

The Sacred Grammar of Time: Critical Discourse Analysis and Theology in Reading World History

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Abstract

This study examines how contemporary world history is linguistically and theologically constructed through discourses of crisis, transition, risk, misinformation, religious identity, and moral accountability. Using a qualitative-dominant mixed-method design, the study integrates Critical Discourse Analysis, corpus-assisted discourse analysis, and Islamic theological hermeneutics to analyze publicly accessible institutional, geopolitical, digital-governance, and religious-public texts published or updated between 2024 and 2026. The findings show that contemporary global discourse frames the present as unstable, the future as threatened, and historical change as a managerial problem of security, governance, and adaptation. At the same time, Islamic theological concepts such as *sunnatullah*, *fitnah*, *ajal*, *qadar*, *ibrah*, *tabayyun*, and *akhirah* provide a moral framework for interpreting time as an arena of human responsibility before God, society, and creation. This study proposes *sacred temporal discourse analysis* as an interdisciplinary framework for reading world history as a linguistic-theological formation in which language, ideology, power, memory, revelation, and moral imagination intersect. The implication is that contemporary global crises should not be understood only through political, technological, or risk-management perspectives, but also through ethical reflection on truth, justice, accountability, and civilizational responsibility.

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Introduction

The study of world history has increasingly moved beyond the understanding of history as a neutral chronology of events toward the recognition that historical narratives are discursively constructed through language, ideology, power, and cultural memory. Contemporary scholarship in Critical Discourse Analysis argues that language does not merely describe reality but actively produces social meanings, legitimizes authority, and shapes collective consciousness (Adiprasetyo, 2025; Khan & MacEachen, 2021; Ong et al., 2024; Rida Khan & Dr. Hafiz Javed ur Rehman, 2025). Similarly, historical temporality is not simply an objective sequence of time but a socially mediated framework through which societies interpret crisis, transformation, decline, and renewal (Chang et al., 2025; Esposito, 2025; Ledesma-Chaves & Jorge Arenas-Gaitán, 2023). In the contemporary global context, this issue has become increasingly significant because world history is now narrated through competing discourses of geopolitical instability, digital transformation, civilizational anxiety, and religious resurgence. Global institutions, policy reports, media narratives, and digital platforms continuously construct historical consciousness using vocabularies such as “multipolarization,” “global risk,” “collapse,” “polarization,” and “future uncertainty.” These discursive formations influence how societies understand the present and imagine the future, thereby positioning language

as a central instrument in shaping world historical perception (Vaara et al., 2024; van Hulst et al., 2025; Velte, 2025).

Recent global developments demonstrate that contemporary temporality is increasingly governed by discourses of crisis and uncertainty. The Munich Security Conference in the Munich Security Report 2025 identifies “multipolarization” as the defining characteristic of the emerging world order, emphasizing fragmentation, geopolitical rivalry, and institutional instability (Bunde et al., 2025). Similarly, World Economic Forum highlights armed conflict, misinformation, societal polarization, and environmental degradation as dominant global risks shaping future historical trajectories (Bunde et al., 2025; Vivoda & Loginova, 2025; WEF, 2025). In the digital sphere, UNESCO emphasizes that disinformation, conspiracy narratives, and hate speech increasingly mediate public access to truth, memory, and historical interpretation (UNESCO, 2023). These developments indicate that contemporary historical consciousness is linguistically constructed through narratives of instability, transition, and civilizational vulnerability. Consequently, world history can no longer be understood merely as a record of events but must also be interpreted as a discursive field in which language organizes collective understandings of temporality, legitimacy, and social order (Adams et al., 2023; Arslan & Alqatan, 2020; Vaara et al., 2024)

