



Tafsir *ijmālī* between Translation and Interpretation: A Study of Its Development in the Study of the Qur'an in the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the existence and significance of the *ijmālī* method of Qur'anic exegesis within the development of Qur'anic studies in the modern era. The background of this study stems from the fact that the *ijmālī* method, as one of the classical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation, has begun to be neglected as more analytical methods—such as *tahlīlī*, *mauḍū'ī*, and *muqāran*—continue to develop. In reality, the *ijmālī* method possesses advantages in presenting meanings in a simple, global, and easily comprehensible manner for the wider community. The focus of this research is to explain the historical emergence of *ijmālī* exegesis, analyze its methodological steps, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and examine whether *ijmālī* interpretation should be categorized as translation or tafsīr, as well as explore the reasons behind its declining popularity in the modern age. This study employs a qualitative approach, drawing on library research methods and classical and modern tafsīr works, scholarly journal articles, and literature on tafsīr methodology. The findings indicate that the *ijmālī* method of exegesis functions not only as a concise explanation of Qur'anic verses, but also as a bridge between scholarly interpretation and the practical understanding required by lay readers. Although often considered analytically limited, this method remains relevant in the digital era due to its adaptability to modern media, including online learning platforms, short educational videos, and digital tafsīr applications. Thus, the *ijmālī* method holds strong potential for revitalization as an effective and communicative approach to education and da'wah that is aligned with the needs of contemporary Muslim society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Qur'anic interpretation is a science that holds a place in the Islamic scholarly tradition because it is the primary means of understanding the divine content and messages contained within the Quran. Over the course of its history, various interpretive methods have emerged, employed by scholars who explore the meaning of verses, such as the *ta'āq* method, *ḥanalītis*, *mauḍū'ī* (thematic), *muqāran* (comparative), and *ijmālī* (global or concise). The *ijmālī* method is an interpretation method that conveys the general meaning of a verse without in-

depth analysis. Conceptually, *ijmālī* interpretation is a method of interpretation in which the interpreter attempts to explain the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in a global manner without lengthy explanations. The focus of the interpreter is to explain the meaning of the verses with a brief explanation, without touching on anything other than the intended meaning. In its application, the interpreter explains verse by verse, chapter by chapter, according to the order of the Muṣḥaf, by first expressing the meaning of the words in a framework that is easier to understand, whether by intellectuals, laypeople, or those in between. The expression of the meaning of the words is attempted to use a language pattern that is not much different from the language of the Qur'an (Zulaiha, 2023).

In the modern era, marked by advances in information and communication technology, social change, and the need for a quick and practical understanding of the Qur'an, the *ijmālī* method has once again found its relevance. People now prefer concise and direct explanations that address the core message of the verses, especially through digital media such as video platforms, social media, and online interpretation applications (Selian & Syabuddin, 2025).

This renewed relevance of the *ijmālī* method can be further understood as a response to the shifting patterns of knowledge consumption in contemporary society, where speed, accessibility, and clarity are highly valued. In an era of information overload, audiences tend to favor interpretations that are immediately understandable and directly applicable to daily life, rather than lengthy, highly technical analyses. In this context, the *ijmālī* approach functions as a mediating framework that simplifies complex Qur'anic messages without detaching them from their essential meanings. Moreover, its adaptability to digital formats—such as short video lectures, visual summaries, and interactive applications—enables the Qur'an to be communicated in ways that resonate with modern audiences, particularly younger generations. Nevertheless, this practicality should not lead to the neglect of methodological rigor; rather, it highlights the need to position *ijmālī* tafsir as an entry point to guide readers toward deeper interpretive engagement. Thus, its role in the modern era is not only to provide quick understanding, but also to foster a gradual and sustained relationship between the reader and the Qur'anic text. In this context, the *ijmālī* method is an effective solution for people who lack a deep scientific background but still want to understand the messages of the Qur'an. However, a critical question arises: is the simplicity of this method sufficient to address the complex problems of modern society? Does conveying global meaning not sacrifice the accuracy and depth of interpretation?

