



**BETWEEN REVELATION AND DIGITALITY: A GADAMERIAN
QUR'ANIC HERMENEUTICS OF PROPHET JONAH AND THE
#KABURAJADULU PHENOMENON**

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the hashtag *#KaburAjaDulu* on various social media platforms represents a manifestation of psychosocial distress, structural criticism and the younger generation's urge to escape the economic pressures and public policies perceived as failing to prioritise their interests. This qualitative, literature-based study aims to contextualise the Qur'anic narrative of the story of Prophet Jonah in Surah al-Anbiya', verse 37, using Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic framework. By engaging the Qur'an's historical-textual horizon (*ḍiyyq al-ṣadr, mughāḍiban, fa ẓanna an la naqdira 'alaihi, al-ẓulumāt, salaf min al-'ibādah*) with the contemporary horizon of digital netizens. This study found that the act of 'running away' without proper preparation risks triggering a new and more severe crisis. The story of Prophet Jonah offers a paradigm shift: the pressures of life must be faced with patience, the cultivation of spirituality through prayer, and the enhancement of one's capacity through self-purification and the discovery of the truth in one's choices, so as to subsequently contribute actively to the welfare of the nation. This research highlights a dual responsibility: it urges the government to treat this phenomenon as an early warning indicator to promptly reform the labour market ecosystem and ensure the welfare of human resources in order to prevent the loss of top talent, whilst simultaneously guiding the younger generation to manage personal crises rationally and spiritually.

Keywords: *Qur'anic Hermeneutics; Digital Escapism; Prophet Jonah*



A. Introduction

The emergence of the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu on various social media platforms in early 2025 reflects the drive amongst Generation Z and young Indonesian workers to seek employment, education and a better life abroad in response to domestic conditions deemed unfavourable (Tumanggor & Sazali, 2025; Silawati et al., 2025). The main triggers were a build-up of frustration regarding government policy dynamics, budgetary constraints, rising prices of basic necessities, economic uncertainty, and a lack of job opportunities commensurate with the qualifications of young graduates (Grehenson, 2025). The public's response takes the form of digital criticism characterised by satire and dark humour, whilst simultaneously serving as a solidarity network for sharing information on job vacancies and international scholarships (Pratama et al., 2025). However, this trend of 'escaping' without formal planning carries real risks, ranging from the threat of exploitation and illegal worker status which deprives individuals of their legal rights (Silawati et al., 2025) to the threat of a brain drain, which has the potential to undermine national competitiveness and erode the potential of Indonesia's demographic dividend (Grehenson, 2025; Wikipedia, 2025).

The shift in patterns of religious communication in the digital age is not merely occurring at a functional level; it has also shifted the boundaries of traditional religious authority into the algorithmic realm of social media. Empirical findings indicate that around 62 per cent of Muslim millennials access religious information via digital platforms, yet only 27 per cent verify it with authoritative institutions. Consequently, narratives of anxiety and hashtags such as #KaburAjaDulu (Just Run Away for Now) have rapidly escalated due to engagement-driven logic, which often simplifies complex issues into emotional slogans on social media (Utami et al., 2026). On the other hand, the penetration of digital technology, when not balanced by character-based digital literacy, also creates scope for distractions, moral degradation and the erosion of local identity amongst the younger generation (Hanin et al., 2026)

In response to digital escapism and the phenomenon of impulsive migration, the author considers that the socio-economic anxieties experienced by the younger generation are a valid objective reality; however, responding to them through emotional flight without spiritual maturity or proper planning risks jeopardising both personal safety and the nation's future. Acts of 'running away' driven solely by frustration risk trapping individuals in new problems whilst abroad and shirking their social responsibilities as citizens. Therefore, a balanced perspective is required one that not only acknowledges the mental and structural pressures they face but also provides an ethical and spiritual foundation so that such disappointment can be transformed into a process of personal maturation, critical evaluation, and a constructive commitment to more meaningful service.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the use of the story of the Prophet Jonah in the Qur'an (specifically Surah al-Anbiya', verse 87) as a lens through which to reflect on the psychosocial crisis facing the modern younger generation. In contrast to conventional theological approaches, which tend to be dogmatic, this study highlights the psychological dimensions experienced by the Prophet Jonah as he faced emotional exhaustion, social anxiety and the urge to abandon his people due to the pressures of his mission. This focus uniquely draws parallels between the phases of emotional flight, isolation and contemplation within the darkness of the fish's belly, and the process of Prophet Jonah's spiritual awakening, with the dynamics of digital escapism amongst young people, in order to establish an ethical foundation that guides them from mere passive escapism towards a renewed commitment to contributing to society.

