

Reevaluating Al-'Ilal al-Saghīr: A Comparative Study on its Classification as a Work of 'Ilal al-Hadīth

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Abstract

The science of 'Ilal al-Hadīth is a vital branch of 'Ulūm al-Hadīth, with numerous key works in the field. One frequently cited work is Al-'Ilal al-Saghīr by al-Tirmizi, traditionally classified under 'Ilal al-Hadīth. However, its structure and discussion raise questions about whether it fits better within Uṣūl al-Hadīth. This study compares Al-'Ilal al-Saghīr with Al-Tamyīz by Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj to determine its proper classification. Using a qualitative approach, it employs document and content analysis as primary methods. Findings suggest that Al-'Ilal al-Saghīr aligns more with Uṣūl al-Hadīth as it primarily discusses fundamental concepts, including narrator classification, hadith terminology, and methodology in sanad evaluation. Conversely, Al-Tamyīz is more suited to 'Ilal al-Hadīth due to its in-depth examination of errors in sanad and hadith texts. This study clarifies the distinction between Uṣūl al-Hadīth and 'Ilal al-Hadīth, offering better classification frameworks for teaching and scholarly reference.

Keywords: 'ilal al-hadīth, al-Tirmizī, uṣūl al-hadīth, 'ilal al-hadīth, al-Tamyīz.

Introduction

Background of Study

The science of 'Ilal al-Hadīth is a significant branch of 'Ulūm al-Hadīth, aimed at identifying hidden defects (al-'illah) within hadith narrations ('Ādil al-Zuraqī, 2004). These defects are not apparent on the surface and require advanced expertise to detect, making this field one of the most complex and challenging areas in hadith studies (Abū Syāmah, 1982). 'Ilal al-Hadīth examines issues such as errors in the sanad, contradictions in narrations, and mistakes in the matn (text) of hadith (Abdul Majid al-Ghouri, 2019). Successfully identifying 'illah determines whether a hadith is acceptable or must be rejected (Ibn Rajab, 1987).

Several key works serve as primary references in the field of 'Ilal al-Hadīth, including Al-'Ilal by Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Al-'Ilal by 'Alī bin al-Madīnī, and 'Ilal by Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal.

These works provide practical guidelines and methodologies for identifying hadith defects and are considered essential references for hadith scholars (Ibn Kathīr, 2006).

One frequently associated work in 'Ilal al-Hadīth is Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr by al-Tirmidhī. Although often classified as a book in this field, its structure and content raise questions about whether it truly belongs to this category (Asmā' Suwailim & Sālimah Ubaid, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the actual classification of Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr within hadith literature. By comparing Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr with other works in 'Ilal al-Hadīth, particularly Al-Tamyīz, this study seeks to determine whether Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr genuinely qualifies as a work in 'Ilal al-Hadīth. The findings of this study are expected to provide clearer guidance for scholars in understanding and teaching this work.

A review of previous studies was conducted using the Google Scholar database without restricting the timeframe. The results indicate that no prior studies have specifically addressed this topic. The search was performed using keywords such as "'Ilal al-Tirmidhī," "'Ilal Ṣaghīr," and "Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr," and was expanded to include searches in Malay, English, and Arabic. However, while existing studies focus on the subject of 'Ilal, none have discussed the classification of this work as a contribution to 'Ilal al-Hadīth. Refer to the table below for further details.

Table 1

Literatures on 'Ilal al-Saghīr

N	Title	Author	Year	Objectives
1.	<i>Bayān Awjah al-Ittifāq wa Mawādi' al-Iftirāq fīmā Rasamah al-Imām al-Tirmizī fī Kitābihi al-'Ilal al-Saghīr min Ahkām wa Muṣṭalahāt</i>	Zahrā' 'Azām	2018	Discussing issues arising from al-Tirmidhī's discussion of Mustalah al-Hadith in Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr.
2.	<i>Al-Hadīth al-Gharīb 'inda al-Imām al-Tirmizī</i>	Asmā' Jābir al-'Abd	2021	Examining the understanding of the term gharīb according to al-Tirmidhī.
3.	<i>Al-Hadīth al-Fard 'inda al-Imām al-Tirmizī min Khilāl Kitābihi al-'ilal al-Saghīr</i>	Asmā' Suwailim, Sālimah Ubaid	2020	Analyzing the concept of hadith fard according to al-Tirmidhī.
4.	<i>Al-Asānīd al-Fiqhiyyah wa al-Masā'il al-Hadīthiyyah allatī Ikhtassa bihā al-Imām al-Tirmizī fī Kitābihi al-'ilal al-Saghīr</i>	Ilhām Ma'mar	2018	Exploring the sanad fuqahā' presented by al-Tirmidhī in Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr.

