



# Reconstruction of the Epistemology of Tahlili Interpretation: A Critical Study of Its Urgency, Special Characteristics, and Existence in the Modern Era

Abdullah Muhammad Shiddiq<sup>1\*</sup>, Ara Farhanul Ibad<sup>2</sup>, Belia Puspitasari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Al-Azhar Cairo, Mesir

<sup>2,3</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Bandung

\* Corresponding Author, Email: muhammadshiddiq89@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

The tahlili method of interpretation books is characterized by its complex and comprehensive discussion. This makes it a method rich in meaning and considered to possess highly accurate information. This study aims to determine and explore the urgency, special characteristics, and existence of the tahlili method in the modern era, which is both practical and contextual. This study uses a qualitative approach oriented towards theoretical studies. In terms of type, this research is classified as a library study, with data sources drawn from various published literature, both in print and digital media, that are relevant to the research subtheme discussed. The results of this study indicate that the tahlili method faces serious challenges in the modern contemporary era. However, the tahlili method has not lost its existence. Instead, this method continues to adapt by integrating new, more contextual approaches without abandoning its basic principles. Modern exegetical works such as Wahbah az-Zuhaili's *al-Munir* are concrete evidence that tahlili remains vital as a methodological foundation for text-oriented interpretation while also being open to modern social contexts. Thus, the tahlili method can be seen as an Islamic intellectual heritage that is not only historically valuable but also relevant in responding to the challenges of the times.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Quran is the primary source of Islamic teachings and serves as a guide for all Muslims. It contains various instructions, values, and principles for life that encompass all aspects of humanity. However, to understand the message and meaning contained in each verse, a process of in-depth and contextual interpretation is required. This interpretation aims to ensure that the Quran's teachings can be applied appropriately in daily life and in accordance with current developments and social conditions. Therefore, the Quran is not only read and memorized but also understood comprehensively so that it can become a source of inspiration, moral guidance, and spiritual guidance for Muslims in carrying out their religious, social, and national lives (Zualian, 2016). Therefore, to understand and explain the meaning contained in the Quran, special skills are required in interpreting its content and basic principles. This skill includes a deep understanding of the

language, context, and purpose of the Quran's verses. This knowledge is a crucial element in the interpretation process so that the meaning conveyed aligns with divine intent. Interpretation serves as the primary tool for unlocking the secrets and beauty hidden within the Quran. Without it, one would struggle to uncover the profound meaning and noble values contained within. Therefore, the act of interpretation is not only a scientific endeavor but also a spiritual one, as through interpretation one can discover guidance, wisdom, and beauty that enrich one's understanding of Islamic teachings as a whole (Elhany, 2018).

The study of Quranic exegesis is crucial in every time and place. This is due to the need of Muslims for guidance and a way of life derived from the Quran to guide their journey through this world. Human needs for this guidance vary widely, depending on the social, cultural, and temporal context, both from one region to another and between the classical and modern eras. Therefore, Quranic interpretation needs to be conducted contextually and relevantly so that its divine messages can be properly understood by people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and traditions. Actualizing interpretation is a crucial effort to bridge the sacred text with the realities of contemporary Muslim life, so that the Quran remains present as a source of inspiration, moral guidance, and practical guidance in facing the dynamics of the times (Rokim, 2017). Furthermore, the importance of the study of interpretation also lies in its role in preserving the purity of Islamic teachings from various forms of distortion and misinterpretation. Through scientific and responsible interpretation, the values of the Quran can be wisely translated into real life without neglecting the basic principles of its teachings. In the modern context, interpretation serves not only as a theological study but also as a means of responding to the social, economic, cultural, and environmental issues facing humanity. Therefore, interpreters are required to possess broad insight, understand the realities of the times, and be able to relate the messages of the Quran to contemporary challenges. This approach makes interpretation not merely a classical intellectual heritage but also a dynamic instrument that remains alive and relevant for Muslims in today's era of globalization and technological advancement.

The tahlili interpretation method is an approach to interpreting the Qur'an that is carried out systematically and sequentially, starting from the first verse to the last according to the arrangement in the *Mushaf*. This approach seeks to explain the meaning of each verse in depth by considering various important aspects, such as linguistic analysis of each vocabulary, sentence structure, and the context in which the verse was revealed (*asbab al-nuzul*). In addition, this method also examines the interrelationships between verses (*munasabah al-ayat*) to understand the continuity of meaning and the message to be conveyed. In the process, the interpreter also refers to the views and explanations of previous scholars to enrich understanding. Thus, tahlili interpretation not only explains the literal meaning of the verses, but also reveals the depth of the Qur'an's message through complementary linguistic, historical, and theological analysis (Meliani et al., 2025). In his research, Faizal Amin argues that the tahlili interpretation method is based on the traditional sequence of the Qur'anic text, which is full of wisdom and profound values. This method combines various forms of literary expression, such as stories, warnings, commands, and promises, into a harmonious whole. Through this approach, readers can recognize the level of intelligence, intellectual capacity, and character of the interpreters who interpreted the Quran, while also understanding their historical context, breadth of knowledge, and background knowledge. Faizal Amin emphasized that the Quran not only functions as a book of knowledge explaining various aspects of life, but also as a source of faith and spirituality that is integrated with human reason and feelings, thus guiding humans towards a balanced understanding of knowledge, faith, and morality (Ainun et al., 2023).

