



Contemporary Approaches to Qur'anic Hermeneutics

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ABSTRAK

Masalah dalam penelitian ini berfokus pada perubahan signifikan dalam hermeneutika Al-Qur'an di era modern, di mana pendekatan tradisional sering dianggap tidak memadai dalam menjawab isu-isu kontemporer. Perbedaan ini menciptakan kebutuhan akan pendekatan penafsiran yang lebih kontekstual dan inklusif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis transformasi hermeneutika Al-Qur'an dan menawarkan pendekatan yang lebih kontekstual tanpa mengabaikan nilai-nilai tradisional. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan desain kajian pustaka. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari 15 ulama dan cendekiawan Muslim yang terlibat dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an kontemporer. Data dikumpulkan melalui analisis dokumen dan wawancara mendalam, dengan menggunakan panduan wawancara sebagai instrumen. Analisis data dilakukan melalui pendekatan analisis isi dan tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan hermeneutika kontemporer lebih adaptif terhadap perubahan sosial dan budaya modern, memperkaya metodologi penafsiran yang lebih inklusif dan kontekstual. Simpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa transformasi hermeneutika Al-Qur'an menawarkan interpretasi yang lebih relevan dengan tantangan zaman. Implikasi penelitian ini menunjukkan perlunya metode hermeneutika yang fleksibel untuk mendukung pemahaman umat Islam dalam konteks modern.

ABSTRACT

The problem in this study focuses on the significant changes in Qur'anic hermeneutics in the modern era, where traditional approaches are often considered inadequate in addressing contemporary issues. This discrepancy creates a need for a more contextualized and inclusive approach to interpretation. This study aims to analyze the transformation of Qur'anic hermeneutics and offer a more contextual approach without ignoring traditional values. The research used a descriptive qualitative method with a literature review design. The research subjects comprised 15 Muslim scholars and scholars involved in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation. Data were collected through document analysis and in-depth interviews, using an interview guide as an instrument. Data analysis was conducted through content and thematic analysis approaches. The results showed that the contemporary hermeneutic approach is more adaptive to modern social and cultural changes, enriching a more inclusive and contextual interpretation methodology. This study concludes that the transformation of Qur'anic hermeneutics offers interpretations more relevant to the challenges of the times. The implication of this research shows the need for a flexible hermeneutical method to support Muslims' understanding in the modern context.

1. INTRODUCTION

Qur'anic hermeneutics forms the foundation of understanding the Qur'an which is the central text of Islam (Dozan & Turmuzi, 2021; Mutmainnah, 2024). Since the early centuries of Islam, scholars have employed various methods to interpret the meanings of the Qur'an (Barokah et al., 2023; Faisal & Th, 2021; Faqih, 2023). Traditional approaches, dating back to the era of the *Tabiun* have relied on tools such as *Tafsir* (exegesis) and *hadith* reports. However, in recent decades, there has been a surge of groundbreaking scholarship challenging these traditional methods with more modern and contemporary interpretations. This article aims to delve into these contemporary approaches, highlighting their impact on Qur'anic studies and the understanding of Islamic texts (Drajat et al., 2024; Leida, 2024; Rizki et al., 2023). Hermeneutics, the art and theory of interpretation, has played a pivotal role in shaping religious thought and practice across various traditions, including Islam (Jailani & Nur kholis, 2021; Sassi, 2021). Qur'anic hermeneutics, specifically, refers to the study of methods and theories employed to interpret and understand the Qur'an.

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Since the early centuries of Islamic scholarship, a variety of interpretive approaches have emerged, each seeking to uncover the profound meanings and messages within the Qur'anic texts.

In recent times, Qur'anic hermeneutics has witnessed a significant transformation, with an increasing number of scholars advocating for contemporary approaches that challenge traditional interpretations. This evolution in Qur'anic hermeneutics is not merely an academic exercise but holds profound implications for how Muslims understand and apply the teachings of the Qur'an to their lives, and ultimately, shape their societal norms and values. Qur'anic hermeneutics, both traditional and contemporary, presents a complex and multifaceted field of study. The richness of interpretive approaches reflects the depth and adaptability of the Qur'anic text itself (Harriguna & Wahyuningsih, 2021; Jannah, 2020; Safudin et al., 2022). As demonstrated in this article, contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics offers a dynamic and evolving perspective that engages with modern intellectual traditions while remaining rooted in the Qur'an's historical context. The ongoing dialogue and scholarship in this field will continue to shape how Muslims understand and apply the teachings of the Qur'an, influencing their religious, social, and ethical lives. As with any interpretive tradition, the challenge lies in navigating between preserving the essence of the sacred text and adapting its teachings to the ever-changing realities of human existence. Traditional Qur'anic hermeneutics is deeply rooted in the Qur'an itself and the Prophetic tradition, or Sunnah, preserved in the Hadith literature. The Qur'an, as the primary source, provides the foundational text for interpretation. Verses such as Qur'an 3:7 indicate the Qur'an as a book that is "clear (in some verses), and others are ambiguous," indicating the need for interpretation. Additionally, the Qur'an emphasizes the role of Prophet Muhammad as an exemplar and clarifier of the scripture, as stated in Qur'an 16:44.

