



From Text to Lived Experience: Reframing the Living Qur'an as a Global Research Paradigm

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Abstract

This research aims to reconstruct *the Living Qur'an* as a Global Research Paradigm in contemporary Qur'an studies. The development of *Living Qur'an studies* has expanded the orientation of *Qur'anic Studies* from text-centered studies to studies that place lived experience as the focus of analysis. However, most of the *Living Qur'an* research is still positioned as a methodological approach oriented towards the description of the practice of Qur'an reception in society, so its contribution to the development of scientific theories and paradigms is still relatively limited. This study uses a qualitative approach with *the library research* method through a critical analysis of the latest literature on *Living Qur'an*, reception theory, *lived religion*, and the development of *Qur'anic Studies*. The results of the study show that *the Living Qur'an* has the epistemological capacity to be developed as a research paradigm built on five main dimensions, namely ontological, epistemological, methodological, sociological, and global. This paradigm integrates textual studies with social science approaches to produce a more comprehensive perspective in understanding the relationship between the Qur'an, religious experience, social practices, and the digital transformation of Muslim society. The reconstruction expands the scope of *Qur'anic Studies*, strengthens the interdisciplinary character of Qur'anic studies, and offers a new conceptual framework relevant to the development of Qur'anic research in the face of the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and the dynamics of contemporary Muslim society.

Keyword: *Living Qur'an; Qur'anic Studies; global research paradigm; lived experience; the reception of the Qur'an; contemporary Islamic studies.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of the Qur'an has undergone a dynamic development in line with the paradigm shift in contemporary Islamic studies. For centuries, the study of the Qur'an has been dominated by textual approaches oriented to linguistic analysis, the history of revelation, the science of interpretation, qira'at, and interpretation methodologies. This approach has produced a very rich intellectual treasure and has become a major foundation in the study of the Qur'an. However, a text-centered approach has not been able to fully explain how the Qur'an is practiced, interpreted, negotiated, and presented in the social life of Muslim society. Academic attention then shifted from the study of texts to the study of the life experiences of Muslims in interacting with the Qur'an (*lived experience*), thus opening up space for the development of more empirical, contextual, and interdisciplinary perspectives.¹

¹ Muhammad Yusuf, 'The Existence of The Living Qur'an and Its Contribution To The Development of Religious Moderation in Indonesia', *Wahana Akademika: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial* 11, no. 1 (2024): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.21580/wa.v11i1.16319>.



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This shift gave birth to the Living Qur'an approach, which is an approach that views the Qur'an not only as a sacred text to be read and interpreted, but also as a living reality in the various social practices, cultures, rituals, and daily lives of Muslim people. In this perspective, the attention of the research is no longer only directed to the normative meaning of the verses, but also to how the Qur'an is received, practiced, and shapes the identity and social behavior of the community. Various Living Qur'an studies show that the reception of the Qur'an can be realized through the traditions of reading, khataman, calligraphy, medicine, religious rituals, education, and social practices that develop in the Muslim community. Thus, Living Qur'an has expanded the scope of Qur'an study from a textual dimension to a socio-cultural dimension.²

Nevertheless, the development of Living Qur'an studies still faces a number of conceptual limitations. Most research tends to be oriented towards local case studies with a descriptive-ethnographic approach that focuses on specific societal phenomena. As a result, the Living Qur'an is more often understood as a research method or social approach in the study of the Qur'an than as an epistemological framework capable of explaining the relationship between sacred texts, religious practices, religious experience, and social transformation more comprehensively. This condition causes the theoretical contribution of the Living Qur'an to the development of Qur'anic Studies at the global level is still relatively limited even though the number of research on this theme continues to increase.³

On the other hand, the development of contemporary religious studies shows an increasingly strong tendency towards an interdisciplinary approach. The study of *lived religion*, *practice theory*, *religious experience*, and *embodiment* has developed rapidly in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and religious studies to explain how religious teachings are embodied in the practice of daily life. This development provides a great opportunity for Living Qur'an to no longer be positioned as an academic phenomenon limited to the Indonesian context, but as a research paradigm that is able to explain various forms of interaction between Muslims and the Qur'an in various parts of the world. In the context of globalization and digitalization, Qur'an-based religious practices have also undergone transformation through social media, digital applications, video platforms, virtual communities, and various forms of digital religious authority which shows that the reception of the Qur'an continues to grow following social and technological changes.⁴

This condition shows that there is a gap between the empirical development of Living Qur'an research and the development of its theoretical paradigm. Until now, there have not been many studies that have systematically reconstructed the Living Qur'an as a global research paradigm that is able to integrate textual studies, reception, religious experiences, social practices, and cultural transformation into one complete conceptual framework. In fact, the multidisciplinary character of the Living Qur'an allows this approach to be applied not only in the study of interpretation, but also in religious anthropology, sociology of religion, cultural studies, studies of the Muslim diaspora, and

² Ridho Afifudin, Zayad Abd Rahman, and Ahmad Subakir, 'Resepsi Al-Qur'an Di Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Ma'ruf Juranguluh Kediri', *Tasamuh: Jurnal Studi Islam* 17, no. 2 (2025): 364–80, <https://doi.org/10.47945/tasamuh.v17i2.2079>.

³ Ahmad Rafiq, 'The Living Qur'an: Its Text and Practice in the Function of the Scripture', *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 22, no. 2 (2021): 469–84, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2021.2202-10>.

⁴ Ahmad Syukron et al., 'Digitalizing the Living Qur'an: Religious Authority and the Transformation of Qur'anic Knowledge in Indonesia', *JURNAL INDO-ISLAMIKA* 16, no. 1 (2026): 191–207, <https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v16i1.51744>.

digital religious studies.

