

FROM TAFSIR TO *TADABBUR*: A PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF SAUDI SCHOLAR'S TRENDS IN UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN

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Abstract: *This article aims to look at the history of tadabbur knowledge in Saudi Arabia as an alternative trend in understanding the Qur'an in the contemporary era. The study of Qur'anic reading dominated by hermeneutical-contextual discourse ignores other responses to the complexity of understanding and applying Qur'anic content. The stagnation of the development of Qur'anic interpretation in Saudi Arabia is not entirely true. One form of response that has become a trend is the recitation of tadabbur al-Qur'an. This is indicated by the massive publication of various books on tadabbur in the last twenty years (2000–2020), which symbolizes the alternation of Saudi Arabian scholars in responding to contemporary interpretive discourse. Tadabbur inspiration can be found in three works of tafsir written by Saudi scholars beginning with 'Abdurrahmān Sa'dī, Shaykh Uthaimīn, and Shaykh Sulaymān al-Lāhīm. Through a survey and brief review of the idea of tadabbur in the knowledge network of Qur'anic exegesis in Saudi Arabia, this study found three main trends. First, the influence of Salafi ideology as an idea that underlies the dissemination of the concept of Qur'anic tadabbur. Second, revitalization efforts were made by 'Abdurrahmān Habannakah in making tadabbur a separate discipline. Third, as a response to the diversity of contextual-applicative approaches dominated by the hermeneutic approach to the Qur'an. These three trends become a form of methodological response of Saudi Arabian scholars to the discourse of reading the Qur'an that developed in the contemporary era.*

Keywords: *Alternative, Saudi Arabia, Tadabbur, Tafsir, Trends.*

Abstrak: Artikel ini bertujuan untuk melihat sejarah pengetahuan *tadabbur* di Arab Saudi sebagai tren alternatif dalam memahami Al-Qur'an di era kontemporer. Kajian atas pembacaan Al-Qur'an yang didominasi wacana hermeneutis-kontekstual mengabaikan respons yang lain atas kompleksitas memahami dan menerapkan kandungan Al-Qur'an. Stagnansi perkembangan tafsir Al-Qur'an di Arab Saudi tidak sepenuhnya benar. Satu bentuk respons yang menjadi tren adalah pembacaan *tadabbur al-Qur'an*. Hal ini ditunjukkan dengan penerbitan secara masif berbagai buku tentang *tadabbur* dalam kurun dua puluh tahun terakhir (2000–2020) menjadi simbol alternasi

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ulama Arab Saudi dalam merespon wacana penafsiran kontemporer. Inspirasi *tadabbur* dapat ditemukan pada tiga karya tafsir yang ditulis oleh ulama Arab Saudi dimulai dari ‘Abdurrahmān Sa’dī, Shaykh ‘Uthaymīn, dan Shaykh Sulaymān al-Lāhīm. Melalui survei dan telaah ringkas atas ide *tadabbur* dalam jejaring pengetahuan tafsir Al-Qur’an di Arab Saudi, penelitian ini menemukan tiga kecenderungan utama. Pertama, pengaruh ideologi Salafi sebagai ide yang melatari diseminasi konsep *tadabbur al-Qur’ān*. Kedua, upaya revitalisasi dilakukan oleh ‘Abdurrahmān Ḥabannakah dalam menjadikan *tadabbur* sebagai satu disiplin ilmu tersendiri. Ketiga sebagai respons atas keragaman pendekatan kontekstual-aplikatif yang didominasi oleh pendekatan hermeneutika atas Al-Qur’an. Tiga kecenderungan ini menjadi satu bentuk respons metodologis ulama Arab Saudi atas wacana pembacaan Al-Qur’an yang berkembang di era kontemporer.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Alternatif, Arab Saudi, Tadabbur, Tafsir, Tren.*

Introduction

Qur’anic studies in the contemporary era that center on Western contextual readings ignore the development of text reading in the Saudi Arabian region with echoes of Qur’an *tadabbur*. Efforts to construct a methodology of *tadabbur* were made by Saudi Arabian scholars by publishing books that cover various elements of *tadabbur* in the last 20 years (2000–2020). The elements of *tadabbur* were gradually arranged to perfect a form of recitation with a series of *manhaj*, *qā’idah*, *mabādi’*, *shurūt*, and *dawābiṭ*.¹ The mainstreaming of *tadabbur* amid echoes of contextual and hermeneutic approaches is a response to Saudi Arabian scholars as an alternative to reading relevant texts. Ignoring the development of thought in the context of the Saudi Arabian region as the locus of the Qur’an is a form of marginalization of the development of interpretive studies. The study of the region and the building of tafsir knowledge in Saudi Arabia provides an important picture of the response and dynamics of interpretive methodology in the contemporary era.

The development of tafsir in Saudi Arabia has been studied in two trends. *First*, the mapping of books that developed in this region. This research model concludes that the study of tafsir in Saudi Arabia did not experience significant growth due to socio-political factors of the government that did not appreciate methodological updates.² The trend of tafsir that is characterized by *fiqh* and belief (*i’tiqādi*) is the result of the influence of Wahhabism, which does not allow the power of the ratio to be used in understanding the Qur’an.³ *Second*, traces of Nusantara tafsir in Saudi Arabia. This model of research looks at the diversity of scholars who take part in and produce tafsir in Saudi Arabia with various thoughts.⁴ These two trends do

1 Refer to chapters 1 and 4: Ahmed Zarangi Ar Ridho, “Objektifikasi Konsep Tadabbur dalam Kitab Al-Itqan Fi Ulum Al-Qur’an Karya Jalal Ad-Din As-Suyuti” (Thesis, Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2023), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/57013/>.

2 Mashud, “Eksplorasi Pusat Dakwah Islam; Pemetaan Perkembangan Tafsir Arab Saudi,” *An-Nida’: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 10, no. 2 (March 1, 2022): 68.

