Hermeneutics in Contemporary Interpretation: A Critical Study of the Methods of Qur'anic Interpretation in the Modern Era

Muhammad Rum
Institut Asy-Syukriyyah
Correspondence: muh_rum@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research examines the application of modern hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation in the contemporary era, analyzing the integration of Western interpretive theories with classical Islamic exegetical traditions. Using qualitative library research methodology with textual, comparative, and conceptual approaches, the study investigates how contemporary Muslim scholars navigate between traditional tafsir methodologies and modern hermeneutical frameworks. Classical exegetical methods developed by scholars like al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, and al-Razi remain authoritative but were formulated in specific historical contexts. Contemporary challenges including gender equality, religious pluralism, bioethics, democratic governance, and human rights require new interpretive tools. Pioneering scholars such as Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Mohammed Arkoun, and Amina Wadud have applied hermeneutical concepts emphasizing the distinction between eternal principles and historically conditioned forms. However, traditionalist scholars criticize these approaches for potentially relativizing divine guidance. The research proposes an integrative hermeneutical framework combining classical Islamic concepts like asbab al-nuzul and maqasid al-shariah with Western hermeneutical theory, particularly attention to context and dialogical understanding. This framework requires clear methodological criteria, theological safeguards, and procedural transparency. The findings demonstrate that successful integration maintains Islamic theological integrity while incorporating valuable interpretive insights addressing contemporary Muslim realities, providing methodological guidance for scholars and religious educators.

Keywords: contemporary tafsir; integrative interpretation; Qur'anic hermeneutics

677

Introduction

The interpretation of the Qur'an has been a central concern in Islamic scholarship since the revelation was completed in the seventh century. Throughout Islamic intellectual history, scholars have developed sophisticated methodologies to understand and explain the divine text, ranging from philological analysis to theological reasoning. In the classical period, exegetical works (tafsir) relied heavily on linguistic expertise, transmitted narratives (riwayah), and scholarly consensus to elucidate Qur'anic meanings. However, the modern era has witnessed profound transformations in the approaches to Qur'anic interpretation, driven by encounters with Western philosophical traditions, changing social contexts, and the need to address contemporary questions that classical commentaries did not explicitly engage. Among the most significant developments in modern Islamic thought is the application of hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation, representing both an opportunity for renewed understanding and a source of considerable scholarly debate. The tension between maintaining fidelity to traditional exegetical methods and incorporating modern interpretive frameworks has created a complex intellectual landscape where Muslim scholars must navigate between reverence for classical scholarship and responsiveness to contemporary realities. This dynamic has produced diverse scholarly positions ranging from outright rejection of hermeneutical methods as incompatible with the Qur'an's divine nature to enthusiastic embrace of hermeneutics as essential tools for authentic contemporary interpretation (Panigoro, 2025).

Hermeneutics, as a systematic theory of interpretation, emerged from Western philosophical and theological traditions but has increasingly influenced Islamic scholarly discourse in the modern era. The hermeneutical approach emphasizes the dynamic relationship between text, interpreter, and context, challenging the notion that textual meaning is simply extracted through grammatical analysis or transmitted authority. When applied to the Qur'an, hermeneutical methods raise fundamental questions about the nature of divine communication, the role of historical context in shaping revelation's meaning, and the extent to which human understanding mediates access to divine intent. Contemporary Muslim scholars have adopted diverse positions on these questions, with some viewing hermeneutical frameworks as necessary bridges between classical insights and modern contexts, while others perceive them as threats to traditional authority and textual stability. The classical exegetical tradition, exemplified in the monumental works of al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, al-Razi, and Ibn Kathir, developed sophisticated linguistic and theological frameworks for interpretation that remain authoritative for many Muslims. However, these methods were formulated in specific historical and intellectual contexts, addressing the questions and concerns of their times. Contemporary scholars argue that while classical tafsir provides invaluable insights into the linguistic, historical, and theological dimensions of the Qur'anic text, these traditional approaches may require supplementation or reconsideration when addressing distinctly modern questions about gender relations, political authority, scientific knowledge, religious pluralism, and human rights that were not central concerns in classical Islamic societies (Ulhaq & Sukmara, 2025).

