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## **Digital Da'wah and Quranic Interpretation: Opportunities, Distortions, and Ethics in the Spread of Interpretations on Social Media**

**Pipin Armita**

Institut Sains Al-Qur'an Syekh Ibrahim Rokan Hulu Riau, Indonesia

Email: [pipinarmita@isqsyekh Ibrahim.ac.id](mailto:pipinarmita@isqsyekh Ibrahim.ac.id)

*Received: 02-03-2025 Reviewed: 23-03-2025 Accepted: 16-05-2025*

### **Abstract**

Digitalization has changed the face of Islamic preaching and dissemination of knowledge, including the interpretation of the Qur'an, which now reaches a broad audience through various social media platforms. This transformation presents significant opportunities in religious education, but also poses serious challenges in the form of distortion of meaning and oversimplification in the presentation of interpretations. This study aims to examine the dynamics of disseminating interpretations of the Qur'an on social media from three main aspects: opportunities, potential distortion, and ethics of dissemination. With a qualitative-analytical approach, this study relies on digital documentation and literature studies of interpretation content spread on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. The data is reviewed in depth to understand the methodological tendencies, narratives, and scientific responsibilities in the presentation of interpretations. The results of the study show that although social media can increase accessibility and attract the interest of the younger generation in interpretations, there is a high risk of the dissemination of interpretations that do not go through proper scientific procedures, ignore the context of the verses, and pay little attention to differences in the views of scholars. In addition, ethics in disseminating interpretations are often ignored, either in the form of plagiarism, provocation, or misleading language. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of ethical guidelines and the active role of religious institutions in overseeing the dissemination of digital interpretation of the Qur'an so that it remains within the scientific and Sharia corridor. This study emphasizes the importance of synergy between digital innovation and the integrity of interpretation science in presenting relevant, credible, and responsible da'wah in the information era.

**Keywords:** Digital Da'wah, Tafser Al-Qur'an, Social Media.

### **Introduction**

In today's digital era, technological developments have revolutionized how humans communicate and access information. Social media, as the main product of the digital era, has now become a new public space that dominates the social life of humanity, including Muslims. This phenomenon has also influenced the way Islamic teachings are conveyed, making preaching no longer limited to the pulpit of the mosque or conventional *al-ta'lim* assembly, but also reaching digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts (Kurniasih, 2022). In this context, the presentation of the interpretation of the Qur'an has undergone a significant transformation. The interpretation previously delivered in the form of thick books and in-depth studies is now packaged concisely, visually, and instantly to suit the characteristics of the digital audience, especially the younger generation. This transformation opens up new space for the development of Islamic preaching, but at the same time, it contains various epistemological and ethical issues that have not been studied scientifically (Wahid, 2011).

The interpretation of the Qur'an is one of the fields of Islamic science that demands high accuracy, transparent methodology, and accountable scientific authority. However, in the digital space, not all interpretation content is delivered by those with academic competence in the *al-Tafsīr wa 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Saleh, 2007). Many digital da'wah accounts interpret the verses of the Qur'an freely, without referring to established rules of interpretation. As a result, there is a simplification of meaning, a cutting of context, and even the use of verses free from their *al-Maqāṣid* to support particular agendas. In addition, social media algorithms prioritizing popularity and interaction often encourage content presenters to deliver tafsir material in a provocative or sensational style to pursue the number of viewers and followers, potentially obscuring the educational value of the da'wah itself.

In this context, an important question arises as to how the presentation of the interpretation of the Qur'an on social media influences the religious understanding of society, especially the digital generation (Saihu & Aziz, 2020). Are digital platforms capable of being an effective means of preaching without sacrificing the depth of meaning of the holy text?. To what extent are scientific ethics maintained in the dissemination of digital interpretation?. These questions indicate the need to study digital preaching practices based on Qur'anic interpretation critically. Unfortunately, academic studies that review the relationship between interpretation, social media, and delivery ethics are still minimal. Most literature discusses digital preaching more generally in the context of communication or preaching marketing strategies, not from the perspective of the epistemology of interpretation and the responsibility of spreading religious knowledge.

