

Contextual Qur'anic Exegesis in the Digital Era: Reinterpreting Islamic Values for Contemporary Muslim Society

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of contextual Qur'anic exegesis in reconstructing Islamic values within contemporary Muslim society amid rapid digital transformation. The research aims to analyze how digital media reshapes Qur'anic interpretation, religious authority, and the dissemination of Islamic teachings, while exploring the relevance of contextual tafsir in addressing contemporary ethical and social challenges. The study employs a qualitative approach using a digital ethnographic design combined with phenomenological interpretation, selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of online religious interaction, interpretive practices, and Muslim experiences within digital environments. The research was conducted in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, Indonesia, as well as within several digital Islamic platforms representing active centers of contemporary Muslim discourse. Twelve informants consisting of Islamic scholars, digital preachers, Muslim youth activists, Islamic educators, and online content creators were purposively selected due to their active engagement in digital religious communication. The findings reveal that contextual Qur'anic exegesis strengthens moderate, inclusive, and adaptive Islamic understanding while responding to challenges such as misinformation, textual literalism, and ideological polarization in digital spaces. The study recommends strengthening contextual religious literacy and developing ethical digital Islamic education frameworks.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the ways religious knowledge is produced, disseminated, and interpreted within contemporary Muslim society (Tran-Dang & Kim, 2024). The emergence of digital platforms such as social media, online learning environments, virtual religious forums, podcasts, and algorithm-driven information systems has enabled broader public access to Islamic teachings beyond traditional institutions of authority (Yilmaz, 2025). In this changing environment, Qur'anic interpretation is no longer confined to classical scholars, pesantren, mosques, or academic institutions, but increasingly circulates through decentralized digital networks that involve preachers, influencers, content creators, and ordinary Muslim users. This transformation has generated both opportunities and challenges for Islamic scholarship, particularly regarding the contextual understanding of Qur'anic values in relation to contemporary social realities. The digital era encourages rapid dissemination of religious interpretations, yet it simultaneously raises concerns about superficial readings, textual literalism, ideological polarization, misinformation, and the weakening of methodological rigor in Qur'anic exegesis (Michael, 2025). Consequently, the reinterpretation of Islamic values through contextual Qur'anic exegesis has become an urgent intellectual and social necessity in order to ensure that Islamic teachings remain relevant, inclusive, and responsive to modern societal dynamics (Asad & Nazir, 2025).

Recent scholarly discussions have emphasized the importance of contextual interpretation in understanding the Qur'an as a living text that interacts with changing historical, cultural, political, and technological conditions (Chen et al., 2024). Contemporary Muslim societies face complex issues such as digital ethics, religious intolerance, identity politics, gender relations, environmental crises, artificial

intelligence, online radicalization, consumer culture, and the transformation of social communication patterns. These phenomena cannot be adequately addressed solely through literal or purely textual approaches to Qur'anic interpretation. Instead, they require interpretive frameworks that integrate classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary socio-cultural analysis (Nissa & Enoch, 2025). Contextual Qur'anic exegesis seeks to understand the objectives, moral principles, and universal values embedded within the Qur'an while considering the realities of present-day society. In this perspective, Islamic values such as justice, moderation, compassion, social responsibility, equality, and human dignity are interpreted dynamically in order to respond constructively to modern challenges (Yulianti et al., 2025). The contextual approach therefore functions not as a rejection of classical tafsir traditions, but rather as a methodological effort to bridge normative Islamic teachings with contemporary human experiences.

The state of the art within current research demonstrates growing academic interest in digital Islam, online religious authority, and contemporary Qur'anic interpretation (T. Aziz, 2024). Several studies have explored the role of social media in shaping religious discourse, the transformation of Islamic preaching in digital spaces, and the emergence of new forms of Islamic identity among Muslim youth. Other scholars have analyzed contextual approaches to tafsir, emphasizing hermeneutics, maqasid al-shari'ah, socio-historical interpretation, and thematic exegesis (Castañeda et al., 2025). Nevertheless, many existing studies tend to discuss digital media and Qur'anic interpretation separately rather than examining the interaction between both dimensions in a comprehensive manner. Research on digital Islam often focuses on communication patterns, media consumption, or online religious movements without critically addressing the epistemological implications for Qur'anic exegesis. Conversely, studies on contextual tafsir frequently remain theoretical and insufficiently connected to the realities of digital culture and algorithmic communication. As a result, there remains limited scholarly discussion concerning how contextual Qur'anic interpretation can function as a methodological framework for reconstructing Islamic values in the digital era.

The primary problem addressed in this research concerns the growing tension between the rapid circulation of religious content in digital spaces and the limited development of contextual interpretive literacy among contemporary Muslim communities (Nadirah et al., 2024). Digital platforms frequently encourage fragmentary interpretations of Qur'anic verses that are detached from historical context, ethical objectives, and broader Islamic principles. Such conditions contribute to the spread of exclusivism, religious populism, online extremism, and simplistic understandings of Islamic teachings (Hutchison et al., 2023). In addition, the democratization of religious authority in digital environments often creates confusion regarding the credibility of interpretations and the qualifications of religious actors (Andika, 2023). The absence of contextual interpretive frameworks within digital religious discourse may weaken the transformative and universal values of the Qur'an itself. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how contextual Qur'anic exegesis can provide an alternative interpretive paradigm capable of reconstructing Islamic values in ways that are relevant to contemporary Muslim society while maintaining fidelity to the foundational principles of Islam.

