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Epistemological Continuity and Mediated Authority in Audiovisual Qur'anic Exegesis: A Study of Sheikh As-Sudais's Interpretation of Fasting Verses

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Abstract

The digital transformation of Qur'anic interpretation raises important questions concerning the continuity of scholarly authority in audiovisual religious communication. This study examines the epistemological construction of Sheikh Abdurrahman As-Sudais's interpretation of the fasting verses in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183–187), focusing on interpretive sources, exegetical methods, validity, and the mediation of religious authority. Employing a qualitative approach through library research and audiovisual content analysis, the study examines lectures published on the Durus al-Masjid al-Haram YouTube channel alongside relevant classical exegetical and hadith literature. The findings reveal an integration of tafsir bi al-ma'tsur and tafsir bi al-ra'yi within a predominantly tahlili method characterized by linguistic, jurisprudential, and limited comparative interpretation. Epistemological validity is examined through coherence, correspondence with identifiable textual authorities, and pragmatic relevance to religious practice. Beyond these methodological characteristics, the study identifies four interconnected dimensions of authority: personal, textual, institutional, and media authority. Their interaction demonstrates that digital platforms extend the circulation of exegetical knowledge without necessarily replacing its classical epistemological foundations. The study proposes epistemological continuity through mediated authority as a conceptual framework distinguishing scholarly justification from institutional recognition and digital visibility. This framework contributes to digital Qur'anic studies by explaining how classical interpretive legitimacy can be maintained and communicated within contemporary audiovisual environments.

Kata kunci:
Tafsir Audiovisual; Tafsir Digital; Otoritas Epistemologis; Syekh As-Sudais

Abstrak

Transformasi digital dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an menghadirkan persoalan mengenai kesinambungan otoritas keilmuan dalam komunikasi keagamaan audiovisual. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konstruksi epistemologi penafsiran ayat-ayat puasa dalam QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 183–187 perspektif Syekh Abdurrahman As-Sudais, dengan menitikberatkan pada sumber, metode, validitas penafsiran, dan mediasi otoritas keagamaan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi kepustakaan dan analisis konten audiovisual terhadap kajian yang dipublikasikan melalui kanal YouTube Durus al-Masjid al-Haram, didukung literatur tafsir klasik dan hadis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan integrasi sumber tafsir bi al-ma'tsur dan tafsir bi al-ra'yi melalui metode tahlili dengan karakteristik kebahasaan, fikih, dan komparatif terbatas. Validitas epistemologis dianalisis berdasarkan koherensi argumentasi, korespondensi dengan otoritas tekstual yang dapat diidentifikasi, serta relevansi pragmatis terhadap praktik keagamaan. Lebih lanjut, penelitian mengidentifikasi empat dimensi otoritas yang saling berhubungan, yaitu otoritas personal, tekstual, kelembagaan, dan media. Interaksi keempatnya memperlihatkan bahwa platform digital memperluas transmisi pengetahuan tafsir tanpa harus menggantikan landasan epistemologi klasik. Penelitian ini menawarkan konsep epistemological continuity through mediated authority sebagai kerangka konseptual untuk membedakan legitimasi keilmuan dari pengakuan

kelembagaan dan visibilitas digital. Kontribusi penelitian terletak pada pengembangan kajian tafsir digital melalui penjelasan mengenai bagaimana otoritas penafsiran klasik dipertahankan, direpresentasikan, dan ditransmisikan dalam lingkungan audiovisual kontemporer secara metodologis.

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Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has significantly transformed the production, dissemination, and accessibility of Islamic knowledge in the digital era (E-sor et al., 2025; Indriyani & Khadiq, 2023). The emergence of the internet and various social media platforms has enabled people to access religious information beyond geographical and temporal boundaries. The transmission of Islamic knowledge, which traditionally took place in religious gatherings, mosques, and educational institutions, has increasingly expanded into digital spaces, reaching broader and more diverse audiences (Raya, 2025; Wahid & Abdulloh, 2026). This transformation indicates that digital media function not merely as communication channels but also as emerging spaces for the dissemination and construction of religious knowledge, including Qur'anic interpretation (Hairul, 2020; Taufikurrahman, 2012). These developments raise important academic questions concerning how the authority and legitimacy of Qur'anic interpretation are maintained when religious knowledge is transmitted through digital platforms.

