

## **THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS: CONTESTATION AND FRAGMENTED RECEPTION ON INSTAGRAM'S QURANREVIEW ACCOUNT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The representation of women in digital spaces has become a critical area of inquiry, as social media now serves not only as a medium for religious dissemination but also as a contested arena for discourse that shapes the social construction of Muslim communities. While previous studies have examined Qur'anic interpretations of women within academic and mainstream media contexts, limited attention has been paid to how these interpretations are constructed and publicly received on digital platforms—particularly Instagram, with its distinctive visual and interactive features. This study aims to analyze how the Instagram account @QuranReview represents Qur'anic interpretations related to women and to identify the patterns of public reception toward such content. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach and guided by reception theory, data were collected over a three-month period through the content analysis of 21 women-focused posts and 228 user comments, supplemented by non-participant observation. Thematic analysis using systematic coding procedures revealed a key finding: there has been a shift in interpretive authority from traditional scholars to digital figures who function as religious influencers in online spaces. This shift is accompanied by three dominant patterns of reception: progressive-affirmative, conservative-resistant, and critical-reflective. These findings underscore the urgency of re-evaluating the legitimacy of religious interpretation in the digital age and call for further studies that explore platform diversity and algorithmic influences in shaping public religious discourse.

**Keywords:** *Qur'anic Interpretation on Women, Digital Platforms, Qur'anic Reception.*

### **ABSTRAK**

Representasi perempuan dalam ruang digital menjadi isu krusial yang perlu dikaji, mengingat media sosial saat ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai saluran dakwah keagamaan, tetapi juga sebagai arena kontestasi wacana yang turut membentuk konstruksi sosial komunitas Muslim. Meskipun sejumlah penelitian sebelumnya telah membahas tafsir Al-Qur'an tentang perempuan dalam konteks akademik dan media arus utama, kajian yang secara spesifik mengungkap konstruksi dan penerimaan publik terhadap tafsir tersebut melalui platform digital, khususnya Instagram yang memiliki karakter visual dan interaktif, masih sangat terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana akun Instagram @QuranReview merepresentasikan tafsir Al-Qur'an terkait isu perempuan, sekaligus mengidentifikasi pola resepsi netizen terhadap konten tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teori resepsi sebagai pisau analisis. Data dikumpulkan selama tiga bulan melalui analisis terhadap 21 unggahan bertema perempuan dan 228 komentar netizen, dilengkapi observasi non-partisipan. Analisis tematik dengan prosedur coding secara sistematis menghasilkan temuan penting: terdapat pergeseran otoritas tafsir Al-Qur'an dari ulama tradisional menuju figur-figur digital yang berperan sebagai influencer keagamaan di ruang maya. Pergeseran ini disertai dengan tiga pola utama

resepsi netizen, yaitu resepsi afirmatif-progresif, konservatif-resisten, dan reflektif-kritis. Temuan ini menegaskan urgensi kajian ulang atas legitimasi tafsir keagamaan di era digital serta mendorong penelitian lanjutan yang lebih luas mencakup keberagaman platform dan pengaruh algoritma dalam membentuk wacana keagamaan publik.

**Kata Kunci:** *Tafsir Perempuan, Platform digital, Resepsi Al-Qur'an.*

## **A. Introduction**

In the rapidly evolving digital era, social media has become one of the primary platforms for disseminating information, including religious content such as Qur'anic interpretation.<sup>1</sup> These platforms offer wide-reaching access and flexibility, allowing diverse audiences to engage directly with the content presented. One notable example is the Instagram account @QuranReview, which consistently shares interpretations of the Qur'an on various social and religious issues, including those related to women—topics that often remain sensitive and contested in many Muslim communities.<sup>2</sup> The discourse on women in Qur'anic interpretation is not only attention-grabbing but also critically important, as it touches on fundamental concerns such as gender justice, social roles, and women's rights within Islamic frameworks.<sup>3</sup> The presence of such interpretations in digital spaces does more than expand access to religious knowledge—it also invites a spectrum of public responses.<sup>4</sup> These responses reflect how religious teachings are reconstructed and reinterpreted by contemporary audiences when presented through new digital formats such as social media.<sup>5</sup>

Statistical data indicate that Instagram is one of the most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia. According to the *We Are Social* report (2023), 85% of active Instagram users in the country are young people aged 18–35. This demographic is known for its distinct characteristics, including a strong interest in contemporary issues and a critical capacity for analyzing information.<sup>6</sup> Posts on the @QuranReview Instagram account that focus on women-related themes frequently receive high levels of engagement, as evidenced by the number of likes, comments, and shares—demonstrating significant public enthusiasm for these topics. For instance, posts discussing women's rights in Islam, grounded in Qur'anic interpretation, often spark intense discussions in the comment sections. While some users express support, others respond with resistance or criticism toward the interpretive approach used. This phenomenon illustrates that social media functions not merely as a tool for disseminating information but also as a dynamic discursive arena, where religious

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<sup>1</sup> Yevhen Leheza, 'Government, Religion and Fake News', *Religion and Policy Journal*, 1.2 (2023), 54–60.

<sup>2</sup> Iqomah Richtig and Muhammad Saifullah, "'Quranreview'", *Suhuf*, 15.2 (2022), 267–87.

<sup>3</sup> Amjad Hussain, Rizwana Gul and Aas Muhammad, 'A Comprehensive Examination of the Concept of Women Rights in Islam, along with a Concise Comparative Analysis of Legal Systems in Other Nations: Exploring the Clash of Narratives', *Sjesr*, 6.2 (2023), 18–28.

