

## **Applying Mahmoud Shaltout's Contextual Tafsīr to Qur'anic Teaching: Insights from Islamic Educational Institutions**

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### **Abstract**

Contemporary debates on contextual *tafsīr* (exegesis) often emphasize methodological reform, yet they pay limited attention to how such approaches are pedagogically enacted and stabilized within Islamic educational institutions. This gap is particularly relevant to the legacy of Mahmoud Shaltout, whose contextual method sought to harmonize textual fidelity with socio-historical awareness. This study investigates how Shaltout's methodology is implemented through pedagogical sequencing in Qur'anic teaching, and how this process mediates questions of textual authority. Through a qualitative, multi-site field study, this research draws on classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with instructors and students, and document analysis across selected Islamic educational institutions. The findings reveal a patterned epistemic sequence: instruction begins with linguistic and textual clarification, proceeds to socio-historical contextualization, and culminates in ethical abstraction and contemporary application. This staged process mitigates resistance, preserves scriptural authority, and enables gradual interpretive expansion. Consequently, the study argues that contextual *tafsīr* attains institutional sustainability not merely through theoretical coherence, but through structured pedagogical enactments that actively negotiate authority in practice.

**Keywords:** Contextual *tafsīr*, Epistemic Sequencing, Pedagogical Authority, Qur'anic Teaching, Islamic Education.

### **Abstrak**

*Perdebatan kontemporer mengenai tafsir kontekstual sering kali menekankan reformasi metodologis, namun masih memberikan perhatian yang terbatas terhadap bagaimana pendekatan tersebut diterapkan secara pedagogis dan dilembagakan dalam institusi pendidikan Islam. Kesenjangan ini menjadi sangat relevan dalam pembahasan mengenai warisan pemikiran Mahmud Syaltut, yang metode kontekstualnya berupaya menyelaraskan kesetiaan terhadap teks dengan kesadaran sosiohistoris. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana metodologi Syaltut diimplementasikan melalui tahapan pedagogis dalam pengajaran Al-Qur'an serta bagaimana tahapan tersebut memediasi persoalan otoritas teks. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi lapangan multisitus, penelitian ini memanfaatkan observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pengajar dan mahasiswa, serta analisis dokumen pada beberapa lembaga pendidikan Islam terpilih. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya pola tahapan epistemik yang sistematis: pembelajaran dimulai dengan klarifikasi linguistik dan tekstual, dilanjutkan dengan kontekstualisasi sosiohistoris, dan diakhiri dengan abstraksi etis serta penerapan kontemporer. Proses bertahap ini mampu meminimalkan resistensi, mempertahankan otoritas kitab suci sebagaimana dipersepsikan, serta memungkinkan perluasan interpretasi secara gradual. Penelitian ini berargumen bahwa keberlanjutan institusional tafsir*

*kontekstual tidak hanya ditentukan oleh koherensi teoretis, tetapi juga oleh implementasi pedagogis yang tersusun secara cermat dalam menegosiasikan otoritas di tingkat praktik.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Tafsir Kontekstual; Tahapan Epistemik; Otoritas Pedagogis; Pengajaran Al-Qur'an; Pendidikan Islam*

## A. Introduction

The Qur'an, as the foundational text of Islam, has generated a vast and internally diverse exegetical tradition shaped by linguistic analysis, theological commitments, and socio-historical contingencies.<sup>1</sup> Yet contemporary Qur'anic studies are increasingly marked by a methodological tension between scriptural textualism and contextual hermeneutics.<sup>2</sup> While textualist orientations prioritize fidelity to transmitted meanings and established interpretive authorities, contextual approaches insist that the normative force of revelation cannot be fully apprehended without critical engagement with historical circumstance and present socio-cultural realities.<sup>3</sup> This tension has significant implications not only for interpretive theory but also for educational practice, particularly within Islamic institutions where tafsir functions as both a scholarly discipline and a formative ethical framework. In recent decades, the contextual *tafsir* paradigm has re-emerged as a significant intellectual response to this tension.<sup>4</sup> Such an approach seeks to bridge the perceived gap between textual signification and normative application, thereby safeguarding the relevance of Qur'anic guidance in rapidly transforming socio-political and environmental contexts.<sup>5</sup> Within contemporary Islamic educational institutions, this challenge is intensified by socio-epistemological pressures arising from the entanglement of religious discourse with global economic inequality, political polarization, environmental degradation, and identity-based radicalization.<sup>6</sup> These conditions demand interpretive models capable of articulating ethical universality without dissolving textual authority.<sup>7</sup>

Within Islamic educational institutions, these interpretive tensions are experienced most directly by instructors responsible for teaching Qur'anic interpretation in socially and intellectually changing environments. Teachers in pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic universities are increasingly required to address contemporary ethical, political, and social

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<sup>1</sup> Andre Bahrudin and others, 'Evolution of Tafsir Approaches in Islamic Studies', *Studi Multidisipliner: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman*, 11.2 (2024), pp. 481–96.

<sup>2</sup> Nurcahyati Nurcahyati and Haqiqi Haqiqi, 'Transformation Of Traditional Tafsir To Modern Perspective Of Fazlur Rahman's Hermeneutics', *Al Muhafidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 5.1 (2025), pp. 143–60, doi:10.57163/almuhafidz.v5i1.177.

<sup>3</sup> Roxanne D. Marcotte, 'New Trends in Qur'anic Studies: Text, Context, and Interpretation', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 33.1 (2022), pp. 99–101, doi:10.1080/09596410.2022.2031656.

<sup>4</sup> Najwan Saada, 'Balancing the Communitarian, Civic, and Liberal Aims of Religious Education: Islamic Reflections', *Religions*, 13.12 (2022), p. 1198; Toha Andiko, Isna Mutia, and Nazaryani Nazaryani, 'THE RULING ON WISHING MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NON-MUSLIMS: AN ANALYSIS OF M. QURAIH SHIHAB'S INTERPRETATIONS', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah*, 21.1 (2024), p. 139, doi:10.22373/jim.v21i1.20040; Abd. Kholid and others, 'Rereading the Indonesian Interpretation of the Qur'an on Awliya': The Cases of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab', *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)*, 9.1 (2021), p. 37, doi:10.21043/qijis.v9i1.7567.