The research gap identified in this study lies in the insufficient integration between contextual Qur'anic exegesis and the realities of digital religious culture. Existing literature rarely examines how digital communication structures influence interpretive practices and public understanding of Islamic values (Eriyanto et al., 2025). Furthermore, previous studies often focus either on theological interpretation or media studies independently, without constructing an interdisciplinary framework that connects Qur'anic hermeneutics, digital communication, and contemporary Muslim social transformation. This study attempts to fill that gap by positioning contextual tafsir not merely as a textual method, but as a socially responsive intellectual approach capable of engaging digital realities critically and constructively. The novelty of this research therefore lies in its effort to conceptualize contextual Qur'anic exegesis as a transformative framework for interpreting Islamic values within digitally mediated Muslim societies. This research also contributes to the development of interdisciplinary Islamic studies by combining perspectives from Qur'anic studies, sociology of religion, digital communication, and contemporary Islamic thought.

Based on these considerations, the research formulates several central questions. The first question concerns how digital transformation has influenced patterns of Qur'anic interpretation and religious authority within contemporary Muslim society. The second question examines the extent to which contextual Qur'anic exegesis can respond to the challenges of digital religious discourse. The third question investigates how Islamic values may be reconstructed and reinterpreted through contextual approaches in order to address contemporary social, ethical, and technological issues. The fourth question explores the relevance of contextual tafsir for strengthening moderate, inclusive, and humanistic Islamic perspectives in digital environments.

The objective of this research is to analyze the role of contextual Qur'anic exegesis in reconstructing Islamic values within the digital era. Specifically, the study aims to explain the transformation of religious interpretation in digital spaces, identify the challenges faced by contemporary Muslim society regarding religious understanding, and formulate a contextual interpretive framework capable of integrating Qur'anic values with contemporary realities. In addition, this research seeks to contribute to the development of moderate Islamic discourse that is adaptive to technological changes while remaining grounded in the ethical and spiritual principles of the Qur'an.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the enrichment of contemporary Qur'anic studies by developing an interdisciplinary understanding of contextual exegesis in relation to digital culture. The study also strengthens academic discourse concerning the interaction between Islamic thought, communication technology, and social transformation. Academically, this research is expected to become a scholarly reference for researchers, lecturers, and students in the fields of Islamic studies, communication studies, sociology of religion, and digital humanities. Practically, the findings may provide insights for religious educators, Islamic institutions, digital content creators, and policymakers in promoting contextual, inclusive, and responsible religious literacy within digital environments.

Nevertheless, this research has several limitations. The study primarily focuses on conceptual and interpretive analysis rather than empirical measurement of audience reception across diverse Muslim communities. In addition, the scope of digital platforms discussed remains selective and may not fully represent the complexity of global digital religious ecosystems. Cultural variations among Muslim societies are also not comprehensively examined due to contextual limitations within the research framework. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to conduct comparative empirical research involving different digital communities, social media platforms, and regional contexts in order to explore how contextual Qur'anic interpretation is received, negotiated, and practiced within diverse Muslim societies. Further interdisciplinary investigations integrating digital ethnography, artificial intelligence studies, and contemporary Islamic ethics may also enrich scholarly understanding regarding the future of Qur'anic interpretation in the evolving digital civilization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of contextual Qur'anic exegesis in the digital era has emerged as an important interdisciplinary discourse within contemporary Islamic scholarship (Miftah & Erzad, 2024). The transformation of communication technology has significantly influenced the construction of religious understanding, the dissemination of Islamic teachings, and the reinterpretation of Qur'anic values in modern Muslim societies (Ismail et al., 2025). Digital media has altered traditional patterns of religious authority by allowing broader participation in religious interpretation through social networking platforms, online preaching, podcasts, digital forums, and algorithm-driven information systems (Rofiq et al., 2024). Consequently, the interpretation of the Qur'an is no longer monopolized by conventional religious institutions, but increasingly shaped by decentralized digital interactions. This condition requires the development of contextual interpretive approaches capable of connecting Qur'anic teachings with rapidly changing socio-cultural realities. Within this framework, the literature review of the present study integrates three major theoretical perspectives, namely Contextual Hermeneutics Theory, Social Construction of Reality Theory, and Mediatization Theory. These theoretical perspectives are employed to explain how Islamic values may be reinterpreted and reconstructed within contemporary digital society while maintaining fidelity to the ethical and universal principles of the Qur'an.

The first theory employed in this research is Contextual Hermeneutics Theory, widely popularized by Fazlur Rahman Malik in 1982 through his influential work *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Mashungam & Khamrang, 2025). Fazlur Rahman was a prominent Muslim intellectual affiliated with the University of Chicago, United States. Rahman's theoretical framework emphasizes the "double movement" approach, which interprets Qur'anic teachings by moving from the historical context of revelation toward universal moral principles and then applying those principles to contemporary realities. According to Rahman, the Qur'an should not be interpreted solely through literal textualism because the ethical objectives of revelation are closely related to historical and social circumstances. His theory encourages dynamic engagement between scripture and modern human problems, including issues related to social justice, gender equality, ethics, pluralism, and technological transformation.

The development of contextual hermeneutics was later strengthened by Abdullah Saeed in 2006 through his work *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (Nadhifah & Najib, 2025). Saeed, affiliated with the University of Melbourne, Australia, expanded contextual interpretation by emphasizing the hierarchy of Qur'anic values and the importance of socio-historical awareness in understanding Islamic teachings. According to Saeed, contextual interpretation allows Muslim societies to distinguish between universal moral values and context-specific regulations. Another influential scholar is Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd from Cairo University, Egypt, whose intellectual contributions in the 1990s emphasized the Qur'an as a dynamic discourse interacting continuously with social realities (Aprilia & Wahab, 2025). Abu Zayd argued that interpretation must consider language, culture, and historical transformation rather than treating the Qur'an as a static legal text. The theoretical development of contextual hermeneutics in contemporary scholarship increasingly focuses on issues of digital ethics, online religiosity, multiculturalism, and global citizenship. In relation to this research, contextual hermeneutics provides a conceptual framework for understanding how Islamic values can be reconstructed within digital environments without losing their normative and spiritual foundations.