Among all the studies conducted, none have specifically examined the classification of Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr by al-Tirmidhī within the context of 'Ilal al-Hadīth. Therefore, there is an urgent need to assess whether Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr qualifies as a work of 'Ilal al-Hadīth. This study is crucial in providing a clear explanation of its true classification and how it compares to other works such as Al-Tamyīz by Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj. Additionally, this research aims to bridge the existing gap in the literature regarding the classification of hadith works, offering more precise guidance for researchers in understanding and teaching this text.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the field of hadith studies, particularly in the methodology of hadith criticism. This, in turn, enhances the comprehension and validity of hadith research. By conducting this study, hadith scholars will gain a deeper

understanding of the categorization and application of Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr in academic contexts more effectively and accurately.

Biography of al-Tirmidhī

His full name is Muḥammad bin 'Īsā bin Saurah bin Mūsā bin al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Sulamī al-Tirmidhī, as recorded by his student Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Maḥbūbī, which is also the most widely accepted view. However, alternative opinions mention his name as Muḥammad bin 'Īsā bin Saurah bin Shaddād or Muḥammad bin 'Īsā bin Yazīd bin Saurah al-Sakan (al-Ṭāhir al-Azhar, 2007).

He is attributed to al-Sulamī, referring to Sulaim bin Maṣṣūr bin 'Ikrimah, a well-known tribe that resided between Mecca and Medina from the pre-Islamic era until today (Abdul Majid al-Ghuri, 2005). Meanwhile, the title al-Tirmidhī denotes his association with the city of Tirmidh. He was given the kunyah Abū 'Īsā, a fact upon which Islamic scholars unanimously agree ('Abdullah al-Sa'ad, 2022).

Al-Tirmidhī was born in 209 AH. Some opinions suggest that he was born blind, but this is inaccurate. As Yūsuf bin Aḥmad al-Baghdādī stated, he became blind only in the later years of his life. Regarding his death, various views have been recorded, including 275 AH, the early 270s AH, 279 AH, and after 280 AH. However, the most widely accepted opinion among scholars is that he passed away in 279 AH in Tirmidh.

Al-Tirmidhī studied under numerous scholars, with some researchers estimating that he had more than 200 teachers. Among his most prominent teachers were Iṣḥāq bin Rāhwayh, Qutaybah bin Sa'īd, al-Dārimī, al-Bukhārī, and Muḥammad bin Yaḥyā al-Dhuḥalī, among many others. At the same time, he also had many students. Al-Mizzī recorded that his students numbered nearly 30, including well-known figures such as Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Maḥbūbī and al-Haytham bin Kulayb al-Shāshī (al-Ṭāhir al-Azhar, 2007).

Islamic scholars, both classical and contemporary, unanimously acknowledge al-Tirmidhī's scholarly stature, particularly in hadith and fiqh. Al-Bukhārī once told him, "I have benefited more from you than you have benefited from me" (al-Khalīlī, 1989). Similarly, Ibn Ḥibbān praised him in his work al-Thiqāt, stating, "Abū 'Īsā was among those who compiled, wrote, memorized, and repeatedly analyzed hadith discussions." Al-Dhahabī summarized al-Tirmidhī's status by describing him as "Muḥammad bin 'Īsā bin Saurah, the preserver of knowledge (al-Ḥāfiẓ al-'Ilm), Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī, the author of al-Jāmi', who is unanimously deemed trustworthy by Islamic scholars" (al-Dhahabī, 1985).

These praises affirm al-Tirmidhī's high rank and esteemed position in the Islamic scholarly tradition, particularly in the field of hadith studies.

