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The Muqāran Interpretation Method and The Dynamics of its Development: Urgency, Steps, Objects of Comparison, and Debate Among Ulama in The Study of Qur'an Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

The *muqāran* method of Qur'anic exegesis is an important approach in Qur'anic studies that emerged as an intellectual response to the diversity of interpretations of the sacred text. This study aims to examine the origin and development of the muqāran method, its significance, procedures, objects of comparison, and the scholarly debates surrounding its scope and objectives. Using a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach based on library research, the findings reveal that the muqāran method evolved from exegetes' academic need to explore the argumentative foundations of differing interpretations. Its steps include determining the theme or verse to be studied, collecting exegetical sources, conducting comparative analysis, and drawing conclusions. This method broadens interpretive perspectives, enhances critical thinking, and enriches the Islamic intellectual tradition. Differences among scholars stem from varying understandings of its definition and application: al-Dhahabi views it narrowly as a comparison of exegetical opinions on specific verses, while Subhi Shalih interprets it broadly to include comparisons among Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and even other revealed scriptures. Classical scholars emphasized identifying the strongest opinion (rajiḥ), whereas modern scholars such as Abdul Mustaqim and Quraish Shihab focus on its descriptive and scientific functions. Consequently, the muqāran method not only serves as a comparative tool but also as a medium for dialogue between classical and modern exegetical traditions, contributing to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The *muqāran* interpretation method is an important approach in the study of Qur'anic interpretation, emphasizing the comparison of the views of commentators on specific verses. This method arose from the scientific need to understand the diversity of interpretations and assess the argumentative strength of various interpretive approaches that have developed from classical to contemporary times (Shihab, 2013). In the context of the development of the science of interpretation, *muqāran* interpretation is relevant because it can provide a scientific dialogue between interpreters and demonstrate the rich and diverse dynamics of Islamic thought.

The diversity of interpretive styles and methods is one of the main factors driving the emergence of the *muqāran* tafsir method. This approach not only serves to compare the results of interpretations but also traces the ideological, social, and methodological backgrounds that influence the birth of an interpretation (Saeed, n.d.). Thus, *muqāran* tafsīr contributes to strengthening objectivity in Qur'anic studies by presenting a broad, argumentative spectrum of interpretations. Historically, the *muqāran* interpretation method is rooted in the efforts of classical scholars to compare various views on interpretation and law (*fiqh*). Figures such as al-Zarkasyi in al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an and al-Suyuti in *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* have demonstrated an early tendency towards comparative analysis in interpretation (Al-Zarkasyi, 1990). However, this method received systematic academic attention only in the 20th century, with the emergence of modern interpretation studies that emphasize the importance of methodological and comparative analysis.

Tafsīr Muqāran is one of the methods of interpretation that uses comparative techniques in revealing or explaining the verses of the Qur'an, so that the main target in this method is the verses that appear to have similar wording, which talk about the same case or two different cases, the second target is the verses that appear to contradict the hadith of the Prophet SAW (Nofitayanti et al., 2022). in a visible way, and the last is to compare the views of the scholars of interpretation about the verses they interpret. In the modern academic context, the muqāran interpretation method is understood not only as a comparison between verses (muqāran bayna al-ayāt), but also includes comparisons between interpreters, between books of interpretation, and even between schools of Islamic thought (Al-Dzahabi, 2000). The steps in implementing this method include: determining the object of comparison (theme or verse), collecting sources of interpretation, argumentative analysis of the interpreter's views, and drawing conclusions by considering the strength of the evidence and its context (Al-Khalidi, 2009).

According to Anwar in (Fillaili et al., 2026), muqāran is the interpretation method exists to address the problem of diverse views among scholars in interpreting the Qur'an. By comparing various interpretations, this method offers a more comprehensive approach, taking into account diverse perspectives and interpretive backgrounds. In the classical tradition, differences in interpretation are often influenced by socio-historical contexts and differing schools of thought. With this method, these diverse views are brought together, allowing scholars and readers to see the complexity of the text more broadly

Several previous studies have made significant contributions to the understanding of this method. For example, the article "The Muqāran Interpretation Method and Its Implementation in Contemporary Interpretation Studies", emphasizing that this method helps avoid fanaticism towards a particular interpretation by opening up a space for dialogue between interpreters (M. Ridwan, 2021). Meanwhile, research by Ahmad Zuhdi in "The Concept of Muqāran in the Study of Al-Quran Interpretation" explains that this method serves to identify the epistemological basis for differences in the interpretation of legal and religious verses (Fitriatunnisa & Rafdi, 2024b). Furthermore, a study by Nur Kholis Setiawan entitled "Comparative Method in Tafsir: Its Role in the Development of Modern Qur'anic Exegesis" shows that the method mysterious has experienced an expansion of meaning in the modern era, from mere comparative analysis to an integrative approach that combines historical, linguistic, and contextual aspects (Setiawan, 2022).