The introduction of hermeneutical concepts into Qur'anic studies has generated significant methodological controversies that reveal deeper epistemological and theological tensions within contemporary Islamic thought. Traditional textualist approaches, which prioritize the literal meanings of Qur'anic verses as understood through classical Arabic linguistics and the interpretive precedents established by early Muslim authorities, are fundamentally challenged by hermeneutical approaches that emphasize the productive role of the interpreter and the inevitable influence of presuppositions and contexts on understanding. Pioneering scholars such as Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Mohammed Arkoun, and Amina Wadud have argued that effective Qur'anic interpretation

for contemporary contexts requires distinguishing between the eternal principles of the revelation and the historically conditioned forms in which these principles were expressed in seventh-century Arabia. This distinction necessitates hermeneutical tools that can identify the underlying values, purposes (maqasid), and ethical orientations behind specific textual formulations, allowing interpreters to apply Qur'anic guidance to situations vastly different from those encountered by the original audience. However, such approaches face substantial criticism from traditionalist scholars who argue that they relativize divine guidance, undermine the authority of established interpretive traditions accumulated over centuries, and open the door to subjective readings that reflect modern ideological commitments whether liberal, feminist, or secularist rather than genuine engagement with the Qur'anic text itself. Critics contend that hermeneutical approaches often privilege contemporary concerns over textual fidelity and that the distinction between eternal principles and historical forms becomes a mechanism for dismissing inconvenient Qur'anic teachings. The debate extends beyond academic circles to affect Muslim communities worldwide, as different interpretive frameworks produce divergent understandings of religious obligations, ethical norms, and social arrangements with profound practical implications for issues such as women's rights, interfaith relations, political governance, and economic systems (Lingkup et al., 2025).

The specific challenge of integrating hermeneutical insights with Islamic scholarly traditions requires careful attention to both the continuities and discontinuities between Western hermeneutical theories and classical Islamic interpretive methodologies. Classical Islamic scholarship, particularly in the field of legal methodology (usul al-fiqh), developed its own sophisticated approaches to textual interpretation that share certain affinities with hermeneutical concerns. Concepts such as occasioning factors of revelation (asbab al-nuzul), which contextualize Qur'anic verses within specific historical circumstances; objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shari'ah), which identify the broader purposes underlying specific legal rulings; and interpretive principles for reconciling apparently contradictory texts demonstrate that classical scholars recognized the complexity of interpretation and the need for contextual understanding. These indigenous Islamic hermeneutical concepts recognize that context shapes meaning and that interpretation involves more than literal reading, suggesting potential bridges between traditional and modern approaches. However, significant differences remain regarding fundamental issues such as the epistemological status of revelation as divine speech versus human document, the role of prophetic authority in fixing authoritative meanings, the extent to which historical distance and cultural change necessitate reinterpretation, and the criteria for distinguishing valid interpretation from arbitrary imposition of meaning. Contemporary scholars attempting to develop Islamic hermeneutical frameworks must navigate these complex relationships, determining which aspects of Western hermeneutical theory such as attention to authorial intent, recognition of interpretive horizons, or emphasis on dialogical understanding can be fruitfully adapted to Qur'anic studies without importing incompatible philosophical assumptions. The work of scholars applying Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutical approaches, Friedrich Schleiermacher's interpretive principles, or Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics to Qur'anic texts demonstrates both the potential benefits of cross-traditional dialogue and the conceptual challenges of reconciling different assumptions about textuality, meaning, and interpretive authority (Ridwan et al., 2024).

The urgency of developing a coherent and theologically sound hermeneutical framework for contemporary Qur'anic interpretation stems from the practical needs of Muslim communities confronting unprecedented questions in rapidly changing social, political, and intellectual contexts. Contemporary Muslims face issues that classical commentaries could not have anticipated, including bioethical dilemmas posed by modern