This gap shows that although the spread of Qur'anic interpretations through social media has become a massive social reality, there have not been many academic efforts to study how these contents are constructed, who the leading actors are, how society responds, and what the implications are for the religious understanding of the community. The absence of a scientific control mechanism in the production and consumption of digital interpretations is also a challenge, which can impact the birth of a partial, textualist, or even deviant understanding of Islam. It is urgent for academics, scholars, and preachers to formulate the ethics of presenting digital interpretations so that they remain based on the strong tradition of Islamic knowledge but remain responsive to the needs of the times (Rifai, 2020).

This study examines the practice of disseminating interpretations of the Qur'an on digital platforms, focusing on three main dimensions: opportunities for preaching, potential distortion of meaning, and ethical delivery problems. The main objective of this study is to analyse the extent to which digital interpretation can be a means of transformative preaching while maintaining the integrity of the holy text. On the other hand, this study also aims to identify forms of deviation or inaccuracy in the presentation of interpretations and formulate ethical principles that should be upheld in disseminating Islamic knowledge through social media.

This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of contemporary tafsir studies and practical contributions to digital da'wah practitioners. This study also aims to bridge the classical tafsir tradition, rich in methodology and depth of meaning, with the digital world that demands speed, creativity, and high accessibility. Through this study, the author hopes to create a new awareness that disseminating al-Qur'anic interpretation through social media is not just a communication activity, but is a tremendous

scientific and spiritual responsibility, which demands caution, depth of knowledge, and high ethical commitment from its practitioners.

### **Literature review**

Several previous studies have discussed the theme related to the spread of the interpretation of the Qur'an through digital media, although with different focuses and approaches. One is a study conducted by Faizah & Maftuhah (2024). This study examines the role of social media as a tool for spreading Qur'an-based da'wah messages among the millennial generation. This study emphasizes the potential of digital da'wah as an effective means of reaching a wider and cross-age audience, but has not explored much about the methodology of interpretation and the accuracy of the content presented.

Other research, conducted by Lukman (2016), reviews the phenomenon of "tafsir instant" on social media, especially on Instagram and YouTube platforms, which present verses of the Qur'an visually and concisely. He highlights the dangers of simplifying the messages of the Qur'an without adequate context, which can cause misperceptions in society. Although this study discusses the dangers of reducing meaning in digital preaching, the form of epistemological deviation appearing in the text's interpretation has not been explained further.

Meanwhile, Mubarak (2023) conducted a case study of the preaching content on a YouTube channel belonging to a popular cleric. He analyzed the extent to which the delivery of the interpretation of the Qur'an in the preaching content followed classical rules, such as the *al-tahlīlī* and *al-mawdū'ī* approaches. His research showed a tendency towards religious populism in digital preaching, where the delivery style emphasized emotion and virality rather than scientific accuracy. However, this research is limited to one channel and has not been compared with similar trends on other platforms.

Finally, a study by Syafirin (2024) explored the ethical aspects of digital da'wah, especially regarding the spread of interpretations of the Qur'an by non-*mufasssir*. This study introduces an ethical framework based on *Tafsīr Maqāsidī* to evaluate da'wah content circulating on social media. He emphasized the importance of digital Islamic literacy so that people can distinguish between authentic and problematic interpretations. However, this study has not specifically examined the form of content distortion and the influence of social media algorithms on the spread of deviant interpretations.

Several studies have shown that despite academic attention to digital da'wah and the dissemination of tafsir, there is still a gap in studies that integrate analysis of the content of tafsir, potential distortion, and ethical principles of delivery as a whole. Therefore, this study will fill this gap with a more comprehensive approach.