Introduction to the Work Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr

Al-Tirmidhī is renowned for his magnum opus, Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī. At the end of this work, he included a small treatise known as Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr, which explains his references, narrators, terminology, and methodology in Al-Jāmi' (Zahrā' 'Azām, 2018). According to Asmā' Suwailim and Sālimah Ubaid (2020), Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr was written due to its immense benefit, especially for students new to hadith studies. Al-Tirmidhī himself stated:

"I have explained in this book the words of the jurists and hadith scholars because we were asked about these matters, and we have clarified them. We did this for the benefit of the people, as we did not find any of the earlier scholars who had written about these topics. It is also beneficial for young students of hadith, such as 'Abdullah bin 'Abdul 'Azīz bin Abū Rawwād, Sulaimān bin Ḥarb, 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Abū al-Mawāhib, and others among the scholars and those of excellence. They have derived great benefit from this, and we hope that Allah will grant benefit to the Muslims through this knowledge and that they will be rewarded by Allah."

Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr encompasses various significant discussions in the science of hadith, particularly in Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth and narrator criticism (Asmā' Jābir al-'Abd, 2021). Among its primary topics are the methodology employed in Al-Jāmi' and explanations regarding the sanad of fuqahā' found in the book. Al-Tirmidhī also elaborates on references in the discussion of 'ilal and the criticism of narrators included in Al-Jāmi'.

Additionally, the book examines the ruling on criticizing narrators, the significance of sanad in Islam, and the classifications of narrators. It also provides an in-depth discussion on the ruling of narrating hadith by meaning, different modes of transmitting hadith (Al-Taḥammul wa al-Adā'), and the ruling on mursal hadith transmission. Al-Tirmidhī further defines and explains essential hadith terms such as ḥasan and gharīb.

Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr holds a prestigious status among books in this field. It is unique in its content, as noted by Ibn Rajab (1987) regarding its title, subject matter, and writing style. Its benefits cannot be overlooked, and no student of hadith should be unfamiliar with this book.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, as it is the most suitable method for in-depth understanding of complex issues, such as evaluating the classification of Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr by al-Tirmidhī within the context of 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth and Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth (Mohd Awang Idris et al., 2018).

For data collection, the documentation method was employed by gathering primary and secondary sources related to Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr and Al-Tamyīz by Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj. These sources were obtained from libraries, journal articles, theses and dissertations, personal collections, books in PDF format, and digital libraries such as the Al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah application. The study also involved an in-depth comparison of the structure, content, and methodology of both works to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

For data analysis, the content analysis method was applied to accurately identify how Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr discusses fundamental hadith concepts, including narrator classifications, hadith terminology, and sanad evaluation methodology. Additionally, this study examines the extent to which Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr aligns with or differs from the 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth approach as exemplified in Al-Tamyīz. Through this comparative analysis, the study evaluates the methodological framework and reliability of both works, providing a clearer understanding of the appropriate classification for Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr.

Findings and Discussions

Comparison of the Methodological Discussions in Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr and Al-Tamyîz

To determine whether Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr qualifies as a work of 'Ilal al-Ĥadîth, this study conducts a comparative analysis with another work in the field, Al-Tamyîz by Muslim bin al-Ĥajjāj. Other works in 'Ilal, such as Al-'Ilal by Ibn Abî Ĥātim al-Rāzî and 'Ilal by 'Alî bin al-Madîni, were not included in this study, as they primarily focus on the practical application of 'Ilal without detailed theoretical discussions (Arfān et al., 2024). This contrasts with the foundational methodology of both Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr and Al-Tamyîz, which contain more comprehensive discussions on 'Ilal methodology.

For Al-Tamyîz, this study relies on multiple printed editions to enable cross-referencing between different versions. These editions include the Dār Ibn al-Jawzî edition, verified by 'Abd al-Qādir Muşţafā al-Muĥammadî, the Dār Ibn Ĥazm edition, verified by Şālih bin Aĥmad, and the Maktabah al-Kawthar edition, verified by Muşţafā al-A'zamî. To facilitate discussion, all hadiths were systematically numbered for easier reference. Among these, the Maktabah al-Kawthar edition was selected as the primary reference, as it is available on Al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah, making it more accessible for further consultation. Meanwhile, for Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr, no available edition was found on Al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah. Therefore, this study relies on the Dār al-Muĥaddith edition, verified by 'Ādil al-Zuraqî. Additionally, the study cross-references the commentary of Ibn Rajab al-Ĥanbalî using two editions: the Dār al-Salām edition, verified by Nūr al-Dîn 'Iṭr, and the Maktabah al-Rushd edition, verified by Hammām Sa'îd.

Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr

The study extracts and organizes the discussion structure of Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr. The details are presented as follows:

Table 2

Discussion Structure of Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr

Author	Muhammad bin 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī
Book	<i>Al-'Ilal al-Şaghîr</i>
Discussion Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Methodology in Al-Jāmi' by al-Tirmidhī. 2. Discussion on the sanad of fuqahā' included in Al-Jāmi' by al-Tirmidhī. 3. Explanation of references in 'Ilal discussions and narrator criticism in Al-Jāmi' by al-Tirmidhī. 4. Ruling on criticizing narrators. 5. The significance of sanad in religion. 6. The classification of narrators. 7. Ruling on narrating hadith by meaning. 8. Forms of hadith transmission (Al-Taĥammul wa al-Adā'). 9. Ruling on mursal transmission. 10. Definition of the term ḥasan. 11. Definition of the term gharīb.

Al-Tamyîz

This book was written by Muslim bin al-Ĥajjāj in response to a request from an individual who asked him to clarify the methodology used by the muĥaddithīn in assessing whether a hadith is ṣaĥīḥ or ḍa'īf (Dzulfaidhi et al., 2024). As a result, in this work, Muslim discusses 25 hadiths

that contain 'illah and explains the methods employed by the muhaddithīn to resolve them. The detailed structure of the discussions in this book is as follows:

Table 3

Discussion Structure of Al-Tamyīz

Author	Muslim bin al-Hajjāj
Book	<i>Al-Tamyīz</i>
Discussion Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explanation of the reason for writing <i>Al-Tamyīz</i>. 2. Classification of narrators. 3. Methodology of the muhaddithīn in identifying hadith errors and their types. 4. The Prophet's (SAW) instruction to narrate hadith exactly as heard. 5. Ruling on criticizing narrators. 6. Discussion on hadiths with 'illah.

Following this, the study analyzes the similarities and differences between these two works to obtain more detailed findings. Refer to the table below:

Table 4

Analysis of Similarities and Differences Between Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr and Al-Tamyīz

No.	Section	Discussion	Books		Notes
			<i>Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr</i>	<i>Al-Tamyīz</i>	
1.	Introduction to the Book	Explanation of the reason for writing the book		✓	
2.	<i>Muṣṭalah al-hadīth</i>	Discussion on hadith terminology	✓		Al-Tirmidhī discusses the definitions of ḥasan and gharīb.
		<i>Al-Taḥammul wa al-Adā' (Modes of hadith transmission)</i>	✓		
		Ruling on narrating hadith by meaning	✓		
		Ruling on mursal hadith transmission	✓		
3.	<i>Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dīl</i>	Classification of narrators	✓	✓	Al-Tirmidhī discusses narrators' classification generally, whereas Muslim focuses specifically on the classification of accepted (maqḅūl) narrators.
		Ruling on criticizing narrators	✓	✓	
4.	<i>'Ilal al-Hadīth</i>	Methodology of 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth		✓	Muslim outlines various types of errors in hadith.

		Discussion on hadiths with 'illah		✓	Muslim presents 25 examples of hadiths with 'illah.
5.	General Discussions	The significance of sanad	✓	✓	
		The Prophet's (SAW) instruction to narrate hadith exactly as heard	✓	✓	Al-Tirmidhī discusses this indirectly within the discussion on the importance of sanad.

The study findings reveal several similarities between the two works. Both al-Tirmidhī and Muslim discuss the classification of narrators. Al-Tirmidhī categorizes narrators into four levels. The first category consists of narrators accused of lying (*muttāham bi al-kadhīb*), who are deemed unreliable due to suspicions of fabrication. The second category includes weak narrators whose negligence and frequent mistakes render their narrations unreliable. The third category consists of narrators criticized for their memory, indicating that their hadith transmissions may contain inconsistencies due to weak retention. Finally, the fourth category comprises reliable and precise narrators (*al-ḥāfiẓ al-mūṭqin*), who demonstrate accuracy and trustworthiness in hadith transmission. These classifications highlight al-Tirmidhī's methodological approach in assessing narrators' reliability. Refer to the table below for further details.