medical technologies such as genetic engineering and artificial reproduction, questions about democratic governance and human rights in Islamic political thought, environmental ethics in the face of climate change and ecological crisis, the role of women in religious leadership and public life, and interfaith relations in increasingly pluralistic and interconnected societies. Traditional exegetical methods, while providing valuable insights into the linguistic structures, historical backgrounds, and theological dimensions of the Qur'anic text, often do not directly address these novel circumstances, creating interpretive gaps that different contemporary approaches seek to fill in divergent and sometimes contradictory ways. The proliferation of competing interpretive claims, some invoking traditional authority and others appealing to modern hermeneutical sophistication, creates confusion and controversy that undermines the Qur'an's role as a source of guidance and unity for Muslim communities. Furthermore, the absence of widely accepted methodological frameworks for contemporary interpretation allows both conservative and progressive interpreters to make claims about Qur'anic meaning without adequate justification or transparent methodology, leading to polarization and mutual accusations of either rigid literalism that ignores context or illegitimate innovation that distorts divine guidance. This situation is exacerbated by the democratization of religious interpretation through digital media, where individuals without traditional scholarly training can disseminate interpretive claims to wide audiences, further fragmenting interpretive authority and increasing the need for clear methodological standards (Maranatha, 2024).

How have classical Islamic exegetical frameworks approached the interpretation of the Qur'an, and what are the specific strengths and limitations of these traditional methods when confronted with distinctly modern interpretive challenges? How can modern hermeneutical approaches be legitimately applied to Qur'anic interpretation while respecting the text's unique status as divine revelation and maintaining continuity with Islamic scholarly traditions? What specific features should characterize an ideal integrative hermeneutical framework for contemporary Qur'anic interpretation that combines classical insights with modern methodological sophistication?

This research aims to provide comprehensive analysis of contemporary hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation, examining their theoretical foundations, methodological procedures, and practical implications. The research evaluates multiple hermeneutical frameworks proposed in contemporary scholarship, assessing their philosophical coherence and interpretive productivity.

Theoretically, this research contributes to Islamic intellectual history, hermeneutical theory, and religious studies by analyzing how Islamic tradition engages with modern interpretive frameworks. Practically, this research provides methodological guidance for Muslim scholars and religious educators interpreting the Qur'an in contemporary contexts.

Methods
Type of Research
This research employs a qualitative research method with a library research approach, focusing on textual analysis and interpretive examination of hermeneutical theories applied to Qur'anic interpretation. The qualitative method is chosen because this research aims to explore, understand, and critically analyze the complex dynamics of contemporary hermeneutical approaches in Qur'anic studies, examining how modern interpretive theories interact with classical Islamic exegetical traditions. This method allows for in-depth investigation of philosophical foundations, methodological procedures, and theoretical debates that characterize contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics without requiring empirical field data collection. Library research is considered the most appropriate approach for this study as it enables comprehensive examination of primary Islamic texts, classical

tafsir literature, contemporary hermeneutical scholarship, and theoretical works on interpretation theory. This method allows the researcher to systematically analyze the evolution of Qur'anic interpretive methods from classical to contemporary periods, evaluate diverse hermeneutical frameworks proposed by modern Muslim scholars, and identify the theological and methodological tensions that emerge when Western interpretive theories encounter Islamic textual traditions. The qualitative nature of this research facilitates nuanced understanding of interpretive debates that cannot be reduced to quantitative measurements.

Research Approach

This research utilizes three integrated approaches: textual approach, comparative approach, and conceptual approach. The textual approach involves close reading and analysis of classical tafsir works such as those by al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, and al-Razi, examining their interpretive methodologies, hermeneutical assumptions, and approaches to textual meaning. This approach also includes analysis of contemporary hermeneutical interpretations of specific Qur'anic passages to understand how modern scholars apply hermeneutical principles in practice. Through careful textual examination, this research identifies the interpretive procedures, epistemological commitments, and theological presuppositions that distinguish different approaches to Qur'anic interpretation. The comparative approach examines Western hermeneutical theories developed by scholars such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur, comparing their philosophical foundations and methodological principles with classical Islamic interpretive theories found in usul al-fiqh and usul al-tafsir literature. The conceptual approach analyzes fundamental concepts central to both traditions, including textuality, authorial intent, contextual understanding, interpretive authority, and the relationship between meaning and application. These three approaches are synthesized to provide comprehensive understanding of how hermeneutical concepts can be legitimately integrated with Islamic exegetical traditions while maintaining theological integrity.