To analyse the unique characteristics of the research subject, this study employs a qualitative approach based on library research, applying Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1989) hermeneutic theory. Through the concepts of 'effective-historical consciousness' and the 'fusion of horizons', the interpretation of the Qur'an aims to generate new and productive meanings. This approach engages in a dialogue with the historical horizon of the narrative of the Prophet Jonah drawn from classical and modern exegetical works such as al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-bayān*, al-Qurṭubī's *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, al-Qushayrī's *Laṭā'if al-ishārāt, Rūḥ al-ma'ānī* by Al-Ālūsī, and *al-Taḥrīr wa al-tanwīr* by Ibn 'Āsyūr with the contemporary perspective of the exegete, which is shaped by a pre-understanding of the psychosocial reality of the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon.

This study puts forward the preliminary argument that the impulse towards escapism in the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon is not merely a rational-economic act or a form of political resistance, but rather a manifestation of a psychospiritual crisis that requires a process of inner healing and a reorientation of the meaning of life. Through a reconstruction of the story of the Prophet Jonah, the urge to 'leave' can be transformed from a destructive act of escapism into a productive phase of self-reflection before one rededicates one's potential. In line with this argument, this study aims to contextualise the interpretation of Qur'anic verses relating to the story of the Prophet Jonah in order to produce a holistic framework of meaning, both as a psychological reflection on managing personal crises and as a religious guide for addressing the structural pressures of modern society.

The discourse surrounding the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu has been academically examined from various perspectives over the past few years. Ridwan et al. (2026), through phenomenological and netnographic studies of Muslim TikTok users, found that young people's decision to 'run away' constitutes an adaptive response formulated within the 'Dual Self-Orientation Model', in which they existentially seek authenticity through social alienation, and pragmatically utilise migration to achieve economic stability by theologically reframing manual labour as

'Family Jihad'. Meanwhile, Setiawan and Rofiki (2025) examined the phenomenon of sudden resignations associated with this hashtag amongst former Islamic boarding school students using person-organisation fit theory and cultural resistance. They conclude that such actions constitute moral and cultural resistance against a corporate working environment that is toxic, capitalistic, and at odds with *pesantren* values.

From the perspective of religious textual studies, Aji (2025) interprets the #KaburAjaDulu trend through a contextual reading of the story of the Companions of the Cave, drawing an analogy between the younger generation's decision to migrate and the strategic move made by the youths of the Cave who fled to the cave to safeguard their faith, hone their skills, and seek a more dignified life. On the other hand, Zahra et al. (2026) employ a 'ma'anil hadith' approach to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadiths No. 1 and No. 2783, integrated with the thought of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. They identified three typologies of intention among the #KaburAjaDulu participants (*al-niyyah al-muwafiqah, al-mubhamah, and al-musykilah*) and criticised the labelling of this entire phenomenon as 'hijrah' as a form of semantic simplification that is normatively and fiqh-wise inappropriate.

This study fills a strategic research gap compared with previous studies. Unlike Aji's (2025) study, which utilised the story of the Companions of the Cave to legitimise passive flight in order to preserve one's faith, this study presents an alternative theological comparison through the story of the Prophet Jonah, which emphasises a process of psychological transformation within darkness, ultimately sparking an awareness to return to serving society. Furthermore, this study complements the existential analyses by Ridwan et al. (2026) and Setiawan and Rofiki (2025) by offering a framework for inner healing based on Islamic psychospirituality, whilst also deepening the normative boundaries outlined by Zahra et al. (2026) by explaining the inner mechanisms of individual transformation from anxiety towards active contribution. Theoretically, this study enriches the body of contextual Qur'anic hermeneutics, whilst practically, it is of the utmost urgency to provide ethical and spiritual direction and guidance for the younger generation in addressing social unrest without losing their commitment to the nation.