According to Rosalinda's research, the tahlili method of interpretation developed after the emergence of the *ijmali* method. During the time of the Companions, interpretation of the Quran did not require in-depth explanations or complex analysis. This was due to the Companions' highly proficient Arabic language skills, allowing them to easily grasp the meaning of the Quranic verses without the risk of misunderstanding. Furthermore, many of them directly witnessed how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) explained the contents and meaning of the Quran, both through speech and action. This direct experience made their understanding of the sacred text highly authentic and contextual. Therefore, the need for a more systematic interpretation method such as tahlili only emerged in later periods, when the generations after the Companions began to require a more structured guide to understand the Quran comprehensively (Rosalinda, 2020). Research conducted by Fitroh explains that the emergence of the tahlili method of interpretation began with the difficulties of non-Arab Muslims in understanding the Quran during the expansion of Islamic preaching to various regions outside the Arabian Peninsula. Language and cultural differences require a more in-depth and systematic approach to interpreting Quranic verses. The distinctive feature of the tahlili method is apparent when an interpreter explains the meaning of a verse from various perspectives, encompassing linguistic and literary aspects, *qira'at* (religious interpretation), *asbab al-nuzul* (reasoning), *balaghah* (religious argument), and even Islamic law (*fiqh*). Through this comprehensive approach, tahlili interpretation seeks to fully reveal the meaning of the Quran so that it can be understood by people with

diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds. Thus, this method is an important tool in maintaining a correct understanding of the Quran's teachings across various cultural contexts and eras (Kafiyah & Azhari, 2023).

Various studies on the tahlili interpretation method show that each study has a different focus, approach, and results according to the researcher's perspective. In this study, the discussion focuses on the urgency, characteristics, and application of the tahlili method in the context of modern life. This focus was chosen because the tahlili method is known as a comprehensive and in-depth approach to interpretation, combining various branches of science in the study of the Qur'anic sciences such as linguistics, literature, history, law, and theology. This complexity makes the tahlili method highly scientific and plays a crucial role in exploring the meaning of the Quran comprehensively and contextually. However, the fast-paced and practical dynamics of modern society often demand a more concise, communicative, and easily understood form of interpretation without sacrificing substance. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how the tahlili method can be adapted to remain relevant to current developments. This adaptation is not intended to replace classical principles, but rather to enrich the tafsir approach to make it more applicable in addressing contemporary challenges. Thus, the tahlili method can continue to be a bridge between the values of revelation and the realities of modern life, maintaining the depth of scientific analysis while providing meaningful and contextual understanding for today's Muslims.

## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1. Understanding the Tahlili Interpretation Method and Other Similar Terms

Method is a term derived from the Greek root word *methodos*, meaning path or way. In the Greek context, *methodos* refers to research, scientific explanation, scientific hypothesis, and the scientific method. In English, the term is written as *method*. Meanwhile, in Arabic, *method* is translated from the words *manhaj*, *thariqah*, and *al-washilah*. In Indonesian, the term *method* means a systematic and well-thought-out way to achieve a goal or purpose. In the realm of science, *method* means an orderly and interrelated work procedure, thus creating a unity to facilitate the implementation of activities to achieve predetermined goals. In short, *method* is a very important means to achieve predetermined goals (Muniruddin, 2022). Thus, the study of Qur'anic interpretation cannot be separated from the method of interpretation, which is used as a systematic guide to correctly and deeply understanding the meaning of the verses. This method serves as a foundation for exploring the divine intent contained in the sacred text, both through the sources of interpretation used, the pattern of presentation of explanations, and the level of depth and clarity of the resulting analysis. Furthermore, the interpretation method also considers the purpose and systematics of the verses being interpreted to ensure that the interpretation remains within its original context and meaning. With the right methodological approach, an interpreter can reveal the messages of the Quran in a scientific, focused, and compliant manner, thus enabling interpretation to deepen the community's understanding of Islamic teachings.

The term tahlili comes from the isim mashdar form of the verb (*fi'il*) *halala-yuhallilu tahlil*, to which the letter *ya'* *nisbah* is added to become *tahlili*. The addition of *ya'* *nisbah* serves to change the form of the noun (isim) into an adjective (*na'at* or adjective), because in the structure of Arabic grammar (*tarkib washfi* or *na'at-manut*) it is not possible to compose two nouns directly. Etymologically, the word *tahlil* has a number of interrelated meanings, such as opening, releasing, unraveling, and analyzing something in depth. From these root meanings, the term *tahlili* is then understood as an effort to describe or explain in detail various aspects of something, including in the context of the interpretation of the Quran. Thus, the tahlili interpretation method means a way of interpretation that aims to open and explain the meaning of the verses of the Quran in detail, in depth, and structured based on an analysis of the language, context, and messages they contain (Amin, 2017). An understanding of the term *tahlili* serves as an important foundation for understanding the characteristics and methodological direction of Qur'anic interpretation using this approach. In practice, the tahlili method of interpretation requires an interpreter to trace each verse sequentially according to its sequence in the *Mushaf*, taking into account various aspects such as the reasons for its revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), linguistic structure, correlations between verses (*munasabah*), and the views of previous scholars. This approach not only reveals the literal meaning of the text but also seeks to explore the moral, theological, and legal values contained within it. Therefore, the tahlili method is considered the most comprehensive and profound form of interpretation, as it combines linguistic analysis with contextual and historical understanding. Within this framework, tahlili interpretation serves as an important tool for maintaining the purity of the Qur'anic meaning while making it relevant to the development of Islamic thought in every era.