### **Research method**

This study uses a qualitative-analytical approach (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018), which aims to examine the presentation of Qur'anic interpretations in social media as part of digital da'wah practices. This approach was chosen because it can deeply explain contemporary religious phenomena, especially in interpreting and examining digital content's implied and explicit meanings. The focus of the study is directed at the narratives of interpretations conveyed through various social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, and how these narratives shape the audience's religious understanding. This study underlines

the importance of analyzing the extent to which digital interpretation content represents the methodological principles of classical and contemporary interpretations and ethical values in conveying da'wah messages (Soehadha, 2012).

Data collection techniques were carried out through digital documentation (Azwar, 2014), namely by collecting and reviewing the contents of the interpretation of the Qur'an that are available online, either in the form of videos, captions, or accompanying descriptions. In addition, literature studies were used as a complementary method to understand the basic concepts of interpretation (Tohirin, 2013), digital preaching, and Islamic communication ethics. Library sources include scientific works, interpretive books, academic journals, and articles relevant to the studied phenomenon. The data collected were then analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify themes, delivery structures, and patterns of interpretation distribution on social media (Surachmad, 2017).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **1. Transformation of Preaching and Interpretation in the Digital Era**

The transformation of preaching and the spread of interpretation of the Qur'an in the digital era is an unavoidable phenomenon in the contemporary religious landscape. The development of information and communication technology, especially social media and digital platforms, has opened up new spaces for religious activities, including conveying understanding of the verses of the Qur'an. If in the past interpretations were delivered in religious study groups or academic spaces limited by space and time, now interpretation-based preaching can be accessed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere through digital devices (Yuningsih & Ghany, 2024).

Digital preaching has shifted the conventional one-way approach to be more interactive and participatory. In the context of delivering the interpretation of the Qur'an, this allows for discussions, comments, and questions directly from the audience, both in real-time and asynchronously. Platforms such as YouTube provide space for preachers and *mufasssir* to deliver interpretations in the form of video lectures, while Instagram and TikTok present shorter, denser, and more visual content, which is easily accessible and quickly disseminated by social media users (Ridwanulloh, 2023).

Furthermore, the transformation of tafsir preaching in the digital era has also encouraged the emergence of Islamic preachers and content creators who previously did not come from formal religious institutions. They are individuals who have digital communication capacities and understand social media algorithms, so they can quickly make tafsir content go viral. Although this benefits the distribution of Islamic knowledge, new challenges have also emerged regarding authority, scientific validity, and accuracy in conveying tafsir. (Yuningsih & Ghany, 2024).

This change requires a redefinition of how we understand religious authority. If previously only scholars or *mufasssir* with academic credentials were recognized as sources of interpretation, now many people refer to social media accounts with many followers as their primary reference. This situation implies a shift in the pattern of religious authority from institutional to personal based on digital popularity, creating a new dynamic in the contestation of religious authority (Randani et al., 2022).

In addition, social media also allows the dissemination of interpretations in various languages and cultural contexts. Through local translation and adaptation, the messages of the Qur'an can reach Muslim communities in various parts of the world with greater cultural sensitivity. It is an excellent opportunity for the global mission of da'wah because geographical and linguistic constraints no longer limit interpretation. However, this process also presents interpretive challenges, especially when the meaning of the verses is oversimplified or even misinterpreted (Gusmian, 2016).

This digital transformation also has implications for the methodology of delivering interpretations. While in the classical tradition, interpretations are carried out with a systematic approach, accompanied by linguistic analysis, the history of the revelation of verses (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and comparisons between the opinions of scholars, in digital preaching all of this must be delivered in a way that can be understood by the wider public quickly. It requires preachers and interpreters to convey essential meanings in simple language without losing the depth of meaning (Yuningsih & Ghany, 2024).

The transformation of preaching and the spread of Qur'anic interpretation in the digital era reflect a paradigm shift in religious communication. This change opens up an excellent opportunity to expand the scope of Islamic preaching, reach a wider audience, and revive the treasury of interpretation in a format appropriate for the digital era. However, this opportunity must be balanced with efforts to maintain the integrity of the science of interpretation and ethics in conveying religious messages so that digital transformation does not obscure the substance of the teachings of the Qur'an (Risadiana et al., 2020).