The second theory applied in this study is the Social Construction of Reality Theory developed by Peter Ludwig Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1966 through their seminal work *The Social Construction of Reality* (Feriansyah, 2023). Berger was associated with Boston University, United States, while Luckmann was affiliated with the University of Konstanz, Germany. This theory explains that reality is socially constructed through processes of interaction, institutionalization, and internalization. Human beings actively create meaning through communication and social engagement, including the construction of religious understanding. Within digital society, religious narratives and interpretations of Islamic teachings are increasingly produced through online interactions, social media discussions, and virtual communities. Consequently, Islamic values circulating in digital spaces are not merely theological doctrines but socially negotiated meanings shaped by technological and cultural conditions.

The theoretical development of social construction theory has expanded significantly in the context of digital communication. Manuel Castells from the University of Southern California, United States, through his theory of network society in the early 2000s, emphasized that digital networks reshape social interaction, identity formation, and knowledge production (Dewi, 2024). In digital environments, religious authority becomes decentralized because information flows horizontally rather than hierarchically. Another relevant scholar is Heidi Campbell from Texas A&M University, United States, who developed the concept of digital religion (Istichoroh et al., 2025). Campbell argues that digital media transforms religious practices, authority structures, and communal identity among believers. According to Campbell, online religious interaction creates hybrid forms of spirituality where traditional teachings intersect with contemporary media culture. The contemporary development of social construction theory therefore demonstrates that digital platforms significantly influence how Muslims understand, negotiate, and reinterpret Islamic values. This theory is closely related to the main problem of the present research because it explains how digital communication shapes contemporary religious consciousness and contributes to interpretive fragmentation within Muslim societies.

The third theory utilized in this study is Mediatization Theory, primarily popularized by Stig Hjarvard in 2008 through his influential studies on media and religion (Miftahussurur et al., 2025).

Hjarvard is affiliated with the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Mediatization theory explains that media has evolved beyond being a neutral communication tool and has become an autonomous institution shaping social, cultural, political, and religious realities. According to Hjarvard, religion in modern society increasingly operates according to media logic, where religious content is simplified, personalized, commodified, and adapted to digital audiences. This transformation influences how Islamic teachings are presented and consumed within contemporary Muslim society.

The development of mediatization theory has been strengthened by Andreas Hepp from the University of Bremen, Germany, who emphasized “deep mediatization” in the context of advanced digital technology (Radiyal et al., 2025). Hepp argues that digital media fundamentally restructures human communication and social practices, including religious engagement. Similarly, Nick Couldry from the London School of Economics, United Kingdom, explains that media practices shape symbolic power and public understanding within modern societies (Werdee, 2023). In contemporary conditions, mediatization theory increasingly addresses the role of algorithms, artificial intelligence, influencer culture, and digital capitalism in shaping religious discourse. Within the context of this research, mediatization theory explains how digital platforms influence the circulation of Qur’anic interpretations and transform religious authority into highly mediated forms of communication. The theory is therefore relevant to understanding the research gap concerning the limited integration between contextual Qur’anic interpretation and digital media studies.

The integration of these three theories provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for analyzing contextual Qur’anic exegesis in the digital era. Contextual Hermeneutics Theory explains the methodological foundation for reinterpreting Qur’anic values in relation to changing social realities. Social Construction of Reality Theory clarifies how religious understanding is collectively produced through digital interaction and communication processes. Meanwhile, Mediatization Theory demonstrates how media structures influence the dissemination, consumption, and transformation of Islamic teachings within digital society. Together, these theories address the main research problem concerning the tension between rapidly expanding digital religious discourse and the limited contextual literacy among Muslim communities.

The theoretical framework also directly addresses the research gap identified in previous studies. Existing scholarship often separates discussions of Qur’anic interpretation from analyses of digital communication and media transformation. By integrating hermeneutics, social construction, and mediatization perspectives, this study offers an interdisciplinary approach capable of explaining both the epistemological and sociological dimensions of contemporary Qur’anic interpretation. This integration constitutes the novelty of the research because it conceptualizes contextual tafsir not merely as a textual method, but as a socially responsive framework interacting dynamically with digital culture and technological transformation.

Furthermore, the selected theories are closely connected to the research questions, objectives, and benefits of the study. The theories provide analytical tools for examining how digital transformation affects Qur’anic interpretation, how contextual exegesis can address contemporary social challenges, and how Islamic values may be reconstructed within modern digital society. Theoretically, the study contributes to the development of interdisciplinary Islamic scholarship integrating Qur’anic studies with communication and media studies. Academically, the research enriches scholarly discourse concerning digital Islam and contemporary tafsir methodology. Practically, the findings may support educators, religious institutions, policymakers, and digital content creators in promoting contextual, inclusive, and moderate Islamic discourse within digital environments.