Within this context, religion remains a significant interpretive framework for understanding historical change and public morality. Contrary to classical secularization assumptions, recent empirical studies reveal that religion continues to shape political identity, legal imagination, and national belonging across many societies (Gülalp, 2025; Jong, 2025; Seth, 2024). Islamic intellectual traditions, in particular, conceptualize time not as a secular and linear progression but as a morally structured reality governed by divine order and human accountability. Qur’anic concepts such as *sunnatullah* (divine laws governing history), *fitnah* (trial and moral testing), *ajal* (appointed time), *qadar* (divine decree), *ibrah* (historical lessons), and *akhirah* (ultimate accountability) frame history as an ethical and spiritual process rather than a merely political or material one (Andi Syahrul et al., 2025; Mertens, 2024; Yuwono et al., 2025). Islamic scholarship therefore views temporality as inseparable from questions of justice, morality, stewardship, and human responsibility before God (Abdelnour, 2025; F. Ali et al., 2025; Munawar-Rachman et al., 2026; Salcedo, 2026). This theological understanding offers an alternative epistemological perspective for interpreting global historical narratives, particularly in an era characterized by civilizational uncertainty and competing ideological frameworks.

At the same time, contemporary studies in Critical Discourse Analysis have extensively examined media narratives, political rhetoric, policy discourse, migration, identity politics, and religious representation (Caballero Mengibar, 2015; Saidin & Azrun, 2024; Sengul, 2025; Xiao & Li, 2021). Corpus-assisted discourse approaches further demonstrate how language patterns reveal ideological assumptions embedded within institutional and media communication (Hart, 2020; Pérez-Paredes & Curry, 2024; Rheindorf & Vollmer, 2026). However, existing research rarely positions temporality itself as the primary object of critical analysis. Most CDA studies focus on power relations within political or media discourse without systematically investigating how the language of time constructs historical imagination and civilizational meaning. Likewise, Islamic theological discussions concerning history and civilization frequently emphasize metaphysical interpretation and moral decline but rarely operationalize discourse-analytical methodologies capable of examining how language structures contemporary geopolitical consciousness (J. A. Ali, 2023; Anam & Alamsyah

Halim, 2025; Beshara, 2026). Furthermore, studies concerning misinformation, digital governance, and global crises predominantly frame these issues within technological, political, or regulatory paradigms while insufficiently addressing their theological and moral implications (Quayle & West, 2025; SANGWA & Mutabazi, 2025; UNESCO, 2023).

Despite the growing body of research on Critical Discourse Analysis, global crisis narratives, and Islamic theological interpretations of history, a significant research gap remains in the systematic examination of temporality as a discursive and theological construct. Existing CDA studies have largely focused on power, ideology, representation, and institutional discourse, while paying limited attention to how the language of time constructs historical imagination, civilizational anxiety, and global moral consciousness. Conversely, Islamic theological discussions of history often provide rich metaphysical and ethical interpretations but have not yet been sufficiently integrated with discourse-analytical approaches capable of examining contemporary geopolitical, digital, and religious narratives. In response to this gap, this article proposes the concept of “sacred temporal discourse analysis” as an interdisciplinary framework that brings Critical Discourse Analysis into dialogue with Islamic theological hermeneutics. The novelty of this study lies in positioning time as a critical intersection of language, ideology, revelation, memory, morality, and power. Through this framework, the study contributes to the development of a morally grounded discourse-analytical model for interpreting contemporary world history. Therefore, this article aims to analyze how contemporary geopolitical, digital, and religious discourses linguistically construct world historical time, to examine how Islamic theological concepts reinterpret these constructions, and to formulate an interdisciplinary analytical model for reading contemporary global temporality through both critical and theological lenses.

Method

Research Design

This study employed an interdisciplinary qualitative documentary discourse design to examine how contemporary world-historical time is linguistically, ideologically, and theologically constructed in public discourse. The study is qualitative in orientation because its primary purpose is not to test statistical relationships or measure causal effects, but to interpret how meanings of crisis, transition, risk, misinformation, religious identity, and moral accountability are produced through language. This design is appropriate for research that treats discourse as a social practice through which power, legitimacy, knowledge, and collective consciousness are organized (Khan & MacEachen, 2021; Ong et al., 2024; Vaara et al., 2024). Recent methodological literature also emphasizes that discourse analysis should be selected according to the epistemological aim of the study, particularly when the research seeks to examine how language constructs reality, authority, and social meaning rather than merely describing textual content.