Based on this description, this research aims to reconstruct the concept of Living Qur'an from just a methodological approach to a global research *paradigm*. The reconstruction is expected to be able to expand the position of the Living Qur'an in the study of the contemporary Qur'an so that it not only explains how the Qur'an is understood as a text, but also how the Qur'an is lived, practiced, and shaped social realities in various cultural contexts and living spaces of Muslims. Thus, this research is expected to make a conceptual contribution to the development of Qur'anic Studies as well as strengthen the position of the Living Qur'an as an interdisciplinary paradigm in contemporary Islamic studies.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research which aims to reconstruct the concept of *Living Qur'an* as a global research paradigm in contemporary Qur'an studies. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research is not on the collection of field data, but on a critical analysis of various scientific literature that discusses the conceptual, epistemological, and methodological developments of the *Living Qur'an* in a multidisciplinary perspective. Library research allows researchers to synthesize various ideas that develop so as to produce new conceptual formulations that have a theoretical contribution to the development of *Qur'anic Studies* ⁵

The source of research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data are in the form of international and national reputable scientific articles, academic books, and works that specifically discuss *the Living Qur'an*, *Qur'anic Studies*, *lived religion*, *reception theory*, religious anthropology, and sociology of religion. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from proceedings, research reports, dissertations, and other academic documents relevant to the development of *Living Qur'an studies*. All sources were selected based on the relevance of the substance, academic credibility, and up-to-date publication to ensure the quality of the analysis produced.⁶ The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies, namely identifying, inventorying, and reviewing various literature sources related to the research theme. Literature is obtained through scientific databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, Crossref, Google Scholar, JSTOR, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library, and ScienceDirect using keywords such as *Living Qur'an*, *Qur'anic Studies*, *lived religion*, *reception theory*, *embodiment*, *religious practice*, and *religious experience*. The collected literature was then selected based on the relevance of the theme, contribution to the development of the concept, and the quality of the publication.⁷

Data analysis was carried out using qualitative content analysis combined with conceptual analysis. The analysis stages include data reduction, theme categorization, concept interpretation, and theoretical synthesis. In the reduction stage, various literature is classified based on main themes such as the development of Qur'an studies, reception theory, *lived religion*, religious practices, and the development of *Living Qur'an methodologies*. Furthermore, a comparative analysis was carried out to identify similarities, differences, and conceptual limitations from each developing perspective.

⁵ Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008).

⁶ H. S. A. Putra, *Metodologi Living Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2012).

⁷ Miza Nina Adlini et al., 'Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Studi Pustaka', *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan* 6, no. 1 (March 2022): 974–80, <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i1.3394>.

The results of the analysis are then synthesized to build an epistemological reconstruction that places the *Living Qur'an* not only as a methodological approach, but as a global research paradigm that is able to bridge textual studies with the lived experiences of Muslim communities in various social, cultural, and geographical contexts.

To increase the validity of the study, this study applies source triangulation, which is comparing various perspectives from books, scientific articles, and previous research so as to produce a comprehensive interpretation and reduce the subjectivity of researchers. In addition, interpretation is carried out critically by linking findings in the literature to the latest developments in religious studies, anthropology, and *Qur'anic Studies*. With this approach, this research is expected to be able to produce a conceptual model that contributes to the development of *the Living Qur'an* as a research paradigm that is interdisciplinary and has global relevance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Paradigm Shift in Qur'an Study: From Textual Approach to *Lived Experience*

The development of *Qur'anic Studies* shows a significant paradigm transformation in recent decades. If in the classical to early modern period, the main focus of scholars was more focused on the textual, linguistic, and normative dimensions of the Qur'an, then the development of the social sciences and humanities has encouraged the birth of a more contextual and empirical approach. This shift not only changes the object of study, but also changes the way of understanding the relationship between the Qur'an and the lives of Muslims. The Qur'an is no longer seen solely as a sacred text that is interpreted through the tools of interpretation, but also as a living reality (*living scripture*) through the social, cultural, ritual, and religious practices of the Muslim community.⁸

Historically, the tradition of Qur'an study developed with a very strong orientation on the textual dimension. Disciplines such as *'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, tafsir, qirā'āt, asbāb al-nuzūl, nasikh-mansukh, and the science of balāghah are the main foundations in understanding the content of revelation. This approach seeks to explore the meaning of the text through the analysis of the Arabic language, the historical context of revelation, and the interpretive methodology that has developed in the Islamic scientific tradition. The contribution of this textual approach is enormous in maintaining the scientific authority of the Qur'an and producing a rich treasure of interpretation. However, text-centered orientations tend to view the Qur'an as an object of normative interpretation and thus are not able to explain how revelation is practiced and interpreted in daily life by Muslim communities with diverse social and cultural backgrounds.⁹

Changes began to be seen as the study of contemporary religion underwent what

⁸ Dewi Bahrotul Ilmiyah, "Transformasi Paradigma Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir Di Era Digital: Dialektika Antara Warisan Tafsir Klasik Dan Inovasi Teknologis Kontemporer", *Pelita: Jurnal Studi Islam Mahasiswa UIN Dalwa* 3, no. 1 (2025): 80–92, <https://doi.org/10.38073/pelita.v3i1.3642>.

⁹ Randy Putra Alamsyah and Daud Lintang, 'Cultural Integration and Political Consciousness in Qur'anic Exegesis: A Study of the Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm by Binjai's Ulama Tiga Serangkai', *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 10, no. 1 (2025): 355–67, <https://journal.iaimnumetrolampung.ac.id/index.php/jf/article/view/6161>.

is often referred to as *an empirical turn* or a shift towards an empirical approach. In this paradigm, attention is no longer only directed to doctrine, but also to religious *practice* and religious experience. Religion is understood as a social phenomenon that continues to be produced, negotiated, and lived in people's lives. This perspective provides space for the development of the concept *of lived religion*, which is an approach that places practice, experience, and daily life as the center of analysis in the study of religion. Through this perspective, religion is understood not only through what is written in scripture, but also through how those teachings are embodied in actions, symbols, traditions, and social interactions.