B. The Anatomy of Digital Anxiety: Triggers, Dynamics and the Public Response to the #KaburAjaDulu Hashtag

The emergence of the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) represents a form of public frustration and criticism amidst the social, economic and political dynamics in Indonesia (Tuamnggor & Sazali, 2025; Putra, 2025). Chronologically, this digital narrative was first initiated by the account @amouraXexa in early January 2025, before eventually escalating massively after

being picked up and disseminated by influential accounts such as @hrdbacot and @berlianidris (Ardianti et al., 2025; Putra, 2025).

The initial trigger for this phenomenon stemmed from a discussion regarding the disparity in incentives and salaries for workers in the information technology (IT) sector in Indonesia compared with opportunities abroad, which subsequently escalated due to a build-up of public policy controversies such as surging prices of basic commodities, the burden of higher education costs, the scarcity of 3 kg LPG cylinders, tax increases, and a decline in public purchasing power (Silawati et al., 2025).

Various studies have detected a high frequency of tweets in the short period following the emergence of these national economic and educational issues, demonstrating that these expressions stem from moments of domestic socio-political crisis. From a demographic perspective, these digital conversations are dominated by younger age groups, including Generation Z, university students and young workers. The tone of the content produced by the public is not uniform, but ranges from complaints and sarcasm to satire and dark humour as a coping mechanism for the pressures of life (Ardianti et al., 2025; Tuamnggor & Sazali, 2025).

Thematically, the main drivers behind the proliferation of this hashtag stem from individual economic crises such as the high cost of living and limited job opportunities, a lack of trust in state institutions, a desire to explore opportunities for a better life abroad, mental strain or burnout, and dwindling hopes for improvements in domestic structural conditions (Ardianti et al., 2025). Findings from an academic survey of a group of students reinforce this phenomenon, with the majority of respondents recognising the factors driving the emergence of the hashtag and viewing it as a form of moral resistance and an expression of concern rooted in a love for the homeland, rather than an apolitical stance (Silawati et al., 2025).

From the perspective of communication and digital sociology, the construction of the #KaburAjaDulu discourse can be comprehensively analysed through the four stages of Robert N. Entman's framing model. At the 'define problems' stage, the crisis is framed as economic pressure and an oppressive collective burden of life. In the 'diagnosis of causes' stage, public grievances are directed at biased government policies, exploitative labour systems and structural inequalities (Tuamnggor & Sazali, 2025).

Moral judgements are typically expressed through sarcasm and dark humour to criticise ethical inequalities whilst simultaneously fostering emotional solidarity amongst fellow netizens who are under pressure. Finally, the proposal of solutions takes the form of the idea of 'escape' as a form of symbolic resistance and a means of psychosocial relief (Ardianti et al., 2025; Tuamnggor & Sazali, 2025). Furthermore, quantitative testing based on Social Judgment Theory demonstrates

that user engagement with hashtags has a positive and very strong influence on the direction of public opinion formation on the X platform (Putra, 2025).

The dynamics of this discourse ultimately triggered polarised responses both in the public sphere and amongst the governing elite (Silawati et al., 2025; Putra, 2025). On the one hand, some netizens used this hashtag constructively to share information on scholarships, job vacancies and tips on adapting to life abroad, whilst others voiced criticism, arguing that the narrative of ‘escape’ cast doubt on nationalism. On the other hand, the official response from policymakers tended to be defensive and reactive (Silawati et al., 2025; Putra, 2025).

President Prabowo Subianto responded to the prevalence of this trend by suggesting that it reflected a sense of pessimism amongst certain sections of society, whilst urging young people not to ‘run away’ and to continue facing national challenges. Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister of Labour offered a confrontational response, stating that people should “just run away altogether and, if necessary, never come back”, whilst dismissing the issue as unworthy of attention (Silawati et al., 2025; Putra, 2025).