The study integrates three analytical traditions: Critical Discourse Analysis, corpus-assisted textual reading, and Islamic theological hermeneutics. Critical Discourse Analysis was used as the main interpretive framework to examine how linguistic choices construct ideological meanings. Corpus-assisted textual reading was used as a supporting procedure to identify recurring lexical patterns, semantic associations, and temporal vocabularies across the selected documents. Islamic theological hermeneutics was used to interpret these discursive constructions through key Islamic concepts related to history, morality, truth, and accountability. Therefore, the corpus component is not treated as an independent quantitative method, but as an auxiliary analytical strategy that

strengthens qualitative interpretation. This positioning is consistent with recent corpus-linguistic scholarship that recognizes corpus methods as capable of supporting interpretive research when used reflexively within qualitative or discourse-oriented designs (Pérez-Paredes & Curry, 2024; Rheindorf & Vollmer, 2026).

Data Sources and Sampling Procedure

The data were collected through purposive documentary sampling from publicly accessible and verifiable texts published or updated between 2024 and 2026. Documentary analysis is appropriate for studies that use institutional texts, reports, policy documents, public statements, and media-related materials as primary sources of social meaning (Bowen, 2009). The selected period was chosen because it represents a recent phase in which global narratives about multipolarization, geopolitical instability, misinformation, digital governance, religious public life, and civilizational uncertainty became increasingly visible in international discourse.

The corpus consisted of three categories of texts. The first category included institutional and geopolitical documents, such as global risk reports, international security reports, and public policy documents that discuss crisis, transition, conflict, instability, and future uncertainty. The second category included digital-governance and public communication documents, especially texts discussing misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, platform governance, truth, and public communication ethics. The third category included religious-public discourse materials, including cross-national religious reports, academic studies, and selected public discourse texts relevant to religion, law, national belonging, public morality, and historical meaning.

Documents were included if they met four criteria: they were publicly accessible and verifiable; they were published or updated within the 2024–2026 period; they contained explicit or implicit temporal vocabulary, such as *crisis*, *transition*, *decline*, *collapse*, *risk*, *future*, *accountability*, *polarization*, *misinformation*, or *civilizational order*; and they were relevant to the relationship between temporality, discourse, and theological meaning. Texts were excluded if they were anonymous, unverifiable, private, inaccessible, polemical without clear authorship, or unrelated to the study's focus.

Analytical Framework

The analysis was guided by the concept of sacred temporal discourse analysis, which was developed in this study as an interdisciplinary framework for reading world history through both discourse analysis and Islamic theological interpretation. The framework assumes that time is not merely a chronological sequence of events, but a symbolic and moral structure constructed through language, memory, ideology, power, and revelation. Within this framework, contemporary discourse is examined not only in terms of what it says about crisis or history, but also in terms of how it constructs the present, imagines the future, assigns agency, obscures responsibility, and frames moral accountability.

Critical Discourse Analysis focused on several textual features: lexical choices, metaphors, modality, nominalization, intertextuality, actor representation, evaluative language, and framing. These features were used to examine how contemporary global discourse constructs the present as unstable, the future as threatened, and historical change as a matter of governance, risk management, security, or adaptation. Discourse, framing, and narrative were treated as complementary interpretive tools for understanding how public texts produce meaning and legitimacy (Vaara et al., 2024; van Hulst et al., 2025).

Corpus-assisted textual reading was conducted to support the CDA process. The selected documents were reviewed for recurring lexical items and semantic associations related to temporality, crisis, risk, misinformation, religion, truth, accountability, and future orientation. This stage did not aim to produce statistical generalization. Instead, it helped identify repeated linguistic tendencies that could guide closer qualitative interpretation. For example, recurring vocabularies such as *risk*, *security*, *polarization*, *uncertainty*, *resilience*, *truth*, *misinformation*, and *future* were interpreted as signals of broader discursive patterns.

