



The Existence of *Maudu'i*'s Interpretation Method: A Study of Historical Background, Urgency, and Relevance in the Modern Century

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ABSTRACT

The *tafsir maudu'i* (thematic interpretation) represents a significant innovation in modern Qur'anic exegesis, emphasizing a thematic and comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an's content. This study aims to examine the historical factors underlying the emergence of the *tafsir maudu'i* method, explain its urgency amid increasingly complex humanitarian issues, describe the scholars who played a key role in its development, analyze the fundamental differences between *tafsir maudu'i* and *tafsir muqaran*, and identify the reasons why *tafsir maudu'i* has gained prominence in the modern era. This research employs a qualitative-descriptive approach through a literature-based analysis of both classical and contemporary sources. The findings indicate that *tafsir maudu'i* holds significant urgency in addressing complex social, theological, and humanitarian issues in the modern context. Its importance lies in its ability to integrate various verses related to a single theme, thereby providing a holistic and contextual understanding. In the modern context, *tafsir maudu'i* serves as an epistemological approach that emphasizes the relationship between the revealed text and social reality. Thus, the existence of *tafsir maudu'i* functions not only as a method of interpretation but also as a hermeneutical paradigm that bridges divine values and contemporary challenges.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is the final revelation that Allah sent down through the Prophet Muhammad SAW, with the main purpose of serving as a guide for all of humanity. This holy book not only serves as a source of spiritual teachings and worship but also as a moral and ethical guide for daily life. In addition to providing guidance on the relationship between humans and Allah, the Qur'an also emphasizes the importance of harmonious social interaction, justice, and responsibility towards others. The values contained within it form the foundation of good behavior, becoming the legal and normative standards that must be followed, and complementing the teachings of the Sunnah of the Prophet as a practical guide. Through its verses, the Qur'an encourages humans to think critically, understand the wisdom behind commands and prohibitions, and develop noble character. This book is not only relevant to the society at the time of its revelation, but also applies across time, adapting its principles to the dynamics of modern life without changing the essence of its teachings. Thus, the Qur'an becomes a comprehensive source of inspiration, encompassing spiritual, social, and legal aspects, and affirming its role as

the primary guide that directs humans towards a balanced and meaningful life (Shihab, 1992). The Quran describes itself as *hudan li al-nas*, meaning guidance for all mankind. This meaning indicates that this holy book serves not only as a guide for society in general but also has particular relevance for those who believe and practice righteous deeds. The Quran emphasizes the importance of following its principles to obtain true guidance, while also fostering an awareness of individual responsibility in interacting with God and others. Through its verses, humans are guided to understand the essence of life, distinguish between good and evil, and tread a path that brings goodness to themselves and their environment. Thus, the Quran serves as a universal guideline that remains relevant for every generation, while also providing practical guidance for those who desire to live a pious and righteous life (Indonesia, 2005).

Interpretation of the Qur'an is the process of understanding and explaining the contents of this holy book, which aims to reveal the meaning of words in accordance with Allah's will. This activity of interpretation involves human efforts to grasp the divine message contained in the verses, while also explaining the implications of the teachings of the Qur'an for everyday life. Although carried out by humans, interpretation is still based on the principle that the true meaning comes from Allah, so that every explanation must always respect the context of the revelation and the meaning contained therein. This process includes understanding the language, historical background, laws, and moral and ethical values that the Qur'an seeks to convey. Thus, tafsir is not merely a personal interpretation, but a systematic effort to bridge human understanding with divine guidance, so that the teachings of the Qur'an can be properly applied in the spiritual, social, and legal lives of humankind (Al-Qaththan, 2000). The effort to explain the meaning of the Qur'an accurately and carefully is the main responsibility of a mufassir. Accuracy in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an is crucial, because any error or deviation in understanding the text can lead to misunderstanding and have a negative impact on the worship practices and social behavior of the ummah. Interpreters must pay attention to the context of the verses, language, scientific rules, and principles of *shari'ah* so that the resulting interpretation can be accurately accounted for. With a careful and systematic approach, an interpreter is able to convey divine guidance correctly, helping the people to practice the teachings of the Qur'an according to Allah's intentions. This sincerity and caution make interpretation an effective medium for bridging human understanding with revelation, while ensuring that the teachings of the Qur'an remain pure, relevant, and not misinterpreted in everyday life (Al-Farmawi, 1996). Therefore, the interpreter must have good criteria or competence in understanding the methodology and principles of interpretation so that the resulting interpretation is accurate.