## **2. Opportunities for Digitalization of Interpretation as a Means of Religious Education**

The digitalization of Al-Qur'ān interpretation has opened up tremendous opportunities in religious education, especially in bringing ordinary people closer to understanding the content and meaning of the Al-Qur'ān. This transformation is related to changes in the medium and creates a new approach in conveying divine messages. Access to tafsir studies has become much easier, cheaper, and faster with various digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and podcasts. It means that interpretations of the Koran are no longer exclusive to academic or Islamic boarding school spaces; they can be consumed by the broader public from various educational backgrounds and ages (Rifai, 2020).

One of the main strengths of the digitalization of tafsir is the accessibility aspect. In the past, people who wanted to study tafsir had to have thick books, attend science assemblies, or follow direct studies. Now, with just a cell phone and an internet connection, someone can access various lectures, discussions, and explanations about the verses of the Qur'an anytime and anywhere. It is relevant for the younger generation and urban communities with high mobility and time constraints. This digital access also bridges the geographical and economic gap, where people in remote areas or with limited funds still have the opportunity to study Islam in depth (Awadin & Rusmana, 2023).

In addition to accessibility, the digitalization of interpretation also encourages cognitive accessibility. Interpretations delivered through digital media use simpler language, attractive visuals, and narratives contextual to everyday life. It makes the values of the Quran easier for the general public to understand and absorb. Through this approach, the Qur'an's moral, social, and spiritual messages become more down-to-earth and relevant to contemporary problems

(Fitriani & Khaerani, 2021). Therefore, the dissemination of interpretations through social media can be an effective means of increasing religious awareness and understanding in society.

The phenomenon of the emergence of competent religious content creators is also an added value in the era of digital interpretation. Many Muslim preachers, academics, and scholars actively produce interpretation-based da'wah content with a scientific yet communicative approach. They come with a friendly style, greet the audience with light language, and insert interpretive messages through storytelling, visual illustrations, or short quotes that hit home. Their existence can bridge complex religious texts and the spiritual needs of today's fast-paced and instant society (Mubarak, 2023).

In addition, the role of social media algorithms in distributing tafsir content widely is no less important. Relevant, engaging, and interactive content can appear on users' homepages, even without them actively searching for it. This phenomenon allows the messages of the Qur'an to reach a passive audience, namely people who initially had no intention of seeking religious knowledge but were then touched by the tafsir content that appeared on their screens. With the right digital strategy, tafsir-based da'wah content can compete with other entertainment content and influence public religious awareness gradually but significantly (Hariyati, 2025).

However, using social media as interpretive education requires caution and scientific responsibility. Not all content that claims to be an interpretation can be academically accounted for. Therefore, content creators and consumers must have adequate digital and religious literacy. This literacy is the foundation for distinguishing between interpretations based on scientific methodology and speculative religious opinions. In this context, the digitalization of interpretation not only opens up opportunities for spreading religious knowledge but also challenges the Islamic scientific community to maintain the quality and integrity of the disseminated knowledge (Wulandari, 2023).

### **3. Distortion of Meaning and Oversimplification in the Presentation of Digital Interpretation**

The dissemination of Quranic interpretations through social media does bring many benefits in terms of accessibility and the spread of religious knowledge. However, one of the biggest challenges is the distortion of meaning and oversimplification to attract the audience's attention and achieve virality. To make interpretations easier to accept and understand for the general public, many content creators tend to present interpretations that ignore their depth and complexity. This simplification, although intended to facilitate understanding, often eliminates the original meaning contained in the Quran verses, and can be misleading if not done carefully (Syafirin, 2024).

This distortion of meaning is often caused by attempts to popularize interpretations to attract a wider audience. Content creators, especially on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, often present interpretations in short, concise, and visual formats. They try to present interpretations that are easy to digest, but this often comes at the expense of the scientific depth of the interpretation. As a result, many of the messages conveyed in these interpretations become truncated and lose important context, resulting in only fragments of teachings that can be consumed instantly without deep understanding (Lukman, 2016).

