

Countering Digital Hate Speech through Qur'anic Communication Ethics: Insights from Q. al-Hujurāt (49):11

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Abstract

The widespread prevalence of digital hate speech, cyberbullying, negative labeling, and identity-based polarization has exposed the growing crisis of ethical communication in contemporary social media. While Islamic communication ethics has been widely discussed, relatively few studies have examined how Qur'anic exegesis can provide a comprehensive ethical framework for addressing these digital challenges. This study aims to investigate how Q. al-Hujurāt (49):11 articulates Qur'anic communication ethics and to explore its relevance for countering hate speech in digital environments. Employing qualitative library research with the *tahlili* method of Qur'anic exegesis, the study analyzes the verse through linguistic (*mufradāt*), historical (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), textual (*munāsabah*), and comparative interpretive approaches based on classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries. The findings identify five interconnected ethical principles: respect for human dignity, self-reflection and communal solidarity, prevention of reciprocal hostility, faith-based moral self-regulation, and the promotion of brotherhood and tolerance. Collectively, these principles provide a normative foundation for preventing cyberbullying, digital backbiting, identity-based hate speech, negative labeling, and social polarization across social media platforms. This study contributes to contemporary Qur'anic studies by demonstrating how Q. al-Hujurāt (49):11 offers a coherent ethical framework for countering digital hate speech, thereby strengthening interdisciplinary engagement between Qur'anic ethics, digital communication, and responsible online citizenship.

Keywords: Qur'anic Communication Ethics; Digital Hate Speech; Social Media; Q. al-Hujurāt (49):11; Tahlili Exegesis.

Abstrak

Maraknya ujaran kebencian digital, *cyberbullying*, pelabelan negatif, dan polarisasi berbasis identitas menunjukkan semakin mendalamnya krisis etika komunikasi di media sosial. Meskipun etika komunikasi Islam telah banyak dibahas, penelitian yang mengkaji bagaimana tafsir Al-Qur'an dapat menawarkan kerangka etis yang komprehensif untuk mengatasi persoalan komunikasi digital masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis QS. al-Hujurāt (49):11 untuk mengungkap prinsip-prinsip etika komunikasi Qur'ani serta menjelaskan relevansinya dalam menangkal ujaran kebencian di ruang digital. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan metode tafsir *tahlili*. Analisis dilakukan melalui kajian *mufradāt*, *asbāb al-nuzūl*, *munāsabah*, serta komparasi penafsiran mufasir klasik dan kontemporer. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi lima prinsip utama etika komunikasi Qur'ani, yaitu penghormatan terhadap martabat manusia, muhasabah diri dan solidaritas sosial, pencegahan permusuhan timbal balik, pengendalian komunikasi berbasis kesadaran iman, serta penguatan ukhuwah dan toleransi. Kelima prinsip tersebut

membentuk landasan normatif yang aplikatif dalam mencegah *cyberbullying*, gibah digital, ujaran kebencian berbasis identitas, pelabelan negatif, dan polarisasi sosial di media sosial. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan studi Al-Qur'an dengan menunjukkan bahwa QS. al-Hujurāt (49):11 menawarkan kerangka etika komunikasi yang koheren untuk menangkal ujaran kebencian digital, sekaligus memperkuat dialog interdisipliner antara etika Qur'ani, komunikasi digital, dan kewargaan digital yang bertanggung jawab.

Kata kunci: Etika Komunikasi Qur'ani; Ujaran Kebencian Digital; Media Sosial; QS. al-Hujurāt (49):11; Tafsir Tahlili.

Introduction

The unprecedented expansion of digital communication has transformed social interaction into an interconnected online environment where information is produced, shared, and consumed instantaneously. Social media platforms have democratized public participation by allowing every individual to become both a consumer and a producer of information. Nevertheless, this transformation has also intensified the circulation of harmful communication, including hate speech, cyberbullying, online harassment, and identity-based discrimination. Rather than functioning solely as channels of communication, digital platforms increasingly shape social attitudes through algorithmic recommendation systems that reinforce ideological polarization and create echo chambers (Cinelli et al., 2021). Within Indonesia, these dynamics are further amplified by algorithmic enclaves that intensify religious and political polarization in online spaces (Lim, 2017).