In the context of Qur'anic studies, this shift has led to the birth of attention to the phenomenon of Qur'anic *reception*. The focus of the research shifted from the question of "what is the meaning of the verses" to the question of "how people receive, practice, and interpret the Qur'an in their lives". Thus, the object of study is no longer limited to the text of the Qur'an or books of tafsir, but also includes various social expressions such as khataman traditions, the recitation of certain verses in religious rituals, the use of verses as a medium of healing, calligraphy, Qur'anic education, and religious practices in the digital space. This development shows that the meaning of the Qur'an is not only produced through interpretive activities, but also through the collective experience of societies that continue to evolve according to their respective social and cultural contexts.¹⁰

This change in orientation was further strengthened by the development of *Living Qur'an studies*. In contrast to the interpretation approach that centers on the analysis of the meaning of the text, *the Living Qur'an* seeks to understand how the Qur'an "lives" in society through various forms of reception, practice, symbols, and culture. This approach views that the existence of the Qur'an does not stop at the process of revelation and interpretation, but continues through the interaction of Muslims with sacred texts in various dimensions of life. Therefore, social phenomena related to the Qur'an become a source of data as important as the text itself.

The increasing number of research on *the Living Qur'an* in Indonesia shows that this approach has developed into one of the new trends in the study of the Qur'an. Various studies have succeeded in documenting religious practices that show how society makes the Qur'an a source of meaning, identity, legitimacy, and spirituality. However, these developments also show a tendency that most research still focuses on the description of local phenomena and has not fully developed a more universal conceptual framework. An evaluation of the publication of *the Living Qur'an* shows that this approach is often used as a method of social research without a clear epistemological foundation. As a result, the position of *the Living Qur'an* in the landscape of *Qur'anic Studies* is still debated, whether it is a stand-alone research method, approach, or paradigm.¹¹

¹⁰ Muhamad Annas Annas, Rio Dwi Saputra, and Hasani Ahmad Said, 'Living Qur'an Sebagai Cerminan Praktik Keagamaan: Analisis Fenomena Sosial Dan Normatif', *Ulumul Qur'an: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (2024): 274–89, <https://doi.org/10.58404/uq.v4i2.333>.

¹¹ Masiyan M. Syam and Nurfadliyati Nurfadliyati, 'The Ambiguity of Living Qur'an Studies in

The development of *the study of the Living Qur'an* cannot be separated from the contribution of *reception theory* which places the reader as an important actor in the process of forming meaning. In this perspective, the meaning of a text is not only in the structure of the language or the author's intentions, but is also born through the interaction between the text and its readers in a particular social context. When such perspectives are applied in the study of the Qur'an, the focus of research shifts from the attempt to discover the normative meaning of the verse to how the Qur'an is received, interpreted, practiced, and reproduced in the lives of Muslim societies. Thus, the reception of the Qur'an is not just a reading activity, but a social process that involves religious experiences, cultural traditions, power relations, and the collective identity of the community.

This change in orientation shows that the relationship between Muslims and the Qur'an is dynamic. The community not only becomes passive readers of revelation, but also becomes actors who constantly actualize the values of the Qur'an according to the social needs and context of the times. Therefore, practices such as the recitation of Surah Yāsīn in religious traditions, the use of certain verses as prayers, the tradition of khataman of the Qur'an, the art of calligraphy, musabaqah tilawatil Qur'an, and the teaching of the Qur'an in educational institutions are forms of reception that show that the Qur'an has a social life outside the space of academic interpretation. These various practices affirm that the Qur'an is not only understood as a normative text, but also as a source of meaning that shapes the behavior, symbols, and life structure of Muslim society.¹²

At the same time, the development of global religious studies shows the increasingly strong use of the perspective *of lived religion*. This approach criticizes the tendency of religious studies to overemphasize doctrinal aspects to ignore the real experiences of religious adherents. From the perspective *of lived religion*, religious practice is understood as the result of the interaction between normative teachings, individual experiences, social conditions, local culture, and historical dynamics.¹³ This approach opens up space for a more comprehensive analysis of how religious teachings are truly embodied in everyday life. In this context, *the Living Qur'an* has a very strong wedge with *lived religion* because both place practice and experience as the center of analysis. The difference lies in the focus of *the Living Qur'an* which specifically makes the Qur'an as a starting point in understanding the various expressions of religious life of the Muslim community.

Digital transformation has further expanded the living space of the Qur'an in

Indonesia', *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 8, no. 2 (2024): 393–405, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v8i2.7920>; Fatira Wahidah, Abdul Muiz Amir, and Fuad Fansuri, 'Methodological Challenges in Living Qur'an Studies from Academic Publication in Indonesian Islamic University', *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian*, 2024, 65–79, <https://doi.org/10.31332/ai.v0i0.9076>.

¹² Diva Queen Berliana, Iklima Iliyini, and Zulfa Syarifah Muthmainnah, 'Living Qur'an and Living Hadith in Contemporary Islamic Studies: An Epistemological Analysis of Authority, Reception, and the Legitimacy of Religious Practices', *Al-Karim: International Journal of Quranic and Islamic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2026): 21–50, <https://doi.org/10.33367/al-karim.v4i1.8404>.