Research that explains the muqāran method certainly has differences in each of the achievements produced, in this study will be more focused on the emergence and urgency of muqāran interpretation, steps, advantages and disadvantages of the muqāran interpretation method, then what is compared in the interpretation books using the muqāran method, why is it compared, what is the purpose, and the debate of scholars about the muqāran interpretation method. This is done because it is remembered that the muqāran interpretation method. This method compares one book of interpretation with another to meet the scientific needs of understanding the diversity of interpretations and assessing the argumentative strength of various interpretation approaches that have developed from classical to contemporary times. This enriches the research literature in the field of Quranic interpretation. The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The approach employed is library research. This involves collecting various data from primary and secondary sources, then analyzing and processing the information to produce research conclusions.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. **The Emergence and Urgency of the Muqāran Interpretation Method**

The history of the emergence of the tafsir method is inseparable from the development of the Qur'an, tafsir, Qur'anic science, and other Islamic sciences, all of which are rooted in the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This is because one of the Prophet's duties is to convey the revelations revealed by Allah Ta'āla to mankind as guidance (*Hudan li an-nāsi*) (Jahira & Faisal, 2026). The *Muqāran* interpretation itself is an interpretation that was born

systematically and structurally in the modern era, which is the answer to the challenges and needs of the times regarding understanding the Al-Quran, as a source of Islamic teachings that is universal and remains relevant throughout life (Haqim et al., 2025).

However, there are several opinions regarding how this *muqāran* interpretation emerged, despite the breadth and importance of this study. Some scholars state that the *muqāran* method as a way of interpreting the Qur'an was already applied during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Others argue that efforts to understand the Qur'an using the *muqāran* method began during the time of the Companions and continued through the Tābi'in, Tābi' al-Tābi'īn, and into the modern era. From the above opinions, it can be concluded that the use of the *muqāran* method in Qur'anic studies has long been practiced and continues to this day, in line with the advancement of the science of interpretation. It can also be said that the practical application of the muqāran method existed before the term muqāran method was introduced (Fitriatunnisa & Rafdi, 2024a).

Regarding the development of sharia sciences such as uṣūl fiqh, fiqh, uṣul tafsīr, and tafsīr, the authors state that these sciences existed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), but had not yet become separate disciplines. This was because there was no need to document them or establish them as disciplines, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was still the primary reference. If any Companions misunderstood or misapplied the contents of the Quran, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) immediately corrected them. For example, when Aisha's mother understood the verse in Surah al-An'am, verse 94:

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَٰدَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَٰكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُم مَّا خَوَّلْنَٰكُمْ وَرَآءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ ۖ وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَآءَكُمُ ٱلَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَٰٓؤُا۟ ۚ لَقَد تَّقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنكُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ٩٤

It means:
"And you have indeed come to Us alone, just as We created you at first. You have left behind you (in the world) what We have bestowed upon you. We do not see with you the intercessors (helpers) whom you used to claim as partners (to Allah). Indeed, (all ties) between you have been severed and what you used to claim (as partners of Allah) has vanished from you." (Q.S al-An'am 94)

Aisyah r.a. understood that humans would look at each other's private parts and straighten each other out:

لِكُلِّ ٱمْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ ٣٧

It means:
"Every one of them on that Day will have a matter that will occupy him." (Q.S 'Abasa 37)

So no more women see men's private parts, and vice versa. Everyone is busy seeking shelter from the sun, which is only a span away from their heads.

This also serves as evidence that verse-by-verse interpretation has existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), although it had not yet become a separate discipline like Qur'anic scholarship or *uṣūl at-tafsīr*. Similarly, muqāran interpretation has actually existed since the time of the Companions. Since the Prophet's death, the Companions have compared their understandings to discover the meaning of verses in the Quran.The difference in interpretation of the companions is what caused the emergence the interpretation of *bil ra'yi* became the beginning of the emergence of the interpretation method of *muqāran* later on, this was caused by the differences in the abilities of the companions in understanding verses, as well as differences in the areas where the companions lived (Jahira & Faisal, 2026).

Fundamentally, this method emerged in response to increasing divergences in interpretation among Qur'anic exegetes, encompassing differences in jurisprudential, theological, and socio-cultural perspectives. As Islam expanded and engaged with diverse societies and intellectual traditions, these interpretive variations became increasingly pronounced. The comparative method (*tafsīr muqāran*) arose as a response to this need—not merely as a means of understanding the Qur'anic text in isolation, but as an approach that facilitates dialogue among various exegetical perspectives. Furthermore, *tafsīr muqāran* developed significantly alongside the rapid intellectual growth of the Muslim world, marked by the emergence of various theological schools, legal madhhabs, and other intellectual currents (Fillaili et al., 2026).