One manifestation of this transformation is the emergence of audiovisual Qur'anic exegesis, which refers to the interpretation of the Qur'an communicated through the integration of auditory and visual elements on digital platforms, particularly YouTube (Ali & Isnaini, 2024; Huda et al., 2025a). Unlike written exegesis, which is generally presented through classical commentaries or scholarly publications, audiovisual exegesis enables interpreters to communicate Qur'anic meanings through spoken explanations, expressions, and interactions with audiences (Emha, 2026; Rosyidi et al., 2026). This format expands public access to Qur'anic scholarship while introducing new characteristics into the transmission of exegetical knowledge (Zahra, 2019). Nevertheless, changes in the medium of communication raise epistemological questions regarding the relationship between interpretive sources, exegetical methods, and scholarly authority. These questions are particularly relevant because greater accessibility to digital religious content does not necessarily guarantee that the interpretations presented are grounded in accountable scholarly methodologies.

The openness of digital media allows individuals with diverse educational backgrounds and levels of religious expertise to disseminate Qur'anic interpretations without necessarily

undergoing the mechanisms of scholarly authorization traditionally associated with Islamic intellectual institutions. Consequently, digital platforms may accommodate interpretations that vary considerably in their sources, methodological rigor, and argumentative foundations. Mannan & Farhana, (2026) emphasizes the importance of epistemological foundations in understanding and evaluating Qur'anic interpretation. Accordingly, the study of audiovisual exegesis should extend beyond examining media characteristics, the popularity of religious figures, or audience reach to investigate how exegetical knowledge is constructed, justified, and evaluated (Chrostowski, 2026; Huda et al., 2025b). Such an epistemological perspective is essential for distinguishing authority grounded in scholarly competence and methodological reasoning from authority generated primarily through visibility and popularity in digital environments.

Within this context, the audiovisual Qur'anic lectures delivered by Sheikh Abdurrahman As-Sudais through the Durus al-Masjid al-Haram YouTube channel provide a relevant case for epistemological investigation. As an imam and preacher of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Sheikh As-Sudais occupies a prominent religious position associated with institutional authority and Islamic scholarly traditions. His interpretation of the fasting verses in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183–187) draws upon classical exegetical sources, particularly Tafsir As-Sa'di, alongside legal hadith literature, including ‘Umdat al-Ahkam. These characteristics present a distinctive epistemological context in which Qur'anic interpretation is communicated by an institutionally recognized religious figure while being constructed through the explanation and reinterpretation of established scholarly sources. Examining this case therefore provides an opportunity to investigate how source-based exegetical authority is transmitted through audiovisual media while remaining connected to established principles of Qur'anic interpretation.

Previous studies have contributed to the growing scholarship on the epistemology of audiovisual Qur'anic exegesis. Fawaid & Aini, (2024) examined Gus Baha's audiovisual interpretation on the Al-Muhibbin YouTube channel, focusing on its interpretive characteristics and implications for viewers. (Ashraf, manuscript) investigated the epistemology of Ustaz Musthafa Umar's Qur'anic interpretation on the Kajian Tafsir Al-Ma'rifah YouTube channel, emphasizing interpretive sources, methods, and validity. Similarly, (Hamid, 2024) explored the epistemological characteristics of Kiai Musta'in Syafi'i's audiovisual exegesis on the Galeri MQ YouTube channel. Collectively, these studies demonstrate the relevance of epistemological approaches to understanding Qur'anic interpretation in digital environments. However, the research emphases reported in these studies have not specifically addressed the interconnected relationship between the transmission of classical exegetical authority, the institutional position of the interpreter, and the transformation of interpretive communication through audiovisual media within a single analytical framework.