3 Riri Fitria, “Pemetaan Karya Tafsir di Arab Saudi,” *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 1, no. 2 (December 9, 2011): 140, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2011.1.2.123-141>.

4 Ni’matul Maula and Norma Azmi Farida, “Jejak Tafsir Ulama Arab Asal Nusantara,” *The International Journal of Pegon: Islam Nusantara Civilization* 8, no. 02 (December 27, 2022):

not capture the development of Saudi Arabian interpretation genealogically. The genealogy of Saudi interpretation is an empty gap to present a concise picture of the development of interpretation in the region in contemporary times.

This article aims to trace the interpretive thinking in the region of Saudi Arabia through the book of tafsir and the discourse behind it. Through a brief review of the idea and spirit of reading the Qur'an that leads to the concept of *tadabbur al-Qur'an*, this study answers three questions. First, what is the growth pattern of tafsir in Saudi Arabia? Second, what are the factors behind the growth and trends of tafsir in Saudi Arabia? Third, what are the implications of the growing trend of tafsir in Saudi Arabia on the discourse of Qur'anic interpretation? These three questions become a form of distinction of this article with previous research related to the study of the Qur'an, tafsir, and the region of Saudi Arabia.

The argument that is the basis for tracking the growth of tafsir in the region of Saudi Arabia is the presence of keywords in the work of tafsir that lead to a new trend in the methodology of reading the Qur'an with the concept of *tadabbur al-Qur'an*. This trend seems to provide a fresh breeze of reading in line with the Qur'anic command in Q.S. Muhammad [47]: 24 and practiced by the Companions and the righteous salaf in complex contemporary approaches. The new direction of the methodology of reading the Qur'an in the region of Saudi Arabia is an important momentum to be photographed considering that many conclude that the study of tafsir in Saudi Arabia has not developed at all.

To answer three research questions, this article uses descriptive and analytical methods on various sources related to the development of tafsir in Saudi Arabia. The primary sources used are *Tafsir Sa'di*, *Tafsir Uthaymin*, *Tafsir Awn al-Rahman*, and books entitled *tadabbur* while secondary sources use historical facts of the region, and studies related to the latest studies in the region of Saudi Arabia. These data are captured through content analysis to map the new trends of tafsir reading that are developing in the region as a form of initial survey. This article uses descriptive and analytical methods to answer three research questions with various sources related to the development of tafsir in Saudi Arabia.

Madrasah Tafsir: Post-Prophet to Pre-Saudi Kingdom

To trace the genealogy of the development of tafsir in the region of Saudi Arabia by reviewing the form, process, and development of tafsir madrasas after the Prophet until before the beginning of the Saudi kingdom. This section emphasizes the characteristics of each stage of the emergence of tafsir madrasas that continue to develop in this region. Through the characteristics of the Qur'anic and tafsir

39–60, <https://doi.org/10.51925/inc.v8i02.66>; Rofik Maftuh, "Konsep Ahl Al-Fatrah Ash'Ariyah dan Salafi (Studi Komparasi Penafsiran Shaykh Nawawi Al-Bantani dalam Tafsir Marah Labid dan Shaykh Al-Shinqiti dalam Tafsir Adwa' al-Bayan)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Tasawuf* 8, no. 1 (April 26, 2022): 28–50, <https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v8i1.382>; Syafiril Syafiril and Fiddian Khairudin, "Paradigma Tafsir Ahkam Kontemporer: Studi Kitab Rawai' al-Bayan Karya 'Ali al-Shabuniy," *SYAHADAH: Jurnal Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Keislaman* 5, no. 1 (December 16, 2017): 107–30, <https://doi.org/10.32520/syhd.v5i1.129>.

madrasas, it can be seen how the influence of the civilization of Qur'anic studies in the past, by knowing the paradigms, methods, and tendencies that are preferred to interact with the Qur'an. Starting from the process of reading, memorizing, and understanding, to the level of practicing the Qur'an on a practical level.

Researchers of tafsir history mention at least four important phases of the development of Qur'anic studies and Tafsir.⁵ *First*, the period of the Prophet; the Prophet was the authoritative mufassir on all issues of the Qur'anic verses. *Second*, the period of the Companions; interpreted the Qur'an using the Prophet's history, *ahl al-kitāb*, and the Companions as interpreters. *Third*, during the *tābi'in* period; they used the completeness of previous interpretations as a source of interpretation. *Fourth*, the period of codification; is the beginning of the formation of the discipline of interpretation, terms, and a complete book of interpretation. The region of Saudi Arabia is the main locus of the beginning of interpretation by the Prophet and companions then continued in the third phase by the *tābi'in* with the presence of famous madrasas led by prominent companions of the Prophet as the inheritor of Islamic science, including the Qur'an and tafsir.

The companions of the Prophet inherited the knowledge of tafsir in five famous regional madrasas: Mecca, Medina, Kufa, Basrah, and Sham.⁶ The Madrasah of Mecca became the center of the civilization of interpretation by Ibn 'Abbās with the best alumni such as Mujāhid, Ikrimah, and Aṭā'. The Madīnah madrasa was led by Ubay bin Ka'ab as the *sayyidul qurrā'*. The Kufa madrasa was the best center of interpretation after Mecca, which was nurtured by Ibn Mas'ūd and produced figures such as Alqamah, Aswad bin Yazīd, and Abū Wā'il Shaqīq.⁷ The Basrah madrasa of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and the Sham madrasa of Abū Dardā' produced figures such as Sa'īd bin Musayyab and Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī. The center of tafsir emerged in the regions of Mecca and Kufa, while in Medina it focused on performative recitation of the Qur'an with reliable readers (*qārī'*).

