



## New Direction of the Qur'an Interpretation in Indonesia: A Study of Nadirsyah Hosen's Interpretation on Social Media

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**Abstract:** This article examines the interpretation of Qur'anic verses on social media by Nadirsyah Hosen. The study employs a library research method with an analytical approach, collecting data from Hosen's posts on his Facebook page. The focus is on his interpretation of controversial Qur'anic verses in response to socio-political issues in Indonesia. The findings reveal that Qur'anic interpretation on social media tends to simplify complex exegetical discourse to align with the platform's fast-paced and accessible nature. This phenomenon contributes to the democratization of tafsir, enabling broader public engagement but also raising concerns about the validity and authority of interpretations. Furthermore, the study highlights how Hosen's contextual approach situates the Qur'an within contemporary social realities, making it more relevant to modern challenges. His method reflects a shift in Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia, where social media facilitates a more inclusive and dynamic exegetical discourse. However, the absence of rigorous academic verification mechanisms in digital tafsir poses the risk of misinterpretation and epistemological inconsistencies. Given these dynamics, future research should explore strategies for integrating academic verification into digital Qur'anic interpretation to ensure methodological robustness. Additionally, this study is limited to the analysis of a single figure, Nadirsyah Hosen. Comparative research examining multiple digital exegetes and their interpretative frameworks would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of Qur'anic interpretation in the digital era.

**Contribution:** This study highlights the role of social media in democratizing Qur'anic interpretation while underscoring challenges to its authority and academic rigor.

**Keywords:** *New Direction Tafsir, Social Media, Nadirsyah Hosen.*

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini mengkaji penafsiran ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an di media sosial oleh Nadirsyah Hosen. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan analitis, mengumpulkan data dari unggahan Hosen di halaman Facebook-nya. Fokus kajian ini adalah penafsirannya terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang berkaitan dengan isu-isu kontroversial di Indonesia. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penafsiran Al-Qur'an di media sosial cenderung menyederhanakan wacana tafsir yang kompleks agar sesuai dengan karakteristik platform yang cepat dan mudah diakses. Fenomena ini berkontribusi pada demokratisasi tafsir, memungkinkan keterlibatan publik yang lebih luas, tetapi juga menimbulkan tantangan terkait validitas dan otoritas interpretasi. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyoroti pendekatan kontekstual Hosen yang menempatkan Al-Qur'an dalam realitas sosial kontemporer, menjadikannya lebih relevan dengan tantangan zaman. Pendekatan ini mencerminkan pergeseran dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an di Indonesia, di mana media sosial membuka ruang tafsir yang lebih inklusif dan dinamis. Namun, ketiadaan mekanisme verifikasi akademik dalam tafsir digital berisiko menimbulkan kesalahpahaman dan ketidakkonsistenan epistemologis. Mengingat dinamika tersebut, penelitian selanjutnya perlu mengeksplorasi strategi integrasi verifikasi akademik dalam tafsir digital guna memastikan ketepatan metodologinya. Selain itu, penelitian ini masih terbatas pada analisis satu tokoh, yakni Nadirsyah Hosen. Studi komparatif terhadap berbagai penafsir digital dan kerangka interpretatif mereka dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif tentang perkembangan tafsir Al-Qur'an di era digital.





**Kontribusi:** Penelitian ini menyoroti peran media sosial dalam mendemokratisasi penafsiran Al-Qur'an sekaligus menggarisbawahi tantangan terhadap otoritas dan ketepatan akademiknya.

**Kata Kunci:** *Arah Baru Tafsir, Media Sosial, Nadirsyah Hosen.*

## Introduction

The study of Quranic interpretation is a field that continues to grow along with social dynamics, politics, and technological developments.<sup>1</sup> From the classical period to the contemporary era, various approaches in Quranic interpretation have been developed, ranging from the history-oriented *tafsir bil ma'tsur* method to *tafsir bil ra'yi* which emphasizes intellectual *ijtihad*.<sup>2</sup> In its development, *tafsir* underwent a major transformation in line with changes in the medium of dissemination of knowledge, especially with the emergence of the digital era that allows wider access to Islamic discourse, including Qur'anic interpretation. In global *tafsir* studies, academic debates on *tafsir* methodology have given birth to various schools, each of which has its own characteristics and advantages.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, there are groups that maintain traditional-based interpretation by emphasizing the authority of *sanads* and narration, as embraced by classical scholars such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kaṭīr, and al-Suyūṭī.<sup>4</sup> This approach emphasizes that understanding the Qur'an must refer to the interpretation of the early generations of Islam, namely the Prophet, the Companions, and the *Tabi'in*.

On the other hand, there is a more contextual approach to interpretation, which seeks to connect the Quranic text with changing social, political and cultural realities. Thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman with his double movement theory, Muhammad Arkoun with his deconstruction approach, and Amina Wadud with her feminist interpretation have contributed greatly in opening up space for a more dynamic and

<sup>1</sup> D. I. Ansusa Putra and Mohammad Hidayatullah, "The Roles of Technology in Al-Quran Exegesis in Indonesia," *Technology in Society* 63 (November 1, 2020): 101418, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2020.101418>; Fred Leemhuis, "1. Origins and Early Development of the Tafsir Tradition," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Gorgias Press, 2013), 13-30, <https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463234898-006>.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Rippin, *The Qur'an: Formative Interpretation* (Routledge, 2020); Lukmanul Hakim et al., "Qur'anic Interpretation Method And Its Impact On Contemporary Interpretation," *Journal of Ushuluddin* 26, no. 2 (December 13, 2018): 142–53, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v26i2.4577>.

<sup>3</sup> Fadhli Lukman, "Digital Hermeneutics and A New Face of the Qur'an Commentary: The Qur'an in Indonesian's Facebook," *Al-Jami'ab: Journal of Islamic Studies* 56, no. 1 (June 14, 2018): 95–120, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2018.561.95-120>.