<sup>4</sup> Mustaqim Pabbajah, 'Religious Disorientation in the Digital Transformation: An Islamic Review', in *Advances in Digital Transformation-Rise of Ultra-Smart Fully Automated Cyberspace* (IntechOpen, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Elis Mila Rosa and others, 'Kontestasi Keberagamaan Di Media Sosial: Kontra Interpretasi Radikalisme Di Platform Youtube', *Jurnal Penelitian Agama*, 23.2 (2022), 175–96.

<sup>6</sup> Anqi Ling, 'The Impact of Social Media on Body Image Anxiety Among Females', in *2022 3rd International Conference on Mental Health, Education and Human Development (MHEHD 2022)* (Atlantis Press, 2022), pp. 716–20.

interpretations are actively contested and negotiated by audiences from diverse social, cultural, and educational backgrounds.<sup>7</sup>

Previous studies have explored how the public receives and responds to Qur'anic interpretation and religious texts presented through digital media. For instance, research by Qurrota A'yun<sup>8</sup> examined audience reception of Qur'anic messages conveyed in the animated film *Nussa Rara*, which was published on YouTube. The study revealed that audiences are not merely passive recipients of religious messages but actively interpret them in light of their personal and social contexts. This insight highlights the potential of digital platforms as alternative channels for disseminating religious interpretation. Further studies by Musyarrifani,<sup>9</sup> Azzahra et al.,<sup>10</sup> and Rosa et al.<sup>11</sup> focused on how netizens respond to Qur'anic interpretation posts on social media—particularly those related to women. These studies consistently found that digital presentations of tafsir significantly influence public engagement with Islamic content. They also observed that gender-related issues tend to attract more attention than other topics, indicating a heightened sensitivity among audiences toward gender discourse in Qur'anic interpretation. According to Solichah et al.,<sup>12</sup> this sensitivity is shaped by users' educational background, cultural values, and personal experiences. Additional research on religious content across other platforms such as YouTube and Twitter further underscores the idea that public engagement in digital spaces reflects broader social complexities.<sup>13</sup>

While numerous studies have addressed the intersection of social media and women's issues, significant gaps remain—particularly in examining discourse, audience reception, and the fragmentation of public responses to representations of women on digital platforms. This study seeks to fill that gap by posing two central research questions. First, how does the Instagram account @QuranReview construct and contextualize Qur'anic interpretations concerning women? Second, how do netizens respond to these interpretations? Grounded in the argument that social media serves as a public sphere that enables interactive dialogue on religious matters, this research aims to identify patterns of reception and explore how such interactions reflect the broader socio-religious dynamics of contemporary Muslim communities. Additionally, it investigates how female-related Qur'anic interpretations are

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<sup>7</sup> Syaiful Halim, Ahmad Rifai and Ace Somantri, 'Fenomena Keberagamaan Di Media Sosial; Deskripsi Analisis Wacana Seni Dan Budaya Di Media Sosial', *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal*, 5.5 (2023), 2674–83.

<sup>8</sup> Qurrota A'yun, 'Resepsi Al-Qur'an Di Media Sosial: Studi Kasus Film Animasi Nussa Episode "Hiii Serem!!!"', *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses*, 3.2 (2020), 319–37.

<sup>9</sup> Nafi Ibdiyana Musyarrifani, 'Pengaruh Citra Tubuh Terhadap Budaya Konsumsi Pada Perempuan', *SASDAYA: Gadjah Mada Journal of Humanities*, 6.1 (2022), 67–80.

<sup>10</sup> Dania Fedriyani Azzahra and Annisa Rahmani Qastharin, 'Evaluation of The Effectiveness of Instagram Social Media: A Case Study in Ringkai Indonesia', *International Journal of Business and Technology Management*, 4.3 (2022), 230–40.

<sup>11</sup> Rosa and others.

<sup>12</sup> Aas Siti Sholichah and Nurul Hikmah, 'Pendekatan Pendidikan Analisis Gender Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an', *Al Burhan: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Dan Pengembangan Budaya Al-Qur'an*, 22.2 (2022), 171–86.

<sup>13</sup> Yichen Wang and others, 'Analyzing Behavioral Changes of Twitter Users after Exposure to Misinformation', in *Proceedings of the 2021 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*, 2021, pp. 591–98.

contextualized in digital spaces, how audiences receive them, and how public responses reflect prevailing religious and social worldviews.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using reception theory to analyze netizen comments on women-focused content posted by the Instagram account @QuranReview. Data were collected over a three-month period, from February to April 2025. During this time, the researcher identified 21 posts that specifically addressed women's issues from an Islamic perspective, yielding a total of 228 comments and responses for analysis. Data collection was carried out using three primary methods: (1) content analysis of relevant posts, (2) non-participant observation of digital interaction patterns between the account administrator and followers, and (3) documentation of user comments and responses. The units of analysis include the @QuranReview account as a disseminator of religious content and the accompanying comments as forms of public reception. Purposive sampling was used to ensure a focused analysis on gender-related themes. Data analysis was conducted iteratively through the processes of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing to ensure consistency, transparency, and validity of the findings.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Interpretive Expression on @QuranReview**