During the codification period, the development of tafsir expanded from Arabia to Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Persia, and Mauritania.⁸ During this period, tafsir appeared in the Arab region by Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, a sufi scholar, emphasized esoteric tafsir that explored the inner meaning of the Qur'an, in line with the tradition of sufism that flourished in Medina and its surroundings. His thought was very influential, especially in expanding the intellectual network to Southeast Asia, where the sufistic approach in tafsir became the hallmark of scholarship at that time.⁹

5 Hādī Ma'rīfah adds a phase on the role of *ahl al-bayt* in tafsir, see further: Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhababī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn* (Kairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2012); Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rīfah, *Al-Tambīd fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'an* (Qūm: Dār al-Ta'āruf lil-maṭbū'ah, 2011).

6 Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rīfah, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn fī Thawbah al-Qashīb* (Mashhad: al-Jāmi'ah al-Rawḍah lil-'ulūm al-Islāmiyyah, 1964), 271–73.

7 Dhahabī, 110.

8 Muḥammad Sīdī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn bi Bilād Shinqīt* (Kuwait: Dār Yusūf bin Tāshfīn, 2007).

9 Nuraini Nuraini, "Al-Simth Al-Majid: Melacak Pengaruh Syaikh Ahmad Al-Qusyaisyi terhadap Tradisi Sufi di Aceh (Pendekatan Analisis Tekstual Hadits)," *Substantia: Jurnal*

On the other hand, Muḥammad Kūrānī combined traditional approaches with rational methods in interpretation, emphasizing the importance of hadith as the main reference in understanding the Qur'an. Kūrānī's interpretation seeks to preserve the scientific heritage of the salaf but is also open to contextualized critical thinking. Before the establishment of the Saudi Kingdom in 1924, tafsir in the Hijaz was still influenced by this sufistic and rational approach. However, with the rise of the Wahhabi movement in the 18th century, which rejected sufi interpretation and focused on literal interpretation, tafsir in the region began to shift to a more puritanical and textual approach. This shift reduced the dominance of the sufi tradition so that the tafsir that developed before the establishment of the Saudi Kingdom underwent a significant transformation towards a more textual and anti-sufistic interpretation.

After this, it was continued by a *Nusantara* figure named Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantani (1213 AH/1813 AD) with *Tafsīr Marāḥ al-Labīd* or known as *Tafsīr al-Munīr* (1305 AH/1884 AD). *Tafsīr al-Nawawī* is thick with the Shāfi'ī style of fiqh as the school of *fiqh* adopted by the majority of muslims in the *Nusantara*.¹⁰ The glory of tafsir in this period was stopped when the arrival of Muḥammad bin 'Abdul Wahab with Wahabi ideology supported by Muḥammad bin Sa'ūd who later founded the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The tendency to purify the teachings of Islam from heresy and establish a state based on Islamic sharia made this country different from other countries. As a result, reciting the Qur'an with terms and methods that are not based on the Qur'an, hadith, and traditions of the righteous salaf is an innovation that must be avoided in interacting with the Qur'an. In addition, the position of the ratio should not play much of a role in understanding the Qur'anic verses.¹¹

Saudi Arabia emphasizes learning over scholarly study of the Qur'an. This can be seen through two famous universities such as Ummul Qūrā University, Mecca, and the University of Medina. The pattern of learning in Saudi Arabia is more likely to "maintain old intellectual traditions" rather than "develop new intellectual traditions" because the learning of the Qur'an is more emphasized on recitation (*tajwīd and qir'āt*), memorization (*tahfīz*), and studies that are limited to 'ulūm al-Qur'ān as understood by classical scholars with all its branches (such as *rasm al-muṣṣḥaf* and *'add āy al-Qur'ān*) rather than analytically-critically studying various discourses that develop in 'ulūm al-Qur'ān and tafsir methodology, whether offered by muslim writers themselves, let alone by orientalis.¹²

Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin 21, no. 2 (October 31, 2019): 107, <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v21i2.3792>.

10 Tsalis Muttaqin, "Khazanah Ulama Nusantara: Tafsir Murāḥ Labīd Karya Nawawi Banten," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat* 12, no. 2 (December 30, 2015): 18, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v12i2.1172>.

11 Abdullah Abdullah, "Perkembangan Islam di Arab Saudi," *Jurnal Ilmiah AL-Jauhari: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Interdisipliner* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2019): 152–71, <https://doi.org/10.30603/jiaj.v4i1.828>.

12 Wardani Wardani, *Metodologi Studi Al-Quran dan Tafsir: Perspektif Integrasi Ilmu*

This portrait shows the main trend that the orientation of Qur'anic madrasas in Saudi Arabia has traditionally tended to focus on three main aspects: recitation, memorization, and teaching of the Qur'an. The educational system in these madrasas emphasizes the importance of *tartil* (recitation of the Qur'an with correct *tajwid*) and *tahfiz* (memorization), as the main forms of interaction with the scripture. Students are educated to master proper recitation and pronounce Qur'anic verses correctly, as well as to memorize the Qur'an in its entirety.¹³ This teaching is seen as a way of maintaining the purity and continuity of the Qur'anic tradition as passed down from generation to generation.¹⁴ However, this orientation often does not include deeper scholarly study of Qur'anic content or complex interpretive and hermeneutical methods. Hermeneutical approaches or more critical methods of interpretation, which involve analyzing the historical, linguistic, and socio-cultural context of the Qur'anic text, are less emphasized in the curricula of these madrasas. As a result, madrasa graduates may have strong skills in Qur'anic recitation and memorization but lack training in deeply analyzing the meaning of Qur'anic verses or developing a critical understanding of tafsir.