The urgency of *muqāran* interpretation according to Mushtafa al-Masyni, among others, is firstly that through muqāran interpretation, an interpreter can discover interpretive abilities obtained from various disciplines and

knowledge, such as lughāwi, naḥwu, and balāghah. Furthermore, secondly, with this *muqāran* interpretation, an interpretation can avoid weak narrations, isrāiliyyāt narrations, as well as opinions and tendencies that deviate from common sense and other authentic narrations. Furthermore, thirdly, that this muqāran interpretation can improve the interpreter's ability to compare various views with the right scientific method, so that the reasons behind the differences of opinion of the interpreters, the variations in their approaches, and the factors that influence their knowledge can be understood. Fourthly, this *muqāran* interpretation plays a role in strengthening the intellectual and mental powers of its researchers. Because with this *muqāran* interpretation, a researcher needs to be equipped with the right knowledge and principles of logic, skills in dialogue, and methods for conveying arguments. Thus, a researcher can have the ability to make objective, balanced, directed, and consistent decisions in their interpretation. Furthermore, fifth, through this muqāran interpretation, similarities and differences between the commentators can be identified. Finally, this muqāran interpretation can certainly enrich the science of interpretation, especially with respect to the Qur'an's uniqueness. Furthermore, this interpretation also provides information about the superiority among the commentators (Fitriatunnisa & Rafdi, 2024a).

The historical trajectory of Qur'anic interpretation demonstrates that the comparative approach (tafsīr muqāran) is not an entirely new phenomenon, but rather a methodological refinement of interpretive practices that have existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and were further developed by the Companions and subsequent generations. Emerging more systematically in the modern era, this method responds to the increasing complexity of interpretive differences shaped by diverse theological, juridical, and socio-cultural contexts within the Muslim world. By facilitating critical comparison among various exegetical perspectives, *tafsīr muqāran* not only enhances the depth and rigor of Qur'anic understanding, but also promotes intellectual objectivity, methodological precision, and interdisciplinary integration. Consequently, it plays a significant role in advancing the science of tafsīr, enabling scholars to navigate differences constructively while uncovering the richness and universality of the Qur'anic message (Fillaili et al., 2026).

2.2. Steps, Advantages and Disadvantages of the Muqoran Interpretation Method

In the book on the categorization of the science of interpretation, the steps taken in comparing the opinions of interpreters using *muqāran* are as follows:

a. Collecting a Number of Verses to be Used as Objects of Study Without Looking at the Wording. The first step is to collect the relevant verses of the Qur'an for study. At this stage, the commentator does not need to pay attention to the redactions or variations in the arrangement of the verses. The main focus is on the themes or issues contained in the verses to be compared.
b. Tracing the various opinions of scholars of interpretation in interpreting verses. Once the relevant verses have been collected, the next step is to identify and trace the various opinions of the exegetes. This will involve exploring various classical and contemporary sources of interpretation to determine how each exegete interprets the verse in question. The opinions expressed may be literal, philosophical, social, or even based on different historical contexts.
c. Comparing their opinions to then obtain information regarding the identity and thought patterns of each interpreter as well as the tendencies and schools of thought that they adhere to. The final step is to compare the opinions of one exegete with another. In this process, the exegete will look for differences and similarities in the interpretations offered by various scholars of tafsir. This step aims to uncover:
    1) The Identity and Mindset of Mufassirs: What differentiates each mufassir in viewing a verse, whether they are more inclined towards literal understanding, rational interpretation, or contextual interpretation.
    2) Tendencies and Schools of Thought: Analyze whether the interpreter follows a particular school of thought (for example, Salafi, Mu'tazilah, Ash'ari, etc.) that influences his interpretation.
    3) Assessment of the Mufassir's Opinion: Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each opinion expressed and determining which is more relevant or appropriate to the current context (Yunus, 2025).

In addition, several other aspects must be taken into consideration. The comparison of Qur'anic verses includes examining similarities in wording across verses that address different issues or events, as well as analyzing verses with differing redactions that pertain to similar issues or occurrences. Furthermore, the comparative analysis of Qur'anic verses can be conducted through the following steps (Lestari et al., 2024):

1) Identifying and compiling verses that exhibit different wording in similar contexts or similar wording in different contexts;

2) Classifying these verses based on their similarities and differences in redaction;
3) Analyzing each group of verses and relating them to the contexts or events they address, followed by conducting a comparative examination.

Moreover, according to Lestari, the comparison between Qur'anic verses and hadiths within the tafsīr muqāran method involves positioning hadith as an explanatory source for the Qur'an, which is then compared with authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) hadiths based on their chains of transmission. Meanwhile, in comparing the views and interpretations of the mufassirūn, it is essential to juxtapose the interpretations of authoritative scholars in the field of tafsir, both from the early (*salaf*) and later (*khalaf*) generations, encompassing interpretations that are based on transmitted reports (*manqūl*) as well as those derived from rational reasoning (ra'y). This method is not free from various limitations in addition to the advantages it has.

a. Advantages

The advantages of the tafsīr muqāran method can be outlined as follows (A. R. Ridwan et al., 2024; Wahid & Kamils, 2024):