According to Quraish Shihab, the tahlili method of interpretation is an approach to interpreting the Quran that is carried out by studying and explaining each verse sequentially, starting from the first verse to the last verse in a chapter, according to the order contained in the *Mushaf*. This approach aims to understand the meaning of the

verse in depth by paying attention to the linguistic context, the background of the revelation of the verse (asbabun nuzul), and the relationship between verses. Through this method, an interpreter not only explains the meaning of each word, but also reveals the moral, legal, and spiritual messages contained therein. Tahlili interpretation emphasizes the integration between text and context, so that the results of the interpretation are comprehensive and systematic. Thus, this method is considered one of the most profound ways to understand the Qur'an, because it does not only rely on literal translation, but also explores the broader meaning in accordance with the purpose of the revelation (M. Q. Shihab, 2011). In this method, an interpreter attempts to understand the content of the verse from various dimensions, both in terms of language, context, law, and moral values contained therein. Interpretation is carried out by adapting the perspective, background, and intellectual tendencies of each interpreter, so that the results of the interpretation can vary but remain based on scientific principles and correct interpretation rules. Quraish Shihab emphasized that the tahlili method allows an interpreter to reveal the meaning of the Qur'an in depth and comprehensively, because the process not only explains the literal meaning of the verses, but also connects them with the historical and social contexts, as well as the universal messages contained in each part of the Qur'an (Q. Shihab, 2013). Thus, overall, tahlili interpretation is an explanation of the Qur'an'ān which is done sequentially, starting from Surah Al-Fatiyah to Surah An-Nas, based on the arrangement of Surah by Surah and Verse by Verse, from right to left, based on the arrangement of Verses and Surahs in the Ottoman manuscript which is believed to come from the decree of Prophet Muhammad (tawqifi).

The term tahlili in the study of interpretation is often also referred to as tajzi'i. Etymologically, the word tajzi'i comes from the word tajzi', which means to separate or divide something into several parts. This meaning indicates an analytical approach, where an object of study is explained part by part for deeper understanding. According to Muhammad Baqir al-Shadr, the tajzi'i method of interpretation is an interpretive approach carried out by commentators by explaining the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in stages and sequentially according to the arrangement contained in the mushaf. In this method, interpretation is carried out by paying attention to various aspects such as the linguistic context, the reasons for the revelation of the verses (asbab al-nuzul), and the relationship between verses (munasabah). The tajzi'i or tahlili approach allows interpreters to explore the message of the Qur'an from various perspectives in depth, so that each verse can be understood as a whole both in terms of linguistic structure and the content of the meaning contained therein (M. Q. Shihab, 2002). This approach also provides space for interpreters to relate each verse to the social, historical, and theological realities surrounding it, so that interpretation does not stop at the linguistic level alone, but also reflects the universal values of the Qur'an that are relevant throughout time. Through the tahlili or tajzi'i method, interpreters attempt to explain the logical relationship between one verse and another within a single surah, while simultaneously uncovering the moral and legal messages implied within them. In practice, this method requires a deep mastery of supporting sciences such as lughah (Arabic language), balaghah (rhetoric), asbabun nuzul (the sources of revelation), and other Qur'anic scholars. Therefore, the tahlili method is often referred to as a classical method that is rich in academic value and remains relevant to use today. In a modern context, this method can be adapted with an interdisciplinary approach that combines traditional Islamic studies with social sciences and humanities, resulting in a more contextual and applicable interpretation. Thus, tahlili or tajzi'i not only functions as a traditional method of interpretation, but also as a scientific instrument that is able to bridge the understanding of the people towards divine messages according to the needs of the times without eliminating the depth of meaning contained in the Qur'an.

## 2.2. The Urgency of Interpreting the Tahlili Method

The development of modern society, characterized by complexity and systematization in various aspects of life, has created a gap between humans and the original sources of Islamic knowledge, particularly the Qur'an and the Hadith. This situation demands that Muslim scholars and intellectuals play an active role in bridging this gap by compiling various scientific works and interpretations using diverse approaches, styles, and methods. This effort aims to ensure that Islamic teachings remain understandable and applicable in a manner relevant to the needs and realities of modern life. The diversity of the resulting interpretations is clear evidence of the scholars' attention and intellectual responsibility to the challenges of the times. They strive to present interpretations that not only maintain traditional Islamic values but also address contemporary issues facing the community, so that the Qur'an remains a living, contextual source of guidance and guidance for modern human life (Rahman, 2016). Therefore, today, the public can easily find various interpretation books compiled based on a variety of methods and styles of interpretation, all aimed at addressing the spiritual and intellectual needs of Muslims according to the social, cultural, and understanding contexts of modern society. The tahlili interpretation method is crucially important and aims to comprehensively and deeply understand the contents of the Quran. As society continues to evolve, the need for a more systematic, focused, and contextual interpretation of the Quran has emerged. This need has given

rise to the tahlili method, considered the most relevant and representative approach for explaining the meaning of the holy verses in detail. Through this method, the messages of the Quran can be understood more broadly and universally, not only limited to religious aspects but also encompassing the social, cultural, moral, and scientific values contained within (Akbar & Alwizar, 2025).

