

LAPORAN PENELITIAN

STATE, SOCIETY AND QUR'ANIC STUDIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
INTELLECTUAL DYNAMICS AND QUR'ANIC STUDIES
IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM AND INDONESIA



Dr. Tri Wahyu Hidayati, M.Ag.

Drs.Abdul Syukur,M.si

Drs.Bahroni,M.Pd

Dr. Ahmad Baha (UNISSA)

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SALATIGA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The study of the Qur'ān, while essentially concerned with the interpretation and understanding of the Qur'ān, has now evolved rapidly in line with the changing social, political and intellectual landscape. In Southeast Asia, Qur'ānic studies are strongly influenced by each country's historical, political and cultural context. Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has a rich tradition of Qur'ānic scholarship. Studies conducted by Robert W. Hefner (2000); Muhammad Sirozi (2016) show that Indonesia's intellectual landscape reflects a complex interaction between traditional Islamic thought, such as the influence of classical scholars like al-Ghazali, and modernist movements that support contextual readings of the Qur'ān amid globalization and modernity. This fusion of tradition and reform has shaped the development of Qur'ānic studies, resulting in diverse interpretations that relate to both local and global intellectual currents.

On the other hand, Brunei Darussalam, a small but strategic Muslim-majority country, presents a different intellectual context. Asbol Mail & Iik A Mansurnoor (2005) emphasize that Qur'ānic studies in Brunei are strongly influenced by state governance, which is intrinsically linked to Islamic principles and values. The monarchy's endorsement of Islam as a basis for political legitimacy shapes the educational policies and Qur'ānic interpretations promoted by state institutions. Ahmad F. Yousif (2021) further notes that Brunei's approach to Qur'ānic scholarship is strongly tied to national identity, with a strong emphasis on the preservation of religious uniformity through the promotion of certain state-approved interpretations of Islam. This government role in Qur'ānic studies contrasts with the more pluralistic and diverse Islamic scholarly landscape in Indonesia.

Recent studies highlight the growing influence of Islamic modernism and political Islam in Qur'ānic studies in both countries. Martin van Bruinessen (2013) argues that in Indonesia, the rise of political Islam and movements such as Salafism have contributed to a shift towards a more conservative interpretation of the Qur'ān. This shift is particularly noticeable among the younger generation, who are increasingly engaging with Islamic teachings through modern media such as social media and online platforms (Anwar, 2022). In addition, the development of political Islam in Indonesia has also influenced interpretations of the Qur'an. Since the reformation era, the ideology of political Islam has become stronger, and many parties have demanded that the reading of the Qur'an be more directed towards the application of Islamic principles in socio-political life. Munir (2019) argues that this influence of political Islam is increasingly felt among the younger generation, who are increasingly open to a more assertive and conservative understanding of Islam, especially that promoted by groups such as Salafis and Hizbut Tahrir. Overall, Qur'ānic studies in Indonesia are influenced not only by academic traditions and interpretations, but also by highly dynamic social

and political influences. In this context, modernist and conservative movements play a major role in determining the direction of development of Qur'ānic studies.

Meanwhile, one of the key elements influencing Qur'anic studies in Brunei is the state's active role in shaping Islamic education. Iik Arifin Mansurnoor (2020), in his work *Islam in Brunei Darussalam: Negotiating Islamic Revivalism and Religious Radicalism*, explores how the Bruneian state negotiates the pressures of Islamic revivalism and religious radicalization. Mansurnoor highlights the narrative of political Islam in Brunei, where Islamic movements interact with state policies, shaping the intellectual atmosphere around Qur'anic education. The role of the state in regulating religious practice, including Qur'ānic education, is crucial to understanding how religious education in Brunei maintains a balance between traditional Islamic values and contemporary religious reform.

The development of Qur'ānic education in Brunei can also be traced through its historical evolution. Sarinah Yahya (2008) outlines the long-standing tradition of Qur'ānic learning in Brunei, from oral transmission to more formalized educational structures in the modern era. This study provides important insights into how Qur'ānic education evolved in response to socio-political changes and the introduction of modern educational frameworks. In recent years, Brunei has also seen the introduction of innovative methods in Qur'ānic education. Nurhamizah Jasni and Mariam bint Abdul Rahman (2021), in their study introduced a modern approach to Qur'ānic teaching by integrating the principles of cognitive neuroscience in the learning process. This method represents a significant change in pedagogical approach and aims to improve memorization and comprehension of the Qur'an by using techniques based on scientific principles. The establishment and development of Islamic institutions in Brunei further emphasizes the role of the state in shaping Qur'ānic education. Ahmad F. Yousif (2023) traces the development of UNISSA as a central institution for the study of Islamic sciences and Qur'ānic education. Yousif's work highlights how the institutionalization of Islamic studies in Brunei is shaped by state policies and global Islamic movements. UNISSA, as a leading educational institution, played a key role in the intellectual development of Qur'anic studies in Brunei, serving as a bridge between traditional Islamic scholarship and modern academic frameworks.

Despite significant developments in Qur'ānic scholarship in Brunei and Indonesia, there remains a significant gap in comparative studies on the intellectual dynamics of Qur'ānic studies in the two countries. Although both are Muslim-majority countries, different historical, political and cultural contexts have resulted in different developmental paths of Qur'ānic scholarship. A key issue lies in the different ways in which Qur'ānic studies have been institutionalized, understood and taught, both within state-supported education systems and through independent scholarship.

In Indonesia, the Qur'ān is studied in a variety of intellectual and social contexts, ranging from formal curricula in Islamic colleges to informal study groups and online platforms. While there is a shift towards modern interpretations of the Qur'ān, especially among younger generations, the

role of pesantren and their attachment to classical interpretations remains dominant (Parker, 2020). This creates a complex dynamic where progressive and conservative voices alike contribute to the discourse around the Qur'ān. Furthermore, the rise of political Islam and the involvement of Qur'ānic studies in political debates, especially in election cycles and religious movements such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), highlights the deeply political nature of Qur'ānic scholarship in Indonesia (Salim, 2021).

In contrast, Brunei presents a more controlled intellectual environment where the government plays a key role in shaping Qur'ānic studies. The state's focus on Islamic teachings as part of national identity and political legitimacy means that Qur'ānic scholarship is strongly tied to the ideological framework of the state. Recent studies have shown that the state-supported education system in Brunei focuses not only on religious knowledge but also on building national unity and political stability through the promotion of a particular interpretation of Islam (Kassim, 2021). The state's tight control over religious discourse ensured that Qur'ānic scholarship remained within the framework of the official interpretation, which was considered essential for maintaining social cohesion and political stability. However, this led to a narrowing of intellectual debate in Qur'ānic studies, where alternative interpretations could be marginalized or even banned (Tajuddin, 2021).

This research aims to uncover how Qur'ānic studies in Brunei and Indonesia are evolving in response to global and local changes, while also highlighting the unique socio-political environments in each country. This research will fill a critical gap by comparing the intellectual development of Qur'ānic studies in Brunei and Indonesia, focusing on the ways in which political, cultural, and educational contexts shape the practice and interpretation of Qur'ānic scholarship. It will also explore the role of Islamic educational institutions in both countries, examining how Qur'ānic studies are influenced by new platforms and an increasingly globalized Islamic discourse.

B. Question Research

1. What is the historical development and intellectual dynamics of Qur'anic Scholarship in Brunei and Indonesia?
2. What are the roles played by scholars, religious leaders, government institutions and religious institutions in the development of Qur'ānic scholarship in each country?
3. How have contemporary intellectual trends, such as Islamic modernism, political Islam and globalization, influenced Qur'ānic studies and interpretations in Brunei and Indonesia?
4. How do intellectual and paedagogical approaches to Qur'ānic studies in Brunei and Indonesia compare?

C. The Research Purposes

The main objective of this study is to analyze the intellectual dynamics that have shaped Qur'anic studies in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia, by tracing its historical roots and examining its contemporary development. More specifically, this research will:

1. Map the historical development and intellectual dynamics of Qur'ānic scholarship in Brunei and Indonesia?
2. Identify the roles played by scholars, religious leaders, government and religious institutions in the development of Qur'ānic scholarship in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia.
3. Map contemporary intellectual trends, such as Islamic modernism, political Islam and globalization, influencing Qur'ānic studies and interpretations in Brunei and Indonesia
4. Construct a comparative building of intellectual and paedagogical approaches in Qur'anic studies in Brunei and Indonesia?

D. Research Significance

This research contributes to the growing discourse on Qur'anic scholarship in Southeast Asia by offering a comparative analysis of the intellectual dynamics in two important Muslim-majority countries in the region. By examining the development of Qur'ānic scholarship in Brunei and Indonesia, this research provides valuable insights into the intersection of religion, politics and education in shaping Islamic intellectual traditions in Southeast Asia. In addition, it will provide a deeper understanding of how Qur'ānic studies in these two countries contribute to broader conversations about Islamic modernization, the role of religion in state building, and the tensions between tradition and modernity in the Muslim world.

E. Theoretical Framework

This research used the theory of intellectual history, which aims to understand the development of ideas in specific historical and socio-political contexts (Koselleck, 2004), a tradition of historical scholarship that focuses on the study of ideas. Intellectual history, like “economic history” or “political history” shows that this scholarly work is part of human activity. Intellectual history “is a tradition that pays attention to studying the history of ideas, concepts, or the intellectual development of the treasury of human knowledge and life” (Santosa, 2014). Thus, intellectual history can be a series of modifications, adjustments or improvements to an idea, in the language of Thomas Kuhn, there can be a paradigm shift.

In addition, this study adopted a comparative methodology that looks at the various intellectual trajectories in Brunei and Indonesia, using the concepts of “Islamic modernism” and “Islamic traditionalism” as a conceptual framework (Gellner, 1992). This framework will help to contextualize the evolution of Qur'anic studies and understand the intellectual dynamics taking place in Brunei and Indonesia. Islamic modernism as an effort to harmonize Islamic values with modern values. It is undeniable that progress and modernity pose a challenge to

Islamic law and its practice, including Qur'anic Studies. Human rights issues, democracy, gender equality, technological advances also influence the study and interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith as sources of law. Islamic modernism Vs Islamic traditionalism, marks the dynamics of the development of Islamic studies, including Qur'anic studies. Traditionalism is a common phenomenon in various parts of the Islamic world, and some countries tend to perpetuate it without critical reasoning (Syam, 2018).

F. Literature Review

The field of Qur'ānic studies in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, has undergone significant transformations influenced by historical, socio-political and educational factors. The existing literature shows a complex and evolving intellectual landscape, with various intellectual traditions shaping Qur'ānic interpretation and transmission. However, comparative analysis of these developments in Brunei and Indonesia is limited, especially in terms of how these intellectual dynamics interact with the political, cultural and educational systems in both countries. This section connects key literature on Qur'ānic studies in Indonesia and Brunei, explores their respective intellectual traditions, and identifies research gaps that this study will fill.

Madjid and Muhajir (2024) introduced an integrative approach in Qur'ānic studies to understand environmental degradation in Indonesia and Brunei. Their research highlights how the Qur'ān is increasingly interpreted in the face of contemporary ecological challenges, reflecting significant changes in Qur'ānic exegesis that point to current global issues. This integrative approach shows that the Qur'ān provides not only spiritual guidance, but also a practical framework for addressing environmental degradation. This approach can make a significant contribution to the development of environmental and educational policies in both countries.

One of the key elements influencing Qur'anic studies in Brunei is the state's active role in shaping Islamic education. Iik Arifin Mansurnoor (2020), in his work *Islam in Brunei Darussalam: Negotiating Islamic Revivalism and Religious Radicalism*, explores how the Bruneian state negotiates the pressures of Islamic revivalism and religious radicalization. Mansurnoor highlights the narrative of political Islam in Brunei, where Islamic movements interact with state policies, shaping the intellectual atmosphere around Qur'anic education. The role of the state in regulating religious practice, including Qur'ānic education, is crucial to understanding how religious education in Brunei maintains a balance between traditional Islamic values and contemporary religious reform.

The development of Qur'ānic education in Brunei can also be traced through its historical evolution. Sarinah Yahya (2008), in her work *History of the Development of Qur'ānic Recitation and Writing in the State of Brunei Darussalam*, outlines the long-standing tradition of Qur'ānic learning in Brunei, from oral transmission to more formal educational structures in the modern

era. This work provides important insights into how Qur'ānic education evolved in response to socio-political changes and the introduction of modern educational frameworks. This historical perspective is crucial to understanding the foundations of Qur'ānic education and its adaptation to contemporary challenges, especially with the increasing role of the state in regulating religious scholarship.

In recent years, Brunei has seen the introduction of innovative methods in Qur'anic education. Nurhamizah Jasni and Mariam bint Abdul Rahman (2021), in their study *Mastering the Basic Qur'an Reading Using Neuro Nadi Method in Brunei*, introduced a modern approach to Qur'anic teaching by integrating the principles of cognitive neuroscience in the learning process. This method represents a significant change in pedagogical approach and aims to improve Qur'ānic memorization and comprehension by using techniques based on scientific principles in neuroscience. This approach shows how Qur'ānic education in Brunei is evolving towards a new learning paradigm, which combines traditional methods with contemporary educational approaches.

The establishment and development of Islamic institutions in Brunei further emphasizes the role of the state in shaping Qur'anic education. Ahmad F. Yousif (2023), in his work *Development of Islamic Institutions in Brunei Darussalam During 1946-2023: An Exploration of Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA)*, traces the development of UNISSA as a central institution for Islamic studies and Qur'anic education. Yousif's work highlights how the institutionalization of Islamic studies in Brunei was shaped by state policies and global Islamic movements. UNISSA, as a leading educational institution, played a key role in the intellectual development of Qur'ānic studies in Brunei, serving as a bridge between traditional Islamic scholarship and modern academic frameworks.

The influence of global Islam on Qur'anic education in Brunei is another important area of study. Mansurnoor (2020), in his work *Islam in Brunei Darussalam and Global Islam: An Analysis of Their Interaction*, discusses how global Islamic trends affect local religious practices in Brunei. The book provides insights into how global movements and ideologies on Islamic revivalism affect the intellectual environment in Brunei. In particular, it emphasizes transnational flows of religious ideologies and how they affect the local education system, including Qur'anic education. This source is essential for exploring the extent to which global Islam shapes Qur'ānic teaching, interpretation and understanding in Brunei and Indonesia.

Finally, the post-war period in Brunei witnessed significant socio-religious changes that affected both state policy and religious practice. Mansurnoor (2011) also explores this transformation in his work *Socio-Religious Change in Brunei After the Pacific War*. The book provides an in-depth account of how social changes in Brunei, especially after World War II, affected religious education. These changes were crucial in the development of a more centralized education system, which promoted both Islamic values and national identity. The

evolution of Qur'ānic education in this period reflects broader shifts in socio-political dynamics and state control over religious education.

Meanwhile, the modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia has been significantly influenced by international collaborations, such as the collaboration between IAIN and McGill University discussed by Jabali and Jamhari (2003). This collaboration introduced Western academic methodologies into Islamic education in Indonesia, influencing the way Qur'anic studies are taught. This study shows how these modernization efforts brought interdisciplinary approaches and global perspectives to Qur'anic studies, making it more dynamic and relevant to the Indonesian socio-political context. This modernization also encouraged a more rational and critical approach to Qur'ānic interpretation, which differed from the more static classical tafsir.

A critical report by Rohman and Ahmad (2022) describes a new trajectory in Qur'ānic studies in Indonesia, which shows a shift from classical tafsir towards more contextualized and interdisciplinary interpretations. They argue that Indonesian scholars are now focusing more on contemporary socio-political issues such as democracy, human rights and social justice in their interpretation of the Qur'ān. This reflects a larger shift in intellectual approach, where Qur'ānic studies are not only limited to theological debates, but also actively engaged in shaping public discourse.

Kaltsum and Amin (2024) analyzed the development of thematic tafsir in Indonesia, which is a new approach to understanding the Qur'ān. This approach organizes the Qur'ānic teachings around specific themes such as justice, governance, and ethics, making them more relevant to contemporary issues. They highlight how thematic interpretation is gaining popularity in Indonesia as a response to modern socio-political challenges. This approach differs from the more traditional approach still widely used in Brunei, which tends to focus more on adherence to classical texts and maintaining religious homogeneity. This change shows that Indonesia is increasingly developing a more independent approach to Qur'ānic studies, although it is still influenced by local authoritative figures.

Feener (1998) provides an important historical perspective on Qur'ānic interpretation in Southeast Asia, highlighting how Qur'ānic interpretation is influenced by local political and cultural contexts. Feener's research shows that Qur'ānic interpretation in Southeast Asia tends to be more pragmatic and practical, often tailored to the challenges faced by local Muslim communities. This study is crucial to understanding how Qur'ānic interpretation in Indonesia and Brunei developed, influenced by socio-political factors unique to each country.

The book edited by Daneshgar et al. (2016), *The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation*, explores the importance of cultural and linguistic context in Qur'anic interpretation in the Malay-Indonesian world. The book shows how local scholars contextualize the Qur'ān in the Malay-Indonesian tradition, producing interpretations that are more relevant to the lived experiences of local communities. This approach emphasizes that the Qur'ān is not

only a universal religious text, but also as a text that interacts with regional culture and history, providing insight into how interpretations in Indonesia and Brunei differ from the more dominant interpretations in the Middle East.

Gusmian (2017) analyzes the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia, focusing on the role of various scientific traditions and political influences that shape Qur'anic interpretation. The study shows that Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia is dynamic and continues to evolve in line with socio-political changes. Gusmian identifies that Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia is influenced by traditionalist, modernist, and reformist thought, reflecting the ideological diversity within Indonesian Muslim society. This shows that Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia is not a monolithic entity, but is influenced by various different schools of thought.

Zuhdi and Syamsuddin (2018) track trends in Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia between 2000 and 2010, focusing on the influence of digital media in the dissemination of exegesis. They note how social media and online platforms have democratized access to Qur'ānic studies, allowing the public to participate in wider religious debates. This trend reflects how technological developments have changed the way Qur'ānic commentaries are disseminated and accessed, although challenges remain regarding the credibility and authenticity of commentaries circulating online.

G. Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study using comparative analysis to explore the intellectual dynamics and development of Qur'anic scholarship in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia. This research is designed using a case study approach to facilitate an in-depth examination of Qur'anic studies in Brunei and Indonesia. Each country will be treated as a distinct case, allowing for a detailed comparison of their respective intellectual landscapes. This approach allows the study to capture the unique socio-political and educational contexts that influence Qur'ānic scholarship, while facilitating comparisons between countries to highlight similarities and differences. The design is exploratory, focusing on understanding how contemporary trends, such as political Islam, Islamic modernism, and digital media, affect Qur'ānic scholarship in both countries.