1) Open the door to always be tolerant of other people's opinions.
2) Interpretation using the Muqāran method is very useful for those who want to know various opinions about a verse.
3) By using this muqāran method, the interpreter is encouraged to study various verses and hadiths as well as the opinions of other interpreters
4) The use of a thematic structure in interpreting Qur'anic verses facilitates Muslims in exploring specific teachings of the Qur'an without the need to examine the entire text sequentially from beginning to end.
5) Its discussions tend to be contextual and relevant to the problems encountered in everyday life.
6) The study of the Qur'an through the *tafsīr muqāran* method is generally more practical and applicable, as it directly addresses specific issues, thereby facilitating its implementation in real-life contexts, whether in matters of worship, law, or ethics.
7) The use of more modern and reader-relevant terminology makes this form of interpretation more accessible, particularly for general readers or younger generations who may be less familiar with the linguistic style of classical tafsir

b. Disadvantages

The disadvantages of *tafsīr muqāran* can be outlined as follows (Arib & Mokodenseho, 2023; Gufron et al., 2025; Wijaya, 2016):

1) Not suitable for beginners. Forcing a beginner into a space filled with differing opinions will not enrich and broaden their horizons, but instead may confuse them.
2) Less suitable for solving contemporary problems. In today's complex world that demands quick and precise solutions, the muqāran method is less suitable because it emphasizes comparison, which can slow down the process of uncovering true meaning and relevance to the times.
3) It creates the impression of repeating the opinions of the commentators.
4) Time-Consuming Process. Comparing a wide range of interpretive opinions requires a considerable amount of time, as readers must engage deeply with each tafsir before they can understand and evaluate them in a comprehensive manner.
5) Difficulty in Drawing Conclusions. Due to the multiplicity of comparisons involved, this method can sometimes make it challenging for readers to arrive at a clear and definitive conclusion.
6) The interpreter's ability is limited to comparing several views and not showing a superior view, making this method more of a repetition of the opinions of classical scholars.

Tafsīr muqāran method represents a systematic and analytical approach to Qur'anic interpretation that emphasizes comparison across verses, hadith, and the diverse perspectives of classical and contemporary exegetes. Through its structured steps—ranging from the collection and classification of verses to the critical evaluation of interpretive opinions—this method enables a deeper understanding of the Qur'an by uncovering patterns, contexts, and intellectual tendencies within the tradition of tafsir. Moreover, its integrative nature, which combines textual, contextual, and methodological analyses, contributes to a more comprehensive and dialogical engagement with the Qur'anic message. Despite its notable advantages, such as promoting tolerance, broadening intellectual horizons, and enhancing contextual relevance, the method also presents certain limitations, including

its complexity, time-consuming nature, and potential difficulty in deriving definitive conclusions. Therefore, while *tafsīr muqāran* is highly valuable for advanced scholarly inquiry, its application requires adequate expertise and methodological rigor to ensure balanced and meaningful interpretive outcomes.

2.3. What is compared in the interpretation book using the Muqāran method, why is it compared and what is the purpose?

Globally, inter-verse interpretation can be applied to Quranic verses, which have two tendencies. First, some verses have similar wording, while others are more ambiguous. Second, there are verses that have different expressions, but still share the same meaning. Comparison between verses is not limited to wording analysis (mabāhith lafziyyāt) alone, but rather the differences in the meaning of each verse being compared. Furthermore, the differences in the cases described by the verses are also discussed, including the reasons for their revelation and the socio-cultural context of society at the time (Jahira & Faisal, 2026). The following will outline the scope of what is compared in the inter-verse interpretation method in each aspect:

a. Sentence by sentence comparison

Quraish Shihab practices the use of the muqāran method by comparing two verses that are similar in wording, namely Surah Ali `Imran verse 126 with Surah al-Anfâl verse 10.

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشۡرَىٰ لَكُمۡ وَلِتَطۡمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُم بِهِۦۚ وَمَا ٱلنَّصۡرُ إِلَّا مِنۡ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ ٱلۡحَكِيمِ ١٢٦

Means: *"Allah did not make it (the help) except as good news for you (victory) and that your hearts might be at ease with it. There is no victory except from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise*." (QS. Al-Imran 126).

The difference between the first and second verses is: First, in Surah Ali 'Imrân it is stated that busyrā lakum, whereas in Surah al-Anfâl the word lakum is not mentioned. Second, in Surah Ali 'Imrân it is stated that wa litaṭma'inna qulúbukum bih(ī) that is to place the word bih(ī) after the qul medium in Surah al-Anfâl bih(ī) is placed before the qulūbukum. Thirdly, Surah Ali 'Imrân is closed with wa man-nayesru illā min 'indillahil- 'azīzil-ḥakīm(i). without using the word inna while Surah al-Anfâl closes with the word inna which means "Indeed",innallaha 'azīzunḥakīm(un). Scholars interpret the Verse of Al-Anfal as speaking frankly about the descent of angels at the Battle of Badr. Meanwhile, the verse of Ali 'Imran was revealed in the context of the promise of the descent of angels at the Battle of Uhud (Jahira & Faisal, 2026). The difference in wording indicates the different mental and psychological states of the interlocutors, in this case the Muslims. At the Battle of Badr, the Muslims were very worried due to the lack of troops and war equipment. In contrast to the Battle of Uhud, they were outnumbered by around 700 men, so their spirits were high, coupled with the belief in the descent of angelic assistance, as at the Battle of Badr. The absence of the word lakum in the second verse suggests the joy felt not only by the Badr troops, but by all Muslims, because wasn't victory in that battle a major milestone for Islam's future victory? In the first verse, the use of the word lakum suggests that the good news was only intended for those present, and even then, with conditions.