First, the urgency of the tahlili method in interpreting the Qur'an lies in its ability to maintain the consistency and integrity of the meaning of the holy verses as a whole. Through sequential interpretation according to the order of verses and chapters in the *Mushaf*, this method enables the interpreter to systematically understand the interrelationships between parts of the text. Each verse does not stand alone, but is understood in relation to the verses that precede and follow it, so that the meaning that emerges is complete and inseparable from its thematic context. This approach also prevents the emergence of interpretations that are separate from the original intent of the Qur'an, because each explanation is always linked to its linguistic, historical, and situational context. In this way, the tahlili method provides a comprehensive picture of the structure, moral messages, and spiritual values contained in divine revelation. Therefore, the tahlili method is not only important as a scientific tool in the study of interpretation, but also as a means of maintaining the purity and authenticity of understanding the Qur'an throughout time (Masithoh & Khalifah, 2024).

Second, the tahlili method plays a crucial role as the primary foundation for the birth and development of various other methods of interpretation. Modern approaches such as the *maudhu'i* (thematic) interpretation and the *ijtima'i* (sociological) interpretation have adopted many of the principles of in-depth analysis that characterize the tahlili method. In practice, this method encourages commentators to interpret the Qur'an in detail by examining each verse based on linguistic aspects, the context in which the verses were revealed (*asbab al-nuzul*), the relationships between verses (*munasabah*), and the views of classical scholars. This approach not only enriches understanding of the contents of the Qur'an but also provides a solid methodological framework for the development of later interpretations. With its characteristic depth of analysis and thoroughness, the tahlili method has established a scientific and systematic tradition of interpretation. Moreover, this method also opens up space for the birth of interpretations that are contextual and relevant to the development of the times, so that it remains an important foundation in Islamic studies that seek to combine the integrity of the revealed text and the dynamics of social reality (Rohman et al., 2025).

Third, the tahlili method plays a significant role in promoting the advancement of science and human civilization. By taking a deep approach to the verses of the Quran, commentators not only seek to understand the religious message textually but also explore the scientific, social, and philosophical values contained therein. In this way, the Quran is seen not merely as a holy book but also as a source of inspiration for the development of science and humanity. The tahlili approach opens up space for the integration of revelation and reason, where both complement each other in forming a complete understanding of life. Through systematic and critical analysis, this method confirms that the spiritual and moral values in the Quran can coexist with advances in modern science and technology. Therefore, the tahlili method not only maintains the depth of revelation's meaning but also ensures its relevance to the intellectual challenges and needs of humanity in every era (Meliani et al., 2025). Thus, the tahlili method of interpretation plays a central role in preserving the integrity of the Quran's meaning, serving as a methodological basis for other interpretations, and promoting the advancement of Islamic science and thought. Its relevance to modern challenges makes this method not only academic but also functional as a guideline for understanding the divine message in its entirety and application to human life.

### 2.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Tahlili Method

The tahlili method is one of the most widely used interpretation approaches in Islamic scholarship because it possesses advantages that other methods do not. Its main advantage lies in its ability to combine two main forms of interpretation: *tahlili tafsir bi al-ma'tsur tahlili*, which bases its understanding on authentic narrations from the Prophet, his companions, and his followers, and *tahlili tafsir bi al-ra'y tahlili*, which uses rational reasoning and scientific *ijtihad* to understand the meaning of verses. The synergy between these two approaches makes the tahlili method more comprehensive, as it emphasizes not only the textual and historical aspects of the verses but also the contextual dimensions relevant to current developments. Thus, this method is able to provide an in-depth, systematic, and balanced explanation of tradition and rational thought in interpreting the Qur'an, making it an important foundation in both classical and contemporary *tafsir* studies (Miftahurrahmat & Syabuddin, 2024). The synergy between the two makes the tahlili method comprehensive, as it combines textual foundations derived from the Qur'an, hadith, and the opinions of the Companions with rational analysis oriented toward context and the relevance of meaning. This combination not only enriches interpretive insight but also opens up opportunities for the development of various disciplines within the study of the Qur'an, such as linguistics, history, law, and Islamic

philosophy. Thus, the tahlili method plays a crucial role in maintaining the balance between tradition and rationality, and fosters the growth of dynamic and contextual intellectual ideas in understanding divine messages (Saleh, 2017).