Islamic theological hermeneutics was then applied to interpret the moral implications of these patterns. Key Islamic concepts used in the analysis included *sunnatullah* as a framework for understanding historical order, *fitnah* as a category for moral and social trial, *tabayyun* as an ethical principle of verification, *ajal* and *qadar* as concepts related to divine ordering and temporal limitation, *ibrah* as historical-moral reflection, and *akhirah* as ultimate accountability. These concepts were not used to impose doctrinal conclusions on the data, but to develop a theological reading of how secular global discourse constructs crisis, truth, responsibility, and historical destiny.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the researchers conducted document familiarization by reading the selected texts repeatedly to identify their communicative purpose, institutional context, dominant themes, and temporal orientation. Second, the texts were coded thematically based on recurring categories, including crisis, transition, risk, misinformation, religious identity, public morality, governance, accountability, and future uncertainty. This stage followed qualitative thematic principles in which coding is used to organize patterned meanings across textual data (Nowell et al., 2017).

Third, Critical Discourse Analysis was applied to examine how these themes were linguistically constructed. The analysis focused on how words, metaphors, modalities, nominalizations, and actor representations shaped the meaning of world history. For instance, terms such as *multipolarization*, *global risk*, and *future uncertainty* were examined not merely as descriptive terms but as discursive devices that construct a particular imagination of historical time. Fourth, Islamic theological hermeneutics was used to reinterpret the findings by connecting the identified discourse patterns with Islamic moral concepts. This final stage allowed the study to move from linguistic description to ideological critique and theological interpretation.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To enhance trustworthiness, the study applied data triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and analytical transparency. Data triangulation was achieved by comparing different types of texts, including geopolitical reports, digital-governance documents, religious-public materials, and academic sources. Theoretical triangulation was achieved by integrating Critical Discourse Analysis, corpus-assisted textual reading, and Islamic theological hermeneutics. Analytical transparency was maintained by clearly defining the criteria for document selection, coding focus, interpretive categories, and theological concepts used in the analysis. Trustworthiness was further strengthened through repeated reading, source verification, publication-date checking, and exclusion of unverifiable materials.

Because the study relied only on publicly accessible documents, it did not involve human participants, interviews, private records, or personally identifiable data. Therefore, formal informed consent was not required. Nevertheless, ethical care was maintained by using verifiable sources,

avoiding decontextualized quotation, and interpreting religious and geopolitical texts with academic caution. The study does not claim to predict world history or provide a universal theological explanation of global events. Rather, it offers an interpretive framework for understanding how contemporary global temporality is constructed through language and how Islamic theology can illuminate the moral assumptions embedded in secular temporal discourse.

Result and Discussion

Result

The results of this study are derived from a qualitative-dominant mixed-method analysis of publicly accessible institutional, geopolitical, digital-governance, and religious-public discourse materials published or updated between 2024 and 2026. The analysis focused on how contemporary world-historical time is constructed through temporal vocabularies such as crisis, transition, risk, decline, misinformation, polarization, governance, religious identity, and accountability. The findings are presented in three interrelated dimensions: the construction of global time as crisis and transition, the acceleration of historical consciousness through digital discourse, and the persistence of religion as a public framework for interpreting history. These findings are then discussed through the integration of Critical Discourse Analysis and Islamic theological hermeneutics.

Global Time as Crisis, Transition, and Risk

The first finding shows that contemporary global discourse constructs historical time through a vocabulary of crisis and transition. Institutional documents analyzed in this study frequently represent the present world as a period of geopolitical fragmentation, instability, and uncertain transformation. The term “multipolarization,” for example, does not merely describe a shift in international power relations; it also functions as a discursive frame that condenses conflict, institutional weakening, strategic rivalry, and global disorder into a seemingly objective historical condition. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, such nominalization is significant because it can obscure human agency and political responsibility. The world appears to “enter” multipolarization as if it were a natural historical process, while the actors, interests, and structural forces producing this condition become less visible.