The Hadith, collections of the sayings, actions, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad, serve as a crucial tool for traditional exegetes (Al-Ayyuubi & Haris, 2024; Alawiyah et al., 2024; Ramadhan, 2024). They provide context, elaborate on Qur'anic verses, and guide the interpretation. For instance, a famous hadith states, "I leave behind me two things: the Qur'an and my Sunnah, and if you follow them you will never go astray". Thus, traditional Qur'anic hermeneutics relies heavily on the interconnection between the Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition. Classical Qur'anic hermeneutics emerged and flourished in the early centuries of Islamic scholarship. This traditional approach to interpretation, known as tafsir, sought to explain and elucidate the meanings of the Qur'anic text. Early Muslim scholars, or *Mufasssirun*, developed a set of established rules and methodologies for interpreting the Qur'an (Fahimah, 2021; Nata, 2022; Ramadhan, 2024).

Previous research supporting this solution has been conducted, especially by scholars who criticize the traditional hermeneutical approach (Hovey et al., 2022; Jedličková et al., 2022; McCaffrey et al., 2022; Syamsuddin, 2021). The novelty of this research lies in the focus on creating a hermeneutical methodology that not only maintains traditional roots but also embraces interpretive flexibility appropriate to the context of the times. The urgency of this research arises from the need for a more relevant hermeneutical approach in the modern era, where Muslims face challenges in translating the teachings of the Qur'an into ever-changing lives. The research is also expected to influence how Muslims view their sacred text, making it more responsive to issues such as human rights, gender equality and pluralism. This study aims to analyze the transformation in Qur'anic hermeneutics and offer a more contextual approach without neglecting traditional values. The results of this study are expected to contribute to Qur'anic studies academically, as well as enrich interpretive methods that are more inclusive and adaptive to the needs of modern Islamic society.

2. METHOD

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research with a hermeneutic approach (Diman, 2020; Tarlam, 2022). This research design focuses on literature review by analyzing contemporary approaches to Qur'anic interpretation. The research's test subjects were 15 Muslim scholars and scholars involved in contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics. These subjects consisted of academics from various backgrounds, ranging from tafsir experts to Islamic jurists, who have published works on hermeneutical transformations in the modern era. The data collection method used document analysis and in-depth interviews. The instrument used was an interview guide to measure scholars' views on Qur'anic hermeneutics. The instrument validity grid includes several leading indicators, such as perspectives on traditional interpretation, contemporary interpretation, issues of gender equality, and the social relevance of the teachings of the Qur'an. The analysis methods used are content analysis and thematic analysis. Data from interviews and documents are analyzed qualitatively by identifying the main patterns and themes relevant to the research objectives. The results of this analysis will be interpreted in the context of hermeneutic studies and the social relevance of Qur'anic teachings in contemporary Islamic society.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This research demonstrates that contemporary approaches to Qur'ānic hermeneutics offer a new, more contextualized and inclusive way of understanding Islamic texts. This transformation, which starts from a critique of traditional methods, opens up space for more adaptive interpretations of modern social and cultural changes. The results reveal that approaches such as historical-critical analysis, feminist hermeneutics and religious pluralism enrich academic discourse and provide practical guidance in addressing the ethical and social challenges facing Muslims today. The emphasis on contextualization, as seen in the work of scholars such as Hasan Hanafi and Nasir Abu Zayd, suggests that a deeper understanding of the social and historical environment behind the Qur'ānic text can provide new insights relevant to contemporary issues. Amina Wadud's feminist approach has also successfully challenged patriarchal assumptions in traditional interpretation, offering a more inclusive and just perspective on women's rights in Islam.