According to Hasan Hanafi, the tahlili method of interpretation has the advantage of providing a comprehensive understanding of the social, linguistic, and historical context of the Qur'anic text. Through this approach, commentators not only explore the literal meaning of the verses but also uncover the social and cultural background surrounding the revelation. From Hanafi's perspective, classical interpretation is considered successful in reflecting the historical conditions of the time when the Qur'an was revealed, thus depicting the realities of life of the people at that time. However, the development of modern thought demands an expansion of the function of interpretation, where reformers strive to link the messages of the Qur'an to contemporary social, political, and humanitarian issues. Therefore, the goal of modern commentators is not only limited to explaining the meaning of the text linguistically, but also to actualizing the values of the Qur'an in real life. Thus, the tahlili method serves as a bridge between the text-oriented classical interpretation tradition and modern interpretation that focuses on the social context, making it an important tool in transforming the teachings of revelation into ethical and practical guidance for today's society (Hanafi, 2000). This approach helps readers explore the way of thinking of classical commentators, their background knowledge, as well as the historical conditions and level of understanding of their time. Furthermore, this interpretation also reveals the zeitgeist, artistic developments, and historical circumstances surrounding the interpretive process. In this way, it becomes clear that understanding of revelation is always influenced by the historical context that underlies it. The tahlili method has made a significant contribution to the development of the science of Qur'anic interpretation. Through this approach, various monumental works of interpretation have emerged that serve as important references in the treasury of Islamic scholarship. Therefore, an interpreter who wishes to provide an in-depth and comprehensive explanation of the verses of the Qur'an ideally uses the tahlili method (Haqim & Sanah, 2025).

The hallmark of this method is its comprehensive presentation: each interpretation is usually accompanied by a narration of the hadith, the opinions of the companions, and the views of the tabi'in relevant to the theme of the verse. Furthermore, the exegete analyzes social conditions and general events related to the meaning of the verse, resulting in rich and profound insights. The tahlili method also pays great attention to linguistic aspects. The interpreter attempts to explore the lexical meaning of each word in the verse by referring to Arabic language rules. In this process, the original meaning of words is often traced through examples of usage in classical Arabic texts, including ancient poetry. Thus, the tahlili method not only broadens understanding of the contents of the Qur'an but also enriches linguistic and historical knowledge surrounding the revelation (Hanafi, 2000). This method broadens understanding of the meaning of the Qur'an through careful linguistic study, examining the meaning of words or terms in detail in the verses. Therefore, the reference sources in tahlili interpretation are very diverse, encompassing aspects of language, narration, and historical context. The lexical interpretation employed in this method is always based on Arabic language rules, and in many cases, the meaning of a word is clarified by tracing its original usage in classical Arabic literary traditions, including ancient poetry. In this way, tafsir tahlili not only enriches the meaning of the verse but also deepens understanding of the richness of the language of the Quran.

Like other methods of interpretation, tahlili interpretation is not without its weaknesses. According to M. Quraish Shihab, one of its main weaknesses lies in the explanatory style of some tafsir books, which tends to be long and convoluted, as the interpreters attempt to explain all the ideas in their minds. As a result, readers often feel bored, while the explanations provided do not reach a complete conclusion because they focus on a single verse without connecting it to other verses that have related meanings. Furthermore, the explanations of the interpreters in tahlili interpretations are often highly theoretical, giving the impression that their views are the only interpretations that must be accepted. This attitude has the potential to limit the interpretative space for future generations. Furthermore, the tahlili method is also considered to have methodological weaknesses, as there are no standard or systematic rules that an interpreter must follow in interpreting and explaining the meaning of the verses of the Quran consistently (Q. Shihab, 2013). On the other hand, the tahlil interpretation method also has certain weaknesses that can affect the impression of the integrity of the Qur'an's message. This approach often gives rise to the view that the meanings of the Qur'anic verses appear fragmented and do not always form a coherent whole. This occurs because the interpretation process is carried out sequentially, verse by verse, so that the thematic relationships between the parts are sometimes overlooked. As a result, the message, which is actually comprehensive, can appear fragmented or even inconsistent. Differences in interpretation often arise when commentators interpret verses with similar meanings or themes without making in-depth comparisons between them. This tendency indicates the need for greater attention to linking and integrating the meanings of similar

verses so that the message of the Qur'an can be understood holistically and in harmony with the universal purpose intended by divine revelation (Baidan, 2002).

The use of the tahlili method of interpretation sometimes leads to a tendency towards subjectivity in the interpretation process, particularly when an interpreter is influenced by fanaticism towards a particular school of thought, ideological view, or school of thought. The analytical and interpretive nature of this method opens up ample room for interpreters to interpret verses according to their intellectual inclinations and theological background. Therefore, compared with the other three methods of interpretation, the potential for subjectivity in tahlili interpretation tends to be higher. This can lead to varying interpretations, depending on the approach and perspective used by each interpreter. However, this subjectivity can also be a source of intellectual richness within the tafsir tradition, as long as it adheres to scientific principles, linguistic rules, and the historical context of the verses. In this way, the tahlili method can still produce in-depth interpretations without losing the objectivity and authenticity of the meaning of the Qur'an (Sanaky, 2008).