In addition, oversimplification in digital interpretation often ignores the methodological aspects that have become the basis for interpreting the Qur'an (Nirwana, 2024). Reasonable interpretation should refer to established scientific principles in the science of interpretation, such as the rules regarding *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the reasons for the revelation of verses), *iḥkām wa mutashābih*, and *ijmā' al-ʿulama*. However, in many cases, interpretations presented on social media ignore these things and prioritize popularity alone. In other words, the delivery of interpretations on social media often emphasizes an easy-to-understand communication style, rather than the accuracy of interpretation or historical and scientific accuracy (Mubarak, 2023).

Furthermore, citing Quranic verses without explaining the context in which the verse was revealed or mentioning the different views among scholars can lead to misinterpretation. In fact, in the classical interpretation tradition, every verse of the Qur'an has a vital context to be understood, so there is no wrong interpretation. Without understanding the reason for the revelation of the verse or the original purpose, someone can easily make a wrong interpretation and lead the audience to an understanding that is not the true meaning (Erfina, 2023).

These misinterpretations can affect an individual's understanding of religion and lead to theological misunderstandings among the general public. Many social media users who do not have a scientific background in interpreting the Qur'an can get caught up in shallow and inaccurate interpretations. It is further exacerbated by the popularity of content that only focuses on quickly understood content without prioritizing the scientific process of interpreting the Qur'an. Without supervision or explanation from scientific authorities, people who do not have a deep understanding will easily accept wrong interpretations, which then have the potential to lead to deviant understanding (Nirwana et al., 2024).

In addition, this phenomenon also shows how big the challenge is in controlling the quality of religious information on social media. As a space open to anyone, social media does not have enough filters to distinguish between authentic and irresponsible interpretations. No authority can supervise or verify every interpretation of shared content, thus allowing the spread of inaccurate and potentially misleading interpretations. Therefore, there needs to be an effort to strengthen supervision and digital literacy among the public so that they are more critical in accepting and spreading interpretations of the Qur'an found on social media (Hariyati, 2025).

Oversimplification also often ignores the diversity of opinions among scholars about the meaning and interpretation of a verse. In fact, in the science of interpretation, differences of opinion are very natural and can lead to a richer understanding of the Qur'an. When interpretation is only represented by a single view presented, other views that may be deeper and more contextual can be ignored. It limits people's understanding of the depth and complexity of the actual teachings of Islam (Nirwana et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to emphasize that in conveying interpretations through social media, the diversity of interpretations must be respected, and the information provided must be complete and based on appropriate scientific methodology.

#### **4. Ethics of Disseminating Interpretations on Social Media: Challenges and Responsibilities**

In digital preaching, the ethics of spreading interpretations of the Qur'an is a crucial aspect to pay attention to. The spread of interpretations through social media is not just an

informative activity but also significantly impacts public religious perception and understanding. Therefore, its delivery must be carried out responsibly by upholding ethical principles in religious communication. Unlike direct interaction in traditional religious studies, which involves face-to-face meetings and supervision from religious figures, social media provides an open space for anyone to spread interpretations, including those who do not have adequate scientific authority. It makes ethics an important fence that limits the potential for misuse of interpretations of the Qur'an (Ridwanulloh, 2023).

One of the basic principles in the ethics of digital preaching is scientific honesty. This honesty includes accuracy in conveying the meaning of verses, caution in concluding, and transparency in citing the sources of interpretation used. In the tradition of Islamic scholarship, conveying something without a valid basis is included in the category of conveying lies in the name of religion. Therefore, in the context of spreading digital interpretation, preachers and content creators need to make authoritative references the primary reference, not solely based on personal interpretations that are weak from a methodological perspective (Rifai, 2020).

Another ethic is acknowledging the source in direct quotations or references to the opinions of classical and contemporary scholars of tafsir. In many cases on social media, quotes from tafsir are often cut without mentioning who the interpreter is, or even displayed as if they were the original interpretation of the content provider. It harms the science and can also mislead the audience because it removes the context and authority of the opinion. Upholding this ethic is important to maintain the integrity of the tafsir and protect the audience from invalid information (Albana, 2023).

