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THE QUR'AN AS A LIVING TEXT: RECEPTION HERMENEUTICS ACROSS MUSLIM TRADITIONS AND DIGITAL SPACES

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Abstract

This article examines the Qur'an as a living text through reception hermeneutics, with attention to transformations in Qur'anic reception from Muslim traditions to digital environments. It treats the Qur'an as a source of meaning enacted through readers' engagements, ritual practices, cultural expressions, social ethics, and intellectual production. The article employs qualitative library research, drawing on scholarship on *living Qur'an*, reception theory, Qur'anic hermeneutics, and digital religion. The analysis identifies five interconnected forms of Qur'anic reception in Muslim traditions: textual, ritual, cultural-aesthetic, social, and intellectual. Digital media extend these forms through Qur'an applications, social media, online learning, visual content, and interactive platforms. This shift reshapes relations among text, readers, media, and religious authority by expanding access and participation while exposing Qur'anic messages to decontextualization, fragmented authority, and visibility-driven circulation. Reception hermeneutics provides a conceptual framework for examining how Qur'anic meaning is received, enacted, circulated, and negotiated in contemporary Muslim societies. The analysis also indicates the need for attention to source integrity, interpretive validity, and digital religious literacy in contemporary Qur'anic studies.

Keywords: Living Qur'an; Reception Hermeneutics; Qur'anic Reception; Digital Religion; Religious Authority

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A. Introduction

Scholarship on the Qur'an as a living text (*living Qur'an*) proceeds from the premise that the Qur'an functions as a normative text and as a source of meaning enacted through the social, ritual, cultural, and intellectual practices of Muslim communities. In Indonesia, Qur'anic reception appears in recitation, memorization, prayer, calligraphy, ritual observances, religious education, and social traditions. Such practices reveal the informative and performative dimensions of the Qur'an in Muslim life (Rafiq 2014; Rafiq 2021). Studies of Qur'anic recitation further show that Muslim engagement with the Qur'an extends beyond textual reading and involves voice, performance, aesthetics, religious authority, and public religious spaces (Rasmussen 2010).

This phenomenon raises a central scholarly question: how does Qur'anic meaning take shape when the revealed text encounters readers' experiences, religious traditions, and social change? Textual-normative approaches remain essential to interpretive discipline, yet they do not fully explain the diverse ways Muslim communities receive and actualize the Qur'an in everyday life. Reception theory provides a useful framework for addressing this issue. Jauss emphasizes the role of the *horizon of expectations* in shaping readers' encounters with texts, whereas Iser regards reading as an active process through which readers participate in meaning-making through their responses and interpretive experiences (Jauss 1982; Iser 1978). Within Qur'anic studies, reception hermeneutics enables an examination of how Muslim communities receive, understand, and practice the Qur'an while retaining the authority of the text and the tradition of Qur'anic exegesis. Rafiq's distinction between the informative and performative functions of the Qur'an also positions *living Qur'an* as a field of interaction among text, practice, and social transformation (Rafiq 2021). Contemporary Qur'anic interpretation is likewise shaped by media, interpretive communities, scholarly genealogies, and social conditions that influence the production of meaning (Görke and Pink 2014; Pink 2019).

Digital technology has expanded and reconfigured this field of reception. In earlier settings, Muslim engagement with the Qur'an was commonly mediated through ritual spaces, pesantren, *majelis taklim*, families, and local traditions. In the digital era, it also occurs through Qur'an applications, social media, da'wah videos, online religious learning, visual content, and interactive platforms. Research on digital religion demonstrates that digital media shape religious practices, identities, authority, and communities (Campbell 2013; Campbell and Tsuria 2021). In Islamic contexts, cyber-Islamic environments have altered how Muslims access religious knowledge, engage with religious authority, and circulate Islamic discourse through online networks (Bunt 2018). Digital Qur'anic reception therefore represents an epistemological transformation in the relationship among text, reader, authority, media, and social space. Readers can select, share, comment on, and reproduce Qur'anic messages through diverse communicative formats, while contemporary Qur'anic interpretation is increasingly mediated by platforms, interpretive communities, and sociopolitical conditions (Pink 2019).