As times change and social, political, and cultural issues become increasingly complex within Muslim communities, there is a growing need for a contextual and systematic approach to interpreting the Qur'an. The challenges of modern life demand that interpretations be not only textual, but also able to adapt the principles of the Qur'an to contemporary realities. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the social, historical, and cultural background of the verses, so that the resulting interpretation is relevant and applicable in everyday life. *Mufassir* are required to use systematic methods, consider the context of the text, and combine supporting sciences such as *fiqh*, language, history, and morals, so that the meaning of the revelation is conveyed accurately. Thus, the interpretation of the Qur'an is not only a tool for understanding the text, but also a means of guiding the *ummah* in facing social and moral dynamics, as well as formulating policies and actions that are in line with Islamic values. This contextual approach ensures that the teachings of the Qur'an remain alive, relevant, and able to provide appropriate guidance for each generation (Al-Farmawi, 1996). Interpretation of the Qur'an is no longer understood as merely an effort to interpret the text literally, but must also be able to respond to various contemporary challenges with a flexible and dynamic methodological approach. Modern interpretation emphasizes the importance of understanding the social, cultural, and historical context in which the verses were revealed, so that the resulting meaning is relevant to today's life. *Mufassir* are required to combine supporting sciences, such as language, *fiqh*, theology, and ethics, so that the interpretation given is not only textually accurate, but also applicable in daily practice. This approach allows interpretation to become a bridge between the principles of the Qur'an and modern reality, helping people deal with social, political, and moral issues appropriately. Thus, interpretation not only serves as intellectual understanding but also as a practical guide that leads people to live their lives according to true Islamic values (Syaltut, 1960).

Maudu'i interpretation is a modern approach to studying the interpretation of the Qur'an that focuses on comprehensive and systematic thematic analysis. In this method, interpretation is carried out by collecting and examining verses related to a specific topic, even if they are scattered across various *surahs*. This approach allows the mufassir to develop a cohesive understanding of a theme, rather than being limited to a partial interpretation of individual verses. Thus, *Maudu'i* interpretation helps readers obtain a complete picture of the teachings of the Qur'an on a particular issue, whether in terms of faith, worship, morals, or law. This approach

is also highly relevant in the contemporary context, as it provides comprehensive solutions and guidance on the social, political, and ethical issues faced by Muslims today. Through this thematic method, tafsir becomes more applicable and easier to understand, while ensuring that the interpretation remains in accordance with the principles of the Qur'an. Thus, *Maudu'i* tafsir becomes a strategic means of understanding the teachings of the Qur'an in a systematic, integrative, and contextual manner, as well as bridging the relevance of its values with the needs of modern life (Badruzzaman M. Yunus, 2025). This method emerged as a response to the limitations of classical methods, which tend to interpret verses fragmentarily. Through a thematic approach, *maudu'i* interpretation seeks to explore the Quranic message in a holistic and contextual manner, thus addressing the social, moral, and spiritual challenges facing the modern community.

Several studies serve as important references in the study of *maudu'i* interpretation. The research of Eni Zulaiha and M. Taufik Rahman (2021) discusses the meaning, background of its emergence, historical development, and various types of *maudu'i* interpretation, examining its relationship with the semantic approach, and reviewing the views of several figures on the *maudu'i* method (Zulaiha, 2021). Lady Eka Rahmawati (2023) examines the methodology, historical development, various styles, methods, books, and the strengths and weaknesses of *maudu'i* interpretation (Rahmawati, 2023). The research of Dinni Nazhifah and Fatimah Isyti Karimah (2021) describes the etymology and terminology of *maudu'i* interpretation in the Qur'an, then discusses the application of this method in thematic interpretation research (Nazhifah & Karimah, 2021). Research by Muh Irfan Helmy (2020) reviews a unified theme in the Qur'an, the contribution of *maudu'i* interpretation as an alternative interpretation study, and the urgency of the *maudu'i* interpretation method in interpreting the Qur'an (Helmy, 2020). Syaeful Rokim and Rumba Triana (2022) explain the emergence of *maudu'i* interpretation as a variety of contemporary research and identify three main types of themes: the theme of Qur'anic vocabulary, the theme of discussion in the Qur'an, and the theme of selected *surahs* (Syaeful Rokim, 2021).

Based on the description above, this study attempts to examine several key issues related to the *maudu'i* tafsir method. These issues include the historical factors underlying the emergence of the *maudu'i* tafsir method, its urgency in addressing the complexity of humanitarian problems in the modern era, the scholars who played a significant role in the development of the *maudu'i* tafsir method, and the fundamental differences between the *maudu'i* tafsir method and the *muqaran* tafsir method. Furthermore, this study also explores the reasons why the *maudu'i* tafsir method has become increasingly popular in tafsir studies in the modern era.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the historical factors behind the emergence of the *maudu'i* interpretation method, explain the urgency of *maudu'i* interpretation amidst increasingly complex humanitarian problems, describe the scholars who play an important role in the development of *maudu'i* interpretation, analyze the fundamental differences between *maudu'i* interpretation and *muqaran* interpretation, and identify the reasons why *maudu'i* interpretation is popular in the modern era. Through a deeper understanding of the *maudu'i* interpretation method, it is hoped that this study can enrich the scientific treasury and analysis of *maudu'i* interpretation in the contemporary context, provide scientific contributions to the development of interpretation studies, and facilitate Muslims in implementing the teachings of the Qur'an contextually in facing the challenges of the ever-evolving era. The methodology in this study uses a descriptive-analytical approach with library research. Data were analyzed descriptively to describe the characteristics of the *maudu'i* interpretation method and analytically to assess its urgency and relevance in the modern era. Data were obtained by collecting various sources such as books on interpretation studies, journal articles, dissertations, and other scientific works related to *maudu'i* interpretation (Mustaqim, 2014).