<sup>4</sup> Nadirsyah Hosen, "Challenging Traditional Islamic Authority: The Impact of Social Media in Indonesia," *Proceedings of International Conference on Da'wa and Communication* 1, no. 1 (November 5, 2019): 84–100, <https://doi.org/10.15642/icondac.v1i1.280>.





critical interpretation of the Quran.<sup>5</sup> This approach often draws criticism from traditionalists who consider it a form of relativization of the meaning of the Qur'an that has the potential to obscure its original message.<sup>6</sup>

Another debate in contemporary tafsir studies is about the authority and legitimacy of interpretation. If in the past, Quranic interpretation was mostly developed in formal academic environments or Islamic boarding schools, today the space for interpretation is increasingly wide open with the presence of social media and digital platforms. This has led to the phenomenon of "democratization of interpretation," where anyone can access, interpret, and disseminate their understanding of the Quran without having to go through a strict academic level or scientific sanad.<sup>7</sup> This phenomenon elicits two main responses. First, there are those who see it as a positive opportunity, because it allows the dissemination of a more inclusive, contextual, and accessible understanding of Islam to the wider community. Tafsir is no longer the exclusive property of academics or scholars in formal educational institutions, but becomes part of a wider public discourse. Some Muslim clerics and scholars utilize social media as a means of da'wah and education, including in conveying the interpretation of the Qur'an in a lighter and more contextualized manner.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, there is also a concern that this openness may lead to the dissemination of interpretations that do not have a strong methodological basis, thus risking a biased, simplified or even distorted understanding of Islamic teachings. Critics remind us that the authority of tafsir cannot simply be given to anyone who has access to social media, without adequate scientific qualifications.<sup>9</sup>

In Indonesia, this phenomenon is increasingly evident with the emergence of various figures who actively convey the interpretation of the Quran through social media. One of the prominent figures in this context is Nadirsyah Hosen, an academic known for his contextual and responsive approach to social

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<sup>5</sup> Mubaidi Sulaeman, "Hasan Hanafi's Qur'anic Hermeneutic Thought in Qur'anic Studies in Indonesia," *Salimiya: Journal of Islamic Religious Studies* 1, no. 2 (June 17, 2020): 1-26.

<sup>6</sup> Mubaidi Sulaeman, "The Dialectic of Philosophical and Literary Exegesis: Mary's Prophetic Status from the Perspectives of Al-Tabari and Al-Qurthubi," *Dirasat International Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (November 25, 2024): 167-84, <https://doi.org/10.59373/drs.v2i2.43>.

<sup>7</sup> Dede Rosyada, "A Contextual Method Of Interpreting The Qur'an: A Search For The Compatibility Of Islam And Modernity" (International Conference on Qur'an and Hadith Studies (ICQHS 2017), Atlantis Press, 2017), 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icqhs-17.2018.1>.

<sup>8</sup> Noor Jamaliah Ibrahim et al., "The Problems, Issues and Future Challenges of Automatic Speech Recognition for Quranic Verse Recitation: A Review," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 13, no. 2 (2015): 168-96.

<sup>9</sup> Lilik Umami Kaltsum and Ahmad Syaifuddin Amin, "The Development of Qur'anic Thematic Exegesis in Indonesia: Historical Landscape and Shifts of Authority," *Journal of Qur'anic and Hadith Studies* 25, no. 2 (September 20, 2024): 296-319, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i2.5422>.





issues. Through platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, he presents interpretations of the Qur'an that are based on scientific understanding while being packaged in language that is easily understood by the general public. His approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the Qur'an in its historical context, while remaining relevant to the challenges of modern times.<sup>10</sup>

Research on the interpretation of the Quran on social media has become an academic concern in recent years. For example, a study by Mahfudlah Fajrie et.al. (2023) examined how Indonesian scholars use digital platforms to disseminate Quranic tafsir and its impact on public understanding.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, a study by M Ghazali, et.al. (2022) explored the role of social media in spreading progressive interpretations of the Quran among the younger generation.<sup>12</sup> In addition, research by Zainun Mustafa, et. Al., evaluates the credibility of Quranic interpretations disseminated through social media as Islamic education for the wider community.<sup>13</sup> Finally, a study by Mubaidi Sulaeman et.al (2024) examined the interaction between social media users and Quranic tafsir content in shaping religious understanding.<sup>14</sup> These studies show that social media plays a significant role in the dissemination of Quranic tafsir in Indonesia, although there are differences in methodology and impact on people's religious understanding.

This study aims to analyze the approaches and methods used by Nadirsyah Hosen in delivering Quranic tafsir on social media, as well as assess its impact on the understanding of Islam in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach, this study will examine the tafsir content produced and disseminated by Nadirsyah Hosen on various digital platforms. The analysis will focus on how he constructs the meaning of the Quran, to what extent his methodology is in line with the rules of academic interpretation, and how the public responds to the interpretations he offers. This study contributes to understanding the new direction of Quranic interpretation in Indonesia by highlighting how digitalization has changed the

<sup>10</sup> Angela Hendley-Boys, "Nadirsyah Hosen," Melbourne Law School, August 1, 2024, <https://law.unimelb.edu.au/about/staff/nadirsyah-hosen>; "Profile," *Khazanah GNH* (blog), accessed March 16, 2024, <https://nadirhosen.net/profil/>.

<sup>11</sup> Mahfudlah Fajrie et al., "Al-Quran Digitalization: Adolescent View on the Value of the Digital Al-Quran Application," *Journal of Communication: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 39, no. 1 (March 31, 2023), <http://ejournal.ukm.my/mjc/article/view/56761>.