Based on this overall synthesis of data and dynamics, several critical observations and comments can be drawn regarding the relationship between the digital community and the state in Indonesia. Firstly, the reactive and dismissive responses of public officials tend to expose the government’s failure in political communication and widen the emotional gap between state institutions and the younger generation (Silawati et al., 2025; Putra, 2025). When formal channels for voicing concerns are perceived as blocked or unresponsive, social media automatically takes over the role of a psychosocial safety valve for the public (Tuamnggor & Sazali, 2025).

Secondly, the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon is a form of soft dissent and digital affective activism; it is therefore mistaken to interpret it superficially as a form of apolitical despair or a loss of patriotism (Ardianti et al., 2025; Putra, 2025). Thirdly, although the call to ‘run away’ originated as satire and an emotional outpouring in the online world, this trend harbours the potential for a real threat in the form of an exodus of skilled, productive labour if the domestic working climate and social welfare provisions fail to improve (Putri et al., 2025).

Therefore, the government should not view this viral hashtag merely as a public relations nuisance, but must treat it as an early warning indicator to promptly evaluate public policy, improve the labour market ecosystem, and restore public trust for the sustainability of national development (Silawati et al., 2025; Putra, 2025).

Ontologically speaking, the mass anxiety and the urge for escapism underpinning the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu stem from the dominance of the neoliberal paradigm and technocratic pragmatism within the modern education and labour market ecosystems, which tend to reduce human dignity to mere ‘human

capital' for the sake of industry (Kamila & Jannah, 2026). Reducing the younger generation to mere economic instruments without regard for the fulfilment of spiritual and existential dimensions triggers dehumanisation and a crisis of life's meaning (Kamila & Jannah, 2026). This is exacerbated by the framing mechanisms of social media algorithms, which act as new gatekeepers, trapping users within a 'filter bubble' of collective anxiety and intensifying the polarisation of narratives between the oppressed public and policy-makers (Utami et al., 2026)

C. The Textual and Historical Dynamics of the Story of the Prophet Jonah in the Qur'an

The Prophet Jonah who, in exegetical accounts, is identified as Jonah bin Matta was sent by Allah SWT to deliver the prophetic message to the people of Nineveh or Palestine. In the text of the Qur'an and exegetical literature, he is known as *zu al-Nūn* or 'Companion of the Fish'. As noted by exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī (2001), al-Qurṭubī (1964) and Ibn 'Āsyūr (1984), Prophet Jonah was a pious servant who, as a human being, possessed a distinctive character trait of being quick-tempered or narrow-minded (*ḍiyyq fī khuluqihī*), so that when the heavy burden of the prophetic mission (*aṣqāl al-nubuwwah*) was placed upon him, he found it extremely difficult to cope with.

When his call to faith met with rejection and defiance from his people, Allah the Almighty revealed a warning that punishment would be brought down at a predetermined time. Prophet Jonah conveyed this warning and then left his people's settlement without waiting for permission or an official command from Allah. His departure whilst in a state of *mughāḍiban* (anger) gave rise to a dynamic of historical and textual interpretation amongst scholars of tafsir. Al-Ṭabarī (2001) explains that Prophet Jonah left out of indignation at his people's disbelief and out of fear of being regarded as a liar should the punishment fail to materialise.

Meanwhile, al-Qurṭubī (1964) and al-Ālūsī (1994) emphasise the interpretations of *Ṭabī'in* scholars such as Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Sya'bi, and Sa'īd ibn Jubair, that the phrase 'angry with his Lord' (*mughāḍiban li rabbihi*) must be understood as anger in defence of the religion of Allah due to the disobedience of his people. Furthermore, Al-Qusyairī (1431 H), al-Qurṭubī (1964) and al-Ālūsī (1994) note the historical context of a dispute with a local ruler (such as King Hezekiah) prior to his departure for the sea. As for Ibn 'Āsyūr (1984), he explains that the word *mughāḍiban* functions as a metaphor (*tasybīh*) describing his departure as if he were in a state of anger.