The data in this study were collected through interviews, observation and documentation. Interviews were conducted with key informants (academics at Sultan Syarif Ali University of Brunei, Ministry of Religious Affairs of Brunei, Academics of Qur'anic Studies at the Association of Qur'anic Sciences and Tafsir, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia). The interviews will explore the informants' views on how Qur'anic studies developed in their countries, the influence of political ideology and state policies. Meanwhile, observations were made by observing the social, political, and educational factors that influence Qur'anic scholarship in the two countries. This methodology is suitable for capturing the complexity of

the intellectual, cultural and political contexts in which Qur'anic studies take place. Documentation methods are used by utilizing state policy documents related to Qur'anic studies or its study in the two countries, including documents produced such as tafsir produced at the initiation of the government through authorized institutions. Literature analysis will be used to map the elements of intellectualism documented in the form of publications, educational curricula, religious texts and policy documents. Data from these documents will help to map the narratives and official frameworks that shape Qur'anic scholarship in both countries.

H. Systematization of Discussion

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter introduces the research topic and provides the background necessary to understand the context of the study. It explains the importance of studying Qur'anic education in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia. It also sets out the research problem, objectives and broader research questions. The chapter will highlight the intellectual and educational challenges faced by Qur'ānic studies in both countries, particularly in relation to political Islam, state control, and the evolving role of digital educational tools.

Chapter II The Theories

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature related to Qur'ānic studies, Islamic education, political Islam and the development of religious education in Southeast Asia. The chapter will draw on historical and contemporary works, exploring the various theoretical frameworks that have influenced Qur'ānic scholarship and educational policy in Brunei and Indonesia. Particular attention will be paid to recent shifts in educational practices and reforms aimed at modernizing Qur'ānic education.

Chapter III Quranic Studies In Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the intellectual dynamics shaping Qur'ānic studies in both countries. It analyzes how state policies and political Islam influence religious discourse, Qur'ānic studies curricula, and intellectual debates among academic and religious communities. It will also discuss how these dynamics differ between Brunei and Indonesia, focusing on the unique political, social and religious contexts in each country.

Chapter IV Education System and Qur'anic Studies in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam

This chapter explores the education systems in Brunei and Indonesia and their impact on Qur'ānic scholarship. It investigates the role of government policies, the state-run religious education system, and how Qur'ānic education is integrated into the education curriculum. The

chapter also discusses the challenges and opportunities for reform in the educational framework, the role of political Islam in shaping educational reform in Qur'anic scholarship, and the role of political Islam in shaping educational reform.

Chapter V Analysis

This chapter will present and analyze the data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The findings will be organized thematically and compared between the two countries. The chapter will identify the main trends, differences and similarities between Brunei and Indonesia regarding Qur'ānic studies, as well as highlight the intellectual, educational and technological factors that shape Qur'ānic education in both countries. Furthermore, this chapter serves to interpret the research findings and relate them to the wider theoretical and empirical literature. The chapter discusses how intellectual dynamics in Brunei and Indonesia shaped the development of Qur'anic studies and educational practices, focusing on the political, social and technological factors at play. It also discusses the implications of the findings for future educational reform in both countries and offers recommendations for improving Qur'ānic education.

Chapter VI Closing

This final chapter summarizes the main findings of the study, answers the research questions, and reflects on the study's contribution to the field of Qur'anic studies and Islamic education in Southeast Asia. It also discusses the limitations of the study and suggests directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY AND QUR'ANIC STUDIES

A. Development of Qur'anic Studies

Qur'anic Studies is an in-depth and systematic academic study of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. This field of study is not limited to traditional approaches focused on Islamic theology and law, but also embraces various modern approaches, including critical and interdisciplinary ones. Qur'anic Studies is an academic and scientific field of study that focuses on the Qur'an as a religious, historical, and literary text. In general, Qur'anic Studies covers several important aspects:

1. 'Ulumul Qur'an (The Sciences of the Qur'an), the foundation of Qur'anic scholarship in classical Islamic tradition. It covers various disciplines directly related to the Qur'an, such as: Asbabun Nuzul, Nasikh and Mansukh, Qira'at, Makkiyah and Madaniyah, I'jaz Al-Qur'an, Tafsir
2. Modern and Critical Approaches, in Western academia, and increasingly in the contemporary Muslim world, Qur'anic studies are also conducted using more critical, historical, and sociological approaches, such as philological, historical, hermeneutical, and Living Qur'an approaches.

The study of the Qur'an has developed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions, where understanding and practicing the Qur'an became the main focus. During the time of the companions, efforts were made to collect and compile the Qur'an into one mushaf (Uthmani Mushaf). Then, during the time of the tabi'in, madrasas of tafsir emerged in various Islamic regions. 'Ulumul Qur'an began to be codified more systematically in the 3rd century AH, with the emergence of works discussing various aspects of the Qur'an. This development continued into the modern era, with the emergence of new methodologies and approaches in Qur'anic studies.

The main objective of Al-Qur'an scholarship is to understand the Qur'an comprehensively, in terms of language, history, context, meaning, and its implications for individual and community life. This is done using various research methodologies, such as:

- a) Tahlili (Analytical) Method: Interpreting verses and surahs sequentially, explaining all aspects.
- b) Thematic Method: Discussing verses of the Qur'an according to specific themes or titles.
- c) Critical/Historical Method: Analyzing the text of the Qur'an by considering its historical and philological context.

The study of the Qur'an is a dynamic field, constantly evolving with the emergence of new questions and innovative methodologies for understanding the Qur'an as a guide for life, making it the most influential text in the history of human civilization

B. Qur'anic Studies and Qur'anic Qur'anic Scholarship

Basically, the terms Qur’anic scholarship and Qur'anic studies are very similar and are often used interchangeably. Both refer to in-depth scientific and academic activities to understand the Al-Qur'an. However, there are slight nuances that distinguish the two terms, especially in terms of their usage and emphasis. Qur'anic scholarship more often refers to an established and systematic discipline of studying the Qur'an. This includes a long scholarly tradition, both in the Muslim world (through 'Ulumul Qur'an and classical Tafsir) and in the Western academic world (through critical, philological, and historical studies).

The term “scholarship” refers to a structured scientific approach, such as linguistic, historical, thematic, sociological, and hermeneutic analysis. Scholarship creates a conceptual framework for understanding the Qur'an. Scholarship necessitates the production of academic works such as research, articles, and books that contribute to the field of the Qur'an. A group of individuals who are professionally dedicated to the study of the Qur'an are partly members of the Association of Qur'anic Sciences and Interpretation. The existence of this community of scholars also demonstrates the vitality of Qur'anic scholarship.

Qur'anic Studies is a more general and broad term, covering all forms of study or research activities related to the Qur'an. This can include: formal studies in educational institutions, individual research, discussions, and seminars. Qur'anic studies have a purely academic approach and studies that are more oriented towards practical or spiritual understanding. It can be concluded that Qur'anic scholarship is part of Qur'anic studies, which is a more specific, formal, and academically oriented sub-field. All Qur'anic scholarship is Qur'anic studies, but not all Qur'anic studies can be called Qur'anic scholarship.

Quranic Studies is the *arena* where the study happens, while Quranic Scholarship is the *knowledge and books* produced by those inside the arena The differences between Qur’anic scholarshidp and Qur’anic studies:

Feature	Quranic Studies	Quranic Scholarship
Category	Academic Discipline / Field	Intellectual Work / Body of Research
Focus	Education, Methodology, and Subjects.	Literature, Expertise, and Contributions.
Refers to...	The what (the field itself).	The who and how well (the scholars' work).
Common Context	University courses, PhD programs, Journals.	Book reviews, historical analysis of ideas.

Political Islam, often referred to as the politicization of Islam, is a concept that refers to any interpretation of Islam as a source of political identity and action. It involves various individuals, groups, or movements that advocate the establishment of a state and society based on their understanding of Islamic principles. The essence of political Islam lies in the view that Islam is not merely a personal religion that governs an individual's relationship with God, but also a comprehensive system that provides guidelines for all aspects of life, including government, law, economics, and society.

Supporters of political Islam believe that religion and state are inseparable (*Dien wa Daulah*). They reject the idea of separating religion from public affairs (secularism) and argue that Islamic principles should form the basis of the constitution, laws, and state policies. Their main goal is to implement Islamic Sharia (Islamic law) comprehensively as the basis for the law and morals of society. They believe that the implementation of Islamic principles will bring justice, prosperity, and benefit to all people. They refer to the state practices of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in Medina and the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin as ideal models for an Islamic political.

Although it varies in form and strategy, political Islam has specific characteristics. Islam is considered a political ideology that provides a complete framework for social and political order. Political Islam movements participate in formal political processes such as general elections and the formation of political parties to achieve their goals. They often seek to mobilize support from the Muslim community by appealing to religious identity and Islam-based political demands. The administration of the state and government is expected to be based on Islamic moral and ethical values. They fight for Islamic law (*sharia*) to be recognized and applied as the highest law in a country. There are various interpretations of how Islamic principles should be translated into the political system, giving rise to a spectrum of movements from moderate to radical.

The idea of the relationship between Islam and politics has existed since the beginning of Islamic history, starting with the establishment of the state of Medina by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. After the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin, various dynasties and caliphates emerged which, although not always perfect in their implementation, still used Islam as a legitimization of power. In the modern era, especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 and the emergence of nation-states, the concept of political Islam gained new momentum. Movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jamaat-e-Islami in South Asia, and Islamic parties in various countries emerged with the aim of reforming society and the state based on Islamic principles. Political Islam is not monolithic; it has a wide spectrum and manifestations. Parties that explicitly use the name and ideology of Islam in their political struggle (e.g., PKS in Indonesia, AKP in Turkey). Organizations that may not be directly involved in practical politics but seek to influence public policy and shape public opinion based

on Islamic values. Some groups embrace political Islam with a more extreme approach, even resorting to violence, to establish an Islamic state or implement Sharia law. There are also many thinkers and scholars who discuss and develop theories about Islam and politics without necessarily being directly involved in political movements.

It is important to note that the term “political Islam” is often used in academic analysis or the media to describe this phenomenon, and may not always be accepted by all Muslim groups. Some Muslims argue that Islam itself is political, while others may prefer terms such as “Islamic politics” (politics based on Islamic values) to distinguish it from “the politicization of religion,” which is considered negative.

Literally, there is no single antonym that directly opposes “political Islam” in the same way that ‘hot’ is the antonym of “cold.” This is because the term “political Islam” is not just a simple noun but a complex and multidimensional concept. There are several concepts that are functionally or ideologically opposed to the idea of political Islam. Secularism is the most common antonym of political Islam. Political Islam necessitates Islam as a comprehensive system that must be the basis for the state, law, and society. Conversely, secularism advocates the separation of religion from state and public affairs. In the view of secularism, the state must be neutral towards religion and the law must not be based on the teachings of any particular religion.

On the other hand, there is the term personal Islam, which emphasizes the non-political dimension of Islam. While political Islam emphasizes the implementation of Islam in the public and state spheres, personal Islam emphasizes a person's relationship with God, ritual worship, moral ethics, and personal spiritual development. Islam is a matter of the heart and personal belief, not a framework for governing politics and the state.

There is also pure nationalism without religious trappings. If political Islam emphasizes Muslim identity as the basis for politics, then pure nationalism can be its counterpart. Political identity is often based on Islam or the idea of “*ummatah wahidah*” (global Muslim community). Political identity and primary loyalty are to the nation-state based on territory, language, or shared culture, regardless of or above religious identity. For example, Indonesian nationalism, which is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity), does not explicitly make a particular religious identity the basis of the state.

Liberalism as a political ideology often conflicts with the claims of political Islam. Political Islam tends to emphasize Sharia authority and the collective views of Islamic society. Political liberalism emphasizes individual rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion (including freedom not to have a religion), and pluralistic democracy, while religion is a private matter.

Traditional Islam and modern Islam are two main approaches to understanding and practicing Islamic teachings. Both have differences in methodology, ways of interacting with social and intellectual changes, and focus in religion. Traditional Islam is based on the legacy of classical scholars, centuries-old schools of jurisprudence, and the pesantren education system. Traditional Islam has a distinctive characteristic, namely absolute acceptance of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Qur'an is the complete and eternal word of God, while the Sunnah of the Prophet is a practical guide based on the instructions of the Prophet Muhammad. Both are the main sources and guidelines for life.

Traditional Islam strongly upholds the legacy of the scholars, who adhere to the Mazhab. Traditionally, followers of traditional Islam adhere to a particular school of jurisprudence (such as the Shafi'i school in Indonesia) and creed (such as Asy'ariyah) as guidelines for religious practice. This implies an obligation to follow what the imams of the school say. Thus, the scholars are their role models, and the traditions that have been passed down are followed from generation to generation. Religious authority is very strong among scholars who are considered competent in Sharia sciences. Religious traditions, including Sufism, also have an important position and are considered the deepest dimension of the Islamic revival.

Traditional Islam allows for acculturation with local cultures. In many regions, especially in Indonesia (known as Islam Nusantara), traditional Islam often accommodates and integrates local cultural values into religious practices, even to the point of syncretism in some aspects. Examples include the blending of Islam and customs in marriage, holiday celebrations, the traditions of sholawat and marhaban, as well as calligraphy and carving on buildings. Adherence to a particular madhhab sometimes leads to a reluctance to engage in ijihad independently, and may even result in the door to ijihad being closed. The Closing of the Door to Ijihad: There is a tendency to view the door to ijihad (independent interpretation of Islamic law) as closed, or that there are no mujtahids who are qualified to do so.

Modern Islam (also known as reformist Islam or Islamic modernism) emerged as a response to the decline of Muslims in the face of Western progress, as well as an effort to purify Islamic teachings from foreign elements that were considered to be the cause of this decline. This movement began around the 19th century. Modern Islam seeks to change religious understanding and practices to suit the demands of the times, as well as to purify Islamic teachings from bid'ah (innovations that are not in accordance with sharia), superstition, and khurafat. Modern Islam encourages Muslims to understand the Qur'an and Sunnah directly, without being rigidly bound to the interpretations of classical scholars or certain schools of thought. This understanding reopens the door to ijihad. Rationality and Openness to Modern Science and Technology are given more weight in modern Islam, emphasizing the importance of reason and rationality in understanding religion, as well as openness to modern science and technology.

Modern Islam seeks to adapt religion to the new world brought about by advances in science and technology. Focus on Worldly and Social Progress: In addition to spiritual aspects, modern Islam also pays great attention to progress in the fields of education, economics, politics, and social affairs. They strive to eradicate ignorance and poverty and advance the community in various aspects of life. Modern Organizations: The emergence of modern organizations as a forum for struggle and the dissemination of ideas, such as Muhammadiyah in Indonesia. Emphasis on Productive Aspects: Encouraging Muslims to not only focus on the afterlife, but also pay attention to material needs and make positive contributions to worldly life. Although there are differences, it is important to note that the boundaries between the two are not always absolute and there is often dialogue or even attempts to bridge the two approaches, such as the neo-traditionalist movement which continues to respect classical authority but is open to dialogue with the modern world.

Feature	Traditional Islam	Modern Islam (Modernism)
Primary Source	Quran, Sunnah, and Classical Consensus .	Quran and Sunnah via Modern Reason .
Legal Approach	Follows established Schools (<i>Madhhabs</i>).	Encourages independent reasoning (<i>Ijtihad</i>).
View of History	History is a source of guidance and identity.	History is often seen as a filter to be peeled back.
Focus	Preservation of the sacred tradition.	Adaptation to contemporary challenges.
Western Values	Often skeptical or selective.	Seeks reconciliation and synthesis.

Comparison Table tradisional Islam and modern islam

D. Intellectual History

Intellectual history is a branch of historical science that focuses on the thoughts, ideas, philosophies, and mentalities of people in the past, both individuals and groups. It is not merely a matter of recording who thought what, but rather, it examines how ideas emerged, developed, influenced each other, and shaped societies and historical events. Intellectual history covers various aspects, including:

- a) Intellectual Thought: A study of the thoughts and works of philosophers, scientists, artists, writers, theologians, or other important figures who have made significant contributions to the development of ideas.

- b) Schools of Thought and Movements: Analysis of how certain ideas developed into schools of thought or movements (e.g., the Enlightenment, the Protestant Reformation, Marxism, nationalism, etc.) and how these movements influenced society.
- c) The Role of Ideas in Social Change: Exploring how certain ideas become catalysts or justifications for social, political, economic, and cultural change.
- d) Context of Thought: Understanding that ideas do not arise in a vacuum. Intellectual history places great emphasis on the historical, social, economic, and cultural contexts in which ideas develop. This means considering the political conditions, social structures, technological developments, and other conditions that influence the birth of a thought.
- e) The Dissemination and Reception of Ideas: Examining how ideas are disseminated (through books, speeches, education, mass media) and how these ideas are accepted or rejected by various groups within society.
- f) The History of Mentalities: Some historians also include studies of the mentalities or collective ways of thinking of a society during a particular period as part of intellectual history.

Intellectual history is important because it helps us understand the roots of contemporary thinking. Many of the ideas and concepts used today have long historical roots. By studying intellectual history, one can trace the origins and genealogy of ideas and knowledge. Intellectual history can help us understand the dynamics of social change in society, starting from an idea that develops into a concept and brings about social change in a society. This shows that humans are thinking beings. The results of their thinking have shaped history and even changed it. Intellectual history highlights how ideas not only reflect reality, but also help shape that reality itself.

Intellectual history uses historical research methods. To analyze the scholarship of the Qur'an in a country, a four-stage framework adapted from general historical methods is used, namely:

1. Heuristics (Source Collection): Searching for and collecting various relevant primary and secondary sources, such as philosophical texts, personal correspondence, diaries, speeches, pamphlets, books, articles, and other documents. Primary Sources: Works by local mufasssir (Qur'an interpreters), books on ulumul Qur'an (Qur'anic sciences), journal articles, dissertations, and lectures by key figures. Secondary Sources: Academic studies on these figures, intellectual biographies, and literature reviews on the development of Islamic studies in the country.
2. Source Criticism (Verification): Assessing the authenticity and credibility of the sources found. This involves external criticism (assessing the physical authenticity of the source) and internal criticism (assessing the content and bias of the source). To analyze the intellectual history of Qur'anic scholarship, external criticism (authenticity and originality of the text) and internal criticism (credibility of the author and their bias) are used.

3. Interpretation (Analysis and Synthesis): Analyzing the meaning of the ideas contained in the source, placing them in their historical context, and connecting them with other thoughts. This is the most crucial stage where intellectual historians attempt to understand the author's intentions, their audience, and the impact of their thoughts.