In the digital era, social media has become a primary avenue through which the public accesses religious knowledge, including Qur'anic exegesis. Numerous Islamic accounts have emerged across digital platforms, offering a range of interpretive perspectives and methods. Among these, the Instagram account @QuranReview has drawn considerable attention for its consistent delivery of Qur'an-based content through a contextual and communicative approach, positioning itself as a digital reference point for many Muslim netizens. Launched as a Qur'an-focused platform, @QuranReview aims to present interpretations in a more modern and accessible style tailored to social media users. Unlike traditional tafsir platforms that typically rely on academic or textual presentations, @QuranReview adopts a visually driven and narrative-based format—integrating text, imagery, and graphic design to convey interpretations in a concise yet informative manner. According to Asaad, this approach reflects a broader shift in how religious content is consumed in the digital age, where accessibility and visual engagement have become key to effective religious communication.<sup>14</sup>

Over time, @QuranReview has evolved from a platform for Qur'anic interpretation into an interactive forum where netizens engage with diverse perspectives on the Qur'an. The account's central focus lies in presenting interpretations through a contextual approach—adapting the understanding of Qur'anic verses to contemporary social and cultural realities. This method seeks to render religious messages more relevant and applicable to everyday life.<sup>15</sup> As a visually oriented social media platform, @QuranReview

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<sup>14</sup> Nargis Khalaf Asaad, 'The Reader Response Theory in Arabic Criticism Mohammad Al-Mubarak's Book: Istiqbal Un-Nass (Text Reception) as an Example', *Journal of Language Studies*, 4.4 (2021), 46–64.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Siddiq, Muhammad Husni Ritonga and Fatma Yulia, 'Pola Penggunaan Akun Instagram@ Quranreview Dalam Meningkatkan Pemahaman Agama Di Kalangan Remaja Di Griya Martubung', *MASALIQ*, 3.5 (2023), 699–716.

employs a distinct content delivery strategy that departs from the format of traditional tafsir texts. In general, its content structure can be categorized into several key components:

First, the structure of the posts typically includes: a) a Qur'anic verse being interpreted, often presented with both Arabic text and its Indonesian translation; b) a concise exegesis referencing both classical and contemporary sources; c) supporting visual elements or illustrations to reinforce the interpretive message; and d) reflective questions or discussion prompts to encourage user interaction. This format allows users to engage with Qur'anic interpretation in a digestible and visually appealing manner, without the need to navigate lengthy scholarly texts.<sup>16</sup>

Second, the language style employed by @QuranReview is intentionally popular, inclusive, and communicative. Unlike conventional tafsir literature—which often uses complex Arabic or academic language—this account favors a lighter, more accessible tone designed to resonate with a broader audience, especially the younger generation that dominates Instagram's user base. For example, in explaining verses related to patience, the account not only provides linguistic and historical context but also connects the interpretation to everyday experiences. This approach fosters a sense of personal relevance and emotional proximity to the message. The use of casual yet intellectually grounded language enables @QuranReview to reach audiences who may not have prior exposure to traditional tafsir studies.<sup>17</sup>

Third, posting consistency and engagement patterns. Each post is typically followed by ongoing discussions in the comment section, indicating active audience reception. @QuranReview regularly uploads tafsir content on a daily or weekly basis, which helps sustain engagement and maintain a sense of continuity with followers. This consistency is a key factor in fostering user interaction and cultivating a digital community around Qur'anic discourse.<sup>18</sup> In addition to traditional feed posts, the account also utilizes Instagram Stories and Reels to deliver short-form video interpretations. This demonstrates @QuranReview's adaptability to evolving social media trends and its effort to diversify content formats to suit user preferences. As an interactive social media platform, the account attracts a diverse audience in terms of age, educational background, and religious understanding—further enriching the variety of responses and interpretations that emerge in its digital space.

The followers of @QuranReview generally fall into several key categories. Young Muslim audiences make up the majority of its followers—individuals who are active on social media and interested in contextual approaches to Islamic studies. Seekers of religious knowledge also form a significant segment, comprising netizens who turn to the platform as an alternative source of Islamic learning due to limited access to classical tafsir literature or direct engagement with religious scholars. Additionally, the platform attracts participants in diverse religious discourses, as followers do not necessarily share a uniform perspective on the interpretations presented. Responses range from supportive to critical, reflecting a spectrum of views. The comment sections frequently serve as a microcosm of broader

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<sup>16</sup> '@Quranreview', [https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfOxBToX2/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/DHwfOxBToX2/?img_index=1).

<sup>17</sup> '@Quranreview'.

<sup>18</sup> Yuliana Jamaludin, 'Paradigma Tafsir Adil Gender Pada Akun Instagram@ Mubadalah. Id', *Journal Of Islam and Plurality*, 8 (2019).

religious engagement, revealing varying levels of interpretation and theological reflection among users. These dynamics highlight that @QuranReview functions not merely as an information provider, but as an interactive space for theological dialogue within the digital sphere.<sup>19</sup> The interactions between the account and its followers illustrate how social media has become a new arena for engaging with Qur'anic exegesis—one where participation is no longer constrained by geography or formal academic background.

Based on observations of posts on the @QuranReview account, several recurring themes can be identified. These themes reflect the dynamics of contemporary Islamic thought, in which the Qur'an is interpreted not solely through a theological lens, but also in relation to social, cultural, and everyday contexts. The content featured on @QuranReview can be broadly classified into several main categories.<sup>20</sup>

First, thematic interpretation (*tafsīr maudū'ī*) addresses social issues. A defining feature of @QuranReview is its consistent use of thematic interpretation to explore pressing contemporary social concerns. Commonly featured topics in this category include social justice and human equality in Islam, the rights and responsibilities of individuals within family and society, and Qur'anic perspectives on poverty and philanthropy. For example, the account once presented an interpretation of Qur'an Surah At-Taghabun [64]:14, emphasizing the importance of the skill of *taṣfahū*—the ability of a husband to forgive and not dwell on the past mistakes of his wife or children. This verse was contextualized within modern social realities, where many husbands tend to bring up past faults, often leading to familial conflict. By framing this interpretation within real-life scenarios, @QuranReview demonstrates the continuing relevance of the Qur'an as a source of ethical and moral guidance in navigating the complexities of modern life.