Building upon this research gap, the present study positions the continuity of epistemological authority as its central analytical concern. Rather than merely identifying the interpretive sources, methods, and validity associated with a particular religious figure, this study employs these three dimensions to examine how scholarly authority is constructed and maintained through digital transmission. Sheikh As-Sudais's audiovisual interpretation offers

a distinctive analytical context by bringing together institutional religious authority, source-based interpretation grounded in Tafsir As-Sa'di and legal hadith, and the dissemination of exegetical knowledge through YouTube. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies not simply in selecting a different interpreter or exegetical subject but in examining the relationship between source authority, methodological legitimacy, and media transformation in the epistemological construction of audiovisual Qur'anic exegesis. Theoretically, this study seeks to contribute to digital Qur'anic studies by clarifying how established exegetical traditions can retain their epistemological foundations within contemporary media environments, while distinguishing the medium of knowledge transmission from the scholarly foundations that legitimize interpretation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the epistemological construction of Sheikh Abdurrahman As-Sudais's audiovisual interpretation of the fasting verses in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183–187), as presented on the Durus al-Masjid al-Haram YouTube channel. Specifically, the analysis focuses on interpretive sources, exegetical methods, and the validity of interpretive arguments to explain how these interconnected dimensions contribute to the construction and continuity of scholarly authority in audiovisual Qur'anic interpretation. By examining the relationship between classical exegetical methodology and digital knowledge transmission, this study is expected to advance the understanding of epistemological authority in contemporary digital Qur'anic scholarship.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach combining library research (Montgomery, 2011) and audiovisual content analysis to investigate the epistemological construction of Sheikh Abdurrahman As-Sudais's interpretation of the fasting verses in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183–187). The primary data were drawn from the audiovisual lecture entitled Tafsir Āyāt al-Ṣiyām min Tafsīr Ibn Sa'dī wa Aḥādīts al-Ṣiyām min 'Umdat al-Aḥkām, published on the Durus al-Masjid al-Haram YouTube channel. The lecture was identified as the principal research object because it directly addresses the selected fasting verses and incorporates classical Qur'anic commentary, prophetic traditions, and jurisprudential explanations. Purposive selection was based on three criteria: thematic relevance to Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183–187), the presence of identifiable exegetical references, and the availability of substantive explanations suitable for epistemological analysis. Secondary data consisted of classical tafsir literature, hadith collections, scholarly books, and relevant journal articles concerning Qur'anic interpretation, epistemology of tafsir, and digital religious communication.

The analytical framework comprised three interconnected dimensions: interpretive sources, exegetical methods, and epistemological validity (Barir, 2026). The unit of analysis was an interpretive statement or audiovisual segment containing explanations of Qur'anic vocabulary, relationships between verses, prophetic traditions, legal rulings, or spiritual teachings. The documentation procedure was structured to identify relevant segments, transcribe their substantive explanations, and compare the statements with the Qur'anic text and cited scholarly references. Data analysis followed the stages of identification, categorization, interpretation, and synthesis. Interpretive sources were classified into bi al-ma'tsur, encompassing Qur'anic cross-references, hadith, and reports from early Muslim

authorities, and bi al-ra'yi, encompassing linguistic reasoning and jurisprudential argumentation. Exegetical methods were examined through indicators of tahlili interpretation, including sequential verse analysis, munasabah, linguistic explanation (lughawi), legal reasoning (fiqhi), and limited comparative analysis (muqaran). Each analytical category was related to the corresponding interpretive evidence to explain how Sheikh As-Sudais constructed and justified his exegetical arguments.

Epistemological validity was examined through three complementary criteria: coherence, correspondence, and pragmatic relevance (Blatter, 2017). Coherence concerned the logical consistency of interpretive explanations and their relationships with other Qur'anic passages; correspondence assessed the alignment of interpretive claims with identifiable Qur'anic texts, prophetic traditions, and established exegetical references; and pragmatic relevance examined the practical religious, ethical, and social implications articulated in the lecture. Analytical credibility was addressed through source triangulation involving the audiovisual material, relevant Qur'anic passages, hadith literature, and classical commentaries, while distinguishing directly observable statements from the researcher's interpretations. The findings were subsequently synthesized to explain the relationship between classical exegetical authority, methodological legitimacy, and audiovisual knowledge transmission. This approach limits its conclusions to the epistemological characteristics demonstrated by the selected material rather than making unsupported claims about audience reception or the empirical effectiveness of the interpretation.

Result and Discussion

Results

Sources of Interpretation in Sheikh As-Sudais's Audiovisual Exegesis

The findings indicate that Sheikh Abdurrahman As-Sudais's interpretation of the fasting verses in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183–187) combines two principal epistemological sources: *tafsir bi al-ma'tsur* and *tafsir bi al-ra'yi*. The former is represented by Qur'anic cross-references, prophetic traditions, and explanations attributed to the Companions, while the latter is reflected in linguistic reasoning, grammatical interpretation, and jurisprudential elaboration. The use of *Tafsir As-Sa'di* and *'Umdat al-Ahkam* demonstrates the centrality of established exegetical and hadith literature in the interpretation. Rather than functioning as independent sources, transmitted evidence and scholarly reasoning are integrated to explain the textual meaning and legal implications of fasting.