<sup>12</sup> Mahbub Ghazali, Achmad Yafik Mursyid, and Nita Fitriana, "Al-Qur'an (Re)Presentation in the Short Video App Tiktok: Reading, Teaching, and Interpretive," *Pertanika Journal of Tropical Agricultural Science* 30, no. 3 (2022), <http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/pjtas/browse/regular-issue?article=JSSH-8475-2021>.

<sup>13</sup> Zainun Mustafa, Azizan Baharuddin, and Shaikh Mohd Saifuddeen, "Islam, Science and Education: Delving into the Progress, Collaboration and Biases," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 11, no. 2 (September 16, 2021): 44–68, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.112.03>.

<sup>14</sup> Mubaidi Sulaeman, Ahmad Muttaqien, and Jan A. Ali, "Hyperspirituality Of Muslim Teens Learning Religion On The Internet Era," *Al-A'raf: Journal of Islamic Thought and Philosophy* 21, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 1–29, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v21i1.8558>.





pattern of interpretation and people's interaction with the sacred text. By examining Nadirsyah Hosen's approach, this article is expected to provide insight into the dynamics of Quranic interpretation in the digital era and its implications for the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia and the world.

### **The Development of Qur'anic Interpretation in Indonesia.**

Talking about the development of tafsir al-Qur'an in Indonesia means tracing the history of Islamic intellectualism in the archipelago.<sup>15</sup> Tafsir as a form of interpretation of the sacred text experiences dynamics that reflect the social, political and cultural transformations of Indonesian Muslim society.<sup>16</sup> From classical to post-modern times, tafsir develops along with the needs of the times, adjusting to the scientific context and technological developments. Since Islam entered the archipelago, understanding of the Qur'an has been carried out gradually, starting with translation and practical explanations for da'wah purposes. Scholars and preachers played an important role in spreading the teachings of Islam by providing interpretations of verses related to basic teachings such as tawhid, worship, and morals.

In the early days, people still relied heavily on oral tradition in understanding sacred texts. The Islamization that occurred in the archipelago had a major influence on the writing system, especially with the introduction of Arabic script in local languages such as Jawi and Pegon.<sup>17</sup> However, due to limited literacy and understanding of Arabic, the interpretation of the Qur'an in this era was more oral and simple, with an emphasis on practical aspects. Then, along with the development of written culture, tafsir began to take a more structured form. One of the early evidences of the development of tafsir is the emergence of tafsir of surah al-Kahf in Malay, although the author is unknown. This indicates that the understanding of the Qur'an in the archipelago began to develop in writing, not just in oral form.<sup>18</sup>

One of the important figures in the development of tafsir in the archipelago is Abdul Raouf al-Singkili, who produced tafsir in Malay with a Sufism approach. His work, *Turjuman al- Mustafid*, became one of the first complete tafsir in this region. Through this work, he not only translated the Qur'an but also

<sup>15</sup> Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Sanad Qur'an and tafsir in Nusantara: paths, lanes, and meeting points* (Pustaka Compass, 2022); Zainul Milal Bizawie, "Sanad and Ulama Network of the Quranic Studies in Nusantara," *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 4, no. 1 (July 8, 2015): 23–44, <https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v4i1.60>.

<sup>16</sup> Zainul Milal Bizawie, "Map Out A New Historical Trajectory Of Islam Nusantara," *The International Journal of Pegon: Islam Nusantara Civilization* 1, no. 01 (July 2, 2018): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.51925/inc.v1i01.2>; Rifa Roifa, Rosihon Anwar, and Dadang Darmawan, "The Development of Tafsir in Indonesia (Pre-Independence 1900-1945)," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (June 27, 2017): 21–36, <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-bayan.v2i1.1806>.

<sup>17</sup> Islah Gusmian, "Qur'anic Interpretation in Indonesia: History and Dynamics," *Nun: Journal of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir in the Archipelago* 1, no. 1 (December 29, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v1i1.8>.

<sup>18</sup> Wawan Djunaedi and Iklilah Muzayyanah DF, *History of Qira'at al-Qur'an in Nusantara*, Cet. 2 (Jakarta: Pustaka STAINU, 2008), <https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1130282270814269568>.





provided a deeper explanation of the meaning of the verses in a language that could be understood by the local community.<sup>19</sup> The existence of this tafsir shows that Islam in the archipelago developed by adapting various approaches from the wider Islamic world, especially in the realm of thought and scholarship. This tradition continued with the emergence of a community of Jawi scholars who studied in the Middle East, such as Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari and Abdul Wahab Bugis.<sup>20</sup> Although they mostly wrote in the fields of fiqh and tasawwuf, the use of Qur'anic verses in their works shows that tafsir began to become an integral part of Muslim intellectualism in the archipelago.<sup>21</sup>

In the 19th century, tafsir in Indonesia developed further with the emergence of Arabic-language works such as *Marah Labid* by Nawawi al-Bantani. This tafsir shows that Nusantara scholars began to have the capacity to formulate a more systematic scientific-based tafsir.<sup>22</sup> In addition, interaction with the wider Islamic world also influenced the tafsir methods used. The journal *al-Manar* published by Rasyid Rida in Egypt in 1898 became one of the sources of inspiration for scholars in the archipelago in understanding more modern and contextual tafsir methods.<sup>23</sup> This development shows that tafsir in Indonesia has not only evolved in terms of language but also in the methods and approaches used to understand the sacred text.<sup>24</sup>

Entering the 20th century, tafsir experienced a significant surge, especially after the Youth Pledge in 1928 which emphasized Indonesian as the language of unity. This encouraged the emergence of interpretations in Indonesian, such as *Tafsir al-Furqan* by A. Hassan, *Tafsir Tarjamah al-Qur'an* by Mahmud Yunus, and *Tafsir al-Qur'an Karim* written by a triad of A. Halim Hasan, Zainal Arifin Abbas, and Abdurrahman Haitami. The presence of tafsir in Indonesian makes it easier for people to understand

<sup>19</sup> Gusmian, "Qur'anic Interpretation in Indonesia."

