

The Concept of the Congregation as an Educational Media for Community Unity in Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an

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Abstract

Keywords:

Congregation,
Islamic Education,
Community Unity,
Tafsir Harakī,
Sayyid Qutb,
Fi Zhilālil Qur'ān,
Systematic Literature Review.

The concept of the congregation is an important pillar in the social and educational structure of Muslims, but its understanding is often limited to ritual and organizational aspects. This article aims to explore Sayyid Qutb's thoughts on the congregation in the Tafsir Fi Zhilālil Qur'ān, particularly as a strategic educational medium in forming the unity of the ummah (ummatan wāhidah). This study is a systematic literature review of 25 relevant scientific sources, including journal articles, undergraduate theses, and translations of tafsir, which are analyzed using content analysis and bibliometric review approaches. The novelty of this study lies in the affirmation of the role of the congregation not only as a social entity, but also as a collective educational mechanism rooted in Qur'anic values with a harakī and thematic approach. The results of the study show that Sayyid Qutb positions the congregation as a transformative instrument that mediates between revelation and the socio-political reality of the community. The congregation functions as a forum for internalizing monotheism, moral education, resistance against modern jahiliyyah, and the formation of collective leadership. These findings have important implications for the development of community-based Islamic education curricula, the revitalization of Islamic missionary organizations, and thematic interpretation studies. This study recommends further development of congregation-based educational models in the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), Islamic missionary institutions, and multicultural societies as a response to the disintegration of the Muslim community in the contemporary era.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of jamaah in Islam has long been recognized as the structural foundation for education, social, and political activities within the Muslim community. According to classical literature, jamaah represents a spiritual unity and collective effort to uphold the values of monotheism and morality (Sidik, 2023). In the modern era, Sayyid Qutb's *Fi Zhilālil Qur'ān* (written between 1951–1965) introduced a hermeneutic approach that advocates for tafsir harakī—a thematic interpretation that encourages the transformation of the community through collective missionary work and education (Darus.id, 2022). In both global and Indonesian contexts, the trend of utilizing Qutb's interpretation in missionary organizations to build community solidarity based on Qur'anic values has emerged.

Qutb's hermeneutic approach emphasizes both linguistic and social relevance (Sidik, 2023). However, much of the previous research has focused on the methods of interpretation and the aesthetic values of literature, while the understanding of jamaah as a medium for collective education and unity has not been systematically explored. The main gap lies in the lack of a structured literature review that conceptually and empirically maps how Qutb's interpretation positions jamaah as an educational institution and an agent of unity.

In Indonesia, concerns about social fragmentation and religious polarization have led many Islamic organizations to adopt jamaah-based models such as Jamaah Tarbiyah, NU, and Muhammadiyah (e.g., halaqah, campus mentoring, etc.) (Reddit, r/indonesia, 2019). These models focus on integrated education of monotheism and community solidarity, resonating with Qutb's idea of *harakī jamaah* as an agent of social transformation.

Mutia Lestari & Susanti Vera (2023) explain that Qutb's method of tafsir is *bi al-ma'tṣūr* and developed analytically with a modern Islamic missionary style (*Fi Zhilālil Qur'an* as a response to the condition of the modern Ummah). Darus.id (2022) emphasizes that Qutb views tafsir as a tool for collective education ("*amaliyah harakiyah al-Qur'an*") that shapes Islamic character and resists modern *jahiliyyah*.

Based on these gaps and phenomena, this research aims to answer the following questions: (1) How does Sayyid Qutb define jamaah in *Fi Zhilālil Qur'an* and how does he structure the educational function within it? (2) How do the *harakī* and thematic patterns in this interpretation construct the awareness of the unity of the Ummah? (3) What are the social-political and institutional implications of understanding jamaah as a medium for education, especially in the context of Islamic organizations in Indonesia? The underlying assumption of this research is that Qutb's interpretation conceptually integrates Qur'anic educational values and social action through the concept of jamaah. Jamaah is viewed as a leadership unit that mediates revelation and the reality of the community (Aji & Yusron, 2022).

Relevant previous research, such as Aji & Yusron (2022), elaborates on jamaah as a unit of education and leadership in Qutb's interpretation, emphasizing the internalization of monotheism and collective character. Lestari & Vera (2023) highlight Qutb's interpretive method, explaining him as an interpreter who rejects the authority of classical interpretations in favor of an independent *harakī* interpretation. Irawan's (2019) study on the value of *zuhud* shows how the concept is taught as part of character education in jamaah (UIN SGD diploma research).

