4. Rarely addresses Sufism.	1. Focuses on linguistic analysis. 2. Offers detailed legal discussion. 3. Addresses technicalities selectively. 4. Covers theology and Sufism in depth.	1. Emphasizes language of hadith. 2. Discusses fiqh briefly, occasionally in detail. 3. Rarely addresses technical aspects. 4. Touches on theology and Sufism when relevant.	-
3. Structural Form of Commentary	1. Discusses specific hadiths within each chapter. 2. Highlights various aspects within a single hadith.	1. Discusses selected chapters. 2. Highlights specific aspects within the hadiths.	1. Discusses selected chapters. 2. Highlights specific aspects.	Qūt al-Mughtazī is the briefest among the three. Tuhfat al-Ahwazī offers the most comprehensive coverage per chapter.
4. Type of Commentary	1. Analytical (al-Sharḥ al-Taḥlīlī) 2. Tradition-based (al-Sharḥ bi al-Ma’thūr)	Analytical (al-Sharḥ al-Taḥlīlī)	General (al-Sharḥ al-Ijmālī)	
5. Writing Style	Thematic commentary (al-Sharḥ al-Mawḍū‘ī)	Thematic commentary (al-Sharḥ al-Mawḍū‘ī)	Commentary only, without including the hadith text.	Qūt al-Mughtazī omits the full hadith texts and presents commentary only.

In summary (Table 3), these three commentaries each serve different scholarly needs. Tuhfat al-Ahwazī is best

suited for those seeking a deep, technically detailed understanding of hadith. ‘Āridah al-Ahwazī offers a more



holistic and multidimensional commentary that spans language, theology, jurisprudence, and spiritual thought. Qūt al-Mughtazī presents an accessible and concise format, appropriate for readers seeking a quick and focused understanding of prophetic traditions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparative analysis shows that Tuhfat al-Ahwazī, Qūt al-Mughtazī, and ‘Āridah al-Ahwazī offer complementary methodological profiles—Tuhfat for technical jurisprudential rigor, Qūt for concise synthesis and isnād-oriented overview, and ‘Āridah for multidimensional, interdisciplinary interpretation—so users should select commentaries according to purpose (detailed legal derivation, quick orientation, or broader contextual inquiry) and ideally apply a layered reading strategy (overview → technical scrutiny → synthetic contextualization). Practically, instructors and researchers should match commentary choice to pedagogical or analytical aims; editors and philologists should consult manuscript witnesses to control for editorial bias; and future studies should expand comparative panels, incorporate manuscript-versus-print comparisons, and employ quantitative corpus methods to validate and extend these findings.

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