<sup>5</sup> Moh. Nor Ichwan and Auwal Salisu, 'Reevaluating Qur'anic Hermeneutics: A Comparative Analysis Between Classical Tafsir and Modern Hermeneutical Approaches', *KALAM*, 18.2 (2024), pp. 107–26, doi:10.24042/kalam.v18i2.24213.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph E.B. Lumbard, 'Islam and the Challenge of Epistemic Sovereignty', *Religions*, 15.4 (2024), doi:10.3390/rel15040406.

<sup>7</sup> Hilmi Ridho and others, 'Interpretation of the Qur'an from Classical-Textual to Contemporary-Contextual; An Approach Proposed by Muslim Scholars', *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies*, 4.2 (2025), pp. 645–74, doi:10.23917/qist.v4i2.12593.

questions raised by students while simultaneously preserving the authority of classical Islamic scholarship.<sup>8</sup> In many authority-sensitive educational contexts, interpretive approaches perceived as overly liberal or disconnected from established exegetical traditions often encounter skepticism or institutional resistance. In this regard, Mahmud Syaltut's contextual methodology becomes pedagogically relevant because it offers a structured interpretive model that maintains visible continuity with linguistic and classical exegesis before moving toward ethical abstraction and contextual application.

As articulated by Halim Calis, the Qur'anic text operates within a dialectical relationship between its formative milieu and subsequent interpretive horizons, necessitating attention to both historical embeddedness and enduring normative objectives (*maqāṣid*).<sup>9</sup> Consequently, modern interpretive frameworks including hermeneutical analysis, thematic approaches, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* oriented methodologies have increasingly sought to address contemporary concerns such as gender justice and environmental sustainability while remaining anchored in the normative architecture of Islamic teachings.<sup>10</sup>

Recent scholarship on contextual tafsi'r has underscored the pedagogical implications of historically conscious interpretation, particularly its potential to cultivate critical moral reasoning and socially engaged forms of religiosity.<sup>11</sup> Thinkers such as Esack<sup>12</sup> and Sardar<sup>13</sup> argue that contextual hermeneutics enables the Qur'an to function as a transformative ethical discourse rather than a static legal archive, thereby fostering dialogical engagement and reflexive faith commitments.<sup>14</sup> Recent research by Fella Lahmar indicates that Islamic education in pluralistic settings increasingly operates as a dialogical environment cultivating ethical agency through guided interpretation. This supports the present study's finding that contextual *tafsi'r* becomes pedagogically viable when ethical abstraction follows visible textual grounding.<sup>15</sup> However, much of this literature remains situated at the level of textual theory, intellectual history, or normative argumentation. The classroom where interpretive authority is negotiated, pedagogical choices are enacted, and students' epistemic orientations are shaped remains comparatively underexamined.

Recent developments in contextual Qur'anic hermeneutics have emphasized staged interpretive movement from textual analysis toward ethical generalization and contemporary application.<sup>16</sup> Fazlur Rahman's double-movement theory, Abdullah Saeed's contextualist framework, and subsequent *maqāṣid*-oriented approaches all presuppose that interpretive legitimacy emerges through ordered transitions between textual grounding and contextual

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<sup>8</sup> Mujiburrahman Mujiburrahman and others, 'The State Intervention in the Islamic Education in Aceh: Threats or Opportunities?', *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 12.2 (2024), pp. 539–64, doi:10.26811/peuradeun.v12i2.1349.

<sup>9</sup> Halim Calis, 'The Theoretical Foundations of Contextual Interpretation of the Qur'an in Islamic Theological Schools and Philosophical Sufism', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), p. 188.

<sup>10</sup> Saba Zamir and Zeba Aqil, 'Portrayal of Women in Quran: A Literature Review', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai*, 97.9 (2023), pp. 148–61.

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad Nabil Amir, 'Fazlur Rahman Dan Interpretasi Teks Al-Qur'an', *JOURNAL OF QUR'AN AND HADITH STUDIES*, 10.2 (2021), pp. 245–55, doi:10.15408/quhas.v10i2.19799.

<sup>12</sup> Erik Sabti Rahmawati, 'Spirit of Liberation and Justice in Farid Esack's Hermeneutics of Qur'an', *Ulumuna*, 20.1 (2016), pp. 119–46, doi:10.20414/ujs.v20i1.822.

<sup>13</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Fella Lahmar, 'Islamic Education: An Islamic "Wisdom-Based Cultural Environment" in a Western Context', *Religions*, 11.8 (2020), p. 409.

<sup>16</sup> Andri Nirwana AN, Dedy Mustofa, and Sayed Akhyar, 'Contextualization Review of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Fathul Qulub Book at the IMM Sukoharjo Regeneration Program', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu Ashirah*, 20.1 (2023), p. 146, doi:10.22373/jim.v20i1.16939.

reasoning.<sup>17</sup> Yet existing scholarship largely conceptualizes these stages as hermeneutical procedures rather than pedagogical processes enacted within institutional learning environments. Consequently, insufficient attention has been given to how interpretive authority is sequentially organized, stabilized, and negotiated in classroom practice.

In this study, the term *epistemic sequencing* refers to the staged pedagogical ordering through which interpretive authority is progressively negotiated from textual-linguistic grounding toward ethical abstraction and contextual application. Rather than functioning merely as instructional organization, epistemic sequencing operates as a legitimacy-producing mechanism that enables contextual interpretation to emerge without appearing to rupture inherited textual authority. Conceptually, the framework directs attention to how authority is pedagogically staged,<sup>18</sup> reinforced, deferred, and expanded across interpretive phases within Qur'anic instruction.<sup>19</sup> In authority-sensitive Islamic educational settings, contextual reasoning does not function autonomously; rather, it becomes institutionally credible only after visible continuity with linguistic analysis, transmitted commentary, and established exegetical structures has been demonstrated.

This analytical framework is particularly relevant for examining Mahmud Syaltut's contextual tafsīr methodology. Although Syaltut's interpretive approach has often been discussed in relation to reformist hermeneutics and maqāṣid-oriented reasoning, little scholarship has examined how his layered interpretive structure functions pedagogically in the negotiation of authority.<sup>20</sup> The present study therefore approaches Syaltut's methodology not only as an exegetical model, but as an enacted pedagogical sequence through which contextual interpretation becomes institutionally sustainable.<sup>21</sup>

Importantly, this study does not assume that the selected institutions formally adopt Mahmud Syaltut's tafsīr as an official curriculum or explicitly identify their instructional approach as "Syaltutian." Rather, Syaltut's interpretive structure is employed here as an analytical framework for examining how staged contextualization is pedagogically enacted in Qur'anic teaching. The study therefore investigates whether the observed instructional patterns reflect methodological features congruent with Syaltut's contextual approach, particularly the sequencing from textual grounding to ethical abstraction and contemporary application.