This article introduces a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to the idea of jamaah as a medium for the education of community unity built through Qutb's interpretation, which has not been explored before. The novelty of this research includes: (a) the integration of *harakī*, *tahlīlī*, and *adabī-ijtimā'ī* concepts into the framework of jamaah education, (b) an analysis of conceptual implications and practical applications in contemporary Islamic organizations, and (c) filling the gap between thematic tafsir studies and the realization of community-based jamaah education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sayyid Qutb employs the *adabī-ijtimā'ī* or social-literary approach, along with *tahlīlī* and thematic methods, crystallized in the *harakī* style—an interpretation that links Qur'anic verses with the socio-political context of the Ummah (Hafizzullah & Ismail, 2024; Qardlawi, 2023b). According to Amir & Rahman (2024), this method combines a dynamic cultural-linguistic framework aimed at explaining universal Islamic values and modern socio-political principles. Additionally, the *adabī-ijtimā'ī* method is chosen for its emphasis on contextual social realities (Agha Mohammadi, 2020; Qardlawi, 2023a). Scholars, like Al-Khalidi, refer to it as "movement interpretation" due to its focus on social change and intellectual *jihad*. In summary, its

epistemology includes social-literary (adabī-ijtimā'ī), tahlīlī, and thematic methods, with the orientation of making tafsir a tool for education and political movement.

Qutb extends the meaning of jamaah from a spiritual community to an institution of education and leadership. Aji & Yusron (2022) state that jamaah is a "leadership unit," a place for instilling the values of tauhid, amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, and building socio-political character. Hafizzullah & Ismail (2024) further assert that through the harakī tafsir, jamaah becomes a channel for moral education, tazkiyah, and community mobilization. Qutb himself emphasized that the aim of Zhilāl is not merely textual adherence but motivating the Ummah to collectively implement its contents, "fighting against ignorance." In short, jamaah functions as a collective educational agent and leadership with a focus on the internalization of Qur'anic values and social action.

Qutb's harakī methodology focuses on the mobilization of the Ummah through active missionary movements. Qardlawi (2023) refers to this as "harakī tafsir", as it links Qur'anic verses with concrete social movements. Amir & Rahman (2024) affirm that this dynamic framework shapes political and social ideologies, as well as the thematic unity of the Ummah based on tauhid. Syeevaulfa (2015) describes this harakī tafsir as a "revolutionary current that moves the Ummah from one state of ignorance to Qur'anic awareness." In summary, harakī = a tangible movement of the Ummah based on the Qur'anic verses, with the function of uniting the Ummah ideologically and in practice.

Although emphasizing mobilization, Qutb also opens space for dialogue. Amir & Rahman (2024) found that his tafsir contains modern missionary narratives and interfaith dialogue, though still emphasizing tauhid and rejecting the system of jahiliyyah. According to Wikipedia, Qutb supported scientific education and dialogue, but still rejected Western philosophy and pluralistic approaches that contradicted Islamic law (Sharia). In short, social dialogue exists, but it is guided by tauhid and Qur'anic principles. Jamaah functions as a mediator between the Qur'anic values and social pluralism.

Qutb's tafsir consistently integrates moral and political teachings, including jihad and leadership. Hafizzullah & Ismail (2024) note the use of the iqtirānī method, which emphasizes morality, social interactions (muamalah), and jihad as part of the education within jamaah. Qardlawi (2023) asserts that the harakī character of Qutb's tafsir is not only literary but also exponential—it drives the Ummah to implement the Qur'an in social-political systems. According to Wikipedia, Qutb is anti-secular and views defensive jihad as a social mechanism for building an Islamic society. In summary, moral education = character development + jihad ethics. Politics = the enforcement of Sharia law and Islamic leadership.

Table 1. Research indicators

Aspect	Indicator
Epistemology of interpretation	Adabī-ijtimā'ī, tahlīlī, thematic, harakī
Language and cultural approach	-linguistic, lyrical prose literature, socio-contextual
Congregation	As an educational medium, agent of transformation, internalization of tawhid & morals
Harakī mobilization	Relationship between verses and social examples, concept of movement, jihad, practical da'wah
Unity of the Ummah	Ideology of tawhid, ummatan wa ...
Dialogue and plurality	Adabī-ijtimā'ī, tahlīlī, thematic, harakī
Moral and political education	-linguistic, lyrical prose literature, socio-contextual

METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with the PRISMA-lite framework as a guide for the literature search, selection, and reporting process. SLR is chosen because it provides structured, transparent, and replicable results when reviewing scientific theory concepts (Kitchenham, 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003). The PRISMA-lite approach consists of five main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, inclusion, and narrative synthesis.

The dataset was collected from 25 documents, including national journals, theses, dissertations, and open-access articles. The primary databases used were ResearchGate, Google Scholar, university journal portals (UIN, UMS, UNJ, UIN Syahada), and Scribd for non-journal documents (Etikan et al., 2016). These sources ensure broad and diverse coverage of the literature.

Three main inclusion criteria were established: (a) The document explicitly discusses the concept of jamaah as an element of education, social, or political contexts. (b) It directly relates to Tafsir Fi Zhilālil Qur'ān, either in terms of methodology or interpretative results. (c) It is relevant to the context of education and community unity, both theoretically and applicably. Exclusion criteria included: documents that discuss jamaah in general without connecting it to Qutb's interpretation, works on Qutb's tafsir outside Fi Zhilālil, and editorial or populist articles without academic value or empirical data.

The process proceeded as follows: (a) Identification: 120 documents were found across all databases. (b) Screening: Titles and abstracts were screened, leaving 70 documents. (c) Eligibility Assessment: Full texts were read to ensure they met the inclusion criteria, resulting in 30 documents. (d) Final Inclusion: After cross-checking for duplicates and quality, 25 references were selected for analysis.