Various previous studies have reviewed the theoretical and practical aspects of this tafsir method. For example, Abdul Ghoni and Al Mukhlisin, in their study entitled "*Ijmālī* Interpretation of Q.S. Al-Fatihah in Tafsir Al-Jalalain," describe the application of the *ijmālī* method in classical texts and highlight its advantages and disadvantages (Ghoni & Fauji, 2022). The *ijmālī* (concise) method of interpretation is also employed by the contemporary exegete Aidh al-Qarni in his work *Tafsīr al-Muyassar*. In this tafsir, he emphasizes a Sufi-oriented interpretive style, characterized by presenting the Qur'anic verse in its entirety prior to offering a comprehensive explanation. The interpretation is delivered directly and succinctly, without reliance on detailed linguistic analysis, such as rhetorical style, modes of expression (*ta'bīr*), lexical forms, pronouns (*ḍamīr*), verb structures, and other grammatical considerations (Qomarullah, 2022). Nida Ul Husna in her article "*The Ijmālī* Tafsir Method: Its History, Importance, Steps, Benefits, and Drawbacks in the Interpretation of the Qur'an" discusses the history, steps, and weaknesses of this method in detail (Husna, 2024). Meanwhile, Bagas Nirwana Selian and Syabuddin in their article "*The Ijmālī* Method and Its Application in the Interpretation of the Qur'an" emphasize the urgency of implementing this method in the context of modern Islamic education (Selian & Syabuddin, 2025). Meanwhile, Nur Fadhilah Syam and Qurrata Aini in their article "Genealogy of the Schools of Interpretation: Exploration of the Methodology of the Interpretation of the Qur'an in Four Main Perspectives" place the *ijmālī* method as an important part of the evolution of the schools of interpretation that are still relevant today (Syam, 2025). In this study, the author examines the *ijmālī* tafsir method from a contemporary perspective that has not been widely explored by previous research. Unlike previous studies that only highlighted the theoretical, historical, or classical application aspects of the *ijmālī* method, this study also discusses whether the *ijmālī* tafsir method is included in translation or interpretation, then focuses on an analysis of its existence and urgency in the modern era marked by the development of digital technology and changes in learning patterns in Islamic society.

Through this research, the author will raise several issues. First, how did *ijmālī* interpretation first emerge and what is its urgency? Second, what are the steps, advantages, and disadvantages of the *ijmālī* interpretation method? Third, is *ijmālī* interpretation included in translation or interpretation? Fourth, why is *ijmālī* interpretation less popular in the modern age?. This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. All data were collected through a review of relevant literature, including classical and modern tafsir books, scientific journal

articles, books on tafsir methodology, and contemporary digital sources discussing the application of the *ijmālī* tafsir method in the modern era. Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive-analytical approach, namely describing the concept and characteristics of the *ijmālī* method, then analyzing its existence and urgency in the development of contemporary Qur'an studies.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 History of the Emergence of the *Ijmālī* Method

The *ijmālī* method of interpretation is the earliest method of interpreting the Qur'an and has deep roots in Islamic history. Etymologically, the word *ijmālī* comes from the word "*ijmāl*," which means comprehensive or global. Terminologically, it is defined as a concise and general explanation of the verses of the Qur'an without lengthy elaboration (Baidan, 2003).

This method has been known since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet was the first interpreter with direct authority from Allah SWT to explain revelation to the people. In the Quran (QS. An-Nahl: 44), Allah says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

"And We have sent down to you the Quran that you may explain to the people what has been revealed to them." (QS. An-Nahl: 44)

This verse emphasizes that the Prophet is not just a conveyer of revelation, but also an interpreter who explains its meaning. Therefore, it is certain that the Prophet Muhammad SAW understood the content of the Quran, both globally and in detail (Ghoni & Fauji, 2022). After the Prophet's death, the Companions continued this tradition by providing global and practical interpretations, based on experience, understanding of Arabic, and the context in which the verses were revealed (*asbāb al-nuzūl*). Figures such as 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, and Ubayy ibn Ka'b are known as pioneers of *ijmālī* interpretation because they explained the verses concisely yet substantive. This tradition was then continued by the generation of *tabi'in* who wrote concise interpretations, such as Mujāhid ibn Jabr and Qatādah, until it developed into written works such as *Tafsir al-Jalālayn*, *Tafsir al-Muyassar*, and *Tafsir Juz 'Amma* (Al-Dzahabi, 2000).

The emergence of *ijmālī* tafsir falls within the formative period of Qur'anic exegesis, during which verses were interpreted in a concise, direct, and simplified manner without extensive elaboration. This was largely due to the fact that leading exegetical figures at the time were drawn from among the Companions (*ṣaḥābah*) and the Successors (*tābi'in*), who possessed a close familiarity with the original Arabic language and the contextual circumstances surrounding the revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*). Consequently, Qur'anic verses were relatively accessible and did not require complex analytical exposition. From a methodological perspective, interpretation in this period commonly involved explaining Qur'anic verses through other Qur'anic passages, relying on the explanations of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as preserved in the *ḥadīth*, and, in cases where no explicit clarification was found in either the Qur'an or the *ḥadīth*, employing independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) by the Companions (Rizal et al., 2026).

It can be argued that the *ijmālī* method is not merely a primitive or simplistic form of exegesis, but rather a foundational epistemological framework that reflects the natural mode of understanding the Qur'an in its earliest context. Its emphasis on clarity, brevity, and directness corresponds to the communicative needs of the first Muslim community, who were already linguistically and contextually equipped to grasp the meanings of revelation. At the same time, this method demonstrates a balanced integration between transmitted knowledge (*naql*) and rational effort (*'aql*), as seen in the use of Qur'an-by-Qur'an interpretation, Prophetic explanations, and *ijtihād*. Therefore, the *ijmālī* approach should be understood not as a limitation, but as an essential stage in the historical development of tafsir that continues to offer methodological relevance, particularly in contexts that require accessible and straightforward engagement with the Qur'anic text.