Second, Qur'anic perspectives on women. Gender-related themes are among the most frequently explored topics on the @QuranReview account. The platform seeks to offer more inclusive interpretations regarding the roles, rights, and status of women in Islam. Topics commonly addressed include female leadership in Islamic discourse, the meaning and boundaries of *hijab* and *aurat*, and interpretations of polygamy and marriage within the Qur'anic framework. One notable example is the account's discussion of Surah An-Nisa [4]:34, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives and how a husband should respond to concerns about a wife's disobedience (*nushūz*). In this post, @QuranReview draws on Al-Qurṭubī's classical tafsir to contextualize the verse within contemporary social dynamics, offering audiences a clearer understanding of how traditional interpretations can be reexamined in light of modern ethical concerns. Posts on gender interpretation often generate intense discussion in the comment sections, reflecting the ongoing sensitivity of this topic and the need for a more dialogical, inclusive approach to Qur'anic gender discourse.

Third, the relationship between religion and science in the Qur'an. In several posts, @QuranReview explores the intersections between Qur'anic verses and contemporary scientific discoveries. Common themes in this category include the creation of the universe

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<sup>19</sup> Marziyeh Bakhshizadeh, 'A Social Psychological Critique on Islamic Feminism', *Religions*, 14.2 (2023), 202.

<sup>20</sup> Halim, Rifai and Somantri.

and the Big Bang theory, embryology in the Qur'an, and the link between ecology and Islamic environmental ethics. For instance, in its analysis of Surah At-Tāriq [86]:7, the account interprets the verse referencing the emergence of semen “from between the backbone and the ribs,” accompanied by a citation from a research study conducted at Columbia University. This kind of scientific engagement appeals not only to followers with a religious background but also to those interested in science-religion dialogue. These science-based interpretations illustrate how the Qur'an can be recontextualized in light of modern scientific knowledge—though debates persist over the appropriate boundaries between scientific exegesis and normative religious interpretation.

Fourth, ethics and morality in Islam. Ethical and moral teachings constitute a significant portion of @QuranReview's content. Topics in this category include the Islamic concepts of honesty and integrity, the prohibition of *ghībah* (backbiting) and its social consequences, and the importance of intention (*niyyah*) in acts of worship. One illustrative example is the account's interpretation of Surah Al-Hujurāt [49]:11, which addresses the prohibition against mocking others and exchanging insults. @QuranReview connects this verse to the phenomenon of cyberbullying in public digital spaces, where slander and gossip are easily circulated. This approach demonstrates that the Qur'an's moral framework remains deeply relevant for addressing the ethical challenges of contemporary life, especially in the context of online interaction and digital culture.<sup>21</sup>

Fifth, Qur'anic interpretation in popular culture. One of the most distinctive features of @QuranReview is its engagement with popular culture as a lens for Qur'anic interpretation. The account frequently relates Qur'anic messages to current trends in film, music, and social discourse. Examples of this include exploring spiritual meaning in song lyrics, identifying Qur'anic values in contemporary literature and cinema, and analyzing prophetic narratives through the lens of visual storytelling. For instance, @QuranReview once offered an interpretation of the song “Gala Bunga Matahari” by Sal Priadi through the lens of Qur'anic teachings, drawing parallels between the lyrics and the Islamic concept of longing and spiritual yearning. This approach enables audiences to engage with the Qur'an in ways that are both culturally resonant and spiritually enriching, bridging the gap between scripture and modern lived experience.<sup>22</sup>

Sixth, responses to contemporary global issues. In addition to the themes discussed above, @QuranReview frequently engages with Qur'anic interpretations in relation to pressing global concerns. Topics in this category include interfaith peace and tolerance, economic justice and Islamic finance, and Islamic perspectives on climate change and environmental responsibility. These discussions illustrate that @QuranReview does not limit itself to theological interpretation alone but actively seeks to offer Islamic insights that address the complex challenges of the modern world.<sup>23</sup>

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that @QuranReview presents a wide range of topics through a contextual approach. This thematic diversity demonstrates how Qur'anic interpretation can evolve in response to shifting social dynamics and the needs of

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<sup>21</sup> '@Quranreview'.

<sup>22</sup> '@Quranreview'.

<sup>23</sup> '@Quranreview'.



contemporary audiences. Visual Elements and Infographics as Interpretive Tools. In the digital age, many social media users are more drawn to visual and audiovisual content than to long-form textual material. Recognizing this shift, @QuranReview incorporates various visual elements to communicate Qur'anic messages effectively. These include infographics, which summarize tafsir content using diagrams or tables that are easy to understand; illustrations, which use imagery or sketches to represent the meaning of a verse; and quote graphics, which highlight key messages from the tafsir and present them in engaging visual formats. For example, in its interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah [2]:286—"God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity"—@QuranReview shared an illustration of a person carrying a load on their shoulders, with the verse reference placed above the image and the thematic message displayed below. This visual strategy not only enhances comprehension but also helps connect users emotionally with the content, reinforcing the spiritual and moral significance of the Qur'an in a visually driven digital culture.