Organizing research findings into a coherent and argumentative historical narrative. The writing stage, where you present your findings narratively, explaining “how” and “why” patterns of thinking about the Qur'an developed in that country. This approach will produce a much richer analysis than a mere list of exegetes; it will explain the dynamics of thought that shaped the tradition of Qur'anic scholarship in that country.

Intellectual history is interdisciplinary, meaning that it uses concepts and theories from other disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and political science to deepen its analysis. Analyzing Qur'anic Studies in a country using an intellectual history approach is a very rich and profound method. Intellectual history focuses on the ideas, thoughts, and discourses of scholars and how these ideas emerged, developed, interacted with each other, and influenced society in a particular historical context. The following are the basic theories of intellectual history:

1. The History of Ideas

This theory attempts to trace basic units of ideas—such as “Rationality,” “Tradition,” or “Textual Authority”—and how these units emerged and migrated across disciplines and time. Application to Al-Qur'an Scholarship: Identification of central units of ideas in Al-Qur'an studies in the country (e.g., the idea of “The Relevance of the Al-Qur'an to the Modern Era,” or “The Relationship between Text and Context”). How these units of thought have changed from the classical period (e.g., in early local exegesis) to the modern period (e.g., contemporary exegesis).

2. Contextualism

This approach, pioneered by Quentin Skinner and John Pocock (the Cambridge School), emphasizes that the meaning of a text or idea cannot be separated from the linguistic, social, and political context in which the text was produced. Texts are viewed as speech acts intended to accomplish something at that particular time. Application to Qur'anic Scholarship: Analysis of Qur'anic scholarship (e.g., exegesis, dissertations, or fatwas) is not only as a text, but as a response to political, social, or modern challenges (such as colonialism, economic development, or gender issues) at the time of writing.

3. Archaeology of Knowledge

Ada suatu According to Michel Foucault, this approach seeks the discursive rules (discourse) that underlie and enable the emergence of certain knowledge in a particular period. It asks: “Under what conditions can a thought be spoken or written?” Application to Qur'anic Scholarship: Identification of the dominant “regime of truth” or “episteme” in Qur'anic studies

in a given country. For example, how the dominance of “Traditionalist/Salafi” discourse in the 1980s limited or enabled the emergence of “Hermeneutic/Liberal” discourse in the 2000s.

CHAPTER III

QUR'ANIC STUDIES IN INDONESIA

A. Geographical and Demographic Conditions of Indonesia

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world, covering a vast area, with a large and diverse population, and a unique religious life based on formal tolerance. Geographically, Indonesia stretches across the equator, making it the largest maritime country and the largest archipelago in the world. Its territory consists of more than 17,000 islands (including large islands such as Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua). Indonesia ranks as the fourth most populous country in the world, with a population of over 280 million people. Religious life in Indonesia is governed by the principles of Pancasila, particularly the first principle, "Belief in One God." The government officially recognizes six major religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The religious life of Muslims in Indonesia is characterized by plurality, strong traditions, and the significant role of community organizations (ormas) in shaping the face of diversity. Islam in Indonesia is the majority religion (professed by more than 86% of the population), but it is expressed in a variety of unique forms.

B. Qur'an recitation and studies in indonesia

The Qur'anic studies in Indonesia is a highly dynamic, tradition-rich, and progressive field, reflecting the cultural plurality and diversity of Islamic thought in the archipelago. Its development can be seen through three main phases: traditional, modernist, and contemporary. The beginnings of Qur'anic scholarship in Indonesia centered on non-formal and traditional education. Before the existence of modern institutions, Islamic boarding schools were the main centers for teaching the Qur'an. The main focus was on tilawah (recitation), tahfiz (memorization), and understanding the basics of religious knowledge through classical Islamic texts. Tafsir studies were conducted with reference to the works of Middle Eastern scholars such as Tafsir Jalalain or Tafsir Ibn Kathir. Scholars made significant contributions, including the birth of works such as Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid by Sheikh Abdur Rauf Singkil (Aceh, 17th century). This book is the first complete tafsir in the Malay language.

Al-Qur'an scholarship began to enter the realm of formal and academic education, driven by the spirit of nationalism and Islamic modernism. This institutionalization was pioneered by state-founded institutions, such as IAIN/STAIN. The establishment of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN), which later transformed into the State Islamic University (UIN), made 'Ulumul Qur'an and Tafsir formal disciplines that have produced thousands of scholars and researchers of the Qur'an. Al-Qur'an scholarship developed rapidly when the Islamic Higher Education Institution (PTAI) established a Tafsir Hadith study program (later

changed to the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Study Program) and study centers that focused on the development of Al-Qur'an and tafsir scholarship and its relevance to contemporary issues.

The study of the Qur'an and its interpretation in Indonesia is institutionally controlled and regulated by the state, but it is more pluralistic and adaptive in nature than in Brunei. This control is exercised through the formal curriculum at State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), which encourages a balance between classical scholarly traditions and contemporary approaches. Curriculum control is carried out centrally to ensure the same academic standards throughout Indonesia, but still allows room for interpretation. Formally, the Ministry of Religious Affairs acts as the main regulator. The quality of study programs is ensured through internal and external quality assurance. The National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (BAN-PT) controls the quality of study programs, forcing institutions to follow established curriculum standards and administrative and academic governance.

Specifically, the curriculum for the Qur'anic Studies and Interpretation program in Indonesia is standardized under the Association of Qur'anic Studies and Interpretation (AIAT). One of AIAT's objectives is to set quality standards for resources and education in the field of Qur'anic Studies and Interpretation. AIAT allows for flexibility in development while taking into account the characteristics of each university. AIAT requires 17 compulsory courses for the Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir program. The compulsory courses are: Uloomul Qur'an, History of the Qur'an, Ushul al-Tafsir wa Qawa'iduh, Ilmu Tajwid, Ilmu Qira'at, Sirah Nabawiyah, Tafsir Book Studies, Madzhab al-Tafsir, Modern and Contemporary Tafsir Thought, Thematic Tafsir, Research Methodology of the Qur'an and Tafsir, Uloomul Hadith, Thematic Hadith, Tahsin and Tahfidz Al-Qur'an, Hermeneutics/Philosophy of al-Ta'wil, Western Studies on the Qur'an, Tafsir Nusantara. This curriculum is designed to produce graduates who master classical Islamic scholarship and are able to interpret the Qur'an textually and contextually.

Although the curriculum is standardized, the Indonesian government's control is more administrative in nature than monolithic ideology. The Indonesian government controls the formal framework of the Tafsir curriculum to ensure academic quality, but gives scholars broad scientific freedom to develop contextual methodologies and interpretations, making the study of the Qur'an in Indonesia highly progressive and pluralistic.

Indonesian Quranic scholarship is very productive. This can be seen from the large number of works produced. This phase is marked by efforts to make the interpretation of the Quran relevant to social and political issues. Hamka wrote the book *al Azhar*, which shows that this interpretation is rich in social nuances that are relevant to Malay society. M. Quraish Shihab wrote *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, in which he reviews the interpretation with detailed,

moderate, and dialogical analysis, accommodating the current context and Indonesianness, making it a popular interpretation and a reference for many Indonesians.

Contemporary Qur'anic studies in Indonesia are characterized by intellectual courage and an interdisciplinary approach, giving rise to diverse styles of interpretation, such as *adabil ijtima'i*, *falsafi*, and *'ilmiy*. Qur'anic studies are heavily influenced by social issues, such as leadership, poverty, tolerance, interfaith relations, and gender equality. Studies that reinterpret Qur'anic verses on women, family, and equality challenge traditional patriarchal interpretations. Indonesian exegesis experts have made scientific contributions that have had an impact on society, one of which is discussing ecology and the environment. The heterogeneity of the Indonesian nation also contributes to the diversity of Qur'anic interpretations in Indonesia.

The study of the Qur'an describes a dynamic dialectic between studies of classical heritage and studies of the Qur'an in the West. The hermeneutic approach, although often controversial among conservatives, is now widely used by some scholars to analyze the text of the Qur'an through philosophical methods and historical criticism in order to discover more contextual meanings. In the digital age, Al-Qur'an scholarship has also expanded into the digital realm, with many research papers, journals, and commentaries (*Tafsir Al-Mishbah*) available online, increasing the accessibility of studies. Overall, Quranic scholarship in Indonesia today stands at the crossroads between preserving traditional heritage (*sanad*) and facing the challenges of modernity (contextualization), making it one of the most fascinating centers of Islamic studies in the world.

C. Products of Qur'anic Studies in Indonesia

In general, the Indonesian government officially publishes three types of products: *Mushaf al-Qur'an*, *Mushaf Al-Qur'an and Translation*, and *al-Qur'an and its interpretation*. All three are published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), a special sub-unit called *Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ)*. This is to ensure the authenticity of the text and provide reading guidelines in line with the understanding of the Indonesian people. The government allows the printing of the Qur'an, but every Qur'an printed by any publisher in Indonesia must have a Certificate of Authenticity from the LPMQ. This certificate can be found at the front or back of the *Mushaf*, which includes the official letter number from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The *Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ)* (established in 1957) serves as an inspection committee. Since 2007, the LPMQ has officially become an independent work unit (*Satuan Kerja*) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and is headquartered at *Bayt Al-Qur'an & Museum Istiqlal, TMII Jakarta*.

1. Indonesian Standard Mushaf

The Quran was first published in 1951 by the Egyptian book company Abdullah bin Afif in Cirebon. The certification was signed by the Minister of Religious Affairs at that time, KH Muhammad Ilyas, on April 17, 1957. Subsequently, the Quran was published by CV Salim Nabhan Surabaya and CV Al-Ma'arif Bandung. The existing copies are the Bombay Quran from Pakistan and the Bahriyyah Quran published in Istanbul. Until the 1970s, there were not many varieties of the Quran circulating in Indonesia. However, over time, many publishers have emerged to publish the Quran, with the number now reaching approximately 100 publishers.

In addition, in 1960, 6 million copies of the Quran were published in Japan for the Indonesian people as war reparations. The Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs assigned four members of the committee to carry out the authentication process. They were KH Iskandar Idris, KH Amin Nashir, H. Ghazali Thaib, and H. TB Manshur Makmun. Thus, this Quran became widely circulated among the community. As time went by, interaction between nations became easier, and many Qurans from abroad entered Indonesia. In terms of punctuation, there were differences with the Quranic script that was widely known at that time.

Of the many copies of the Quran in circulation, there is a wide variety of punctuation marks and waqaf signs, each differing from one another. Those who are accustomed to reading the Quran will be able to identify overlapping text or misplaced dots, which may be caused by technical errors in printing. However, those who are still learning will encounter difficulties and errors in reading if there are missing dots or other errors in the printing of the Quran.

Throughout its history, specifically in 1984, the committee produced the Standard Mushaf Alquran, which subsequently served as a guideline in the task of proofreading mushafs to be published and distributed in Indonesia. The birth of this standard mushaf was based on the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 25 of 1984 dated March 29, 1984, concerning the Determination of the Standard Mushaf. The contents of the decree are as follows:

- a. The Usmani, Bahriyyah, and Braille standard Qurans, which are the result of research and discussion by the First to Ninth Qur'anic Scholars Council, shall be used as the Indonesian Standard Mushaf.
- b. The master copy of the Indonesian Standard Mushaf as referred to in the first dictum shall be kept by the Religious Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

- c. The Indonesian Standard Quran Mushaf as referred to in the first dictum is used as a guideline in the verification of the Quran.

The decree was then followed up with Minister of Religious Affairs Instruction No. 7 of 1984. This instruction was addressed to the Lajnah and contained the following:

- a) Use the Indonesian Standard Mushaf Alquran as a guideline in carrying out its duties
- b) Ensure that new editions of the Alquran published by publishers use the Indonesian Standard Mushaf Alquran

The consequence of the decree and instruction is that all Qurans published and distributed in Indonesia must comply with the standard mushaf. A publisher wishing to publish a Quran manuscript must submit a complete master copy of the Quran to the committee for correction in accordance with the standard manuscript. Once the correction process is complete, the committee then issues a tashih mark signed by all committee members.

The Indonesian Standard Mushaf refers to three mushafs, namely the Indonesian Usmani Standard Mushaf (for general use), the Sudut/Pojok Mushaf, and the Braille Mushaf. Thus, every Quran published after 1984 and approved by the committee should comply with the Indonesian Standard Mushaf, both those used for the general public and those commonly used by people who are memorizing the Quran (corner mushaf). Meanwhile, the Braille mushaf is specifically provided for the visually impaired.

Every copy of the Quran that is published and has been certified by the Lajnah will receive a certification mark. Examples include the corner mushaf published by PT Toha Putra Semarang (with verification mark no. P.III/TL.02.1/257/1999) and the corner mushaf published by PT Pena Pundi Aksara Jakarta (with verification mark no. BD.III/TL.02.1/392/2006). The corner mushaf published by PT Pena Pundi Aksara has the same writing characteristics as the Indonesian Uthmani standard mushaf. An example of a standard Uthmani mushaf (for the general public) that has received a tashhih mark is the one published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs with tashhih mark no. BD. III/TL.02.01/529/2005 and the mushaf published by Hasyim Putra Semarang with the tashhih mark no. P.III/TL.02.1/76/1995.

In short, prior to the 1970s, the Qur'an circulating in Indonesia had a wide variety of punctuation marks and rasm (writing) because it came from various foreign and local publishers. From 1974 to 1983, a standardization process was initiated through nine meetings of the Working Committee (Muker) of Quranic Scholars. The aim was to agree on the most appropriate standards for writing, punctuation, and waqaf signs for the Indonesian people. In 1984, the Minister of Religious Affairs officially launched the Indonesian Standard Mushaf (MSI). Since then, all Qur'ans printed in Indonesia must refer to this standard and must undergo a review process (pentashihan) by the Lajnah Pentashihan

Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ). In 2002, aesthetic improvements were made to the khat (handwriting) to make it clearer and bolder, while still maintaining the standard Indonesian Rasm Usmani rules.

Some Muslims ask why there are slight differences in punctuation between the Ministry of Religious Affairs Mushaf and the Madinah Mushaf. Some of the main differences are: first, the punctuation system (Dhabt), the Indonesian standard mushaf (MSI) gives a long mark to the word “Allah,” while the Madinah Mushaf does not (because Arabs are considered to already know this). Second, the sukun mark. The MSI places a sukun mark on certain ikhfa and idgham letters to help beginners know that these letters must be read according to the rules of tajwid. Third, the waqaf mark. The MSI uses more waqaf marks in accordance with the tradition of teaching the Qur'an in the archipelago.

2. Mushaf al-Qur'an and Its translation

This official translation project was initiated to address the community's need for an accurate and authoritative Indonesian translation of the Qur'an. The first translation was launched on August 17, 1965, by the Minister of Religious Affairs, KH. Saifuddin Zuhri. The team of compilers was led by Prof. R.H.A. Soenarjo, S.H. This edition initially consisted of 3 separate volumes. In 1971, revisions were made, it was combined into one volume, and the Enhanced Spelling System (EYD) began to be used. In 1989-1990, the translation was revised and then adopted by the Saudi Arabian government to be printed at the King Fahd Printing Complex (Medina) and distributed to Indonesian pilgrims. In 1998-2002, improvements were made to the language to make it more modern and easier for the younger generation to understand. From 2016 to 2019, the most comprehensive changes were made. An in-depth study of the translation was conducted over three years, involving exegetes, linguists, and sociologists. This edition improves on outdated diction, is more sensitive to gender and disability issues, and refines sentence structure.

The publication of the Qur'an and its translations in Indonesia is dynamic. The official translation by the Ministry of Religious Affairs continues to be refined to keep pace with developments in the Indonesian language and the dynamics of interpretation. In 2019, the Ministry of Religious Affairs released a new edition, which included minor changes in word choice (diction), more fluid sentence structure, and sensitivity to gender and disability issues without altering the original meaning. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has also permitted the publication of the Qur'an in regional languages, such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Bugis. This aims to preserve local culture while bringing the Qur'an closer to the local community.

3. Interpretation of Qur'an

The Al-Qur'an and its Tafsir published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) is an official state interpretation project that aims to provide an easy and relevant understanding of the Al-Qur'an in the Indonesian context. One of its unique features is that this Tafsir was compiled collectively by a team of experts. The compilation of this interpretation went through several important phases involving leading scholars and academics in Indonesia. The first team was formed based on KMA No. 90 of 1972, led by Prof. R.H.A. Soenarjo, S.H. This project aimed to meet the community's need for a comprehensive and easy-to-understand interpretation in Indonesian. The team's work was first published in 1975 (Juz 1-3) and was completed in 30 juz in 1980 under the leadership of Prof. K.H. Ibrahim Hosen. Considering the development of language and science, the Ministry of Religious Affairs conducted a major revision. During the period 2004-2007, comprehensive improvements were made in terms of language, substance, and the addition of modern scientific findings. This major project involved renowned exegetes such as Prof. Dr. M. Quraish Shihab.

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), through LPMQ, has released an interpretation product called Tafsir Wajiz. The term “Wajiz” means ‘brief’ or “concise,” referring to the writing methodology that is compact but covers the essence of each verse. This method of interpretation is known as the *ijmali* method. This concise interpretation was compiled to meet the needs of the community in understanding the essence and global meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in a practical, simple, and quick manner. This interpretation was compiled collectively by a team and is the most common type of interpretation found and read on the “Qur'an Kemenag” application on Android/iOS and its official web version. This Ministry of Religious Affairs interpretation product is officially referred to as the “Concise Interpretation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs,” often nicknamed the Wajiz Interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to distinguish it from the *Tahlili* Interpretation (Analytical/Complete Interpretation), which consists of 10 volumes. The Wajiz Kemenag Tafsir can be accessed via smartphone apps by downloading the Qur'an Kemenag through the Play Store or App Store, or by visiting the portal quran.kemenag.go.id. The PDF version or printed book is available on the Pustaka LPMQ website.

In addition to brief interpretations, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also publishes interpretations using the *tahlili* method. This model can be seen in the Qur'an and its Interpretations. Verses are explained sequentially according to the *mushaf*, covering *asbabun nuzul*, *munasabah* (correlation between verses), vocabulary, and general content. *Maudhu'i* (Thematic) Method: Used in the Thematic Interpretation

series, which discusses specific issues (such as the environment, economy, or health) by compiling related verses from various surahs.

4. Digital Services: The “Qur'an Kemenag” Application

The Ministry of Religious Affairs provides an official application called Qur'an Kemenag (available on Android/iOS and the web). Its outstanding features include:

- a) Text according to the Indonesian Standard Mushaf.
- b) Translation options from the 2002 and 2019 editions.
- c) Concise Exegesis and In-depth Exegesis.
- d) Audio recitations from various qaris.
- e) Bookmarking and verse search features based on Indonesian keywords.