<sup>20</sup> NIM 993141 / S3 Abdul Mustaqim, "Contemporary Tafsir Epitemology (Comparative Study Between Fazlur Rahman and Muhammad Syahrur)" (phd, Postgraduate, 2007), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/14300/>; Abdul Mustaqim and Sahiron Syamsudin, *Contemporary Qur'anic Studies: New Discourses on Various Tafsir Methodologies*, vol. 39 (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Network of ulama: The Middle East and the Archipelago in the XVII & XVIII centuries: the roots of Indonesian Islamic renewal* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Syamsul Bahri, Romlah Widayati, and M. Ziyadul Haq, "Language Studies in Tafsir: Analysis of Kitab Marah Labid Li Kasyfi Ma'na Al-Qur'an Al-Majid by Shaykh An-Nawawi Al-Bantani," *EL-Afkar: Journal of Islamic Thought and Hadith Interpretation* 12, no. 2 (April 23, 2023): 482–96, <https://doi.org/10.29300/jpkth.v12i2.3108>.

<sup>23</sup> M. Abdullah, S. Arifin, and K. Ahmad, "The Influence of Egyptian Reformists and Its Impact on the Development of the Literature of Quranic Exegesis Manuscripts in the Malay Archipelago," *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, January 1, 2012, <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&sw=w&issn=21516200&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA344602620&sid=googleScholar&linkaccess=abs>.

<sup>24</sup> Andi Miswar, "CORRECTIONS OF TAFSIR MIND IN THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF TAFSIR TRADITION IN NUSANTARA (Hamzah al-Fansuri, Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani and Abd Rauf al- Singkel)," *Rihlah: Journal of History and Culture* 4, no. 1 (June 1, 2016): 115–26, <https://doi.org/10.24252/rihlah.v4i1.2593>.





the contents of the Qur'an without having to master Arabic.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the tafsir book, literature related to the science of the Qur'an also began to develop, such as Introduction to Qur'anic Science by Hasbi as-Shiddiqi and Index al-Qur'an by Badaruthanan Akasah. Tafsir in this era became more systematic and began to lead to a more academic and scientific approach.<sup>26</sup>

In the 21st century, the interpretation of the Qur'an has undergone major changes with the presence of digital media. If previously tafsir was more text-oriented, now the interpretation of the Qur'an began to be done through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. This development cannot be separated from the rapid development of information technology and changes in public consumption patterns in accessing knowledge. Muslim scholars and intellectuals began to utilize digital platforms to spread the understanding of the Qur'an in a more interactive and accessible way. Some figures who are active in digital tafsir include Nadirsyah Hosen who is active through Twitter and Facebook, Salman Harun who uses YouTube as a means of da'wah, and Gus Baha whose tafsir lectures are widely uploaded and consumed by the wider community.<sup>27</sup>

The digital era opens up new possibilities for the development of tafsir in Indonesia. With a more contextual approach and responsive to social issues, tafsir is no longer limited to academic texts but becomes part of everyday life. The dissemination of tafsir through digital media also allows more people to access and discuss the meaning of Qur'anic verses in various contexts. This diversity of methods and approaches in tafsir reflects the flexibility of Islam in responding to the times. With the development of technology and increased access to knowledge, the future of Qur'anic tafsir in Indonesia will be more open to innovation and new approaches that are more inclusive and relevant to the needs of modern society.

### Interpreting the Qur'an on Social Media

Qur'anic exegesis and social media initially appear as two different, even opposing, entities. Tafsir al-Qur'an is academic and religious in nature, while social media is a vast interaction space

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<sup>25</sup> Dr. Ahmad Zainal Abidin M.A and Thoriqul Aziz M.Ag, *Khazanah Tafsir Nusantara: Figures and Works* (IRCISOD, 2023); Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah tafsir Indonesia: from Hermeneutika to ideology* (Teraju, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Gusmian, "Qur'anic Interpretation in Indonesia."

<sup>27</sup> Nadirsyah Hosen, *Tafsir Al-Quran di Medsos: Examining the Meaning and Secrets of Sacred Verses in the Age of Social Media (REPUBLIC)* (Bentang Pustaka, 2019); Ridho Agung Juwantara, Rezki Putri Nur Aini, and Dwi Noviatul Zahra, "TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN IN MEDSOS: Nadirsyah Hosen's Resistance to the Politicization of the Quran in Indonesian Social Media," *ULUL ALBAB Journal of Islamic Studies* 21, no. 2 (2020): 312-36; Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy and Althaf Hussein Muzakky, "The Dynamics of Online Ngaji in the Gus Baha Hashtag: A Study of Living Qur'an in Social Media," *POROS ONIM: Journal of Social Religion* 2, no. 1 (June 29, 2021): 1-19, <https://doi.org/10.53491/porosonim.v2i1.48>; Fadhli Lukman, "Tafsir Sosial Media in Indonesia," *Nun: Journal of Quranic and Tafsir Studies in the Archipelago* 2, no. 2 (October 30, 2016): 117-39, <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v2i2.59>.





with a variety of general content, often paying less attention to religious aspects.<sup>28</sup> However, in today's digital era, tafsir and social media have a close relationship and support each other. Social media is not only a forum for sharing information, but also a discussion space that allows the public to be actively involved in Islamic studies.<sup>29</sup>

According to Rulli Nasrullah, the media has a big role in shaping meaning and culture. The media not only conveys messages, but also creates a context that frames people's understanding. In the face of the times and the complexity of human problems, the Qur'an requires a more effective and efficient means of delivery.<sup>30</sup> Social media is the main choice for contemporary mufasssirs in disseminating tafsir to make it more accessible to the wider community. Through social media, the interpretation of the Qur'an can be disseminated more quickly, reaching audiences from various backgrounds, and presenting more dynamic interactions.<sup>31</sup>