In conclusion, the literature review demonstrates that Contextual Hermeneutics Theory, Social Construction of Reality Theory, and Mediatization Theory collectively provide a strong analytical foundation for examining the reinterpretation of Islamic values in the digital era. The perspectives of Fazlur Rahman, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, and Stig Hjarvard reveal that contemporary religious interpretation is deeply influenced by historical context, social interaction, and media transformation. The integration of these theories addresses the primary research problem concerning fragmented digital religious understanding, fills the existing gap between tafsir studies and digital communication studies, and supports the novelty of developing contextual Qur’anic exegesis as a

transformative framework for contemporary Muslim society. Ultimately, the theoretical synthesis contributes to achieving the research objectives and generating theoretical, academic, and practical benefits for the advancement of contemporary Islamic studies in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to examine the dynamics of contextual Qur'anic exegesis in the digital era and its relevance for reconstructing Islamic values within contemporary Muslim society (Werdee, 2023). The qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate method because the research focuses on understanding meanings, interpretations, social experiences, and religious discourses that emerge within digital environments. The study does not aim to measure statistical relationships or numerical trends, but rather seeks to explore deeply how Islamic values are interpreted, negotiated, and disseminated through digital communication practices. Qualitative research enables the researcher to analyze complex social phenomena holistically by emphasizing interpretive understanding, contextual analysis, and the subjective experiences of social actors involved in contemporary digital religious interaction (Peace, 2023). Within the context of this research, the qualitative approach allows the exploration of how contextual Qur'anic interpretation develops in response to technological transformation, online religious authority, and changing patterns of Muslim social engagement.

The research design applied in this study is qualitative digital ethnography combined with a phenomenological interpretive approach (Liza et al., 2025). Digital ethnography is utilized because the research investigates religious discourse and interpretive practices occurring within digital spaces such as social media platforms, online Islamic forums, YouTube religious channels, podcasts, and virtual discussion communities. This design enables the researcher to observe patterns of communication, forms of religious interaction, and the dissemination of Qur'anic interpretations within digitally mediated environments. The phenomenological interpretive approach is incorporated to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretive consciousness of Muslim individuals engaged in digital religious activities (Wang & Xu, 2025). The combination of digital ethnography and phenomenology is particularly relevant because the study aims not only to identify online religious practices, but also to interpret the meanings and motivations underlying those practices. Through this design, the researcher is able to analyze how contextual Qur'anic exegesis functions as a framework for reconstructing Islamic values amid the challenges of digital modernity.

The selection of qualitative digital ethnography is further justified by the nature of the research problem itself. The main issue investigated in this study concerns the transformation of Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic values within rapidly evolving digital environments. Contemporary religious discourse cannot be separated from the influence of digital media, algorithmic communication, influencer culture, and online interaction (Muhasim et al., 2025). These phenomena are fluid, socially constructed, and context-dependent, making qualitative inquiry more suitable than quantitative measurement. Digital ethnography allows the researcher to engage directly with online religious communities and observe how Islamic teachings are interpreted, debated, and disseminated across digital platforms (Abdiraiymova, 2023). Moreover, the interpretive phenomenological dimension provides deeper insight into how Muslim users understand contextual tafsir and how they negotiate religious authority within contemporary digital society.

The research was conducted within several digital environments that serve as primary locations of online Islamic discourse. The virtual field sites include Islamic discussion communities on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook groups, and online Qur'anic study forums. In addition, the study also involved limited offline engagement within Islamic educational institutions and urban Muslim intellectual communities located in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, Indonesia. These locations were selected because they represent important centers of Islamic intellectual activity, digital literacy development, and contemporary Muslim discourse in Indonesia (Nadlif, 2023). Indonesia was chosen as the broader research setting due to its position as the world's largest Muslim-majority country with a highly active digital population. Indonesian Muslim society demonstrates dynamic interactions between Islamic tradition, digital culture, and modern social transformation, making it highly relevant for investigating contextual Qur'anic interpretation in the digital era.

The selection of Jakarta as one of the research locations is based on its role as Indonesia's political, educational, media, and technological center. Jakarta contains numerous Islamic organizations, digital religious communities, universities, and online media institutions that actively produce and circulate Islamic discourse. Yogyakarta was selected because of its reputation as an intellectual and academic city characterized by strong traditions of Islamic scholarship, student activism, and progressive religious discourse. Meanwhile, Bandung was chosen due to its vibrant digital creative culture, strong youth participation in online religious movements, and rapid technological adaptation among Muslim communities. These locations collectively provide a diverse representation of contemporary Muslim experiences regarding digital religious engagement and contextual Islamic interpretation.

Because this research employs a qualitative methodology, the study does not focus on large-scale statistical respondents. Instead, the research emphasizes purposive selection of participants who possess relevant experiences, expertise, and involvement in digital Islamic discourse (Camilia et al., 2025). The study involved twelve key informants selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Andriyani, 2024). Purposive sampling was used to identify participants who actively engage in contextual Qur'anic interpretation, digital Islamic communication, or online religious education. Snowball sampling was subsequently applied to expand participant networks through recommendations from initial informants who possessed significant expertise or influence within digital religious communities.

The first informant, identified using the pseudonym Dr. Ahmad F., serves as a lecturer in Qur'anic studies at an Islamic university in Jakarta. He was selected because of his expertise in contemporary tafsir methodology and his active involvement in digital Islamic education through webinars and online lectures. The second informant, referred to as Ustazah Nabila R., is a female Islamic content creator based in Bandung with significant social media influence among Muslim youth audiences. She was chosen because her digital preaching emphasizes contextual Islamic ethics, gender discourse, and moderate interpretations of Qur'anic teachings. The third informant, named Professor Yusuf H., is a senior scholar specializing in Islamic hermeneutics from Yogyakarta. His participation was important for understanding the academic development of contextual tafsir within Indonesian Islamic scholarship.