This historical trajectory further indicates that the *ijmālī* method should be viewed as an organic and adaptive response to the evolving needs of the Muslim community rather than as a static or limited interpretive form. In its earliest phase, the method functioned effectively because the audience shared linguistic competence and contextual awareness, allowing concise explanations to convey rich meanings. However, its continued transmission into later generations—through the works of the *tābi'in* and classical exegetes—demonstrates its enduring pedagogical value as a tool for simplifying and preserving core Qur'anic messages. In this sense, the *ijmālī* method operates not only as a historical foundation of tafsir but also as a methodological bridge that

connects the immediacy of early interpretive practices with the structured scholarship of later periods. Its ability to condense meaning without severing interpretive intent highlights its role as a flexible framework that can be recontextualized across different intellectual and social settings, maintaining both continuity with tradition and relevance for diverse audiences.

2.2 The Urgency of the *Ijmālī* Interpretation Method

The urgency of the *ijmālī* interpretation method lies in its function as an educational and da'wah medium that is easily accessible to all groups (Yunus, 2025). In the context of Islamic education, this method significantly helps students understand the message of the Qur'an without requiring advanced knowledge of tafsir. Meanwhile, in da'wah, *ijmālī* interpretation is effective because it is communicative, simple, and can be delivered quickly. This global interpretation also fosters a sense of closeness among the people to the Qur'an because it presents the complete meaning of the verses without causing confusion due to lengthy scholarly debates (Akhdiat & Kholiq, 2022).

The *ijmālī* tafsir represents one of the approaches to Qur'anic interpretation that has developed since the early period of Islam, in response to the community's need to understand the messages of the Qur'an in a simple and comprehensive manner. As a method that employs systematic procedures, it was historically utilized by the Companions and early scholars to explain the meanings of Qur'anic verses without engaging in detailed word-by-word analysis, thereby making it more accessible to the general public. The urgency of this method lies in its capacity to convey the message of the Qur'an concisely yet comprehensively, rendering it an effective medium for establishing a foundational understanding of the Qur'an among readers from diverse backgrounds. The presentation of meaning in a global manner, while maintaining narrative coherence without focusing on in-depth linguistic or grammatical analysis, constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the *ijmālī* method (Salim et al., 2026).

In addition, in the modern era, the *ijmālī* method remains relevant to bridge people's understanding of the Qur'an (Laili et al., 2024). When most people have limited time, *ijmālī* interpretation can be an effective form of teaching, for example through digital interpretation, popular interpretation, and brief explanations on social media. In this case, the *ijmālī* method serves as a starting point for a deeper understanding of interpretation, such as tafsir *mauḍū'ī* (Ridwan et al., 2024).

In this context, for beginners or individuals who do not require detailed and elaborate explanations of Qur'anic verses, tafsir employing the *ijmālī* method proves to be highly appropriate and beneficial. This is because the explanations provided within this method are concise and straightforward, making them relatively easier to comprehend for those at a basic level of engagement. The concise and simple nature of *ijmālī* tafsir also makes it particularly suitable for individuals occupied with daily routines and professional responsibilities. Accordingly, this method holds significant urgency and relevance for those at the basic stage of studying tafsir, as well as for those whose time is largely devoted to earning a livelihood. Under such circumstances, the suitability of *ijmālī* tafsir becomes evident, as it serves as an effective means of guiding individuals toward the right path and attaining the pleasure of Allah (Akbar & Alwizar, 2025).

Taken together, the foregoing discussion demonstrates that the urgency of the *ijmālī* method lies not only in its pedagogical practicality but also in its strategic role within the broader landscape of Qur'anic interpretation. Its emphasis on brevity, clarity, and accessibility enables it to function as an inclusive interpretive approach that bridges the gap between the sacred text and diverse audiences, particularly in contemporary contexts characterized by limited time and varying levels of scholarly competence. However, this very strength simultaneously invites critical reflection: while the *ijmālī* method is effective in facilitating initial comprehension and fostering engagement with the Qur'an, its tendency to generalize meanings may risk oversimplification and limit deeper analytical insight if used in isolation. Therefore, the *ijmālī* approach should be positioned not as a substitute for more analytical methods, but as a complementary entry point that prepares readers for more comprehensive interpretive engagement. In this sense, its continued relevance depends on its integration within a broader methodological framework that balances accessibility with depth, ensuring that the understanding of the Qur'an remains both approachable and intellectually rigorous.