The role of social media in spreading tafsir is increasingly relevant with the increasing number of internet users in Indonesia. Currently, there are 185.3 million internet users in Indonesia, accounting for 66.5% of the total population. Of this number, 139 million are active users of social media, with an average usage time of 3 hours and 11 minutes per day. YouTube, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram are the main platforms used by Indonesians, showing that social media has become an important part of digital life. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world with around 237 million Muslims, has great potential in the development of interpretations on social media. Facebook, for example, has 118 million users in Indonesia, with an advertising reach that reaches 42.2% of the total population and 63.5% of internet users. Instagram, with 101 million users, also shows significant dominance. This dominance of social media users in Indonesia provides a great opportunity for wider and more interactive dissemination of Qur'anic commentaries. With increasing internet penetration into rural areas and the growth of new users each year, social media is increasingly becoming a key

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<sup>28</sup> Sulaeman, Muttaqien, and Ali, "Hyperspirituality Of Muslim Teens Learning Religion On The Internet Era."

<sup>29</sup> Lukman, "Interpretation of Social Media in Indonesia."

<sup>30</sup> Juwantara, Aini, and Zahra, "TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN ON MEDSOS."

<sup>31</sup> Hosen, "Challenging Traditional Islamic Authority."







platform in supporting the spread of more inclusive interpretations and understandings of Islam.<sup>32</sup>

One interesting example in the development of interpretation on social media is the interpretation made by Nadirsyah Hosen of the word *Awliya'* in Surah Al-Maidah verse 51 on his personal Facebook page. The interpretation responds to the issue of "blasphemy" associated with Basuki Tjahaja Purnama's (Ahok) speech in Thousand Islands. In his interpretation, Gus Nadir refers to various classic tafsir books such as Tafsir Ibn Katsir, Tafsir Al-Khazin, and Tafsir Al-Baydawi. This post received a huge response from the audience, with more than 5,151 likes, 1,971 comments, and 2,418 shares. The diverse responses show that tafsir on social media not only serves as a delivery of knowledge, but also as a dynamic interactive forum. The different opinions that emerged in the comments section show that social media has become a new public space that allows for debate and further reflection on an interpretation.<sup>33</sup>

According to Fadli Lukman, interpretations on social media can be categorized into three main tendencies: textual, contextual, and scientific interpretations. The textual tendency focuses on the text and refers to the opinions of previous scholars. An example is Salman Harun's interpretation on his Facebook account, which initially responded to social issues such as Friday sermons or Ru'yatul Hilal, but later focused more on tafsir *tahlili*, such as his interpretation of Surah Yusuf published in 53 statuses over several months. Meanwhile, the contextual tendency pays more attention to social, political and cultural conditions in interpreting the Qur'an. This approach sees that the teachings of the Qur'ān must be applied flexibly according to the dynamics of the times. Nadirsyah Hosen's tafsir is one example of this approach, where his tafsir is often

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<sup>32</sup> Andreas Daniel Panggabean, "This is the Statistics of Indonesian Social Media Usage in 2024," rri.co.id - trusted news portal, accessed August 17, 2024, <https://www.rri.co.id/ipitek/721570/ini-data-statistik-penggunaan-media-sosial-masyarakat-indonesia-tahun-2024>; Pierre Rainer, "This is the Most Used Social Media in Indonesia," GoodStats, accessed August 17, 2025, <https://goodstats.id/article/inilah-media-sosial-paling-sering-dipakai-di-indonesia-Pdyt0>; Cindy Mutia Annur, "This is the Most Used Social Media in Indonesia in Early 2024 | Databoks," accessed August 17, 2025, <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/teknologi-telekomunikasi/statistik/66ea436ab12f2/ini-media-sosial-paling-banyak-digunakan-di-indonesia-awal-2024>.

<sup>33</sup> Juwantara, Aini, and Zahra, "TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN ON MEDSOS"; Hosen, "Challenging Traditional Islamic Authority"; Nadirsyah Hosen, "Race and Religion in the 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election: The Case of Jokowi-Ahok," in *Religion, Law and Intolerance in Indonesia* (Routledge, 2016).





associated with actual issues in Indonesia, such as the interpretation of Surah Al-Maidah verse 51 in response to the Ahok case.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, there is also a trend of scientific interpretation that seeks to find compatibility between Qur'ānic verses and modern scientific theories. This approach assumes that the Qur'an explains various scientific phenomena, as Muhammad Abduh did in interpreting the attack of *Ababil* in Surah Al-Fil, which he attributed to the plague spread by the bird. In the context of social media, the tendency of tafsir ilmi often appears in the form of content that relates Qur'ānic verses to scientific findings, such as the Big Bang theory that is associated with the verse about the creation of the universe.<sup>35</sup>

The development of interpretations on social media is influenced by various factors. Social media features that support the production and consumption of tafsir quickly and widely are one of the triggers. Features such as live streaming, commenting, and sharing allow for greater interaction between the mufassir and the audience. In addition, the availability of Qur'anic translations in various formats, both printed and digital, also facilitates public access to tafsir. People's growing interest in understanding the Qur'ān in a more flexible and interactive way through digital media has also contributed to this phenomenon. Social media also allows for more dynamic discussions, so that tafsir is not only one-way, but also opens up space for interaction with various perspectives.<sup>36</sup>

Interpretation of the Qur'an on social media not only impacts the spread of Islamic knowledge, but also raises new challenges. One of the challenges that arises is the authority of interpretation. In the academic realm, interpretation is usually done by scholars or academics who have a clear scientific capacity, while on social media, anyone can interpret the Qur'an without certain scientific limitations. This has the potential to cause misunderstanding or even the spread of biased interpretations that are not in accordance with Islamic scientific principles.