The prioritization of *bih(ī)* over *qulūbukum* in Surah al-Anfal is in the context of prioritizing the joyful news to show the emphasis and great attention devoted to the news and promise. Unlike Surah Ali 'Imran, the context of the verse no longer requires emphasis because wasn't it already the case at the Battle of Badr? That is also why in Surah Ali 'Imran the word inna is not used as a reinforcement because, once again, it is not needed (Jahira & Faisal, 2026). Thus, the differences in wording between the two verses cannot be understood merely as linguistic variations; rather, they reflect the rhetorical depth of the Qur'an in adapting its message to the historical context and the psychological condition of its audience. The choice of words, sentence structure, as well as the inclusion or omission of emphatic elements such as inna, indicate a highly precise divine communication strategy aimed at generating an appropriate emotional and spiritual impact in accordance with the situation faced by the المسلمين. Therefore, such comparative analysis affirms that every variation in Qur'anic expression carries significant meaning, while also reinforcing the importance of the tafsīr muqāran method in uncovering deeper, contextual, and more comprehensive layers of meaning.

b. Comparison of verses with hadith

What must be considered in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet are (Wahid & Kamils, 2024):

1) Determining the value of the hadith that will be compared with the verses of the Quran. The hadith must be authentic. Da'if hadith are not compared because, besides their low authenticity, they are even more rejected because they contradict the verses of the Quran

2) Compare and analyze the contradictions found in the two versions, namely the verse and the hadith.
3) Comparing the opinions of tafsir scholars in interpreting the verses and hadiths.

Of course, what is worthy of comparison with the verses of the Quran are hadith that are considered authentic, so that weak hadith do not need to be considered against the verses of the Quran. One example is the following:

Al-Qur'an:

فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِۦ وَجِئْتُكَ مِن سَبَإٍۭ بِنَبَإٍ يَقِينٍ ٢٢ إِنِّي وَجَدتُّ ٱمْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ٢٣

It means. "Not long after (Hudhud came), then he said, I have learned something that I have not yet you know. I have come to you from the land of Saba' with important and convincing news. (The truth.) Indeed, I found a woman ruling over them (the inhabitants of the land of Saba'). She was granted everything and had a great throne. " (An-Naml:22-23)

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ ءَايَةٌ ۖ جَنَّتَانِ عَن يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ ۖ كُلُوا۟ مِن رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ لَهُۥ ۚ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ ١٥

It means: "Indeed, for (the people of) Saba' there was indeed a sign (of the greatness and power of Allah) in their dwelling place, namely two fields of gardens on the right and the left. (We advised them,) "Eat of the provisions (given) by your Lord and be grateful to Him. (Your country) is a good (comfortable) land, while (your Lord) is the Most Forgiving." (Saba:15).

Hadith:

مافلح قوم ولواأمرهم امراة

Means: "Never has a nation been successful (lucky) that leaves all their affairs to women." (HR. Bukhari)

At first glance, the text of the hadith above contradicts the two previous verses because the Qur'an informs us of Queen Balqis's success in leading her country, Saba'. Conversely, the hadith narrated by Bukhari states the failure of any country ruled by women. Thus, women are positioned in an unequal position compared to men. Yet, world history and the history of Islamic civilization record successful female leaders, such as Syajarat al-Durr the founder of the Mamluk empire that ruled from North Africa to West Asia (Wijaya, 2016).

To compare and reconcile the two texts, it is necessary to ascertain the qualifications of the hadith, as its authenticity is unquestionable. Next, we examine the asbab al-wurûd (the basis for the wurûd) of the hadith. In the case of this hadith, the asbab al-wurûd refers to the Prophet's hearing that the daughter of the King of Persia was crowned queen, succeeding her deceased father. Based on this, it is not surprising that the notion that women are unfit to lead a country emerged. However, if we apply the principle ofالعبرة بعموم اللفظ لا بخصوص السبب then another understanding will be found.

Through the analysis of the rules regarding the hadith, it will be found that the wordقوم - امراة formed in nakirah format which means that what is meant by the words are all people, all women, and all affairs. So, the translation of the hadith (roughly) reads: "A nation will never achieve success if all the affairs of the nation are handed over (entirely to the policies of) women alone (without involving men)". If understood in this way, then it is clear that it is very natural that a nation will not be successful if all areas in the nation are handled absolutely by women without the slightest involvement of men because both men and women have limitations which, if combined, will create good cooperation (Wijaya, 2016).