Additional informants include Muslim digital activists, online religious educators, Islamic media practitioners, university students, and members of virtual Qur'anic discussion communities. Among them are Farid M., a podcast host discussing Islam and technology; Siti A., an Islamic education practitioner involved in online Qur'anic literacy programs; Rizky T., a Muslim youth activist managing digital da'wah platforms; and Hana P., a graduate student researching digital religion and Islamic communication. These informants were selected because they represent different dimensions of contemporary Muslim interaction with digital religious discourse. The diversity of participants enables the researcher to obtain comprehensive perspectives regarding the reinterpretation of Islamic values in the digital era.

The primary data collection techniques employed in this study consist of in-depth interviews, participant observation, digital content analysis, and documentation studies (Daabi & Inayati, 2023). In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structurally to allow flexibility in exploring participants' experiences, interpretations, and perceptions regarding contextual Qur'anic exegesis. Interviews focused on themes such as religious authority, digital literacy, online Islamic discourse, contextual interpretation, and the challenges of disseminating Islamic values within digital platforms. The semi-structured format enabled participants to express their perspectives openly while still maintaining alignment with the research objectives.

Participant observation was conducted through active engagement with online religious communities and digital Islamic forums (Sulfemi, 2024). The researcher observed interactions within social media discussions, virtual religious lectures, online Qur'anic study sessions, and digital comment sections related to Islamic interpretation. This method enabled the researcher to identify patterns of communication, interpretive debates, symbolic expressions, and forms of religious engagement within

digital environments. Observation also allowed examination of how contextual Qur'anic interpretation is accepted, contested, or transformed within contemporary online Muslim communities.

Digital content analysis was another significant component of the methodology (Abdulloh, 2025). The researcher analyzed selected religious content from YouTube videos, Instagram posts, TikTok sermons, online articles, and podcast discussions focusing on contextual Islamic interpretation and contemporary social issues. Content analysis aimed to identify dominant themes, interpretive strategies, representations of Islamic values, and patterns of digital religious communication. This method was particularly important for understanding how Qur'anic teachings are framed and disseminated within algorithm-driven digital platforms.

Documentation studies were conducted by examining academic publications, Islamic organizational reports, digital archives, online religious statements, and contemporary tafsir literature relevant to the research topic. Documentation analysis provided contextual support for interpreting empirical findings and situating them within broader academic and social discussions concerning digital Islam and contextual Qur'anic exegesis.

The validity and trustworthiness of the research were strengthened through triangulation techniques involving multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical perspectives (Milutinovic et al., 2025). Source triangulation was achieved by comparing information obtained from scholars, digital activists, educators, and online Muslim communities. Methodological triangulation involved integrating interviews, observations, content analysis, and documentation studies. Theoretical triangulation was conducted by connecting findings with contextual hermeneutics theory, social construction theory, and mediatization theory. These triangulation processes enhanced the credibility, reliability, and interpretive depth of the research findings.

The data analysis process employed thematic and interpretive analysis techniques (Istighosah, 2025). Data obtained from interviews, observations, and digital content were transcribed, categorized, and coded according to emerging themes relevant to the research questions. The researcher identified recurring patterns related to contextual interpretation, digital religious authority, Islamic values, and online communication practices. Themes were subsequently interpreted critically using the selected theoretical frameworks in order to explain the relationships between digital transformation and contemporary Qur'anic interpretation.

The technique of drawing conclusions in this research follows an inductive analytical approach (Nafia et al., 2025). Conclusions were developed gradually through continuous interaction between empirical findings, theoretical interpretation, and contextual analysis. The researcher first identified specific patterns emerging from field data and subsequently constructed broader conceptual understandings regarding contextual Qur'anic exegesis in the digital era. Inductive reasoning enabled the researcher to formulate conclusions grounded in participants' lived experiences and actual digital religious practices rather than imposing predetermined assumptions. Furthermore, the process of conclusion drawing involved reflective interpretation aimed at connecting empirical realities with broader theoretical discussions concerning Islamic studies, digital communication, and contemporary Muslim society.

Overall, the qualitative digital ethnographic methodology employed in this study provides a comprehensive framework for examining the reinterpretation of Islamic values within digitally mediated environments. Through the integration of phenomenological interpretation, digital observation, in-depth interviews, and thematic analysis, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how contextual Qur'anic exegesis functions as a transformative intellectual approach in responding to contemporary social and technological challenges faced by Muslim societies in the digital age.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the digital era has significantly transformed the patterns of Qur'anic interpretation, religious authority, and the dissemination of Islamic values within contemporary Muslim society (I. H. Aziz et al., 2023). The research reveals that contextual Qur'anic

exegesis has emerged as an increasingly important interpretive framework for responding to social, ethical, cultural, and technological changes influenced by digital communication systems (Nahwiyah & Syarif, 2025). Through digital ethnographic observation, in-depth interviews, and content analysis conducted across various online Islamic platforms, the study identified that contemporary Muslim communities actively engage with Qur'anic interpretation through social media, online lectures, podcasts, virtual study circles, and short-form religious content. However, the rapid circulation of religious narratives in digital environments simultaneously creates interpretive fragmentation, simplification of religious understanding, and ideological polarization among online Muslim audiences (Tu et al., 2025). These findings confirm the primary research problem concerning the tension between accelerated digital religious communication and the limited contextual literacy applied in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation.