While Qur'anic madrasas in Saudi Arabia play an important role in maintaining the tradition of Qur'anic recitation and memorization, their limited approach to this aspect means that areas of Qur'anic scholarship, such as methods of tafsir or hermeneutics, often have to be studied outside the madrasa system, either through education at more modern Islamic universities or through independent study and supplementary studies.¹⁵ As such, the orientation of education in Saudi Qur'anic madrasas focuses more on the preservation of tradition, rather than intellectual exploration and deeper interpretation of the text.

Modern Mufassir in Saudi Arabia

After understanding the early stages, development process, and trends of the madrasa of Qur'anic studies and tafsir, this section will review three famous Qur'anic interpretation products written by Saudi Arabian scholars during the Sa'ud kingdom. The book reviews are only limited globally by aiming at the main characteristics of the book by looking at thematic verses and then comparing one book with another. This effort was made to see how these three books emerged and elaborated on central themes such as belief, worship, and contemporary Islamic

dan Wacana Pendekatan Tafsir Lintas Kawasan (Yogyakarta: Zahir Publishing, 2018), 87–89.

13 Lilik Ummi Kaltsum et al., "Model Pembelajaran Tahfidz Al-Qur'an di Indonesia, Iran, Turki, dan Arab Saudi," *An-Nuha: Jurnal Kajian Islam, Pendidikan, Budaya dan Sosial* 8, no. 2 (December 18, 2021): 347–73, <https://doi.org/10.36835/annuha.v8i2.458>.

14 Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 12.

15 Nur Millah Muthohharoh, Nur Kholis, and Puspita Handayani, "Perbandingan Pembelajaran Al-Qur'an di Arab Saudi dan Indonesia," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme* 4, no. 1 (March 19, 2022): 333–41, <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v4i1.1313>.

studies. The description of the book can then be a reference to how the influence of Wahabism on the works of tafsir that are used as references in understanding and practicing the Qur'an in everyday life.

Three famous tafsir books appeared during the formation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1727–1932 CE). First, the book of interpretation by 'Abdurrahman al-Sa'di with the title *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman fi Tafsir Kalam al-Rahman* (1924), Muhammad bin Shalih al-'Uthaymin with *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim* (2000), and Sulayman bin Ibrahim bin 'Abdullah al-Lahim with *Tafsir 'Awn al-Rahman fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (2020). These three commentaries are relatively similar in terms of form, tendency, and *manhaj*. The form is global, the tendency is to uncover the *fa'idah* of the lesson from the verse, and the *manhaj* only uses interpretation with the *Qur'an bil-Qur'an* and the *Qur'an bil-riwayah*. There is a new, more elaborate trend in the last book that is more specialized in revealing three important points: guidance, *fa'idah*, and ruling, as contained in its small title *bayan ma fihi min al-hidayah wa al-fawa'id wa al-ahkam*. This product is a distinct point of influence of the *tadabbur* project as a book of guidance that must be practiced in daily life.

In verses related to worship, these commentaries choose the perspective of religious purification that should not make new things (*bid'ah*) that were not done by the prophet. The recitation of Q.S. Al-Fatihah other than during the five daily prayers, funeral prayers, and for the sick is an innovation that is not prescribed in the texts and practices of the Prophet Muhammad. Shaykh 'Uthaymin cites the practice of muslims who add the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah at the beginning and end of prayers and various religious events as heresy, for him worship is an act of *tawqifi* and *ittiba'*.¹⁶ In line with this, Sulayman also emphasized that the recitation of Al-Fatihah to start activities and events was never done by the prophet, and none of the companions practiced it.¹⁷ This interpretative tendency focuses on justifying practices that are not based on the sharia and sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.

As for the verse related to the verse related to anthropomorphism, Saudi Arabian interpreters tend to interpret it textually as the influence of Wahhabism ideology. The verse of *kursi* in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 255, there is the word *kursiy* which is interpreted as the seat of the feet of Allah.¹⁸ 'Uthaymin rejected the interpretation of the word *kursi* with His knowledge, even though this explanation was quoted from the narration of Ibn 'Abbās. This rejection is supported by two things. *Firstly*, this narration cannot be attributed to Ibn 'Abbās because it is far from the sharia evidence. *Secondly*, this meaning is not known in Arabic.¹⁹ The

16 Muhammad bin Shalih al-'Uthaymin, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, vol. 1 (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2002), 4.

17 Sulayman bin Ibrahim bin 'Abdullah al-Lahim, *'Awn al-Rahman fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol. 1 (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2020), 312.

18 Lahim, 1:463.

19 Muhammad bin Shalih al-'Uthaymin, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, vol. 1 (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2002), 254–55.

interpretation is still based on the textual approach that the meaning of the chair is the meaning of the chair for the two feet of Allah, not also Arys because it is broader than the chair. Textual tendencies and interpreting verses in tajsīm or anthropomorphism.

While in *Tafsīr al-Sa'dī* as a predecessor mufasssīr, there is no tendency to justify religious practices that are considered heresy and anthropomorphism. There is not much elaboration on the *fādilah* and the practice of reciting Al-Fātiḥah as exemplified by the Prophet and the facts among the people. As for the meaning of *kursī*, al-Sa'dī interprets it as *Arsh* Allah.²⁰ Genealogically, al-Sa'dī was the teacher of 'Uthaymīn who then continued the regular study at the Unaizah Mosque. This means that there is a textual interpretation and a tendency to justify religious practices in *Tafsīr 'Uthaymīn* and *Tafsīr 'Awn al-Raḥmān* during the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This shift is seen through Saudi Arabia's power relations with Wahabism ideology through scholars and books, including Qur'anic commentaries that are in line with the Kingdom.