Existing *living Qur'an* studies have established that the Qur'an lives within the practices of Muslim communities. Rafiq examines how the Qur'an is positioned, used,

and interpreted in non-Arab Muslim communities, while Rasmussen demonstrates the relationship between Qur'anic recitation, performance, gender, and religious authority in Indonesian public life (Rafiq 2014; Rasmussen 2010). Studies of digital religion also show that social media and digital networks increasingly shape contemporary religious communication and practice (Campbell 2013; Bunt 2018; Campbell and Tsuria 2021). However, the relationship among *living Qur'an*, reception hermeneutics, and digital transformation still requires a more systematic formulation. An integrated account is needed to explain digital Qur'anic reception as a process of meaning-making that involves readers, media, authority, and social context.

This article addresses that gap through a conceptual synthesis of *living Qur'an*, reception hermeneutics, and digital religion. It examines the Qur'an as a living text by tracing forms of Qur'anic reception across Muslim traditions and the digital era. Specifically, the discussion focuses on the concept of the Qur'an as a living text; the principles of reception hermeneutics; forms of Qur'anic reception in Muslim traditions; and the transformation of Qur'anic reception in digital spaces, including its implications for religious authority and the production of religious meaning. Through this framework, the article clarifies how changes in media reshape the reception, interpretation, and circulation of Qur'anic meaning in contemporary Muslim societies.

B. Methods

This article employed a qualitative library research approach to examine the Qur'an as a living text through the perspective of reception hermeneutics. The analysis drew on academic literature, theoretical works, and previous studies on *living Qur'an*, reception theory, Qur'anic hermeneutics, and digital religion. Within library research, literature serves as the primary material for developing conceptual arguments and identifying patterns of thought relevant to the focus of inquiry (Zed 2008; Snyder 2019).

The sources consisted of books, journal articles, dissertations, and other scholarly works related to four principal themes: the Qur'an as a living text, reception hermeneutics, Qur'anic reception in Muslim traditions, and digital transformation in religious practice. The literature was selected purposively on the basis of thematic relevance, scholarly credibility, conceptual contribution, and relevance to both traditional and digital contexts. The selected works were read critically to identify how the Qur'an has been understood

as text, practice, meaning, and authority in Muslim societies. This procedure follows qualitative document analysis, which treats written materials as objects of systematic interpretation (Bowen 2009).

The analysis proceeded through three descriptive-interpretive stages. First, the literature was screened to identify sources directly relevant to *living Qur'an*, reception theory, Qur'anic hermeneutics, and digital religious practice. Second, the selected literature was organized into four analytical themes: the Qur'an as a living text, the principles of reception hermeneutics, forms of Qur'anic reception in Muslim traditions, and the transformation of Qur'anic reception in the digital era. Third, these themes were interpreted through reception hermeneutics to examine the relationship among text, reader, tradition, media, and social context. This analytical strategy was used to examine the conceptual and epistemological dimensions of digital Qur'anic reception within the limits of library-based evidence.

C. Results and Discussion

1. The Qur'an as a Living Text: Normativity and Social Practice

The concept of the Qur'an as a living text (*living Qur'an*, meaning the Qur'an as experienced and practiced in everyday life) refers to the continuing presence of the Qur'an in the consciousness, practices, and cultures of Muslim communities. Within this framework, the Qur'an is approached as written scripture, recited discourse, a source of normative orientation, and a source of meaning enacted through social life. Its presence can be observed in recitation, memorization, prayer, calligraphy, education, ritual, social ethics, and diverse forms of religious expression (Rafiq 2021; Ahimsa-Putra 2012; Graham 2010). Rafiq distinguishes between the informative and performative functions of the Qur'an. Informatively, it is read for teachings, guidance, and knowledge; performatively, it is present in actions, rituals, symbols, and social practices that shape Muslim religious experience (Rafiq 2021). The vitality of the Qur'an thus rests on the ways Muslim communities receive, read, interpret, and actualize it in lived experience, while its textual form remains unchanged.