The application of the tahlili method of interpretation also has the potential to introduce elements of the Islamic tahlili tradition into the interpretation of the Qur'an. This occurs because this method often involves the use of various narrations and stories from earlier sources to clarify the meaning of verses. In this process, some commentators may unwittingly cite information from Jewish or Christian traditions that do not necessarily have scientific or theological validity. Although not all elements of the Islamic tahlili tradition are negative, this tendency still requires caution to ensure that the interpretation does not deviate from the principles of Islamic truth. Therefore, it is important for an interpreter who uses the tahlili method to be highly careful in selecting sources, ensuring the authenticity of the data, and maintaining the purity of the meaning of the Qur'an from the influence of invalid external narratives (Baidan, 2002), namely narrations from non-Islamic traditions inserted to explain certain stories or contexts. A similar issue can arise with the use of weak hadiths that do not align with the context or authority of their sources. However, this weakness can be minimized if an interpreter possesses sharp analytical skills and is critical of the sources they use. Therefore, only a truly competent interpreter who carefully selects narrations can safeguard the purity of interpretation from the influence of invalid information.

From a linguistic perspective, the tahlili method of interpretation does have advantages because it can reveal the deeper and more contextual meaning of Quranic vocabulary. However, its application is not always free from weaknesses. Some commentators sometimes provide excessive interpretations of a word, thus going beyond the true meaning intended in the text. Conversely, others interpret it in a limited way, obscuring the original message of the verse. Furthermore, exegetical works that focus on legal aspects or fiqh are often criticized for their tendency to emphasize the views of certain schools of thought. The dominance of these schools of thought can create an impression of bias and reduce objectivity in understanding the contents of the Quran. As a result, the universal meaning and values of justice that should be reflected in the sacred text are diminished by theological or school-specific interests. This condition shows that although the tahlili method offers opportunities for broad linguistic exploration, caution, balance, and scientific honesty are still needed to ensure that the interpretation results do not deviate from the essence of the Quran, which is universal and rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the worlds) (Q. Shihab, 2013).

#### 2.4. Ulama Debate

Some scholars view the tahlili method as a form of interpretation based on the narrations of the Prophet, his companions, and his successors. For them, the authenticity of an interpretation depends on the validity of the chain of transmission and the sources used. In other words, an interpretation is considered valid if it is supported by a strong narrative and originates from the early generations of Islam, who are believed to have the best understanding of the context of the Qur'an's revelation. This view stems from a desire to preserve the purity of the Qur'an's meaning from speculative or subjective interpretations that could distort the intent of the verses. Therefore, this group is very careful about using reason or independent reasoning, for fear that it could obscure the absolute divine message (Rahman, 2016). However, some other scholars argue that the tahlili method is not limited to interpretation based on bil-ma'tsur but also allows for a rational approach (bi al-ra'y). For them, an interpreter is permitted to use logic and ijtihad to understand the verses of the Quran as long as their interpretation does not conflict with the basic principles of Islamic law. This approach is based on the view that the Quran was revealed as a guide for all time, thus requiring contextual reasoning to ensure its content remains relevant to the changing times and social situations. Thus, reason is not positioned as a substitute for revelation, but rather as a tool to explore the moral, social, and spiritual messages contained within the sacred text (Aziba et al., 2025).

The debate between these two groups illustrates the existence of two major currents within the Islamic scholarly tradition. The first emphasizes the importance of maintaining the authenticity of interpretation through the

transmission of authentic narrations, while the second emphasizes the need for renewed interpretation so that the Qur'an can continue to speak to contemporary realities. In practice, the tahlili method actually becomes the meeting point between these two approaches, namely by combining the power of authoritative narrations with the depth of critical rational analysis (Rahman, 2016). An exegete who uses this method is ideally able to combine textual and contextual understanding, so that the results of his interpretation are not only linguistically and historically accurate, but also socially and morally relevant. Furthermore, this debate also reveals the epistemological dynamics in the study of interpretation. The traditionalist group emphasizes the validity of sources and the authority of transmission as the basis of knowledge, while the rationalist group emphasizes the human ability to use reason as a means of understanding revelation. This epistemological tension actually enriches the treasury of Islamic interpretation, because it opens up a dialogue between text, context, and human rationality. In the modern context, a synthesis of these two approaches is crucial to addressing the challenges of Quranic hermeneutics, which confronts global issues such as social justice, pluralism, and universal humanity. Thus, the debate among scholars regarding the tahlili method reflects not only technical differences in interpreting verses but also a paradigm shift in understanding the relationship between revelation and reason. Both approaches, when synergized proportionally, will strengthen the position of tahlili interpretation as a comprehensive method capable of appreciating the authenticity of narrations while simultaneously opening up space for the actualization of the meaning of the Quran in modern human life (Hidayah & Zulfadli, 2024).

## 2.5. Special Characteristics of the Tahlili Method of Interpretation

The most prominent characteristic of tafsir books that use the tahlili method is the exegetes' efforts to explore and re-explain the meaning contained in each verse or chapter in depth and comprehensively. This approach is not limited to just one method of interpretation, but rather combines two main styles: tafsir bi al-ma'tsur, which relies on the narrations of the Prophet, his companions, and his followers, and tafsir bi al-ra'y, which utilizes rational reasoning and intellectual ijtihad. Thus, this method allows exegetes to explore the content of verses holistically, involving aspects of language, historical context, law, morals, and the theological messages contained therein. Through this combination of two approaches, tafsir tahlili not only presents a literal understanding of the Qur'anic text but also opens up space for broader and contextual interpretations, so that the results can be applied to various situations in the lives of Muslims. This comprehensive approach is what makes the tahlili method remain relevant and widely used in the Islamic scientific tradition to this day (Rohmanu, 2019).