The spread of interpretations on social media also faces a significant challenge in maintaining the boundaries of provocation and hate speech. In a digital world full of competition for attention, it is not uncommon for interpretations of verses to be used to strengthen narratives of hatred against particular groups or as a pretext to belittle others. This kind of misuse of interpretations is contrary to the principle of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which emphasizes the protection of religion and human honor (Hariyati, 2025). Therefore, interpreters must ensure that the shared content does not cause division, hostility, or justify violence.

This ethical obligation becomes even more important because most young social media users are still forming their religious understanding. They tend to absorb information quickly without a deep critical process. Therefore, religious content creators must have an intellectual and moral responsibility not to spread half-baked information or cause misunderstandings that can have long-term impacts on their religious construction. In other words, the ethics of digital preaching are not only about the delivery style but also concern the substance, impact, and intention behind the presentation of the content (Ridwanulloh, 2023).

In order to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of interpretations spread on social media, the role of religious authorities is vital. Official institutions such as the *Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI)*, large Islamic mass organizations, and Islamic educational institutions must be actively present in supervising, guiding, and even producing digital interpretation-based da'wah content. Their presence is not to limit freedom of expression, but rather as a preventive measure so that the spread of interpretations does not deviate from the framework of valid Sharia and science. In this limitless world, the presence of authorities is an important filter to maintain the purity of da'wah while educating the public in accepting and selecting religious information (Randani et al., 2022).



Ethics in disseminating interpretations on social media must also consider aspects of social sensitivity and multiculturalism. Digital society is a society with very diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The delivery of interpretations must be able to adapt to the context of this diversity, so as not to create social unrest or horizontal conflict. Wise, empathetic, and communicative delivery is the key to conveying the messages of the Qur'an peacefully and inclusively. Therefore, digital ethics is not only about the truth of the material, but also concerns the method and time of delivery that pays attention to the spiritual atmosphere of the audience (Saiin & Karuok, 2023).

Thus, discussing the ethics of digital preaching in interpreting the Qur'an is not just discussing the general norms of communication ethics, but also touching on the epistemological, social, and spiritual dimensions of conveying divine messages in the digital era. The absence of ethics in disseminating interpretation can reduce the dignity of the Qur'an as a source of guidance. It can even become a tool of legitimacy for behaviours that are contrary to Islamic values themselves. Therefore, the enforcement of ethics is not a complement, but the primary foundation in building a healthy, scientific, and dignified digital space for the dissemination of the interpretation of the Qur'an.

## **Conclusion**

This study confirms that disseminating Qur'anic interpretations through social media is a contemporary da'wah phenomenon with two sides: a great opportunity in religious education and a serious challenge in maintaining the purity of the meaning and methodology of interpretation. The transformation of da'wah into the digital realm has opened up wide access for the community, especially the younger generation, to access the contents of the Qur'an in a more visual, narrative, and interactive form. However, behind this convenience is the potential for distortion of meaning due to excessive simplification, delivery without a solid scientific methodology, and the absence of supervision from credible religious authorities. Therefore, digital da'wah actors need high ethical awareness to present interpretations honestly, responsibly, and based on authoritative sources. In addition, there needs to be synergy between religious institutions, academics, and content creators to build an informative digital da'wah ecosystem while maintaining the integrity of the message of the Qur'an. With this approach, digital da'wah is a tool for popularizing Islam and strengthening quality and moral tafsir literacy.

## **Declaration of conflicting interest**

The researcher confirms that there is no conflict of interest in the implementation and preparation of this research. All stages, from data collection and analysis to writing, were carried out independently without intervention or influence from external parties, either individuals or institutions. All findings and conclusions presented were born from an objective scientific process and can be academically accounted for. This research was compiled while maintaining the principles of scientific honesty and academic freedom, so that the results are free from elements of bias or pressure that can harm the integrity of the research.

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