The growing prevalence of hate speech has attracted considerable international concern because of its implications for democracy, human rights, and social cohesion. Brown (2017) argues that hate speech extends beyond expressions of personal hostility and functions as a communicative practice that undermines the dignity and equal standing of targeted individuals or communities. Similarly, the United Nations (2021) defines hate speech as every form of communication that attacks or employs discriminatory language toward individuals or groups based on religion, ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, or other social identities. UNESCO (2023) further emphasizes that hate speech has become one of the most urgent educational challenges of the digital age because it contributes to discrimination, radicalization, and social fragmentation. Contemporary linguistic research likewise demonstrates that hate speech frequently appears not only through explicit insults but also through sarcasm, stereotypes, symbolic narratives, derogatory labels, memes, and coded expressions that subtly normalize hostility toward particular communities (ElSherief et al., 2018).

Indonesia represents one of the world's largest digital societies, making the ethical consequences of online communication increasingly significant. Recent studies show that hate speech in Indonesian social media is strongly associated with political contestation, religious identity, and social polarization (Saud & Dewanti, 2025). The IndoToxic2024 corpus further indicates that toxic online communication disproportionately targets women and minority groups while simultaneously reducing the quality of democratic public discourse (Susanto et al., 2024). These developments demonstrate that technological regulation alone is insufficient to address digital hostility and that sustainable solutions require ethical frameworks capable of cultivating individual moral responsibility and respectful communication.

From the perspective of digital citizenship, responsible participation in online environments requires not only technological competence but also ethical awareness regarding the consequences of digital communication (Ribble, 2015). Similar concerns have emerged within the growing field of digital religion, where scholars argue that religious values continue to influence communication practices even within technologically mediated environments. Campbell (2013) demonstrates that digital media reshape religious interaction without eliminating ethical norms derived from religious traditions, while Bunt (2018) shows that online Islamic environments have transformed religious authority by extending Qur'anic discourse into digital public spaces. These developments suggest that Islamic ethical principles remain highly relevant for guiding communication within contemporary social media ecosystems.

Within Islamic thought, communication is fundamentally understood as a moral and spiritual responsibility rather than merely a process of exchanging information. Every communicative act should promote *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare), preserve human dignity, and strengthen harmonious social relationships (Suryani, 2017). The Qur'an formulates this ethical orientation through several principles of speech, including *qaulan ṣadīdan* (truthful speech), *qaulan ma'rūfan* (kind speech), *qaulan balīghan* (effective speech), *qaulan kaṭīman* (honourable speech), *qaulan layyīnan* (gentle speech), and *qaulan maysūran* (appropriate speech), indicating that both the substance and manner of communication possess ethical significance (Burhanudin & Rojali, 2022). Siddiqi (1997) further argues that Qur'anic ethics consistently links verbal conduct with broader social responsibility, making communication an essential instrument for preserving justice, mutual respect, and communal harmony.

These ethical principles are closely related to one of the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), namely the protection of human dignity (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*).

Consequently, ridicule, humiliation, slander, and derogatory labeling are prohibited because they threaten both personal honour and collective solidarity (Hefni, 2015). Islamic communication therefore aims not only to transmit information but also to cultivate *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), social solidarity, and peaceful coexistence (Rafidawati, 2024). This ethical orientation has historically contributed to the development of Indonesia's tradition of Civil Islam, which emphasizes moderation, tolerance, and democratic coexistence within a pluralistic society (Hefner, 2000).

Among the Qur'anic passages addressing communication ethics, Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 occupies a particularly central position because it explicitly prohibits ridicule (*yaskhar*), humiliation (*talmizū*), and derogatory labeling (*tanābazū bil-alcāb*). These three prohibited communicative practices closely resemble contemporary manifestations of cyberbullying, online harassment, hate speech, and digital stigmatization. Although numerous studies have examined Islamic communication ethics, hate speech, and digital communication separately, relatively few have systematically analyzed the semantic structure, historical context, and exegetical interpretation of Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 as an integrated ethical framework for digital communication. Existing studies generally emphasize normative moral teachings without demonstrating how the verse addresses contemporary patterns of communicative violence in online environments. Furthermore, contemporary Qur'anic interpretation increasingly encourages contextual engagement between the Qur'an and present social realities, allowing Qur'anic ethics to respond constructively to emerging societal challenges (Saeed, 2013).