The apparent contradiction between the Qur'anic account of Queen Balqis's successful leadership and the hadith in question can be resolved through a contextual and methodological analysis that considers both the authenticity and the circumstances of its narration. By examining the asbāb al-wurūd and applying appropriate linguistic and interpretive principles, it becomes evident that the hadith does not establish a universal prohibition against female leadership, but rather reflects a specific historical context and a particular mode of governance. Consequently, the integration of textual, contextual, and linguistic analysis highlights the importance of a balanced and critical approach in interpreting religious texts, ensuring that conclusions drawn are both contextually grounded and methodologically sound.

The reasons why interpretations need to be compared are:

1) Knowing the sources and factors of differences

Although the commentators share the same goal, namely to explain the meaning of the Quran, they have different backgrounds, methods, and tendencies. By comparing them, we can identify the factors underlying these differences of opinion, such as:

a) Differences in schools of jurisprudence: The interpretation of legal verses is often influenced by the school of jurisprudence adopted by an interpreter.
b) Differences in scientific background: An interpreter who is an expert in the science of balaghah (rhetoric) will probably focus more on the beauty of language, while an interpreter who is an expert in science will tend to interpret verses related to the universe from a scientific perspective.
c) Differences in social and cultural conditions: The social and cultural context in which interpreters live can influence their perspective in understanding the verses of the Qur'an.

2) Enriching understanding

Comparing different interpretations allows us to view a verse from many different perspectives. Each commentator may highlight aspects of the meaning that others have overlooked. By bringing together these diverse perspectives, we can gain a much richer and more complete understanding of a verse's content. Thus, a comparative approach not only broadens the horizon of understanding but also encourages a critical and objective approach in assessing each interpretation. Through this process, readers can identify the strengths and weaknesses of each view while also understanding the methodological, theological, and social backgrounds that shape an interpretation. Ultimately, the integration of these various perspectives allows for a more proportionate, balanced, and contextual understanding of the Quran's message.

3) Testing the authenticity and credibility of interpretation

Muqāran interpretation allows us to trace the originality of an interpretation. Sometimes, a view considered new is actually borrowed from a previous commentator. This method helps test the veracity and validity of the quotations used, allowing readers to distinguish between them. Through this comparative approach, the interpretation process is not only descriptive, but also evaluative and critical. Research into the scientific chain of transmission, the references used, and methodological consistency are crucial aspects in determining the quality of an interpretation. This also encourages researchers to be more careful in citing and developing opinions, thus producing interpretations that are not only academically valid but also make original contributions to the body of Islamic scholarship.

The comparative analysis of Qur'anic interpretations serves as a crucial methodological approach for uncovering the underlying factors that shape exegetical diversity, enriching the depth of understanding, and ensuring the authenticity and credibility of interpretive claims. By systematically examining differences in jurisprudential affiliations, scholarly backgrounds, and socio-cultural contexts, this approach enables a more nuanced and comprehensive appreciation of the multiplicity of meanings within the Qur'anic discourse. At the same time, it fosters a critical and evaluative stance that allows scholars to assess the strengths, limitations, and methodological consistency of various interpretations. Consequently, the tafsīr muqāran method not only deepens intellectual engagement with the Qur'an but also contributes to the development of rigorous, balanced, and contextually grounded scholarship within the broader tradition of Islamic studie.

2.4. **Scholars' Debate on the Muqāran Interpretation Method**

There are several debates regarding the muqāran interpretation method that are being debated, including:

a) Debate about definition and scope

Some scholars define muqāran interpretation in a narrower sense, namely limited to comparing the views of interpreters on a particular verse. Muhammad Husain al-Dzahabi explains that muqāran interpretation is an effort to examine and compare the interpretations of a number of interpreters on a verse of the Qur'an with the aim of revealing differences in views and the reasons behind them (Al-Zahabi, 1976). Meanwhile, other scholars such as Subhi Shalih provide a broader understanding of the interpretation of muqāran namely including comparisons between one verse and another, between verses and hadith, even between the Qur'an and other heavenly books (Shalih, 1988).

Furthermore, as explained by Quraish Shihab, as cited (Tohis & Malula, 2023), tafsīr muqāranah refers to the comparative analysis of Qur'anic verses that exhibit similarities in their wording yet pertain to different contexts or issues. In addition, this method also encompasses the comparison between Qur'anic verses and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that appear to be contradictory, as well as the comparison of various

exegetical opinions regarding the interpretation of the Qur'an. It may also involve comparing verses with different redactions that address the same or similar issues or cases, including those that are claimed to be equivalent.