Furthermore, Abdolkarim Soroush's religious pluralism underscores the importance of interfaith dialogue in an increasingly complex and diverse global context. This approach allows for a more open interpretation of the Qur'an to diverse beliefs and universal values, promoting interfaith harmony and tolerance. Thus, the results of this study answer the main objective of offering a more contextualized hermeneutical approach without neglecting traditional values. This research contributes significantly to the academic study of the Qur'ān. It provides a model of interpretation that is more relevant and responsive to the needs of Muslims in the modern era. Through this approach, the Qur'ān remains a dynamic source of guidance, navigating ethical and social challenges in a changing society.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the contemporary approach to Qur'anic hermeneutics provides a new perspective that is more inclusive and contextual. This approach allows for a more dynamic interpretation of the sacred text, especially in the face of modern challenges such as gender equality, religious pluralism, and human rights. It enriches hermeneutical methodologies that are more adaptive to socio-cultural changes, thus bridging the gap between traditional approaches and the needs of modern society. This research aligns with the work of Amina Wadud, who also highlights the need for more inclusive interpretations in response to gender equality issues in Islam. Other researchers have argued that traditional interpretations often perpetuate gender inequality and are insensitive to modern contexts. In addition, this study also supports the views of other researchers, who suggests using literary criticism to interpret Qur'anic texts more profoundly and aesthetically, revealing more complex layers of meaning (Amali & Suhartini, 2024; Nurcahaya & Akbarizan, 2023). By comparing the results of this study with previous theories, it can be seen that the proposed contemporary contextual approach is highly relevant, towering the challenges of modern interpretation (Bu'ulolo & Tioma, 2023; Manalu et al., 2024). The strength of this research lies in its approach, which integrates the classical hermeneutic tradition with contemporary perspectives. It succeeds in formulating a more flexible and relevant hermeneutical methodology without abandoning the traditional roots of Islam. This allows for interpretations that are theologically valid and responsive to social needs.

This research significantly contributes to Qur'anic studies by offering a more adaptive and inclusive hermeneutical approach (Alkouatli, 2024; Imarotuz Zulfa, 2024). This research adds academic insight into how Qur'anic interpretation can evolve along with socio-cultural dynamics. It also helps to open up space for more pluralistic interpretations, which support the diversity of views in modern Islamic societies. The contemporary approaches to Qur'anic hermeneutics have far-reaching implications for Muslim communities worldwide. By engaging with modern philosophical and intellectual traditions, these scholars offer interpretations that are more relevant to the lived experiences of Muslims today. For instance, the emphasis on social context by scholars like Hanafi provides a framework for addressing contemporary social issues, such as gender equality, environmental concerns, or economic justice, through a Qur'anic lens. Additionally, the focus on religious pluralism by scholars like Soroush fosters interfaith dialogue and promotes a more tolerant and inclusive understanding of Islam, which is crucial in an increasingly diverse global community. Contemporary approaches to Qur'anic hermeneutics reveal the depth and adaptability of the Qur'anic message. By engaging with modern intellectual traditions, contemporary scholars have opened new avenues for interpretation, allowing the Quran to speak to the challenges and realities of the modern world.

The richness of these contemporary approaches lies in their ability to navigate the complexity of the Qur'anic text while embracing diversity in interpretation. This evolution in Qur'anic hermeneutics is a testament to the Qur'an's enduring relevance and its ability to guide Muslims in their spiritual, intellectual, and ethical journeys. The methods and contributions of these contemporary scholars have had a profound

impact on the field of Qur'anic hermeneutics. By engaging with social context, literary criticism, religious pluralism, and feminist hermeneutics, they have expanded the interpretive possibilities of the Qur'an. Their work demonstrates the richness and adaptability of Qur'anic interpretation, ensuring that the Quran remains a living source of guidance and inspiration for Muslims in the modern era. The limitation of this research lies in the limited empirical data used to test the effectiveness of contemporary hermeneutical approaches in various socio-cultural contexts. This research is more theoretical, thus requiring further studies involving more cases and diverse contexts. Therefore, future researchers are advised to conduct empirical research that can measure the real impact of using this approach in the daily lives of Muslim communities, both at the local and global levels. In addition, it is suggested that this hermeneutic approach be explored further in Islamic education to enhance understanding and inclusivity among students.

4. CONCLUSION

Contemporary approaches to Qur'anic hermeneutics have revolutionized the field of Qur'anic studies, offering fresh insights and perspectives. By challenging traditional interpretations, modern scholars have paved the way for a more dynamic, contextually aware, and inclusive understanding of the Qur'an. This evolution in hermeneutical approaches is vital for scholars of religion as it highlights the complexities and nuances within Islamic thought, providing a more nuanced understanding of Qur'anic positions on various issues. As the field continues to evolve, further research and exploration of these contemporary approaches are warranted to capture the richness and diversity of Qur'anic interpretations in the modern era. The emergence of contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics has had a profound impact on Islamic thought and practice. It has opened up new avenues for interpretation, allowing Muslims to engage with their sacred text in ways that are more relevant to their contemporary contexts. It has also led to a more diverse and pluralistic understanding of Islam, recognizing the validity of multiple interpretations. However, these contemporary approaches have also faced criticism. Traditional scholars argue that these new interpretations deviate from established understandings and risk undermining the authority and unity of the Qur'anic message. They caution against the potential for subjective interpretations that may lead to confusion and division within the Muslim community.

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