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<sup>34</sup> Lukman, "Interpretation of Social Media in Indonesia."

<sup>35</sup> Mustaqim and Syamsudin, *Contemporary Qur'anic Studies*; Abd Hannan and Ach Fatayillah Mursyidi, "Mapping Cases and Actors in Violations of Religious Freedom in Contemporary Madura," *Tribakti: Journal of Islamic Thought* 35, no. 1 (January 31, 2024): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i1.4564>.

<sup>36</sup> Hosen, "Challenging Traditional Islamic Authority."





In addition, social media also opens space for the emergence of provocative or political interpretations, which sometimes aim more to influence public opinion than to provide in-depth understanding.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the development of tafsir on social media can be seen through its various forms and tendencies. The developing categories of tafsir include textual tendencies that refer to classical texts, contextual tendencies that adapt tafsir to social conditions, and scientific tafsir tendencies that seek correlations between the Qur'an and modern science. Social media has opened a new space for the dissemination of Qur'anic tafsir and proved that this platform is not just a means of entertainment, but also an effective medium of da'wah and dissemination of Islamic knowledge.

### **Nadirsyah Hosen's Interpretive Contributions on Social Media**

The development of digital technology has changed many aspects of life, including the method of Qur'anic interpretation. Social media has become a new arena for Islamic discussions, including in terms of tafsir. The presence of the book *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Medsos* (2017) by Nadirsyah Hosen is an interesting phenomenon because it is a documentation of his interpretations that were originally posted on various digital platforms. However, the fundamental issue that arises is whether the printed form of tafsir on social media retains its characteristics, or instead experiences an essential shift?

Interpretation on social media is unique and dynamic. Unlike books that are monological, interpretations on social media are dialogic. The interaction that occurs between the interpreter and the reader forms a meaning that continues to develop, making the interpretation not stop at a single meaning. The diversity of responses, comments, and reactions from the audience creates a hermeneutical landscape that is different from conventional interpretation. In this context, the meaning of a particular verse can change following the social and political dynamics that occur. For example, the debate about QS. Al-Maidah: 51 in 2016-2018 shows how interpretation can transform into a tool of political discourse on social media, with responses from the public directly shaping new narratives in interpretation.

Some examples of Nadirsyah Hosen's tafsir on social media reflect an approach that is contextual and relevant to contemporary issues. In responding to QS. Al-Maidah: 51, for example, he asserts that this verse cannot be used as an absolute basis for rejecting non-Muslim leadership, referring to the historical

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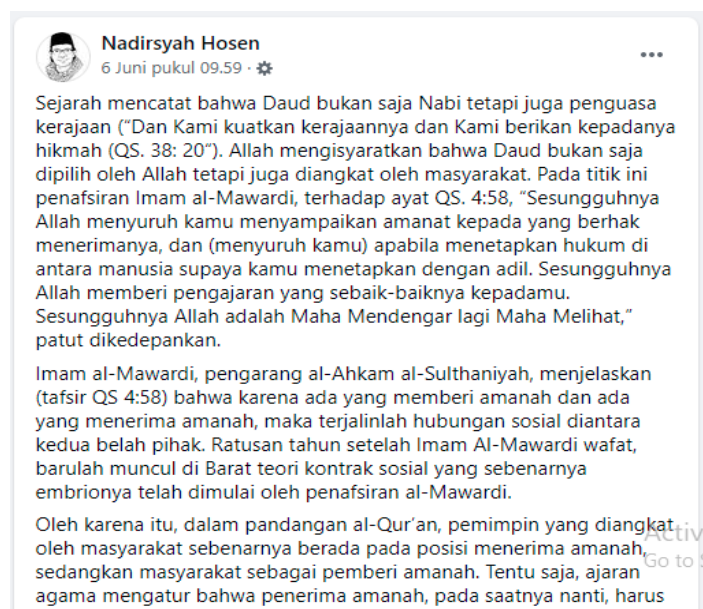
<sup>37</sup> Putra and Hidayaturrahman, "The Roles of Technology in Al-Quran Exegesis in Indonesia."





context and various scholarly views. This view drew widespread response on social media, sparking discussions between supporters and opponents of his interpretation.<sup>38</sup> Another example is his interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurat: 6, which relates to the importance of tabayyun or information verification. In the era of disinformation and hoaxes, Nadirsyah Hosen connects this verse to the phenomenon of fake news spreading on social media. He emphasizes that Muslims must be critical before believing or spreading information, an interpretation that is very relevant in today's digital context.<sup>39</sup>

Walter J. Ong in *Orality and Literacy* asserts that written text is context-free, which means it is not bound to one particular situation. However, interpretations on social media show the opposite phenomenon: interpretations that develop in a digital environment interact with ongoing social discourse. This interaction strengthens or even challenges an interpretation, opening up possibilities for interpretations that are more contextual and reflective of the situation.<sup>40</sup> Social media becomes a more open field of interpretation, allowing audiences to not only be passive readers but also participate in shaping the meaning of the verse. One example is the following post:



<sup>38</sup> Hosen, "Race and Religion in the 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election."

<sup>39</sup> Hosen, *Tafsir Al-Quran di Medsos*.

<sup>40</sup> Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: 30th Anniversary Edition*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203103258>.





mempertanggungjawabkan amanahnya kepada si pemberi amanah, yaitu pada "pengadilan" masyarakat di dunia, dan "pengadilan" Allah di Padang Mahsyar nanti.

