



# The Commodification of the Qur'an in the Digital Age: A Study of the Representation and Consumption of the Qur'an on the @quranReview Account

Ach. Faidi Rasyadi<sup>1</sup>, and Annisa Raudhatul Afra<sup>2</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
faidirasyadi01@gmail.com

**Abstract.** The rapid and dynamic evolution of technology has significantly transformed how Muslim communities perceive and engage with the meanings of the Qur'an. One emergent phenomenon is the commodification of the Qur'an, wherein the sacred text shifts from being a purely spiritual reference to a consumable object within a capitalist digital ecosystem. This study explores various forms of Qur'anic commodification in the digital age, with a particular focus on the Instagram account @Quranreview. Employing a qualitative methodology and literature-based approach, the research is theoretically grounded in Jean Baudrillard's concepts of consumption, symbolism, and postmodern society. The findings reveal that @Quranreview presents Qur'anic verses in visually aesthetic formats, uses accessible popular language, and aligns its content with contemporary socio-cultural issues. This process of commodification gives rise to a form of religious commercialization, exemplified by the monetization of exclusive content subscriptions. Such developments signify a shift in religious authority from traditional institutions to digital platforms. The study underscores the pressing challenge for Muslims to maintain a balanced engagement with the Qur'an in an increasingly digitalized reality.

**Keywords:** Qur'anic Commodification, Social Media, @Quranreview.

## 1 Introduction

The dynamic development of digital technology has brought significant implications to religious studies, particularly in how individuals practice and embody religious values in daily life [1]. Initially, the rapid progression of the modern era led to assumptions that religion would gradually fade amidst waves of industrialization, modernization, and even secularization, all propelled by technological advancement. However, empirical reality reveals the contrary: religion's presence and influence have not only persisted but become increasingly pronounced [2]. The emergence of social media and digital religious platforms in today's contemporary digital landscape is, in part, the result of deliberate efforts by app developers and content creators to commodify religion in various ways, including its intersection with Islamic values. This includes, notably, the Qur'anic text. As noted by Natalie Shit, the Qur'an has undergone a substantial

transformation (from physical manuscript to audio cassette, broadcast media, and now digital formats), which, in turn, has shaped discourse within religious communities and influenced how they apply the Qur'an in everyday life.

The digitization of sacred texts in audio-visual formats has facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in the commodification of the Qur'an [3]. One notable phenomenon explored in this research is the Instagram account @Quranreview, which exemplifies this trend by offering curated verses accompanied by interpretive commentary. These short-form contents respond to contemporary social issues circulating on digital platforms [4]. This process of Qur'anic commodification illustrates how the sacred text, once primarily intended for ritual and spiritual practice, now participates in economic mechanisms, becoming embedded within the commercial sphere [5]. As a result, the Qur'an has become both a consumable commodity and a symbolic manifestation within the broader framework of religious commercialization [6]. This backdrop presents a unique challenge for contemporary Muslim communities: maintaining the sanctity of sacred texts while navigating the realities of commercialism and digital innovation [7].

Existing literature on @Quranreview reflects two main academic orientations. The first focuses on its reception and relevance among millennials in an era of digital disruption. [8] highlight the positive values embedded in the account's content, which support religious understanding and offer Islamic-based frameworks for problem-solving. Likewise, Muhammad Libat underscores how @Quranreview applies Qur'anic interpretation via Instagram, emphasizing the cognitive gains users experience through digital exegesis [4]. Muhammad Syaifullah adds that the issues raised are framed in ways that are accessible and engaging for young audiences. By simplifying complex theological concepts, the account effectively meets the spiritual and intellectual needs of digital-native Muslims [9].

The second orientation centers on the epistemological and methodological strategies employed by @Quranreview. Abdul Ghani argues that the platform enriches its textual interpretations with visual elements, such as imagery and background music, to enhance relatability among youth. This multimedia approach makes social media a more effective medium for religious education. Echoing this view, Muhafilah asserts that the account adopts illustrative analogies and thematic categorizations based on contemporary societal issues, all grounded in Qur'anic teachings. The approach is intentionally simplified to align with the sensibilities of modern youth, enabling them to comprehend complex religious concepts through digestible formats [10], further elaborates on how these epistemological and methodological strategies shape the content and influence of @Quranreview, making it a key subject in studies of Qur'anic interpretation in the digital age.

