



PAUL RICOEUR'S HERMENEUTICAL REVIEW OF THE DISCOURSE ON QUR'ANIC TAFSIR IN DIGITAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The development of Qur'anic tafsir research reveals that the interpreting process is becoming increasingly diverse, particularly since social media has emerged as a new platform for the dissemination and production of religious meaning. However, studies that specifically link Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics to the practice of Qur'an tafsir on social media are still minimal. This emptiness signifies the need for a theoretical framework capable of explaining how the Text of the Qur'an is understood and interpreted in an interactive and rapidly changing digital space. This article aims to fill this gap by analyzing the relevance of the main concepts of Ricoeur's hermeneutics in reading the dynamics Tafsir of the Qur'an on social media. The research uses a qualitative method with a literature review approach, referring to Ricoeur's hermeneutic literature and digital interpretation studies. The analysis was carried out descriptively by connecting the concepts of autonomy of the Text, explanation, understanding, and symbols with the interpretive patterns that develop on digital platforms. The findings of the study suggest that the Ricoeur framework helps explain the changes in interpreting authority, the active engagement of the audience, as well as the process of reinterpretation that arises when texts circulate in digital formats. Theoretically, this study expands the application of Ricoeur's hermeneutics in the study of contemporary interpretation. Practically, this study provides a new understanding of how social media shapes the way people receive and interpret the message of the Qur'an.

Keywords: *Hermeneutics, Paul Ricoeur, Qur'anic Tafsir, Social Media.*



A. Introduction

The dynamics Tafsir of the Qur'an in the modern era show a significant transformation, especially because of the various methods and ways of delivery. Technological innovations provide opportunities for Muslims to access and understand the Qur'an in various ways that suit their circumstances, although the main principles of interpretation are maintained and consistent from time to time. This transformation is increasingly evident as interpretation enters social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which offer new communication patterns that are more open, fast, and participatory. (Miftahuddin, 2020)

The phenomenon of interpretation on social media platforms not only expands access to da'wah, but also brings changes in interpreting authority, the method of conveying messages, and the way meaning is understood by the audience (Khalifah & Aini, 2026). However, academic research that specifically elaborates on how religious meanings are formed, disseminated, and interpreted in the digital world is still lacking. This situation creates a need for a theoretical framework capable of explaining the process of interpretation in this new context. (Nurdin, 2023). In this context, the hermeneutic thought by Paul Ricoeur becomes very relevant. His views on the autonomy of texts, ways of understanding, and taking meaning provide analytical tools to explore the dynamics of interpretation of the Qur'an in various media. (Fernandes et al., 2025) Ricoeur also affirms that texts can be understood without considering the author, and that the meanings contained in them are open to interpretation by different readers in different situations, a very real circumstance in the interaction of interpretation on digital platforms. Thus, the hermeneutic framework put forward by Ricoeur is essential for analyzing how the interpretation of the Qur'an is represented and understood in a popular and interactive social media environment. (Ricoeur, 2021)

Research on the application of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics in Islamic studies has been carried out in several previous works. First, the research of Ihsan Sa'dudin and M. Nasrun Siregar entitled "Reinterpretation of the Hadith of the Dead Punished for the Crying of His Family with the Hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur" seeks to redefine the meaning of the hadith narrated by Muslim (1536) through the stages of Ricoeur's interpretation which emphasizes the distance of the Text from the author's intention and the emphasis on the autonomy of meaning. This study shows that the hermeneutic approach allows for a more critical and contextual rereading of the hadith. (Sa'dudin & Siregar, 2018). Second, Almaydza Pratama Abnisa's research entitled "The Position of Asbab al-Nuzul in the Interpretation of the Qur'an from the Hermeneutic Perspective of Paul Ricoeur" emphasizes more how the concept of distance and autonomy of texts according to Ricoeur can affect the understanding of asbab al-nuzul. The focus of his research is

how the historical context is positioned in the process of interpreting the Text of the Qur'an according to Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework.(Abnisa, 2023)

Although both studies use Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach, both still focus on the realm of classical normative interpretation of texts, namely hadith and Qur'anic verses, without expanding the scope of analysis in the contemporary context in which interpretation now operates, especially in the digital space. Until now, studies that integrate Ricoeur's hermeneutics with the phenomenon of Qur'an interpretation in digital media are still very limited. In fact, the dynamics of digital interpretation with interactive characters, the popularity of social media, and the tendency for rapid reproduction of meaning require a hermeneutical approach that is able to read the autonomy of the Text as well as the movement of meaning in the digital public space.(Ashadi, 2024)

This research is a qualitative research with a library research method. The primary data source in this study is the works of Paul Ricoeur related to hermeneutic theory, especially the concepts of distance, text autonomy, and dialectics of understanding-explanation. Meanwhile, secondary data sources include journals, scientific articles, and literature that discuss the development of Qur'an interpretation on social media and the dynamics of religious authority in the digital space.