Within Muslim traditions, the living presence of the Qur'an is evident in worship and everyday religious practices. Reciting al-Fātiḥah (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) in prayer, reading particular verses for supplication and protection, memorizing the

Qur'an, engaging in *murāja'ah* (revision or repetition of memorized Qur'anic passages), attending recitation gatherings, and incorporating Qur'anic verses into family and pesantren (Islamic boarding school) education demonstrate the close relationship between the revealed text and the spiritual experience of its readers. Rafiq's study of Qur'anic reception in Indonesia shows that non-Arab Muslim communities approach the Qur'an through translation and exegesis while also positioning, treating, and employing it within particular religious and social practices (Rafiq 2014). These modes of engagement also reflect the close relationship between oral transmission and textual preservation in the Qur'anic tradition (Dutton 2012). The relationship between Muslim communities and the Qur'an is therefore multidimensional, encompassing textual, ritual, affective, symbolic, and social dimensions.

The performative dimension of the Qur'an is especially evident in recitation practices. Qur'anic recitation has long been understood as a tradition of oral performance and transmission in which sound, vocal discipline, and embodied practice shape engagement with scripture (Denny 1989). Its aesthetic dimension is equally important, since cantillation (melodic recitation) gives Qur'anic recitation a distinctive mode of sacred vocal expression (al-Faruqi 1987). In Indonesia, Qur'anic recitation involves the formation of bodily discipline, voice, emotion, authority, and religious identity. Gade shows that learning and beautifying Qur'anic recitation in Indonesia cultivate religious emotion and an ethic of excellence in engaging with the sacred text (Gade 2004). Rasmussen likewise demonstrates that Qur'anic recitation occupies a rich religious public sphere shaped by women's participation, vocal arts, and Islamic musical expression, thereby expanding the ways communities experience the presence of the Qur'an (Rasmussen 2010). The Qur'an as a living text is encountered through the lexical meaning of its verses, together with voice, performance, aesthetics, and the collective experiences that accompany recitation.

The Qur'an also lives through the social and cultural traditions of Muslim communities. Qur'anic verses are recited in *khataman* (ceremonial completion of Qur'anic recitation), *tahlilan* (communal remembrance ritual involving recitation of praises to God), *aqiqah* (ritual sacrifice celebrating a newborn), weddings, prayers for safety, pilgrimages, children's education, and various communal activities. Qur'anic calligraphy displayed in homes, mosques, madrasahs (Islamic schools), and public spaces

further reflects the symbolic function of the sacred text as a marker of religious identity and a source of spiritual reassurance. Such practices demonstrate that Qur'anic reception is embedded in the social worlds through which Muslim communities sustain religious meaning (Ahimsa-Putra 2012). Studies of *living Qur'an* practices involving the routine recitation of particular surahs (chapters of the Qur'an) in pesantren show that regular Qur'anic recitation can function as collective habituation that cultivates discipline, religious meaning, and communal solidarity (Salafudin 2021). In this context, the Qur'an becomes part of the social rhythm of Muslim communities and extends beyond the domain of formal exegesis.

Within the framework of reception hermeneutics (the study of how texts are interpreted by readers), these practices indicate that Qur'anic meaning emerges through a dynamic relationship among text, reader, tradition, religious experience, and social context (Jauss 1982; Iser 1978). Muslim communities bring the Qur'an into lived reality in accordance with their horizons of understanding, spiritual needs, social structures, and inherited religious traditions. The Qur'an as a living text therefore encompasses layered forms of reception: it is read as guidance, recited as worship, displayed as a symbol, practiced as ethics, and transmitted as tradition. Through this perspective, *living Qur'an* studies demonstrate how Muslim communities actively form, sustain, and negotiate Qur'anic meaning in their everyday lives.

2. Reception Hermeneutics as a Framework for Reading the Living Qur'an

Reception hermeneutics positions readers as active participants in the formation of meaning. Meaning develops through the encounter between textual structures and readers' interpretive engagement. Jauss explains that readers approach texts through a *horizon of expectations* shaped by their experiences, traditions, knowledge, and particular historical circumstances (Jauss 1982). Iser similarly argues that reading is an active process in which readers respond to textual structures through imagination and interpretive experience (Iser 1978). This perspective helps explain why a single text may generate diverse forms of understanding and practice among different communities of readers.