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D. Qur'anic Studies and Contemporary Issues

The curriculum in Indonesia is adapted to the social and national context. The Qur'anic Studies and Interpretation (IAT) program requires students to study interpretations by Indonesian scholars (Abdurrauf as Singkili, Hamka, Quraish Shihab, etc.) in order to understand the context of local wisdom. The study is directed at interpreting verses of the Qur'an that support unity, tolerance, and nationalism (*hubbul wathan minal iman*), in line with the ideology of Pancasila. The curriculum openly includes material that discusses issues of gender justice and equality in the Qur'an, a trend that is characteristic of Qur'anic scholarship in Indonesia. The study of the Qur'an and modernity in Indonesia is a highly dynamic intellectual arena, characterized by systematic efforts to recontextualize the teachings of the Qur'an so that they are relevant and applicable in facing modern challenges such as democracy, human rights, pluralism, and scientific developments.

Broadly speaking, the relationship between Qur'anic studies and modernity in Indonesia can be classified into three main approaches, namely contextual thematic interpretation. This is the most dominant approach among Indonesian Muslim academics and intellectuals. The goal is to shift the focus from atomistic (isolated verse by verse) and literalist (literal) interpretations to interpretations that consider the social, historical, and sociological context of the Qur'an. Thus, there is a dynamic movement from Text to Context. Qur'anic scholars seek to distinguish between the permanent teachings of the Qur'an (*tsawabit*) and the temporary teachings (*mutaghayyirat*) or those bound to the conditions of 7th-century Arabia.

Thematic interpretation (*Mawduhi*) requires the collection of all verses in the Qur'an on a single modern issue (e.g., poverty, economic justice, or politics) in order to produce comprehensive solutions. Key figures include M. Quraish Shihab (with his dialogical and moderate *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*), as well as contextual thinking influenced by Fazlur Rahman

(through the concept of double movement). This approach uses the Qur'an as an ethical basis for combating injustice and responding to issues brought about by modernity.

Tafsir studies in Indonesia accommodate gender and feminism issues. They reinterpret verses that have traditionally been used to justify patriarchy (such as male leadership, polygamy, or inheritance). The goal is to develop gender-just interpretations that emphasize the universal messages of the Qur'an regarding human equality (*musawah*) and respect for women. Key figures include activist groups and scholars such as the initiators of the Indonesian Women Ulema Congress (KUPI), who formulate fatwas and interpretations from a gender justice perspective.

Interpretive studies in Indonesia are more fluid and dynamic. Themes of pluralism and democracy have contributed to the development of exegesis studies in Indonesia in line with the times. Exegesis analyzes verses from the Qur'an related to *Ukhuwah Basyariyah* (brotherhood among humans) and *Ukhuwah Wathaniyah* (brotherhood among fellow countrymen). The goal is to provide a theological basis for the state ideology, Pancasila. This activity certainly supports democracy and reinforces interfaith tolerance in Indonesia. Key figures include Nurcholish Majid and Abdurrahman Wakhid. Their Islamic ideas encourage the separation of religion from the formal political affairs of the state, but still make it a guide for public ethics.

The study of the Qur'an in Indonesia shows a dialogue with Western science and scholarly traditions. This is marked by the emergence of scientific interpretation (*tafsir ilmi*). Scientific interpretation studies seek to explain and reveal the compatibility of the description of the universe in the Qur'an with scientific and technological findings and advances. Although popular among the general public, academics at PTKIN tend to be selective and critical of scientific interpretation. Scholars of interpretation remind us not to force verses to fit changing scientific theories and to continue to prioritize spiritual and moral meanings.

The Hermeneutics and Orientalism dialogue also falls within the field of al-Qur'an and tafsir studies. Some of them examine and critique Western methodologies, such as Hermeneutics (the philosophy of interpretation) and Orientalist works, to enrich the discourse of Indonesian Tafsir. Although the debate on Hermeneutics is often controversial, it has become an important tool for critiquing stagnant Tafsir works and paving the way for new *ijtihad* in academic circles. Overall, the study of the Qur'an and modernity in Indonesia is characterized by a spirit of contextualization and the grounding of Qur'anic values within the framework of a democratic and pluralistic nation-state.

CHAPTER III

QUR'ANIC STUDIES IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

A. Kondisi geografis dan Demografis Brunei Darussalam

The geographical conditions of Brunei Darussalam are characterized by its strategic location on the island of Kalimantan, divided into two separate regions, and a humid tropical climate. Brunei Darussalam is located at 4-5.5 degrees north latitude and 114-115 degrees east longitude. The country is located on the northwest coast of Kalimantan Island, bordering the state of Sarawak, East Malaysia, which divides Brunei into two parts. Its total area is approximately 5,765 km², making it the second smallest country in Southeast Asia after Singapore. Brunei Darussalam is divided into two regions (West and East) that are physically separated by the Sarawak region. The Western Region includes the districts of Belait, Tutong, and Brunei-Muara. The Eastern Region consists of the Temburong District. The region is dominated by hills and highlands. Most of the area is still covered by dense tropical rainforest, which has been designated as a national park (Ulu Temburong National Park).

Brunei has a hot and humid equatorial tropical climate throughout the year due to its location near the equator. Average temperature: ranges from 24-32 degrees Celsius. Rainfall is high, with average annual rainfall reaching around 2,500 mm/year or more in inland areas. The seasons are influenced by monsoon winds, with the rainy season occurring around November-May and a shorter dry season from June-August. Brunei is very rich in petroleum and natural gas, which are the main sources of the country's income (nicknamed the Petro Dollar country). In addition, there are also forest products from its tropical forests.

The demographics of Brunei Darussalam are quite unique due to its small population, ethnic composition, and the dominant role of Islam. Total Population (2024): Approximately 455,500 (official Brunei source). This figure is relatively small compared to neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. The population density is approximately 72.11 people per km² (much lower than other Southeast Asian countries, indicating a sparse population). The annual growth rate is around 1.1%. The majority of the population lives in urban areas, which is about 80% of the total population, mostly centered in the capital city of Bandar Seri Begawan and surrounding cities. Brunei has a relatively young population, but it is starting to age. The ethnicity in Brunei is dominated by the Malay group, which has special legal status.

Islam (Shafi'i school of thought) is the official religion of the country. The Sultan of Brunei is the Head of State Religion. More than 80% of the population is Muslim. The official language is Malay, but English is also widely used in business and government. Arabic is also widely used as the language of instruction in higher education. Brunei's demographic structure is unique, consisting of Brunei citizens: 76.1%, permanent residents: 5.8%, and foreign workers: 18.1%. This demographic situation is closely related to Brunei's prosperity, where most of its citizens enjoy a high quality of life, supported by the wealth of oil and gas resources.

Brunei Darussalam adheres to a unique absolute monarchy system, with a strong foundation in Islam. Brunei is ruled by the Sultan, who acts as the head of state, head of government (Prime Minister), and supreme leader of Islam (Caliph). Brunei Darussalam officially adheres to the Malay Islam Beraja (MIB) system, which means Malay Monarchy based on Islamic principles. MIB is a national philosophy that integrates Malay culture, Islam, and the monarchy system. Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah (since 1967). The Sultan holds full executive power. He heads the cabinet of ministers (Council of Ministers) and is also the Minister of Defense, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Although the Sultan holds full power, there are several councils that serve as advisors, such as the Council of Ministers, the Legislative Council (with limited functions), and the Religious Council.

No political party has a significant role or strong opposition, as the Sultan holds absolute power. Based on English common law, Islamic law (Sharia), and Malay customs. Sharia law is applied to Muslims in certain cases, alongside civil law. Brunei's population policy is known to be very strict, especially regarding the granting of citizenship. Brunei's citizenship law is based on Jus Sanguinis (citizenship is determined by the citizenship of the parents), not Jus Soli (place of birth). To become a citizen, a person must prove that at least one parent is a Brunei citizen. Ethnic Chinese who were born in Brunei before independence in 1984 but do not have Malay parents are often only granted Permanent Resident (PR) status, not full citizenship. Foreigners or permanent residents who wish to become citizens must go through a very difficult naturalization process. One of the most difficult requirements is passing a proficiency test in the Malay language (including Jawi script) and having a deep understanding of Brunei's customs and history. The Malay Islamic monarchy (MIB) system and strict citizenship policies aim to preserve the Malay and Islamic identity and ensure the political and economic stability of the country under the Sultan's leadership.

The economy of Brunei Darussalam is often described as very rich and stable. Its economy is dominated by the oil and natural gas sector. Its citizens enjoy extensive social services (such as free education and healthcare) and very low taxes (there is no income tax). Although the government has made efforts to diversify, dependence on the energy sector remains very high. The oil and natural gas (hydrocarbon) sector is the lifeblood of Brunei's economy. This sector directly contributes more than 50% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounts for more than 90% of total export revenue. Crude oil is exported to various Asian countries. Brunei is also one of the world's largest exporters of LNG. Brunei Shell Petroleum (BSP), a joint venture between the Government of Brunei and Royal.

B. Al-Qur'an recitation and study in Brunei

1. Educational Institutions Concerned with Qur'anic Education

The teaching of the Qur'an in Brunei began with the early development of Islam there. In the past (pre-independence), the main focus of teaching tended to be on learning

to read the Qur'an and studying the basics of religious knowledge such as akidah/Tawhid, Sufism, Akhlak, and Sharia law. In-depth studies of Tafsir and 'Ulum al-Qur'an (Qur'anic sciences) were not extensively documented in detail during the early period.

Brunei Darussalam, as a country that upholds Islamic values, has several educational institutions that focus on the study of the Qur'an. This is in line with the country's vision to become a "Zikir State" and a "Qur'anic society" (literate in the Qur'an). After independence, especially with the government's strong emphasis on Islamic education, Qur'anic scholarship has made significant progress. Religious education is compulsory for Muslim students at the elementary and secondary levels, with a focus on subjects such as the Qur'an, Tawhid, Fiqh, Akhlak, and Sirah Nabawiyah. The Qur'an memorization program (tahfiz) also became an important part of the education system. This development was supported by the establishment of Islamic higher education institutions. Educational institutions concerned with the Qur'an include:

a) Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA)

UNISSA is the first national Islamic university in Brunei Darussalam. As an Islamic university, UNISSA offers various study programs related to Islamic sciences, including the Qur'an and Tafsir. Founded in 2007, UNISSA has become the main center of Islamic higher education in Brunei with international standards. It offers undergraduate (S1) and postgraduate (S2) programs in Islamic disciplines, including a Bachelor of Ushuluddin (Tafsir & Hadith) program. The UNISSA curriculum integrates various disciplines based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, demonstrating a commitment to more in-depth and multidisciplinary studies. Although the Qur'an may be integrated into various faculties such as the Faculty of Ushuluddin and the Faculty of Arabic Language, UNISSA also has special programs and activities related to the Qur'an, such as: The Tadabbur Al-Qur'an Program, organized by the Center for Leadership and Lifelong Learning (PKPSH).

b) Seri Begawan University College of Religious Education (KUPU SB)

A higher education institution that focuses on the education and training of religious teachers. It plays an important role in preparing competent educators to teach the Qur'an and religious sciences at the school level. KUPU SB is a university that focuses on teacher education in the field of Islamic religion. Although its main focus is teacher education, the study of the Qur'an is an integral part of their curriculum. Students who enroll at KUPU SB, especially for programs such as the Bachelor of Religious Education (Islamic Education), are expected to be able to read the Qur'an well. Some study programs, such as the Bachelor's degree, may include courses related to the study of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

c) Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Qur'an Memorization Institute (ITQSHHB)

The Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Al-Qur'an Tahfiz Institute (ITQSHHB) was established on January 1, 1993, by order and permission of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (Sultan and Yang Dipertuan of Brunei Darussalam), coinciding with his 46th birthday. The inauguration was carried out by Pangeran Muda Haji al Muhtadee Billah (crown prince of Sultan Haji Hassal Bolkiah). In its early stages, ITQSHHB accepted 44 students, who were housed in Blocks C12 and 13 of the Kampong Kiarong Housing Complex. On January 3, 1995, the school began accepting 14 female students, who were placed in Block C of the Royal Housing Complex in the Beribi Industrial Complex.

To develop this institution, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah subsequently allowed the construction of a permanent building on 20 hectares of land in the Tutong area. The groundbreaking ceremony was held on April 5, 1997, by Prince Haji al Muhtadee Billah. The construction cost approximately 34 million Brunei dollars. The building began to be used on April 13, 2000. In order to further strengthen and develop this tahfiz institute, it was later expanded with the addition of the MABIMS Center for the Study and Dissemination of the Qur'an.¹

ITQSHHB is the main institution in Brunei specifically established to produce Al-Qur'an hafiz (Al-Qur'an memorizers). The institute aims to make Al-Qur'an memorization an advantage for students to continue their education to a higher level, both in the fields of Islamic studies and science and technology. ITQSHHB offers programs such as the Higher Diploma in 'Aliyah Qiraat and intermediate-level study

¹ Interview with Ustadz Ali Sabri, October 8, 2025.

programs focused on tahfiz Al-Qur'an. They actively produce Al-Qur'an memorizers and organize various Al-Qur'an-related events, such as tahfiz education symposiums.

2. Education Policy/Qur'an Curriculum in Brunei

In addition to these three educational institutions, there is another institution that plays an important role in the study of the Qur'an in Brunei, namely the Islamic Da'wah Center. The Islamic Da'wah Center (PDI) plays an important role in disseminating and strengthening the teachings and understanding of Islam to the community, including through education and guidance related to the Qur'an. They organize lectures, courses, and religious guidance. Overall, Al-Qur'an studies in Brunei are highly emphasized, both through specialized institutions such as ITQSHHB, which focuses on memorization, and Islamic universities such as UNISSA and KUPU SB, which integrate Al-Qur'an studies into their academic programs and also offer special programs for the general public.

At the academic level, the study of the Qur'an is no longer limited to reading, but has expanded to other fields, such as Nusantara Tafsir and ulumul Qur'an. There are efforts to trace and develop the chain of Qur'anic interpretation in Southeast Asia, including Brunei. The contribution of Brunei's scholars and leaders to the development of Qur'anic studies is recognized as being very significant. Since 1968, scholars have played a role in formally incorporating Tafsir studies into the syllabus of religious schools and adult classes, making it a compulsory part of the curriculum. The entire attitude towards religious life and the education system in Brunei is based on the philosophy of Malay Islam Beraja, the implications of which are also felt in Qur'anic scholarship, emphasizing adherence to Islamic teachings (Ahlussunnah Waljamaah) and obedience to the King.(interview with Prof. Dr. Dato' Fakhruddin, Oktober 2025).

In summary, Qur'anic scholarship in Brunei has moved from a traditional focus on recitation towards a more systematic and integrated scientific study through higher education institutions, while maintaining the religious and cultural values embraced by the state. Religious education policy in Brunei is regulated by the KHEU (Ministry of Religious Affairs). The KHEU manages and sets the curriculum for Ugama Schools (Religious Schools), which are compulsory for Muslim children. This curriculum focuses on the Qur'an, Fiqh, Tawhid, and Arabic. KHEU also supervises institutions such as the Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan (KUPU SB) and ensures the production of religious teachers who adhere to the official teachings of the state.

The government controls learning materials to ensure they are consistent with Islam and Malay culture. Textbooks and teaching materials must be approved by the relevant ministry (KPM or KHEU) to ensure there is no content that contradicts MIB principles. General subjects such as History, Science, and Language are integrated with

Islamic values wherever relevant. Despite strong ideological control, the Kingdom also maintains control to achieve global standards. Brunei has adopted the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) system. (Interview with Ustad Ali Shabri, Oktober 2025). This system demonstrates the government's efforts to integrate international standards with the national curriculum. In summary, the Brunei government's control over education is to ensure the quality of education and to achieve unity and peace in the Brunei region. This control is delegated to the Ministry of Education (for general affairs) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (for religious affairs), but both operate under the umbrella of the kingdom's ideology, namely MIB (Malay Islam Beraja). KHEU ensures that every Muslim student masters the basic principles of Islam and is able to read the Qur'an.

The development of Qur'anic studies has become more focused with the opening of the Tafsir Hadith study program, such as at the Faculty of Ushuludin at Sultan Syarif Ali University. Basic Islamic knowledge (akidah, dakwah, fiqh) is compulsory for all programs at the faculty of ushuludin. Core courses in tafsir hadith are taken starting in the third year. These courses include: Ulumul Qur'an, Qiraat, I'jaz al-Qur'an, Manahij al Mufassirin, Tafsir Tahlili and Maudhu'i Methods, Ad Dakhil Fit Tafsir, Hadith and Ulum al Hadith. With this curriculum structure, graduates of the Bachelor of Usuluddin (Tafsir & Hadith) program are expected to not only be able to read and memorize the Qur'an, but also have the ability to analyze, interpret, and apply the content of the Qur'an and Hadith in the context of modern life and the philosophy of the state of Brunei, namely Malay Islam Beraja.

Brunei Darussalam's attitude towards the development of Islamic studies, including Tafsir, by Western scholars tends to be cautious, selective, and emphasizes orthodoxy in line with the Malay Islamic Beraja (MIB) ideology. In general, Brunei approaches Western studies through two main approaches: Brunei filters Western studies that enter through educational institutions and the media to maintain the purity of Islamic teachings that are upheld. Islamic higher education institutions (such as UNISSA) firmly place themselves within the framework of Ahli Sunnah Waljamaah by prioritizing the Shafi'i school of thought. Western interpretations that tend to be liberal, historical-critical, or post-structuralist are viewed with skepticism and tend not to be included in the formal curriculum, except for the purposes of comparison or criticism. Western studies that are considered controversial, especially those that question the authority of the Qur'an, Hadith, or established concepts of Sharia, will be filtered and their dissemination restricted. The main focus is to produce scholars who are able to defend and strengthen the country's Islamic orthodoxy. The MIB ideology acts as a

gatekeeper. Every Islamic study, including those originating from the West, must be appropriate and must not disrupt the stability of Islamic values, Malay culture, and obedience to the institutions of the King.

Despite its caution, Brunei does not completely isolate itself from Western scientific developments. Islamic studies from the West that are considered useful are often absorbed, but through a rigorous selection process. Institutions such as the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and UNISSA may adopt research methodologies (such as data collection techniques, statistical analysis, or social theory) developed in the West to examine contemporary Islamic issues, without adopting Western theological or philosophical conclusions. Brunei scholars can utilize the works of earlier Orientalists who focused on philology (linguistics) or the history of the manuscripts of the Qur'an and Hadith, which provide a wealth of data without having to accept their theological interpretations. Academic studies at the postgraduate level sometimes introduce Western perspectives (e.g., Orientalism) as objects of criticism or comparison to strengthen traditional Islamic arguments. The aim is to understand their arguments so that they can be responded to scientifically, not to adopt them. Brunei's attitude is pragmatic but conservative. They welcome Western methodologies that can assist scientific research, but they strongly reject and filter liberal, questionable, or contradictory interpretations of Tafsir or Islamic studies from the West that contradict the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah and the MIB philosophy that is the pillar of the state.