Berkenaan dengan pemberian amanah, ada satu ayat yang cukup menyentak kita: "Sesungguhnya Kami telah mengemukakan amanat kepada langit, bumi dan gunung-gunung, maka semuanya enggan untuk memikul amanat itu dan mereka khawatir akan mengkhianatinya, dan dipikullah amanat itu oleh manusia. Sesungguhnya manusia itu amat zalim dan amat bodoh," QS 33: 72

Dr. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili dalam *at-Tafsir al-Munir* menjelaskan bahwa amanah yang dimaksud adalah ketaatan dalam menjalankan kewajiban (taklif) syar'i, seperti sholat, puasa dan lainnya. Lebih jauh Az-Zuhaili menafsirkan bahwa kata amanah dalam ayat di atas juga mencakup amanah terhadap harta, menjaga kemaluan, menjaga pendengaran, penglihatan, lisan batin, tangan dan langkah kaki.

Kegagalan menerima amanah ini (akibat manusia itu amat zalim dan amat bodoh) akan mengakibatkan manusia terbagi menjadi tiga golongan (sebagaimana diisyaratkan oleh ayat selanjutnya QS 33: 73): pertama, munafikin, yaitu sebagaimana digambarkan dalam hadis: kalau berkata selalu berdusta; kalau berjanji selalu ingkar; dan kalau diberi amanah berlaku khianat (Musnad Ahmad, Hadis Nomor: 6583).

Kedua, golongan musyrikin, yaitu golongan yang baik tersembunyi maupun terang-terangan telah berlaku syirik dan menentang Rasul. Ketiga Mu'minin, yang dalam ayat ini digambarkan sebagai mereka yang diterima taubatnya.

Nadirsyah Hosen in his post explained the concept of leadership in Islam by highlighting the role of Prophet David. He emphasized that David was not only a prophet chosen by God, but also a leader appointed by the community. This shows that in the Islamic tradition, leadership has two sources of legitimacy, namely from God and from social acceptance.

In explaining this concept, Nadirsyah refers to Imam al-Mawardi's interpretation of QS. 4:58, which emphasizes the importance of delivering the mandate to those entitled to receive it and upholding justice in law. Al-Mawardi in his work *al-Ahkam al-Sulthaniyah* interprets this verse as the basis for the establishment of social relations between leaders and society. He argues that the existence of a trust giver and trustee creates a reciprocal relationship that binds the two. This thinking, according to Nadirsyah, is the forerunner of the social contract theory that only developed in the West centuries after the death of al-Mawardi.

The concept of trust in leadership is further emphasized in QS. 33:72, which states that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains reject the trust because they realize the weight of the responsibility, while humans with all their limitations accept the trust. Tafsir Wahbah Az-Zuhaili in *at-Tafsir al-Munir* explains that this trust includes obedience in carrying out sharia obligations, such as prayer and fasting, as well as responsibility for property, honor, and limbs. Human failure in carrying out this mandate causes the formation of three groups as described in QS. 33:73: the hypocrites who always betray, the polytheists who oppose the Messenger, and the believers who eventually repent.





In the context of leadership, this verse makes it clear that a leader is not the one who gives the mandate, but the recipient of the mandate from the people. Thus, the position of a leader depends on the trust of the people who give him the mandate. As human beings who are given a mandate by God in life, leaders must maintain their mandate with full responsibility and justice.

Through this analysis, Nadirsyah reveals that Islam has first offered principles of leadership accountability rooted in popular legitimacy. This view shows that leadership in Islam has a democratic dimension, where a leader does not have absolute power, but must be accountable to the people who have given him the mandate. The picture that accompanies this discussion can clarify the concept that trust is a huge burden, which should be carried with full awareness and responsibility, both in leadership and in life in general.

In his post, Nadirsyah Hosen presents a tafsir approach that connects classical Islamic thought with modern socio-political theory. He highlighted how the concept of leadership in Islam has two sources of legitimacy, namely from God and from social acceptance, as seen in the story of Prophet David. By referring to Imam al-Mawardi's interpretation of QS. 4:58, he emphasizes the importance of the reciprocal relationship between leaders and society, where leaders receive a mandate from the people and must account for it fairly. This approach leads to the analysis that the principles of leadership accountability in Islam existed long before the development of social contract theory in the West.

In the world of tafsir on social media, Nadirsyah Hosen's approach has a different character when compared to Quraish Shihab and QuranReview. Quraish Shihab prioritizes linguistic and contextual approaches with a reflective narrative style. He often elaborates on the meaning of Arabic words and explains their relevance in everyday life in a more universal and humanist way. His approach not only refers to classical tafsir books, but also seeks to make the Qur'an a moral guide that can be applied by the wider community without discussing too much socio-political theory.

Meanwhile, QuranReview presents tafsir in a more concise and practical form. By utilizing a dynamic social media format, QuranReview presents verse explanations in the form of infographics, short threads, or inspirational quotes that are easy to digest. This approach is simpler than the academic tafsir developed by Nadirsyah Hosen or the reflective style of Quraish Shihab. QuranReview's main focus is to provide a quick and applicable understanding of Qur'anic verses for the general public, especially the younger generation who are more familiar with digital formats that are direct and to the point.





These three approaches reflect the variations in conveying Qur'ānic interpretation on social media. Nadirsyah Hosen offers a critical analysis that links classical tafsir with modern socio-political thought. Quraish Shihab presents tafsir with a more reflective and linguistic-based narrative style. QuranReview simplifies the concepts of tafsir into a more popular and easily understood form. Each has a role in enriching people's understanding of the Qur'an according to the needs and preferences of different audiences.