In Qur'anic studies, this approach is relevant because Muslim engagement with the Qur'an never occurs in a social or historical vacuum. Readers bring educational

backgrounds, religious experiences, inherited traditions, recognized authorities, and social conditions that shape their understanding of the text. This observation does not detach Qur'anic meaning from the authority of the text; it recognizes that understanding develops through the encounter among text, reader, and context. Gadamer emphasizes that interpretation is inseparable from tradition and the interpreter's horizon, since understanding develops through a dialogue between the past and the present (Gadamer 2004). Within *living Qur'an* studies, this insight explains how Qur'anic verses continue to be read and actualized in changing social circumstances while remaining connected to the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Reception hermeneutics also recognizes tradition as a mediator between text and reader. In Muslim societies, understandings of the Qur'an are often shaped by classical exegesis, the teachings of religious scholars, pesantren practices, Islamic study circles (*majelis taklim*), family rituals, and social customs transmitted across generations. These traditions provide an initial framework through which readers approach the Qur'an. At the same time, tradition remains dynamic because readers may adapt, extend, and negotiate meaning in response to changing social needs and historical circumstances. Ricoeur argues that texts can exceed their original contexts and generate new possibilities of meaning when read in different situations (Ricoeur 1976). Qur'anic reception may therefore be understood as an ongoing process that connects the revealed text, exegetical heritage, readers' experiences, and social realities.

Applying reception hermeneutics to *living Qur'an* studies does not displace textual authority or substitute for the methodological discipline of Qur'anic exegesis. It broadens the analysis of how the Qur'an is received and enacted within Muslim societies. This approach enables researchers to examine Qur'anic engagement across academic interpretation, worship, social rituals, cultural expression, education, and religious communication. Saeed emphasizes the importance of attending to historical and contemporary contexts in assessing the relevance of the Qur'an for present-day Muslim societies (Saeed 2006). This concern is compatible with reception hermeneutics because both approaches attend to the relationship among text, context, and readers' interpretive needs.

Reception hermeneutics thus provides an analytical framework for approaching the *living Qur'an* as a dialogical process of meaning-making. The Qur'an remains the

authoritative centre of Muslim religious life, while the continuity of its meaning becomes visible through the ways Muslims read, respond to, practice, and transmit it within social life. Variations in Qur'anic reception reflect differences in readers' horizons and historical circumstances. For this reason, *living Qur'an* studies require an approach capable of examining the relationship among text, reader, tradition, and social context in a balanced manner. Reception hermeneutics offers such a framework by asking how Qur'anic meaning is received, negotiated, and actualized within changing social settings.

3. Forms of Qur'anic Reception in Muslim Traditions

Qur'anic reception in Muslim traditions demonstrates that Muslim engagement with the revealed text takes multiple forms. The Qur'an is received through reading, interpretation, recitation, visual representation, practice, and transmission across diverse social and cultural settings. Within *living Qur'an* studies, these forms of reception refer to the ways Muslim communities actualize the Qur'an in concrete life through textual, ritual, cultural, social, and intellectual activities. Junaedi defines *living Qur'an* as an approach that examines how the Qur'an is present and functions within the socio-religious practices of Muslim communities, including practices beyond the domain of textual exegesis (Junaedi 2015). Hasan's study of the Qur'an as a medium of healing also shows how the sacred text may acquire functional significance within ritual practices and the social needs of Muslim communities (Hasan 2019). These forms of reception should therefore be understood as religious expressions that reveal a dynamic relationship among text, community, and tradition.

The first form is textual reception, which involves reading, memorization, teaching, translation, and interpretation of the Qur'an. In this form, the Qur'an serves as a source of guidance, knowledge, and normative orientation. Textual reception is evident in traditions of Qur'anic exegesis, study circles, *tajwīd* (rules governing proper Qur'anic pronunciation), *taḥfīẓ* (Qur'an memorization), *murāja'ah* (revision or repetition of memorized verses), and the use of Qur'anic verses in sermons and Islamic education. It also shapes how Muslim communities understand scholarly authority, chains of knowledge transmission, and the legitimacy of interpretation. Qur'anic reading in Muslim traditions is consequently linked to institutions of knowledge such as pesantren (Islamic

boarding schools), madrasahs (Islamic schools), *majelis taklim* (informal religious study gatherings), and other Islamic educational institutions.