Table 5

Al-Tirmidhī's Classification of Narrators

No.	Narrator Category	Notes
1.	Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Mūṭqin	This category represents the highest level of <i>thiqaḥ</i> (trustworthy narrators).
2.	Narrators criticized for their memory but known for their integrity and knowledge.	Narrators in this category are accepted. However, their solitary narrations (<i>gharīb</i>) are rejected.
3.	Weak narrators due to frequent mistakes and negligence.	Narrations from this category are not accepted.
4.	Narrators accused of lying (<i>muttāham bi al-kadhīb</i>).	Narrations from this category are not accepted.

However, Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj differentiates between the classification of narrators presented in the Muqaddimah of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and that in Al-Tamyīz. In the Muqaddimah, Muslim categorizes narrators into three general levels: (1) narrators who are just and possess perfect retention (*ḍabṭ*), (2) narrators who are just but have weaker retention, and (3) narrators who are neither just nor possess good retention ('Alī bin Ādam al-It'yūbī, 2003; Muḥammad Amīn, 2009). This classification differs from the one found in Al-Tamyīz, where Muslim also divides narrators into three levels but with a different approach. In Al-Tamyīz, the classifications are: (1) *al-ḥāfiẓ al-mūṭqin*, referring to narrators with exceptional memory and precision in narration, (2) *al-mutasāhil*, *dhū ghaflah*, or *ghayr ḍābiṭ*, referring to narrators with weaker retention and occasional negligence, and (3) narrators who focus primarily on memorizing the text (*matn*) of hadith without emphasizing its sanad.

Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj focuses only on the classification of narrators whose narrations are accepted (*maqḅūl*), whereas in Al-Muqaddimah, he provides a broader classification that

includes both accepted (*maqbul*) and rejected (*mardud*) narrators. This aligns with the focus of *ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth*, which primarily examines the errors of accepted narrators (Ahmad Maʿbad & Muhammad Nasr, 2016).

Both works also discuss the ruling on criticizing narrators. Al-Tirmidhī and Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj employ a similar methodology, where they present hadith narrations with full sanad to demonstrate the permissibility of criticizing narrators as a means of preserving the authenticity and accuracy of the Prophet's (SAW) hadith. In the general discussion section, both scholars address the importance of sanad and the significance of narrating hadith exactly as heard. They both approach this topic in a similar manner by citing hadith with full sanad, a characteristic feature of the works of *mutaqaddimīn* scholars, who habitually included complete sanad when discussing any topic.

Despite these similarities, Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr and Al-Tamyīz exhibit notable differences. In the introduction section, al-Tirmidhī does not explicitly explain the reason for writing his treatise. However, some scholars consider it to be a preface to his work *Al-Jāmiʿ* (Asmāʾ Jābir al-ʿAbd, 2021). In contrast, Muslim clearly states that his work was written in response to a request from an individual seeking clarification on the methodology of *muhaddithīn* in evaluating hadith. Furthermore, al-Tirmidhī discusses various topics in the *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* section, including the definitions of hadith terms such as *mursal*, *ḥasan*, and *gharīb*. He also elaborates on the ruling on narrating *mursal* hadith. Additionally, al-Tirmidhī explores the modes of hadith transmission, particularly the similarities and differences between the terms *akhbaranā* and *ḥaddathanā*. According to Ibn Rajab, some *muhaddithīn* consider both terms synonymous when used in *majlis al-samāʿ*, while others differentiate between them (Ibn Rajab, 2016). Al-Tirmidhī also incorporates discussions on the ruling of narrating hadith by meaning (*al-riwāyah bi al-maʿnā*). Al-Dhahabī states that the established opinion on this issue is that narrating by meaning is permissible as long as the original intent of the hadith remains unchanged (Dzul Dzulraidi, 2023). However, Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj does not discuss any of these topics in *Al-Tamyīz*, possibly because he did not consider them necessary for the scope of his work.