Following the departure of the Prophet Jonah, his people realised the gravity of the divine threat when the signs of punishment began to appear. They flocked out into the open field, separating each mother animal from her young, then repented, wept, and collectively sought forgiveness from Allah. Allah accepted the sincerity of their repentance and thus called off the punishment. Meanwhile, the Prophet Jonah,

who was watching from afar, did not know the exact reason for the punishment's cancellation and felt too ashamed to return, fearing he would be accused of being a liar by his people.

He then continued his journey until he reached the coast (the Sea of Rūm or Jaffa) and boarded a sailing ship. Out at sea, the ship was struck by a massive wave and was in danger of sinking, so the crew agreed to draw lots to determine which passenger should be thrown overboard to lighten the ship's load. As explained by al-Ālūsī (1994) and Al-Qusyairī (1431 H), the draw was carried out three times and the name of the Prophet Jonah was drawn each time (*fa kāna min al-mudḥaḍin*).

Understanding this as a test decreed by Allah the Almighty, he leapt into the sea and was immediately swallowed by a large fish (*al-nūn/al-ḥūt*). Allah revealed to the fish not to harm his flesh or break his bones, but rather to make its belly a place of refuge. Al-Qusyairī (1431 H) adds that he remained inside the fish's belly for a period ranging from several days to forty days.

Within the fish's belly, there are two aspects of in-depth textual exegesis discussed by the scholars. Regarding the phrase *fa ẓanna an lan naqdira 'alaihi*, al-Ṭabarī (2001), Al-Qurṭubī (1964), al-Ālūsī (1994) and Ibn 'Āsyūr (1984) all agree that the word '*naqdira*' must not be interpreted from the root '*al-quḍrah*' (God's power) in a way that suggests the Prophet Jonah doubted God's power, for such a belief constitutes a form of disbelief that could never exist in a prophet.

The phrase '*an lan naqdira*' is interpreted here as '*al-taḍyīq*' (inflicting hardship or a trial) or '*al-taqdīr*' (determining the fate of his departure). Furthermore, regarding the phrase *al-ẓulumāt* (layers of darkness), al-Ṭabarī (2001), Al-Qusyairī (1431 H), al-Qurṭubī (1964), al-Ālūsī (1994) and Ibn 'Āsyūr (1984) explain that this refers to three tangible forms of darkness: the darkness of night, the darkness of the ocean depths, and the darkness within the belly of a fish — or the situation where the fish that swallowed it is itself swallowed by a larger fish.

Upon realising that he was still alive inside the fish's belly, the Prophet Jonah moved his legs, prostrated himself, and made the fish's belly his place of worship, as narrated by al-Ṭabarī (2001) and al-Qurṭubī (1964). As explained by Ibn 'Āsyūr (1984), there he offered a prayer of repentance and seeking purification from Allah the Exalted: "*Lā ilāha illā anta subḥānaka innī kuntu min al-ẓālimīn*". al-Ṭabarī (2001) records that the echo of his tasbīh, together with that of the sea creatures, was heard by the angels in heaven, who recognised the voice of a righteous servant whose good deeds continually ascended day and night; whereupon the angels implored Allah the Almighty to grant him assistance.

By the grace of Allah the Almighty and his past record of worship (*salaf min al-'ibadah*) as emphasised by al-Qusyairī (1431 H) and al-Ṭabarī (2001) Allah commanded the fish to spew the Prophet Jonah onto the barren shore whilst he was ill and weak (*wa huwa saqīm*). Furthermore, al-Ālūsī (1994) explains that Allah caused a plant resembling a gourd (*yaqtīn*) to grow to provide shade and restore the

Prophet Jonah's physical strength, then commanded him once more to preach to his people, numbering more than one hundred thousand, all of whom had already believed.

Safeguarding the doctrine of the infallibility of the Prophet (*'ismah*) is the primary focus of the exegetes, who consistently reject the interpretation of the verse *fa zanna an lan naqdira 'alaihi* as a form of doubt regarding Allah's power (*al-qudrah*) which would imply disbelief but rather understand it as a restriction of circumstances (*al-tadyiq*) or the predestination of punishment (*al-taqdir*) in order to avoid theological presumptions unworthy of a messenger of Allah.