This finding indicates that dominant global narratives do not simply report historical change; they organize historical consciousness by naming the present as transition and the future as uncertainty. In Islamic theological terms, this secular vocabulary of transition can be critically compared with the concept of *sunnatullah*, which frames history as patterned and morally intelligible. However, while global institutional discourse recognizes instability and consequence, it generally avoids explicit moral and metaphysical categories such as injustice, arrogance, oppression, divine accountability, and spiritual decline. As a result, contemporary global discourse tends to transform moral-historical questions into managerial categories of risk, security, and strategic adaptation.

Digital Discourse and the Acceleration of Historical Consciousness

The second finding reveals that digital-platform discourse reshapes historical time through acceleration, fragmentation, and information disorder. In the analyzed materials, misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, and conspiracy narratives are repeatedly framed as threats to public truth, democratic life, and collective memory. This shows that contemporary world history is no

longer narrated only by states, scholars, religious authorities, or international institutions, but also by algorithmic infrastructures that amplify immediacy, emotional reaction, and fragmented interpretation.

From a discourse perspective, digital platforms transform crisis into virality and memory into a contested archive. Historical consciousness becomes unstable because public meaning is increasingly shaped by speed, visibility, and circulation rather than depth, verification, and ethical reflection. Through Islamic theological hermeneutics, this condition may be interpreted through the concept of fitnah, not merely as social disorder but as a moral trial involving truth, judgment, responsibility, and speech ethics. The concept of tabayyun is especially relevant here because it emphasizes careful verification before accepting or disseminating information. Therefore, digital misinformation is not only a technical or regulatory problem but also an ethical rupture in the moral order of communication.

Religious Public Discourse and Sacred Historical Imagination

The third finding concerns the continued significance of religion in public life and historical imagination. The data summarized in Table 1 indicate that religion remains an important interpretive resource for identity, law, public morality, and national belonging. This finding is particularly important because it challenges the assumption that modern public discourse is entirely secular. Instead, the data suggest that sacred categories continue to shape how many societies interpret authority, belonging, legitimacy, and historical destiny.

Table 1. Religious Public Dimension Portrait

Indicator	Number	Category	Meaning
Countries surveyed	36	Cross-national coverage	Broad comparison
Total respondents	54,196	Sample size	Nearly 55,000 adults
Non-U.S. respondents	41,503	Sample size	International sample
U.S. respondents	12,693	Sample size	Corrected U.S. figure
Countries asked about religious texts and law	35	Law item	Tunisia excluded from this item
Middle-income country pattern	Majority	Religious texts and law	Most support some/fair influence
High-income country pattern	<50%	Religious texts and law	Lower support in most cases
U.S. support	49%	High-income case	Highest among high-income countries
Turkey: Quran should have no influence	31%	Muslim-majority variation	Highest no-influence figure
Tunisia: Muslim identity very important	86%	National belonging	Strong religious-national link
Sweden: Christian identity very important	3%	National belonging	Weak religious-national link
Indonesia: Muslim identity very important	80%	National belonging	Strong relevance for Islamic discourse
Religion mostly helps society	77%	Social impact median	Positive public role
Religion mostly hurts society	19%	Social impact median	Negative public role

As Table 1 shows that religious discourse remains socially and politically relevant, particularly in societies where religious identity continues to influence national belonging and public morality. The high relevance of Muslim identity in Indonesia and Tunisia, for instance, demonstrates that religion still functions as a major source of collective meaning in Muslim-majority contexts. However, the contrast with Sweden and other high-income countries also indicates that secularization is uneven rather than universal. Therefore, religious language should not be treated as a residual or irrational element of modernity, but as an active discursive system through which communities interpret crisis, law, suffering, authority, and historical direction.

Sacred Temporal Displacement in Contemporary Global Discourse

The integration of the findings reveals a key theoretical insight: contemporary global discourse often uses quasi-theological vocabularies while maintaining a secular explanatory structure. Terms such as crisis, collapse, fragmentation, transition, risk, conflict, and future outlook create an atmosphere of impending judgment, but these conditions are usually interpreted as policy problems rather than moral signs. This study identifies this pattern as sacred temporal displacement. In this condition, the world speaks in a language that resembles moral warning, yet translates that warning into the managerial language of governance, security, regulation, and adaptation.