A significant example is the interpretation of the obligation of fasting in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"*O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain righteousness.*"

The manuscript identifies the expression كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ (*fasting has been prescribed for you*) as central to explaining fasting as a binding religious obligation. The analysis further connects the expression *kutiba* with its occurrence in the preceding verses

concerning retaliation (*qisas*) in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:178) and bequests in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:180). This intertextual relationship illustrates the use of Qur'anic cross-references to explain the normative character of religious obligations. Epistemologically, the relationship reflects *tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an*, while its interpretive function demonstrates the application of *munasabah* in establishing thematic coherence between related verses.

Another example concerns the linguistic meaning of fasting as *al-imsak*, or restraint. The manuscript relates this explanation to Surah Maryam (19:26):

إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا

"*Indeed, I have vowed a fast to the Most Merciful, so I will not speak today to any person.*"

In this context, the term *sawm* refers to abstaining from speech, providing a linguistic foundation for understanding fasting as restraint. The connection between this verse and the prescribed fasting of Ramadan demonstrates how Qur'anic vocabulary can be explained through related textual occurrences. However, the linguistic meaning of restraint must be distinguished from the specific legal definition of Islamic fasting, which involves abstention from designated acts within prescribed times. This distinction illustrates the relationship between transmitted Qur'anic evidence and jurisprudential reasoning in the construction of exegetical meaning.

The use of transmitted authority is also evident in the discussion of *fidyah* in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:184):

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ

"*And for those who can bear it with difficulty, there is a compensation: feeding a person in need.*"

The manuscript discusses the explanation attributed to Ibn Abbas regarding the application of *fidyah* to elderly individuals who are unable to observe fasting. This example demonstrates the importance of Companion-based interpretation in clarifying the legal implications of Qur'anic provisions. It also indicates that the meaning of a verse is not established exclusively through lexical analysis but through the interaction between Qur'anic wording, transmitted explanations, and jurisprudential interpretation. The use of such evidence represents the *bi al-ma'tsur* dimension, while the clarification of its legal application reflects the interpretive role of *bi al-ra'yi*.

Exegetical Methods and Interpretive Characteristics

The analysis identifies *tahlili* as the dominant exegetical method in Sheikh As-Sudais's audiovisual interpretation. This method is characterized by the sequential explanation of Qur'anic verses through linguistic clarification, textual relationships, transmitted evidence, and legal implications. Three interpretive characteristics are particularly prominent: linguistic (*lughawi*), jurisprudential (*fiqhi*), and limited

comparative (*muqaran*) interpretation. These characteristics function as interconnected dimensions within the broader analytical method rather than as separate interpretive systems.

The linguistic dimension is illustrated by the discussion of the expression يُطِيقُونَهُ (*yutiqunahu*) in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:184). The manuscript connects this expression with differences in Qur'anic readings and their implications for understanding the obligation of *fidyah*. This discussion demonstrates that linguistic analysis extends beyond vocabulary to include the interpretive consequences of textual readings. Differences in reading and interpretation become relevant when explaining the legal position of individuals who experience difficulty fulfilling the obligation of fasting. Accordingly, the relationship between *qira'at* and jurisprudential interpretation reflects a limited comparative dimension within the *tahlili* method.

Another significant example is the interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah (2:187):

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُمْ

"*It has been made permissible for you, during the nights of fasting, to have intimate relations with your wives.*"

The expression الرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُمْ (*al-rafath ila nisa'ikum*) provides an example of the relationship between linguistic expression and legal meaning. The manuscript examines *al-rafath* through the rhetorical concept of *kinayah*, in which an indirect expression communicates a meaning related to marital intimacy. This interpretation demonstrates that linguistic analysis is not limited to defining individual words but also considers rhetorical conventions and their relationship to Qur'anic legal provisions. The linguistic explanation is subsequently connected with the permissibility of marital relations during the nights of Ramadan, illustrating the integration of *lughawi* and *fiqhi* interpretation.