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

• Factors Behind the Emergence of the *Maudu'i* Interpretation Method

The development of Qur'anic interpretation typology occurred in line with the changing times and the social, cultural, and intellectual needs of Muslims. In the early stages, interpretation focused on tafsir *bi al-ma'tsur* or tafsir riwayat, which emphasized the use of authentic texts from the Qur'an, the *Hadith* of the Prophet, and the sayings of the companions and *tabi'in* as the basis for interpretation. This approach emphasized adherence to traditional sources and preserving the authenticity of the meaning of the revelation. Over time, tafsir *bi al-ra'yi* emerged, which is an interpretation that emphasizes the use of reason and the interpreter's *ijtihad* in a systematic and authentic manner to understand the contents of the Qur'an. This method allows mufassir to answer contemporary issues and translate the principles of the Qur'an into modern life practices, while still adhering to the rules of *shari'ah*. With this development, the typology of interpretation has become increasingly rich, encompassing textual and rational, traditional and contextual approaches. This demonstrates the flexibility

of the science of interpretation in adapting to the dynamics of the times, while maintaining the relevance of the Qur'an as a comprehensive guide for humanity in various eras (Jibril, 1999). The methodology of tafsir is divided into four categories: tafsir *tahlili*, tafsir *ijmali*, tafsir *maudu'i* and tafsir *muqaran*. *Maudu'i* exegesis first emerged as a basis in classical exegetical works, presenting thematic thought in a simple format and not yet considered a standalone method. At this stage, some exegetes attempted to group verses by theme, but not systematically. In the 20th century, tafsir *maudu'i* developed into a systematic scientific discipline that was introduced at the Faculty of Usuluddin, al-Azhar University, Cairo. Although in fact the forerunner of tafsir *maudu'i* had existed and developed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Badruzzaman M. Yunus, 2025). Evidence of the application of this method can be found in a narration from Bukhari and Muslim from Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, he said: "When the 82nd verse of Surah al-An'am was revealed, the companions found it difficult to understand and practice the content of the verse. Then they asked the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), "O Messenger of Allah, is there anyone among us who has never wronged himself?" In response to that question, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained that what is meant in the verse is not injustice in the general sense. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Have you not heard the words of a righteous servant of God: 'Verily, polytheism is indeed a great injustice.' So what is meant is polytheism." (Muslim, 1989).

According to *al-Daghamain*, Mustafa Muslim's opinion cannot be used as a basis for the claim that the *maudu'i* method of interpretation emerged during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is because this form of interpretation does not yet reflect a unified theme, either throughout the Quran or within a specific chapter. According to *al-Daghamain*, the intended interpretation pattern is more accurately understood as an attempt to collect several verses that discuss similar topics to answer a specific problem within a limited context. Thus, the Prophet's collection of verses and his explanation of their meanings have a different purpose and orientation than the method and objectives characteristic of *maudu'i* interpretation (Ali-Daghamain, 1995). Regardless of the differences of opinion above, Ali Khalil responded to the narration by stating that through the method of interpretation carried out by the Prophet Muhammad SAW intelligently, the Prophet Muhammad had given important lessons to his companions regarding how to collect *mutasyabihat* verses to clarify the core of the problem, as well as eliminate doubts and ambiguities in understanding the text of the Koran (Al-Farmawi, 1996). The emergence of problems regarding the existence of contradictions in the Qur'an during the time of the companions, scholars created rules of interpretation that were based on the interpretation of the Qur'an bi al-Qur'an. This concept was popular in the early days of the development of Islam and continued to inspire new compatible readings (Mulazamah, 2014). What is mentioned globally in one verse will be detailed in another verse, and what is mentioned briefly in one verse will be explained comprehensively in another verse.

The presence of *Muqātil* ibn Sulaimān al-Balkhī with his work *al-Ashbāh wa al-Nazā'ir* marked an important moment in the development of *maudu'i* or thematic interpretation. In this book, *Muqātil* attempted to collect verses from the Qur'an that had similar wording but different meanings, then explained the differences by referring to the specific context of each verse. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of certain themes in the Qur'an. Similar efforts were also made by several other exegetes, such as Yahya ibn Sallam through his work *al-Tasrif fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* and Al-Mufarrij *fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān Al-Mufarrij ibn al-Ghabbār al-Andalusī*. However, these works still present thematic interpretations without a neat systematics, because the arrangement of verses follows the order in the Qur'an manuscript. Nevertheless, these works remain the initial foundation for the development of *maudu'i* tafsir, which emphasizes thematic analysis. Their approach paved the way for the next generation of *mufassir* to develop a more structured method of interpreting the Qur'an based on specific themes, so that the meaning and message of the verses can be understood in a more coherent and applicable manner (Mulazamah, 2014). According to Mustafa al-Shawi al-Juwaini in his work *Manāhij fī al-Tafsīr*, the first interpreter who applied the *maudu'i* tafsir method explicitly in interpreting the Qur'an was 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāhiz, a thinker with a background in *Mu'tazilite* theology. He sought to understand the Qur'an comprehensively by examining the themes contained in its verses systematically and in a unified way. Al-Jāhiz is considered a pioneer in the use of a thematic approach in Qur'anic interpretation, by examining verses based on a unified theme and relevant historical dimensions (Al-Dadhamain, 1995).