This does not mean that theological interpretation should replace political, legal, or sociological analysis. Rather, Islamic theology can deepen Critical Discourse Analysis by asking questions that secular discourse often leaves unaddressed: What kind of moral order is implied by this discourse? Whose agency is hidden? What forms of injustice are normalized? How does public language shape responsibility before God, society, and creation? In this sense, CDA identifies how discourse works, while Islamic theology interrogates the moral universe that discourse produces.

The quantitative indicators used in this study must be interpreted cautiously. They do not directly measure “sacred time,” nor do they prove that all global discourse is theological. Instead, they provide empirical support for the claim that contemporary global narratives are structured by recurring anxieties concerning risk, truth, public order, religion, and the future. Thus, the contribution of this study lies not in predicting world history, but in offering an interpretive framework for reading world history as a linguistic-theological formation. The findings confirm that contemporary world time is not neutral chronology, it is a contested grammar of meaning in which language, ideology, power, memory, and theology intersect.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that contemporary world history is not merely represented through chronological narration but constructed through a discursive grammar of crisis, transition, risk, and moral uncertainty. This finding is consistent with Fairclough’s view that discourse functions as a social practice that shapes power relations and legitimizes particular interpretations of reality, and it also supports van Dijk’s argument that public discourse organizes social cognition through selective framing, emphasis, and ideological reproduction. In this study, terms such as multipolarization, risk, misinformation, disinformation, polarization, civilizational decline, and future uncertainty do not simply describe global conditions; they produce a particular temporal imagination in which the present is perceived as unstable and the future as threatened. This strengthens previous international studies in Critical Discourse Analysis that show how political and institutional language converts complex social realities into manageable categories of governance,

security, and policy intervention (Agustus et al., 2025; Kaufmann & Wiering, 2022; “V International Relations / Relations Internationales,” 2022).

This study also extends Koselleck’s and Ricoeur’s arguments that historical time is not neutral but semantically and narratively mediated. While Koselleck emphasizes that modern societies construct historical consciousness through concepts of expectation, crisis, and transition, and Ricoeur shows that time becomes meaningful through narrative configuration, the present study demonstrates that contemporary global temporality is further shaped by institutionalized risk discourse. The language of global reports does not only organize what has happened but also anticipates what may happen, thereby producing an “anxious future” through categories of forecast, risk ranking, and strategic adaptation. This finding is aligned with the World Economic Forum’s framing of global risks, where armed conflict, misinformation, disinformation, societal polarization, and environmental degradation are repeatedly placed within short-term and long-term temporal horizons (WEF, 2025).

The finding on geopolitical transition is also comparable to the Munich Security Report 2025, which uses the term multipolarization to describe the contemporary international order. However, this study goes further by arguing that multipolarization is not only a geopolitical concept but also a discourse of time. It transforms political rivalry, institutional weakening, military conflict, and strategic uncertainty into a seemingly objective historical condition. From a CDA perspective, this confirms that nominalization can obscure agency and moral responsibility. Thus, unlike conventional international-relations studies that mainly treat multipolarity as a structural redistribution of power, this study interprets it as a linguistic mechanism that frames the world as moving through an inevitable transition while concealing the actors and interests that produce disorder.

The finding on digital misinformation is consistent with UNESCO’s concern that platform governance is increasingly central to safeguarding freedom of expression and access to information. UNESCO’s guidelines emphasize that misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy discourse, and hate speech have become major challenges for public truth in digital societies (UNESCO, 2023). This study supports that argument but adds a theological interpretation: misinformation is not merely an information disorder or regulatory problem, but also a moral crisis of speech. Through the Islamic concept of *tabayyun*, this study shows that verification is not only an epistemic procedure but also an ethical obligation. Therefore, the study contributes to digital discourse research by connecting platform governance with Islamic moral epistemology.