The jurisprudential dimension is further reflected in discussions concerning the intention to fast, the conditions under which *fidyah* applies, the prescribed duration of fasting, and religious practices associated with breaking the fast. These explanations connect Qur'anic injunctions with relevant prophetic traditions and established legal interpretations. The resulting pattern indicates that the *tahlili* method provides an analytical structure through which linguistic evidence, transmitted traditions, and jurisprudential reasoning are brought together. The audiovisual format changes the mode of presentation but does not, by itself, constitute a distinct exegetical method.

Epistemological Validity of the Interpretation

The epistemological validity of Sheikh As-Sudais's interpretation was examined through coherence, correspondence, and pragmatic relevance. These criteria serve as analytical tools for evaluating the structure of interpretive arguments rather than as independent proof of the absolute correctness of the interpretation.

Coherence is reflected in the consistency of relationships established between Qur'anic passages and their interpretive explanations. The connection between *kutiba* in the verses concerning *qisas*, bequests, and fasting demonstrates a thematic relationship among Qur'anic legal obligations. Similarly, the relationship between fasting and the expression لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ(*so that you may attain righteousness*) establishes a connection between legal observance and spiritual development. These examples indicate that the interpretation seeks to maintain consistency between textual meaning, legal obligation, and the ethical objectives of worship.

Correspondence is assessed through the alignment of interpretive claims with identifiable textual authorities, including Qur'anic passages, prophetic traditions, Companion reports, and established exegetical literature. The discussion of *fidyah*, for instance, is connected with the explanation attributed to Ibn Abbas, while the interpretation of fasting practices incorporates legal hadith literature. Such relationships provide a basis for examining whether interpretive propositions are supported by the sources invoked. In this study, correspondence therefore refers specifically to textual and scholarly alignment rather than empirical verification of metaphysical or theological truth claims.

Pragmatic relevance is reflected in the relationship between the interpretation of fasting and its implications for religious conduct. The explanation of fasting as restraint extends beyond abstention from food and drink to encompass moral discipline, self-control, and spiritual responsibility. The connection between fasting and *taqwa* demonstrates that the interpretation addresses both the legal requirements and ethical purposes of worship. Nevertheless, these findings establish the practical orientation of the exegetical message rather than its measurable effects on viewers. Claims concerning changes in audience behavior would require separate empirical investigation.

Synthesis of Audiovisual Evidence and Epistemological Categories

Table 1 synthesizes the principal textual examples identified in the manuscript and their epistemological classification. It distinguishes the scriptural or reported evidence discussed in the study from the researcher's categorization of interpretive sources, methods, characteristics, and validity indicators.

Table 1. Synthesis of Textual Evidence and Epistemological Characteristics of Sheikh As-Sudais's Audiovisual Exegesis

Textual evidence	Interpretive source	Method	Interpretive characteristic	Validity indicator	Video timestamp
كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ (2:183), related	Qur'anic cross-reference (*bi al-ma'tsur*)	*Tahlili*, *munasabah*	Linguistic and contextual	Coherence	Pending verification

to 2:178 and 2:180					
إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ صَوْمًا(19:26)	Qur'anic evidence and linguistic reasoning	*Tahlili*	Linguistic	Coherence	Pending verification
وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ(2:184), with the explanation attributed to Ibn Abbas	Companion report (*bi al-ma'tsur*)	*Tahlili*	Jurisprudential	Correspondence	Pending verification
يُطِيقُونَهُ(2:184) and discussion of *qira'at*	Qur'anic readings and linguistic reasoning	*Tahlili*, limited *muqaran*	Linguistic and jurisprudential	Coherence and correspondence	Pending verification
الرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُمْ (2:187)	Qur'anic text and rhetorical reasoning	*Tahlili*	Linguistic, rhetorical, and jurisprudential	Coherence	Pending verification
Hadith-based explanations of fasting intentions and practices	Prophetic traditions (*bi al-ma'tsur*)	*Tahlili*	Jurisprudential	Correspondence	Pending verification
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ(2:183)	Qur'anic text and ethical interpretation	*Tahlili*	Ethical and spiritual	Pragmatic relevance	Pending verification

Source: Researcher's synthesis of the interpretive examples presented in the original manuscript. The Arabic expressions are Qur'anic textual evidence, not verbatim transcriptions of Sheikh As-Sudais's spoken statements. Video timestamps must be verified against the original audiovisual recording.