Such visualizations make it easier for followers to grasp the core messages of Qur'anic interpretation without having to read lengthy texts. The use of visual elements in Qur'anic interpretation serves not merely as a strategy to capture audience attention but also as an educational tool that enhances comprehension.<sup>24</sup> Infographics, for instance, allow viewers to perceive the relationships between concepts within a verse, helping them to identify the central message quickly and efficiently. Illustrations, on the other hand, provide a more nuanced visual representation of interpretive meaning, offering contextual depth and emotional resonance to the verse being discussed.<sup>25</sup>

As social media continues to evolve, the incorporation of images and infographics into Qur'anic interpretation aligns with the principles of visual communication theory. In communication studies, visual media are considered more impactful than text alone, as the human brain processes visual information more rapidly and effectively.<sup>26</sup> The visual strategies employed by @QuranReview also broaden its outreach, especially among younger audiences who are more actively engaged with social media platforms. However, the use of visualization in tafsir is not without its challenges. One key concern is the risk of oversimplification—reducing the interpretive complexity of a verse to a level that may obscure its multilayered meanings. Striking a balance between accessibility and interpretive depth remains a critical task in the visual presentation of Qur'anic knowledge.

## **2. Qur'anic Reception in the Digital Media Era**

The term *reception* was originally used in literary studies to understand how audiences or readers engage with a text—producing responses, reactions, or new meanings.<sup>27</sup> In the context of Qur'anic studies, reception refers to how individuals or communities, both

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<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Allibaih and others, 'Review of the Presentation of the Qur'anic Text Up to the Qur'anic Maps', *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9.4 (2020), 1–28.

<sup>25</sup> Dinda Azzahra, 'The Effect of Using Audio Visual Learning Al-Qur'an Through Smart Hafidz Media on Cognition in Early Childhood', *Al-Fadlan: Journal of Islamic Education and Teaching*, 2.1 (2024), 64–76.

<sup>26</sup> Tetiana Skorokhod and Lidiya Smola, 'Visualization as a Means of Influence (on the Example of Student Periodicals)', *Amazonia Investiga*, 11.51 (2022), 267–80.

<sup>27</sup> Agus Effendi and others, 'Translating the Qur'an in Palembang Vernacular: An Aesthetic Reception Theory Perspective on Surat An-Naziat', *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman*, 34.2 (2023), 181–94.



historically and in the present, perceive, interpret, or utilize the Qur'an in their daily lives. Ahmad Rafiq expands this concept by asserting that the Qur'an is not merely a sacred text in written form but also a collection of meanings that can be interpreted through various intellectual, social, and practical frameworks. This perspective highlights the multidimensional nature of Qur'anic reception, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. It is particularly relevant in the digital age, where social media platforms have become new spaces for engaging with the Qur'an and bringing its messages closer to contemporary audiences.<sup>28</sup> Through the lens of reception, we can better understand how the Qur'an maintains its relevance amid the rapid transformations of modern life.

Qur'anic reception takes multiple forms, involving acts of interpretation, aesthetic appreciation, and practical application in human life. According to Ahmad Rafiq, three major categories of reception are central to this discourse: interpretive reception, aesthetic reception, and functional reception.<sup>29</sup> Each reflects a distinct way in which individuals interact with the sacred text. Interpretive reception typically entails intellectual efforts to extract deeper meaning from the verses, while aesthetic reception emphasizes the artistic beauty inherent in the Qur'anic text—such as its rhythm, structure, and linguistic elegance. Functional reception, by contrast, focuses on the practical use of Qur'anic teachings in everyday contexts. These three forms of reception often intersect, offering a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the Qur'an's role in shaping the values and practices of modern society.

Interpretive reception refers to the effort to understand and explain the meaning of Qur'anic verses. The term "tafsir"—originally derived from the Greek word for "explanation" or "textual interpretation"—has long been central to the Islamic tradition. From the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), tafsir has been an integral part of Muslim life. As narrated by Abdurrahman al-Sulami, the Prophet would recite ten verses to his companions and ensure they fully understood and applied them before moving on to the next set of verses. This illustrates that interpretive reception is not limited to textual comprehension but also involves the practical application of the Qur'an in daily life.<sup>30</sup> In the modern era, digital tafsir—such as the content shared by the Instagram account @QuranReview—offers a new approach to conveying the meanings of the Qur'an. By incorporating engaging visuals and socially relevant contexts, digital tafsir helps bridge the gap between tradition and modernity.

Aesthetic reception of the Qur'an refers to an engagement that centers on the beauty of the text and the manner in which it is conveyed.<sup>31</sup> This form of reception manifests in two key areas: the aesthetic qualities of the text and recitation and its visual and artistic representation. Qur'anic verses are often appreciated for their linguistic elegance in Arabic and the melodic rhythm of their recitation. In the age of social media, visual representations—such as calligraphy and digital art—have emerged as prominent

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<sup>28</sup> Ahmad Rafiq, 'The Living Qur'an: Its Text and Practice in the Function of the Scripture', *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 22.2 (2021), 469–84.

<sup>29</sup> Rafiq.

<sup>30</sup> Rizal Faturohman Purnama, 'The Aesthetic Reception Of The Quran In Instagram: Variations, Factors, and Religious Commodification', *Ulul Albab*, 21.2 (2020), 237.

<sup>31</sup> Rafiq.

expressions of aesthetic reception. The Instagram account @QuranReview, for example, frequently integrates visual aesthetics into its interpretive content, producing works that are both informative and visually appealing. This approach effectively captures the attention of younger audiences familiar with digital culture, making the Qur'an more accessible and appreciated through artistic expression.