¹³ Alamsyah and Lintang, 'Cultural Integration and Political Consciousness in Qur'anic Exegesis'.

contemporary society. The interaction of Muslims with the Qur'an no longer takes place only in mosques, Islamic boarding schools, or educational institutions, but also through social media, smartphone applications, YouTube channels, podcasts, online interpretation classes, and *artificial intelligence*. This phenomenon shows that the reception of the Qur'an has changed very quickly following the development of information technology. Reading the Qur'an through digital applications, participating in online interpretation studies, sharing verse quotes through social media, and the use of AI-based technology in verse search and interpretation explanations are new forms of *Living Qur'an* that are no longer limited by certain geographical spaces or communities. Therefore, the object of studying *the Living Qur'an* in the digital era has become much more complex than in the previous period.¹⁴

This phenomenon shows that the *Living Qur'an* has actually developed beyond the local context of Indonesia. Various Muslim communities in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, Europe, America, and diaspora communities present different forms of Qur'an reception according to their respective cultural, political, linguistic, and social backgrounds. These differences show that the experience of life towards the Qur'an is universal even though its expressions are diverse.¹⁵ Thus, *the Living Qur'an* has great potential to be used as an analytical framework in explaining the dynamics of the relationship between revelation and the life of cross-cultural Muslim communities. This potential has not been widely developed in the literature, as most research still focuses on documenting local practices without building a conceptual model that can be applied more broadly.

This condition shows the need to reconstruct the epistemological position of the *Living Qur'an*.¹⁶ So far, the *Living Qur'an* is more often understood as a methodological approach that is synonymous with ethnographic research, reception studies, or descriptions of the cultural practices of Muslim communities. In fact, its multidisciplinary characteristics allow the *Living Qur'an* to develop into a research paradigm that integrates textual analysis, religious experience, social practices, cultural construction, and digital transformation in one intact conceptual framework. This reconstruction is important because the paradigm not only provides a set of research methods, but also determines how to view reality, formulate problems, choose an analysis approach, and build new theories in a field of science.

Thus, the shift from a textual approach to *lived experience* is not just a change in the object of research, but a fundamental change in the way of understanding the relationship between the Qur'an and the lives of Muslims. If the textual approach places the Qur'an as an object of interpretation, then *the Living Qur'an* approach places the Qur'an as a social reality that is continuously lived, negotiated, and reproduced in

¹⁴ Syukron et al., 'Digitalizing the Living Qur'an'.

¹⁵ Ayis Mukholik, 'The Variation of the Quran Reception 21st Century in Central Java Indonesia', *IJASOS-International E-Journal of Advances in Social Sciences* 3, no. 7 (2017): 268–75, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18769/ijasos.309686>.

¹⁶ Karman, Rully Agung Yudhiantara, and Asep Muhyidin, 'The Qur'an and the Earth: Qur'anic Reception Among Pesantren Residents toward Environmental Conservation', *Ulumuna* 29, no. 1 (2025): 310–38, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v29i1.1127>.

various cultural and historical contexts. This shift is the main foundation for placing *Living Qur'an* no longer only as an approach in the study of the Qur'an, but as a global research paradigm that is able to bridge the normative dimension of revelation with the empirical reality of the lives of Muslim communities in various parts of the world. Based on these arguments, the next discussion will examine in more depth the epistemological position of *the Living Qur'an*, including the opportunities for its development as well as the various conceptual limitations that are still faced in contemporary literature.

Living Qur'an in an Epistemological Perspective

The development of *Living Qur'an* studies in the last two decades has shown a very significant increase, especially in the Indonesian academic environment. Various Islamic universities have made *Living Qur'an* one of the main approaches in Qur'an research because it is considered to be able to explain the relationship between sacred texts and the practice of Muslim life empirically. In contrast to the study of interpretation which is oriented towards the analysis of the meaning of the text, *the Living Qur'an* focuses on how the Qur'an is received, practiced, negotiated, and actualized in daily life. This orientation shows that the main object of study is no longer solely the normative content of the Qur'an, but the social dynamics born from the interaction of society with revelation.¹⁷

Epistemologically, the *Living Qur'an* was born as a response to the limitations of the textual approach in explaining the religious reality of the Muslim community. The normative approach is able to explain the meaning of the verse based on the rules of language, history, and interpretation methodology, but it often leaves little room for analysis of how the meaning is reproduced in social practice.¹⁸ On the other hand, *the Living Qur'an* views that the meaning of the Qur'an does not stop at the process of interpretation, but continues to develop through religious experiences, cultural traditions, rituals, education, media, and social interaction of the community. Thus, knowledge of the Qur'an is not only generated through interpretive activities, but also through a process of reception and collective experience that takes place dynamically.

These characteristics make *Living Qur'an* a multidisciplinary approach. Various studies utilize anthropological theory, sociology of religion, phenomenology, cultural studies, communication, and ethnography to explain how the Qur'an is present in people's lives. This approach expands the scope of *Qur'anic Studies* from textual studies to empirical studies so as to allow researchers to understand religious practices more comprehensively. It is not surprising that themes such as the tradition of reading certain surahs, khataman Al-Qur'an, calligraphy, Qur'an-verse-based medicine, Qur'anic education, local rituals, and the use of the Qur'an in digital media are the objects of study that are increasingly developing in contemporary research.

In addition to expanding the object of study, *the Living Qur'an* also has an important contribution in building a dialogue between Islamic sciences and social

¹⁷ Ghulam Murtadlo et al., 'Mendalami Living Qur'an: Analisis Pendidikan Dalam Memahami Dan Menghidupkan Al-Qur'an: Exploring The Living Qur'an: An Analysis Of Education In Understanding And Living The Qur'an', *PANDU: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Dan Pendidikan Umum* 1, no. 2 (2023): 73–78, <https://doi.org/10.59966/pandu.v1i2.206>.