Furthermore, this narrative reveals the human dimension and the process of spiritual purification (*tamhīṣ*), in which the innate trait of a constricted heart (*ḍayiq al-ṣadr*) whilst bearing the heavy burden of the call to Islam is tempered through the trial within the belly of the fish, whilst simultaneously proving that a consistent record of worship in the past (*salaf min al-'ibādah*) can serve as a means of intercession that invites the intercession of angels and divine assistance. This sequence of events also rests upon the historical exception of the revocation of punishment, wherein the collective act of mass repentance by the people of Nineveh before the punishment was due to befall them succeeded in overturning the decree of destruction, setting a unique precedent in the history of the Qur'an.

D. A Fusion of Hermeneutic Horizons: Engaging the Text of the Story of the Prophet Jonah in Dialogue with the #KaburAjaDulu Discourse

Through Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic fusion of horizons, an understanding of the Qur'anic text does not merely reproduce past meanings, but gives rise to a productive dialogue between the historical-textual horizon of the story of the Prophet Jonah and the contemporary horizon of netizens within the discourse of the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu. The #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon in the digital sphere is a form of expression that carries a variety of meanings.

On the one hand, this hashtag represents the accumulation of public frustration and anger over various socio-economic dynamics, policy controversies, the high cost of living, and the scarcity of job opportunities. On the other hand, this phenomenon reflects a sense of disappointment and a crisis of trust in state institutions, which, at its most extreme, places society particularly the younger generation in a position of resignation or despair after feeling that their criticisms and aspirations have failed to bring about change. Nevertheless, this discourse also has a positive dimension as a psychosocial safety valve for self-soothing, a form of symbolic resistance, and a means of sharing opportunities for international education and careers.

When this socio-digital horizon is brought into dialogue with the textual horizon of the Qur'an, a profound existential encounter with the narrative of the Prophet Jonah's flight becomes apparent. The Qur'anic text records that the Prophet

Jonah experienced *ḍiyq al-ṣadr* (a constriction of the chest) and emotional exhaustion whilst bearing the heavy burden of his mission amidst the rejection of his people, so he decided to abandon his duty whilst in a state of *mughadhiban* (anger).

He assumed that by walking away, his situation would improve and that Allah would not make his path difficult (*fa ẓanna an lan naqdīra ‘alaihi*). However, leaving without divine command and without proper preparation actually led the Prophet Jonah to a far greater trial: being tossed about by the waves of the ocean until he was swallowed by a great fish (*al-nūn/al-ḥūt*). This convergence of horizons offers a reflective critique: the impulse towards escapism or the act of ‘running away’ — driven solely by emotion and despair, without proper planning or adequate provisions risks exposing a person to a new and even more dangerous crisis out there.

From the convergence of these two horizons emerges a crucial ethical and spiritual message: that a problem must, in essence, be faced, not avoided. Avoiding reality does not necessarily resolve the issue, for fear and social anxiety are, in truth, part of life’s trials designed to test and strengthen one’s capacity for faith. In the layered darkness within the belly of the fish (*al-ẓulumāt*), the Prophet Jonah taught the importance of patience and prayer as the foundation for inner healing.

He did not wallow in lamentation, but instead engaged in deep introspection, prostrated himself, and offered a prayer of repentance (*Lā ilāha illā anta subḥānaka innī kuntu min al-ẓālimīn*). It was this record of devotion and the sincerity of his prayer that invited the mercy of Allah the Almighty to deliver him from his distress and lead him towards recovery.

This contextualisation offers reconstructive guidance for the younger generation in addressing the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon, whether in the context of life’s pressures or nationalism. The choice to migrate, pursue education, or seek opportunities abroad should not be interpreted as a ‘leap of faith’ born of despair or a desire to abandon one’s love for one’s homeland. Prophet Jonah’s phase of contemplation within the fish’s belly symbolises a process of psychospiritual transformation and purification of the soul (*tazkiyah al-naḥs*) before he was ultimately restored and commanded to return to guide his community of over one hundred thousand people.