The second form is ritual reception. Here, the Qur'an is present within acts of worship and collective religious practices. The recitation of Qur'anic verses in prayer, supplication, *dhikr* (remembrance of God through repeated phrases), *khataman* (ceremonial completion of Qur'anic recitation), *tahlilan* (communal recitation of prayers and remembrance, often for the deceased), *aqiqah* (ritual sacrifice celebrating a newborn), weddings, pilgrimages, and other social rituals indicates that the Qur'an is experienced through enacted religious practice as well as through interpretation. Ritual reception expresses the performative dimension of the Qur'an, as the revealed text is practiced as a source of blessing, protection, tranquillity, and communal solidarity. A study of Qur'anic gratitude in the *Kupatan* tradition (a post-Ramadan communal celebration involving symbolic foods) shows how local symbols and rituals may become spaces in which Qur'anic authority and cultural logic are negotiated, particularly when religious values are articulated through collective practices that strengthen social cohesion and communal identity (Alfiyah & Pratiwi, 2025).

The third form is cultural and aesthetic reception. In this form, the Qur'an is received through artistic expression, symbols, architecture, vocal arts, visual media, and cultural representation. Calligraphy, mosque ornamentation, the art of Qur'anic recitation, *qasidah* (devotional poetic songs), *nasyid* (Islamic vocal music), Sufi literature, and visual representations of Qur'anic verses demonstrate that the Qur'an also operates through aesthetic experience. Muslim communities engage with the Qur'an through beauty, emotion, symbolism, and religious identity alongside its conceptual meaning. Research on the aesthetic reception of the Qur'an on Instagram shows that Qur'anic verses may be presented in diverse visual forms while becoming subject to commodification and adaptation within media culture (Purnama 2020). Studies of modern Qur'anic marble inscriptions likewise demonstrate that visual Qur'anic expression can connect the sacred text, public space, and the symbolic meanings of society (Nurani & Maulana, 2023).

The fourth form is social reception. In this form, Qur'anic values are translated into social ethics, collective norms, education, philanthropy, and patterns of human relations. Justice, trustworthiness, fraternity, consultation, social concern, zakat

(obligatory almsgiving), *infaq* (voluntary charitable spending), charity, and waqf (endowment for public benefit) illustrate how Qur'anic values are enacted through social practice. Social reception shows that the Qur'an serves as a basis for collective conduct and the formation of social institutions. A study of meaning-making in the *Ancak* tradition (a communal offering practice in certain local cultures) shows how local practices may provide a space for communities to negotiate religious meaning, solidarity, and social identity through a *living Qur'an* framework (Ansori et al., 2023).

The fifth form is intellectual reception. This form develops through Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*, Islamic legal understanding), theology (*kalam*, Islamic doctrinal discourse), Sufism (*tasawwuf*, Islamic spirituality), Islamic philosophy, *maqāṣid* studies (objectives of Islamic law), Qur'anic hermeneutics, and contemporary Islamic scholarship. The Qur'an serves as a source of scholarly reflection and methodological debate. Intellectual reception indicates that Muslim traditions preserve inherited understandings while developing new approaches to address the concerns of their time. Contemporary Qur'anic exegesis, hermeneutics, and *living Qur'an* studies demonstrate the continuing role of the Qur'an in the production of Islamic knowledge. In this respect, intellectual reception sustains the relationship among textual authority, scholarly heritage, and the interpretive needs of modern Muslim societies.

These five forms demonstrate that the Qur'an lives within Muslim traditions through multiple and interconnected pathways. Textual reception sustains engagement with reading and interpretation; ritual reception enacts the Qur'an in worship; cultural and aesthetic reception presents it through symbols and artistic expression; social reception translates Qur'anic values into collective ethics; and intellectual reception develops the Qur'an as a source of thought. This diversity indicates that Qur'anic meaning develops through encounters among text, reader, tradition, and social context. Muslim traditions should therefore be understood as communities of readers that continually sustain and negotiate Qur'anic meaning across diverse spheres of life.