3. Supportive policies for Quranic education in Brunei

Brunei has a key policy of Qur'an literacy for all Brunei citizens. Qur'an education is a core program in education from the elementary level. Starting in 4th grade, students who can read the Qur'an well can continue the tahfizh (memorization) process. Brunei aspires to produce a Qur'anic generation that can be active in various fields. The hope is that there will be pilot hafizh, hafizh doctors, hafizh teachers, and hafzih engineers. (interview with Ustadah Ristinah, ITQSHHB, October 8, 2025).

The government provides incentive allowances for those who memorize the Qur'an. These incentives are given to anyone who passes the tasmi exam. This program aims to motivate and appreciate huffazh who are steadfast in maintaining their memorization. This policy has been enthusiastically welcomed by the public and is implemented every 6 months. Those who pass receive incentives according to the regulations. The policy applies to all Brunei citizens, even those working abroad are willing to return home briefly to participate in this tasmi program. The rewards are as follows: (Ustad Ali Shabri, ITQSHHB, October 8, 2025)

- a. 10 juz: 200 Brunei Dollars/month
- b. 20 juz: 400 Brunei Dollars/month
- c. 30 juz: 1,000 Brunei Dollars/month.

Brunei also holds regular musabaqah activities as part of its program to support the propagation of the Qur'an and as a manifestation of love for the Qur'an. The activities include Quran recitation competitions and Quran memorization competitions. These activities are held nationally and internationally. For international Quran recitation competitions, Brunei is a member of MABIMS (Ministers of Religious Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore).

B. Quranic scholarship products

1. The Brunei Darussalam Qur'an Mushaf

The writing of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf is a major project that marks the sovereignty of the country's Islamic identity. This Mushaf is not simply printed, but is handwritten in great detail and through a long process. This project began with a decree from His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah on 3 Rabiulawal 1407 H or November 6, 1986. The Sultan wanted Brunei to have an official Mushaf Al-Qur'an handwritten by the best calligraphers (khatthath). The physical writing of this Mushaf officially began on 8 Ramadhan 1408 H or April 25, 1988. In the process, the Government of Brunei collaborated with experts from the Arab Republic of Egypt. The main writer (khatthath) appointed was a renowned calligrapher from Egypt. Each age was strictly checked by a panel of scholars and Al-Qur'an experts to ensure there were no errors in the writing of letters or punctuation (rasm).

After several years of work, the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam was officially launched by the Sultan in October 1992. The launch coincided with the historic Silver Jubilee (25 years) celebration of the reign of Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah. Approximately 150,000 copies were printed and distributed to the people of Brunei. This Mushaf has a very strong visual identity. The decorations (illuminations) on the page frames use Brunei's distinctive carving motifs and traditional Malay patterns known as *Air Muleh*. This Mushaf uses the Rasm Usmani standard, which is the international standard for writing the Qur'an. This Mushaf is a source of pride because Brunei is one of the few countries in the world that has an official Mushaf with a special handwriting on behalf of its own country.

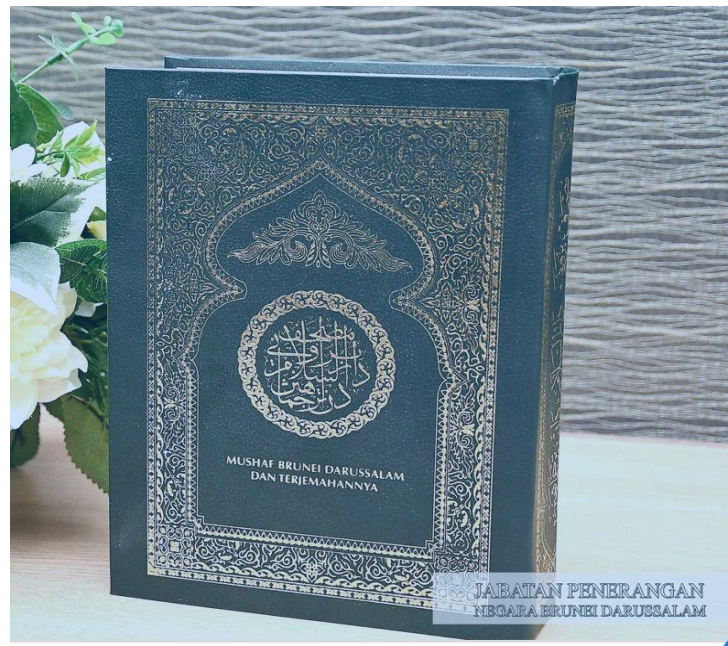


Photo of the cover of the Brunei Mushaf issued by the Islamic Da'wah Center

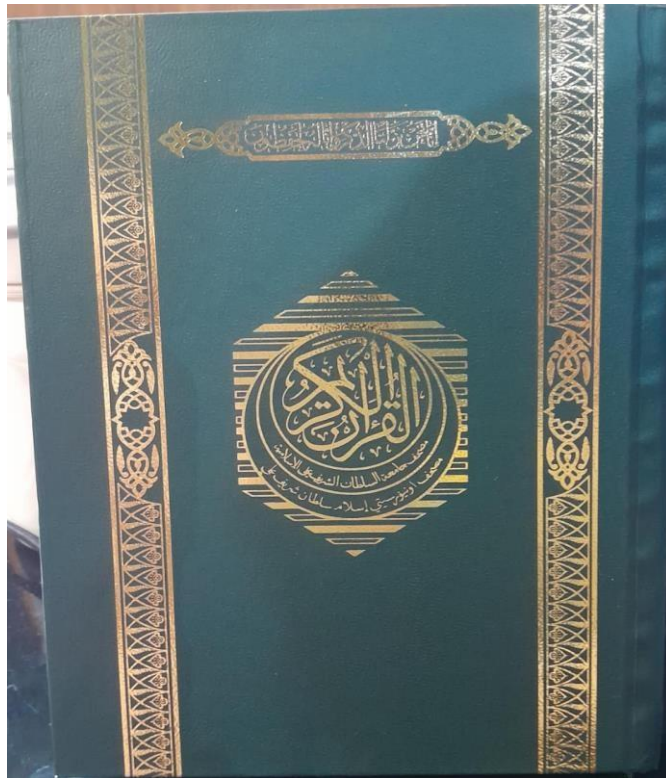


Photo of the Quran manuscript of Sultan Syarif Ali University

The Brunei Darussalam Mushaf has characteristics that combine the artistic traditions of the Nusantara Mushaf with international standards for writing the Qur'an. Brunei is very meticulous in maintaining the quality of the printing and authenticity of their Qur'anic texts through strict government supervision. Like Indonesia and Malaysia, the Brunei Mushaf uses the narration of Imam Hafs from Imam 'Asim. Brunei generally follows the Eastern (Masyariqah) system of punctuation (ḍabt), but with special ijtihad that sometimes differs slightly from the Madinah or Malaysian Mushaf in the placement of certain punctuation marks to facilitate local pronunciation. The writing of the text adheres strictly to the rules of Rasm Usmani, which is the global standard for writing the Qur'an.

Over time, the Brunei government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, continued to develop this Mushaf. In 2009, a version complete with a Malay translation began to be launched in stages. The Mushaf and its Interpretation Brunei also publishes an edition that includes a brief interpretation to aid public understanding. Currently, the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam is available at in the form of an official *mobile* application to facilitate access for the digital generation.

One of Brunei's prides is the UNISSA Mushaf, which is the first mushaf to be entirely handwritten by local Brunei calligraphers (not using fonts or writing from abroad),⁴ The ornaments or frames (zukhruf) on the initial pages typically feature traditional Brunei Malay motifs (such as the *Ayer Muleh* motif), giving them a distinctive visual identity compared to Qurans from Arab countries. Every Mushaf circulated in Brunei must obtain approval from the Jabatan Hal Ehwal Ugama (Ministry of Religious Affairs). The Brunei government has also released an official mobile application called "Mushaf Brunei" to ensure that the public can access the text of the Al-Qur'an that has been digitally verified for accuracy. Thus, the Brunei Quran is a symbol of integration between textual accuracy (Rasm Usmani), ease of understanding (Malay commentary), and national identity (local Brunei art).

2. The Qur'an and its translation

Before 2007, students and Muslim citizens of Brunei used the Qur'an and its translation from Indonesia, published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Knowing this, the Sultan of Brunei ordered that a variety of Qur'an manuscripts be presented. The Sultan then ordered Brunei to have its own national Mushaf. The Sultan's order was conveyed to the Minister of Religious Affairs, HPPO 4/1981/III dated March 17, 2007: "The Al-Qur'an tafsir books used need to be diversified and not limited to just one version. Consideration should be given to providing a version produced by Brunei Darussalam itself." (interview with state of Islamic Dakwah, Oktober 2025).

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Religious Affairs had indeed considered that the Mushaf Darussalam, which had been published twice, should be followed by its interpretation, namely by taking into account the interpretation in the Tafsir Darussalam series, which had been published since the 1970s, to be continued as its material. On May 24, 2007, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam, during his departure for the 1428H/2007M National Adult Quran Reading Competition, stated, among other things: ***"... I am very pleased to learn that an effort is being made to compile a Quranic commentary titled Tafsir Darussalam. I hope this effort will succeed, and that its success will become another landmark of Islamic excellence in this country. It will also contribute to by providing additional reference materials for understanding the content of the Quran, alongside the existing authoritative tafsir books."*** To uphold this mandate, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has initiated the Darussalam Tafsir Compilation Project in two versions, namely the **Translation** Edition and the Explanatory Edition. A committee called the Darussalam Tafsir Publishing Management has been

established, with the Director of the Islamic Da'wah Center appointed as its Chair. The implementation of the Darussalam Tafsir Compilation Project Translation Edition has shown results with the publication of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Translation Volume 1, which contains Juz 1 to Juz 3, at the 1430H/2009M National Nuzul Al-Qur'an Celebration Council. After that, the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Translation in the Complete Edition of 30 Juz was launched at the Nuzul Al-Qur'an Reception Council in 1435H / 2014M. The compilation process took six years, starting from Jamadil Akhir 1428H/July 2007M to Sya'ban 1434H/July 2013M.

3. The Qur'an manuscript and its commentary

Although Brunei may not have classical tafsir works as extensive as those of other Nusantara scholars, such as *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* (Aceh) in the past, their contributions in the modern era are very prominent through national projects and educational institutions. The Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and tafsir are the most important national tafsir contributions. This project involved a committee of local scholars and clerics to produce the official Mushaf of the country, accompanied by translations and contextual explanations (tafsiriyah) in the Brunei Malay language. To make it easier for the general public to understand the meaning of the Qur'an, to ensure that the explanations of the verses are in line with the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (Shafi'i school of thought), and to strengthen the position of the Qur'an as the main reference for legislation and life under the MIB. This Mushaf combines a literal and tafsiriyah approach, and is supplemented with footnotes and concise explanations of the verses.

The publication of the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and its Tafsir is the wish of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in his speech at the Nuzul Al-Qur'an Reception in 1435H, corresponding to 2014M: "...*In line with this year's theme, AL- QUR'AN CEMERLANG (The Brilliant Qur'an), we should be grateful that this country has a book, the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and its Translation, which I will launch shortly. This is a historic achievement for the State of Brunei Darussalam. This book is the result of the efforts of our local scholars and scientists from the , graduates of Al-Azhar University. I hope it will become a source of reading and reference for Muslims in this country. Furthermore, I hope that the interpretation will appear later, even though it will take a long time...*"

For the Darussalam Tafsir Compilation Project, 10 people have been assigned as compilers, 7 of whom work full-time, while the other 3 work part-time. Of the 7 full-time staff, 5 are temporary employees seconded from the Department of Islamic

Studies. All of them are graduates of Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt -
Department of Usuluddin.

From November 5 to 8, **2007**, the Darussalam Tafsir Writing and Compilation Workshop was held at the Islamic Da'wah Center, inviting foreign tafsir experts as facilitators. The objectives of the workshop were: To produce concrete guidelines for the compilation of the Darussalam Tafsir to be used as a guide so as not to stray from the specified methods (manahij). To explain to the tafsir compilers the compilation methods to be used.

A concept paper for the Darussalam Exegesis has been prepared to serve as a guideline for the compilers, and the compilation work will commence after the workshop concludes. Urusetia has agreed to carry out the project of compiling the Explanatory version of the Darussalam Tafsir according to the guidelines provided, namely with a new methodology and writing format to produce a tafsir compilation that is consistent in its methodology and writing. The verses are arranged in the order of the mushaf, starting from Surah al-Fatihah to Surah An- Nas, grouped according to theme and divided among all compilers.

The tafsir workshop was held again more intensively by inviting experts from UNISSA to produce more comprehensive guidelines. The compilers also attended a writing workshop held specifically for the compilation of tafsir and also attended writing and scientific research workshops recommended by other parties. After the publication of the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and its Translation in May **2013**, the compilation of the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and its commentary began to be carried out more systematically. The compilation of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Exegesis began with the surahs from Juz 30. In addition to the current compilers, Juz 30 was also compiled by several compilers of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Translation who have since retired.

The compilation of Juz 30 was not continued because it was agreed that the interpretation should begin with Surah al-Fatihah from Juz 1 in accordance with the meaning of Surah al- Fatihah, which means the opening or the beginning. His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di- Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam once graced the Office of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf Publishing House during a visit to the Islamic Da'wah Center on February 27, 2016. His Majesty graciously reviewed the book "Guidelines for the Compilation and Review of the Brunei Darussalam Quran Translation () and Its Exegesis," the exegesis, and the collection of reference books for this project. Eight local graduates from Al-Azhar University have been assigned full-time to carry out this project at the compilation stage, along with an appointed supervisor. The process of compiling and reviewing the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir is as follows:

- a) Referencing authoritative tafsir books as a basis

- b) Referring to new tafsir books as a guide
- c) Refer to other books in various related disciplines
- d) Collecting materials
- e) Drafting interpretations

- f) Holding editorial meetings with the supervisor and other authors
- g) Written review by the Masyaikh Panel
- h) Review by the Brunei Language and Literature Council.
- i) Review by the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute for the Memorization of the Qur'an.
- j) Review by the Screening Department, Islamic Da'wah Center.
- k) Review by several officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.
- l) Corrections and additions by the Editorial and Compilation Panel.

The Islamic Da'wah Center has collaborated with the Royal Printing Department, Prime Minister's Office in facilitating the printing process of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir, including the cover design and border of the contents of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir. Prior to the printing process, on Thursday, **13 Jamadilawal 1441H, corresponding to January 9, 2020**, a Prayer Council for the Commencement of the Printing Process of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir Juz One was held at the Royal Printing Department, Prime Minister's Office. His Excellency Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Hj Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Hj Awang Othman, as the guest of honor at the ceremony, initiated the printing process of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir, followed by the chanting of takbir. Also present at the ceremony were the Panel of Masyaikh for the compilation of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir, guests from the Brunei Language and Library Council and the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Tahfiz Institute.

The Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir is a continuation of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Translation, which was printed, published, and launched in 2014. The Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir explain the relationship between the verses of the Qur'an and the previous ones, the reason for the revelation of the verses, their interpretation, and the essence and of the verses' teachings. It is an effort to explain the contents of the Qur'an in a language and manner that is easily understood by the people of Brunei. Additionally, it aims to strengthen the unity of the Brunei community in understanding Islamic teachings through the interpretation of Quranic verses based on the understanding of the Aqidah Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah Aliran Al-Asya'irah / Al-Maturidiyah and Fiqh Mazhab Syafi'e. The Brunei Darussalam Quran and its Exegesis includes:

- a) General Content of the Surahs
- b) Groups of Quranic verses with titles
- c) Translation of the verses
- d) The Relationship Between Verses and Previous Ones

- e) The reason for the revelation of the verse
- f) Interpretation of the Verse
- g) Summary and Lessons of the Verse

The reference books used in the compilation of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its interpretation are: The authoritative books of Qur'anic interpretation (at-tafsir bil-Ma'tsur and at-Tafsir bir-Ra'yi) written by scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah as the primary basis for interpretation, such as:

- a) Jami' Al-Bayan 'An Ta'wil Aayi Al-Qur'an by Imam Ath-Thabariy
- b) Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azhim by Imam Ibn Kathir
- c) Mafatih Al-Ghaib, also known as At-Tafsir Al-Kabir by Imam Ar-Razi
- d) Anwar At-Tanzil Wa Asrar At-Ta'wil by Imam Al-Baidhawiy
- e) Tafsir Al-Imamain Al-Jalalain by Imam Jalaluddin Al-Mahalliy and Imam Jalaluddin As-Suyuthiy

In addition, several new tafsir books have been selected as the main guides for compilation, namely:

- a) The Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and its Translation
- b) At-Tafsir Al-Munir Fi Al-'Aqidah Wa Asy-Syari'ah Wa Al-Manhaj by Dr. Wahbah adz-Dzuhail
- c) Shafwah At-Tafasir by Muhammad 'Aliy ash-Shabuni
- d) Zahrah At-Tafasir by Imam Abu Zuhrah

Other books written by Ulama Ahli Sunnah wal Jama'ah in various related fields, including fiqh and aqidah. From a linguistic perspective, to ensure linguistic accuracy, the tafsir refers to the Malay grammar book and Arabic and Malay dictionaries for reference in writing.

Starting in January 2021, 10 Draft Compilers (Contractors) have begun their work in compiling the Draft Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and its Tafsir after passing a written test and interview. They are graduates of Al-Azhar University in the Usuluddin Department who do not yet have permanent jobs and are assisted by Permanent Drafters in successfully compiling the relevant draft. This project can be completed in 2 years (24 months) as planned. In early November 2021, two Editorial Chairpersons were contracted for three years (36 months) and began their duties. The contract period will end at the end of October 2024. Then, starting in January 2023, they will be assigned as Review Officers for two years from January 2023 to December 2024. His Excellency Pengiran Dato Seri Paduka Haji Mohd

Tashim bin Pengiran Haji Hassan was appointed as Deputy Chairman on August 7, 2023, corresponding to 20 Muharram 1445H.

The Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Tafsir were compiled with the Masyaikh Panel playing a role in the research before it was published. This panel consists of His Excellency the Minister of Religious Affairs, His Excellency Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Hj Awang Badaruddin bin Pengarah Dato Paduka Hj Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs as Chairman. The experts also consisted of religious figures including the Mufti of the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam (), the Chief Sharia Judge, the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, and the Rector of Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University. (interview with Hj. Ninne, interview on October 8, 2025).

The Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its local interpretation have been published from Juz 1 to Juz 13 and Juz 30. Brunei's higher education institutions also publish their own mushafs, demonstrating their academic commitment. The **UNISSA mushaf** was published in 2011, and was the first to be written entirely by local Brunei calligraphers, reflecting the local Islamic artistry. **The Brunei Darussalam University Mushaf** was launched in 1996. This Mushaf Jami'ah Universiti Brunei Darussalam is used as a symbol of the sanctity of knowledge and often replaces the "cokmar" graduation symbol, signifying the integration of Al-Qur'an values in general education. Overall, the official Mushaf and its translation are a collective contribution by Brunei's scholars to Tafsir and are supported by the Kingdom, serving as an ideological and legal reference for the country.

C. Adaptation to modernity and technology

1. The Quran Mushaf application on smartphones

The Brunei Mushaf Application Project began in November 2017 with the collaboration of the Information Technology Division, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the MABIMS Al-Qur'an Study and Dissemination Center, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Al-Qur'an Institute. The audio recording of the 30 juzu' al-Qur'an began on 4 Ramadan 1439, corresponding to May 20, 2018, and was completed on 26 Zulkaedah 1439, corresponding to August 8, 2018. A Review and Verification Committee was formed to facilitate the

review and verification of the audio for the Mushaf Display, and a Colour Coding and Audio Review Working Committee was also formed to facilitate the Tutorial Display. The audio recording of the 30 Juz' al- Qur'an by Local Hafiz, His Excellency Ustaz Haji Mohamamd Hashim bin Haji Abdullah, has been reviewed and verified in its entirety by the Review and Verification Committee, the Islamic Da'wah Center, and the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Tahfiz Institute-Quran Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, a process that took five years to complete in stages. This review and verification must be done meticulously to ensure that the recitation of the Qur'an broadcast on the radio channel is authentic and correct. Moreover, this verification involves the verses of the Qur'an, the words of Allah Azza Wajalla. The contents of the application include:

- a) Mushaf Presentation: audio recitation of the 30 Juz' of the Quran by local hafiz in solo.
- b) Translation Display: contains the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam and translations published by the Islamic Da'wah Center
- c) Tutorial Display: Tutorials produced by the Islamic Da'wah Center aim to teach how to read the Qur'an with tajwid using color coding to facilitate the reading of the 30 Juz' of the Qur'an.

The Brunei Mushaf application was launched on Saturday, December 29, 2018. Alhamdulillah, this application will be fully ready in July 2023. Launching Ceremony of the 30 Juz' al-Qur'an reading radio program by local hafiz managed by the Islamic

Da'wah Center on channel al- Radio al-Qur'an 89.1 and 99.7 FM was held on Wednesday, 15 Muharram 1445 corresponding to August 2, 2023, at the Songket Ballroom, Level 4, The Rizqun International Hotel. The number of users who have downloaded the Brunei Mushaf Application as of September 30, 2025 is; iOS: 16,812, Android: 29,201. Insya Allah, for the next step, the Islamic Da'wah Center through the Media Division will continue to strive to improve and enhance the functionality of this application to be better and more user-friendly.

In addition to the Mushaf al-Qur'an on smartphones, the Brunei government is utilizing technological advances to spread Islam in a contemporary way. The Brunei Islamic Da'wah Center Media Section plays a role in spreading Islamic teachings to the people and residents. The Islamic Da'wah Center plays a

strong role in overseeing the progress of Islam in Brunei, which is deeply rooted in the philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB). In general, the study of the Qur'an in Brunei can be seen through several main aspects. The media used are television, radio, and social media. This section has three units, namely: (Interview with the Media Department of the Islamic Da'wah Center of Brunei, October 8, 2025.)

1. Da'wah Broadcasting: Responsible for publishing religious programs on television in collaboration with Radio Televisyen Brunei.
2. Da'wah FM: Manages religious programs on radio networks, namely Nasional FM, Nur Islam FM, and Pilihan FM.
3. Multimedia Da'wah: Disseminates accurate and recognized Islamic religious information and knowledge through social media, which then becomes a source of reference and guidance for the public to ensure a stable, focused, and maintained social life. Social Media Platforms of the Islamic Da'wah Center include *Blogspot* (Islamic Mind), *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *YouTube*, *TikTok*, *WhatsApp Channel*, and the *Brunei Mushaf Application*.

2. Contemporary Qur'anic study model in Brunei

Contemporary studies in the field of Tafsir and the Qur'an in Brunei Darussalam are greatly influenced by the state's policy to strengthen the Malay Islamic Beraja (MIB) identity and the implementation of Sharia Criminal Law (HJS). These studies are institutional in nature and are largely conducted by scholars at Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA) and other religious institutions . The main focus of contemporary Tafsir studies in Brunei is thematic interpretation. The most important focus of study is to connect the teachings of the Qur'an with the philosophy of the state. Contemporary studies tend to use a thematic approach (examining one topic throughout the Qur'an) to discover and reinforce the core values of MIB. For example: Studies of the verses *on Ulul Amri* (leaders) and *Khilafah* to support obedience to the institution of the King (pillar of Beraja). Analysis of verses related to manners, ethics, and the unity of the ummah in line with Malay cultural norms and sharia, Interpretation of verses that promote security, prosperity, and social justice in the context of Brunei. (Interview with the Interpretation Department of the Islamic Da'wah Center in Brunei, October 8, 2025).

Currently, the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf Interpretation Publishing Office has begun compiling the Maudhuiy Interpretation, which is a thematic interpretation. This project is a continuation of the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf Compilation and Interpretation Project. This method focuses on explaining the main content related to the topic being studied and the issues discussed in the specified verses. Examples of topics include "Being Good to Parents" and "Hypocrites in the Qur'an." Or it focuses on the study of a particular theme in a surah by forming a title that becomes the main discussion of that surah. Then the study will be carried out on that title only from the selected surah. For example, "The Story of *Ashhab al-Kahfi*" in Surah al-Kahfi.⁸ With the implementation of Sharia Criminal Law, Tafsir studies focus on the legislative aspect to provide a scientific basis for Sharia law. Tafsir scholars collaborate with Fiqh scholars to study **Ayat al-Ahkam** (legal verses) in the Qur'an and Hadith. The focus is on the methodology of interpretation that leads to the establishment of laws, particularly those related to Hudud, Qisas, and Ta'zir. There are studies that analyze the methodology used by Shafi'i scholars in interpreting the verses of the law to ensure the validity and consistency of the laws enacted by the Kingdom. The study conducted by UNISSA scholars, for example, focuses on how verses about the Attributes of Allah are interpreted in **the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam** to be in line with the creed of Ahli Sunnah Waljamaah (Ash'ariyah).

Brunei scholars are actively studying the national Tafsir (Brunei Darussalam Mushaf) and local Al-Qur'an recitation traditions. In-depth research has been conducted on the Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its translation. This study examines the style of translation, the tafsir methodology used, and the accuracy of contextual explanations in the Brunei Malay language. There are also studies tracing the history of the development of Tafsir science in Brunei, including the influence of earlier works by Nusantara scholars (such as Abdul Rauf al-Fansuri) and how classical Tafsir traditions (such as *Tafsir Jalalain* or *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*) are used in *bolai* (traditional Brunei boarding schools) and formal institutions.

Technological developments are also a focus, in line with Brunei's vision of becoming a digitally savvy country. A study of the format, practicality, and suitability of the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam in digital form or mobile applications.

An investigation into current methods of teaching the Qur'an, such as the use of technology in hafazan, tajwid, and distance learning, to improve Qur'anic literacy among the people of Brunei. In summary, contemporary Tafsir studies in Brunei are **applied** in nature, **centered on MIB**, and aim **to support the country's religious and legal structures** through detailed analysis of the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith.

CHAPTER V

ANALISIS KOMPARATIF QUR'ANIC SCHOLARSHIP DI INDONESIA DAN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

A. Quranic Scholarship Indonesia dan Brunei

The Qur'anic studies in Indonesia is a highly dynamic, tradition-rich, and progressive field, reflecting the cultural plurality and diversity of Islamic thought in the archipelago. Its development can be seen through three main phases: traditional, modernist, and contemporary. The beginnings of Qur'anic scholarship in Indonesia centered on non-formal and traditional education. Before the existence of modern institutions, Islamic boarding schools were the main centers for teaching the Qur'an. The main focus was on *tilawah* (recitation), *tahfiz* (memorization), and understanding the basics of religious knowledge through classical Islamic texts. Tafsir studies were conducted with reference to the works of Middle Eastern scholars such as Tafsir Jalalain or Tafsir Ibn Kathir. Scholars made significant contributions, including the birth of works such as Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid by Sheikh Abdur Rauf Singkil (Aceh, 17th century). This book is the first complete tafsir in the Malay language

The Qur'anic studies in Brunei Darussalam shows a development that is deeply rooted in the country's religious tradition, in line with the philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB). Al-Qur'an recitation in Brunei began with the early development of Islam there. However, in the past (pre-independence), the main focus of teaching tended to be on teaching and learning to read the Qur'an (*tilawah*), studying the basics of religious knowledge such as Aqidah/Tawhid, Sufism, Akhlak, and Sharia law. In-depth studies of Tafsir and 'Ulum al-Qur'an (Qur'anic sciences) were not documented in detail in the early days.

Brunei Darussalam, as a country that upholds Islamic values, has several educational institutions that focus on studying the Qur'an. This is in line with the country's vision to become a "Nation of Remembrance" (Negara Zikir) and a society that is "Qur'an literate." After independence, especially with the government's strong emphasis on Islamic education, Qur'anic scholarship has made significant progress. Religious education is compulsory for Muslim students at the elementary and secondary levels, with a focus on subjects such as the Qur'an, Tawhid, Fiqh, Akhlak, and Sirah Nabawiy. The Brunei government has mandated that all children must learn to read the Qur'an properly. Children who wish to memorize the Qur'an are required to have already mastered reading it.

(interview with ustadz in ITQSHHB). The Quran memorization program (tahfiz) is also an important part of the education system. This development is supported by the establishment of Islamic higher education institutions, such as Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA), Seri Begawan Islamic College (Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan/ KUPU SB), and Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Qur'an Memorization Institute (Institut Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah /ITQSHHB).

UNISSA is the first national Islamic university in Brunei Darussalam. As an Islamic university, UNISSA offers various study programs related to Islamic sciences, including the Qur'an and Tafsir. Founded in 2007, UNISSA has become the main center of Islamic higher education in Brunei with international standards. It offers undergraduate (S1) and postgraduate (S2) programs in Islamic studies, including a Bachelor of Ushuluddin (Tafsir & Hadith) program. The UNISSA curriculum integrates various disciplines based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, demonstrating a commitment to more in-depth and multidisciplinary studies. Although the Qur'an is integrated into various faculties such as the Faculty of Ushuluddin and the Faculty of Arabic Language, UNISSA also has special programs and activities related to the Qur'an, such as: The Tadabbur Al-Qur'an Program organized by the Center for Leadership and Lifelong Learning (PKPSH). UNISSA also has student exchange programs, including with Indonesia, which cover aspects of the development of Qur'anic studies.

KUPUSB is a college that focuses on teacher education in the field of Islam. Therefore, it plays an important role in preparing competent educators to teach the Qur'an and religious sciences in various schools. Although its main focus is teacher education, Qur'anic studies are an integral part of their curriculum. Students who enroll at KUPUSB, especially for programs such as the Bachelor of Religious Education (Islamic Education), are strongly encouraged to be able to read the Qur'an well. The Kingdom has made this program part of preparing a strong generation of Brunei Muslims who are able to read the Qur'an well and have superior knowledge.

The royal family's increased focus on teaching the Qur'an was also evidenced by the establishment of the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Qur'an Memorization (ITQSHHB) on January 1, 1993, by order and with the permission of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (Sultan and Yang Dipertuan of Brunei Darussalam). The Brunei government provides fully funded (free) education for its citizens, covering almost all

levels of education, from preschool to university, including higher education abroad through scholarships. The kingdom also provides incentives for hafizh in the form of living allowances, as long as they can maintain their memorization of the Qur'an. Initially, the ITQSHHB only accepted male students who were boarded at the Housing Complex in Kampong Kiarong. On January 3, 1995, it began accepting female students, who were placed in Block C of the Royal Housing Complex in the Beribi Industrial Complex. For further development, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah permitted the construction of a permanent building on a 20-hectare plot of land in the Tutong area. The building began operations on April 13, 2000. To further strengthen and develop the institute, it was expanded with the addition of the MABIMS Quranic Studies and Dissemination Center. (Interview with Ustadz Ali Sabri, October 8, 2025)

Institut Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (ITQSHHB) is the main institution in Brunei that was specifically established to produce hafiz Al-Qur'an (Al-Qur'an memorizers). This institute aims to make Al-Qur'an memorization an advantage for students to continue their education to a higher level, both in the fields of Islamic studies and science and technology. ITQSHHB offers programs such as the Higher Diploma in 'Aliyah Qiraat and intermediate-level courses focused on Quran memorization. They actively train Quran memorizers and organize various Quran-related events, such as symposiums on Quran memorization education. ITQSHHB plays an important role in reviewing the Mushaf al-Qur'an and its interpretation published by the Brunei government. (Interview with Ustadz Ali Sabri, ustadz of ITQSHHB, October 8, 2025)

In addition to these three educational institutions, there is another institution that plays an important role in the study of the Qur'an in Brunei, namely the Islamic Da'wah Center. The Islamic Da'wah Center (PDI) plays an important role in disseminating and strengthening the teachings and understanding of Islam to the community, including through education and guidance related to the Qur'an. This institution is also responsible for screening books entering Brunei. PDI is at the forefront of Quran publication in Brunei. They have successfully published the Brunei Quran, the Quran and its interpretation, and even a digital Quran that can be accessed through a smartphone application. The PDI also organizes lectures, courses, and religious guidance, both face-to-face and online. (interview with Bu Ninne Pusat Dakwah Islamiah Brunei, October 8, 2025)

So, overall, the study of the Qur'an in Brunei is strongly emphasized, both through specialized institutions such as ITQSHHB, which focuses on memorization, and Islamic universities such as UNISSA and KUPUSB, which integrate Qur'anic studies into their

academic programs and also offer special programs for the general public. In the academic realm, Qur'anic studies are no longer limited to reading, but have expanded into the following fields, such as the study of Nusantara Tafsir and Ulumul al-Qur'an. There is a special nuance to Qur'anic studies in Brunei, where the entire attitude towards religious life and the education system in Brunei is based on the philosophy of Malay Islam Beraja. (Interview with Lecturer in UNISSA, October 8, 2025). This certainly has direct implications for Qur'anic scholarship, namely emphasizing adherence to Islamic teachings (Ahlussunnah Waljamaah) and obedience to the King. In summary, Qur'anic scholarship in Brunei has moved from a traditional focus on recitation towards more systematic and integrated scientific study through higher education institutions, while still maintaining the religious and cultural values embraced by the state.

B. The Curricula Policies

Al-Qur'an scholarship began to enter the realm of formal and academic education, driven by the spirit of nationalism and Islamic modernism. This institutionalization was pioneered by state-founded institutions, such as IAIN/STAIN. The establishment of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN), which later transformed into the State Islamic University (UIN), made 'Ulumul Qur'an and Tafsir formal disciplines that have produced thousands of scholars and researchers of the Qur'an. Al-Qur'an scholarship developed rapidly when the Islamic Higher Education Institution (PTAI) established a Tafsir Hadith study program (later changed to the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Study Program) and study centers that focused on the development of Al-Qur'an and tafsir scholarship and its relevance to contemporary issues.

Specifically, the curriculum for the Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir program in Indonesia is standardized under the Association of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir (AIAT). One of AIAT's objectives is to set quality standards for resources and education in the field of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir. AIAT allows for flexibility in development while taking into account the unique characteristics of each university. AIAT requires 17 compulsory courses for the Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir program. Mata kuliah wajib nya adalah: Ulumul Qur'an, Sejarah Alquran, Ushul al-Tafsir wa Qawa'iduh, Ilmu Tajwid, Ilmu Qira'at, Sirah Nabawiyah, Studi Kitab Tafsir, Madzahib al-Tafsir, Pemikiran Tafsir Modern dan Kontemporer, Tafsir Tematik, Metodologi Penelitian Alquran dan Tafsir, Ulumul Hadis, Hadis Tematik, Tahsin dan Tahfidz Alquran, Hermeneutika/Falsafat al-Ta'wil, Kajian Barat atas Alquran, Tafsir Nusantara.¹ The

¹ SK Ketua AIAT, No. 3/12/AIAT/2015 kemudian pada annual meeting dimusyawarahkan lagi menjadi 15 mata kuliah.

field of Qur'anic studies in Indonesia has produced many great names, such as Hamka (tafsir al Azhar), Hasbi Ash Shiddiqi (Tafsir An-Nur), and M. Quraish Shihab (Tafsir Al-Mishbah). They introduced social analysis in their moderate and dialogical tafsir works in the Indonesian context. As a result, these books have become references.

Contemporary Qur'anic studies in Indonesia are characterized by intellectual courage and an interdisciplinary approach. There are studies that reinterpret Qur'anic verses on women, family, and equality, challenging traditional patriarchal interpretations; the development of ecological exegesis that focuses on human responsibility as caliphs on earth to preserve nature; and studies on verses related to interfaith relations and the concept of religious freedom. Various types of tafsir studies are developing very dynamically, such as scientific tafsir studies. Methodologically, tafsir studies are also no less dynamic, with the emergence of hermeneutics integration in Qur'anic studies (although some conservative circles still do not fully accept it).

Qur'anic studies has now also entered the digital realm, with numerous research projects producing articles and books that can be accessed online. Overall, Al-Qur'an scholarship in Indonesia today faces the challenge of preserving its traditional heritage (sanad) while also addressing the challenges of modernity (contextualization and digitalization). This makes Indonesia one of the most fascinating centers for Islamic studies in the world. Trends in Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia between 2000 and 2010, focusing on the influence of digital media in the dissemination of exegesis. They note how social media and online platforms have democratized access to Qur'ānic studies, allowing the public to participate in wider religious debates. This trend reflects how technological developments have changed the way Qur'ānic commentaries are disseminated and accessed, although challenges remain regarding the credibility and authenticity of commentaries circulating online. (Zuhdi and Syamsuddin, 2018).