As the teacher of Shaykh al-Sa'dī, it is important to briefly present Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī. Al-Shinqīṭī played a central role in the Islamic world and Qur'anic exegesis in Saudi Arabia after emigrating from Mauritania with his work, *Tafsīr Adwā' al-Bayān fī Idāḥ al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*.²¹ He is known for his method of interpreting the Qur'an by the Qur'an, in which he explains verses through other relevant verses, guided by hadīth.²² His expertise in the Arabic language strengthened this method, as he was able to uncover the deep meanings of words and phrases through linguistic and rhetorical analysis. Al-Shinqīṭī had an independent scientific personality, in that he did not rely entirely on the views of previous scholars unless he found a solid scientific basis from the Qur'an itself. This approach made his *tafsīr* both literal in-depth and broad in thought and knowledge. In Saudi Arabia, he taught at the Prophet's Mosque, the most prestigious place of Islamic education, as well as at the Islamic University of Medina and the Institute of Justice in Riyadh, cementing his influence in the world of higher education. His influence extended not only to exegesis and education but also to the world of Islamic social and political affairs, with him serving on the Council of Senior Scholars and leading World Muslim League delegations to various countries. The awards from King Abdulaziz and King Faisal show how important the shaykh's role was in building strong religious ties in the Islamic world.²³

20 'Abdurraḥmān bin Naṣīr al-Sa'dī, *Tafsīr al-Sa'dī* (Riyāḍ: Maktabah Dār al-Salām, 1984).

21 Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān fī Idāḥ al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān* (Makkah: Dār 'Ālim al-Fawā'id, 2005).

22 Izza Rohman, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Bi al-Qur'an: Sectarian Tendencies in al-Tabataba'i's al-Mizan and al-Shanqīṭī's Adwā' al-Bayan* (Tangsel: Al-Wasat Publishing House, 2016), 124, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/49927>.

23 Sīdī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn bi Bilād Shinqīṭ*, 411.

In Saudi Arabia, Shaykh al-Shinqīṭī taught at the Prophet's Mosque, one of the most prestigious places of Islamic education, where he imparted the knowledge of tafsir and *fiqh* to students from various parts of the world. In addition, he was also involved as a lecturer at the Islamic University of Medina and the Institute of Justice in Riyaḍ, cementing his influence in the world of higher education in Saudi Arabia. Al-Shinqīṭī's influence was not only limited to the fields of tafsir and education but also in the world of Islamic social and political affairs. He became a member of the Council of Senior Scholars and led World Muslim League delegations to various countries, including Mauritania, demonstrating his role in international Islamic diplomacy. His highly respected reputation among Saudi Arabian scholars and officials, including King Abdulazīz and King Faisal, reinforced his role in building strong religious ties in the Islamic world. For more than 25 years, his scholarly and social contributions continued to bring great benefits to muslims, not only in Saudi Arabia but also internationally.

Despite coming from a strong background of Maliki *fiqh* and Ash'ari theology in Mauritania, al-Shinqīṭī changed from thinking after settling in Saudi Arabia, where Hanbali *fiqh* and salafi doctrines (based on the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah and carried forward by the Wahhabis movement) were dominant. Initially, he viewed these teachings with suspicion, like most scholars from his background. However, after interacting with Saudi scholars and delving into Ibn Taymiyyah's works, he began to understand that these teachings were based on the Qur'an and sunnah and following the approach of the salaf (early generations of Islam).²⁴ This change in view showed his intellectual openness, where he integrated salafi principles into his studies without abandoning his intellectual identity. His acceptance of Ibn Taymiyyah's thoughts and Wahabism strengthened his position among Saudi scholars, as well as enhanced his relationship with the intellectual elite and royal officials.

These three commentaries are based on the salafi movement which has a hadith-oriented tendency. Through this lens, they encountered a major problem, namely that of the hundreds of Qur'anic commentaries written throughout Islamic history, only a few conformed to, or actually met, salafi's demands. However, this has not diminished the movement's influence on the development of Qur'anic recitation in modern muslim lands. One form of hegemony reinforced by the movement is the mainstreaming of Ibn Taymiyyah's hermeneutical theory through "*The Muqaddimah*". Thus, this work becomes a reference and benchmark in conducting interpretive activities under the methods of the Prophet, companions, and righteous salaf. Thus, the success or failure of a mufassir for this group is measured by how far he sticks to Ibn Taymiyyah's hermeneutical paradigm.²⁵

24 Sidi, 409.

25 Walid A. Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsir in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* (2010): 15.

***Tadabbur* as a Methodological Trend**

In this section, the study of the new trend will be outlined by looking at the various phenomena that have emerged in the recent development of Qur'anic studies in Saudi Arabia. The explanation of the new trend that is fully supported by the government becomes a form of combination between the ulama and the ruler. Both then form a massive “intellectual project” effort, through the formation of knowledge by scholars and scholars and then disseminated authoritatively by the government through funding the printing of books that focus on Qur'anic *tadabbur*. The power relationship between religious leaders and government leaders is a force to introduce a new trend in the region of Saudi Arabia in interacting, understanding, and practicing the Qur'an in the contemporary era. The trend of *tadabbur* as *ādāb* in interacting with the Qur'an then shifts to a deeper process, understanding and practicing.