This fusion of the Gadamerian hermeneutic horizon finds its axiological foundation in the concept of *ta’dīb*, namely the reorientation of the self to recognise and place everything in its proper place within the order of life (Kamila & Jannah, 2026). In the context of #KaburAjaDulu, young people are encouraged to reawaken their awareness of the *mīšāq* (primordial covenant) so that the phase of isolation and social disillusionment may be transformed from a mere act of impulsive escape into a space for the maturation of intellectual capacity and spiritual resilience, in order to realise the ideal human being (*insān kāmil*) (Kamila & Jannah, 2026). This

transformation simultaneously shields the younger generation from the trap of the 'algorithmic authority' of digital media, which often presents uniform, single answers and reduces the complexity of *ikhtilāf* and social reality (Adinugraha et al., 2026)

Similarly, the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon, if interpreted positively, should be used as an opportunity to develop one's capabilities, hone one's knowledge, and consciously build up one's resources. In this way, the younger generation, wherever they may be, will remain driven by a spirit of returning or making a tangible contribution to the nation's progress and the common good

The #KaburAjaDulu hashtag phenomenon is, in essence, a form of soft dissent and digital affective activism; it is therefore a mistake to interpret it superficially as a form of apolitical despair or a loss of patriotism. Regrettably, the reactive responses from public officials ranging from President Prabowo's appeal to young people not to 'run away' to the confrontational statement by the Deputy Minister of Manpower telling netizens to 'just run away altogether and, if necessary, don't come back' have in fact exposed a failure in political communication that widens the emotional gap between state institutions and the younger generation. The government should not adopt a defensive stance, but rather treat this social media narrative as an early warning indicator of the blockage in the formal channels through which the public's aspirations are channelled.

Although this discourse originated from expressions of grievance, satire and dark humour online, the trend poses a real threat in the form of a brain drain. If the working environment, career prospects, research incentives and the burden of higher education fees are not addressed, Indonesia risks losing the potential benefits of its demographic dividend. In this context, reflection on the story of the Prophet Jonah offers a two-pronged appeal: it urges the government to reform the domestic structural and labour ecosystem, whilst simultaneously educating the younger generation so that they do not become trapped in emotional escapism without proper planning and preparation.

Amidst the proliferation of social studies relying on the analytical tools of Western secular existentialism or person-organisation fit theory, the hermeneutic horizon fusion approach demonstrates that the Qur'an possesses a wealth of conceptual depth. This approach successfully transforms the narrative of the holy book from merely a rigid theological doctrine into a responsive and practical psycho-spiritual guide for nurturing mental wellbeing whilst preserving a sense of national identity in the digital age.

Specifically, the findings of this study reinforce its position amongst previous studies. Whilst previous research has tended to respond to the #KaburAjaDulu phenomenon in a dichotomous manner whether through a secular socio-political lens that views it purely as an accumulation of structural disillusionment, or a

textual-normative religious approach that regards escapism merely as a form of weakness of faith this study bridges these two perspectives.

This research demonstrates that a hermeneutic dialogue between Qur'anic narratives and digital reality is not only capable of unravelling the psycho-structural roots of the tension between citizenship and despair, but also offers a new axiological framework: transforming netizens' emotional escapism into educational contemplation (*tamhīṣ*) oriented towards strengthening personal capacity and restoring national commitment.

E. Ethical, Spiritual and Well-being Implications for Human Resources: Practical Solutions for the Younger Generation and Public Policy

The ethical and spiritual implications of contextualising the story of the Prophet Jonah offer a fundamental reorientation for the younger generation in addressing social anxieties in the digital age. On an individual level, the Qur'anic narrative calls for a paradigm shift from emotional escapism towards utilising moments of pause or uncertainty as opportunities for self-reflection and measured capacity-building.

The younger generation is encouraged to align their intentions in every decision regarding geographical or career mobility, so that efforts to seek opportunities abroad do not stem from impulsive desperation—which is prone to triggering legal crises and threats to personal safety but are instead grounded in thorough preparation and a sense of cosmopolitan-nationalist awareness, with a view to eventually returning to contribute to the nation's welfare. In the spiritual dimension, the record of the Prophet Jonah's worship and prayers for self-purification emphasises the importance of strengthening inner resilience and active patience when facing life's pressures, so as not to succumb to apathy.