4. The Transformation of Qur'anic Reception in the Digital Era and Its Implications for Religious Authority

Digital transformation has expanded the field of Qur'anic reception in contemporary Muslim societies. Earlier forms of engagement with the Qur'an were commonly mediated through printed *muṣḥafs* (written copies of the Qur'an), religious

gatherings, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), *majelis taklim* (informal religious study gatherings), families, and local ritual practices. In the digital era, Qur'anic reception also takes place through Qur'an applications, social media, da'wah videos, podcasts, YouTube channels, online classes, visual content, and other interactive platforms. This development indicates that the Qur'an has entered a communication environment characterized by speed, visuality, participation, and networked interaction. Research on digital religion shows that digital media shape religious practices, identities, authority, and communities, alongside their function in disseminating religious messages (Campbell 2013; Campbell and Tsuria 2021). In Islamic contexts, digital environments have also changed how Muslims access religious knowledge, build religious networks, and engage with Islamic authority (Bunt 2018).

In relation to Qur'anic reception, digitalization has widened access to the Qur'anic text, translations, exegesis, audio recitation, worship schedules, and Qur'anic learning materials. Qur'an applications allow users to read digital *muṣḥafs*, listen to reciters, bookmark verses, search keywords, and access translations or exegesis with relative ease. These features have generated new forms of textual and ritual reception, since engagement with the Qur'an can now occur through digital devices embedded in everyday life. Studies of Qur'an applications show that digital *muṣḥafs* have introduced new patterns of Qur'anic reading while raising questions concerning textual authentication, source validity, and religious authority within app-based environments (Kushidayati 2019). Qur'an applications thus function as tools for worship and as media through which Qur'anic experience is produced and circulated.

Social media has intensified this transformation. Qur'anic verses are quoted, shared, visually designed, connected to current events, used as daily motivation, and circulated as part of religious identity expression. A study of Qur'anic verse-sharing on Twitter shows that social media can serve as a space for religious expression, where users share verses for worship, advice, solidarity, prayer, moral encouragement, and the formation of symbolic communities (Abokhodair, Elmadany, and Magdy 2020). Qur'anic reception consequently extends beyond individual reading and formal instruction to include sharing, commenting, liking, saving, and reproducing Qur'anic messages within digital networks.

These developments also alter patterns of religious authority. In classical traditions, authority in Qur'anic interpretation rests on mastery of relevant disciplines, scholarly chains of transmission (*sanad*), Arabic language competence, exegetical methodology, and institutional recognition. In digital spaces, these forms of authority coexist and compete with authority based on visibility, popularity, algorithms, follower counts, visual communication skills, and the ability to adapt religious messages to prevailing patterns of media consumption. Bunt argues that cyber-Islamic environments have changed Muslim relations with religious authority because religious knowledge can now be accessed, curated, and disseminated through more open digital networks (Bunt 2018). Pink similarly emphasizes that media, interpretive communities, and genealogies of authority shape how Qur'anic interpretations are produced and received by contemporary audiences (Pink 2019).

This shift in authority does not have uniformly negative consequences. Digitalization can widen access to Qur'anic learning, connect users with diverse exegetical resources, strengthen religious literacy, and enable groups with limited public visibility to participate in religious conversations. Online religious lectures, *taḥsīn* classes (training in accurate and refined Qur'anic recitation), Qur'an journaling, *tadabbur* content (reflective engagement with Qur'anic meaning), and discussions of verses on social media illustrate emerging forms of Qur'anic internalization. Research on Qur'an journaling in virtual communities, for example, shows how readers can develop reflective relationships with Qur'anic verses through writing, visual expression, and the exchange of experiences in digital settings (Abadiah & Dardum, 2025). Digital media may therefore expand affective and reflective forms of Qur'anic reception.

Digitalization also presents significant challenges. When Qur'anic verses are excerpted, simplified, or detached from their exegetical contexts to suit short-form content, the risk of reducing meaning becomes more pronounced. Qur'anic content on social media often follows platform logics that favor brevity, emotional appeal, visual attraction, and shareability. Complex messages may consequently be reduced to motivational quotations that lack adequate scholarly context. Studies of Qur'anic interpretation on social media indicate that digital dissemination creates broad opportunities for da'wah while also generating risks of distortion, oversimplification, and weak scholarly oversight (Armita 2025). Digital Qur'anic reception should therefore be

approached critically as a field that produces meaning while also carrying risks of interpretive deviation.