2.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of the *Ijmālī* Interpretation Method

In every method of interpreting the Qur'an there are advantages and disadvantages, including the *ijmālī* method, the description of which is as follows.

a. Advantages of the *ijmālī* method

The *ijmālī* tafsir method has several advantages that make it an attractive choice in the context of Qur'anic learning, Islamic preaching, and modern Islamic educational media. The following is a more detailed explanation

of these advantages. *First*, simple, concise, and easy to understand. One of the main advantages of the *ijmālī* method is the simplicity of conveying the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in a concise explanation that is not too long, not too technical, so that it is easily accepted by readers who do not have a deep background in the science of interpretation or Arabic. As mentioned in the research by the *ijmālī* interpretation of Q.S Al-Fatihah in Tafsir Al-Jalalain that this method "makes the initial stage easier for beginner interpreters simple, easy, practical and fast" (Yunus, 2025). Similarly, in the article on the *ijmālī* method and its application in interpreting the Qur'an, it was found that the *ijmālī* method "emphasizes clarity and simplicity in conveying the meaning of the holy verses" which makes it suitable for Muslims in general (Laili et al., 2024).

Due to its concise nature, this method is very suitable for use in formal or non-formal teaching. -Formal methods that require a fast and efficient process, such as in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), beginner study groups, religious study groups, or digital media (short videos, infographics, interpretation apps). Thus, this method bridges the gap between the complexities of classical interpretation and the needs of modern society, which tends to seek practical understanding. *Second*, it is efficient for both initial teaching and the general public. The *ijmālī* method can be an effective strategy for initial learning, for example, for students, novice Islamic students, or the general public who want to understand the contents of the Qur'an without having to go through linguistic analysis, *qira'at* (recitation), verse lineages, or lengthy fiqh debates. With this method, instructors or teachers can introduce the core message of a verse in a relatively short time, thus providing initial motivation for further learning. As studies by the characteristics of tafsir *taḥlīlī* and *ijmālī* interpretations show that *ijmālī* interpretations "tend to provide simpler and more accessible explanations than tafsir *taḥlīlī* provides a more detailed explanation (Fikri Ys & Rohmanudin, 2022).

Fourth, the communicative and narrative style. The communicative and narrative style makes the *ijmālī* method easily adaptable to digital media such as short video interpretations, podcasts, or infographics. Research on interpretation in the digital era shows that "the *ijmālī* method has high flexibility in contemporary da'wah media" because its moral messages are easily packaged in visual formats (Rezwandi, 2025). This adaptability gives the *ijmālī* method great potential for revival in the context of a fast-paced global society. Thus, it can be concluded that the advantage of the *ijmālī* interpretation method lies in its ability to bridge the gap between simplicity of delivery and depth of meaning, making it very relevant for basic education, digital da'wah, and an introduction to contemporary Qur'anic interpretation studies. According to Bashori, as cited in (Yahya et al., 2022), the general advantages of the *ijmālī* method of tafsir can be outlined as follows:

First, it is practical and easy to understand. Tafsir that employs the *ijmālī* method is relatively more practical and accessible, enabling readers to grasp the meanings of Qur'anic verses without encountering significant difficulty. *Second*, it is relatively free from *Isrā'īliyyāt* influences. Due to the brevity of the explanations presented, *ijmālī* tafsir tends to remain more concise and focused, thereby minimizing the inclusion of extraneous narratives or interpretive elements derived from *Isrā'īliyyāt* traditions. *Third*, it maintains close proximity to the language of the Qur'an. The *ijmālī* method utilizes concise and compact language, allowing readers to engage with the text in a manner that does not feel overly interpretive. This is because the global approach to interpretation adopts expressions that are brief and closely aligned with the linguistic style of the Qur'an, preserving its original tone and familiarity.

The advantages of the *ijmālī* method of tafsir can be understood as a synthesis of accessibility, efficiency, and communicative effectiveness within Qur'anic interpretation. Its concise and straightforward mode of explanation enables a wide range of audiences—particularly beginners and the general public—to grasp the essential meanings of the Qur'an without the need for extensive linguistic or technical expertise. At the same time, its practical nature makes it highly adaptable to both traditional and contemporary learning contexts, including formal education and digital media platforms. Furthermore, the method's tendency to avoid excessive elaboration contributes to its relative freedom from *Isrā'īliyyāt* influences, while its close alignment with the linguistic style of the Qur'an preserves the text's original tone and clarity. Collectively, these characteristics position the *ijmālī* method as an effective introductory and complementary approach that bridges the gap between the complexity of classical exegesis and the practical needs of modern audiences.

b. Disadvantages of the *ijmālī* method

Despite its advantages, the *ijmālī* method also has several disadvantages that need to be considered so that its use does not result in excessive simplification of meaning. First, this method lacks analytical power and is not contextual enough to address modern issues such as gender, religious pluralism, or ecology. An overly brief interpretation "has the potential to oversimplify the meaning and lose the depth of the Quran's message," as Akhdiat and Kholiq (Akhdiat & Kholiq, 2022) point out. Its global nature makes it difficult to use in academic

research requiring in-depth analysis. Second, this method risks ignoring linguistic depth and scientific aspects such as variations in *qirā'at* (recitation), Arabic language structure, and the detailed *asbāb al-nuzūl* (religious reasons). As a result, readers only grasp the general meaning without understanding the semantic dimensions or historical context of the verse (Ridwan et al., 2024). Third, this method is less suitable for high-level academic research. Because it lacks argumentative evidence, the *ijmālī* method is difficult to use as a primary reference in a thesis, dissertation, or dissertation on interpretation (Wigati & Pramuja, 2024). The *ijmālī* method is more suitable for initial studies or da'wah material than for scientific research.