However, the concept of decommodification of the Qur'an, particularly within the context of digital media, remains largely underexplored. Previous research has not sufficiently examined how platforms like @Quranreview influence consumer motivations, especially among younger users who actively engage with religious content online [11]. In response to these gaps, this study proposes a focused exploration of Qur'anic commodification through the lens of @Quranreview. Specifically, it seeks to investigate the underlying motives behind content creation, the mechanisms by which Qur'anic values

are reframed for digital consumption, and the extent to which audiences are influenced as religious consumers in the social media economy. A preliminary argument proposed by the author is that social media offers fertile ground for repackaging religious values into commercial formats, reflecting materialist perspectives that regard human agency as inherently inclined to maximize economic opportunities across social domains.

## 2 Method

This study employs a qualitative passive theoretical method, with the commodification of the Qur'an as its central object of inquiry. The research aims to develop a deep understanding of the underlying factors behind the emergence of commodification within *Qur'an review* accounts. Data collection is conducted through a series of structured activities grounded in library research, involving careful examination, interpretation, and critical analysis of materials drawn from scholarly texts and archival notes [12].

Additionally, the study adopts Jean Baudrillard's theoretical framework to analyze human behavior as inherently consumptive. From this perspective, the research investigates how consumerist impulses have reshaped spiritual needs into lifestyle expressions, particularly in the way technological advancements mediate the consumption of religious values through social media [13]. The primary object of analysis is the Instagram account *Qur'an Review*, which functions as a digital platform engaged in interpretive religious dissemination. It is examined as a commodified product that embodies both interpretive affiliations and an evangelistic zeal for spreading Qur'anic values, facilitated by Instagram's visual and algorithmic infrastructure.

## 3 Result and Discussion

This study centers its primary focus on the Instagram account QuranReview, which serves as a contemporary model of Qur'anic interpretation characterized by a simplified approach adapted to social media platforms. Its intentional design and content presentation, specifically tailored to engage younger audiences, position it as a significant case study for examining Qur'anic exegesis in the digital era.

### 3.1 The Contribution of Social Media to Qur'anic Interpretation in the Digital Era

The growing penetration of social media platforms in Indonesia, including WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, has shown a significant year-over-year increase. By 2022, the number of social media users in Indonesia reached approximately 197 million. This massive engagement presents a strategic opportunity for content creators to promote various themes, including Islamic content, in formats that are readily accessible to the general public. One notable example is the Instagram account Qur'an Review,

which consistently offers posts featuring Qur'anic verses paired with contextually relevant interpretations [14]. Through platforms like Qur'an Review, digital engagement with tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) has surged.

In the past, access to Qur'anic interpretation was mediated through scholars and formal institutions. Today, digital technologies, particularly audiovisual formats shared on Instagram and other social media, allow individual users to engage with the Qur'an independently. These technologies include short videos, memes, and infographics that communicate Qur'anic meanings adapted to contemporary socio-cultural realities [15].

The proliferation of Qur'anic apps and Instagram-based content has expanded the variety of interpretative frameworks available to the public. In an era that is no longer confined by time or space, Qur'anic exegesis continues to evolve and generate new hermeneutic approaches aligned with current cultural contexts. The integration of social media and the Qur'an has transformed digital platforms into primary arenas for religious discourse. However, this trend also raises concerns about textual reductionism and the commodification of Qur'anic interpretation. What was once considered the domain of sacred scholarship has, in some cases, shifted toward market-driven religiosity and spiritual consumerism [11].

Compared to traditional methods such as books and academic papers, social media enables faster production and dissemination of content. There is no need for lengthy scripting, editing, or publishing processes. With just an account, users can access interpretative content on demand, making engagement with the Qur'an more immediate and dynamic. Moreover, social media platforms provide interactive spaces for dialogue. Comment sections on pages like Qur'an Review allow users to offer feedback, pose questions, or suggest future topics. This interaction facilitates communal participation in the interpretation of sacred texts, shaped by both religious literacy and contemporary social developments.