Functional reception refers to the engagement with the Qur'an based on its practical utility in everyday life. This form of reception encompasses the use of Qur'anic verses for specific purposes such as healing, supplication, or ritual practice. A classic example is the narration of a companion of the Prophet who recited Surah Al-Fātiḥah to heal a scorpion sting—an act that reflects the Qur'an's perceived efficacy beyond its textual meaning. In contemporary contexts, functional reception is also evident in spiritual practices such as reciting particular verses for protection, blessings, or inner peace. The Instagram account @QuranReview frequently highlights such dimensions, demonstrating how Qur'anic verses can be practically applied in modern life. For instance, the use of specific verses for self-reflection or spiritual motivation represents a new expression of functional reception within the digital age.

Thus, Qur'anic reception in the digital era is closely intertwined with the evolving dynamics of popular culture. Social media platforms have emerged as new arenas for integrating Qur'anic values into modern lifestyles. Some accounts, for example, employ storytelling formats that blend Qur'anic messages with relatable contemporary narratives.<sup>32</sup> This strategy not only enhances the comprehensibility of Qur'anic teachings but also brings them closer to the everyday experiences of users—particularly younger generations. Visual and interactive approaches enabled by digital media further allow Qur'anic reception to transcend textual engagement, appealing simultaneously to emotional and aesthetic sensibilities. Posts that pair visually compelling illustrations with specific verses often prompt users to explore the Qur'anic message more deeply. In this way, digital reception of the Qur'an strengthens personal connection to the sacred text while also fostering new interpretive spaces that are attuned to the complexities and challenges of the present age.

### **3. Netizen Responses to the Representation of Women**

To explore netizen responses to @QuranReview's posts more comprehensively, this study adopts a mass communication effects theory framework. Within this model, @QuranReview functions as a communication channel consisting of several key elements: the account itself serves as the communicator delivering tafsir content; Instagram acts as the medium of message dissemination; netizens are the audience receiving and responding to the content; and the implications of their reception serve as indicators of the message's effectiveness. Analyzing user comments on posts by @QuranReview reveals that audience

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<sup>32</sup> Achmad Fuaddin and Ahmad Nurul Hadi, 'The Tradition of Kundangan in the Last Ten Days of Ramadan: A Study of Living Hadith in Dasin Tuban Village through the Lens of Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge.', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif*, 21.2 (2024), 214–31.

responses can be broadly categorized into three primary types of effects: cognitive effects, affective effects, and behavioral effects.<sup>33</sup>

From a cognitive perspective, the posts effectively facilitate new understandings of Qur'anic interpretation by presenting it in ways that are socially and culturally relevant and easy to comprehend. For example, in the post interpreting Surah An-Nur:31 under the theme "Wearing the Hijab Is Difficult," @QuranReview offers historical context regarding the verse's revelation. This approach was well received by netizens, with many commenters expressing that the explanation helped them better understand the verse's meaning in light of contemporary challenges. Such responses indicate the account's capacity to serve as a bridge between the sacred text and modern social realities.

Affective effects refer to the emotional responses of netizens to the content shared.<sup>34</sup> In many instances, followers reported feeling a deeper emotional connection after engaging with the interpretations presented by @QuranReview. For example, in a post interpreting Surah An-Naml:32 under the theme "Muslimah Value," the account emphasized the importance of women's courage in decision-making, drawing on the story of Queen Balqis. The comment section reflected strong sentiments of empathy, motivation, and spiritual reflection. Many users expressed gratitude for gaining a new perspective that encouraged them to be more confident in facing life's challenges.

Behavioral effects are evident in the changes in attitudes and actions among netizens following their engagement with @QuranReview's content. One notable example is the post on Surah An-Nisa:32 titled "Women & Mirrors," which highlighted the importance of healthy self-reflection and discouraged fixation on physical flaws. Numerous followers shared that after reading the post, they began to appreciate themselves more and stopped comparing themselves to others. This demonstrates how Qur'anic interpretations, when presented in a simple and contextually relevant manner, can have a tangible, positive impact on everyday behavior—promoting constructive personal transformation.

In addition to generating cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects, netizen responses to gender-related Qur'anic interpretations on the @QuranReview account reveal broader patterns of interaction within digital spaces. Many users engage the comment section not only to express agreement or appreciation but also to initiate discussions, share personal experiences, or even challenge the interpretations presented. This phenomenon illustrates that platforms like Instagram function not merely as channels for information dissemination, but also as dynamic arenas for public dialogue. Some comments express strong support for inclusive interpretations, while others question their alignment with classical traditions. Such diverse reactions reflect the plurality of views within the Muslim community and underscore the growing importance of contextual approaches to Qur'anic interpretation in the digital age. Accounts like @QuranReview have the potential to act as catalysts for social change, particularly by fostering constructive discourse on gender and religious exegesis.

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<sup>33</sup> Kedi Gong and others, 'A Study on the Audience Psychological Effects of "Cloud Tourism" Based on Webcast: A New Mechanism for Sustainable Development in the Tourism', *Sustainability*, 15.12 (2023), 9728.

<sup>34</sup> Kaiyue Chen, 'Research on the Functions of Users' Emotions in Social Media Product Design', in *E3S Web of Conferences* (EDP Sciences, 2021), CCLIII, 02010.