The diverse definitions of tafsīr muqāran—ranging from a narrow focus on comparing exegetical opinions to a broader scope that includes inter-verse, verse–hadith, and even intertextual comparisons with other scriptures—reflect the methodological flexibility and richness of this approach in Qur'anic studies. While scholars such as al-Dhahabi emphasize its function in identifying differences among mufassirūn and their underlying reasons, others like Subhi Shalih and Quraish Shihab expand its scope to encompass a wider range of comparative dimensions. These varying conceptualizations have significant implications for the study of tafsir, as they influence both the analytical framework and the objectives of interpretation. A narrower definition tends to produce a more focused and critical evaluation of interpretive traditions, whereas a broader definition enables a more integrative and interdisciplinary analysis of the Qur'anic text. Consequently, the plurality of definitions not only enriches the methodological discourse but also encourages a more comprehensive, contextual, and dialogical engagement with the Qur'an, thereby enhancing the depth and relevance of contemporary tafsir studies.

b) The Debate on the Status and Independence of Method

Some scholars view muqāran interpretation as an independent method of interpretation, as it has a distinct object of study and analytical steps from other interpretation methods. This view was put forward by al-Dzahabi and al-Farmawi, who emphasized that the essence of muqāran interpretation lies in analyzing differences in interpretation, not simply in grouping verses with similar themes (Al-Farmawi, 1977). However, a number of other scholars, such as Manna' al-Qaththan, are of the opinion that muqāran interpretation is part of maudhu'i (thematic) interpretation, because both attempt to collect verses of the Qur'an and trace the differences in meaning contained therein (Al-Qaththan, 1992).

Thus, the differing views among scholars regarding the status of tafsīr muqāran reflect a conceptual dynamism in the development of Qur'anic interpretive methodology. On the one hand, the perspective that positions it as an independent method underscores the distinctiveness of its analytical approach, which focuses on comparison and the critical examination of interpretive differences. On the other hand, the view that associates it with tafsīr mauḍū'i (thematic interpretation) highlights methodological intersections, particularly in the processes of collecting verses and analyzing meanings thematically. These differences are not inherently contradictory; rather, they are complementary in enriching the methodological framework of tafsir studies, thereby opening space for more flexible, integrative, and contextual approaches to understanding the Qur'an.

c) The Debate on Goals and Orientation

The purpose of using the muqāran method has also been a topic of debate among scholars. Some classical scholars argue that the primary purpose of this method is to establish the strongest (rājih) opinion among the various interpretations being compared. Meanwhile, modern scholars such as Abdul Mustaqim and M. Quraish Shihab argue that this method should be used descriptively and scientifically, not normatively (Mustaqim, 2010; Shihab, 2013).

In summary, the debate over the purpose of the tafsīr muqāran method reflects a shift in epistemological orientation within Qur'anic studies, from a normative approach aimed at determining the most authoritative (rājih) interpretation to a more descriptive and analytical framework that prioritizes objectivity and scholarly rigor. While classical scholars emphasize evaluative judgment as the ultimate goal of comparison, modern scholars advocate for a neutral and systematic presentation of interpretive diversity without necessarily privileging a single viewpoint. These differing orientations are not mutually exclusive; rather, they indicate the evolving function of tafsīr muqāran as both a tool for critical assessment and a means of fostering a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the plurality inherent in Qur'anic interpretation.

d) Debate on Steps and Procedures

Al-Farmawi explains four steps in implementing the muqāran method, namely:

1) Determine the verse or theme
2) Collecting various interpretations
3) Comparing opinions
4) Determine the correct opinion

However, some commentators criticized the fourth step because it was considered to give rise to subjectivity and was contrary to the objective spirit of scientific interpretation (Iman & Al-Habsyi, 2024). Thus, the four steps formulated by al-Farmawi essentially provide a systematic framework for conducting comparative analysis,

particularly in organizing exegetical data and tracing differences of opinion in a structured manner. However, the criticism directed at the step of determining the most appropriate opinion reveals a tension between the need for normative conclusions and the demands of scientific objectivity. Therefore, some contemporary scholars tend to position this evaluative stage more proportionally—not as an attempt to establish absolute truth, but rather as a reflective process that considers the strength of arguments, contextual factors, and methodological consistency. Through this approach, the tafsīr muqāran method is able to maintain a balance between critical analysis and scholarly objectivity (Manaf, 2023).

The debate surrounding the procedural steps of the tafsīr muqāran method highlights an important methodological refinement within contemporary Qur'anic studies. While al-Farmawi's framework provides a clear and structured pathway for comparative analysis, the critique of its final evaluative stage underscores the need to reconcile interpretive judgment with academic objectivity. Rather than abandoning the evaluative dimension altogether, contemporary scholarship tends to reinterpret it as a critical and reflective process grounded in methodological transparency and contextual awareness. This balanced approach not only preserves the analytical rigor of the comparative method but also ensures that its application remains aligned with the principles of scientific inquiry, thus enhancing its credibility and relevance in modern exegetical discourse.

e) The Debate on Function and Impact

Some classical scholars argue that this method has the potential to cause confusion because it presents a variety of differing interpretations. In contrast, modern scholars view it as a dialogical approach, capable of broadening horizons and fostering tolerance among various schools of interpretation (Mustaqim, 2010). Thus, these differing perspectives indicate a paradigmatic shift in understanding the function of the tafsīr muqāran method. While the classical perspective tends to emphasize the potential for confusion arising from the plurality of interpretations, the modern perspective views such diversity as an intellectual richness that must be managed critically and constructively. Through a dialogical approach, readers are not only encouraged to understand various differences, but are also trained to adopt an open, objective, and tolerant attitude toward diverse viewpoints. Therefore, when applied appropriately, the tafsīr muqāran method can serve as an effective means of fostering an inclusive and dynamic scholarly tradition in the study of Qur'anic exegesis. This phenomenon, of course, arises due to differing external challenges between the classical and contemporary periods. In the classical era, Muslim societies tended to exist within a predominantly dogmatic theological dynamic, whereas in the contemporary period, they are situated within a context of reform and ideological transformation (Riksanda et al., 2026).