Classical Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) traditionally centered on textual, juridical, and linguistic analyses, relying heavily on transmitted reports (*riwāyah*), grammar, and classical scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*).<sup>22</sup> Traditional exegesis aimed to clarify meanings based on the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation), hadith, and classical jurisprudential frameworks to preserve textual integrity and doctrinal coherence.<sup>23</sup> However, as Qur'anic studies matured, scholars increasingly recognized limitations in purely textual methods for addressing social,

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<sup>17</sup> Choirur Rois and others, 'ISLAMIC HIERARCHY OF VALUE: Abdullah Saeed's Progressive Interpretation of the Qur'an', *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 49.1 (2025), p. 205, doi:10.30821/miqot.v49i1.1125.

<sup>18</sup> Talal Asad, 'The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam', *Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities*, 48 (1996).

<sup>19</sup> Ichwan and Salisu.

<sup>20</sup> Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsir Ath-Thabari*, ed. by Aḥmad 'Abd al-Razzāq Al-Bakrī and others, Vol. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Jauhar Azizy, Mohammad Anwar Syarifuddin, and Hani Hilyati Ubaidah, 'Thematic Presentations in Indonesian Qur'anic Commentaries', *Religions*, 13.2 (2022), doi:10.3390/rel13020140.

<sup>22</sup> Dr. Abdul Hameed and Mian Saadat Ali Nadeem, 'A Brief Review of Historical Promotions of Interpretive Methods of the Holy Quran in Early Times', *Al-Qamar*, 2023, pp. 1–34, doi:10.53762/alqamar.06.03.e01.

<sup>23</sup> Harun Şahin, *A Textual Analysis of the Concepts Laid Down in the First Verses of Qur'anic Revelation: Language and Meaning* (Fecr Yayın Grubu, 2025), doi:10.70458/fcr.9786255576583.

cultural, and ethical challenges in modern contexts.<sup>24</sup> This recognition has led to a methodological shift toward contextual interpretation that intentionally engages Qur'anic text with contemporary realities and lived experience beyond its original socio-historical setting.

Recent scholarship highlights that contextual tafsi'r transcends the bounds of literalism, seeking meaning not just from the surface of the scriptural text but through hermeneutic engagement with social, ethical, and cultural realities of modern life.<sup>25</sup> Scholars such as Moh. Nor Ichwan and colleagues argue that contextual exegesis is necessary to connect the Qur'an's normative messages with contemporary issues like gender equality, pluralism, and human rights, thus making Qur'anic guidance applicable across time and societies.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary works on Qur'anic hermeneutics further situate contextual tafsi'r within broader interpretive theory, incorporating concepts such as hermeneutical circularity and dialogical interpretation.<sup>27</sup> These approaches emphasize that understanding the Qur'anic text is not static but involves ongoing negotiation between the text's intrinsic meaning and external contextual factors, such as culture, history, and socio-ethical conditions.

In educational contexts, studies also demonstrate that tafsi'r as pedagogy, particularly contextual models, improves learners' comprehension by linking Qur'anic values with real-world experiences a strategy that moves beyond rote memorization to critical engagement with scripture.<sup>28</sup> For example, research on contextual interpretation in Islamic education shows that integrating exegesis into teaching enhances students' reasoning and spiritual insight, particularly when digital tools and contextualized learning strategies are applied.

More specifically, while Syaltut's exegetical contributions have been analyzed in relation to reformist thought and modern Islamic legal theory, little systematic attention has been given to how his methodological principles are translated into instructional practice. Existing studies tend to reconstruct his hermeneutical framework conceptually,<sup>29</sup> without investigating how educators operationalize linguistic analysis, maqāsid-oriented reasoning, and socio-historical contextualization within structured learning environments.<sup>30</sup> As a result, a critical gap persists between exegetical theory and pedagogical implementation. It remains unclear how contextual tafsi'r functions as a lived educational methodology: how teachers negotiate textual authority and contextual relevance, how students internalize interpretive frameworks, and how institutional cultures shape or constrain such processes. This lacuna is not merely empirical but theoretical. Without examining the pedagogical enactment of contextual exegesis, discussions of maqāsid-oriented interpretation risk remaining abstract and detached from the formative spaces in which interpretive habits are cultivated.

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<sup>24</sup> Nuraini Nuraini, Waharjani Waharjani, and Mohammad Jailani, 'From Textual To Contextual: Contemporary Islamic Thinker Abdullah Saeed On Qur'anic Exegesis', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah*, 21.1 (2024), 32 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v21i1.19639>>.

<sup>25</sup> Nurcahyati and Haqiqi.

<sup>26</sup> Moh. Nor Ichwan, David Ming, and Mokh Sya'roni, 'Bridging Tradition and Modernity: Integrating Classical Interpretation and Modern Hermeneutics through Ijtihad in Qur'an Studies', *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 106.2, 2025, doi:10.46222/pharosjot.106.2021.

<sup>27</sup> Ilyas Supena, 'Epistemology of Tafsi'r, Ta'wil, and Hermeneutics: Towards an Integrative Approach', *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 14.1 (2024), pp. 121–36, doi:10.32350/jitc.141.08.

<sup>28</sup> Ulfah Rahmawati and Aziizatul Khusniyah, 'Local Wisdom in Script and Spirit: Educational and Policy Insights from Integrating Islamic Teachings with Cultural Heritage', *Utamax: Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education*, 7.3 (2025), pp. 182–93, doi:10.31849/zdk3km64.

<sup>29</sup> Fatemeh Mansouri and others, 'Analysis of the Meaning of Understanding in Gadamer's Perspective to Present a Conceptual Model of Teaching-Learning Strategies', *Journal of Study and Innovation in Education and Development*, 4.5 (2025), pp. 263–87, doi:10.61838/jsied.4.5.14.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Abdul Hameed and Mian Saadat Ali Nadeem.