Fourth, in the modern era this method tends to be less popular than the *tahlīlī* and *mauḍū'ī* methods more comprehensive. However, some researchers argue that its simplicity becomes a strength when coupled with innovations such as the use of digital media, online learning platforms, and tafsir infographics (Aisyah, 2025). According to Jannah (Tohis & Malula, 2023), as explained by Wigati and Pramuja, several additional limitations of the *ijmālī* tafsir method can be identified as follows:

First, Limited Depth of Analysis. The *ijmālī* method of tafsir is not designed to provide a comprehensive and detailed understanding. Its explanations are general in nature and do not elaborate extensively on grammatical aspects, vocabulary, linguistic structures, or the historical background of the verses. Therefore, this method is less adequate for readers who intend to conduct an in-depth study of the Qur'anic content. Second Potential for Ambiguity. Because it does not provide detailed elaboration on the meaning and context of the verses, this approach may leave room for ambiguity in interpretation. The limited discussion of specific aspects of the verses can lead to misunderstandings or less accurate interpretations. Third, Limited Applicability to Complex Legal Verses. The *ijmālī* method is less suitable for interpreting legal verses that are detailed and complex. Verses containing specific legal rulings require thorough and precise explanations to avoid errors in understanding and application. In such cases, more analytical interpretive approaches are generally needed. Fourth, Insufficient Engagement with Historical and Technical Dimensions. This method generally does not examine in detail the historical aspects or the context of revelation. Consequently, for verses related to particular events or those requiring deep contextual analysis, the *ijmālī* approach is considered insufficient.

In other words, the weaknesses of the *ijmālī* method can be overcome with an adaptive approach that integrates technology and a socio-contextual approach, without abandoning its characteristics as a simple, communicative interpretation that directly touches on the main message of the Qur'an. The disadvantages of the *ijmālī* method primarily stem from its inherent emphasis on brevity and generalization, which, while advantageous for accessibility, simultaneously limit its analytical depth and contextual sensitivity. The method tends to overlook important linguistic, historical, and technical dimensions of the Qur'anic text, thereby risking ambiguity and potential misinterpretation, particularly in relation to complex legal verses and contemporary issues that require nuanced analysis. Moreover, its lack of argumentative rigor makes it less suitable for advanced academic research, positioning it more appropriately as an introductory or complementary approach rather than a primary analytical framework. Nevertheless, these limitations do not negate its relevance; rather, they highlight the need for a more integrative application in which the *ijmālī* method is combined with more analytical approaches and supported by technological and socio-contextual innovations. In this way, it can retain its communicative strengths while contributing more effectively to a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of the Qur'an.

2.4 Steps of Interpretation Using the *Ijmālī* Method

Methodologically, interpretation using the *ijmālī* method is carried out through several systematic yet simple stages. The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the verse's content without getting bogged down in technical linguistic or legal details. The steps are as follows (Akhdiat & Kholiq, 2022; Ridwan et al., 2024):

- a. Read the verses in the order of the *Mushaf*. Interpretation begins by reading the verse or group of verses in sequence as arranged in the *Mushaf*. This maintains continuity of meaning between verses and makes it easier for readers to understand the thematic flow conveyed in a single *surah*,
- b. Explain the meaning in general (global). After reading, the interpreter provides a concise and comprehensive explanation of the verse's meaning without delving into linguistic, grammatical, or legal aspects in depth. The explanation focuses on the main message the verse is trying to convey.
- c. Add contextual explanations where necessary. In some cases, the interpreter may refer to the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (reason for the revelation of the verse) or its thematic context if it helps clarify the meaning of the verse.
- d. Draw conclusions about the overall meaning. The final step is to summarize the general meaning of the verses explained so that the reader obtains a complete picture of the message contained within the passage. The primary goal is not to interpret each word, but rather to understand the content and message of the Quran as a whole.

With these steps, the *ijmālī* interpretation method makes it easier for readers to understand the meaning of the Qur'an without requiring in-depth Arabic language analysis skills, while still maintaining the integrity of the message and context of the verse. These procedural steps demonstrate that the *ijmālī* method is structured upon a coherent yet flexible methodological framework that prioritizes clarity, continuity, and accessibility in Qur'anic interpretation. By following the *tartīb* of the *muṣḥaf*, emphasizing general meaning, incorporating limited contextual references, and concluding with a holistic synthesis, this method ensures that readers can grasp the essential message of the verses without being overwhelmed by technical complexities. At the same time, its selective use of context—such as *asbāb al*-(Al-Zarkasyi, 1990) measured and functional manner. Consequently, the *ijmālī* approach can be understood as a pedagogically oriented methodology that balances simplicity with coherence, making it particularly effective as an entry point for engaging with the Qur'an while preserving the unity and integrity of its message.