In the next stage of development, the early traces of the *maudu'i* method of interpretation began to appear more clearly in various works of interpretation, although the form was still simple and did not yet show a systematic structure or mature methodology. Thematic elements in this interpretation began to appear implicitly through the discussions of several major commentators, such as *al-Rāzī*, *al-Qurtubi*, and Ibn 'Arabi, who, although only briefly discussing certain topics, marked a tendency to interpret verses of the Qur'an based on themes. This approach shows an early attempt to organize the understanding of the Qur'an in a more thematic manner, rather than simply interpreting verses in the order they appear in the *mushaf*. Although still limited and

not entirely consistent, these steps provided an important foundation for the development of a more mature *maudu'i* tafsir in later periods. With the emergence of thematic elements, tafsir began to move towards a more focused and systematic approach, where the focus of interpretation was not only on literal or textual explanations, but also on grouping verses to understand the meaning of a topic as a whole. This approach became the forerunner of a thematic methodology that later developed into a more complex and structured approach among the next generation of *mufassir* (Al-Farmawi, 1996). This phenomenon inspired scholars of tafsir to produce works of interpretation with specific themes by compiling all or part of verses from various *surahs* that have similar wording and discuss the same topic. This idea was first developed by Ahmad Sayyid al-Kumiy, Head of the Tafsir Study Program at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, al-Azhar University, Egypt, in the 1960s (Shihab M. Q., *Membumikan Al-Qur'an*, 1992). Al-Kumiy's thinking is essentially a development of the *maudu'i* tafsir method previously introduced by Mahmud Shaltut (Shihab, 1992). The method formulated by al-Kumiy was then followed by a number of commentators, such as al-Husaini Abu Farhah through his work *al-Futūḥāt al-Rabbāniyyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Maudhu'ī li al-Āyāt al-Qur'āniyyah*, which outlines various themes found in the Qur'an. Subsequently, Abdul Hayy al-Farmawī, Professor of the Faculty of Usul al-Din at al-Azhar University, compiled the monumental work *al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Maudhu'ī* in 1977, which systematically explains the stages of applying the thematic tafsir method. Since then, the *maudhu'ī* tafsir method has undergone significant development and is considered a representative approach in addressing various contemporary problems faced by Muslims.

- **The Urgency of *Maudu'i* Interpretation Amidst Increasingly Complex Humanitarian Problems**

With the rapid pace of globalization and technological advances, Muslims now face a variety of new challenges covering social, political, and environmental aspects. These conditions require an approach to interpreting the Qur'an that is capable of responding to contemporary issues in a relevant manner. *Maudu'i* interpretation offers a solution to this problem, as its approach allows for a thematic study of the verses of the Qur'an, so that the meanings and principles of its teachings can be applied in the context of complex modern life. By emphasizing comprehensive analysis based on specific themes, this interpretation makes it easier for Muslims to understand the relationship between the teachings of the Qur'an and current issues, without neglecting the basic principles of revelation. Therefore, the *maudu'i* method has developed into an important element in the study of interpretation, which not only serves as an academic study but also as a practical guide for solving social problems. This approach helps Muslims apply the teachings of the Qur'an in a relevant and contextual manner, while maintaining moral, social, and ethical values in line with the guidance of revelation amid the ever-changing dynamics of modern life (Zulaiha, 2017).

According to Al-Farmawi, the emergence and development of thematic or *maudhu'ī* interpretation was influenced by the increasingly complex and urgent needs of society to find solutions to various contemporary issues. The challenges of modern life, ranging from social and political to moral issues, demand an approach to interpreting the Qur'an that is not only textual, but also contextual and thematic. *Maudhu'ī* interpretation allows *mufassir* to thoroughly examine verses related to a particular theme, so that the messages of the Qur'an can be applied in a relevant way in everyday life. This approach emphasizes a systematic understanding of Islamic teachings, so that people can adapt religious practices and social solutions to the guidance of revelation without losing the essence of the meaning of the verses. Thus, *maudhu'ī* interpretation is not merely an academic study, but also a strategic tool for dealing with the dynamics of modern society. Al-Farmawi emphasizes that this method emerged as a response to the practical needs of the people, as well as a means of maintaining the relevance of the Qur'an in guiding humans to face contemporary challenges, so that interpretation remains alive, applicable, and capable of effectively answering the issues of the times (Nurzaki et al., 2025). Quraish Shihab also emphasized that a systematic approach to understanding the Quran is very relevant to answering contemporary issues (Shihab, 2007).