The synthesis reveals an interpretive pattern in which Qur'anic evidence, transmitted traditions, and scholarly reasoning are integrated through a predominantly *tahlili* method. Linguistic analysis provides the foundation for explaining textual meanings, while jurisprudential reasoning connects these meanings with religious obligations and practical conduct. The three epistemological criteria demonstrate different aspects of the interpretive structure: coherence concerns

argumentative consistency, correspondence concerns identifiable textual support, and pragmatic relevance concerns the practical implications articulated in the interpretation. Collectively, these findings provide a basis for examining how classical exegetical authority is communicated through contemporary audiovisual media while remaining connected to recognizable scholarly sources and interpretive procedures.

Discussion

The Reconstruction of Exegetical Authority in Audiovisual Qur'anic Interpretation

The findings indicate that the epistemological significance of Sheikh Abdurrahman As-Sudais's audiovisual interpretation extends beyond the continued application of classical exegetical sources and methods in digital environments. More fundamentally, the case illustrates how scholarly authority is communicated through the interaction of different forms of legitimacy. The transmission of Qur'anic interpretation through YouTube does not necessarily replace established epistemological foundations with digital popularity (AM et al., 2025; Syukron et al., 2026). Instead, it creates a communicative environment in which personal scholarly authority, textual authority, institutional authority, and media-based visibility intersect. These dimensions are analytically distinguishable, although their relationships contribute to the public presentation and reception of exegetical knowledge. This distinction is important because the accessibility of religious content and the epistemological justification of its interpretation represent different aspects of religious communication.

Personal authority constitutes the first dimension of this relationship. As an imam and preacher associated with the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Sheikh As-Sudais possesses a publicly recognized religious position that contributes to the perceived credibility of his Qur'anic explanations. However, personal authority should not be understood merely as an individual characteristic or a consequence of public recognition. In Islamic intellectual traditions, scholarly authority is also associated with competence in religious sciences, familiarity with authoritative texts, and the ability to provide reasoned interpretations. The findings suggest that the significance of As-Sudais's personal position lies in its connection with recognizable scholarly practices. His interpretation does not depend exclusively on his public identity but is presented through explanations that draw upon established exegetical and hadith literature. Accordingly, personal authority functions as a dimension of religious credibility, whereas the epistemological justification of particular interpretations remains dependent on the quality of their textual and methodological foundations (Bagasharov et al., 2026).

Textual authority represents the second and more directly verifiable dimension of epistemological legitimacy. The use of Tafsir As-Sa'di, Qur'anic cross-references, prophetic traditions, and legal hadith literature indicates that the interpretation is situated within an established body of Islamic scholarship. These references are

significant not simply because they are classical or widely recognized, but because they provide identifiable grounds against which interpretive propositions can be examined. The relationship between textual evidence and exegetical reasoning therefore becomes central to evaluating scholarly authority. In this respect, the findings support the epistemological emphasis advanced by (Lufaefi et al., 2026), particularly the importance of examining the sources and justification of Qur'anic interpretation. The authority of a religious figure cannot independently establish the validity of an exegetical proposition; rather, such validity must be investigated through the relationship between the interpretation, its supporting evidence, and the reasoning through which meaning is constructed.

The third dimension concerns institutional authority. Sheikh As-Sudais's association with Masjid al-Haram situates his audiovisual interpretation within a religious environment possessing substantial symbolic and institutional significance for Muslims. This association distinguishes the context of his lectures from religious communication produced primarily through independent digital channels. Institutional affiliation may reinforce the public recognition of a religious interpreter and provide an established setting for the transmission of scholarly knowledge. Nevertheless, institutional authority and epistemological validity should not be treated as equivalent. Institutional recognition can strengthen the perceived legitimacy of an interpreter, but it does not eliminate the need for critical examination of the sources and arguments presented. The findings therefore suggest that institutional authority functions as a contextual source of legitimacy that interacts with, rather than substitutes for, textual and methodological justification.