The selection of literature is carried out through a systematic search process of works relevant to the research theme, then selected based on theoretical suitability and contribution to the discussion of hermeneutics and the phenomenon of digital interpretation. Data analysis uses a descriptive-analytical approach by exposing Ricoeur's hermeneutic concepts and connecting them critically with the pattern of interpretation of the Qur'an in a digital platform. Through this step, the research is directed to find the relationship between Ricoeur's frame of thought and the dynamics of authority, reception, and the process of reinterpretation of the Qur'an in the context of digital media. Therefore, in this research, the author offers novelty in the form of an effort to apply Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework directly to the interpretation of the Qur'an in a digital platform, an area that has not been explicitly explored by previous research. The novelty lies in the merger of two rarely met domains: Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory and the phenomenon of contemporary digital interpretation. Thus, this research not only continues the discussion of hermeneutics in the study of Islamic texts but also extends it to new fields where texts, interpreters, and audiences interact through digital technologies.

Thus, this study seeks to explicitly discuss the following research problems: how is the relevance and application of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework in reading and analyzing the practice of Qur'an interpretation in digital media? In line with that, the purpose of this study is to explain the principles of Ricoeur's hermeneutics as well as show how these concepts can be used to understand the

patterns, forms, and characters of interpretation of the Qur'an that appear on digital platforms. Through Ricoeur's perspective, digital interpretation can be understood not only as the delivery of religious information but also as a process of interpretation that involves distancing, interpretation, and appropriation in the modern context.

B. Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics, and Studies of Qur'anic Tafsir

This study will discuss the development of Quranic tafsir in the digital era, which shows a shift from traditional interpretation methods to a more open approach through social media platforms. This change requires a theoretical framework that can explain how the Quranic Text is understood and strengthened in accordance with existing social and cultural dynamics. In this regard, Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics is a relevant foundation because it considers the Text as an independent entity capable of various possible meanings. This perspective is important for understanding how interpretive media functions not only in conveying meaning but also as a process of dialogue between the Text, the reader, and the ever-evolving digital context.

In an effort to apply Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics in the study of Qur'anic tafsir in the media, it is necessary to first understand the concept of Ricoeur's hermeneutics. According to Ricoeur's theory of understanding, the Text is assumed to be a stand-alone entity, that is, interpreting the Text without considering the author's intentions, the socio-historical background surrounding it, or the initial audience. The Text is seen as having its own existence and identity that is not tied to external things. (Luthfi, 2023)

Therefore, the approach in his theory does not aim to produce meaning according to the author's intentions or the socio-historical conditions that store the creation of the Text, as is done in the Romantic hermeneutic tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, but rather to produce new meanings that are closer to Gadamer's hermeneutic view. In producing meaning, interpretation is not seen as a way to survive or an attempt to stick to what the author intended or to the initial intention, but rather as a creative process to understand what is stated by the Text itself. And the Text is considered always able to provide meaning that is open to every new reader. (Abnisa, 2023)

The application of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics in the study of Qur'an interpretation on social media requires a fundamental understanding of the principle that texts have autonomy. At this point, Ricoeur views the Text as a stand-alone entity, regardless of the author's intentions or its original historical context. This thinking becomes relevant when assessing digital interpretation content, because interpretation on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok is often no longer tied to the context of the initial interpreter, but moves according to the needs of the audience and the dynamics of public discourse. The implication for

digital interpretation is that the meaning of the verse can develop openly through the interaction between the Text, the interpreter, and the audience in the online space.(Usman & Junaedi, 2024)