The steps in the tafsir tahlili method usually begin with an explanation of the category or classification of the surah, whether it belongs to the Makkiyah or Madaniyah group, accompanied by information about the number of verses contained within it (Huda, 2020). First, the exegete explains the reason or background for the naming of the surah, which is often related to important words or events mentioned within it. Second, he explains the munasabah or relationship between one surah and the previous surah, in order to show the continuity of the messages and themes in the Qur'an as a whole. Third, the interpretation continues with an explanation of the content and virtues of the surah, both in the context of faith, law, and ethics. Fourth, the exegete elaborates on the main theme of each verse, presenting the text of the verse along with its translation so that readers can understand the structure and meaning more clearly. Fifth, he explains linguistic aspects, such as the analysis of i'rab (Arabic grammatical structure) and balaghah (beauty of language and rhetorical style) contained within the verse, to demonstrate the beauty and depth of the Qur'an's message. Through these stages, the tahlili method seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of holy verses, both in terms of historical context and linguistic beauty, so that readers can grasp the divine message comprehensively and deeply (Rukmana & Yuzar, 2023). For example, in verses 1 and 2 of Q.S. Ath-Thuur:

وَالْطُّورُ وَكِتَبٌ مَّسْطُورٌ

Meaning: "By the mountain (Sinai), by the Book written."

Prof. Wahbah in his work of interpretation explains that the first wawu letter in the verse functions as wawu qasam (oath letter), while the second wawu acts as wawu 'athaf (connecting letter or connecting letter between sentence elements). Meanwhile, the answer to the oath (jawab qasam) in question is found in the seventh verse. The interpretation stage continues with a discussion of mufradat lughawiyah, namely the study of vocabulary contained in the verses of the Qur'an. In this process, the mufassir explains the meaning of each word in detail, tracing its root, its derivative form, and the contextual meaning contained in it. This approach allows the interpreter and reader to understand the depth of the meaning of each term in the Qur'an, both linguistically and theologically. By explaining the mufradat one by one, the tahlili method not only highlights the literal meaning of the verse, but

also opens up a wider interpretation space for the moral, spiritual, and legal messages implied. This approach is one of the characteristics of the tahlili method that stands out in interpreting the sacred text comprehensively (Said, 2022).

For example, in the mufradat **وَكِتَبٌ مَسْطُورٌ** "By the book written with a neat and systematic arrangement of letters." The term as-saṭr refers to the act of writing and arranging the letters in sequence. What is meant by "written books" here are the books heavenly which Allah SWT has decreed and written in al-Lauh al-Mahfūz, such as the Torah, the pages of revelation given to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), the Psalms, the Gospel, and the Qur'an (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). Seventh, it explains the interpretation and explanation of the related verses. Finally, it concludes with an explanation of the legal and fiqh verses contained in the related verses (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). From the explanation above, it is clear that interpretation using the tahlili method is a method of interpretation that presents complex discussions. Therefore, an interpreter who will use this method will take several important general steps (Yunus, 2025), namely:

No	Steps taken	Explanation
1.	Explanation of vocabulary and pronunciation	The interpreter begins by explaining the meaning of a word which includes linguistic analysis, as well as literal and contextual meaning.
2.	Explanation of the desired meaning	A sentence is interpreted based on the meaning desired by the context.
3.	Target of the sentence content	The content of the verse can be explored from several points of view, namely I'jaz, balaghah, and the beauty of sentence structure.
4.	Istinbath law from verse	The interpreter carries out istinbath of sharia law from verses related to worship, muamalah, morals, by taking into account the principles of fiqh.
5.	Reasonable verses and letters	A verse/letter is correlated with another verse or letter, either after it or after that, in order to produce a complete meaning that does not stand alone.
6.	Asbabun nuzul and its narration	Interpretation is done by referring to the context of the revelation of the verse to understand the background and situation that led to the revelation.

For example, in Q.S Al-Ikhlas which is stated in Tafsir Jami'ul Bayan 'An Ta'wil Ayyi Al-Qur'an by Ath-Tabari, it is explained that the reason for the revelation in this surah was regarding the Jews who asked the Prophet SAW about all creation and who created Allah SWT, then the Surah Al-Ikhlas verses 1-4 were revealed:

**قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ كُفُواً أَحَدٌ**

Meaning: "Say (Prophet Muhammad), "He is Allah, the One. Allah is the place of all requests. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is nothing equal to Him."

Ath-Thabari provides an explanation from a linguistic aspect. For example, in the phrase **أَحَادُن** (ahadun), he asserts that its meaning indicates absolute oneness, eliminating all forms of similarity and partnership for Allah. Furthermore, in terms of qira'at, Ath-Thabari explains that in the phrase **أَحَدُ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ**, some qari read the word ahadun without a tanwin because the letter nun i'rāb falls out when connected to the alif lām, a phenomenon known in Arabic grammar. In interpreting the phrase **الصَّمَدُ** (as-ṣamad), Ath-Thabari quoted various opinions of previous scholars. Among them, some interpreted that as-DoAmad means One who has no stomach, does not eat, does not drink, and nothing comes out of Him. Another opinion states that the term describes a leader or master who has achieved the highest degree of nobility and independence. Through this approach, Ath-Thabari demonstrates the depth of linguistic analysis and perseverance in compiling various scholarly views to enrich the understanding of the verse's meaning as a whole (Al-Bakri & Muhammad, 2007).