2.5 *Ijmālī* Interpretation Method Translation or Interpretation?

Some scholars believe that the *ijmālī* method of interpretation is simply another form of translation of the Qur'an accompanied by a brief explanation. They argue that because *ijmālī* interpretation does not examine in detail the structure of the language, the reasons for the revelation of the verse (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), or the legal dimensions contained therein, it is methodologically closer to the form of *tarjamah tafsīriyyah*. This view was put forward, for example, by Az-Zarkasyi in *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, who explained that some global interpretations only provide meanings that can be directly understood by the reader without opening up space for analysis (Az-Zarkasyi, 1990). A similar opinion was also expressed by Al-Dzahabī, who called *ijmālī* interpretation "interpretation that only transfers the apparent meaning of the verse into another language without delving into its inner meaning or context" (Zahabi, 2005). In the contemporary context, Ahsin Sakho Muhammad also emphasized that in several popular works, the *ijmālī* method is often practiced in the form of free translation with the addition of a few notes, so that the boundaries between interpretation and translation become blurred.

This line of argument can be further strengthened by considering the methodological criteria that distinguish tafsir from translation within the discipline of Qur'anic studies. Tafsir, in its classical definition, entails a systematic engagement with linguistic analysis, contextual background, intertextual relationships, and juristic implications, all of which aim to uncover both the ظاهر (apparent) and باطن (deeper) meanings of the text. In contrast, when an interpretive approach—such as the *ijmālī* method—limits itself to presenting a generalized and surface-level meaning without sustained analytical engagement, it functionally converges with *tarjamah tafsīriyyah*. This convergence becomes more evident in contemporary practices, where many *ijmālī* works prioritize readability and brevity over methodological rigor, often resembling annotated translations rather than fully developed exegetical analyses. Consequently, the argument that *ijmālī* tafsir operates closer to translation is not merely a matter of perception, but reflects a substantive epistemological concern regarding the depth, scope, and scholarly criteria of what qualifies as tafsir proper.

In contrast to the above view, many scholars argue that *ijmālī* tafsir remains a category of tafsir because it contains elements of explanation (*bayān*) and interpretation of the meaning of the verse, even if done briefly. According to al-Farmawī, *ijmālī* tafsir provides a comprehensive understanding of the verse without losing its main meaning, so it remains within the corridor of interpretation, not just translation (Al-Farmawi, 1977). Similarly, As-Suyūṭī in *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, he emphasized that any form of explanation of the meaning of Allah's word that is interpretative, even if global, is still categorized as tafsir (Al-Suyuthi, 2008). M. Quraish Shihab also stated that *ijmālī* tafsir is important in conveying the messages of the Qur'an to the general public. It facilitates understanding of the meaning of verses without requiring complex scientific tools such as in the tafsir *mauḍū'ī* method. Thus, even though it is concise, *ijmālī* interpretation still has scientific and spiritual value as a form of valid interpretation (Shihab, 2008).

This perspective can be further reinforced by emphasizing that the defining criterion of tafsir lies not in the length or technical complexity of the explanation, but in the presence of interpretive intent and the effort to clarify meaning (*bayān*). Even when presented concisely, the *ijmālī* method goes beyond mere linguistic transfer by selecting, organizing, and articulating the intended meaning of the verse in a way that reflects human understanding and interpretive judgment. In this sense, it inherently involves an act of interpretation, as the exegete determines which aspects of meaning to highlight and how to convey them coherently to the audience. Moreover, its ability to preserve the core message of the Qur'an while making it accessible to a broader readership demonstrates that brevity does not necessarily negate depth, but rather represents a different mode of engagement. Therefore, the *ijmālī* method should be recognized as a legitimate form of tafsir that fulfills both

pedagogical and communicative functions, while remaining grounded in the essential objectives of Qur'anic interpretation.

Conceptually, interpretation and translation have fundamental differences. Interpretation is an in-depth explanation of the meaning of a verse based on linguistic rules, historical context, and sharia objectives, while translation only serves to transfer the literal meaning from one language to another (Al-Khuli, 1961). In this regard, the *ijmālī* method lies somewhere in between. It provides an explanation of the meaning of a verse without interpreting it word for word, but it also does not stop at transferring the language. Mannā' al-Qaṭṭān differentiates interpretation and translation by emphasizing that interpretation attempts to explain the meaning contained in a verse, both verbally and implicitly, while translation only captures the apparent meaning. Therefore, *ijmālī* holds a unique position as a method that functions to convey meaning globally with a moderate approach (Al-Qattan, 2001).