Media authority constitutes the fourth dimension and introduces an important distinction between the legitimacy of religious knowledge and the conditions of its circulation. YouTube enables audiovisual interpretation to extend beyond the physical location in which religious instruction takes place, making the lecture accessible to audiences who are not present at the original scholarly gathering. Through audiovisual reproduction, the interpreter's voice, delivery, and institutional setting can be communicated to geographically dispersed audiences. However, the authority associated with digital visibility is fundamentally different from authority grounded in textual evidence or scholarly reasoning. A video may achieve extensive circulation without possessing adequate epistemological foundations, while a methodologically rigorous interpretation may remain relatively inaccessible (Goldman, 2007). Consequently, the role of digital media in this case is better understood as the mediation and amplification of existing forms of religious authority rather than the independent production of exegetical validity. This distinction extends discussions of audiovisual interpretation beyond its technical characteristics and highlights the need to examine the relationship between digital dissemination and scholarly legitimacy (Hidayatulloh, 2026).

Interrelationships among Personal, Textual, Institutional, and Media Authority

The central conceptual finding of this study lies in the relationship among these four dimensions of authority. Personal authority provides a recognizable scholarly voice; textual authority supplies the evidentiary foundation of interpretation; institutional authority contributes an established context of religious legitimacy; and media authority enables the wider circulation and public visibility of the interpretive message. These dimensions should not be understood as a linear sequence in which one automatically produces another. Rather, they operate as interconnected but functionally distinct elements within the communication of audiovisual Qur'anic interpretation.

In the case of Sheikh As-Sudais, personal and institutional authority establish a recognizable context for the delivery of religious knowledge, while textual authority provides the primary basis for evaluating the content of that knowledge. The audiovisual medium subsequently extends the accessibility of the interpretation without necessarily changing the sources from which its scholarly justification is derived (Mulyana, 2023). This relationship suggests that digital transmission may transform the public presentation of exegetical authority while preserving the distinction between communicative recognition and epistemological legitimacy. Theoretically, this distinction is essential because the presence of a recognized interpreter, an established religious institution, or a widely accessible platform cannot independently guarantee the validity of the interpretation being communicated.

The findings consequently support the formulation of an interconnected authority framework for audiovisual Qur'anic exegesis. Within this framework, epistemological legitimacy is primarily examined through textual evidence and interpretive reasoning, while personal, institutional, and media authority shape the context in which that knowledge is presented and circulated. The framework does not imply that these dimensions carry equal epistemological weight. Textual and methodological justification remain directly relevant to the evaluation of interpretive claims, whereas personal recognition, institutional affiliation, and media visibility contribute to the social and communicative dimensions of authority. This conceptual distinction provides a more precise explanation of how classical exegetical traditions can remain influential within contemporary digital environments.

Theoretical Contributions to Digital Qur'anic Studies

The proposed framework contributes to existing studies of audiovisual Qur'anic interpretation by shifting the analytical emphasis from identifying the characteristics of individual interpreters to explaining the relationships among different foundations of religious authority. Previous studies by (Huda et al., 2025c, 2025d; Malik & Masrur, 2025a; Rozikin, 2025) have examined audiovisual Qur'anic interpretation through different religious figures and digital channels. The present study extends this line of inquiry by treating the relationships among personal recognition, textual justification,

institutional legitimacy, and digital circulation as a distinct conceptual problem. Its contribution therefore does not rest solely on the selection of Sheikh As-Sudais as a previously underexamined figure, but on the analytical framework developed from the interaction of these dimensions.

This perspective also refines the understanding of epistemological continuity in digital Qur'anic interpretation. Continuity should not be interpreted simply as the continued citation of classical sources or the reproduction of established exegetical methods. Rather, it involves the preservation of identifiable relationships between interpretive claims, textual evidence, and scholarly reasoning despite changes in the medium through which knowledge is communicated. The audiovisual format introduces new conditions of accessibility and presentation, but these conditions do not automatically alter the standards through which interpretive arguments can be assessed. Accordingly, digital transformation and epistemological continuity should be understood as potentially compatible processes rather than inherently contradictory developments.

The analysis further demonstrates the importance of distinguishing epistemological validity from the social recognition of religious authority. The coherence, correspondence, and pragmatic relevance examined in this study concern different aspects of interpretive justification and meaning. They do not measure the degree to which audiences trust the interpreter, accept the institution, or respond to the audiovisual presentation. Although these dimensions may influence public reception, their effects cannot be established through textual and audiovisual content analysis alone. This distinction prevents the conflation of interpretive credibility with audience popularity and establishes clearer boundaries between epistemological analysis and empirical research on digital religious reception.