¹⁸ Al Fiqri Ardiansyah et al., 'Qiwamah And Epistemic Violence: A Critical Socio-Legal Analysis of Gendered Authority In Islamic Family Law', *Mawaddah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 3, no. 2 (2025): 605–26, <https://doi.org/10.52496/mjhki.v3i2.100>.

sciences. This approach shows that the Qur'an is not only a source of normative teachings, but also has a social dimension that continues to shape the behavior, identity, and culture of Muslim society. Therefore, the *Living Qur'an research* is able to provide a more complete understanding of the relationship between the sacred text and the reality of life. This contribution is very important in the context of modern society characterized by cultural plurality, social mobility, and the development of digital technology that changes the way people interact with the Qur'an.

Nevertheless, the development of *the Living Qur'an* also faces a number of epistemological problems. The first problem is related to the lack of agreement on the scientific position of the *Living Qur'an*. Some scholars view it as a research method, while others consider it to be an approach or branch of the study of the reception of the Qur'an. These differences show that the epistemological foundation of the *Living Qur'an* is still in the process of development so that its conceptual boundaries are not yet fully established. As a result, many studies use the term *Living Qur'an* only as a label for field research without providing an explanation of the epistemological assumptions underlying it.¹⁹

The second problem is the dominance of descriptive research. Most *Living Qur'an* studies focus on documenting community practices, such as the tradition of reciting certain verses, the use of the Qur'an in rituals, or local religious activities. This kind of research has succeeded in enriching empirical data on people's reception of the Qur'an, but it often stops at the description of the phenomenon without developing new concepts or theories. In fact, the development of a discipline is not only determined by the amount of empirical research, but also by the ability of the research to produce theoretical constructions that are able to explain various phenomena more broadly.

The third problem is related to the scope of research which is still dominated by the local context. Most *Living Qur'an publications* take place in Indonesia with a focus on the traditions of a particular community, pesantren, mosque, or local community. This condition is certainly a strength because it shows the richness of religious practices of the Indonesian people. However, the dominance of local studies has led to the *Living Qur'an* not being widely tested in the context of Muslim communities in other regions such as the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and diaspora communities. As a result, the contribution of *Living Qur'an* to the development of *Qur'anic Studies* at the global level is still relatively limited.

The fourth problem is that the integration between normative approaches and empirical approaches has not been optimal. In some studies, the analysis is more directed at the description of social practices without connecting them to the in-depth construction of the meaning of the Qur'an. On the other hand, there is also research that is too oriented to interpretation so that it ignores the social dynamics of society. In fact, the main strength of the *Living Qur'an* lies precisely in its ability to connect texts, interpretations, experiences, and social practices in one integrated analytical framework. Without this integration, *the Living Qur'an* will be difficult to develop into a scientific paradigm that has a wider explainability.

Although the development of *the study of the Living Qur'an* shows rapid progress, an evaluation of the latest literature shows that its epistemological development still

¹⁹ Berliana, Iliyina, and Muthmainnah, 'Living Qur'an and Living Hadith in Contemporary Islamic Studies'.

faces conceptual fragmentation.²⁰ Most research has focused on documenting the practice of Qur'an reception in society, while discussions of its philosophical foundations and theoretical framework are still relatively limited. This condition causes *the Living Qur'an* to be understood more often as a field research approach than as a scientific paradigm that has clear ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. This finding is also confirmed by the latest epistemological studies that show that the *research of the Living Qur'an* so far tends to be phenomenological-descriptive and has not developed much conceptual models that are able to explain the relationship between texts, religious experiences, and the construction of social meaning in an integrated manner.

This epistemological problem has implications for various definitions of *the Living Qur'an*. Some scholars define it as the study of society's reception of the Qur'an, while others understand it as the study of social practices inspired by the Qur'an. These differences actually show a wealth of perspective, but on the other hand create ambiguity regarding the boundaries of the object of study. As a result, various studies with very different characteristics are still categorized as *Living Qur'an* even though they have different theoretical and methodological assumptions. This condition shows that the development of *the Living Qur'an* is still at the stage of expanding the object of research, not yet fully entering the paradigm consolidation stage.

In addition, the dominance of case-based research causes the theoretical contribution of *Living Qur'an* to the development of global *Qur'anic Studies* to be still not optimal. Most articles end with descriptions of forms of societal reception without developing a conceptual proposition that can be applied to a broader context. In fact, in the development of science, paradigms not only function as a methodological tool, but also as a framework that explains how a reality is understood, how research questions are formulated, and how theories are developed. Therefore, strengthening the epistemology of *the Living Qur'an* requires a shift from a documentary orientation to a theoretical orientation so that the results of the research not only explain local phenomena, but also contribute to the development of theory in contemporary Qur'an studies.²¹

Recent literature also shows that the development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the pattern of interaction of Muslims with the Qur'an. Reading, memorizing, learning interpretation, and building religious communities are now taking place through digital applications, social media, podcasts, online videos, and even artificial intelligence-based systems. This transformation shows that the reception of the Qur'an no longer takes place in a cultural space that is local in nature, but has entered a transnational space that connects Muslim communities across countries. Thus, the *Living Qur'an approach* is no longer sufficient if it is only used to explain local traditions, but must be able to read new dynamics in the form of religious digitization, virtual religious authority, mobility of diaspora communities, and changes in the production pattern of religious knowledge in the digital era.

Based on this study, this study identified four research gaps in the study of contemporary *Living Qur'an*. First, the research is still dominated by a descriptive approach so that its theoretical contribution is relatively limited. Second, the *Living Qur'an* is positioned more as a research method or approach than as a scientific paradigm. Third, the majority of research is oriented to the local context so that it has

²⁰ Rafiq, 'The Living Qur'an'.