Addressing this gap requires moving beyond textual analysis toward a practice-oriented investigation that situates contextual tafsīr within concrete educational settings.

Mahmud Syaltut as former Grand Imam of al-Azhar, occupies a pivotal yet insufficiently theorized position within the landscape of modern Qur'anic interpretation. Rather than aligning fully with either reformist rationalism or rigid traditionalism, Syaltut articulated a methodological framework that sought to recalibrate the relationship between textual authority and socio-ethical responsiveness.<sup>31</sup> His *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* represents not merely an exegetical commentary, but an epistemic project aimed at harmonizing classical interpretive discipline with the moral and institutional demands of modern Muslim societies.<sup>32</sup>

Syaltut's methodology is structured around three interdependent dimensions: rigorous linguistic engagement with the Qur'anic text; careful consideration of revelatory context (*asbāb al-nuzūl* and socio-historical milieu); and systematic articulation of ethical and societal objectives grounded in maqāsid al-sharī'ah.<sup>33</sup> Through this layered structure, he resists both atomistic literalism and unrestrained contextual relativism.<sup>34</sup> His contribution lies in proposing a moderated contextualism one that preserves epistemic continuity with transmitted scholarship while expanding the interpretive horizon toward public welfare (maṣlaḥah), justice, and communal reform.<sup>35</sup>

Despite sustained theoretical discussions of Syaltut's reformist orientation and legal thought, his methodology has largely been examined at the level of intellectual history and doctrinal analysis.<sup>36</sup> What remains underdeveloped is an account of how his interpretive architecture functions as a pedagogical paradigm. The transition from exegetical theory to classroom enactment where interpretive authority, contextual reasoning, and ethical abstraction intersect has not been systematically explored.

The absence of pedagogical analysis is significant because tafsīr within Islamic educational institutions is not merely an academic subject but a formative epistemic practice. Interpretive methods shape students' conceptualization of revelation, authority, and moral reasoning. If contextual exegesis remains confined to textual discourse without pedagogical operationalization, its transformative potential is structurally constrained. Consequently, examining how Syaltut's methodological principles are embodied in teaching practice becomes essential for assessing the viability of contextual tafsīr as an educational model rather than a purely theoretical construct.<sup>37</sup>

To address the identified theoretical and pedagogical gap, this study employs a multi-site qualitative field research design grounded in interpretive inquiry. The research was conducted across three Islamic educational institutions representing distinct socio-educational contexts: (1) an urban Islamic public university (Faculty of Qur'anic Studies), (2) a semi-urban Islamic senior high school (Madrasah Aliyah), and (3) a rural Islamic boarding school (pesantren). This cross-institutional configuration enables comparative analysis of how contextual tafsīr is enacted across different educational levels and

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31 مجلة كلية الدراسات الإسلامية والعربية للبنات، 'رضا عبد المجيد المتولى ابراهيم،' الشيخ محمود شلتوت ومنهجه في التفسير، 7.1 (2023)، pp. 21–70، doi:10.21608/fica.2023.338564.

32 Alireza Delafkar, Naser Nayastani, and Naser Abedini, 'A Comparative Study of the Comprehensiveness of the Quran from the Perspective of Moghniyeh and Shaltut', *Journal Of Islamic Denominations*, 8.15 (2021), pp. 229–57.

33 M Shaltūt, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm: Al-Ajzā' Al-'asharah Al-Ūlá* (Dār al-Shurūq, 1983).

34 Shaltūt.

35 المجيد المتولى ابراهيم.

36 Shaheen Amid Whyte, 'The Ulama: History, Institutions and Modernity', in *Islamic Religious Authority in a Modern Age: Australian and Global Perspectives* (Springer, 2024), pp. 29–53.

37 Supena.

institutional cultures. This study argues that contextual tafsiṛ becomes pedagogically sustainable through epistemic sequencing: a staged negotiation of authority in which textual grounding legitimizes subsequent ethical abstraction and contextual expansion.

The study involved 27 participants: nine instructors and eighteen students across three institutional contexts (university, madrasah, and pesantren). The instructors represented diverse educational levels and disciplinary formations, combining doctoral and master's training in Qur'anic Studies, Tafsiṛ, or Hermeneutics with, in some cases, traditional pesantren scholarship. Students participated in three focus group discussions (FGDs) organized by institutional level and selected purposively based on their engagement with contextual or reform-oriented interpretive approaches.

Data collection employed methodological triangulation through semi-structured interviews with instructors, three student FGDs, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis of syllabi and selected tafsiṛ materials. Observations generated detailed field notes concerning instructional sequencing, interactional dynamics, and moments of interpretive tension.

Data were analyzed using iterative thematic procedures informed by grounded theory. Coding proceeded through open, axial, and selective stages, enabling the identification and integration of recurring patterns such as textual grounding, ethical abstraction, institutional mediation, interpretive resistance, and cognitive load. Constant comparison across sites facilitated the reconstruction of convergences and institutional variations in pedagogical enactment. Credibility was strengthened through cross-site comparison, triangulation of data sources, participant variation, limited member checking with selected instructors, and iterative coding review. This design allows a practice-oriented reconstruction of how Mahmud Syaltut's interpretive methodology operates not merely as exegetical theory but as a pedagogically enacted and institutionally mediated paradigm.

## **B. Results and Discussion**

### **Core Features of Syaltut's Contextual Tafsiṛ Methodology**

Mahmud Syaltut's contextual tafsiṛ methodology is characterized by a layered interpretive structure that seeks to balance textual fidelity with socio-ethical responsiveness. Rather than treating the Qur'anic text as a purely literal or historically fixed discourse, Syaltut emphasizes the importance of deriving broader ethical objectives while remaining anchored in linguistic analysis and classical exegetical tradition.<sup>38</sup> His interpretive approach generally proceeds through interconnected stages: textual and grammatical clarification, consideration of *asbāb al-nuzūl* and socio-historical context, identification of normative and ethical objectives (*maqāsid*), and contextual application to contemporary social realities.<sup>39</sup>

Importantly, these stages do not function as independent interpretive moves but as a sequential structure through which interpretive legitimacy is maintained. Ethical abstraction, in Syaltut's methodology, is not positioned against textual authority; rather, it is presented as emerging from disciplined engagement with the text and inherited scholarly tradition.<sup>40</sup> This sequential movement enables contextual interpretation while preserving continuity with established exegetical frameworks.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Syafril Syafril and others, 'Maqasid-Based Interpretation of Socio-Legal Qur'anic Verses: A Methodological Analysis of Mahmud Shaltut's Tafsiṛ', *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, 33.1 (2025), pp. 286–304.