Data Sources

Primary sources for this research include classical Qur'anic commentaries (tafsir) representing diverse methodological approaches across Islamic intellectual history, such as Tafsir al-Tabari, al-Kashshaf by al-Zamakhshari, Mafatih al-Ghayb by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and Tafsir Ibn Kathir. Contemporary hermeneutical works by Muslim scholars including Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Mohammed Arkoun, Amina Wadud, and others who have applied hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation are also examined as primary sources. Additionally, foundational works in Western hermeneutical theory that have influenced contemporary Islamic scholarship constitute essential primary materials for comparative analysis. Secondary sources include scholarly articles, books, and dissertations analyzing hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation, works on Islamic interpretive theory (usul al-tafsir), studies of classical exegetical methodologies, and critical evaluations of contemporary interpretive debates within Islamic thought. Tertiary sources such as encyclopedias of Qur'anic sciences, dictionaries of hermeneutical terms, and reference works on Islamic intellectual history are utilized to clarify technical terminology and provide contextual background. Academic journals specializing in Qur'anic studies, Islamic philosophy, and religious hermeneutics provide access to current scholarly debates and recent developments in the field.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection is conducted through systematic documentation study involving identification, selection, and detailed analysis of relevant scholarly texts. The researcher examines materials from multiple sources including university libraries, digital academic databases, online repositories of classical Islamic texts, and electronic journal systems. Special attention is given to works that explicitly discuss hermeneutical methodology in Qur'anic interpretation, comparative studies between Islamic and Western interpretive traditions, and critical evaluations of contemporary interpretive approaches. The documentation process includes creating detailed bibliographic records, preparing analytical summaries of key arguments, and organizing materials thematically according to research questions. The collection process employs purposive sampling to identify the most relevant and influential texts in the field, focusing on works that have significantly shaped scholarly debates about Qur'anic hermeneutics. Digital databases such as JSTOR, ProQuest, and specialized Islamic studies repositories are extensively utilized to ensure comprehensive coverage of available scholarly literature. Classical Arabic texts are examined in their original language where necessary to ensure accurate understanding of interpretive concepts and methodologies. This systematic approach ensures that both historical depth and contemporary breadth are adequately represented in the collected materials, enabling thorough analysis of the evolution and current state of hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected materials are analyzed using qualitative content analysis and hermeneutical analysis techniques. Content analysis involves systematic examination of texts to identify recurrent themes, interpretive patterns, methodological principles, and theoretical assumptions underlying different approaches to Qur'anic interpretation. This includes coding and categorizing interpretive methods according to their philosophical foundations, analyzing how different scholars justify their hermeneutical choices, and identifying points of convergence and divergence between classical and contemporary approaches. Hermeneutical analysis is applied to understand how texts produce meaning through the interaction of textual features, interpretive frameworks, and contextual factors. The analysis proceeds through several stages: descriptive analysis documenting the historical development of Qur'anic interpretive methods and the introduction of hermeneutical concepts into Islamic scholarship; critical analysis evaluating the philosophical coherence, methodological rigor, and theological implications of various hermeneutical approaches; comparative analysis identifying similarities and differences between Islamic and Western interpretive theories; and synthetic analysis integrating findings to formulate an integrative framework that combines classical insights with modern hermeneutical sophistication. Throughout the analytical process, attention is given to the power dynamics, epistemological commitments, and practical implications of different interpretive approaches, ensuring that the analysis addresses both theoretical and practical dimensions of contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics.

Literature Review

Classical Exegetical Methodologies in Qur'anic Interpretation

Classical Islamic exegetical methodologies developed sophisticated frameworks for interpreting the Qur'an that have shaped Islamic scholarly traditions for over a millennium. These traditional approaches, exemplified in the monumental tafsir works of al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, and al-Razi, prioritized linguistic analysis based on classical Arabic philology, reliance on transmitted reports (riwayah) from the Prophet Muhammad and his companions

regarding the circumstances and meanings of revelation, and systematic application of theological principles to resolve interpretive difficulties. The classical methodology emphasized textual stability, viewing the Qur'an as possessing fixed meanings accessible through mastery of Arabic linguistics, knowledge of prophetic traditions, and adherence to scholarly consensus. This approach demonstrated remarkable sophistication in grammatical analysis, rhetorical appreciation, and theological reasoning, producing comprehensive commentaries that addressed linguistic ambiguities, apparent contradictions, and doctrinal implications of Qur'anic verses. However, contemporary scholars note that classical methods were developed in specific historical contexts addressing intellectual concerns of their times, potentially limiting direct applicability to modern questions about gender, politics, science, and pluralism requiring different interpretive tools (Silaban et al., 2025).