The research findings indicate that digital media has democratized religious authority by allowing broader participation in Islamic discourse production (Muksalmina, 2024). Traditional religious authority once centered within pesantren, mosques, Islamic universities, and established scholars has gradually shifted toward decentralized digital networks involving influencers, independent preachers, and online content creators (Ilham & Madum, 2025). Several informants emphasized that younger Muslim audiences frequently obtain religious knowledge from social media algorithms rather than from structured educational institutions. This condition creates accessibility to Islamic teachings but simultaneously increases vulnerability to textual literalism, misinformation, and superficial interpretation. According to the findings, contextual Qur'anic exegesis becomes crucial in addressing these challenges because it emphasizes ethical interpretation, socio-historical awareness, and universal Islamic values rather than rigid textual formalism (Sihono & Cahyo, 2024).

The implementation of Contextual Hermeneutics Theory developed by Fazlur Rahman was clearly reflected in the findings (Criddle et al., 2025). Informants consistently highlighted the importance of interpreting Qur'anic verses through contextual understanding that connects historical revelation with contemporary realities. The study found that digital Islamic educators who apply contextual approaches tend to discuss broader ethical principles such as justice, compassion, moderation, equality, environmental responsibility, and social harmony rather than focusing exclusively on literal legalism. This confirms Rahman's "double movement" theory, where Qur'anic interpretation moves from historical context toward universal moral values and then returns to contemporary social realities. In practical implementation, contextual interpretation was frequently applied in discussions regarding digital ethics, cyberbullying, online intolerance, artificial intelligence, gender relations, and multicultural coexistence within digital environments.

The findings further reveal that Social Construction of Reality Theory proposed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann strongly explains the formation of religious understanding within online Muslim communities (Dainuri, 2025). Digital religious discourse was found to operate through processes of social interaction, institutionalization, and collective meaning-making. Online religious narratives become normalized through repeated sharing, algorithmic amplification, and virtual communal reinforcement. Informants noted that social media platforms significantly influence how Muslims interpret Islamic values because digital communication structures shape public perception regarding what constitutes authentic or authoritative religious knowledge. Consequently, Islamic interpretation in digital spaces becomes socially negotiated rather than solely institutionally determined. This phenomenon supports the argument that digital religious reality is constructed collectively through interaction between technology, media culture, and social participation.

The application of Mediatization Theory developed by Stig Hjarvard was also evident throughout the findings (Husaini et al., 2025). The study demonstrates that media logic increasingly shapes the presentation and consumption of Islamic teachings. Religious messages are frequently simplified into short visual content, motivational quotations, emotional narratives, or algorithmically optimized sermons designed to maximize audience engagement. Several participants observed that digital religious content often prioritizes popularity and virality over methodological depth and scholarly rigor. As a result, religious interpretation may become commodified and detached from critical intellectual traditions. Nevertheless, the study also found positive developments in which

contextual Islamic educators utilize digital media creatively to promote inclusive, moderate, and humanistic Islamic values. Therefore, mediatization does not merely weaken religious understanding but also creates opportunities for renewing Islamic communication through adaptive digital engagement.

The following table summarizes the major research findings and their theoretical implications.

Table

Table 1 Main Findings and Theoretical Integration in Contextual Qur’anic Exegesis within the Digital Era

Research Findings	Theoretical Perspective	Implementation in Contemporary Muslim Society
Democratization of religious authority through digital media	Social Construction of Reality Theory (Berger & Luckmann)	Online religious interaction reshapes authority structures and public understanding of Islamic teachings
Growth of contextual Islamic interpretation in digital platforms	Contextual Hermeneutics Theory (Fazlur Rahman)	Qur’anic values interpreted according to contemporary ethical and social realities
Simplification and fragmentation of religious discourse	Mediatization Theory (Hjarvard)	Religious content adapted to media logic, algorithmic trends, and audience engagement
Increasing popularity of moderate and inclusive Islamic narratives	Contextual Hermeneutics + Mediatization	Digital da‘wah promoting tolerance, social harmony, and ethical literacy
Expansion of online Muslim communities	Social Construction + Mediatization	Virtual communities influence collective religious identity and interpretation
Challenges of misinformation and textual literalism	Contextual Hermeneutics Theory	Need for contextual literacy and critical interpretive education

The findings also address the identified research gap concerning the limited integration between contextual tafsir studies and digital communication analysis. Previous studies generally examined either contemporary Qur’anic interpretation or digital Islam separately. In contrast, this research demonstrates that both dimensions are inseparable within contemporary Muslim society. Digital media not only functions as a communication tool but also actively shapes interpretive consciousness and religious authority structures (ChoGlueck & Lloyd, 2023). The study therefore contributes a new interdisciplinary framework integrating Qur’anic hermeneutics, sociology of religion, and digital communication studies.

The novelty of this research lies in its conceptualization of contextual Qur’anic exegesis as a transformative framework for navigating digital religious culture. Unlike previous studies that emphasized either theological interpretation or technological transformation independently, this study demonstrates that contextual tafsir functions simultaneously as an interpretive methodology, ethical framework, and social response to digital modernity (Levin et al., 2025). Informants consistently emphasized that contextual interpretation enables Muslims to address contemporary issues without abandoning foundational Islamic principles. For example, discussions regarding digital privacy, artificial intelligence ethics, online hate speech, environmental sustainability, and interfaith interaction were interpreted through broader Qur’anic principles of justice, human dignity, and social responsibility.

The research findings also respond directly to the formulated research questions. The first research question examined how digital transformation influences Qur’anic interpretation and religious authority. The findings indicate that digital media decentralizes religious authority and encourages

participatory religious discourse, thereby transforming conventional hierarchical patterns of Islamic knowledge transmission (Fauziah et al., 2025). The second research question investigated how contextual exegesis responds to digital religious challenges. The findings reveal that contextual interpretation provides interpretive flexibility capable of addressing rapidly changing social and technological realities while preserving Islamic ethical principles. The third research question explored how Islamic values may be reconstructed within contemporary digital society. The study found that values such as moderation, compassion, inclusivity, and social justice are increasingly interpreted through contemporary ethical frameworks relevant to digital citizenship and global multicultural interaction.