### **3.2 A Glimpse into the @Quranreview Instagram Account**

Quranreview is an Instagram account distinguished by its visually compelling design and curated Qur'anic content. With over 567,000 followers, the account presents Qur'anic verses through aesthetically pleasing layouts and accessible language. Operating under the slogan "Stay Close with Quran," Quranreview offers a more relatable and emotionally resonant approach to Islamic teachings for contemporary audiences through social media platforms. Its inaugural post, dated June 21, 2019, features a stylized image of the moon labeled "Lemon 17," which later became the account's iconic logo.



**Fig. 1.** @Quranreview Instagram Account  
<https://instagram.com/quranreview?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y>

Functioning at the intersection of faith and digital innovation, Quranreview exemplifies how Qur’anic discourse can be reimagined for a millennial audience. By leveraging Instagram as an expressive medium, the account enables young Muslims to engage with the Qur’an in ways that align with their visual and aesthetic preferences. Through carefully crafted captions and images, its content reflects a seamless fusion of religious knowledge and contemporary digital culture. The platform also represents a hybrid form of religious education, offering Islamic teachings centered on the Qur’an as a primary axis of learning [16]. Quranreview introduces its audience to Qur’anic interpretations contextualized within current social issues and events. Each post captures unique thematic responses derived directly from Qur’anic verses, articulated in a linguistic style that resonates with the language habits of today’s youth. The creative application of Qur’anic principles via social media has been met with positive reception, effectively revitalizing the Qur’an’s presence in everyday digital life.

Departing from traditional text-based study, Quranreview expands Qur’anic engagement by adopting a more informative and performative method. It not only disseminates sacred knowledge but does so in a way that attracts and sustains public interest, functioning as a cultural magnet for thousands of followers. The account’s use of conversational and relatable language, complemented by visually dynamic posts, enhances its appeal among digital-native audiences.

As suggested by its name, Quranreview offers a modern interpretation of Qur’anic verses through artful storytelling and a modular, slideshow format. The first slide typically features abstract imagery or animations that hint at the thematic focus of subsequent slides. Its interpretive approach is marked by linguistic nuance and holistic exegesis, presenting a unique synthesis of scholarly insight and contemporary relevance. Notably, Quranreview often integrates code-switching—a blend of Indonesian and foreign languages—to create a hybrid linguistic style that reflects the multicultural experience of its readership. This stylistic choice mirrors current youth communication patterns and enriches the consumption of religious knowledge in new and engaging ways.

In essence, Quranreview demonstrates how technological advancement can be harnessed as a platform for digitally mediated da'wah, primarily through visual storytelling and simplified explanations of Qur'anic messages linked to specific life events. Through this innovative model, the account plays a pivotal role in promoting broader public understanding and appreciation of the Qur'an's timeless wisdom, bridging the sacred and the digital in the age of social media.

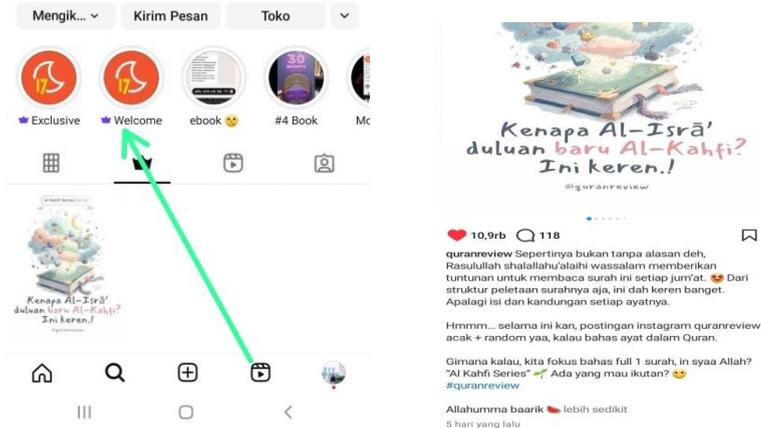


Fig. 2. @Quranreview Instagram Account

### 3.3 The Transformation of Content Delivery on the Qur'an Review Account

Initially, the Qur'an Review account presented its interpretive content in a conventional format, similar to the general practices of most social media platforms. It offered open-access posts without a specialized platform or exclusive segmentation, allowing followers to engage freely with the Qur'anic interpretations featured in each publication. This model promoted accessibility and inclusivity in Qur'anic learning.