The contrasting views between classical and modern scholars regarding the tafsīr muqāran method reflect not only methodological differences but also broader shifts in intellectual and socio-historical contexts. While classical concerns centered on maintaining doctrinal clarity and avoiding confusion, contemporary perspectives reinterpret interpretive plurality as a constructive resource for critical engagement and intellectual growth. This transition underscores the adaptive nature of Qur'anic exegesis in responding to changing challenges, where the comparative method evolves from a potentially problematic approach into a dialogical and integrative framework. Consequently, tafsīr muqāran serves as a strategic tool for navigating diversity in interpretation, fostering scholarly openness, and reinforcing a balanced, context-sensitive understanding of the Qur'an within an increasingly complex modern landscape.

2.5. Comparison of Mufassir's Opinions

The *muqāran* (comparative) interpretation method is an approach to interpretation that emphasizes comparing one verse with another, verses with hadith, and various commentators' interpretations of the same verse. However, scholars have different views, even debates, regarding the limits, scope, steps, and objectives of this method. These differences arise because each scholar reviews the muqāran interpretation method from a different perspective, some emphasizing the linguistic side, others highlighting its historical or theological dimensions (Rafdi, 2023).

Comparing the opinions of several commentators, such as when interpreting the word Alam, according to him, the majority of scholars in the third century interpreted it with the expression: Allahu A'lam. However, after this, some scholars peered further into its meaning. There are others who understand it as the name of the letter, or the method that Allah uses to attract the listener's attention to what will be presented in the following verses. There are still some people who understand the letters that open the letters of the Qur'an as a challenge to those who doubt the Qur'an. In addition, he also quoted the view of Sayyid Quthub who more or less said: "The miracle of the Qur'an is similar to the creation of Allah in all things compared to the creation of man. With the same material, Allah and man create. From grains of soil, Allah creates life, while the highest man is only able to make bricks.

Similarly, from the same letters (hija`iyyah letters) Allah makes the Qur'an and al-Furqan. From there, man also makes prose and poetry, but which is the better creation?"

Quraish also added by quoting the opinion of Rashad Khalifah who said that the letters are a sign of the most numerous letters in the letters. In Surah al-Baqarah, the most numerous letters are alif, lam, and mim. This opinion still requires further research. However, Quraish Shihab still seems to doubt the truth of the opinion he quoted until he concluded that the opinion that interprets the Universe with Allāhu A'lam still relevant today (Jahira & Faisal, 2026).

3. CONCLUSION

The *Muqāran* method of interpretation emerged as an intellectual response to the diversity of approaches to understanding the Qur'an. Historically, this method stems from the academic need of commentators to explore the argumentative basis of each exegetical view. The steps include determining the theme or verse to be studied, collecting sources for interpretation, comparative analysis, and formulating conclusions. The Muqāran method has the advantage of broadening interpretive horizons, fostering critical thinking skills, and enriching the treasury of Islamic scholarship. However, this method also has weaknesses, such as the potential for subjectivity among interpreters or a tendency to favor certain interpretations. Scholars have debated whether the purpose of this method is to perform tarjih (select the strongest interpretation) or simply to scientifically understand the plurality of interpretations. Its relevance in the contemporary era underscores this method's significant contribution to enriching the scholarly tradition of Qur'anic interpretation. Thus, Tafsir Muqāran does not merely serve as a tool for comparing interpretations, but also becomes a forum for dialogue among various types of interpretation, both classical and modern, thereby contributing to a broader and deeper understanding of the Qur'an. tafsīr muqāran method represents a vital epistemological framework within Qur'anic studies that bridges tradition and modernity through a systematic and dialogical engagement with interpretive diversity. By accommodating multiple perspectives while maintaining analytical rigor, this method not only enhances the depth and breadth of understanding of the Qur'anic text but also reinforces the importance of methodological awareness and intellectual openness in scholarly inquiry. Despite its inherent challenges, such as the risk of subjectivity, its continued relevance in contemporary discourse demonstrates its capacity to adapt to evolving intellectual contexts. Therefore, tafsīr muqāran stands as a significant instrument for cultivating a balanced, critical, and integrative approach to Qur'anic interpretation, ultimately contributing to the advancement of a more dynamic and reflective tradition of Islamic scholarship.

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