<sup>39</sup> Ghamārī Nasīrat, 'Al-Ittijāh Al-Maqāsidī Fī Tafsiṛ Al-Syaykh Mahmūd Syaltūt', *Al-Farā'id Fī Al-Buḥūth Al-Islāmiyyat Wa Al-'arabiyyat*, 46.2 (2024).

<sup>40</sup> Zainal Fanani, 'Construction of the Paradigm of Islamic Universality in Maḥmūd Shaltūt's Taqrīb Madhāhib Project', *An-Nur International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 1.1 (2023), doi:10.62032/aijit.v1i1.17.

<sup>41</sup> Aiyub Aiyub and Isna Mutia, 'Muhammad Quraish Shihab's Methodology in Interpretation of The Qur'an', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu Ashirah*, 20.1 (2023), p. 1, doi:10.22373/jim.v20i1.16891.

The present study employs this layered interpretive structure as an analytical framework for examining how contextual tafsīr is pedagogically enacted within Islamic educational institutions. The following section therefore investigates the extent to which classroom instructional patterns reflect methodological features congruent with Syaltut's interpretive sequencing.

### **Enactment of the Syaltutian Interpretive Sequence Across Institutional Contexts**

The findings demonstrate the operation of what this study conceptualizes as epistemic sequencing, namely the patterned pedagogical ordering through which contextual interpretation is rendered institutionally legitimate.

In one university classroom observation on Q. 4:135 concerning justice, the session opened with close grammatical and textual analysis. For approximately twenty-five minutes, the lecturer guided students through lexical structure, classical tafsīr references, and legal implications before gradually shifting toward broader ethical discussion. The atmosphere changed noticeably when contemporary political systems were introduced as a possible site of application. Several students leaned forward while others quietly shook their heads in disagreement. One student questioned whether linking Qur'anic justice to democratic governance risked "secularizing" the text. Rather than resolving the tension immediately, the lecturer reopened Syaltut's discussion of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and restated the interpretive sequence guiding the session: "*Textual fidelity first, ethical objectives second, contextual application third.*"<sup>42</sup> In this setting, interpretive sequencing functioned not merely as instructional organization but as a visible negotiation of legitimacy within classroom interaction.

Across the three institutional sites, classroom instruction consistently followed a patterned interpretive progression corresponding to the contextual methodology associated with Mahmud Syaltut. Observational data indicate a four-stage sequence: (1) linguistic-textual clarification, (2) historical contextualization through *asbāb al-nuzūl*, (3) ethical abstraction framed through maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and (4) contemporary application.

In the university setting (110-minute observed session), instructional time allocation was distributed as follows: 25 minutes textual-linguistic analysis, 20 minutes contextual-historical clarification, 40 minutes ethical abstraction and debate, and 25 minutes applied case analysis. The instructor (U1) explicitly articulated this sequencing: "*Textual fidelity first, ethical objectives second, contextual application third that is our interpretive sequence.*"<sup>43</sup>

In the madrasah context, similar sequencing was observed but compressed due to curricular constraints. In the pesantren setting, extended emphasis was placed on grammatical analysis and riwāyah-based commentary before ethical abstraction was introduced. Document analysis supports these observations. University and madrasah syllabi explicitly included learning objectives referencing *maqāṣid*, justice (*'adl*), and public welfare (*maṣlahah*), while pesantren teaching materials centered on classical tafsīr texts, with contextual framing introduced orally during instruction rather than embedded in written curriculum documents.

Interview data confirm that this sequencing was deliberate rather than incidental. Teachers emphasized that ethical abstraction must be legitimized through textual grounding to prevent accusations of interpretive relativism. As one pesantren instructor (P2) explained:

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<sup>42</sup> Classroom observation, Islamic Public University Tafsīr session, March 14, 2025.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with U1, March 12, 2025.

*"I had to demonstrate that Syaltut still begins with language and asbāb al-nuzūl. Only after textual grounding does he abstract ethical objectives."*<sup>44</sup>

Thus, ethical universalization was pedagogically framed as derivative rather than autonomous. The interpretive sequence functioned as a stabilizing structure, preserving classical authority while enabling normative expansion.

Cross-site comparison reveals variation in pacing but convergence in structural logic. The university context demonstrated the most dialogical ethical debate; the madrasah setting displayed compressed abstraction due to curriculum pressure; the pesantren exhibited extended textual caution before abstraction. Despite institutional differences, the four-stage interpretive sequence remained consistent across sites. This convergence suggests the emergence of a shared pedagogical architecture of contextual tafsi'r rather than isolated instructional improvisation. The sequence operates as a reproducible instructional model grounded in textual legitimacy and ethical extrapolation.

The empirical findings presented above indicate that the pedagogical enactment of contextual tafsi'r involves more than instructional sequencing alone. Across institutional settings, the movement from textual grounding toward ethical abstraction generated varying forms of epistemic negotiation, interpretive resistance, and cognitive adjustment. These dynamics reveal that contextual interpretation functions not merely as a hermeneutical method, but as a contested pedagogical process through which authority is continuously recalibrated within Islamic educational environments.

### **Negotiating Authority, Resistance, and Cognitive Demand**

Interview and FGD data reveal recurring epistemic tension between riwāyah-based authority and maqāsid-oriented ethical abstraction. University students expressed concern about premature contextualization: *"Sometimes I feel we move too quickly to modern application without fully mastering classical commentary. I worry that if we don't first understand how earlier mufassirūn structured their arguments, especially in terms of language and legal reasoning, then our contextual conclusions might become superficial."*<sup>45</sup>

Madrasah students described discomfort with dialogical formats: *"Discussion feels uncomfortable because we must argue and defend our views. Before this, tafsi'r mostly meant listening to the teacher and memorizing summaries. Now we are asked to connect verses to real social issues, and that requires us to speak. Not everyone feels confident doing that."*<sup>46</sup>

Observation notes from the pesantren setting revealed that resistance often appeared indirectly rather than through open confrontation. During one session discussing Q. 2:177 on al-birr, two senior santri sitting near the back quietly whispered to one another after the instructor connected ritual piety with social responsibility and distributive justice. One student later described the approach as sounding "too close to Western hermeneutics." Rather than dismissing the concern, the instructor returned to Syaltut's Arabic commentary and carefully traced grammatical explanation alongside riwāyah-based interpretation before gradually introducing broader ethical objectives. Over several meetings, participation patterns shifted. Students who initially remained silent began responding more actively, particularly when ethical discussion was preceded by extensive textual clarification.<sup>47</sup>

In the pesantren context, resistance was more explicit. One instructor reported students whispering that contextualization resembled "Western hermeneutics," while a

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with P2, Pesantren Instructor, March 25, 2025.