Overall, the study proposes that audiovisual Qur'anic interpretation can be understood as a process of epistemological continuity through mediated authority (Malik & Masrur, 2025b; Salma et al., 2025). In this process, established scholarly sources and interpretive reasoning remain central to the justification of religious knowledge, while personal recognition, institutional affiliation, and digital media shape its presentation and circulation. The conceptual contribution lies in distinguishing the foundations that justify interpretation from the mechanisms that communicate and amplify its authority. Although the framework is derived from a single audiovisual case and requires further examination across different interpreters and digital platforms, it provides an analytical basis for investigating how Islamic exegetical authority is maintained, represented, and transformed in contemporary digital religious communication.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Sheikh Abdurrahman As-Sudais's audiovisual interpretation of the fasting verses in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183–187) maintains

identifiable epistemological foundations derived from classical Qur'anic scholarship despite its transmission through digital media. The interpretation integrates tafsir bi al-ma'tsur and tafsir bi al-ra'yi within a predominantly tahlili method, incorporating linguistic, jurisprudential, and limited comparative analysis. Its epistemological structure can be examined through coherence, correspondence with identifiable textual authorities, and pragmatic relevance to religious and ethical conduct. These findings indicate that audiovisual communication does not necessarily diminish the methodological foundations of Qur'anic interpretation, provided that interpretive arguments remain connected to recognizable scholarly sources and reasoning.

The principal contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing audiovisual Qur'anic interpretation through the interconnected dimensions of personal, textual, institutional, and media authority. Personal authority establishes the interpreter's recognized religious position, textual authority provides the foundation for evaluating interpretive claims, institutional authority contributes a context of religious legitimacy, and media authority facilitates the wider circulation of exegetical knowledge. Their interaction supports the concept of epistemological continuity through mediated authority, which explains how established interpretive traditions can be communicated through contemporary digital platforms without equating public visibility or institutional recognition with epistemological validity. This framework extends the study of digital Qur'anic exegesis beyond the classification of interpretive sources and methods toward a more comprehensive understanding of how scholarly authority is represented and transmitted.

Nevertheless, this study is limited to the analysis of selected audiovisual material concerning the fasting verses and does not investigate audience reception, the effectiveness of religious communication, or the broader diversity of Sheikh As-Sudais's exegetical practices. Consequently, its conclusions concern the epistemological characteristics of the material examined rather than the empirical influence of the interpretation on viewers. Future research should examine different interpreters, religious institutions, and digital platforms to evaluate the applicability of the proposed framework. Studies incorporating audience interviews, digital ethnography, or comparative audiovisual analysis would also help clarify how textual legitimacy, institutional recognition, and platform visibility influence the reception and negotiation of Qur'anic interpretive authority in digital environments.

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Ethical Statement

Ethical approval was not required for this study because it employed library research and audiovisual content analysis based exclusively on publicly accessible religious lectures and published scholarly literature. The research did not involve direct interaction with human participants, the collection of private personal data, or animal subjects. The audiovisual materials and scholarly sources were examined for academic purposes with appropriate acknowledgment of their original sources.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement

The authors used artificial intelligence (AI) tools solely for limited language-editing purposes, including grammatical refinement, improvement of academic clarity, and enhancement of manuscript readability. AI was not used to transcribe or manipulate the audiovisual data, select Qur'anic interpretations, conduct epistemological analysis, assess exegetical validity, or develop the conceptual framework of epistemological continuity through mediated authority. All interpretations, analytical arguments, references, and research conclusions were critically reviewed and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

Author Contributions

Sikha Afiah Nur Afidah contributed to the conceptualization, research design, identification and documentation of audiovisual materials, literature investigation, content analysis, epistemological interpretation, and preparation of the original manuscript. Anisatul Fikriyah Aprilianti contributed to the conceptualization, methodological refinement, theoretical analysis, validation of interpretive findings, development of the conceptual framework, and critical review and editing of the manuscript. Both authors contributed to the interpretation of the findings, reviewed the final manuscript, and approved the version for publication.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no financial, professional, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research process, interpretation of findings, or publication of this study.

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