The most representative form of *ijmālī tafsīr* can be found in the work *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn as-Suyūṭī. This work provides a brief explanation of each verse with concise sentences, but still contains interpretive elements, such as an explanation of the figurative meaning or reference of the verse (Gufron et al., 2025). Similarly, *Tafsīr al-Wajīz* by Wahbah az-Zuhaylī which uses the *ijmālī* approach in simple language, but still displays the legal and moral insights of the verse. These two works prove that the *ijmālī* method is not just a translation, but an interpretation packaged in a concise and communicative form (Al-Zuhaili, 1996).

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the *ijmālī* interpretation method is not just a translation, but rather a form of global explanation (*ijmālī* interpretation) of the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. It bridges the gap between the *ijmālī* interpretation method and the Qur'anic interpretation method and literal translation methods. This method plays an important role in conveying the message of the Qur'an to a wide audience without sacrificing the depth of meaning, especially in the context of da'wah and basic education in tafsir. This view is also in line with the opinion of Nashruddin Baidan who calls tafsir *ijmālī* an "introductory tafsir" that leads the reader to understand the general meaning of the Qur'an before entering into a more in-depth thematic or historical analysis (Baidan, 2002).

the *ijmālī* method can be more precisely understood as an intermediate interpretive model that mediates between the depth of classical exegesis and the functional clarity of translation. Its methodological position reflects a deliberate balance: it does not aim to exhaust the semantic, legal, or historical dimensions of the text, yet it also transcends the limitations of literal translation by incorporating elements of explanation and interpretive direction. The examples of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and *Tafsīr al-Wajīz* further illustrate that conciseness does not negate interpretive substance, but rather represents a strategic adaptation to the needs of broader audiences. Consequently, the *ijmālī* approach should be viewed as a legitimate and necessary layer within the hierarchy of tafsir methodologies—one that functions as an accessible entry point while still preserving the essential intent and guidance of the Qur'anic message, and preparing readers for more advanced and specialized forms of interpretation.

2.6 Why is the *Ijmālī* Interpretation Method Less Popular in the Modern Age?

The development of modern interpretation studies in Islamic universities places more emphasis on *the mauḍū'ī* (thematic) and *tahḥlīlī* (analytical). Both are considered more scientific and systematic in addressing contemporary issues, while the *ijmālī* method is considered too simplistic and lacking in depth (Rosihon, 2013). Furthermore, the methodological limitations of *ijmālī* interpretation in interpreting modern issues such as bioethics, gender, or ecology make it less popular among academics (Chirzin, 2004).

An external factor that also influenced this was the shift in the paradigm of Qur'anic studies, which became more rational and contextual. The modern hermeneutic approach developed by figures such as Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur emphasized the active interaction between text, context, and reader. This paradigm encouraged a more critical and reflective method of interpretation, while *ijmālī* tended to be descriptive and simplistic. Furthermore, the emergence of modern Islamic thought, such as that developed by Mohammed Arkoun and Nasr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd also shifted the focus of interpretation from a textual approach to a historical-critical approach. Within this framework, *ijmālī* is considered incapable of meeting the demands of contemporary scientific methodology.

Lack of attention to the interpretations of Mohammed Arkoun and Nasr Ḥāmid Abu Zayd has resulted in a decline in academic literature and research on this method. Many classical works of *ijmālī* exegesis, such as *al-Jalālayn* or *al-Wajīz*, are no longer studied in a methodological context in modern Islamic universities.

Consequently, a gap has emerged between the communicative tradition of classical exegesis and the more technical and theoretical approaches of modern academics. Nevertheless, the *ijmālī* tafsir method still has great potential for development, particularly in the context of digital da'wah and popular Islamic education. Integrating this method into tafsir learning based on social media, short videos, or digital applications could be an effective revitalization step. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Miyasin has practiced a form of interpretation that approaches *ijmālī* in conveying messages that are light yet still interpretive. Such efforts demonstrate that the *ijmālī* method remains relevant in the modern era when presented in a format that suits the needs of contemporary society (Shihab, 2008).

These factors indicate that the declining prominence of the *ijmālī* method is not merely the result of its internal limitations, but also a consequence of broader epistemological shifts within contemporary Islamic scholarship. The growing preference for analytical rigor, interdisciplinarity, and critical methodologies has repositioned tafsir as an academic discipline that demands depth, argumentation, and contextual engagement—criteria that the *ijmālī* approach does not fully prioritize. However, this does not necessarily render the method obsolete; rather, it highlights a mismatch between its traditional function and current academic expectations. In this regard, the future relevance of the *ijmālī* method depends on its ability to be recontextualized within modern frameworks, where its strengths—such as clarity, brevity, and communicative effectiveness—can complement more analytical approaches. By integrating it into digital platforms and contemporary modes of knowledge dissemination, the *ijmālī* method can be repositioned as a strategic entry point that bridges scholarly interpretation and public understanding, thereby reaffirming its significance in the evolving landscape of Qur'anic studies.