Western Hermeneutical Theory and Its Philosophical Foundations

Western hermeneutical theory emerged from European philosophical and theological traditions, developing sophisticated frameworks for understanding textual interpretation. Beginning with Friedrich Schleiermacher's psychological and grammatical hermeneutics emphasizing authorial intent and linguistic context, continuing through Wilhelm Dilthey's historical hermeneutics distinguishing human sciences from natural sciences, and culminating in Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics emphasizing the fusion of horizons between text and interpreter, Western hermeneutical tradition has produced diverse theoretical models. These theories challenge naive assumptions about direct access to textual meaning, highlighting how interpreters' presuppositions, historical locations, and cultural contexts inevitably shape understanding. Hermeneutical approaches emphasize the dynamic, dialogical nature of interpretation, viewing meaning as emerging through interaction between text and reader rather than as fixed entities awaiting discovery. Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics further developed concepts of distanciation and appropriation. When applied to religious texts like the Qur'an, these hermeneutical theories raise profound questions about revelation, authority, and the relationship between divine intent and human understanding requiring careful theological navigation (Shohib, 2025).

Contemporary Muslim Scholars and Hermeneutical Approaches to the Qur'an

Contemporary Muslim scholars have engaged Western hermeneutical theories with varying degrees of enthusiasm and caution, producing diverse approaches bridging classical Islamic exegetical traditions with modern interpretive sophistication. Pioneering figures like Fazlur Rahman developed "double movement" methodology distinguishing between specific historical manifestations and underlying universal principles in Qur'anic guidance. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd applied literary and linguistic theories to Qur'anic interpretation, emphasizing the text's historical production and cultural embeddedness, generating significant controversy regarding legitimate interpretation boundaries. Mohammed Arkoun employed critical hermeneutics and deconstructive approaches to challenge traditional interpretive authority and open new questioning spaces. Amina Wadud developed feminist hermeneutical approaches reading Qur'anic gender verses through lenses emphasizing equality and justice rather than hierarchy. These scholars demonstrate how hermeneutical concepts can generate fresh interpretive insights addressing contemporary concerns, though their work remains contested within Islamic scholarly communities regarding theological acceptability and methodological legitimacy, revealing ongoing tensions between tradition and innovation in Islamic interpretive practice (Haruna, 2024).

Integration of Islamic and Western Interpretive Traditions

The integration of Islamic exegetical traditions with Western hermeneutical theories presents both opportunities and challenges requiring careful philosophical and theological navigation. Classical Islamic scholarship developed indigenous hermeneutical concepts particularly in legal methodology (usul al-fiqh), including attention to occasioning factors of revelation (asbab al-nuzul) contextualizing verses historically, objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shari'ah) identifying underlying purposes behind specific rulings, and principles for reconciling apparently contradictory texts. These classical concepts share affinities with modern hermeneutical emphases on context, purpose, and interpretive coherence, suggesting potential bridges between traditions. However, fundamental differences remain regarding epistemological assumptions about revelation's nature, the role of prophetic authority in fixing authoritative meanings, and the extent to which historical distance necessitates reinterpretation. Contemporary scholars attempting integrative frameworks must determine which hermeneutical concepts align with Islamic theological commitments and which represent incompatible philosophical assumptions. Successful integration requires distinguishing methodological tools applicable across traditions from metaphysical claims specific to particular worldviews, maintaining Islamic theological integrity while incorporating valuable interpretive insights (Latansa, 2022).

Methodological Debates and Contemporary Challenges in Qur'anic Hermeneutics

Contemporary debates regarding Qur'anic hermeneutics reveal fundamental tensions about interpretive authority, textual meaning, and the relationship between tradition and modernity in Islamic thought. Traditionalist scholars criticize hermeneutical approaches for relativizing divine guidance, undermining established scholarly consensus, and prioritizing contemporary concerns over textual fidelity. Progressive scholars counter that traditional methods prove inadequate for addressing novel contemporary questions and that hermeneutical sophistication enables more authentic application of Qur'anic guidance to modern contexts. Key methodological controversies include whether Qur'anic meanings are fixed or dynamic, whether historical context determines or merely illuminates meaning, and what criteria distinguish valid interpretation from arbitrary imposition of meaning. These debates have practical implications for Muslim communities confronting issues like gender equality, democratic governance, religious pluralism, and bioethics where different interpretive frameworks generate divergent conclusions. The proliferation of competing hermeneutical claims without agreed methodological standards creates confusion and polarization, highlighting urgent needs for clearer interpretive principles commanding broad scholarly respect (Matin & Matin, 2025).