Analysis was conducted in two main stages: (a) Content Analysis: Based on Schreier (2012), this method maps the units of analysis—such as definitions of jamaah, educational functions, and aspects of community unity—into codes and themes (Schreier, 2012). Initial codes were based on indicators in the literature review (e.g., "harakī mobilization," "leadership unit," "tauhid dialogue"), then validated through triangulation among researchers. (b) Thematic Synthesis: Following Thomas & Harden (2008), thematic synthesis organized these codes into conceptual narratives: Epistemology of tafsir, Collective education and jamaah leadership, Harakī patterns and ideological mobilization, Dialogue and pluralism, and Moral-political education (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This stage resulted in thematic findings interpreted within the context of Islamic-social theory and practical applications in Indonesian religious organizations.

The study applied peer debriefing and audit trail techniques to ensure the credibility of the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each stage of coding and synthesis was reviewed by two independent researchers to minimize subjective bias. A series of in-depth quotes and methodological clarifications were also conducted to maintain transparency and accountability.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the 25 selected literatures, 18 articles mention jamaah as a medium for moral, faith, and practical education. These include: (a) Aji & Yusron (2022) who state that jamaah is a leadership unit to educate values of tauhid and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar; (b) Hafizzullah & Ismail (2024) describe jamaah as a space for tazkiyah and moral preaching; (c) Nor & Dahliana (2025) present informal educational institutions through jamaah that produce cadres based on the harakī tafsir.

This addresses the first research question: Qutb views jamaah not just as a ritual community, but as a collective educational institution that prepares the ummah for socio-political roles based on the Qur'anic text (Fi Zhilālil Qur'ān) (Aji & Yusron, 2022; Nor & Dahliana, 2025). With thematic and harakī tafsir methods, jamaah becomes a learning medium that includes: (a) Tauhid internalization: the teaching that Allah is one and transformative (Hafizzullah & Ismail, 2024); (b) Social ethics: interpersonal and communal morality (Nor & Dahliana, 2025); (c) Socio-political preparedness: da'wah and resistance against

contemporary jahiliyyah (Aji & Yusron, 2022); (d) Lestari & Vera (2023) add that jamaah also functions as a collective tafsir forum (halaqah) that strengthens communal consensus on Qur'anic values.

21 articles (84%) note the concept of jamaah as the foundation for ideological unity of the ummah, rather than cultural or nationalistic. For example: (a) Amir & Rahman (2024) show jamaah as a means for the integration of the ummah globally; (b) Hafizzullah & Ismail (2024) emphasize the creation of ummatan wāḥidah through collective movements; (c) Mulazamah (2023) and Juandi (2023) observe that jamaah becomes a political da'wah instrument transcending national borders.

In addressing the second research question, the literature contextualizes jamaah as a transnational medium. Qutb's harakī approach bridges texts and real-world actions in various communities, empowering the concept of global unity based on tauhid (Amir & Rahman, 2024; Mulazamah, 2023). Relevant studies show Aji & Yusron (2022) emphasize jamaah as a global mobilization agent based on Qur'anic values, Mulazamah (2023) highlights transnational unity through collective da'wah, and Juandi (2023) sees jamaah as a global Islamic political force, not national. Lestari & Vera (2023) show the ideological configuration of jamaah in determining the direction of struggle. Amir & Rahman (2024) examine the ideological implications of jamaah in da'wah organizations in the era of globalization.

15 literatures discuss the benefits and risks of harakī tafsir: (a) Amir & Rahman (2024) and Syeevaulfa (2015) highlight its strength in mobilizing the ummah and raising socio-political awareness; (b) However, Hafizzullah & Ismail (2024) and Mulazamah (2023) warn of the potential for exclusivism and sectarianism if this movement is not contextualized with inclusivity.

The thematic analysis on the third research question shows: (a) Strengths: a structured movement, collective learning, and quick mobilization on community issues; (b) Weaknesses: the tendency to ignore diverse understandings and reject pluralism if not accompanied by inclusive principles (Mulazamah, 2023; Hafizzullah & Ismail, 2024). Relevant studies show that Syeevaulfa (2015) emphasizes ideological dominance if harakī is not paired with dialogue. Hafizzullah & Ismail (2024) warn about the potential for symbolic/cumulative violence against other groups. Amir & Rahman (2024) point to the sectarian phenomena in some modern da'wah organizations. Mulazamah (2023) notes the rejection of national political systems that do not align with harakī tafsir, and Aji & Yusron (2022) suggest expanding the educational strategy of jamaah to be more inclusive of internal differences.

CONCLUSION

From the 25 selected literatures, 18 articles mention congregation as a medium for moral, faith, and practical education. These include: (a) Aji & Yusron (2022) who state that congregation is a leadership unit to educate values of tawhid and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar; (b) Hafizzullah & Ismail (2024) describe congregation as a space for tazkiyah and moral preaching; (c) Nor & Dahliana (2025) present informal educational institutions through congregations that produce cadres based on the harakī tafsir.

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