The biggest challenge facing Qur'anic scholarship today is how to study the Qur'an in the face of technological advances such as artificial intelligence (AI). AI provides easy and quick access to a vast amount of data sources. What needs to be considered is how to ensure that artificial intelligence becomes a tool, not an interpreter that works to interpret the Qur'an. AI should not make students lazy in thinking, studying the interpretation of the Qur'an, and producing interpretations that benefit society.

The Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam centrally and comprehensively oversees the curriculum and management of education. This can be seen in the official management guidelines, which are based on the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) ideology. The Sultanate ensures that every aspect of the curriculum, from preschool to university, integrates MIB values. Among the main tenets of MIB are Malay as the official language, Islam as the official

religion (with a focus on the Shafi'i and Ahl al-Sunnah Waljama'ah schools of thought), and allegiance to the Sultan. MIB is also a compulsory subject at all levels of education, including higher education. (Interview with Dato'Fakhrudin UNISSA, October 2025).

The contribution of Brunei Darussalam scholars (ulama) in the field of Qur'anic exegesis and Qur'anic studies as a whole is tangible and structured, particularly driven by the Royal Initiative to strengthen the country's Islamic identity. Although they may not have had classical tafsir books such as Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid (Aceh) in the past, in the modern era, scholars have played an important collective role in prestigious projects to produce the Brunei Mushaf al-Qur'an, the Mushaf al-Qur'an and its translation, and the Mushaf al-Qur'an and its tafsir. The resulting interpretations became the official reference for the state in determining its policies.

The government provides financial incentives for those who memorize the Qur'an. These incentives are given to anyone who passes the tasmi exam. The program aims to motivate and show appreciation for huffazh who consistently maintain their memorization. This policy has been enthusiastically welcomed by residents and is implemented every six months. Those who pass the exam receive incentives according to the regulations. The policy applies to all Brunei citizens, including those working abroad who are willing to return briefly to participate in the tasmi' program. The rewards are as follows:

- a. 10 juz: 200 Brunei dollars/month
- b. 20 juz: 400 Brunei dollars/month
- c. 30 juz/1000 Brunei dollars/month

C. Komparasi Mushaf Brunei dan Indonesia

Perbedaan utama antara Mushaf Al-Qur'an Standar Indonesia (MSI) dan mushaf yang digunakan secara resmi di Brunei Darussalam terletak pada sistem tanda baca (adh-Dhabt) yang digunakan untuk membantu pembacaan (terutama hukum-hukum tajwid) dan juga pada tradisi kaligrafi/dekorasi (iluminasi). Meskipun keduanya sama-sama menggunakan Rasm Utsmani (pola penulisan dasar huruf Arab) dan mengikuti riwayat bacaan Imam Hafs 'an Ashim, penanda-penanda spesifiknya disesuaikan oleh lembaga pentashihan masing-masing negara.

The comparison of Qur'anic Studies in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia reveals significant differences in their institutional framework, interpretive tradition, and intellectual output, driven primarily by their respective political philosophies. In Brunei Darussalam, Qur'anic studies are characterized by a centralized, state-controlled, and

highly integrated model aligned with the national ideology of Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB). The state, led by the Sultan, maintains an absolute monopoly over the definition and dissemination of Islamic doctrine, including the interpretation of the Qur'an. Religious scholars (*ulama*) are essentially civil servants, ensuring that the official interpretation supports state policy and the MIB philosophy. The education system places a strong emphasis on mandatory and standardized religious instruction. Institutions like the Institut Tahfiz Al-Qur'an and Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) focus on producing scholars who uphold the state's vision of a *Baldatun Tayyibatun Wa Rabbun Ghafur* (a prosperous, gracious state) through Shafi'i fiqh and Ash'ari theology. The focus is on consistency, orthodoxy, and practical application (especially in relation to the implementation of Shari'ah law). The public space for alternative or diverse interpretations (*tafsir*) is heavily restricted, with the State Mufti Department being the primary source for authoritative *fatwas* (legal rulings).

In Indonesia, Qur'anic studies thrive within a decentralized, pluralistic, and highly dynamic intellectual environment that reflects its democratic, Pancasila-based national identity and the strength of its civil society. The field is marked by the influence of major independent Islamic organizations, alongside state institutions (like the Ministry of Religious Affairs). This creates a marketplace of ideas where diverse schools of thought can flourish. Scholarly Output and Methodology: Indonesia has a rich tradition of indigenous *tafsir* production, dating back to figures like Abdul Rauf as-Singkili (*Tarjumānul Mustafid*) in the 17th century. Modern Indonesian scholars, such as Hamka (*Tafsir Al-Azhar*) and Quraish Shihab (*Tafsir Al-Mishbah*), are internationally recognized for pioneering Contextual-Social Interpretation (connecting Qur'anic verses to contemporary issues and local culture). Hermeneutical approaches, engaging with modern disciplines like sociology, philosophy, and science. Intellectual Freedom: The comparative freedom allows for a constant internal debate and the development of inclusive and moderate Islamic values (*Islam Wasati*), often in direct response to domestic and global challenges like radicalism.

The policy on publishing interpretations of the Qur'an in Indonesia is generally decentralized and pluralistic, and is greatly influenced by two main channels: the State (Government) channel and the Community/Private (Academics and Religious Organizations) channel. The policy on the publication of Qur'anic interpretations by the government is held by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) through its special unit, namely the Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ). The main policy is to establish and publish the Indonesian Standard Mushaf Al-Qur'an, which serves as the basis for all official translations

and interpretations. The Ministry of Religious Affairs publishes the Al-Qur'an and its translation, which serves as the most authoritative single translation reference for the community and educational institutions. This policy ensures uniformity of basic meaning at the national level. The Ministry of Religious Affairs regularly publishes interpretations of the Qur'an compiled by a team of scholars, academics, and experts from various fields. The aim is to provide interpretations that are moderate, inclusive, and relevant to the Indonesian context.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has a policy to publish Thematic Interpretations (Maudhu'i) that focus on specific and contemporary issues, such as: Interpretations on Religious Moderation, Interpretations on Women's Empowerment, Scientific Interpretations (Science and the Qur'an). These interpretations serve as an effort to make the Qur'an a source of solutions to social and national problems.

The publication of interpretations in Indonesia is largely dominated by community initiatives, making it highly dynamic and pluralistic. Policies in this area are liberal, but subject to general publishing regulations. Private publishing has enabled the emergence of interpretations with various styles and methodologies, depending on the background of the author or organization. There is a Salafi style of interpretation published by foundations that focus on literalist interpretation and Tafsir bi al-Ma'tsur. There are modern styles published by organizations such as Muhammadiyah (for example, Tafsir Al-Azhar by Hamka), which emphasize rationality and *ijtihad*. There are also traditional styles published by organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) or Islamic boarding schools, which often prioritize the scientific traditions of the Shafi'i school of thought and Sufism. Contemporary academic style of tafsir publication: Published by universities or study centers (e.g., Tafsir Al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab) with a philosophical, sociological, and hermeneutical approach.

Although private publishers are free to be creative, all Mushaf Al-Qur'an, translations, and interpretations to be distributed in Indonesia must be submitted to the LPMQ Kemenag to obtain a tashih (legalization/certification) mark. (PMA No. 44 tahun 2016). This certification policy aims to: Ensure the accuracy of the Qur'an text from printing errors (omissions or additions of letters). Ensure that translations and interpretations do not deviate from the basic teachings of Islam, do not contain elements of radicalism, or contradict the consensus of Indonesian scholars. This certification policy serves as a minimum quality control without limiting interpretive variations, ensuring academic freedom continues within the agreed-upon doctrinal framework.

Policies within UIN/IAIN/STAIN (State Islamic Higher Education Institutions) encourage research and writing of interpretations using continuously updated methods, such as

Muqarin (Comparative) and Maudhu'i (Thematic) interpretations. This policy supports dynamic intellectual growth. Traditionally, the curriculum policy in Islamic boarding schools has continued to maintain the study of classical tafsir books (Tafsir Jalalain, Tafsir Ibn Katsir, etc.) as the main reference. Overall, the tafsir publishing policy in Indonesia has created a stable ecosystem (through the control of the Ministry of Religious Affairs) as well as an innovative one (through the role of the private sector and academics).

The policy of interpreting the Qur'an in Brunei Darussalam is highly centralised, formalised, and institutionalised under the umbrella of the state ideology, Malay Islam Beraja (MIB). Its main objective is to ensure uniformity of interpretation that supports political and social stability and strengthens national religious identity. The authority to interpret the Qur'an is held by religious institutions under the kingdom, specifically: the Office of the Grand Mufti (Jawatan Mufti Keagamaan/JMK), the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Hal Ehwal Ugama/KHEU), and the Islamic Da'wah Center (Pusat Dakwah Islamiyah/ PDI).

The comparison of the study of the Qur'an in Brunei and Indonesia is as follows:

Feature	Brunei Darussalam	Indonesia
Institutional Control	Centralized. State-controlled by the Sultan/MIB. <i>Ulama</i> are state officials.	Decentralized. The government controls, but allows flexibility to develop according to the characteristics of each university
Primary Goal	To achieve the national vision and justify Shari'ah law and the Malay Islamic Monarchy ideology (Melayu Islam Beraja).	To develop a moderate, inclusive Islamic civilization and address complex socio-cultural issues (e.g., democracy, pluralism).
Interpretive Style	Tends to be Conservative and orthodox, strictly adhering to the Shafi'i school and state-approved doctrine.	Highly Diverse and dynamic, ranging from traditional <i>bi al-ma'thūr</i> to modern contextual and thematic approaches.
Intellectual Output	Focused on governmental decrees, official <i>fatwas</i> , and integrated curriculum materials.	Production of extensive, multiple-volume modern Qur'anic commentaries (<i>tafsir</i>) and academic journals with international reach.

The comparison between official mushaf al-Qur'an of Brunei and Indonesia

The core difference between the Indonesian Standard Mushaf (MSI) and the official Brunei Darussalam Mushaf is found in the Dhabt system (diacritical and auxiliary signs for

recitation/Tajwid), although both use the same fundamental structure. Both adhere to the Uthmani script (Rasm Utsmani) and the famous recitation method of Hafṣ 'an Ashim. The variations exist because each country's standardization body adapts the signs to best suit the reading tradition of its local Muslim community (Interview, Ulfah, LPMQ, 2025) .

Aspect	Indonesian Standard Mushaf (MSI)	Brunei Darussalam Mushaf
Standardizing Body	There are many publishers of the Qur'an in Indonesia, but printed copies of the Qur'an must obtain a license certifying that they have passed standardization tests conducted by Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.	Published and approved by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (KHEU).
Idgham (Merging)	Highly explicit. It generally uses a full Shaddah (Tashdid) sign on the letter being merged into (e.g., in <i>Idgham bi ghunnah</i>), ensuring the reader recognizes the merging rule.	Tends to be less explicit, closer to the Madinah Mushaf style where the Shaddah is used more selectively, primarily for Idgham Kamil (complete merging).
Iqlab (Nūn/Tanwīn followed by Bā')	Marked by a small standing Mīm placed right on top of the Nūn or Tanwīn. The Nūn might retain its Sukūn sign.	Also uses a small Mīm sign, but the Nūn Sukūn may be omitted underneath it, aligning more closely with the Mashāriqah Dhabt tradition.
Mad Ṭabī'ī (Natural Vowel Lengthening)	The letters Alif, Wāw, or Yā' that function as a <i>Mad</i> are often given a Sukūn (dead letter sign) as an auxiliary mark to guide the non-Arab speaker on the correct pronunciation length.	Generally does not use the Sukūn sign on <i>Mad Ṭabī'ī</i> letters (similar to the Madinah Mushaf). The reader is expected to know the <i>Mad</i> rule.

Aspect	Indonesian Standard Mushaf (MSI)	Brunei Darussalam Mushaf
Gharīb (Special Recitation Rules)	Specific rules like <i>Imālah</i> (slanting the vowel) or <i>Ishmām</i> (lip-pointing) are often indicated by small, explicit Arabic labels written below the word.	use specific symbols (like a diamond shape or an inverted Dammah) or small labels, adhering to the local reading tradition.
Hamzah Waṣl (Joining Hamzah)	The <i>Hamzah Waṣl</i> (the Alif at the beginning of a word that is either pronounced or silent depending on the preceding word) may not carry an explicit <i>Dhabt</i> sign.	Similar to the Madinah Mushaf, it might feature a small Ṣād sign on top of the Alif as a visual aid for the <i>Hamzah Waṣl</i> rule.

Decoration and khaṭ (Script), Both primarily use the clear Naskhi script. However, the style of the Brunei Mushaf's calligraphy and illumination (decoration) often reflects the rich and intricate Malay Archipelago (Nusantara) tradition, with densely decorated floral motifs, similar to ancient manuscripts found in Patani and Java. Waqf Signs (Pauses): While the standard set of pause signs (e.g., *Mīm*, *Jīm*, *Qāf Lāy*) is used in both, the placement and frequency of these signs can vary due to differences in the *Ijtihad* (scholarly interpretation) of where a reader should optimally pause for breath or meaning. The Indonesian Mushaf prioritizes overtly visible Tajwid signs to simplify reading for the general Indonesian populace (non-Arab speakers). The Brunei Mushaf shares this goal but often adheres to a slightly more traditional or less crowded *Dhabt* system, which often aligns with patterns seen in the widely used Madinah Mushaf, while maintaining its distinct Archipelago aesthetic.

The Comparisan Of Tafsir Al-Quran Brunei And Indonesia

The official Qur'anic translations and commentaries (Tafsir) used in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia share a common Nusantara (Southeast Asian) heritage but have distinct characteristics in their methodology, scope, and specific national religious policies.

The main difference lies in the methodology of commentary and the official language used. Brunei's official translation is called Mushaf Brunei Darussalam dan Terjemahannya

(The Brunei Darussalam Mushaf and its Translation). The subsequent full commentary project is known as Tafsir Mushaf Brunei Darussalam. The translation is in Bahasa Melayu Brunei (Brunei Malay). This reflects the country's national identity and its official policy of *Melayu Islam Beraja* (Malay Islamic Monarchy). The initial translations aim to provide a direct and accurate understanding of the verses in the local mother tongue (Brunei Malay). The official Tafsir project is comprehensive, often following the Tahlili (Analytical) method, explaining the verses sequentially, including aspects like vocabulary (*Mufradat*), context (*Munasabah*), and legal rulings (*Ahkam*). Institutional Influence: The compilation and publication are highly controlled by the Pusat Da'wah Islamiah (Islamic Da'wah Centre) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (KHEU), ensuring the commentary aligns perfectly with the official state religious doctrine (Sunni, Shafi'i Madhhab). Focus: It places a strong emphasis on practical guidance and reinforcing Islamic values within the framework of Bruneian law and culture.

Indonesia's official translation and commentary, known as Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya, is produced by the Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The translation is in Bahasa Indonesia (Standard Indonesian), reflecting the national language. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) publishes two main types of accompanying Tafsir: Tafsir Ijmali (Global/Brief) and tahliliy. The Indonesian government has also commissioned Tafsir Maudhu'i (Thematic Tafsir), such as the multi-volume *Tafsir Ilmi* (Scientific Tafsir) which explores Qur'anic verses related to modern science and technology, often in collaboration with MABIMS (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore). It aims for inclusivity and a moderate, state-sanctioned interpretation of Islam (*Islam Wasathiyyah*), reflecting the country's pluralistic society and Pancasila ideology. It tends to avoid overly divisive sectarian or rigid legalistic interpretations.

Feature	Indonesia (Kemenag Tafsir)	Brunei Darussalam (Tafsir Mushaf Brunei)
Official Language	Bahasa Indonesia	Bahasa Melayu Brunei
Primary Method	Ijmali (Brief/Global) in the printed Mushaf; Tahlili (Analytical) in multi-volume works.	Tahlili (Analytical) and comprehensive.

Feature	Indonesia (Kemenag Tafsir)	Brunei Darussalam (Tafsir Mushaf Brunei)
Accessibility	High (Ijmali version is simple and widely circulated).	High for the local Malay-speaking population.
Institutional Control	LPMQ (Ministry of Religious Affairs).	Ministry of Religious Affairs (KHEU) and Pusat Da'wah Islamiah.
Philosophical Focus	Moderation, <i>Wasathiyyah</i> , and national context (Pancasila).	Reinforcing <i>Melayu Islam Beraja</i> (MIB) ideology and Shafi'i tenets.

Both nations prioritize the Nusantara tradition of Qur'anic scholarship, but Brunei's Tafsir is more focused on reinforcing the specific Malay Islamic Monarchy state ideology, while Indonesia's official Tafsir is designed to be a nationally accepted, comprehensive, and moderate resource for a massive and diverse population.

While both the Indonesian and Brunei Darussalam Mushafs follow the **Uthmanic script** (Rasm Uthmani), they feature distinct differences in their calligraphic styles, regulatory standards, and printing aesthetics. Here is a breakdown of the key differences between the two.

a) Regulatory Authority and Standardization

Both countries treat the Mushaf as a matter of national importance, but the governing bodies differ: In Indonesia, The Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs oversees the "Mushaf Standar Indonesia" (MSI). It is specifically designed to cater to the phonetic habits of Indonesians. In Brunei Darussalam: The Pusat Pengajian dan Penyebaran Al-Quran MABIMS ensures the Mushaf aligns with the standards of the MABIMS (the unofficial body of Religious Ministers from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore). Brunei's Mushaf is often heavily influenced by the Mushaf Al-Madinah (Saudi Arabia) while maintaining regional identity.

b) Calligraphy (Khat) Style

The visual "font" of the Quran differs based on historical preference:

Feature	Indonesian Mushaf (MSI)	Brunei Mushaf
Primary Script	Historically influenced by the Naskh style of Izhuddin Al-Aruqi. It is often bolder and slightly more "compressed" to fit 15 lines per page.	Primarily uses the Naskh script, often mimicking the elegant, spacious style of the world-renowned calligrapher Uthman Taha .
Legibility	Optimized for readers accustomed to local teaching methods (like the <i>Iqra</i> method).	Closely resembles the international "Madinah" standard, which is widely recognized globally.

c) Harakat (Vocalization) and Signs

This is where the most practical differences for a reader occur, **Indonesian Mushaf** uses specific symbols to help locals with pronunciation. For example, the sign for *Saktah* (a brief pause without breathing) or the markers for *Idgham* are sometimes stylized differently to ensure clarity for non-Arabic speakers. **Brunei Mushaf** strictly adheres to the MABIMS standard. The placement of *fathah*, *kasrah*, and *dammah* is very precise, and the signs for *Tajweed* (rules of recitation) are often color-coded in modern prints, similar to the Malaysian style.

d) Ornamentation and Aesthetics (Illumination)

The "look and feel" of the pages reflects national culture. The borders and illumination of indonesia's mushaf often incorporate Batik patterns or traditional Indonesian floral motifs (like the *Mega Mendung* or *Pucuk Rebung*). Each province may even have its own "Mushaf Wilayah" with local patterns. The illumination of Brunei's mushaf is often more "Royal" and "Islamic-Geometric." It frequently uses gold leaf accents and patterns that reflect the architecture of Brunei's grand mosques (like the Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque). The Indonesian Mushaf is highly "user-friendly" for the local population with unique phonetic markers, whereas the Brunei Mushaf leans toward a more classical, "Internationalized" Arabic aesthetic with a focus on MABIMS regional uniformity.

e) Technical Orthography (Rasm and Dhabt)

While both use the Rasm Uthmani (the Uthmanic script), the way they apply vocalization marks (*Dhabt*) differs. In cases Indonesia mushaf, *Izhar* (clear pronunciation), the double vowels (Tanween) are written strictly parallel (stacked

directly on top of each other). In Brunei mushaf. Follows the "Successive Tanween" system. If the rule is *Idgham* or *Ikhfa* (merging or hiding), the strokes are offset (shifted). This helps the reader identify the Tajweed rule visually before even reaching the next letter.

f) **The Sign for Mad (Prolongation)**

Indonesia: The *Mad* sign (the wavy line above a letter) often has a specific thickness and curvature unique to the Indonesian calligraphy style. **Brunei mushaf** closely follows the **Mushaf Al-Madinah** style, where the wave is thinner and more elongated.

g) **Page Layout and "Mushaf Pojok".**

Indonesia muahaf, Famous for the 15-line format known as *Mushaf Pojok* (Corner Mushaf). In this layout, every verse ends exactly at the bottom corner of the page. This is a vital tool for Indonesian *Hafiz* (memorizers) to visualize the placement of verses. Mushaf Brunei, also uses a 15-line format, the spacing between words is often more generous, following the aesthetic of the MABIMS regional standard, which prioritizes calligraphic elegance over the strict "corner-ending" constraint found in traditional Indonesian prints.