However, the content delivery approach of Qur'an Review has recently undergone a strategic transformation. The account has shifted toward a subscription-based model, offering followers a more tailored and in-depth interpretive experience. This transition is intended to enhance both the quality of service and the depth of understanding for its most committed followers.

Subscribers, upon activating membership through a designated button, are charged a monthly fee of IDR 7,500. In return, they receive privileged access to a suite of exclusive content that extends beyond the general posts previously available. Notable features include focused discussions on Surah al-Kahf, early access to new uploads, and personalized engagement strategies designed specifically for the subscription-based community. This transformation represents a deliberate move toward curating a more immersive and enriched interpretive journey for a dedicated audience.



Fig. 3. @Quranreview Subscription-Based Model

### 3.4 The Qur'an as a Commodity in the @quranreview Account

Commodification can be understood as the process of transforming something into a commodity that is suitable for commercial use. In this context, communication becomes a medium through which religious values—once seen as separate from economic considerations—are recontextualized and exchanged. This reflects a broader phenomenon known as religious commodification, where religious expressions are reconstructed to serve economic functions. Religion is positioned as a product that can generate income and be made available for public consumption and adaptation. Formerly limited to ritual practices, religion—particularly the Qur'an—has undergone a significant shift in meaning with the rise of social media. The content presented by Qur'an Review illustrates how the commodification of the Qur'an is not only driven by intentional marketing strategies but is also influenced by consumer behavior and how society engages with religious values in the digital era [11].

The digitalization of the Qur'an has introduced new ways of understanding religion in society, especially among individuals whose daily routines are closely linked to social media. The commercialization of religion, and the Qur'an specifically, is deeply connected to the human tendency to seek meaning and satisfaction through consumption. This consumerist tendency includes spiritual fulfillment, often pursued through commodified religious content. From the standpoint of postmodern theory, religion can

be treated as a communicative object that is packaged, distributed, and sold. As a result, the symbolic capital found in the Qur'an becomes a source of material benefit. Followers are encouraged to subscribe, interact, and participate in the monetization of Qur'anic content. In this way, the Qur'an assumes additional roles beyond its sacred and spiritual meanings, taking on utilitarian and economic functions as well [2].

In this new landscape, the consumer is not merely a passive recipient but also becomes a content producer, especially on social media. This shift blurs the boundaries between consumption and production. Within religious communication, there is a reciprocal relationship between consumer culture and the commodification of the Qur'an. As audiences consume and reproduce religious messages, the Qur'an increasingly takes on physical, commodified forms, as seen in the Qur'an Review platform [17]. However, the commercialization of Islam and its spiritual heritage carries serious consequences. There is a risk that sacred values, including spiritual rituals and authenticity, may be eroded. The Qur'an, traditionally a medium for worship, is now part of a digital culture that prioritizes spiritual consumption over spiritual production. This shift can cause discomfort, especially when sacred texts are tailored to meet the preferences of digital consumers.

The process of commodification in Qur'an Review becomes particularly relevant given the audience's dependence on and frequent engagement with its content. For many followers who view themselves as consumers, this relationship becomes normalized. It evolves into a daily practice for seeking spiritual, symbolic, or even material satisfaction through digital religious experiences.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the findings and analysis, the Qur'an Review account presents a distinctive example of the commodification of the Qur'an as curated by its administrator. This phenomenon not only contributes to contemporary forms of religious understanding but also reflects a shift in the ways followers engage with Islamic teachings, particularly through subscription-based access on Instagram. In this context, social media functions not merely as a channel for disseminating religious knowledge but emerges as a transformative space where sacred values are subtly redefined. The Qur'an, traditionally revered as a text of devotion and spiritual guidance, is increasingly framed within commercial narratives. Through monetized features such as paid subscriptions and "one surah per session" packages, the Qur'an is positioned simultaneously as a spiritual resource and an economic product. This reflects a broader trend in the digital age in which the Qur'an is mediated, formatted, and consumed according to the logic of commodification, as clearly exemplified in the case of the Qur'an Review account.

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