The ability to interpret and answer various contemporary questions in society is obtained through the application of structured and systematic problem-solving methods. This approach allows *mufassir* to examine modern issues in depth, combining the principles of the Qur'an with the context of today's life. By following a neat and analytical procedure, the resulting interpretation is not only literal, but also provides more original and applicable insights. This systematic method includes collecting relevant data, studying related verses, and conducting a comprehensive thematic analysis, so that the solutions offered are comprehensive. This approach allows the interpretation to remain relevant amid social, political, and cultural changes, while helping people understand the message of the Qur'an more deeply. In addition, the systematic problem-solving method encourages *mufassir* to develop creative and innovative interpretations, without abandoning the basic principles

of revelation. Thus, the resulting interpretation not only guides spiritual understanding, but also provides practical guidance for the ummah in facing the challenges of modern life effectively and responsibly (Tohis & Malula, 2023). This method creates a close reality between revelation and the needs of the times (Al-Jāwī, 2008). The application of scientific methods in interpreting the Qur'an, adapted to the needs of contemporary society, emphasizes the analysis of verses relevant to the topic under discussion. This method avoids explanations that are too general or broad, so that the resulting interpretation is more focused and systematic. With this approach, understanding of the teachings of the Qur'an becomes more objective, because the interpretation is based on careful study and is relevant to the context of modern life. In addition, this method allows the Muslim community to gain efficient and applicable insights, so that the teachings of the Qur'an can be applied appropriately in various aspects of life, both spiritual and social. This scientific approach also makes it easier for mufassir to compile clear and focused interpretations, while maintaining the consistency of the meaning of the verses. Thus, this method becomes an important tool for interpreting the Qur'an accurately, contextually, and beneficially for the ummah in the modern era (Mustaqim, 2016). Through integration between the sacred text and the reality of life, the *maudu'i* interpretation has proven to be able to offer relevant and applicable solutions to the problems of modern society, while also becoming strategic tool in building public awareness about the relevance Al-Qur'an in everyday life (Gusmian, 2013). Furthermore, this thematic approach also helps Muslims adapt to developments in science and technology. In many cases, *maudu'i* interpretations allow for more flexible and dynamic interpretations, allowing Muslims to integrate Islamic values with modern advancements. This is crucial for maintaining the relevance of Islamic teachings amidst rapid change (Awadin & Hidayah, 2022).

- **Scholars who support the Maudu'i interpretation method**

The *maudu'i* method of interpretation, often referred to as the thematic method, has become a method widely favored by prominent scholars throughout history. The *maudu'i* method of interpretation has become a new treasure trove in the field of interpretation, emerging as a method and attracting significant attention, particularly in the contemporary period (Ash-Shiddiq & Rahmi, 2024). The following are some contemporary scholars and intellectuals who pioneered and supported the *maudu'i* method of interpretation:

- a. **Abdul Hayyi Al-Farmawi**

Husein Abdul Hayyi Al-Farmawi is a scholar widely known for his career in the Islamic world and his ideas in the field of Tafsir development. This Egyptian scholar pays great attention to the *maudu'i* method (Habibah Lutfiah, 2025). As a professor of the Faculty of Usuluddin at one of the largest Islamic universities, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Al-Farmawi developed and formulated elements of this method through his book entitled *Al-Bidayah fi al-Tafsir al-Maudu'i* which was released in 1977 (Ash-Shiddiq & Rahmi, 2024). His support for the *maudu'i* method is also evident in his opinion contained in his own work. In this book, Al-Farmawi considers the *maudu'i* interpretation method to be the most relevant method for use in contemporary and modern times such as today (Badruzzaman M. Yunus, 2007). As a contemporary scholar who has successfully formulated the *maudu'i* method systematically and methodologically, Al-Farmawi believes that examining a Qur'anic chapter as a whole will produce a more satisfying interpretation. This approach allows for the revelation of the main mission and specificity of the chapter, and demonstrates the close relationship between its various themes, so that their unity and coherence become apparent (Al-Farmawi, 2002). And there are many more views of Al-Farmawi that demonstrate his contribution and full support for the concept of the *maudu'i* method.

- b. **Muhammad Abduh**

In his work, Muhammad Abduh emphasized the importance of understanding the Quran in the social and cultural context of society. He argued that understanding the text must be adapted to the conditions of the times, so that the interpretation produced is relevant and beneficial to the people (Sari et al., 2025). In addition, one of the proofs that Muhammad Abduh was a pioneer in this method is the note of Abdul Hayyi Al-Farmawi in his writings which said that Muhammad Abduh was the initiator of the *maudu'i* method (Nazhifah & Karimah, 2021). As a reformist scholar who is recognized as one of the figures in the development of the social-rational school of thought (*al-'aqliyyah al-ijtima'iyyah*) in the interpretation of the Qur'an, his works emphasize the importance of contextual coherence or *siyaq* in the *surahs* of the Qur'an. This shows that Muhammad Abduh is also a scholar who places concentration on thematic principles or *maudu'i* methods even though they are not yet in the form of systematic and methodological concepts. In addition, along with the publication of Muhammad

Abduh's works, it also marks the emergence and development of the *maudu'i* method in the modern era, precisely at the end of the 19th century (Ash-Shiddiq & Rahmi, 2024).

c. Mahmoud Shaltut (1893-1963)