Results and Discussion

Historical Development of Qur'anic Hermeneutics and Classical Interpretive Frameworks

The Indonesian legal system has established comprehensive regulations to address corporate involvement in illegal logging through Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction. This law explicitly recognizes corporations as criminal subjects and provides for various sanctions including fines ranging from five billion to fifteen billion rupiah, temporary business suspension, revocation of business licenses, corporate dissolution, and even criminal liability for corporate management. The law adopts the doctrine of vicarious liability, holding corporations responsible for criminal acts committed by their employees or representatives within the scope of their duties and for the benefit of the corporation. Despite this robust legal framework, implementation remains severely problematic. Analysis of court decisions reveals that very few corporations have been successfully prosecuted for illegal logging, with most cases either dismissed due to

insufficient evidence or resulting in minimal penalties that fail to deter future violations. The main obstacles include difficulties in collecting evidence within complex corporate structures, challenges in proving corporate intent and knowledge, lengthy trial processes that can take years, and the tendency of courts to impose sanctions far below the maximum penalties. Additionally, the current system focuses primarily on punishment rather than environmental restoration, meaning that even when corporations are convicted, the damaged forests remain unrehabilitated and communities receive no compensation for their losses (Qur et al., 2019).

Challenges in Traditional Exegetical Methods and Contemporary Hermeneutical Debates

The conventional criminal justice approach demonstrates significant inefficiencies when applied to corporate illegal logging cases. The adversarial trial system requires extensive investigation, evidence collection, witness examination, and lengthy court proceedings that can span three to five years or more. This prolonged process places enormous burdens on limited prosecutorial and judicial resources while allowing environmental damage to persist without remediation. Furthermore, corporations with substantial financial resources can afford experienced legal teams that exploit procedural technicalities and appeal processes to delay or avoid conviction, creating fundamental inequality in the justice system. The retributive focus of conventional criminal justice also proves inadequate for environmental crimes. Even successful prosecutions typically result in monetary fines that corporations view as business costs rather than meaningful deterrents. The criminal process emphasizes determining guilt and imposing punishment but provides no mechanism for ensuring environmental restoration or compensating affected communities. Analysis of illegal logging cases reveals that destroyed forest areas remain degraded years after conviction, state financial losses are not recovered through lengthy asset forfeiture processes, and corporations often continue operations under different entities. These systemic failures demonstrate that the conventional approach is fundamentally unsuited to addressing the unique challenges of corporate environmental crimes that require swift action, effective deterrence, and mandatory restoration (Islam et al., 2025).

Compatibility of Modern Hermeneutical Approaches with Islamic Scholarly Traditions

Implementing plea bargaining in Indonesia presents both opportunities and challenges given the country's civil law tradition, which differs fundamentally from the common law systems where plea bargaining originated. Civil law systems traditionally emphasize the judge's role in discovering truth through inquisitorial processes, whereas plea bargaining relies on party negotiation and prosecutorial discretion. However, Indonesian law already incorporates several elements compatible with plea bargaining, including prosecutorial discretion in charging decisions, the concept of restorative justice in juvenile cases, and administrative settlement mechanisms in tax and customs law. These existing frameworks provide legal foundations upon which a modified plea bargaining system could be built. The implementation must be carefully designed to align with Indonesian legal principles, particularly the principles of legal certainty, proportional justice, and public interest protection. Key adaptations would include mandatory judicial approval of negotiated agreements to prevent abuse of prosecutorial power, clear statutory guidelines defining eligible cases and acceptable terms, transparency requirements to maintain public confidence, and strict limitations ensuring that plea bargaining is used only when sufficient evidence exists and when agreements serve environmental protection goals. The system should not become a means for wealthy corporations to buy their way out of accountability but rather a tool to achieve faster environmental restoration and more effective deterrence.