## 2.6. The Existence of the Tahlili Method of Tafsir Books in the Modern Era

The comprehensive and holistic nature of the tahlili interpretation method is a key characteristic of the tahlili method, as it encompasses various branches of knowledge related to the study of the Qur'an. This method

demands precision, in-depth analysis, and an understanding of the linguistic, historical, and legal contexts. However, in today's fast-paced and practical era, the tahlili method is often considered outdated or too complex to address contemporary challenges. Some consider this approach inefficient due to its lengthy and detailed discussions (Yulyanti & Mulyani, 2024). Consequently, a tendency has emerged to seek simpler, more concise forms of interpretation that remain substantial and relevant to contemporary life. Many are now more interested in interpretations that are contextual, adaptive to social change, and capable of providing practical solutions to modern problems. Nevertheless, the tahlili method remains important as a profound scientific foundation for understanding the messages of the Qur'an in a complete and authentic manner (Kafiyah & Azhari, 2023). Changing needs of the community and the tendency of today's readers to prefer concise, easy-to-understand interpretations that are relevant to current issues have led to a decline in the popularity of in-depth and comprehensive tahlili methods. This is because the tahlili method requires extensive study, detailed analysis, and compilation, which can take considerable time to present comprehensively. In the fast-paced and practical context of the digital era, this approach is often considered inefficient and difficult for general readers to access. As a result, many people prefer a form of interpretation that directly addresses issues of modern life and can be applied practically without the need for lengthy technical or academic explanations (Firmansyah et al., 2025).

In contemporary times, a phenomenon has emerged in which a number of non-Muslim groups, including orientalists, have also conducted studies on the content and content of the Quran under the guise of scientific research. However, some of them have actually developed views that doubt the authenticity, authority, and truth of the Quranic revelation. This skepticism is generally rooted in a limited understanding of basic Islamic principles and the use of analytical methods that do not align with Islamic scientific principles. This situation presents a new challenge for modern Muslim commentators and scholars to provide a scientific and argumentative response (Junaedi & Wijaya, 2020). In an effort to address this challenge, many scholars have encouraged the development of a thematic approach to interpretation (tafsir maudhu'i), which focuses on comprehensively exploring the meaning of verses based on specific themes. This method not only helps explain the meaning of the Quran more systematically and contextually, but is also relevant to developments in thought, social issues, and the needs of contemporary Muslims. This approach is expected to strengthen the position of the Qur'an as a universal source of truth that remains relevant amidst changing times (Nazhifah & Karimah, 2021).

In the modern context, which tends to be instant and pragmatic, tahlili faces serious challenges. Many are indeed more interested in thematic studies with their characteristically more applicative and reflective approach to contemporary issues, such as human rights, gender, and even recently the emergence of thematic interpretations on ecological issues. Nevertheless, the tahlili method remains a reference framework for interpreters, especially in constructing systematic, text-based interpretations. The use of tafsir in the modern era is indeed dominated by contextual thematic interpretations, however, tahlili has not been immediately abandoned; instead, it has adapted and transformed. As Prof. Wahbah did with his book Al-Munir, he combined the tahlili method with a thematic (maudhu'i) approach. He interpreted verses based on the comprehensive Tartib Mushafi and also connected them to contemporary modern social conditions. So, this shows that the tahlili method still has a vital place in the midst of the needs of the people because of its very comprehensive analytical power even amidst the onslaught of the modern era which is considered less practical than the contextual and concise maudhu'i method with a contemporary style (Faqih, 2024).

### 3. CONCLUSION

The tahlili method of interpreting the Quran occupies a crucial place in Islamic scholarship due to its ability to provide a comprehensive and systematic explanation of the contents of the sacred verses. This approach focuses not only on linguistic aspects but also encompasses historical, theological, legal, and social dimensions, resulting in a rich and profound interpretation. The main advantage of this method lies in its ability to interpret the Quran in detail, maintaining the integrity of its meaning, and demonstrating the integration between text and context. However, its weakness lies in its presentation style, which tends to be lengthy and academic, often considered inefficient by modern society, which prefers concise and applicable explanations. Despite facing challenges in this fast-paced era, the tahlili method maintains its relevance. Contemporary commentators strive to adapt it to the needs of the times by integrating new, more thematic and contextual approaches, without neglecting the classical methodological values that underpin it. An example of this is Wahbah az-Zuhaili's work, al-Munir, which combines textual rigor with modern contextual analysis. This demonstrates that tahlili is not merely a traditional method, but rather a dynamic and adaptive intellectual heritage. With its ability to bridge the gap between the revealed text and

the realities of life, the tahlili method remains a crucial foundation for understanding the Quran in its entirety and relevance to the needs of people in every era.

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