The differences Indonesia’s and Brunei mushaf

Feature	Indonesian Mushaf (MSI)	Brunei Mushaf (MABIMS)
Calligrapher Influence	Izhuddin Al-Aruqi (Local style)	Uthman Taha (International style)
Stop Signs (Waqf)	Uses traditional small letters (mīm, laa, qala, sala)	Uses the standardized MABIMS/Madinah markers
Tajweed Color Coding	Optional, usually follows local publishers' schemes	Strictly standardized according to MABIMS color keys
Verse Markers	Often simple circles with the verse number	Often more ornate, sometimes incorporating floral motifs

- h) **Cultural Illumination (Artistic Borders):** Indonesian Style, the borders are heavily influenced by Nusantara Art. You will see patterns like *Mega Mendung* (clouds), *Batik Parang*, or floral carvings found in Jepara woodcraft. The colors are often vibrant and earthy. Brunei Style: The borders reflect Royal Malay Islamic Identity. They often use

"Air Guci" patterns, gold-threaded *Songket* motifs, and architectural elements from the Sultanate's mosques. It feels more "regal" and formal. If they are used to the Global/Saudi Standard, you will find the Brunei Mushaf very easy to navigate. However, if you were taught using the Iqra or Qiroati methods in Southeast Asia, the Indonesian Mushaf will feel more natural because its symbols are specifically tuned to the phonetic habits of local learners.

In short, the Indonesian standard Mushaf adds more explicit tajwid marks (such as tasydid on all idgham bi ghunnah and sukun marks on mad letters) to guide readers who do not have direct contact with a teacher, while the Brunei Mushaf, although also based on Hafs, may have more concise punctuation marks or follow other marking patterns inherited from the Malay-Ottoman tradition in Southeast Asia.

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E. Komparasi aplikasi mushaf Indonesia dan brunei

Comparing the digital versions of the Quran Mushaf from Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam reveals fascinating insights into how Southeast Asian countries preserve their calligraphic traditions while adapting to modern technology. Here is a comparative analysis of the official Android applications: Qur'an Kemenag (Indonesia) and Mushaf Brunei Darussalam (Brunei).

1. Calligraphy and Script Styles

Both countries utilize the Uthmani script, but they differ in their calligraphic "school" or aesthetic influence. Indonesia’s Digital Quran uses the Mushaf Standar Indonesia (MSI). The script is specifically designed to be easily readable for Indonesians, featuring a slightly bolder and more spaced-out calligraphy compared to the classic Middle Eastern style. It follows the *Rasm Uthmani* but with localized punctuation and vowel marking (harakat) conventions. Brunei (Mushaf Brunei) Features a distinct script known for its elegance and clarity. It is heavily influenced by the Mushaf Brunei Darussalam calligraphy commissioned by the Sultan. The script is often described as having a very "clean" and sharp aesthetic, closely adhering to the *Rasm Uthmani* while maintaining a unique identity through its specific letter proportions.

2. Features and User Interface (UI)

Feature	Qur'an Kemenag (Indonesia)	Mushaf Brunei Darussalam
Translation	Comprehensive Indonesian translation and <i>Tafsir</i> (Lajnah Pentashihan).	Malay translation, often featuring specific Bruneian linguistic nuances.
Audio	Multiple <i>Qari</i> options (local and international).	Focuses on high-quality recordings, often highlighting local Bruneian reciters.
Navigation	Very intuitive, organized by Surah, Juz, and Page.	Traditional layout, often mimicking the physical page-flip experience.

Feature	Qur'an Kemenag (Indonesia)	Mushaf Brunei Darussalam
Additional Info	Includes prayer times, Qibla direction, and "Verse of the Day."	Primarily focused on the purity of the Mushaf reading experience.

3. Regulatory Standards (Lajnah)

A crucial aspect of these apps is their "Official" status, meaning they have undergone rigorous verification. Digital Qur'an in Indonesia Managed by the Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Every digital character is verified to ensure it matches the National Standard. In Brunei, overseen by the Islamic Outreach and Da'wah Centre (Pusat Da'wah Islamiah) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The app is a digital extension of the "Sultan's Mushaf," ensuring absolute accuracy as per royal decree and national religious law.

4. Technical Performance

Qur'an Kemenag: Tends to be more "feature-rich," which can make the app slightly larger. It is designed as a multi-tool for Indonesian Muslims. **Mushaf Brunei:** Often more lightweight and "meditative," focusing on the visual beauty of the script without overwhelming the user with too many menus or external features. While both apps serve the same spiritual purpose, the Indonesian app excels in providing educational context (Tafsir and Indonesian translation), whereas the Bruneian app excels in aesthetic preservation and the purity of the reading experience. Both apps are highly recommended for students of *Tajwid*, as they both use color-coded systems to help users identify pronunciation rules correctly.

F. The dynamics of Quranic studies in Indonesia and Brunei from the perspective of intellectual history theory

Analyzing the dynamics of Quranic studies in Indonesia and Brunei through the lens of **Intellectual History** requires looking at how the "Idea of the Quran" has been shaped by political authority, educational movements, and the tension between traditionalism and modernity. Intellectual history (the history of ideas) focuses on how thoughts are transmitted and transformed by their social and political environments.

1. The Indonesian Landscape: Pluralism and Academic Reform

In Indonesia, Quranic studies have evolved through three distinct intellectual phases:

- a) **Traditional-Vernacular Phase:** Early intellectualism was centered in *Pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools). The focus was on *Tafsir Jalalayn* and local translations (like the Javanese works of Kyai Saleh Darat). The "idea" was to make the Quran accessible to the local population while maintaining the authority of the teacher.
- b) **The Modernist/Reformist Turn:** Influenced by Cairo’s Al-Azhar, figures like **Quraish Shihab** introduced a "thematic" approach (*Tafsir Mawdu'i*). This shifted the intellectual focus from literal reading to finding "contextual solutions" for a modern, democratic nation.
- c) **The Academic-Critical Phase:** In State Islamic Universities (UIN), Quranic studies moved into the realm of **Social Sciences**. Scholars began using Western hermeneutics (like the theories of Fazlur Rahman or Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd) to analyze the Quran. This represents a highly pluralistic and sometimes "rebellious" intellectual environment.

2. The Bruneian Landscape: Monarchy and "Melayu Islam Beraja" (MIB)

Brunei presents a contrast where intellectual history is tied to **Institutional Stability** and the preservation of the **Sultanate**.

- a) **State-Centered Intellectualism:** Unlike the decentralized intellectualism of Indonesia, Brunei’s Quranic studies are guided by the national philosophy of *Melayu Islam Beraja* (Malay Islamic Monarchy). The Quran is studied as the ultimate source of law and state identity.
- b) **The MABIMS Framework:** Brunei leads the intellectual effort to standardize the Quranic text across the region. Their focus is on **Orthodoxy**—ensuring that the *Rasm Uthmani* (the script) and the *Tajweed* are perfectly preserved.
- c) **The Rise of UNISSA and KUPU SB:** Intellectual growth in Brunei is channeled through state institutions. The focus is less on "critical hermeneutics" (as seen in Indonesia) and more on **Specialized Memorization (Tahfiz)** and the **Science of Qira’at** (different modes of recitation).

3. Comparative Intellectual Perspectives

Feature	Indonesia	Brunei Darussalam
Intellectual Driver	Diverse civil society (NU, Muhammadiyah, Universities).	Centralized State Authority (The Sultanate).
Methodological Focus	Contextualism: How does the Quran fit into a modern, democratic context?	Preservationism: How do we maintain the purity of the Quranic text and tradition?

Feature	Indonesia	Brunei Darussalam
External Influence	Middle Eastern Reformism + Western Hermeneutics.	Middle Eastern Orthodoxy + Malay Cultural Identity.
Goal of Study	Social transformation and religious pluralism.	Strengthening national identity and moral governance.

4. Key Differences in Intellectual Direction

From the perspective of **Intellectual History**, Indonesia’s Quranic studies are "**Centrifugal**"—they move outward, experimenting with new ideas, methods, and interpretations. It is an intellectual "marketplace."

In contrast, Brunei’s Quranic studies are "**Centripetal**"—they move inward toward a core of established tradition and state-sanctioned orthodoxy. The intellectual goal in Brunei is to achieve a "Perfect Society" through the strict and beautiful application of the Quran as the "Divine Constitution." Briefly, While Indonesia treats the Quran as a living text to be debated in the context of modern social challenges, Brunei treats the Quran as a sacred anchor that stabilizes the nation’s cultural and political identity.

To understand the intellectual history of these two nations, we must look at their most influential "engines" of thought: **M. Quraish Shihab** in Indonesia and the **Sultan’s Decrees** in Brunei Darussalam. Here is an analysis of how these two forces have shaped the Quranic landscape in English.

1. Indonesia: The Era of "Contextualization" (M. Quraish Shihab)

In the intellectual history of Indonesia, **M. Quraish Shihab** represents the bridge between classical Al-Azhar tradition and modern Indonesian needs. His impact can be viewed through three lenses:

- a) **Thematic Interpretation (*Tafsir Mawdu’i*)**: Before Shihab, most Indonesians studied the Quran verse-by-verse (*tahlili*). Shihab introduced a systematic way to look at the Quran’s stance on modern issues—such as women’s rights, democracy, and environment—through his monumental work, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*.
- b) **Linguistic Modernism**: He argues that the Quran is a "living miracle" (*mu’jizat*). His intellectual contribution was to show that the Arabic language of the Quran is flexible enough to remain relevant in a 21st-century secular state like Indonesia.

- c) **The "Grounding" of the Quran:** His philosophy is often called *Membumikan Al-Qur'an* (Grounding the Quran). Intellectually, this moved the Quran from the "heavens" (sacred ritual) to the "earth" (social guide for a pluralistic society).

2. Brunei: The Era of "Divine Governance" (The Sultan's Decrees)

In Brunei, the intellectual trajectory is driven "top-down" by **His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah**. The Quran is not just a text for study; it is the **National Constitution of the Soul**.

- a) **The "Negara Zikir" Philosophy:** Through royal decrees, the Sultan established the concept of *Negara Zikir* (A Remembrance Nation). This means the Quran is integrated into the very fabric of government administration, education, and public law (*Sharia*).
- b) **Institutionalization of Tahfiz:** The Sultan's decree led to the establishment of the **Institut Tahfiz Al-Quran Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (ITQSHHB)**. This shifted the intellectual focus toward **preservation**. In Brunei, the highest intellectual achievement is often the perfect memorization and recitation (*Qira'at*) of the text.
- c) **Sovereignty and Orthodoxy:** While Indonesian scholars might debate the "context" of a verse, the intellectual direction in Brunei—mandated by the Sultan—is to uphold the **perfection** of the text. This ensures that the Quran acts as a stabilizer for the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) identity.

3. Comparison of Intellectual "Authority"

Factor	M. Quraish Shihab (Indonesia)	The Sultan's Decrees (Brunei)
Source of Authority	Academic & Scholarly (Charismatic)	Sovereign & Religious (Institutional)
Primary Method	Hermeneutics & Linguistics	Implementation & Memorization
View on Society	The Quran solves social diversity.	The Quran protects national unity.
Key Output	<i>Tafsir Al-Misbah</i> (Books/Media)	Sharia Law & Tahfiz Schools (Policy)

Conclusion: "The Scholar" vs. "The Guardian"

From the perspective of intellectual history, **Indonesia** views the Quran through the lens of **The Scholar**; it is an intellectual journey of discovery, interpretation, and adaptation to a

changing world. **Brunei** views the Quran through the lens of **The Guardian**; it is a sacred trust that must be protected, obeyed, and placed at the center of the state to ensure divine blessing (*Barakah*).

BAB VI CLOSING

A. Conclusion

The comparison of Qur'anic Studies in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia reveals significant differences in their institutional framework, interpretive tradition, and intellectual output, driven primarily by their respective political philosophies. In Brunei Darussalam, Qur'anic studies are characterized by a centralized, state-controlled, and highly integrated model aligned with the national ideology of Malay Islamic Monarchy (Melayu Islam Beraja, MIB). The state, led by the Sultan, maintains an absolute monopoly over the definition and dissemination of Islamic doctrine, including the interpretation of the Qur'an. In Indonesia, Qur'anic studies thrive within a decentralized, pluralistic, and highly dynamic intellectual environment that reflects its democratic, Pancasila-based national identity and the strength of its civil society. The field is marked by the influence of major independent Islamic organizations, alongside state institutions (like the Ministry of Religious Affairs). This creates a marketplace of ideas where diverse schools of thought can flourish. In short, Brunei prioritizes doctrinal unity and state-guided consistency in its Qur'anic studies, making it a systematic *State of Zikir* (Remembrance), while Indonesia champions intellectual pluralism and contextual dynamism, making it a vibrant center for diverse, modern Islamic thought.

The study of the intellectual dynamics of Quranic Studies in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia has made an important contribution to scholarship, particularly in the fields of Nusantara Tafsir, Islamic Education, and Comparative Quranic Studies Methodology. The essence of this contribution lies in the comparison between the formal-institutional tradition (Brunei) and the populist-academic tradition (Indonesia).

This research has examined the intellectual dynamics of Quranic scholarship in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, highlighting how historical, political, and sociological factors shape the way the Quran is studied and interpreted in these two Southeast Asian nations. The study reveals a distinct contrast in the intellectual trajectories of both countries. Indonesia's Quranic scholarship is characterized by a high degree of plurality and liberalization. The influence of Middle Eastern graduates combined with Western-educated scholars has birthed a vibrant discourse involving various methodologies, ranging from traditional *tahlili* approaches to contemporary hermeneutics and social-activist interpretations. In contrast, Brunei Darussalam exhibits a more centralized and stable intellectual dynamic. Quranic scholarship in Brunei is deeply integrated into the state

philosophy of *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB). Consequently, the scholarship tends to be more conservative and protective of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* framework, focusing on the practical application of the Quran in governance, ethics, and national identity.

A significant finding of this research is the differing roles of institutional authority. In Indonesia, the dynamism is driven largely by civil society, including mass organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, as well as an expansive network of State Islamic Universities (UIN). In Brunei, the intellectual landscape is predominantly state-led, where the government plays a central role in standardizing interpretation, education, and the publication of Quranic works to ensure ideological harmony.

Despite their methodological differences, both nations share a common foundation in the Malay-Nusantara tradition. Both Indonesia and Brunei maintain a strong reverence for classical exegesis (*Turath*) while attempting to contextualize the Quranic message within the Malay cultural sphere. The use of the Malay language (and its variants) remains a vital bridge that links the intellectual heritage of both nations, even as they move toward different modern expressions.

Finally, the research concludes that globalization and digitalization are beginning to bridge the gap between these two traditions. Scholars in both Indonesia and Brunei are increasingly utilizing digital platforms to disseminate Quranic knowledge, leading to a "democratization" of scholarship that challenges traditional boundaries and fosters a new era of transnational intellectual exchange within the Malay world.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings regarding the intellectual dynamics of Quranic scholarship in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, the following suggestions are proposed for future researchers, academic institutions, and policymakers:

1. For Researchers and Academics

- a) Future studies should look beyond mainstream male-dominated scholarship and explore the contribution of female Quranic scholars in both nations, a demographic that remains underrepresented in current literature.
- b) It is highly recommended to employ social-scientific frameworks—such as the sociology of knowledge or digital humanities—to analyze how Quranic interpretations in Indonesia and Brunei respond to contemporary global shifts like climate change, artificial intelligence, and religious moderation.

- c) Scholars could delve deeper into "vernacular tafsir" (interpretations in local languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, or Melayu Brunei) to understand how indigenous wisdom shapes intellectual engagement with the Quran.

2. For Higher Education Institutions

- a) Academic institutions (e.g., UIN in Indonesia and UNISSA in Brunei) should establish formal joint research programs to map the typology of Nusantara Quranic scholarship more comprehensively.
- b) There should be more structured academic exchanges where Indonesia's diverse methodological landscape (from classical to modern hermeneutics) and Brunei's integrated approach to state-sponsored Islamic values can be mutually studied.

3. For Policymakers and Religious Authorities

- a) Digitalization of Manuscripts: Governments (the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Brunei Islamic Da'wah Centre) should prioritize the preservation and digitalization of ancient Quranic manuscripts found in remote areas to prevent the loss of historical intellectual heritage.
- b) Standardization and Relevance: Both nations are encouraged to collaborate on "Thematic Tafsir" projects that specifically address the unique socio-cultural challenges faced by the Malay-Nusantara world in the 21st century.

4. For the General Public

The public is encouraged to engage with diverse Quranic scholarship with an open yet critical mind. This intellectual dynamism should be viewed as a tool for strengthening religious moderation (wasathiyah) and social harmony, rather than a source of theological friction.

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