<sup>45</sup> Statement by S-U1 in Focus Group Discussion (FGD-U), March 15, 2025.

<sup>46</sup> Focus Group Discussion (FGD 2) with Madrasah Students, participant S4, March 15, 2025.

<sup>47</sup> Classroom Observation Session 2, Pesantren Site, March 2025; Focus Group Discussion (FGD 3) with Pesantren Students, participant S1, March 15, 2025; Interview with Teacher Participant P2, March 2025.

student acknowledged: *“At first we thought contextualization weakens textual authority. In pesantren, we are trained to respect classical scholars very carefully, so when the teacher connects the verses to modern systems, some of us felt it might reduce the weight of traditional interpretations.”*<sup>48</sup>

Classroom observations corroborated these tensions. During a discussion of justice (Q. 4:135), Visible tension emerged during the discussion. Several students leaned forward while others lowered their gaze or quietly shook their heads when democratic governance was introduced as a possible contextual implication of Q. 4:135. One student paused before responding, while another continued taking notes without participating verbally. The instructor moderated the exchange without imposing a definitive conclusion, instead redirecting the discussion toward Syaltut’s maqāsid-oriented reasoning.<sup>49</sup>

These reactions reflect an ongoing negotiation of interpretive authority rather than outright rejection. Resistance was strongest where institutional culture emphasized memorization and transmitted authority. Teachers responded by intensifying textual demonstration rather than suppressing debate. As U1 explained: *“We are not secularizing; we are extracting normative objectives.”*<sup>50</sup>

Repeated emphasis on grammatical and *riwāyah* grounding gradually reduced suspicion. Ethical abstraction became acceptable when framed as structurally anchored in maqāsid rather than imported from external philosophical paradigms.

Institutional comparison reveals patterned variation. The pesantren context displayed the highest initial skepticism but also the most visible gradual internalization. The university context exhibited lower resistance but higher theoretical anxiety regarding over-contextualization. The madrasah context demonstrated moderate acceptance coupled with cognitive discomfort due to argumentative learning expectations. Thus, interpretive resistance correlates with institutional epistemic culture, while gradual acceptance correlates with sustained textual-legitimizing pedagogy.

In the madrasah environment, contextual interpretation frequently intersected with students’ immediate social experiences. During discussion of Qur’anic charity verses, one student questioned whether modern taxation systems could legitimately be understood within the Qur’anic framework of social redistribution. The discussion subsequently shifted toward local experiences of economic inequality in the surrounding community. Although students showed interest in relating the Qur’an to contemporary realities, classroom interaction remained relatively cautious. Several students preferred note-taking and brief responses rather than extended argumentative exchange, reflecting the continuing influence of teacher-centered pedagogical culture within the institution.

A critical moment in the university classroom illustrates the live negotiation of interpretive authority. During a session on justice (Q. 4:135), after extended textual clarification, a student asked: *“If justice is universal and not limited to a specific historical setting, does that mean Islamic governance is flexible in form? Or are we still required to follow one fixed political structure?”*<sup>51</sup>

Another student responded: *“From what I understand, Syaltut prioritizes objectives rather than political forms. He seems to argue that what must remain constant is justice itself as a principle, not necessarily the institutional model that carries it.”*<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Focus Group Discussion (FGD 3) with Pesantren Students, participant S1, March 15, 2025.

<sup>49</sup> Classroom observation, Islamic Public University Tafsir session, March 14, 2025.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with U1, March 12, 2025.

<sup>51</sup> Focus Group Discussion (FGD 1) with University Students, participant S3, March 15, 2025.

<sup>52</sup> Focus Group Discussion (FGD 1) with University Students, participant S5, March 15, 2025.

The instructor then restated the hierarchy of interpretation: “*We begin with the linguistic meaning of the verse and its classical interpretations. After that, we identify its ethical objective. Only then do we discuss contextual application. Flexibility does not mean ignoring the text; it means remaining faithful to its purpose across situations.*”<sup>53</sup>

In the pesantren setting, resistance was initially more pronounced. During an early session, two students were observed whispering that contextual reasoning “resembles Western hermeneutics.” When invited to articulate their concern more openly, one student later reflected: “*At first we were worried that contextualization might weaken textual authority. In pesantren, we are trained to follow classical scholars carefully, so when contemporary issues are introduced, it feels unfamiliar.*”<sup>54</sup>

In response, the instructor cited Syaltut’s Arabic exposition directly, emphasizing grammatical reasoning before moving to broader objectives: “*Notice that Syaltut starts with linguistic analysis and transmitted interpretations. He does not bypass them. He builds from them to identify broader purposes.*”<sup>55</sup>

Subsequent observations recorded reduced whispered resistance and increased participation, particularly during sessions where textual analysis was explicitly foregrounded before ethical abstraction.

These cases demonstrate that internalization occurs through iterative exposure to structured interpretive modeling. Students gradually shifted from perceiving contextualization as epistemic threat to recognizing it as layered reasoning. Importantly, internalization did not eliminate tension but reframed it as intellectual challenge. Ethical abstraction imposed higher cognitive demand than memorization-based instruction. Students were required to reconcile textual authority, historical context, and normative generalization simultaneously.