Ricoeur stated: "What is interpreted in a text is the world presented, in which I can reside and in which I can represent one of the things I consider most possible." As he often said, the purpose of understanding is not only to grasp the meaning of the Text, but also to understand ourselves as we interact with the Text. We give the Text a chance and expand our understanding based on what is contained in it.(Ricoeur & Thompson, 2016) In this context, the Qur'an as a holy book can be understood not only from the perspective of the history of its revelation, but also from the meaning that emerged in the process of reading and interpretation in various eras. Thus, viewing the Al-Qur'an as an independent text provides the opportunity for more flexible interpretation to align with the study of Al-Qur'an interpretations presented through various media platforms, so that the meaning of the Text can be reviewed, and it can be at the stage of understanding. (Atabik, 2019)

After explaining textual interpretation, Paul Ricoeur then develops hermeneutical steps into application, namely, how the Text relates to readers in different spaces and contexts. In this case, the interpretation of the Quran presented on digital platforms can be interpreted as a realization of the textual world that can be interpreted in various ways. Every interpretive content, whether in the form of short videos, visual images, or popular writing, is an attempt to represent the meaning of the Quran for today's readers.(Mahridawati, 2022)

In this regard, Ricoeur emphasized the importance of the interaction between explanation and understanding. The process of explanation allows interpreters to offer an analysis of the Text and its historical context, while understanding incorporates the Text's meaning into the reader's lived experience.(A. Ghasemi dkk., n.d.) This interaction is seen in the interpretation of the Quran on social media as the interpreter attempts to convey the message of the verse while giving the audience the opportunity to understand according to their experiences and needs.

Then, in Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, the culmination of the process of understanding is appropriation. Appropriation refers to when the meaning of a text is not only expressed and understood from an intellectual perspective, but also can be understood by the reader as part of his or her existence. Thus, the text gains meaning because it is integrated into the horizon of the reader's life experience. In the context of the study of Qur'anic tafsir in the media, this absorption is seen when the audience listening or watching not only understands the explanation of the verse by thinking alone, but also states that the Text appropriates the meaning to themselves so that the meaning comes alive with awareness and action. For example, interpretation material distributed through YouTube, TikTok, Instagram,

and others does not just stop as discourse, but is also applied by readers in the form of real attitudes and actions, namely by engaging in the form of comments and further discussions on social media, where the Qur'anic Text finds new life in the digital community.(Najib, 2023)

Ricoeur emphasizes that the explanation of what is stated in the Text and the understanding discussed in the Text will be interrelated, because discourse is limited by the Text, so that interpretation can go beyond the explanation of understanding. The essence of this is Paul Ricoeur's explanation, which is to study language in the form of Text, while understanding is to reveal deep meaning, as in the Tafsir of the Qur'an on YouTube Media, conveyed by Husein Ja'far, that verses do not stop at meaning but touch the meaning of the spiritual context.(Afandi, 2023)

Over time, the communication used in everyday life turns into a logic that is based on symbols. It's time for people to update the language that starts with the richness of the language. Ricoeur argues that symbols can spark thoughts. Symbols give meaning, but they are something that needs to be worked out in the mind. Ricoeur also explained the symbol criteria. Paul Ricoeur said that the symbols contained in the Text can present layers of meaning. In this case, Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar, when delivering an explanation of the meaning of tafsir on the YouTube channel, often uses symbols in each delivery.(Amanda, 2024)

Dialectics of Appropriation is a process that frees the Text from its author by giving freedom of meaning to the reader, where this also allows interpretation by unifying, equalizing, and giving meaning to the reader's world. Through appropriation that at first feels unfamiliar, it must be understood as a possession by the reader, even though the reader is aware of the process of transformation of the abstract discourse reflected in a writing when it does not create its own reality by considering the Text as its own. (Bidin et al., 2025) In this case, Paul Ricoeur states that the Text appropriates the meaning into oneself so that the meaning lives with awareness and action, such as the existence of the Qur'an interpretation in the YouTube media LOGIN episode 10, which not only provides understanding, but it can be repeated again to be studied or reflected on itself through comments.(Akram, 2024)

Thus, this is in line with the study of the interpretation of the Qur'an in the media when conveyed in the platform space either in Text or verbally not with direct sentences but included as discourse (delivery with policy and based on religion), metaphor (explanation of the Qur'an through parables), Text (meaning conveyed with different interpretations without leaving the realm of religion), narrative (before the explanation at the beginning with a prologue first), in this case the interpretation of the Qur'an in the media can present layers of meaning.(Alatas et al., 2025)