²¹ Fatira Wahidah and Abdul Amir, *Jejak Studi Living Qur'an: Otoritas, Idealitas, & Realitas* (Kendari: SulQa Press IAIN Kendar, 2024).

not produced a conceptual model that has global cruising power. Fourth, the integration between textual studies, reception theory, *lived religion*, and the development of digital society has not been systematically built. These four gaps show the need for epistemological reconstruction so that the *Living Qur'an* is not only an instrument for documenting religious practices, but also a paradigm capable of comprehensively explaining the relationship between revelation, religious experience, social practice, and civilizational change.

The findings can be summarized in the following Table.

Evolving Paradigm	Epistemological Limitations
<i>Living Qur'an</i> as a case study	Local and contextual
<i>Living Qur'an</i> as an ethnograph	Dominant descriptive, minimal theoretical construction
<i>Living Qur'an</i> as a reception study	Focus on public acceptance, not yet build a paradigm
<i>Living Qur'an</i> as a buday phenomenon	Lack of integration of textual, social, and global dimensions
<i>Living Qur'an</i> as a research method	It does not yet have a complete epistemological foundation

Based on this analysis, it can be affirmed that the main challenge in the study of *the Living Qur'an* today no longer lies in the lack of empirical research, but in the lack of a conceptual framework that is able to integrate these findings into a more comprehensive scientific paradigm. In other words, the development of *the Living Qur'an* has produced a wealth of empirical data about the life of the Qur'an in society, but it still requires epistemological reconstruction in order to be able to explain the phenomenon across disciplines, cultures, and social spaces. Therefore, the next subchapter offers a conceptual model that repositions the *Living Qur'an* as a Global Research Paradigm, which is a research paradigm that bridges textual analysis, reception, *lived experience*, social practices, and the transformation of Muslim society in a global context.

Reconstruction of *Living Qur'an* as a Global Research Paradigm

The rapid development of *the study of the Living Qur'an* shows that this approach has succeeded in expanding the scope of Qur'an study from textual analysis to empirical studies of the religious practices of Muslim society. However, as described in the previous subchapter, these developments are still dominated by descriptive and contextual research. Most research focuses on documenting the forms of reception of the Qur'an in a given community, while efforts to build an epistemological framework capable of comprehensively explaining these phenomena are still relatively limited. Therefore, a conceptual reconstruction is needed that places the *Living Qur'an* not only as a methodological approach, but as a research paradigm that has a clear ontological, epistemological, and methodological foundation.²²

In the perspective of the philosophy of science, a paradigm is a set of basic

²² Muhammad Alif, 'Rethinking Studi Living Qur'an Dan Hadis', *Holistic Al-Hadis* 9, no. 02 (2024): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.32678/34f8m742>.

assumptions that determine how a reality is understood, how research questions are formulated, what methods are used, and how knowledge is constructed. Thus, the paradigm is not only related to research techniques, but also becomes the framework of thought that directs the entire scientific process. If *the Living Qur'an* is only positioned as a field research method or approach, then its contribution will be limited to the collection of empirical data. In contrast, when understood as a paradigm, *the Living Qur'an* has the ability to explain the relationship between revelation, religious experience, social practice, and cultural change in various contexts of Muslim society.

The reconstruction of the paradigm begins with a change in the way of viewing the Qur'an as an object of study. In the textual paradigm, the Qur'an is positioned as a text that is understood through the process of interpretation. The focus of the research is directed at the structure of language, the context of revelation, the methodology of interpretation, and the normative meaning of the verse. Meanwhile, the *Living Qur'an paradigm* views the Qur'an as a reality that continues to live through human interaction with revelation. The Qur'an does not stop at the process of interpretation, but continues to undergo actualization through rituals, education, culture, digital media, social activities, and the formation of religious identity. Thus, the object of *Living Qur'an* study is not only in the form of texts, but also all social practices that make the Qur'an a source of meaning in people's lives.²³ Based on this reconstruction, this study proposes that the *Living Qur'an* is built on five interrelated epistemological dimensions.

First, the ontological dimension, which is to view the Qur'an not only as a *sacred text*, but also as a *social reality*. In this dimension, the existence of the Qur'an is understood through various forms of manifestation in people's lives, both in the form of rituals, traditions, cultural symbols, and digital practices. Thus, the reality studied is not limited to the content of the text, but also includes the social life shaped by human interaction with the Qur'an.

Second, the epistemological dimension, namely the recognition that knowledge about the Qur'an can be obtained through two complementary paths, namely interpretation of the text and observation of people's life practices. This approach integrates the tradition of interpretation with the approach of the social sciences so as to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between revelation and reality.

Third, the methodological dimension, namely the use of a multidisciplinary approach in analyzing the phenomenon of the *Living Qur'an*. Studies no longer depend on one particular method, but can utilize ethnography, phenomenology, discourse analysis, religious anthropology, sociology of religion, digital media studies, and cultural analysis. This methodological flexibility allows the *Living Qur'an* to be used in a variety of research contexts without losing its epistemological identity.