### New Directions in the Development of Qur'anic Interpretation on Social Media

When digital interpretation is transferred to book form, this dynamic character undergoes a significant shift. Books as a written medium do not have direct interaction features that allow dialog between the interpreter and the reader. As a result, tafsir that was previously organic and constantly evolving becomes more static. Although the substance of the tafsir in the book still has relevance, the loss of the interactive element reduces the liveliness of the tafsir. This move, although provides better systematization, also closes the space for the diversity of perspectives that were originally present in digital discussions.<sup>41</sup>

The main problem in moving tafsir from social media to books lies not only in the change of format, but also in the change of epistemology of tafsir itself. Interpretation in social media develops in a discursive space that allows negotiation of meaning between the interpreter and the audience, while books tend to confirm the authority of the interpreter without providing space for direct response. In other words, books represent interpretation as a finished product, while social media maintain interpretation as an ongoing process.<sup>42</sup>

This phenomenon leads to a larger question about the future of Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia. If tafsir on social media offers a more participatory and dialogic space, how can future tafsir methods accommodate these advantages without losing their academic depth? A model of tafsir that combines digital interactivity with in-depth text-based analysis could be a solution that bridges these two approaches. Community-based tafsir, where various perspectives are gathered to produce a more inclusive understanding, can be a new approach that enriches the tradition of tafsir in Indonesia.

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<sup>41</sup> Hosen, *Tafsir Al-Quran di Medsos*.

<sup>42</sup> Juwantara, Aini, and Zahra, "TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN ON MEDSOS."





Qur'anic exegesis should not stop as an academic product or static text, but should become part of a lively conversation in a digital society. If tafsir is to remain relevant, it must be able to respond to social dynamics in a way that is not only adaptive but also critical. This is not just a matter of medium, but also a way of thinking: do we still maintain tafsir as a closed authority, or do we open it up as a space for wider dialog? This shift is not just a technical change, but a paradigm shift that requires us to revisit how Qur'anic interpretation develops in the digital age.<sup>43</sup>

Nadisyah Hosen's approach to tafsir on social media shows how the Islamic scholarly tradition continues to evolve and adapt to the needs of the times. Nadirsyah Hosen's academic style makes an important contribution to those interested in exploring the relationship between classical thought and contemporary theory. By highlighting the thought of scholars such as Imam al-Mawardi, he not only interprets verses textually but also places them in a broader socio-political context. His interpretation leads to the understanding that Islam has long had a concept of leadership accountability, even before modern theories such as the social contract developed in the West.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab has his own way of delivering tafsir that prioritizes aspects of wisdom and practical relevance in everyday life. Through books, lectures, and social media, he conveys the interpretation of the Qur'an with a more inclusive language and flowing narrative. His approach does not overemphasize explicit socio-political analysis, but rather the ethical and moral values contained in the Qur'anic verses. This makes his tafsir more accessible to various levels of society, both academics and the general public who seek spiritual guidance in their lives.

On the other hand, QuranReview comes as a form of interpretation that adapts to the speed of information consumption in the digital era. With a more concise format and attractive visuals, QuranReview is able to reach audiences who may not have a deep Islamic background but still want to understand the message of the Qur'an in a simple and applicable way. Tafsir presented

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<sup>43</sup> Hosen, "Challenging Traditional Islamic Authority."

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Amin Abdullah, "Islamic Studies in Higher Education in Indonesia: Challenges, Impact and Prospects for the World Community," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55, no. 2 (December 15, 2017): 391–426, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.552.391-426>.







in the form of short bullet points or infographics makes QuranReview a quick reference source for those who want to get an instant understanding of a verse without having to read a long text.<sup>45</sup>

The diversity of tafsir methods shows that social media has become a new space for the development of Islamic science. The tafsir presented is not only based on classical texts but also contextualized with the challenges of the times. Nadirsyah Hosen with his academic and analytical approach, Quraish Shihab with his reflective style and wisdom of language, and QuranReview with the simplicity and practicality of its digital format, all contribute to enriching people's understanding of the Qur'an.

This diversity reflects how the Qur'anic message can be accessed and understood by various groups in different ways. With the development of social media as a medium for da'wah and Islamic studies, tafsir methods are also increasingly inclusive, dynamic, and able to answer the challenges of the times without losing their scientific roots. This shows that Islam as a religion and intellectual tradition continues to adapt, maintaining its relevance in modern life without abandoning the scientific heritage that has developed over the centuries.

## Conclusion

This study found that Qur'anic interpretation on social media tends to emphasize simplicity in presentation, following the fast and accessible patterns of digital communication. This contributes to the democratization of interpretation, where anyone can access and discuss the meaning of Qur'anic verses without strict academic restrictions. However, this phenomenon also presents challenges, especially regarding the authority and validity of interpretations. The lack of verification mechanisms in the dissemination of interpretations on social media can lead to biased understandings or lack a strong methodological foundation, potentially leading to misunderstandings among people who do not have an academic background in Islamic studies.

Nadirsyah Hosen's tafsir approach emphasizes that the Qur'ān must be understood in its social context, so that it remains relevant to the challenges of the times. Social media-based interpretation allows readers to relate the sacred text to contemporary reality more directly, making it a source of inspiration

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<sup>45</sup> M. Nurdin Zuhdi and Sahiron Syamsuddin, "The Contemporary Qur'anic Exegesis: Tracking Trends in the Interpretation of the Qur'an in Indonesia 2000-2010," *JAWI* 1, no. 1 (March 11, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.24042/jw.v1i1.2840>.





for responses to social, political and cultural issues. Thus, this study shows that social media has established a new direction in Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia, making it more inclusive and dynamic. However, differences in the methods and quality of interpretation on social media also lead to imbalances in religious understanding, especially when the interpretations are not well-researched or supported by credible sources.

As a recommendation for future research, further studies are needed to explore how the academic verification model can be applied in digital interpretation in order to maintain the validity and authority of interpretations that develop on social media. In addition, this study still has limitations in terms of data coverage, especially because it only focuses on one particular figure, namely Nadirsyah Hosen. A comparative study that analyzes digital tafsir approaches from various figures or platforms can provide a more holistic picture of the trend of Qur'anic interpretation in the digital era. Thus, future research can further examine the influence of digital tafsir on people's religious understanding and how social media platforms can be optimally used to support more responsible and scientifically-based interpretations.

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