Triangulation across semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document review reveals a coherent pattern rather than fragmented impressions. Across all three institutional settings, the data converge on three interrelated findings. First, a persistent four-stage interpretive sequencing—linguistic grounding, engagement with classical commentary, ethical abstraction, and contextual application—was consistently maintained, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis.<sup>56</sup> Second, patterns of resistance and acceptance were mediated by institutional culture: hesitation in madrasah settings was linked to dialogical unfamiliarity, while pesantren skepticism centered on concerns about textual authority. Third, gradual internalization occurred when instructors explicitly foregrounded textual continuity, thereby legitimizing subsequent ethical expansion. Taken together, these convergent data indicate that contextual *tafsīr* operates not as interpretive displacement but as staged negotiation of authority. The pedagogical process generates measurable cognitive load—particularly at the transition from textual analysis to ethical abstraction—yet simultaneously cultivates ethical reflexivity. Rather than eroding textual authority, the enactment observed across sites reconfigures authority as the necessary epistemic foundation from which contextual reasoning becomes both credible and sustainable.

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<sup>53</sup> Classroom Observation Session 1, University Site, March 2025.

<sup>54</sup> Focus Group Discussion (FGD 3) with Pesantren Students, participant S2, March 15, 2025.

<sup>55</sup> Classroom Observation Session 2, Pesantren Site, March 2025.

<sup>56</sup> Kate Zebiri, *Maḥmūd Shaltūt and Islamic Modernism* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

**Table 2.** *Institutional Mediation of Staged Contextualization in Qur'anic Pedagogy*

<b>Institutional Context</b>	<b>Configuration of Textual Authority</b>	<b>Site of Interpretive Tension</b>	<b>Mode of Negotiation</b>	<b>Pedagogical Re-stabilization</b>	<b>Evidentiary Basis</b>
University	Textual analysis treated as analytical foundation, yet open to discursive expansion	Transition from linguistic-textual reading to political-ethical implications	Structured debate concerning flexibility of governance models	Explicit reiteration of interpretive hierarchy (text → objective → application)	FGD1; Obs1
Madrasah	Textual explanation primarily mediated through teacher-centered transmission	Requirement for dialogical articulation and argumentative defense	Expressed discomfort with public reasoning and peer contestation	Guided questioning and moderated scaffolding	FGD2; Obs2
Pesantren	Classical grammar and transmitted authority foregrounded as normative anchor	Introduction of ethical abstraction beyond established commentarial frames	Anxiety over possible displacement of inherited authority	Direct citation of Syaltut's Arabic exposition to demonstrate continuity	FGD3; Obs3

The table illustrates not institutional divergence in interpretive method, but variation in how textual authority must be pedagogically secured before contextual abstraction becomes legitimate.

### **Recalibrating Authority in Contemporary Qur'anic Pedagogy**

The empirical findings demonstrate that Syaltut's interpretive approach, when enacted pedagogically, does not operate as a methodological rupture but as a staged recalibration of authority. Contextual reasoning only gains legitimacy after visible textual anchoring. Reform, therefore, appears not as epistemic replacement but as sequential expansion. This insight nuances conventional historiography that situates modern exegetes primarily within reformist paradigms.<sup>57</sup> Instead of rupture, what emerges in classroom practice is regulated continuity.

The observed sequencing cannot be separated from the epistemic culture of Indonesian Islamic education, particularly within pesantren traditions where textual continuity, sanad-based authority, and deference toward classical scholarship remain central to the transmission of religious knowledge. In such settings, interpretive legitimacy is not established primarily through argumentative novelty but through visible continuity with inherited exegetical structures. This helps explain why instructors repeatedly foregrounded

<sup>57</sup> Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

grammar, riwāyah, and classical commentary before introducing ethical abstraction or contemporary application.<sup>58</sup>

The madrasah context occupied an intermediate pedagogical position between memorization-oriented transmission and dialogical engagement. While students demonstrated openness toward contextual application, many still expressed discomfort when required to defend interpretations publicly. Meanwhile, the university environment normalized debate more openly, although concerns regarding over-contextualization remained visible. These institutional variations suggest that epistemic sequencing is shaped not only by hermeneutical theory but also by locally embedded pedagogical cultures within Indonesian Islamic education.

The sequencing observed in this study resonates with but also modifies major hermeneutical models. Fazlur Rahman's double-movement theory proposes deriving general moral principles from the historical context of revelation and reapplying them to contemporary circumstances.<sup>59</sup> The classroom evidence parallels this logic yet shows that moral abstraction is pedagogically deferred until textual authority is performatively secured. In practice, the "first movement" is extended and publicly emphasized before the "second movement" is permitted.

Similarly, Abdullah Saeed's contextualist framework highlights the socio-historical situatedness of revelation while preserving normative commitment.<sup>60</sup> What this study adds is an ethnographic dimension: contextualism must be socially legitimized through visible grammatical continuity, particularly in tradition-centered institutions.

The anxiety documented in pesantren contexts echoes reception controversies surrounding Nasr Abu Zayd, whose literary-discursive approach was interpreted by some as relativizing divine authority.<sup>61</sup> The present data suggest that such anxieties are less about hermeneutics per se and more about perceived displacement of interpretive hierarchy.

Angelika Neuwirth's work situates the Qur'an within Late Antique discursive traditions, emphasizing its dialogical engagement with surrounding cultures.<sup>62</sup> Her historical-contextual approach underscores that contextual reading is not inherently modern but intrinsic to the Qur'an's formative milieu.<sup>63</sup> Yet the classroom data reveal that such contextual awareness must be mediated pedagogically to avoid appearing as external imposition.

Nicolai Sinai, in his philological-historical analysis of Qur'anic composition, foregrounds rigorous linguistic scrutiny before theological extrapolation.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, the staged sequencing observed in this study mirrors Sinai's methodological caution: linguistic precision precedes broader theorization.<sup>65</sup> In this sense, the pedagogy documented here

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<sup>58</sup> Moh. Mukri and others, 'The Implementation of the Maslahah Principle in Cultivating Religious Moderation in the State Islamic Universities', *Al-'Adalah*, 21.2 (2024), p. 371, doi:10.24042/adalah.v21i2.23953; Lailatussaadah, Asyraf Isyraqi Bin Jamil, and Fakhrol Adabi Bin Abdul Kadir, 'Designing and Assesing an Islamic Entrepreneurship Education Model for Islamic Higher Education (IHE)', *Islam Futura*, 23.1 (2023), pp. 38–59, doi:10.22373/jiif.v23i1.17556.

<sup>59</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1982).

<sup>60</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'ān* (Routledge, 2006).