In the realm of public policy and the development of human resources (HR), the interpretation of the story of the Prophet Jonah in Surah al-Anbiya', verse 87, provides a clear imperative for the government to address the dynamics of the #KaburAjaDulu movement as an early warning indicator demanding concrete structural reform. It is not enough for the state to merely issue moral appeals; rather, it must take action to improve the national labour market ecosystem by providing fair employment opportunities, establishing appropriate incentive standards and career progression schemes, restructuring the burden of higher education costs, and strengthening research facilities.

Furthermore, strengthening regulations and the governance of skilled labour migration is crucial to providing maximum legal protection for Indonesian citizens abroad, whilst preventing a brain drain that could threaten the sustainability of Indonesia's demographic dividend. Through the realisation of synergy between the ethical and spiritual resilience of young people and improvements to the policy ecosystem by the state, socio-economic pressures will no longer lead to destructive

flight, but will instead be transformed into a force for achieving sustainable national progress.

The above explanation demonstrates that uncovering the fundamental dialectic between agents (the younger generation) and structures (the state and its policies) is essential; in this context, the strengthening of ethical and spiritual values must not be misinterpreted as a means of condoning social inequality. An analysis of the period of isolation experienced by the Prophet Jonah confirms that inner reflection and personal development constitute the capital of agency required to strengthen both professional bargaining power and individual spirituality.

However, this youth agency will face disparities if the state fails to respond by improving the public ecosystem. Without guarantees of structural justice—such as career certainty, adequate research incentives, and protection from exploitative working conditions efforts to cultivate patience risk becoming trapped in passive compromises that trigger prolonged alienation. Therefore, the ethical and spiritual integrity of young people and policy reforms by the government must proceed hand in hand and support one another, whereby an individual's inner strength serves as a source of resilience, whilst the state is responsible for providing a space for self-actualisation that is fair and humane.

In the realm of human resource welfare, the implications of this analysis call for a reorientation of the policy paradigm from a rigid perception of geographical barriers towards a dynamic approach to talent mobility. The phenomenon of young people moving abroad should no longer be viewed dichotomously as either a threat stemming from despair or an indication of waning nationalism; rather, it should be transformed from a risk of losing top talent into an opportunity.

Through a 'return commitment' scheme, the state needs to build an adaptive re-integration ecosystem encompassing competitive research incentives, recognition of global expertise, and regulatory ease so that the potential of the demographic dividend can be optimally realised. At the same time, instilling a sense of 'nationalist-cosmopolitanism' in the younger generation ensures that the experience, knowledge and international networks gained whilst living abroad remain oriented towards a commitment to serving the greater good of society back home.

F. Conclusion

A contextualisation of the story of the Prophet Jonah through Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics of the fusion of horizons suggests that the social unease felt by the younger generation in the digital sphere as seen in the #KaburAjaDulu discourse is a reflection of *ḍīq al-ṣadr* (a constriction of the chest) caused by structural pressures. The Qur'anic text warns that impulsive flight without proper preparation risks bringing about a more severe crisis in the future. Through the prayer of *tasbih*, patience, and the interpretation of 'inside the belly of the fish' as a

space for transformative self-purification. The Qur'anic narrative guides the younger generation not to become mired in escapism, but rather to continue honing their capabilities and rectifying their intentions of service, whilst remaining committed to bringing tangible benefits to the nation and the state.

In theory, this study demonstrates the success of Gadamer's hermeneutics of the fusion of horizons in providing a constructive ethical and spiritual foundation for bridging classical religious texts with contemporary social phenomena in the digital sphere. Nevertheless, this study has limitations in that its focus on a qualitative-hermeneutic approach has not yet empirically examined the impact of policy. It is therefore recommended that future research combine this approach with field studies or public policy analysis. In practical terms, this research recommends a dual responsibility: urging the government to treat this phenomenon as an early warning indicator to reform the labour market ecosystem and ensure the welfare of human resources in order to prevent the loss of top talent, whilst also guiding the younger generation to manage personal crises rationally and spiritually.

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