Regarding the discussion on *ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth*, Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj directly addresses the objective of his work by explaining the methodology of hadith scholars in identifying narrator errors. He categorizes different levels of errors in hadith (ʿAbdullah al-Saʿad, 2021). Refer to the table below:

Table 6

Methodology of Hadith Scholars in Identifying Narrator Errors

Type of Error	Characteristics	Example of Error	Level of Difficulty in Identification
Error in Narrator's Name (Tashīf)	Mistake in attributing a sanad to the wrong narrator or errors in the narrator's name within the sanad.	Abū al-Tufail is recorded as 'Amr bin Wāthilah, whereas the correct name is 'Āmir bin Wāthilah.	Easily recognized by general scholars.
Error in Sanad and Matn Transmission	This error involves narrations that contain incorrect wording in the hadith text.	A transcription error (tashīf) in a hadith, such as "al-tahbīr" which should be "al-najasy," or "al-ḥirfah" which should be "al-ḥarām".	Easily recognized by general scholars.
Contradiction in Sanad and Matn Transmission	A group of ḥāfiẓ narrators report a consistent narration, but another group of narrators—though also thiqah—transmit a conflicting version.	Contradiction between narrations from ḥāfiẓ scholars and those from other thiqah narrators.	Difficult to recognize; requires evaluation by muhaddithīn.

After discussing the methodology of hadith scholars in identifying narrator errors from a theoretical perspective, Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj further examines the subject practically by presenting 25 problematic hadiths, analyzing and resolving each issue individually. Meanwhile, al-Tirmidhī does not discuss this topic at all. However, he does touch on the references he used when addressing 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth in his work *Al-Jāmi'*.

The findings of this comparative study between the two works indicate that *Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr* by al-Tirmidhī is more appropriately categorized as a work of *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* rather than specifically as a work of 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth. This conclusion is based on the comparative analysis with *Al-Tamyīz*, which shows that *Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr* does not focus exclusively on the science of 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth. Instead, al-Tirmidhī discusses other fields, including *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth*, *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, and general hadith discussions. On the other hand, *Al-Tamyīz* by Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj is clearly a work of 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth due to its in-depth focus on the methodology of identifying errors in hadith.

Nonetheless, this study suggests further research on the reality of teaching 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth in hadith institutions, analyzing how instructors explain these texts. This is because *Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr* could potentially be interpreted and taught as a work of 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth depending on the understanding and flexibility of the instructor.

Thus, the findings of this study have successfully addressed the research objective of determining whether *Al-'Ilal al-Ṣaghīr* qualifies as a work of 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth. Additionally, this study has conducted a comparative analysis with a well-established work in 'Ilal al-Ḥadīth, namely *Al-Tamyīz* by Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj.

Conclusion

Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr by al-Tirmidhī and Al-Tamyīz by Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj are two significant works in hadith studies, yet each adopts a different approach to discussing hadith sciences. Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr is often classified as a work in ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth; however, this study raises the question of whether it truly deserves this classification or if it would be more accurately categorized as a work in Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth.

The findings of this study indicate that Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr is more appropriately classified as a work of Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth, as its content focuses more on hadith terminology, narrator classification, and the basic methodology of sanad evaluation. Although it does include discussions on ʿIlal, they are not comprehensive enough to classify it strictly as a work of ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth.

Conversely, Al-Tamyīz by Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj demonstrates a more systematic and in-depth approach to identifying and resolving errors in both sanad and matn of hadith, making it more appropriately classified as a work of ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth.

This study also highlights the importance of understanding the context and purpose of a scholarly work in order to determine its proper classification. Therefore, it suggests further research into how Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr is taught in hadith institutions, as this could provide greater insight into its scholarly application.

Additionally, this study has successfully addressed the question of the classification of Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr within hadith literature while paving the way for more extensive research in this area. It also recommends conducting a comparative analysis between Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr and other classical works in Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth, such as the Muqaddimah of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Risālah ilā Ahl Makkah by Abū Dāwūd. Undertaking such research would provide preliminary findings on the precise classification of Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr within hadith studies.

This study contributes theoretically by refining the classification of Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr within hadith literature, bridging the gap between ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth and Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth. By demonstrating that Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr shares methodological and conceptual similarities with Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, this research challenges existing assumptions about the nature of hadith categorization. It offers a new perspective that encourages scholars to critically assess the framework of classical hadith works beyond traditional classifications.

From a contextual perspective, this study provides insights that are relevant to the pedagogy of hadith sciences. By questioning the classification of Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr, it encourages a reassessment of how hadith texts are introduced in academic settings. The findings of this research can inform curriculum development in hadith studies, particularly in structuring Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth modules more effectively. Furthermore, this study enhances scholarly understanding of Al-ʿIlal al-Ṣaghīr, allowing researchers and educators to contextualize its role in contemporary hadith discourse, particularly in relation to the study of Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth and hadith authentication methodologies.

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