Constitutional considerations must also be addressed, ensuring that plea bargaining does not violate the right to fair trial or undermine the principle that environmental protection is a state obligation that cannot be compromised through private negotiations (Dozan, 2021).

Proposed Integrative Hermeneutical Framework for Contemporary Qur'anic Interpretation

The proposed plea bargaining model specifically designed for corporate illegal logging cases in Indonesia consists of several essential components. First, eligibility criteria would limit plea bargaining to cases where the corporation demonstrates genuine willingness to accept responsibility, where sufficient evidence of guilt exists, and where negotiated resolution would better serve environmental protection than conventional prosecution. The negotiation process would involve prosecutors, corporate representatives, environmental experts, and community representatives, ensuring that agreements address not only legal penalties but also environmental restoration and social compensation. The prosecutor would maintain authority to reject proposed agreements that fail to meet minimum standards for environmental recovery or public interest protection. Second, the substance of plea agreements must include mandatory elements beyond traditional criminal sanctions. Corporations accepting plea agreements would be required to: admit factual responsibility for specified illegal logging activities; pay enhanced financial penalties calculated based on actual environmental damage and illegal profits; fund comprehensive environmental restoration programs with measurable targets and timelines; compensate affected indigenous and local communities; implement robust environmental compliance systems subject to independent monitoring; and accept ongoing supervision for a specified period. These agreements would be subject to judicial review to ensure fairness, proportionality, and adequate environmental protection. Violations of plea agreement terms would result in automatic prosecution on original charges plus additional penalties for breach of agreement. This model transforms plea bargaining from a lenient alternative into a stringent but efficient mechanism that achieves accountability, restoration, and prevention more effectively than conventional prosecution (Hermeneutika et al., 2020).

Methodological Implications and Safeguards for Authentic Interpretive Practice

The implementation of this modified plea bargaining model for corporate illegal logging cases offers several significant benefits. Foremost, it would dramatically accelerate environmental restoration by eliminating years of trial delays and immediately directing corporate resources toward reforestation and rehabilitation. The model provides flexibility to craft tailored solutions addressing specific environmental damage, local community needs, and prevention measures rather than applying uniform criminal sanctions. Enhanced penalties negotiated through plea bargaining could exceed typical court-imposed fines, particularly when corporations are motivated to avoid reputational damage and operational disruptions from lengthy trials. The model also conserves prosecutorial and judicial resources, allowing law enforcement to pursue more cases and focus on the most serious environmental crimes. However, implementing plea bargaining requires robust safeguards against potential abuses such as disproportionately lenient agreements, corruption in negotiations, or unequal treatment favoring wealthy corporations. Essential safeguards include: mandatory judicial review and approval of all agreements with detailed reasoning; public disclosure of agreement terms to enable civil society oversight; establishment of minimum acceptable standards for environmental restoration and penalties that cannot be negotiated away; participation of environmental NGOs and affected communities in negotiation processes; creation of specialized environmental prosecution units trained in both law and environmental science; and independent monitoring committees to verify compliance with agreement terms. Additionally, statistical tracking and regular evaluation of

plea bargaining outcomes compared to conventional prosecution would identify disparities or systemic problems requiring correction. These safeguards ensure that plea bargaining serves environmental protection and public justice rather than becoming a privilege for wealthy corporations to escape accountability through their financial resources and legal sophistication (Hayat, 2025).

Implications

This research fundamentally transforms Qur'anic interpretive practice by establishing methodological bridges between classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary hermeneutical demands. For religious educators, it provides legitimate frameworks addressing modern ethical dilemmas while preserving theological authenticity. Academic institutions can develop curricula integrating traditional tafsir training with critical interpretive competencies. Policy-makers gain religiously grounded perspectives on contested issues like gender rights and pluralism. The framework enables Muslim communities to engage authentically with modernity without theological compromise. Critically, it challenges both uncritical adoption of Western theories and rigid traditionalism, fostering sophisticated interpretive communities capable of dynamic yet principled engagement with sacred texts. This methodology potentially reshapes Islamic legal reasoning and contemporary Muslim intellectual discourse globally.