The results also correspond with international scholarship on corpus-assisted discourse analysis, especially Baker’s work, which demonstrates that recurring lexical patterns can reveal ideological structures embedded in public texts. Similar to Baker et al.’s corpus-based CDA of refugee and asylum discourse, this study shows that repeated lexical clusters around crisis, risk, governance, religion, and future reveal broader ideological assumptions in global discourse (Baker & McEnery, 2005; Rheindorf & Vollmer, 2026). However, this study differs by positioning temporality itself as the main object of analysis. Instead of merely asking how a group, policy, or issue is represented, this study asks how time is represented, moralized, secularized, and contested.

The religious-public dimension of this study is supported by Pew Research Center’s cross-national findings showing that religion remains influential in shaping public identity, law, and national belonging in many societies. The table used in this study indicates that religion continues to influence how communities imagine social order, legitimacy, and collective destiny. This finding

challenges the assumption that modern public discourse is fully secular. It also supports recent studies of religious nationalism and public religion, which show that religion remains a powerful symbolic resource in contemporary political and social life (Chistyakova, 2024; Kamraju, 2025; Rahman, 2025). In this respect, the study strengthens the argument that theological language cannot be dismissed as a residual element of premodern society because it remains active in shaping public imagination.

In the Indonesian context, this study is comparable to Aminuddin's study on Islamic discourse in digital media, which shows that online Islamic platforms such as Islami.co and IBTimes.id construct religious moderation through specific discursive strategies. That study demonstrates that Indonesian digital Islamic discourse is not static but actively shaped through language, framing, and ideological positioning (Ahmad Aminuddin, 2024). The present study expands this national discussion by moving from religious moderation discourse to the broader question of sacred temporality. It shows that Islamic concepts do not only function in identity politics or moderation discourse but can also serve as analytical categories for interpreting global historical consciousness.

The study also resonates with Hilmi's corpus-assisted CDA of jihad discourse in NU Online. Hilmi shows that the meaning of jihad is recontextualized within constructive, institutional, and socio-political discourse rather than reduced to violence or militancy (Hilmi & Pimay, 2025). This is relevant because both studies demonstrate that Islamic terms must be analyzed linguistically, historically, and institutionally rather than only doctrinally. However, while Hilmi focuses on the reconstruction of one Islamic concept in an Indonesian media corpus, the present study examines several theological concepts *sunnatullah*, *fitnah*, *ajal*, *qadar*, *ibrah*, *tabayyun*, and *akhirah* as a broader interpretive framework for reading world history.

The findings further correspond with Fahad and Roselani's corpus-based CDA of CNN Indonesia and *Republika.co.id* in representing jihad and *shahid*. Their study confirms that Indonesian media construct Islamic concepts differently through issue framing, lexical selection, and ideological positioning (Fahad & Roselani, 2025). This supports the present study's claim that theological vocabulary is never neutral when it enters public discourse. Nevertheless, the present research offers a different contribution by analyzing not only religious vocabulary in media discourse but also secular global vocabularies that carry quasi-theological anxieties, such as crisis, collapse, transition, threat, and future risk.

This study is also relevant to Ridho's (2025) research on multimodal strategies of moderate Islamic discourse in Indonesian digital *da'wah*. Ridho demonstrates that Islamic values are constructed through verbal, visual, and auditory modes in digital spaces, especially in relation to inclusivity and interfaith understanding. The present study shares the concern that religious discourse is mediated by digital environments, but it differs by focusing on how digital temporality accelerates moral judgment and destabilizes historical meaning. Thus, while Ridho emphasizes multimodal representation of moderate Islam, this study emphasizes the ethical-temporal consequences of digital discourse, especially through the concepts of *fitnah* and *tabayyun*.

The results also complement Indonesian studies on religious moderation as a governmental and public discourse. For example, Syahbudi's study on religious moderation discourse as a new form of nationalism in Indonesia shows that religious language can be connected to state hegemony, stability, and national identity. This is relevant because the present study similarly finds that religion remains part of public order and historical imagination. However, this research differs by not limiting

religious discourse to state policy or nationalism. Instead, it proposes that Islamic theology can become a critical hermeneutic for interpreting global temporal narratives, especially those related to crisis, truth, accountability, and civilizational uncertainty.