Ricoeur also proposed three stages in the process of understanding, which can serve as a practical basis for interpreting. These stages include the semantic stage (equivalent to pre-understanding), the reflective stage (the process of interpretation), and the existential stage (related to appropriation). Each of these stages encompasses all the essential components of Ricoeur's hermeneutics, from understanding the structure of the Text's meaning, to reflecting on its content, to the interpreter's personal and existential experience of meaning. (Prisilia Maya Safa et al., 2025)

First, at the semantic level, social media allows the Quran to be presented in a more easily understood language, allowing its core message to reach a wider audience. Furthermore, each audience member, prioritizing their social background and the authority of religious figures, indirectly develops a baseline for selecting knowledge through media. This is evidenced by research by the Indonesian Student Association (PPIM) of the State Islamic University of Jakarta (UIN Jakarta) (2021), which shows that more than half of Indonesia's young generation acquires religious knowledge through digital media, indicating a shift in understanding and a more open interpretation.(itofficerppim-webadmin, 2021)

Second, at the reflection stage, audience involvement through reviews, online conversations, or content dissemination can be seen as a form of shared thinking that enriches articles from Text. Although the digital form only summarizes explanations, Ricoeur's thoughts indirectly show that meaning is independent of the author who always produces new meanings that are appropriate to the context, and becomes a wide place for the emergence of variations in interpretation, namely that every meaning contained in the study of Al-Qur'an interpretation in the media does not only understand the meaning of the verses but also its contextual interpretation.

Third, the existential stage is a high level of understanding, because the meaning of the Text can touch the self-awareness of the audience, indirectly, so that every meaning of the Text can be revived by the audience. This also presents a challenge for society because understanding is between merely a viral phenomenon or truly understanding the meaning. Therefore, this criticism requires hermeneutics so that the appropriation of meaning is maintained, not just made into a temporary phenomenon.(Fithri & Hum, n.d.)

Applying the hermeneutic approach developed by Paul Ricoeur, one example of Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar's analysis in the tenth episode of YouTube LOGIN shows how the Qur'an can be understood in a flexible way in a digital context. Through separation, dialogue between explanation and understanding, symbols, and takeover, the interpretation it presents not only explains the textual meaning, but also invites the listener to feel the change in meaning through stories, parables, and reflections on life(Jannah et al., 2026). This shows that interpretation

through the media can present the Qur'an as a lively discourse and is open to a variety of new interpretations in a digital space that involves participation.

These theories become relevant when placed in a digital space that allows for the rapid, open, and participatory dissemination of meaning. The implication for the interpretation of the Qur'an on social media is that every interpretation content, whether in the form of short videos, visual illustrations, or popular narratives, not only conveys the meaning of the verse in an informative way, but also forms a new process of appropriation in which audiences participate in bringing the meaning to life and expanding the meaning through interactions, comments, and religious practices in the digital space.

C. Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics: A New Interpretative Framework in the Interpretation of the Qur'an on Social Media

Quranic exegesis is a discipline that specifically considers the approaches and methods used to explain the meaning of the holy book. Despite the use of new technologies, the method of developing an exegesis remains crucial, as interpreters cannot convey their explanations of the Text until the Text is presented in a way that facilitates understanding. (Islam et al., 2025) Although new media such as the internet and digital platforms provide new ways to disseminate exegesis, the techniques used have not changed significantly compared to those used in conventional media such as books and television. The fundamentals of Quranic exegesis remain consistent, even though the media and methods of delivery may differ. (Miftahuddin, 2020) This is where the first hermeneutic challenge arises: how to maintain the depth of meaning in a medium that tends to encourage extreme summaries.

In the digital age, the interplay between technology and traditional knowledge has created increasingly diverse wisdom, better able to meet the social needs of society at large. The approach to media is not significantly different from the methods used in tafsir books, the only difference being the application through media. Developments in tafsir media also present an opportunity to enhance strategies for disseminating religious values, making them more creative and innovative, enabling them to be accepted by the younger generation.