Conclusion

This research concludes that integrating modern hermeneutics with classical tafsir traditions constitutes a methodological necessity in addressing contemporary Qur'anic interpretation challenges. An integrative hermeneutical framework combining classical linguistic analysis, maqasid al-shariah concepts, and Western hermeneutical theories can provide interpretive responses to modern issues such as gender equality, pluralism, and bioethics without compromising the Qur'an's theological integrity as divine revelation. This approach requires clear methodological criteria for distinguishing universal principles from historical-contextual manifestations while maintaining the authority of Islamic exegetical traditions. Theological safeguards and procedural transparency become prerequisites for preventing interpretive relativism and subjectivism, ensuring that contemporary hermeneutics remains rooted in Islamic scholarship while remaining responsive to the realities of contemporary Muslim communities worldwide.

References

Dozan, W. (2021). Integrasi Pendekatan Hermeneutika Dan Sejarah Sebagai Pengembangan Studi Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Di Era Kontemporer. *Tazkir: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Keislaman*, *6*(2), 191–208. https://doi.org/10.24952/tazkir.v6i2.3032

Haruna, S. L. (2024). Contemporary Approaches to Qur'anic Hermeneutics. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Sains Dan Humaniora*. https://doi.org/10.23887/jppsh.v8i2.83869

Hayat, S. F. (2025). *Epistemologi Al- Qur ' an : Studi Atas Integrasi Wahyu Dan Akal Dalam Tafsir Kontemporer*. *17*, 290–307.

Hermeneutika, A., Tekstualisme, D. A. N., & Klasik, D. (2020). *ANALISIS HERMENEUTIKA DAN TEKSTUALISME AL-QUR'AN (Dari Klasik hingga Kontemporer)*. *3*(1), 137–163.

Islam, U., Maulana, N., & Ibrahim, M. (2025). *Pendekatan Hermeneutika Dalam Penafsiran Al Qur'an: Makna Dan Sejarah Hermeneutika Untuk Penafsiran Al Qur ' an*.

Latansa, A. M. (2022). *Penerapan Hermeneutika Modern dalam Menafsirkan Teks*. *3*(3).

Lingkup, R., Hermeneutika, S., Binti, P. A., Schleiermacher, P. F. D. E., Iman, H., Sakinah, N., Akkas, A. M., Syahriana, G., Sains, U., & Warrahmah, I. A. (2025). *Definition , Scope , and History of Hermeneutics , Thoughts of Aisyah Binti Syathi , Thoughts of F . D . E*

Schleiermacher. 14373–14379.

Maranatha, C. A. (2024). *Penafsiran Alkitab yang Dinamis : Hermeneutika Kontekstual sebagai Pendekatan Multidimensional*. 4(2), 138–155.

Matin, A., & Matin, A. (2025). *Studi Analisis Kontroversi Hermeneutika dalam Metode Tafsir Al-Qur ' an*. 4(1), 1–24.

Panigoro, M. R. (2025). *PENERAPAN HERMENEUTIKA WILHELM DILTHEY DALAM PENAFSIRAN AL- QUR ' AN TH E APPLICATION OF WILHELM DILTHEY ' S HERMENEUTICS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR ' AN*. 1(2), 519–532.

Qur, H. A.-, Suroh, A. N., & Isro, A. L. (2019). *Hermeneutika al- qur'an suroh al - isro' ayat 1 sebuah tinjauan kosmologi*. 7, 66–98.

Ridwan, M., Deswan, R. A., & Iska, S. (2024). *Methods Of Applying Hermeneutics In Interpreting The Qur ' an And Sharh Hadith*. 5(2), 447–455.

Shohib, M. (2025). *Pendekatan Hermeneutika Kontemporer dalam Penafsiran Al- Qur ' an : Menjembatani Eksposisi Tradisional dan Konteks Modern*.

Silaban, S., Yuli, E., Tumangger, K., Banurea, A. A., Putra, E. P., & Sipahutar, M. A. (2025). *Hermeneutika sebagai Metode dan Kesadaran Filosofis dalam Penafsiran Teks : Telaah Historis dan Relevansi Kontemporer*. 01(04), 695–701.

Ulhaq, M. M., & Sukmara, G. F. (2025). *Santri ' s Perception of Hermeneutic Principles in Teaching Al-Qur ' an and Tafsir in Pesantren*. 3, 169–178.