Fourth, the sociological dimension, which is understanding that people's interaction with the Qur'an is always influenced by social, cultural, political, economic,

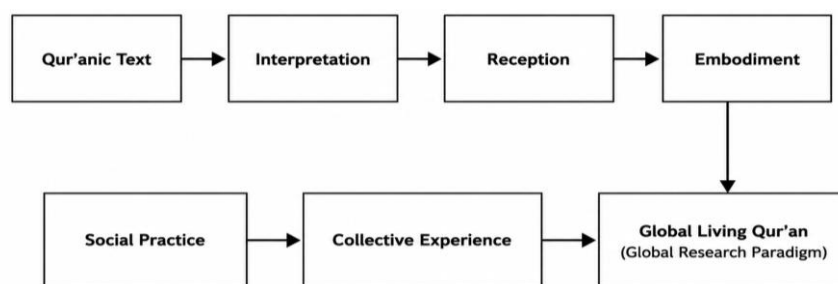
²³ Dedi Masri and Randy Putra Alamsyah, 'Force Majeure in Abortion: A Review of Ulama Fatwas and Indonesian Health Law', *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 14, no. 1 (April 2026): 61–76, <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol14no1.1179>.

and technological structures. Therefore, the meaning of the Qur'an is not understood as something static, but continues to undergo a negotiation process according to changes in time and space.

Fifth, the global dimension, namely the recognition that the phenomenon of Living *Qur'an* does not only occur in the Indonesian Muslim community, but also in Muslim communities in various parts of the world. The practice of learning the Qur'an in Europe, the use of Qur'an applications in the Middle East, tahfiz communities in Africa, digital da'wah in South Asia, and the religious practices of the diaspora community are forms of *the Living Qur'an* that show that the relationship between the Qur'an and people's lives has a universal character even though it is manifested in different cultural expressions.

Based on these five dimensions, this research offers a new conceptual model that describes the transformation of the relationship between text and life experience.

Based on these five dimensions, this research offers a new conceptual model that describes the transformation of the relationship between text and life experience.



The model shows that the journey of the Qur'an does not stop at the process of interpretation. The meaning produced through interpretation is accepted by the community (*reception*), embodied in action, develops into social *practice*, forms collective *experience*, and finally produces various forms of *Living Qur'an* that can be found in various Muslim communities at the global level. This model also expands the research orientation of *Living Qur'an*. If previous research answered more questions about how people practice the Qur'an, then the paradigm proposed in this study directs attention to a broader question, namely how the Qur'an shapes social reality across cultures, spaces, and technological developments.²⁴ Thus, *the Living Qur'an* is no longer understood as a local cultural phenomenon, but as a scientific paradigm capable of explaining the dynamic relationship between revelation, humans, and changes in global society.

This reconstruction also has important methodological implications. Living *Qur'an research* does not have to be limited to the observation of religious rituals, but can be extended to various contemporary issues such as digital religious authority,

²⁴ Ahmad Rafiq, 'The Reception of the Qur'an in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Place of the Qur'an' (Dissertation, Temple University, 2014).

artificial intelligence in Qur'an learning, diaspora Muslim communities, Islamic popular culture, ecology, education, health, and social movements based on Qur'anic values. The expansion shows that the *Living Qur'an* has the capacity as an interdisciplinary paradigm that is able to dialogue with anthropology, sociology, communication, media studies, political science, education, and cultural studies.

Thus, the reconstruction of *the Living Qur'an* as a Global Research Paradigm is not just a change in terminology, but a paradigm shift in contemporary Qur'an studies. This paradigm places the Qur'an as a *living scripture*, whose meaning continues to be produced, negotiated, and realized through the collective experience of Muslims in various parts of the world. Through this approach, *Living Qur'an* has the potential to become one of the main paradigms in the development of *Qur'anic Studies* in the global and digital era.

Implications of Living Qur'an as a Global Paradigm in Contemporary Qur'an Studies

The reconstruction of *the Living Qur'an* as a paradigm of global research has far broader implications than just changing terminology in the study of the Qur'an. This paradigm changes the way we look at the relationship between revelation, humans, and social reality. If so far the Qur'an has been understood more as an object of textual interpretation, then the *Living Qur'an* paradigm places the Qur'an as a source of meaning that continues to interact with the dynamics of human life. This shift has made *Qur'anic Studies* no longer only oriented to the search for the normative meaning of verses, but also to how the values of the Qur'an are produced, negotiated, and embodied in various social, cultural, political, economic, and technological practices. Thus, this paradigm expands the scope of Qur'an study from a textual approach to an interdisciplinary and contextual approach.²⁵

The first implication of this paradigm is the expansion of the object of study in *Qur'anic Studies*. For decades, the object of research on the Qur'an has been dominated by the study of interpretation, linguistics, the history of codification, and the sciences of the Qur'an. The reconstruction of *the Living Qur'an* allows the object of research to develop into various social phenomena related to the presence of the Qur'an in people's lives. Religious practices, Islamic popular culture, education, sharia economics, social movements, philanthropy, the environment, and digital communication can be analyzed as a form of actualization of the values of the Qur'an. Thus, the Qur'an is understood not only as a text to be read, but also as an inspiration that shapes individual behavior as well as social structures.

The second implication has to do with strengthening interdisciplinary approaches. The *Living Qur'an paradigm* opens a space for collaboration between *Qur'anic Studies* with various disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, political science, communication, education, psychology, media studies, and environmental

²⁵ Neneng Kurnia, 'Al-Qur'an Dan Rekonstruksi Worldview Keagamaan: Fondasi Holistik Dalam Pendidikan Islam', *Jurnal Indragiri Penelitian Multidisiplin* 6, no. 1 (2026): 81-92, <https://ejournal.indrainstitute.id/index.php/jipm/article/view/1476>.

science. Such integration allows the study of the Qur'an to produce a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship between sacred texts and empirical reality. For example, in the study of digital communication, *the Living Qur'an* can be used to analyze how Qur'anic verses are produced, disseminated, and received through social media. Recent research shows that digital platforms have changed the pattern of production and circulation of Qur'anic knowledge so that religious authority is no longer only shaped by scientific sanad, but also by algorithms, media visibility, and audience participation. This condition shows that digital transformation has presented a new space for the actualization of *the Living Qur'an* in the contemporary era.