This study's novelty lies in its proposal of sacred temporal discourse analysis as an interdisciplinary framework that integrates Critical Discourse Analysis, corpus-assisted linguistic analysis, and Islamic theological hermeneutics. Previous studies have examined political discourse, media discourse, religious moderation, digital Islamic communication, misinformation, and public religion, but they rarely treat time itself as the main object of critical analysis. The originality of this study is therefore located in its attempt to read world history as a linguistic-theological formation in which grammar, metaphor, ideology, revelation, memory, and power intersect. It does not merely ask what global discourse says about crisis, but how crisis is temporally named, morally displaced, and theologically interpretable.

The theoretical implication of this study is that CDA can be expanded beyond ideology critique toward moral-temporal critique. By integrating Islamic theological concepts, CDA becomes capable not only of identifying hidden agency, power relations, and ideological framing, but also of interrogating the moral assumptions embedded in secular historical discourse. The practical implication is that global discourse on risk, misinformation, conflict, and civilizational uncertainty should not be interpreted only through managerial, technological, or security frameworks. It also requires ethical reflection on truth, justice, responsibility, and accountability. For Islamic scholarship, this study implies that theological concepts can be operationalized analytically without falling into fatalism, sensational apocalypticism, or speculative prophecy.

The study also has implications for digital literacy, religious communication, and global citizenship. The concepts of *tabayyun* and *fitnah* offer an ethical vocabulary for addressing misinformation and disinformation in digital societies. Rather than treating misinformation merely as a technical failure of information systems, this study frames it as a moral disruption of public truth. This implication is relevant for educators, religious leaders, policy makers, and digital-platform regulators who seek to build ethical communication cultures in plural societies. In the Indonesian context, where religion remains strongly connected to public identity and social morality, the framework may help develop a more responsible model of Islamic digital literacy and public discourse.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the corpus is selective and limited to publicly accessible texts from 2024–2026, so the findings cannot be generalized to all global discourses or all historical periods. Second, the study does not directly measure public reception; therefore, it cannot determine how audiences actually interpret the temporal and theological meanings identified in the texts. Third, the corpus-assisted analysis is used to support interpretive reading rather than to produce large-scale computational generalization. Fourth, the theological interpretation is grounded in selected Islamic concepts, meaning that other theological traditions, schools of *tafsir*, or comparative religious perspectives may produce different readings. Finally, because this study works at the intersection of linguistics, theology, and global discourse, its conclusions should be understood as an interpretive contribution rather than a predictive theory of world history.

Conclusion

This study concludes that contemporary world history cannot be adequately understood as a neutral chronology of events, because it is constructed through discursive formations that organize crisis, transition, risk, uncertainty, truth, religious identity, and moral accountability into a contested grammar of time. By integrating Critical Discourse Analysis, corpus-assisted discourse analysis, and Islamic theological hermeneutics, this study demonstrates that global institutional and digital discourses from 2024–2026 tend to frame the present as unstable, the future as threatened, and historical change as a managerial problem of governance, security, and adaptation. At the same time, Islamic theological concepts such as *sunnatullah*, *fitnah*, *ajal*, *qadar*, *ibrah*, *tabayyun*, and *akhirah* reveal that time is not merely secular duration but a morally charged arena of human responsibility before God, society, and creation. The main contribution of this study lies in proposing sacred temporal discourse analysis as an interdisciplinary framework for reading world history as a linguistic-theological formation in which language, power, ideology, memory, revelation, and moral imagination intersect. The findings imply that contemporary crises should not be interpreted only through political, technological, or risk-management perspectives, but also through ethical reflection on truth, justice, accountability, and civilizational responsibility. However, because this study relies on a selective documentary corpus and does not examine audience reception, its findings should be understood as an interpretive contribution rather than a universal or predictive theory of world history.

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