Mahmoud Shaltut was a prominent academic at Al-Azhar University who contributed his thoughts to the development of the *maudu'i* method. He is noted as the first thinker to pioneer a thematic interpretation approach based on the Surah. This contribution can be found in his monumental work, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, published around 1960 (Hasrul, 2016). Mahmoud Shaltut's *Tafsir* is a book of interpretation with thematic scientific studies that show the Quran as the main teaching in studies and the main teaching of legislation (Mahmud, 2006).

d. Sayyid Ahmad Kamal Al-Kummy (1912-1991 M)

Al-Kummy was a cleric and academic from the renowned Al-Azhar University in Cairo who played a crucial role and is considered the founder of the *maudu'i* interpretation method. His main contribution was his formal introduction of *maudu'i* interpretation as an official course in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin at Al-Azhar University, Cairo (Fauzan et al., 2020). Furthermore, Al-Kummy's involvement in this method is evident in his intellectual contributions, which view that the method of interpretation that unites related themes is a significant necessity to answer the need and reveal a complete explanation of the meaning contained in the verses. The Qur'an. This view is also in line with what was put forward by Muhammad Al-Qasim (Ash-Shiddiq & Rahmi, 2024). As a pioneer, Al-Qumi played an important role in formulating a methodological and comprehensive definition and scope of *maudu'i* interpretation.

e. Muhammad Baqir al-Shadr

Muhammad Baqir As-Sadr is a prominent Shia Muslim intellectual recognized as a pioneer who made significant contributions to contemporary Islamic thought, particularly in the field of Quranic interpretation methodology. Through his original thinking, he is widely recognized for his contributions, offering a methodological framework for the *maudu'i* tafsir approach. Apart from that, his attention to the *maudu'i* method can also be seen from His thinking emphasizes that this method is an objective study that starts from a specific topic. The entire discussion is then examined and critically reviewed from a specific perspective. Al-Qur'an, with the aim of concluding and formulating a theory that is entirely based on Al-Qur'an on the topic being researched (At-Tamiymi, 2015). In his writings he also said the interpretation *maudu'i* as the *At-Taukhidiy* method, a method with certain steps and processes (As-Shadr, 2013). Like Al-Farmwi, Baqir al-Shadr also formulated a step-by-step method *maudu'i* which differs from Al-Farmawi's. His attention to this method clearly demonstrates his support and significant contribution to the development of the tafsir method, particularly *maudu'i* tafsir.

f. Abd As-Sattar Fath Allah Said

Abd As-Sattar Fathallah was a Muslim figure who expounded his thoughts on the *maudu'i* method in his book entitled *al-Madkhal ilaa at-Tafsir al-Maudu'i*. Abdul sattar stated that this *maudu'i* method of interpretation has significant urgency, especially in the current situation, where the contemporary era is marked by the dynamics of the exchange of ideas, the rise of fanaticism of groups and schools of thought, and the complexity of life's problems. This situation necessitates the urgent need to formulate solutions sourced from the Qur'an through a thematic interpretation approach (Yunus et al., 2021). One of his other contributions to thought is conceptualizing *maudu'i* interpretation into 2 types, including *maudu'i* 'Am interpretation and *Maudu'i* Khas interpretation (Said, 1985). The *maudu'i* 'Am interpretation emphasizes more on the objective aspect of '*Wihdah fi al-ghayah faqath*' and the *Maudu'i* Khash interpretation which does not only cover the objective aspect, but also demands an emphasis on the meaning aspect of '*Wihdah al-Ghayah wa al-Ma'na*' (Badruzzaman M. Yunus, 2025). The following ideas are evidence of his contribution in developing the *maudu'i* method as a concept in interpreting the Qur'an.

g. Muhammad Quraish Shihab

Muhammad Quraish Shihab is a contemporary Indonesian exegete whose tafsir has become a reference source for interpretation in Indonesia. His contributions to the *maudu'i* method are evident in his views and ideas on this method. This begins with his definition of *maudu'i* tafsir, which states that this method is a method for seeking the Quran's perspective on a topic through specific steps (Izzan, 2022). His support for this method is also clearly explained through his handwork entitled *Quranic Insight, Thematic Interpretation of Various Problems of the Ummah* published in 2007. In certain sections, Quraish Shihab thoroughly examines the history

of *maudu'i* interpretation. Quraish Shihab also quotes extensively from scholars who initiated the *maudu'i* method published by Al-Azhar Cairo such as Sayyid al-Kumi and Abdul Hayyi al-Farmawi in outlining the steps presented in the *maudu'i* method (H. Hidayat, 2020). From the description above, it shows that Quraish Shihab became one of the pioneers and initiated the *maudu'i* method in the Indonesian region which is evident through his thoughts. In addition, there are still many Indonesian scholars who also pay attention to the *maudu'i* method, which can be seen through the results of their thoughts or interpretation products such as Buya Hamka in his interpretation entitled Tafsir Al-Azhar, Prof. Dr. T.M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy in his interpretation entitled Tafsir An-Nur (Ash-Shiddieqy, 1971), KH. Ahmad Dahlan who left his mark in the form of a teaching of the Qur'an through a thematic or *maudu'i* approach (Dahlan, 1920), and there are still many other scholars who use the *maudu'i* method in their thought products.