The development of *tadabbur* from reading manners to a method of reciting the Qur'an is shown by the mainstreaming of *tadabbur* books by the Saudi Arabian government massively in the last 20 years. Various *tadabbur* books show the elements that form *tadabbur* as a separate discipline that includes methods (*manhaj*), rules (*qā'idah*), structure (*mabādi'*), conditions (*shurūṭ*), and principles (*dawābiṭ*). The presence of *tadabbur* books is a form of massive response published to be a guide for interacting, reading, and understanding the Qur'an as a book of guidance. The following is a list of important books that became the project of disseminating *tadabbur al-Qur'an* by Saudi Arabian scholars:²⁶

1. *Tadabbur al-Qur'an*, Salmān 'Umar al-Sunaydī, Riyāḍ, 2002.
2. *Manhaj Tada bbur al-Qur'an al-Karīm*, Ḥikmat bin Bashīr Yāsīn, Riyāḍ, 2004.
3. *Maḥbūm al-Tafsīr wa al-Ta'wīl wa al-Istinbāṭ wa al-Tadabbur wa al-Muḥāsir*, Musā'id bin Sulaymān bin Nāṣir al-Ṭayyār, Riyāḍ, 2006.
4. *Maḥāṭib Tadabbur al-Qur'an wa al-Najāḥ fī al-Ḥayāḥ*, Khālid 'Abdul Karīm al-Lāḥim, Riyāḍ, 2007.
5. *Tadabbur al-Qur'an al-Karīm Bayna al-Nazariyyah wa al-Taṭbīq*, Ruḳayyah Ṭaha Jābir al-Ulwānī, Riyāḍ, 2008.
6. *Ta'lim Tadabbur al-Qur'an al-Karīm: Asālim 'Amaliyyah wa Marāḥil Manhajīyyah*, Hāshim bin 'Alī al-Ahdal, Riyāḍ, 2008.
7. *Maḥbūm al-Tadabbur: Taḥrīr wa Ta'ṣīl*, Abū 'Umar Maḥmūd bin Shawqī bin Muḥliḥ, Riyāḍ, 2009.
8. *Fann al-Tadabbur al-Qur'an al-Karīm*, 'Iṣām Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad al-'Awīd, Riyāḍ, 2010.
9. *Afalā Yatadabbarūn al-Qur'an*, Nāṣir bin Sulaymān al-'Umar, Riyāḍ, 2011.
10. *Liyaddabbarū Ayātihī*, Team Markaz al-Tadabbur, Riyāḍ, 2012.

26 Islamweb.net, “كتب هامة في تدبير القرآن,” islamweb.net, September 14, 2014, <https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/267748/القرآن-في-تدبير-هامة-كتاب>.

11. *Al-Tadabbur Haqīqatuhu*, ‘Abdullāh ‘Abdul Ghānī Sarhānī, Riyāḍ, 2013.
12. *Tadabbur al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, ‘Abdil Laṭīf bin ‘Abdillāh al-Tuwajrī, Riyāḍ, 2015.
13. *Qawā’id Tadabbur al-Qur’ān wa Taṭbīqāt alā Qiṣār al-Mufaṣṣal*, Aqīl bin Sālīm al-Samrī, Riyāḍ, 2015.
14. *Al-Khulāṣah fī Tadabbur al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, Khālid bin ‘Uthmān al-Sabat, Riyāḍ, 2016.
15. *Al-Qawā’id wa al-Uṣūl wa Taṭbīqāt al-Tadabbur*, Khālid bin ‘Uthmān al-Sabat, Riyāḍ, 2016.
16. *Afalā Yatadabbarun al-Qur’ān*, Asmā’ binti Rāshid al-Ruwayshīd, Riyāḍ, 2017.
17. *Mabādi’ Tadabbur al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, ‘Abdul Muḥsin al-Muṭīrī, Riyāḍ, 2017.
18. *Al-Qur’ān Tadabbur wa al-‘Amal*, Markaz al-Minhāj li Ishrāf wa al-Tadrīb al-Tarbawī, Riyāḍ.

From the various books published massively, there are two points in terms of publication year and title. First, the year of publication which is always close together shows the systematic and massive efforts of Saudi scholars in promoting *tadabbur al-Qur’ān* as an ideal form of reading. Second, the title of the book shows the completeness of the elements in forming a separate discipline in interacting with the Qur’an, both in terms of theoretical and practical methods. The new trend with the term *tadabbur* reading is an alternative step for Saudi scholars in restoring the authentic term of the Qur’an as Q.S. Muḥammad [47]: 24, Q.S. An-Nisā’ [4]: 82, Q.S. Ṣād [38]: 29, and Q.S. Al-Mukminūn [23]: 68. As for the practical side, the recitation of *tadabbur* is the custom of the pious salaf’s interaction with the Qur’an as mentioned in the book of *faḍā’il al-qur’ān* and *ādāb tilāwatil Qur’ān*. These two points are the basis on which Saudi scholars base the *tadabbur* method as an ideal form of interacting with the Qur’an.

These two points are important because they are considered the basis of the importance of revitalizing Qur’anic *tadabbur* as the most authentic method of interacting with the Qur’an. First, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* emphasizes the primacy and majesty of the Qur’an in the life of a muslim. The pious salaf, the early generation of Islam known for their obedience and piety, made the Qur’an the center of their lives. They not only recited the verses of the Qur’an, but also pondered them deeply, understood the divine messages, and sought to apply them in every aspect of life. Saudi scholars, in their efforts to revive *tadabbur*, adopted this approach, encouraging people to not only recite the Qur’an but also ponder and internalize its content as an ideal form of interaction with the scripture. Secondly, *ādāb tilāwatil Qur’ān* teaches about the proper etiquette and manner of reciting the Qur’an. The pious salaf paid great attention to these manners, which included solemnity, sincerity, and pure intention in reciting the Qur’an. For them, the recitation of the Qur’an was not just a ritual activity, but a form of worship that required deep appreciation and involvement of the heart. Saudi scholars, in basing their *tadabbur*

method, emphasize the importance of maintaining these manners, so that the process of *tadabbur* becomes not only an intellectual endeavor but also a spiritual one, capable of touching the heart and inspiring the soul.