Interpretation of the Qur'an in the digital era is an interpretation in a new space in contemporary dynamics. While in classical interpretation, this process was carried out through written works aimed at scholars and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), Quranic interpretation is now available in the global public sphere through platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. This shift in medium has created a more accessible, concise, and interactive style of interpretation, yet it remains part of a hermeneutical process involving interaction between Text, interpreter, and audience. (Wafi et al., 2022) This shift confirms a second challenge: interpretive authority is now determined by audiences and platforms,

not mere science. As Gadamer stated, "*understanding is always related to the limitations of the reader's horizon*," so that interpretation on digital platforms cannot be separated from the dynamics of hermeneutics, because audiences in the digital world bring social and cultural pre-understandings that influence the way they understand the Text.(Khishigtugs, 1975)

On the one hand, digital transformation opens up new space for creativity and innovation in the delivery of Qur'anic values. But on the other hand, digital media also creates a shift in authority. If in the classical era the authority of a mufassir relied on scientific competence, sanad, and institutional legitimacy, then in the digital era, authority is often shaped by popularity, algorithms, and the number of followers (Utami et al., 2026). The findings of PPIM (2021) show that the younger generation learns more about religion from digital figures than from scholars who have classical authority.(itofficerppim-webadmin, 2021)

This condition suggests that authority is no longer determined only by "who is knowledgeable", but by "who can explain interestingly" or "who appears most often on the user's homepage". This shift is important to criticize, because it has changed the way people build trust in the interpreter and the meaning of the verse. It is in this context that Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics provides a powerful analytical tool. With the concept of autonomy of the Text, Ricoeur emphasizes that the Text of the Qur'an has its own world of meaning (the world of the Text) which cannot be reduced only to the intention of the interpreter or the demands of the media. These interactions can enrich understanding if managed well, but they can also present distortions of meaning if the reader accepts the Text without adequate structural explanation. Thus, Ricoeur's framework helps us see that digital interpretation is not just the process of conveying a message, but the process of negotiating meaning that takes place between texts, interpreters, and audiences in an ever-changing digital world.(George, 2025)

The hermeneutics proposed by Paul Ricoeur, with its concepts of the meaning of the text independent of the author, appropriation, and symbols regarding hidden meanings, offers a relevant framework for understanding the existence of Quranic interpretation in the media as a new form of interpretation. Media platforms create opportunities where the Quranic Text is not only preserved literally, but also enriched with symbolic meanings relevant to the socio-cultural context of modern society. Therefore, digital interpretation is not only seen as a popular form of expression, but as a proper hermeneutical practice, where there is an interaction between the reader, the interpreter, and the Text that always occurs in an open space. Through this analysis, the research shows that Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics makes an important contribution to the study of contemporary Islamic thought because it is able to explain the changes in the way Muslims interpret the Qur'an in the digital age. This modern hermeneutic theory helps to understand that technological developments not only change the form of

interpretation delivery, but also affect the way of thinking, religious authority, and the process of forming religious understanding in society. However, even though digital interpretation is dynamic and open, Ricoeur's framework still demands precision in selecting sources, reading context, and ensuring the authority of interpreters so that the authenticity of the meaning of the Qur'an is maintained. Thus, Ricoeur's hermeneutics serves not only as a theory, but also as a relevant critical methodology for assessing and developing the practice of interpreting the Qur'an in today's digital space.

D. Conclusion

This research shows that Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding the interpretation of the Qur'an in the digital age. Key concepts such as the autonomy of the Text, the explanatory relationship – understanding, symbols, and the three stages of understanding (semantic, reflective, and existential) affirm that the meaning of the Text is always open and can be reconstructed in new contexts. Through this approach, digital interpretation is seen not only as a popular phenomenon but as a new form of interpretive process that places the Text, the interpreter, and the audience in a dynamic dialogical relationship. Thus, Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework allows interpretation to remain relevant while maintaining the authenticity of the meaning of the Qur'an when interacting with digital public spaces.

Then the research findings hint that the interpretation of the Qur'an on various media platforms presents a new way to understand meaning in a more flexible, interactive, and participatory way. In Ricoeur's hermeneutic perspective, the digital space is not just a medium of dissemination, but an arena for the appropriation of meaning, the formation of new symbols, public dialogue, and the negotiation of religious authority. This implication opens up opportunities for further research, such as examining the impact of algorithms on the authority of digital mufasir, the patterns of reproduction of meaning that occur through comments and audience interactions, and how visual symbols in digital content expand or even reduce the meaning of verses. With this research direction, the study of digital interpretation can be further deepened as part of the dynamics of contemporary hermeneutics.

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