Long before the Contemporary era, along with the publication of the works of Muhammad Abduh, if we look closely, the *maudu'i* method has been found in several tafsir products, although still in a form that is not yet systematic as in the Contemporary era. This early application can be seen from their efforts in grouping and discussing certain themes in the Qur'an. Some works that represent this approach include: *Al-Tibyan fi Aqsam al-Qur'an* by Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jauziyah, *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Al-Jashshash, *Majaz al-Qur'an* by Abu Ubaidah, *An-Nashikh wa al-Mansukh* by Abu Ja'far An-Nahas, and *Asbab an-Nuzul* by Al-Wahidi. The existence of these works proves that the methodological seeds of a thematic approach already exist in the classical Islamic intellectual tradition (Badruzzaman M. Yunus, 2007). Also al-Husaini Abu Farhah through his work *al-Futuhah ar-Rabbaniyah* (Shihab, 2007), and many others.

- **The Basic Differences between the *Maudu'i* and *Muqaran* Interpretation Methods**

In the Islamic scholarly tradition, the science of exegesis has developed through various methods designed to explore the meaning of the Quran in depth, tailored to the needs of the times and the scientific context. Among the widely recognized methods in contemporary exegesis studies are the *maudu'i* (thematic) and *muqaran* (comparative) methods. Both aim to understand the Quran's message holistically and objectively, but they differ in focus, approach, and analytical orientation. Understanding the fundamental differences between these two methods is crucial, as it will determine the direction of exegesis research and the resulting interpretations. The *maudu'i* and *muqaran* interpretation methods have different approaches to understanding the Quran. However, the differences between the two are not significant and antagonistic, but rather complementary and synergistic, complementing each other. As explained by Quraish Shihab, each method has its own advantages and disadvantages, with one method able to address aspects that the other cannot (Yahya et al., 2022).

The term *maudu'i* interpretation is a relatively new term in the treasury of tafsir science. In this method, interpretation is carried out based on a specific theme relevant to the needs of the community or the problem being faced (Badruzzaman M. Yunus, 2025). The *maudu'i* interpretation approach begins by collecting all the verses of the Quran related to a particular theme, then studying them integrally and arranging them according to the chronology of their revelation, considering the *munasabah* between the verses being studied. Then, the exegetes discuss the theme comprehensively to gain a thorough understanding of the Quran's perspective on it. In contrast, *muqaran* interpretation emphasizes a comparative and analytical approach. The main focus of this method is to take a number of Quranic verses and then present the opinions of the exegetes on these verses, both *salaf* and *khalaf* scholars, based on *manqul* or *ra'y* sources (Yahya et al., 2022). Based on the analysis of the stages of the *maudu'i* and *muqaran* interpretation methods, both show points of methodological intersection, particularly in the use of themes as core components. In the method *maudu'i* emphasizes specific themes. This method consistently uses themes as the primary foundation by collecting all verses related to the established theme (Yahya et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the *muqaran* method, the initial step is an inventory of verses to be compared based on similarities in wording, themes, or discussion subjects, which are then compared with one another within the same theme (Baidan, 2016). Thus, despite having different frameworks, these two methods converge on a common principle: the use of themes as the pivot in the interpretation process.

Maudu'i interpretation is an interpretation methodology defined as the process of collecting a number of verses of the Qur'an from various *surahs* related to a specific theme, to then be analyzed in an integrative manner from the linguistic (wording) and legal aspects, as well as their interpretation based on *al-maqasid al-qur'aniyyah* (universal goals) Al-Qur'an (Taufik, 2020). Apart from that, several experts in interpretation, including Al-Kumi, define *muqaran* interpretation by stating that this method of interpretation is an explanation. Al-Qur'an which contains a comparison of the interpretations of a number of commentators, including comparing their opinions and methodological tendencies. This method also examines the efforts of the commentators to

harmonize seemingly contradictory verses, connect them with the Prophet's Hadith, and analyze their similarities and differences with other divine books (al-Qasim, 1982). Mahmud Hijazi is of the opinion that the essence of thematic interpretation (tafsir *maudu'i*) is to reveal the specific meaning of the verses. Al-Qur'an related to a particular theme being studied. This method shifts the perspective from viewing verses separately to understanding them as a unified whole based on the theme (Rishwani, 2002). The aim of this method is more oriented towards achieving an integrative understanding of certain themes in the Qur'an (Anwar & Abdussalam, 2022). Meanwhile, the *muqaran* interpretation method has the primary objective of providing an analytical framework for systematic comparisons between parts of interpretation (Yahya et al., 2022). Through this comparative approach, interpreters can identify points of difference and similarity between elements and analyze the factors underlying this diversity, ranging from the influence of the socio-political context, culture, the scholarly background of each interpreter, and so on (Faruqa et al., 2024).