Netizen engagement with gender-focused tafsir on @QuranReview also highlights the complex interplay between religious values and the evolving landscape of digital culture.<sup>35</sup> On one hand, the enthusiastic reception of context-sensitive interpretations—especially those addressing contemporary issues—signals a growing desire for relevance and accessibility in religious discourse. On the other hand, the variety of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses elicited through this interaction reaffirms that social media platforms serve not only as tools for knowledge distribution, but also as participatory arenas for negotiating meaning across diverse perspectives and lived experiences. Through its creative and dialogic approach, @QuranReview has successfully opened new avenues for Qur’anic interpretation to resonate with younger audiences, offering a more inclusive and transformative space for spiritual reflection amid the complexities of modern popular culture.<sup>36</sup>

#### **4. Analysis of Netizen Reception**

This section specifically examines the portrayal of women in the Instagram account @QuranReview by highlighting themes that resonate with the lived realities of contemporary Muslim women. One notable post, titled “*Women and Mirrors*” (Q.S. An-Nisa:32), links the concept of womanhood with self-reflection through the metaphor of a mirror. The interpretation emphasizes the importance of embracing oneself as a perfect creation of God. The post underscores values of justice and self-acceptance, offering insights that are particularly relevant in today’s social context—where many women experience pressure to conform to beauty standards often constructed and amplified by social media.<sup>37</sup> The reflection inspired by this interpretation reveals that the themes addressed are deeply relevant to the psychological and social challenges faced by women today. The post is especially compelling in its critique of how beauty ideals promoted through digital platforms can undermine women’s self-esteem. Through this kind of thematic engagement, @QuranReview contributes not only to religious understanding but also to broader conversations about gender, identity, and mental well-being in the digital age.

In a world increasingly connected through digital platforms, body and appearance comparisons have become an almost unavoidable phenomenon. The tafsir presented under the theme “*Women and Mirrors*” offers a powerful reminder that women should view themselves through the metaphorical mirror as creations of Allah—perfect and dignified—without needing to conform to unrealistic social standards of beauty. This interpretation deepens the understanding of self-acceptance as an essential aspect of Islamic teaching.<sup>38</sup> Rather than focusing solely on physical appearance, the tafsir encourages women to recognize their worth through a spiritual lens—as noble beings created by God. In a society that often prioritizes outward appearance, this message asserts that true beauty lies in one’s ability to honor and embrace the self as a divine creation. It also underscores the importance

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<sup>35</sup> Richtig and Saifullah.

<sup>36</sup> Zainal Arifin, ‘The Effectiveness of the Socialization of Tafsir Inspirasi in Social Media’, *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 27.2 (2019), 1219–29.

<sup>37</sup> Tian Tian, ‘Research on Body Image Anxiety among Women in the Social Media Environment’, *Acad J Humanit Social Sci*, 6.9 (2023), 51–57.

<sup>38</sup> Ling.

of internalizing spiritual values in daily life, fostering a stronger sense of self-worth that is not dependent on superficial ideals imposed by modern media culture.

The theme *“Wearing the Hijab Is Difficult”* (Q.S. An-Nur:31) emphasizes that the practice of wearing the hijab is not merely a physical obligation, but also a spiritual journey that requires deep understanding and strong faith. The interpretation presented in this post suggests that a firm foundation of faith enables women to carry out religious commandments, including the hijab, with greater conviction and ease. This reflection offers valuable insight into how the hijab should not be reduced to a mechanical religious duty<sup>39</sup> but rather understood as a conscious spiritual commitment grounded in personal conviction. The tafsir presented in this post frames the hijab as an expression of one's inner devotion and alignment with spiritual values. It provides space for women to approach the hijab not simply as a rule to be followed, but as a meaningful act of nearness to God. By presenting the hijab as a pathway to deepen one's relationship with the Divine, the tafsir encourages a shift from external compliance to internalized understanding. Moreover, it highlights that the acceptance of religious obligations is profoundly shaped by one's comprehension of the spiritual purpose underlying those commands.

In the post themed *“Muslimah Value”* (Q.S. An-Naml:32), the tafsir centers on the story of Queen Balqis, highlighting her wisdom and prudence in decision-making. This interpretation encourages women to recognize and value their intelligence and potential across various aspects of life, including leadership. The reflection on this post underscores the importance of acknowledging women's cognitive capacities and decision-making abilities—an insight that aligns with the growing call for gender equity in both public and private spheres.<sup>40</sup> By interpreting the leadership role of a female figure in the Qur'an, this tafsir challenges reductive views that confine women to beauty or domestic roles. Instead, it affirms that women deserve recognition for their intellect, strategic thinking, and leadership qualities. Such an interpretation is highly relevant in today's world, where women increasingly occupy influential positions in politics, business, education, and beyond. It resonates with contemporary gender discourse by framing leadership not as gender-exclusive, but as a domain where women can—and should—excel with dignity and agency.<sup>41</sup>

The post titled *“Am I Beautiful?”* (Q.S. At-Taghabun:3) invites audiences to reflect on the pursuit of true beauty, which is not found merely in physical appearance but in one's relationship with Allah, the Most Beautiful. This interpretation encourages a shift in focus from external aesthetics to deeper spiritual meaning—emphasizing that beauty is ultimately rooted in divine connection and inner devotion. The tafsir presented in this post challenges conventional paradigms that equate beauty with physical attributes, calling instead for a

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<sup>39</sup> Subhan Abdullah Acim, 'Interpretation of the Commandment to Women's Hijab Authorize According to the Quran, Al Hadith and Ahlussunnah Waljamaah Ulama', *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 6.2, 51–60.

<sup>40</sup> Hartati Yuningsih and Abdul Ghany, 'Transformasi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Era Media Digital: Analisis Metodologi Tafsir Dalam Channel Youtube Kajian Tafsir Al-Ma'rifah', *Al-Qudwah*, 2.2 (2024), 187–204.