A further concern involves the fragmentation of authority and the emergence of highly personalized religious spaces. Social media algorithms tend to prioritize content based on user preferences, rather than scholarly quality or exegetical authority. Users may consequently become confined within patterns of content consumption that correspond with their interests, emotions, or ideological tendencies. Studies of religious authority in the digital era suggest that digitalization can shift authority away from hierarchical structures of scholars and religious institutions toward authority grounded in popularity, public figures, and religious influencers (Rachman et al., 2025). In Qur'anic interpretation, this raises epistemological questions concerning who may explain the meaning of verses, how interpretive authority is validated, and how audiences distinguish scholarly explanation from personal opinion and popular content.

From the perspective of reception hermeneutics, digital transformation positions readers as recipients, producers, curators, and distributors of Qur'anic meaning. Digital users may select verses, add visual designs, write captions, connect verses to current issues, and circulate them to wide audiences. In this process, Qur'anic meaning is mediated by technology, algorithms, visual aesthetics, popular language, and the interactive logic of platforms. Research on Qur'anic interpretation on Instagram suggests that social media can connect verses with contemporary issues, yet it also requires caution because exegetical context may shift in response to platform formats and audience expectations (Abay 2025). Digital spaces therefore constitute new arenas in which text, readers, media, and authority interact in shaping Qur'anic reception.

These changes carry important epistemological implications for contemporary Qur'anic studies. First, the study of the Qur'an needs to consider media, platforms, algorithms, communication formats, and reader communities alongside textual analysis and written exegesis. Second, interpretive authority should be examined as a matter of scholarly competence, distribution, visibility, and legitimacy in digital spaces. Third, digital religious literacy has become essential for enabling Muslims to distinguish responsible interpretation, popular advice, motivational verse fragments, and potentially misleading content. Research on the movement of digital Qur'anic interpretation from *sanad* to algorithm confirms that changing media environments affect the production,

circulation, and authority of Qur'anic interpretation in contemporary Muslim societies (AM et al., 2025).

The transformation of Qur'anic reception in the digital era therefore exceeds a technical change in access to the sacred text. It is an epistemological transformation that reshapes the relationship among text, reader, authority, media, and meaning-making. Digitalization broadens access to the Qur'an and expands participation, while also demanding careful attention to interpretive validity, source integrity, and the ethics of circulating Qur'anic messages. Through the lens of reception hermeneutics, the digital era demonstrates that the Qur'an continues to live through readers' responses, now mediated by technologies that shape how meaning is produced, circulated, received, and negotiated in contemporary Muslim societies.

D. Conclusion

The Qur'an as a living text (*living Qur'an*) can be understood through the dynamic relationship among text, reader, tradition, and social context. Reception hermeneutics shows that Qur'anic meaning develops through reading, ritual practice, cultural expression, social ethics, and the production of Islamic knowledge. This perspective preserves the authority of the Qur'anic text while examining how Muslim communities receive, enact, and transmit its meaning in lived settings. Within Muslim traditions, Qur'anic reception takes textual, ritual, cultural-aesthetic, social, and intellectual forms. These forms indicate that Muslim communities actively sustain and negotiate Qur'anic meaning across diverse spheres of life. In the digital era, these processes have expanded through Qur'an applications, social media, online religious learning, visual content, and interactive platforms. Digital environments widen access to Qur'anic materials and facilitate new forms of participation, reflection, circulation, and religious communication. At the same time, platform logics may encourage the circulation of verses detached from their exegetical contexts, contribute to the fragmentation of religious authority, and amplify content whose visibility may outpace its scholarly reliability.

This transformation reshapes religious authority, the distribution of knowledge, and the production of Qur'anic meaning. Contemporary Qur'anic studies therefore need to consider media platforms, reader communities, algorithms, communicative formats, and digital religious literacy alongside textual interpretation and exegetical traditions.

Reception hermeneutics offers a relevant conceptual framework for examining these developments because it clarifies how Qur'anic meaning is produced, circulated, received, and negotiated within contemporary Muslim societies.

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