The third implication is the development of digital Islamic studies (*digital Islam*). The presence of Qur'an applications, online tafsir platforms, Islamic podcasts, virtual tahsin classes, and the use of artificial *intelligence* in verse search and interpretation of interpretation shows that the interaction of Muslims with the Qur'an has undergone a fundamental transformation. The Qur'an is now present in the digital space as a source of learning, da'wah, consultation, and even the formation of religious identity. In this context, the *Living Qur'an* paradigm becomes relevant to explain how technology not only functions as a medium for delivering religious messages, but also shapes the way people understand, access, and practice the Qur'an. In other words, technology is part of the process of receiving the Qur'an which continues to evolve following social changes.

The fourth implication relates to the study of Muslim diaspora and transnational society. Globalization and human mobility have shaped Muslim communities living in different parts of the world with very diverse cultural backgrounds. In these conditions, religious practices are no longer limited by geographical space, but take place through digital networks and cross-border communities. The *Living Qur'an* paradigm allows researchers to understand how diaspora communities build their religious identity through interaction with the Qur'an in multicultural situations. Recent research shows that the digital space is an important arena for the Muslim diaspora in negotiating religious identities, dealing with cultural differences, and building new religious communities that are transnational.

The fifth implication is the strengthening of theoretical contributions to the development of *Qur'anic Studies*.²⁶ So far, most of the *Living Qur'an*'s research has ended up with a description of social phenomena without producing a theoretical construction that can be used in other contexts. The paradigm offered in this study seeks to change this orientation by placing *the Living Qur'an* as an analytical framework that is able to explain the relationship between texts, interpretation, reception, life experiences, and social practices. Thus, *the Living Qur'an* is no longer understood as a set of case studies, but as a paradigm that has *explanatory power* for various forms of interaction of Muslims with the Qur'an.

In addition to contributing to the development of theory, this paradigm also has methodological implications. *Living Qur'an* research should not be limited to the ethnographic approach that has dominated literature. Researchers can utilize digital ethnography methods, social network *analysis*, critical discourse analysis, media

²⁶ Annas, Saputra, and Said, 'Living Qur'an Sebagai Cerminan Praktik Keagamaan'.

analysis, phenomenology, and *mixed methods* to examine the transformation of the reception of the Qur'an in the digital era. This diversification of methodology expands the capacity of the *Living Qur'an* in answering increasingly complex contemporary problems, while strengthening its position as a research paradigm that is adaptive to the development of science.²⁷

Conceptually, the paradigm reconstructed in this study can be applied to various fields of study as shown in the following Table.

Field of Study	The Contribution of the <i>Living Qur'an Paradigm</i>
Agama Anthropologists	Explain the practices and religious symbols based on the Qur'an
Sociology of Religion	Analyze social constructs and religious identities
Digital Media Studies	Studying the reception of the Qur'an through digital platforms and algorithms
Poly Science	Examining the use of Qur'anic values in public spaces and policies
Islamic Education	Developing a contextual culture of Qur'an learning
Kajian Diaspora	Understanding the negotiation of Muslim identity in a multicultural society
Environmental Studies	Analyze the implementation of the ecological values of the Qur'an in the environmental movement

Based on this description, it can be affirmed that the reconstruction of the *Living Qur'an* as a Global Research Paradigm offers epistemological, methodological, and practical contributions. This paradigm not only expands the scope of *Qur'anic Studies*, but also opens up the possibility of the birth of new studies that are able to explain the dynamic relationship between the Qur'an, society, and global change. Therefore, *Living Qur'an* is no longer understood as an approach limited to the study of local cultures in Indonesia, but rather as a scientific paradigm that has universal relevance to analyze the life of the Qur'an in contemporary Muslim societies in various parts of the world. Thus, this paradigm is expected to be one of the important foundations for the development of *Qur'anic Studies* that are more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and responsive to the challenges of the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the development of *Living Qur'an studies* has shifted the orientation of *Qur'anic Studies* from a *text-centered* approach to a lived experience-oriented approach. Nevertheless, the study of the *Living Qur'an* still faces various epistemological limitations, such as the dominance of descriptive studies, the focus on

²⁷ Muhammad Faqih Ihsan and Muhammad Naufal Ashshiddieqi, 'Historiografi Kajian Living Hadis Di Indonesia', *Journal of Hadith Studies* 7, no. 1 (2024): 63-85, <https://doi.org/10.32506/johs.v7i1-04>.

local contexts, and the unstable position of *the Living Qur'an* as a scientific paradigm. Based on these findings, this study offers a reconstruction of the *Living Qur'an* as a Global Research Paradigm, which is a paradigm that combines ontological, epistemological, methodological, sociological, and global dimensions to explain the dynamic relationship between the Qur'an, religious experience, social practices, and the transformation of Muslim society in various cultural contexts and technological developments. This reconstruction is a major conceptual contribution to research because it places *the Living Qur'an* no longer merely as a field research approach, but as a theoretical framework capable of expanding the scope of contemporary Qur'an studies.

The paradigm offered has important implications for the development of *Qur'anic Studies* that are more interdisciplinary and globally oriented. Through this paradigm, *the study of the Living Qur'an* can be applied to examine various contemporary phenomena, such as digital religious authorities, diaspora Muslim communities, Qur'an education, Islamic popular culture, to the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence in the interaction of Muslims with the Qur'an. Although this research is still conceptual and based on literature studies, the resulting model provides a theoretical basis for future studies to test and develop this paradigm through cross-border and cross-disciplinary empirical studies. Thus, *Living Qur'an* has the potential to become one of the important paradigms in the development of *Qur'anic Studies* that are more inclusive, adaptive, and relevant to the challenges of the global society of the 21st century.

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