Based on the author's analysis, the fundamental difference between *maudu'i* and *muqaran* interpretations lies in the focus of the interpretation's purpose. *Maudu'i* interpretation aims to compile all verses related to a single theme to achieve a comprehensive discussion, while *muqaran* interpretation focuses on comparing various interpretations within a single theme to identify similarities and differences, then direct them to the right conclusion. Furthermore, the *muqaran* method seeks to highlight the uniqueness of each of the comparative aspects, while the *maudu'i* interpretation aims to highlight the relevance of Quranic teachings in today's social and cultural context. Therefore, it can be said that the *maudu'i* interpretation is more applicable and contextual, while the *muqaran* interpretation is more academic and comparative. Based on the previous description, it can be concluded that the fundamental difference between the *Maudu'i* Method and the *Muqaran* Method lies not only in the methodological and technical aspects of interpretation, but more substantively in the purpose and context of interpretation. While *Muqaran* interpretation emphasizes textual comparison, *Maudu'i* interpretation emphasizes the implementation of Quranic values in the realities of life. This characteristic makes the method *maudu'i* as the most relevant approach in responding to various contemporary problems.

- **Why *Maudu'i* Interpretation is Popular in the Modern Age**

Early Muslims always sought to apply Islamic law directly, based on the belief that all teachings contained in the Quran are divine provisions that apply for all time without considering changes in the social (textual) context. This understanding, while demonstrating a high degree of devotion, has the potential to give the impression that Islam is rigid and inadaptive to modern developments. Within this framework, the *maudu'i* interpretation method emerged as a more progressive hermeneutic approach, aiming to provide conceptual solutions to the social dynamics and challenges of modern life (Badruzzaman M. Yunus, 2007). Functionally, the *maudu'i* interpretation method has a primary function in responding to the problems of contemporary human life through a systematic thematic approach (Zulaiha, 2017). This approach emphasizes the strategic role of the exegete as an intellectual agent tasked with guiding the community to understand the messages of the Quran according to the social and moral context of his time. Thus, the *maudu'i* method is not merely descriptive of the text, but also applicable in guiding society towards a way of life that is in line with the values of the Quran. Therefore, the position of this method is very significant in the scientific treasure of interpretation because it is able to bridge the gap between normative texts and the empirical reality of people's lives (Baidan, 2012).

The *maudu'i* method of interpretation has received theoretical legitimacy from leading experts in interpretation. Quraish Shihab in "Wawasan Al-Qur'an " emphasizes the great potential of this method in answering contemporary problems because of its characteristics which are not tied to the order of the mushaf (Shihab, 2007). Similar support comes from Al-Farmawi, who cites Ahmad Sayid al-Kumi's views on the urgency of this method in the modern era for comprehensive understanding and practical implementation (Lutfiah, 2025). Meanwhile, Buya Hamka has applied it in Islamic education through a thematic approach (M. N. Hidayat & Sajili, 2025). *Maudu'i* interpretation has undergone systematic institutionalization in Indonesia through the *Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an* (LPMQ) of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs since the 2000s. This national program has produced substantive works such as Thematic Interpretations on Religious Moderation, Social Responsibility, and Environmental Conservation. The integration of this method into the PTKIN curriculum and its use in theses and dissertation writing demonstrates its significance in Islamic studies. Al-Qur'an in Indonesia (H. Hidayat, 2020). Its existence confirms its relevance to the needs of the people today and also demonstrates its potential for sustainability as a contributory interpretive approach for the future.

In the context of modern society, the application of the interpretation method *maudu'i* it has gained widespread public recognition and become increasingly relevant because it combines religious understanding with social needs. Through thematic analysis, Quranic verses are interpreted in an integrated manner to produce

applicable theological and ethical concepts to address the challenges of the times. Evidence of this significance can be seen from the functional transformation in the digital era through platforms such as applications. Al-Qur'an Thematic and interpretation YouTube channels. Its adaptation to Indonesia's socio-cultural context makes it an effective tool for responding to contemporary issues such as climate change, globalization, and technological developments, enabling the integration of Islamic values with modern progress while maintaining the relevance of teachings amidst rapid change (Fadli, 2025). This approach not only broadens Islamic scientific knowledge but also strengthens the link between Islamic theory and practice. Thus, *maudu'i* interpretation serves as a methodological instrument that allows the Qur'an to remain alive, contextual, and solution-oriented for the development of human civilization, while also affirming the close and mutually enriching relationship between the revealed text and social reality (Hakim, 2006).

3. CONCLUSION

The *maudu'i* method of interpretation emerged as a response to the limitations of classical interpretation methods in addressing the increasingly complex challenges of human life. Historically, its emergence stems from the need of modern interpreters to present a more systematic, thematic, and contextual understanding of the Quran in relation to various socio-religious phenomena. With the advancement of science and changes in civilization, this method has become a crucial tool for exploring the Quran's messages in an integral and applicable manner. Its urgency lies in its ability to connect the sacred text with empirical reality, so that Quranic values can be implemented in the social, political, economic, and cultural spheres without losing their normative essence. In the context of the modern age marked by technological advancement, globalization of values, and moral crisis, *maudu'i* interpretation is a relevant approach to interpreting the Quran in a solution-oriented and humanistic manner. Thus, the *maudu'i* method of interpretation is not merely a form of thematic interpretation, but also an interpretation paradigm that affirms the Quran's function as a guide for life for all time. It demands synergy between classical scholarship and contemporary approaches to ensure that the divine message remains contextual and applicable in facing the challenges of the modern era.

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