In the modern era, Qur'anic interpretation no longer functions merely as an instrument for uncovering the intended meaning of the Qur'anic text. Rather, tafsir is increasingly required to engage in applying and connecting the meanings of the Qur'an with contemporary realities, including social, political, economic, and scientific contexts (Maryana et al., 2025). Furthermore, contextual readings are considered more capable of addressing the challenges of Qur'anic interpretation in the modern age. Consequently, various interpretive trends have emerged as a result of contextual engagement with the Qur'anic text.: First, a hermeneutical orientation has developed, placing greater emphasis on epistemological and methodological aspects. This approach seeks to produce a more productive reading of the Qur'an, rather than one that is merely repetitive or ideologically driven. Second, a contextual approach oriented toward the spirit of the Qur'an has gained prominence. This is achieved through interdisciplinary readings that draw upon multiple fields of knowledge, utilizing modern intellectual tools such as philosophy, semantics, anthropology, sociology, and the natural sciences (Muallifah et al., 2022). Nevertheless, *ijmālī* tafsir, as part of the classical or traditional interpretive tradition, continues to offer stability and authenticity in understanding Qur'anic verses and Hadith. It provides a strong foundation for religious practice and the preservation of long-established Islamic values (Zahra et al., 2025). Therefore, *ijmālī* tafsir cannot simply be disregarded, as it serves as an essential starting point and foundational framework for accurately understanding the Qur'anic text in accordance with established principles of interpretation.

Thus, the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation in the modern era should not be understood as an attempt to replace the classical tradition, but rather as a dialectical process in which continuity and innovation complement one another. *Ijmālī* tafsir continues to play a fundamental role as an initial foundation that preserves the authenticity of meaning and the continuity of Islamic scholarly authority, while contextual and hermeneutical approaches serve to expand the relevance of the Qur'anic message in addressing contemporary issues. The integration of these approaches enables the emergence of a model of interpretation that is not only methodologically sound but also responsive to the needs of the time. Therefore, the development of tafsir in the contemporary era should ideally be grounded in a solid traditional foundation, enriched by multidisciplinary approaches, in order to produce an understanding of the Qur'an that is both authentic and applicable across various dimensions of modern life.

3. CONCLUSION

The *ijmālī* tafsir method, one of the earliest forms of Qur'anic interpretation rooted in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, remains a valid and relevant approach in both classical and contemporary contexts. This method conveys the general meaning of Qur'anic verses concisely and systematically—by following the order of the Muṣḥaf, explaining the overall meaning, adding necessary context, and drawing comprehensive conclusions—while preserving the essence of the Qur'anic message. Its simplicity

makes it highly practical, easy to understand, and effective for da'wah and basic Qur'anic education. The main finding of this study is that *ijmālī* tafsir is not merely a translation, but a legitimate interpretive method that includes essential elements of explanation (*bayān*). It occupies an intermediate position between literal translation and analytical exegesis, making it both accessible and meaningful. Its distinctive characteristics—clarity, brevity, and systematic presentation—allow it to serve as an effective entry point for understanding the Qur'an, particularly for beginners and the general public. However, the *ijmālī* method has limitations, especially in terms of analytical depth and its ability to address complex contemporary issues such as social, ethical, and scientific challenges. As a result, it cannot function as a standalone approach in advanced academic or contextual interpretation. Its continued relevance therefore depends on its integration with other methods, such as *taḥlīlī* (analytical) and *mauḍū'ī* (thematic) approaches, which provide deeper and more comprehensive analysis. Despite being less prominent in modern academic discourse—due to the dominance of more analytical and thematic methodologies—the *ijmālī* method still holds significant potential. Its concise and communicative nature makes it highly adaptable to contemporary needs, particularly through digital media, online learning platforms, and interactive da'wah content. In this way, it can bridge the gap between classical interpretive traditions and the expectations of modern Muslims who seek quick, clear, and practical understanding of the Qur'an. This study contributes to Qur'anic studies by reaffirming the importance of *ijmālī* tafsir as a foundational and complementary method. It offers practical benefits for educators, preachers, and digital content creators by providing a flexible and accessible interpretive framework. However, the study is limited to a qualitative library-based approach and lacks empirical analysis of how *ijmālī* tafsir is received in digital contexts. Future research is encouraged to explore audience reception, comparative studies with other interpretive methods, and the development of hybrid models that combine simplicity with analytical depth. Finally, this study recommends that Islamic educational institutions, universities, and da'wah organizations reintegrate the *ijmālī* method into curricula and outreach programs. Policymakers should also support the development of digital-based *ijmālī* tafsir content. Through such efforts, the *ijmālī* method can be revitalized as a strategic tool for enhancing Qur'anic literacy in contemporary society while remaining grounded in authentic Islamic scholarship.

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