The findings further support the objectives of the research by demonstrating the importance of contextual Qur'anic exegesis for developing adaptive Islamic discourse within contemporary society. The first research objective sought to analyze the transformation of religious interpretation in digital environments. The results confirm that digital communication systems profoundly influence interpretive authority, knowledge circulation, and religious identity formation (Langi et al., 2025). The second objective aimed to identify contemporary challenges regarding Islamic understanding within digital society. The findings highlight problems including algorithmic polarization, religious populism, misinformation, and interpretive superficiality. The third objective focused on developing a contextual interpretive framework capable of integrating Qur'anic values with contemporary realities. The study demonstrates that contextual hermeneutics effectively bridges classical Islamic teachings with present-day social and technological conditions.

From a theoretical perspective, the research contributes to the advancement of interdisciplinary Islamic scholarship by integrating contextual hermeneutics, social construction theory, and mediatization theory within a unified analytical framework. The findings strengthen Fazlur Rahman's argument that Qur'anic interpretation must prioritize ethical objectives rather than rigid literalism (Umayyatun, 2025). Simultaneously, the study extends Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory into digital religious contexts by illustrating how online interaction constructs collective Islamic understanding (Toriqirrama, 2025). Furthermore, the findings enrich Hjarvard's mediatization theory by demonstrating how digital media influences Islamic authority structures and interpretive practices within Muslim societies (Purnasih et al., 2025).

Academically, the research contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic studies, digital humanities, communication studies, and sociology of religion. The study provides empirical and conceptual insights regarding how digital transformation reshapes religious interpretation within Muslim-majority societies. Several previous studies by Heidi Campbell on digital religion similarly emphasized the transformation of religious practices through online communication (Astuti et al., 2025). However, the present research advances these discussions by specifically focusing on contextual Qur'anic interpretation as an ethical and intellectual response to digital modernity. Likewise, Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach to Qur'anic interpretation emphasized socio-historical understanding, yet this study expands his framework into digitally mediated religious environments (Rumaisa et al., 2025).

Practically, the findings provide important implications for religious educators, Islamic institutions, policymakers, and digital content creators. The study demonstrates the need for strengthening contextual religious literacy within digital platforms to prevent extremism, misinformation, and ideological polarization. Islamic educational institutions may utilize these findings to develop digital literacy programs integrating Qur'anic ethics with critical media awareness. Religious leaders and content creators may also apply contextual interpretive approaches to promote moderate Islamic discourse relevant to younger digital audiences. Policymakers may further benefit from understanding how digital media shapes religious consciousness and public morality within contemporary Muslim society.

The findings also confirm several arguments proposed in earlier research regarding the transformation of religious authority in digital society. Previous studies by Manuel Castells emphasized that network society structures reshape knowledge production and social identity formation (Ihwanah

et al., 2024). This research supports Castells' perspective by demonstrating that digital religious authority increasingly operates through decentralized communication networks rather than traditional institutional hierarchies. Similarly, earlier research by Andreas Hepp concerning deep mediatization highlighted how digital technology restructures everyday communication practices (Salik, 2023). The present findings extend this argument into Islamic studies by illustrating how digital mediation influences Qur'anic interpretation and religious engagement.

In relation to the primary research problem, the findings indicate that the main challenge within contemporary digital Muslim society is not merely technological transformation itself, but rather the absence of contextual interpretive literacy capable of critically engaging digital religious content. Many online Islamic narratives were found to prioritize emotional mobilization, identity politics, and symbolic religiosity rather than ethical reflection and intellectual depth (Maftuh & Devita, 2023). This problem corresponds with previous studies concerning digital populism and online religious radicalization. However, the present research demonstrates that contextual Qur'anic exegesis offers a constructive alternative by emphasizing universal Islamic ethics and socially responsive interpretation.

The findings additionally clarify the existing research gap regarding insufficient interdisciplinary integration within studies of digital Islam and contemporary tafsir. Previous scholarship often analyzed Islamic media communication without examining interpretive methodology, while tafsir studies frequently neglected digital communication structures. This research bridges both dimensions by positioning contextual Qur'anic interpretation within contemporary digital communication systems. The integration of the three theoretical frameworks enables a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values are socially constructed, mediated, and interpreted within contemporary digital environments.

The discussion also reveals that younger Muslim generations increasingly seek Islamic understanding relevant to modern social realities. Informants consistently emphasized the importance of discussing issues such as mental health, environmental ethics, gender equality, digital citizenship, economic justice, and multicultural coexistence through contextual Islamic perspectives. This finding reflects broader transformations within contemporary Muslim intellectual discourse, where Islamic teachings are expected to address global ethical challenges rather than remain confined to ritualistic or doctrinal concerns (Rachmawati et al., 2024). Contextual Qur'anic exegesis therefore functions not only as a methodological approach but also as a means of renewing Islamic ethical engagement within contemporary civilization.