<sup>41</sup> Amalia Lathifah, 'Interpretation Of Verses On Women In Islamic Law Politics', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review*, 2.1 (2023), 10–26.

redefinition of beauty as a manifestation of love for and nearness to God. It reminds audiences that true beauty originates from Allah and is reflected in the sincerity of one's faith, character, and spiritual depth—rather than in outward appearance alone. In doing so, it fosters a more meaningful and spiritually grounded understanding of self-worth, especially relevant in a digital age saturated with superficial beauty ideals.

Finally, the post titled “*Always Dressing Up...*” (Q.S. Az-Zukhruf:18) challenges the reductive notion that women are solely preoccupied with physical beauty. The tafsir reframes adornment (*tabarruj*) as part of the natural disposition (*fitrah*) that Allah has instilled in women, and asserts that when practiced in accordance with Islamic principles, it becomes a form of gratitude for divine blessings.<sup>42</sup> This interpretation underscores that beautification is not inherently negative; rather, it is a valid and meaningful expression of faith when guided by sincere intention and ethical boundaries. Overall, the interpretations offered by @QuranReview address socially relevant issues concerning women, offering a more holistic understanding of religious obligations and the multifaceted roles of women in society. This particular reflection provides a fresh perspective on female beauty by emphasizing that adornment, when aligned with the values of Islam, is both natural and spiritually significant. It shifts the discourse from superficiality to a deeper appreciation of beauty as a balance between physical presentation and inner morality. The tafsir highlights that women's inclination toward beautification is not only normal but divinely embedded—so long as it is pursued with sincere intention and within the framework of Islamic ethics. This approach affirms that in Islam, a woman's beauty is not measured solely by her appearance, but also by her spiritual depth and moral character. For modern Muslim women, such interpretations offer empowering guidance on how to navigate self-expression, faith, and identity with confidence and spiritual awareness.<sup>43</sup>

A comparison between the tafsir analyzed in this study and findings from previous research reveals that the interpretations presented in @QuranReview's posts place greater emphasis on the integrative relationship between religious teachings and the social realities of women. For instance, the study by Afrouz and Crisp on the hijab primarily focuses on social and physical dimensions, such as the societal pressures women face when wearing the hijab in public.<sup>44</sup> In contrast, the tafsir in the post “*Wearing the Hijab Is Difficult*” offers a broader perspective, framing the hijab not merely as a physical obligation but as part of a spiritual journey that requires deep personal understanding and conviction. Likewise, while Musyarriyani's study highlights how female beauty is often reduced to physical and cosmetic attributes, the “*Women and Mirrors*” theme in @QuranReview encourages women to move beyond externally imposed beauty standards. It invites a reorientation toward self-

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<sup>42</sup> Rojan Afrouz and Beth R Crisp, ‘Anti-Oppressive Practice in Social Work with Women Wearing Hijab’, in *Exploring Islamic Social Work: Between Community and the Common Good* (Springer International Publishing Cham, 2022), pp. 203–18.

<sup>43</sup> Abdul Majid, ‘The Symbolic Interpretation of Quraish Shihab on The Hadith of Women's Creation’, *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif*, 20.1 (2023), 182–90.

<sup>44</sup> Rojan Afrouz, Beth R Crisp and Ann Taket, ‘Afghan Women Perceptions of Gender Roles, Possibilities and Barriers to Change after Settlement in Australia: A Qualitative Study’, *Qualitative Social Work*, 22.3 (2023), 569–86.

acceptance as a spiritual principle, aligning beauty with divine creation rather than societal expectation.

In the “*Always Dressing Up...*” post, the interpretation that links feminine beauty to a divinely ordained *fitrah* offers a perspective that diverges sharply from materialistic views often found in existing literature, which either trivialize adornment or treat it solely as a matter of aesthetics. Instead, the tafsir emphasizes that beautification, when performed with sincere intention and in accordance with Islamic ethics, is an act of gratitude toward God’s creation. The “*Muslimah Value*” theme in this study also contrasts with earlier research that tends to overlook women’s intellectual and leadership capacities. By drawing on the story of Queen Balqis, the tafsir underscores that women possess the wisdom and capability to lead, thereby affirming their potential beyond traditional domestic or aesthetic roles.

### **C. Conclusion**

This study reveals that the Instagram account @QuranReview plays a significant role in shaping a more contextual, communicative, and socially attuned interpretation of the Qur’an on women-related issues. Through the use of visual elements, popular narratives, and inclusive language, the account not only presents women’s issues as part of religious discourse but also situates them within the dynamic sociocultural landscape of digital space. Over a three-month observation period, 21 posts focused on women's themes were analyzed, generating 228 user comments that reflected diverse patterns of reception: progressive-affirmative, conservative-resistant, and critical-reflective. These varied responses indicate that social media has evolved beyond a one-way channel for religious outreach into an epistemic arena that facilitates the renegotiation of religious interpretation, values, and gender constructs in the digital era. Conceptually, the findings affirm a paradigm shift in Qur’anic interpretive authority—from the traditional dominance of classical *mufasssirūn* rooted in formal scholarship to the rising influence of digital figures within online religious spheres. Accounts like @QuranReview demonstrate that religious interpretation is no longer confined to traditional scholarly authorities but is increasingly constructed, disseminated, and negotiated by digital influencers. This shift calls for a reassessment of interpretive legitimacy in the digital age, where the credibility of tafsir is shaped not only by classical scholarly credentials but also by public reception, digital reach, and the ability to communicate religious discourse in accessible, visual, and engaging formats. Accordingly, this study contributes to the expanding field of contemporary Qur’anic studies and underscores the importance of integrating reception theory and digital culture analysis to better understand the evolving configurations of Muslim religiosity today.

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