The priority of the *tadabur* method, compared to interpretation, lies in the dimension of practice. Tafsir focuses on revealing the meaning of the verse, while *tadabbur* invites us to contemplate, interact with the verse, and practice it in life. *Tadabbur* requires the full presence of the heart, understanding the verse through proper rules, being moderate in thought, and establishing active interaction with revelation through deep questions on Q.S. Al-Fātiḥah such as: What is the wisdom behind the mention of praise at the beginning of the verse? Why does Allah prioritize the attribute of the Most Compassionate before the Most Merciful? What is the significance behind the mention of the Day of Judgment, or why does worship come before asking for help? These questions open up a space for deep contemplation, making *tadabbur* not just an intellectual discourse, but a spiritual journey that uncovers inner veils such as sin, negligence, and weakness in understanding Arabic.²⁷ This approach leads us to truly feel the meaning of the verse in our daily practice.

Revitalizing *Tadabbur al-Qur'ān*

This section attempts to explain the revitalization of Qur'anic *tadabbur* by Saudi scholars that emerged in response to the challenges presented by contemporary Qur'anic studies. In this context, Saudi scholars see an urgent need to re-emphasize the importance of *tadabbur*, which is to contemplate and understand the meaning contained in the Qur'an deeply and comprehensively. Contemporary Qur'anic studies, with all their modern and critical approaches, often focus on linguistic, historical, and contextual analysis, which, while useful, sometimes neglect the spiritual and essential aspects of the Qur'anic message itself. In response, Saudi scholars have sought to revitalize the tradition of *tadabbur* by writing books, organizing seminars, and guiding studies that invite people not only to understand the Qur'anic text literally but also to explore its meaning for application in daily life. This revitalization also includes an emphasis on the importance of building a personal relationship with the Qur'an, so that each reader can find relevance and life guidance in the verses he or she reads. Thus, the revitalized Qur'anic *tadabbur* by Saudi scholars is a means to bridge the gap between the intellectual approach in contemporary studies and the spiritual needs of Muslims in living a life in harmony with Qur'anic values.

The basis for making *tadabbur* a separate discipline complete with all its elements, Saudi scholars cite 'Abdurrahmān Ḥabannakah who is allegedly the first figure to revitalize Qur'anic *tadabbur* (1980 AD) with his two monumental works, *Qawā'id Tadabbur* and the application of its rules in the book *Ma'ārij al-Tafakkur wa Daqā'iq al-Tadabbur*.²⁸ At the end of the book, Ḥabannakah expressed his

27 'Aqil bin Sālim al-Samrī, *Qawā'id Tadabbur al-Qur'ān wa Taṭbīqāt alā Qiṣār al-Mufaṣṣal* (Riyāḍ: Fahrasah Maktabah al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah Athnā' al-Nashr, 2016), 12–18.

28 'Abdurrahmān Ḥasan Ḥabannakah al-Maydānī, *Ma'ārij al-Tafakkur wa Daqā'iq*

hope for his endeavor with the following statement: “*May these rules of tadabbur guide the practitioners of tadabbur as well as serve as an opening for the foundation of the discipline of ‘tadabbur science’.*” They also cite Ḥabannakah’s concept of *tadabbur* as an authentic commandment for all human beings whether believers or not with the definition of *tadabbur* as: A form of holistic contemplation that leads to the culmination of the meaning of words and their deep content.²⁹ The citation of Ḥabannakah as a reference for the trend of *tadabbur* in Saudi shows an effort to strengthen sources in line with the mainstreaming of *tadabbur* reading, considering that Ḥabannakah is allegedly the first scholar to revitalize the study of *tadabbur* with scientific networks in Damascus and Cairo. However, Ḥabannakah’s intellectual network is not related in the slightest to the Wahabism ideology spread in Saudi.

The culmination of the *tadabbur* project can be seen in Markaz al-Minhāj’s latest collective work on the Qur’an, *Tadabbur wa al-‘Amal*. This work became a government-funded project with massive printing offset by the digitization of the book; and the launch of a complete digital website and application that can be accessed online at <https://altadabbur.com>. This project is the best response to fully interact with the Qur’an as the Companions did with the Prophet Muhammad on five levels. First, listening (*al-istimā*); QS. Al-A‘rāf [7]: 124. Second, intensive reading (*al-tilāwah*); Al-Baqarah [2]: 121. Third, memorizing (*al-ḥifẓ*); Al-‘Ankabūt [29]: 49. Fourth, contemplating its content (*al-tadabbur*); Ṣād [38]: 29. Finally, practicing it (*al-‘amal*); Az-Zumar [39]: 18.³⁰ In fact, this book has been translated into Indonesian by Al-Kautsar Library with the title, *Tadabbur Al-Qur’an Aplikatif: Panduan Mengamalkan Al-Qur’an dalam Kehidupan Sehari-hari*. The effort to revitalize *tadabbur* is a major project of the Saudi Arabian government to provide a form of training method for contemplating the Qur’an at the theoretical and practical levels. The idea of the *tadabbur* method can be seen from the form and keywords of interpretations that developed authentically from the Saudi Arabian region. First, the form of interpretation is global in nature with the source of the prophet’s history, companions, *tābi‘īn*, and righteous salaf. Second, the dominant keywords that appear are *fā‘idah*, *hidāyah*, and *aḥkām*. The dominant forms and keywords in Saudi Arabia’s tafsir products are a form of construction and trends based on the worldview that the Prophet, Companions, and *tābi‘īn* were the best generation in understanding the Qur’an.

The influence of mainstreaming the Qur’anic *tadabbur* method has also had an impact on Qur’anic studies in Indonesia. This is indicated by the presence of

al-Tadabbur: Tafsīr Tadabburī li al-Qur’ān al-Karīm (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 2000).

29 See the quotation of Habannakah’s concept of *tadabbur* in: ‘Abdul Muḥsin Zabn al-Muṭīrī, *Mabādi’ Tadabbur al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Riyāḍ: Fahrasah Maktabah al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah Athnā’ al-Nashr, 2017); Samrī, *Qawā‘id Tadabbur al-Qur’ān wa Taṭbīqāt alā Qiṣār al-Mufaṣṣal*; Ruqayyah Ṭāha Jābir al-‘Ulwānī, *Tadabbur al-Qur’ān al-Karīm Bayna al-Naẓariyyah wa al-Taṭbīq*, 2008.