In conclusion, the results and discussion demonstrate that contextual Qur'anic exegesis plays a transformative role in reconstructing Islamic values within the digital era. The findings confirm that digital communication reshapes religious authority, interpretive practices, and Muslim social interaction, thereby creating both opportunities and challenges for contemporary Islamic scholarship. Through the integration of Contextual Hermeneutics Theory, Social Construction of Reality Theory, and Mediatization Theory, the research provides a comprehensive explanation of how Islamic values are interpreted, negotiated, and disseminated within digital society. The study addresses the main research problem, fills the identified scholarly gap, supports the formulated research questions and objectives, and contributes theoretical, academic, and practical benefits to the advancement of interdisciplinary Islamic studies in the contemporary digital age.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research demonstrates that contextual Qur'anic exegesis possesses a significant and transformative role in responding to the complexities of contemporary Muslim society within the digital era. Based on the findings and discussion, the study confirms that digital technological development has fundamentally reshaped the production, dissemination, and reception of Islamic knowledge. Religious authority, which was previously concentrated within traditional Islamic institutions such as pesantren, mosques, and formal educational centers, has increasingly shifted toward decentralized digital communication networks. Social media platforms, online religious forums, podcasts, short-video applications, and algorithm-driven communication systems have enabled broader

participation in the interpretation of Islamic teachings. While this transformation has expanded public access to religious knowledge, it has simultaneously generated challenges including interpretive fragmentation, textual literalism, ideological polarization, and the rapid spread of unverified religious narratives. Consequently, the research concludes that contextual Qur'anic exegesis is urgently needed as an interpretive framework capable of connecting Qur'anic teachings with the ethical, social, and technological realities of modern Muslim society.

The research findings reveal that contextual interpretation provides a methodological approach that allows Islamic values to remain relevant amid contemporary social transformation. Through contextual exegesis, Qur'anic teachings are not understood merely as static legal formulations, but rather as dynamic ethical principles aimed at promoting justice, compassion, moderation, equality, human dignity, and social harmony. The study demonstrates that Muslim intellectuals, digital Islamic educators, and online religious communities increasingly apply contextual approaches when discussing issues such as digital ethics, online intolerance, environmental crises, gender relations, multicultural coexistence, and technological modernization. This finding confirms that contextual Qur'anic interpretation enables the reconstruction of Islamic values in ways that remain faithful to the moral objectives of the Qur'an while simultaneously addressing contemporary human experiences.

The application of Contextual Hermeneutics Theory within this study confirms the relevance of Fazlur Rahman's interpretive framework in understanding the relationship between revelation and social reality. The findings indicate that contemporary Muslim communities require interpretive methods capable of translating universal Qur'anic values into practical guidance relevant to digital civilization. The study further concludes that the contextual approach strengthens Islamic adaptability without undermining the authenticity of religious teachings. By emphasizing ethical substance rather than rigid literalism, contextual tafsir contributes to the development of moderate and inclusive Islamic discourse suitable for pluralistic digital societies.

The findings also reinforce the explanatory relevance of Social Construction of Reality Theory developed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The research concludes that religious understanding within digital society is socially constructed through interaction, communication, and collective participation within online communities. Digital platforms shape how Muslims perceive religious authority, authenticity, and Islamic identity. Religious narratives circulating through algorithmic communication systems become normalized through repetition, visibility, and communal reinforcement. Therefore, contemporary Qur'anic interpretation cannot be separated from the influence of digital social structures and communication culture. This conclusion highlights that the reinterpretation of Islamic values in the digital era is not solely a theological process but also a sociological phenomenon shaped by media interaction and technological transformation.

Furthermore, the research confirms the importance of Mediatization Theory in explaining how media logic influences contemporary religious discourse. The study concludes that digital media increasingly determines the format, style, and dissemination of Islamic teachings. Religious messages are frequently simplified into short, emotionally engaging, and highly consumable content designed for digital audiences. While this condition risks reducing the depth of Islamic scholarship, the findings simultaneously demonstrate that digital platforms may also function as productive spaces for promoting contextual, moderate, and humanistic Islamic values. Consequently, the study concludes that mediatization should not only be viewed as a challenge to religious authority, but also as an opportunity for renewing Islamic communication strategies within contemporary society.

In relation to the primary research problem, the study concludes that the central challenge faced by contemporary Muslim society lies in the imbalance between the rapid expansion of digital religious discourse and the limited development of contextual interpretive literacy. Many digital religious narratives prioritize symbolic religiosity, emotional mobilization, and ideological simplification rather than ethical reflection and intellectual depth. Contextual Qur'anic exegesis therefore becomes essential for strengthening critical religious literacy and preventing the spread of exclusivism, intolerance, and misinformation within online Muslim communities.

The research also concludes that the integration of contextual hermeneutics, social construction theory, and mediatization theory successfully addresses the identified research gap concerning the limited interdisciplinary connection between tafsir studies and digital communication studies. This theoretical integration represents the novelty of the research because it conceptualizes contextual Qur'anic exegesis not merely as a textual method, but as a socially responsive intellectual framework capable of engaging digital realities critically and constructively. Through this interdisciplinary approach, the study contributes to the advancement of contemporary Islamic studies by connecting Qur'anic interpretation with sociology of religion, communication studies, and digital culture analysis.

Finally, the study concludes that contextual Qur'anic exegesis offers significant theoretical, academic, and practical contributions for contemporary Muslim society. Theoretically, the research enriches interdisciplinary Islamic scholarship regarding the relationship between religion, technology, and social transformation. Academically, the study contributes to the development of contemporary tafsir studies and digital religion research within global Islamic discourse. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for educators, religious institutions, policymakers, and digital Islamic content creators in promoting inclusive, contextual, and ethically grounded Islamic understanding. Overall, the research confirms that contextual Qur'anic exegesis functions as an important intellectual and ethical framework for reconstructing Islamic values capable of responding adaptively to the opportunities and challenges of the digital era while maintaining the universal moral vision of the Qur'an.

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