<sup>61</sup> Nasr Abu Zayd, *Rethinking the Qur'an* (Humanistics University Press, 2004).

<sup>62</sup> Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>63</sup> Sujjat Zubaidi and others, 'Late Antiquity Revisited: Angelika Neuwirth's View on the Story of Prophet Abraham', *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, 20.1 (2025), pp. 65–79.

<sup>64</sup> Nicolai Sinai, *Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

<sup>65</sup> Nicolai Sinai, 'Historical Criticism and Recent Trends in Western Scholarship on the Qur'an: Some Hermeneutic Reflections', 2020.

converges not only with reformist Muslim scholarship but also with contemporary critical Qur'anic studies.

Meanwhile, Gabriel Said Reynolds advocates reading the Qur'an intertextually within Biblical traditions.<sup>66</sup> Although such approaches are rarely institutionalized in Indonesian pesantren settings, the core principle meaning emerges through dialogical context aligns structurally with the layered interpretive sequence observed here. Thus, while differing in epistemological commitments, these paradigms converge in treating textual scrutiny and contextual expansion as sequentially interdependent rather than mutually exclusive. The findings should therefore be read as micro-ethnographic evidence of epistemic performance. The instructor's repeated reaffirmation of textual hierarchy resembles what Talal Asad conceptualizes as the disciplined formation of tradition.<sup>67</sup> Tradition persists not through rigidity, but through regulated transmission. Resistance decreased not when contextualization was abandoned, but when continuity was enacted.

Theoretically, this study contributes to global Qur'anic hermeneutics by demonstrating that legitimacy in contextual interpretation depends on visible sequencing. Reform succeeds when it is staged as continuity. For pedagogy, this suggests that ethical abstraction must be scaffolded through explicit grammatical anchoring, especially in institutions where authority is sacralized. For the broader reform discourse, the implication is significant: debates should shift from "Is contextualization legitimate?" to "How is contextualization pedagogically sequenced?" Institutional variation reflects epistemic habitus. University students inhabit discursive environments where interpretive plurality is normalized. Pesantren students are formed within continuity-based authority structures. Madrasah settings mediate between memorization culture and dialogical expectation.

What distinguishes the present study from existing hermeneutical models is its empirical reconstruction of sequencing as a pedagogical mechanism of legitimacy.<sup>68</sup> While Rahman articulates a double movement and Saeed formulates contextualist principles, this study demonstrates how interpretive sequencing functions socially to stabilize authority within educational institutions. The contribution is therefore not another hermeneutical theory, but an account of how hermeneutics becomes institutionally credible. This study is limited to Indonesian institutional contexts and does not claim universal generalizability. Rather, it offers a situated reconstruction of pedagogical sequencing within a specific socio-educational ecology

Future research should extend the present findings through cross-regional comparative ethnographies that examine whether similar patterns of negotiated sequencing emerge in other Muslim educational contexts beyond Indonesia. Such comparative work would help determine whether staged contextualization is culturally specific or structurally characteristic of contemporary Qur'anic pedagogy more broadly. Methodologically, further studies would benefit from integrating fine-grained discourse analysis with sustained classroom observation in order to capture how interpretive authority is linguistically constructed, challenged, and stabilized in real time. In addition, longitudinal inquiry is necessary to assess whether repeated exposure gradually normalizes staged contextualization, transforming initial resistance into routinized interpretive practice. Most importantly, future scholarship should reconsider reform not as an ideological declaration imposed upon tradition, but as a form of pedagogical choreography enacted within it. The

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<sup>66</sup> Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'an and the Bible: Text and Commentary* (Yale University Press, 2018).

<sup>67</sup> Asad.

<sup>68</sup> Ichwan, Ming, and Sya'roni.

evidence presented here suggests that reform does not unfold as rupture; rather, it proceeds through visible sequencing. In practice, reform is sequential.

### **C. Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that pedagogical practices observed across the selected Islamic educational institutions exhibit interpretive sequencing that is methodologically congruent with Mahmud Syaltut's contextual tafsiṛ approach. Rather than representing the formal institutional adoption of Syaltut's tafsiṛ, the observed instructional patterns reflect a staged movement from textual grounding toward ethical abstraction and contextual application. Conceptually, the study proposes epistemic sequencing as an authority-regulating mechanism within contemporary Qur'anic pedagogy. While previous scholarship has examined Syaltut's interpretive principles at the level of theory, this research shifts attention to their institutional enactment and the micro-dynamics of classroom negotiation. Methodologically, it offers a practice-oriented reconstruction of tafsiṛ pedagogy through triangulated qualitative analysis, showing that interpretive frameworks become pedagogically viable only when mediated through structured progression. The contribution, therefore, lies not simply in reaffirming the relevance of contextual tafsiṛ, but in clarifying the conditions under which it becomes pedagogically legitimate and institutionally sustainable.

This study is limited by its focus on three institutional contexts within a single national setting, which may not capture the full diversity of interpretive cultures across the Muslim world. The analysis also centers on classroom enactment and does not extend to long-term curricular transformation or enduring student epistemic development. Future research may pursue comparative cross-national studies, examine digital and online Qur'anic pedagogies, or investigate how epistemic sequencing operates in non-formal learning environments. Longitudinal inquiry would further clarify whether staged contextualization produces durable interpretive shifts or functions primarily as institutional accommodation, thereby determining whether sequencing represents a localized adaptation or a broader model of authority negotiation in contemporary Islamic thought.

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### **Interviews**

- Interview with P2, Pesantren Instructor, March 25, 2025
- Interview with U1, March 12, 2025
- Interview with Teacher Participant P2, March 2025

### **Focus Group Discussions**

- Focus Group Discussion (FGD 2) with Madrasah Students, participant S4, March 15, 2025.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD 3) with Pesantren Students, participant S1, March 15, 2025.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD 1) with University Students, participant S3, March 15, 2025.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD 1) with University Students, participant S5, March 15, 2025.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD 3) with Pesantren Students, participant S2, March 15, 2025.
- Statement by S-U1 in Focus Group Discussion (FGD-U), March 15, 2025.

### **Classroom observations**

- Classroom observation, Islamic Public University Tafsīr session, March 14, 2025.
- Classroom Observation Session 2, Pesantren Site, March 2025; Focus Group Discussion (FGD 3) with
- Classroom Observation Session 1, University Site, March 2025.