30 See the introduction: Team Markaz al-Minhāj, *Al-Qur’ān Tadabbur wa al-‘Amal* (Riyāḍ: Minhāj li Ishrāf wa al-Tadrīb al-Tarbawī, 2017).

various books with similar themes in various forms as well as efforts to translate books by Saudi scholars into Indonesian. This is also supported by ustaz and scholars who are alumni of Saudi Arabia. The books that emerged from the impact of mainstreaming *tadabbur al-Qurʾān* in addition to the translations that have been mentioned, namely: *Tadabbur Al-Qurʾan: Panduan Hidup bersama Al-Qurʾan Juz 29-30* (2013)³¹ by Bachtiar Nasir, a *dāʿī* and cleric who graduated from the Islamic University of Medina who is also the chairman of the Saudi Arabia graduate in Indonesia, *Tadabbur Qurʾan Di Akhir Zaman: Membumikan Kalam Ilahi di Zaman Tak Bertepi* (2017)³² by Fahmi Salim, *Tadabur Juz Amma* (2019)³³ by Saiful Bahri, and the last is *Mushaf Al-Qurʾan: Tadabbur Maiyah Padangbulan* (2021)³⁴ by Muhammad Ainun Nadjib (*Cak Nun*) and Ahmad Fuad Effendy, *Cak Fuad* is a member of the Board of Trustees of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz International Center Saudi Arabia. The translated books by Saudi scholars are *Buku Panduan Tadabbur Al-Quran* (2016)³⁵ by Khālid ʿAbdul Karīm al-Lāḥim and Asmāʾ binti Rāshid al-Ruwayshīd, *Tadabur Al-Qurʾan: Menyelami Makna Al-Qurʾan dari Al-Fatihah Sampai An-Nas* by Shaykh ʿĀdil Muḥammad Khalīl (2018).³⁶

Qurʾanic *tadabbur* studies in Saudi Arabia have significantly influenced the development of Qurʾanic studies in Indonesia through several main channels. The translation of *tadabbur* books written by Saudi scholars into Indonesian enabled Indonesians to access in-depth concepts of *tadabbur*. In addition, Indonesian scholars, inspired by Saudi studies, wrote *tadabbur* books adapted to the local context, enriching the Islamic literature in Indonesia. This influence can also be seen in the organization of seminars, studies, and recitations that often feature *tadabbur* methods from Saudi Arabia, strengthening the understanding and appreciation of the Qurʾan among Indonesians. Through these three channels - book translation, book writing, and organizing seminars—*tadabbur* Qurʾan studies from Saudi Arabia have had a significant influence on the way Indonesians learn and live the Qurʾan.

31 Bachtiar Nasir, *Tadabbur Al-Qurʾan: Panduan Hidup Bersama Al-Qurʾan Juz 1 & 2* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013).

32 Fahmi Salim, *Tadabbur Qurʾan di Akhir Zaman: Membumikan Kalam Ilahi di Zaman Tak Bertepi* (Yogyakarta: Pro-U Media, 2017).

33 Saiful Bahri, *Tadabur Juz Amma* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2019).

34 Ahmad Fuad Effendy and Muhammad Ainun Nadjib, *Mushaf Al-Qurʾan Tadabbur Maiyah Padangbulan* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Maiyah Al-Manhal, 2021).

35 Khalid Abdul Karim Al-Lahim and Asmaʾ binti Rasyid Ar-Ruwayisyid, *Panduan Tadabbur Al-Quran*, trans. Agus Suwandi and Yasir Abu Ibrahim Awwab (Solo: Kiswah Media, 2016).

36 Syaikh Adil Muhammad Khalil, *Tadabur Al-Qurʾan: Menyelami Makna Al-Qurʾan dari Al-Fatihah sampai An-Nas*, trans. Andi Muhammad Syahrir (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2018).

Conclusion

The stagnation of Qur'anic recitation in the region of Saudi Arabia cannot be fully justified, because the theoretical and practical *tadabbur* recitation methods are developed systematically, structurally, and massively. The development of *tadabbur* is shown by the publication of various *tadabbur* books covering various elements of a scientific discipline with the support of Saudi government projects. The effort to revitalize *tadabbur* by Saudi Arabian scholars is motivated by three factors. First, the salafi ideology which considers that *tadabbur* is the practice of the Prophet, the Companions, and the righteous salaf based on the Qur'anic text on the four verses of *tadabbur*. Second, the continuation of Ḥabannakah's idea in the hope of establishing *tadabbur* as an independent discipline. Third, a response to the diversity of contextual approaches, by presenting the *tadabbur* method in practice as a form of internalizing the content of the Qur'an in contemporary times. These three factors became the spirit behind the mainstreaming of Qur'anic *tadabbur* as a trend through an initial survey of this phenomenon.

This study only limits itself to an initial survey of *tadabbur* as a form of alternative reading of Saudi Arabian scholars on trends and keywords. The portrait of scientific traditions and the origins of thought become the focus of study in seeing the development of methods and approaches used by Saudi Arabian scholars in the study of the Qur'an and tafsir. The scope of this research will certainly be different if it is targeted through other theories and research approaches. Through various other approaches and theories such as power relations and genealogy of knowledge, *tadabbur* trends can produce different findings from this article or can annul its conclusions. As a result, the initial survey of the development of study trends in Saudi Arabia is a breath of fresh air in reviving Qur'anic studies and tafsir by region. This could be a provocative step towards conducting similar studies in specific countries, cities, or regions, thus revealing pieces of global Qur'anic studies in the history of interpretation.

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