Accordingly, this study examines Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 using the *tahḥīlī* method of Qur'anic exegesis by integrating lexical analysis (*mufradāt*), *asbāb al-nuzūl*, *munāsabah*, and comparative interpretation from classical and contemporary tafsīr. Through this approach, the study formulates a Qur'an-based framework of communication ethics capable of addressing hate speech within digital environments. The novelty of this study lies in integrating semantic, historical, and contextual analyses into a coherent model of Qur'anic digital communication ethics that bridges classical exegetical tradition with contemporary debates on digital citizenship, hate speech, and ethical communication in social media.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative library research design to examine the ethical principles of communication articulated in Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 and their relevance to contemporary digital communication. The research adopted the *tahlili* (analytical) method of Qur'anic exegesis, which enables a comprehensive interpretation of a Qur'anic verse by

examining its linguistic features, historical background, textual coherence, and exegetical development. This approach was selected because the study focuses on uncovering the normative ethical values embedded in a specific Qur'anic passage and explaining their applicability to the contemporary phenomenon of digital hate speech.

The primary source of data was Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11. Secondary sources consisted of classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries, including *Jāmi' al-Bayān* by al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* by Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, and *Tafsīr al-Miṣbāḥ* by M. Quraish Shihab. To contextualize the interpretation, the study also consulted recent scholarly publications on Qur'anic ethics, digital communication, social media, cyberbullying, and hate speech.

The analysis was conducted in four sequential stages. First, a linguistic analysis (*mufradāt*) examined the semantic meanings of key expressions in the verse, including *yaskhar*, *talmizū*, and *tanābazū bil-alqāb*, to identify their ethical implications for interpersonal communication. Second, the historical context (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) and textual coherence (*munāsabah*) were analyzed to understand the verse within the broader thematic structure of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt. Third, comparative analysis was undertaken by examining interpretations offered by classical and contemporary exegetes to identify convergences, differences, and developments in understanding the verse. Finally, the identified ethical principles were interpreted within the context of contemporary digital communication through analytical interpretation, allowing the Qur'anic values to be related systematically to issues such as hate speech, cyberbullying, digital backbiting, identity-based discrimination, and online social polarization.

To ensure interpretive rigor, the study employed source triangulation by comparing multiple authoritative Qur'anic commentaries representing different historical periods and interpretive orientations. Analytical validity was strengthened through constant comparison between linguistic evidence, historical context, exegetical interpretations, and contemporary scholarship on digital communication ethics. This procedure ensured that the resulting ethical framework remained grounded in established Qur'anic interpretation while maintaining relevance to current challenges in social media communication.

Results and Discussion

A. Semantic Structure of Qur'anic Communication Ethics in Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11

The semantic analysis of Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 reveals that the verse constructs a comprehensive framework of communication ethics through three interconnected prohibitions that regulate verbal and non-verbal interactions among believers. Rather than prohibiting hatred in general terms, the verse identifies specific communicative behaviors that progressively undermine social cohesion. The Qur'anic text states:

"O believers! Let not one group ridicule another, for they may be better than them. Nor should women ridicule other women, for they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor insult one another with offensive nicknames..." (Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11; Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

Semantic examination demonstrates that the three principal expressions—*yaskhar*, *talmizū*, and *tanābazū bil-alqāb*—represent distinct forms of unethical communication rather than synonymous prohibitions. Each expression addresses a different communicative practice, ranging from ridicule and indirect humiliation to public labeling, thereby illustrating a gradual escalation of verbal violence.

The first expression, *yaskhar*, derives from the root *sakhira*, referring to acts of ridicule that deliberately expose another person's weaknesses for amusement or humiliation. According to al-Iṣfahānī (2009), ridicule may be expressed verbally, behaviorally, or even through gestures, indicating that communication ethics extend beyond spoken language to encompass all symbolic forms of interaction. The verse further distinguishes between male and female audiences by explicitly mentioning *qawm* and *nisā'*, emphasizing that this prohibition applies universally across social groups.

The second expression, *talmizū*, originates from the root *lamaza*, which denotes indirect forms of insult expressed through facial expressions, eye movements, gestures, insinuations, or subtle verbal attacks. Ibn 'Āshūr (2000) explains that the Qur'an intentionally employs the phrase *anfusakum* ("yourselves") although the intended object is other people, thereby conveying that insulting fellow believers ultimately diminishes one's own communal dignity. This linguistic construction highlights the collective nature of Islamic social ethics.

The third expression, *tanābazū bil-alqāb*, derives from *nabaza*, meaning to assign degrading labels or offensive nicknames publicly. Unlike *lamz*, which often operates implicitly, *tanābuz* involves reciprocal and explicit labeling capable of provoking immediate retaliation and social polarization. Shihab (2012) further notes that the accompanying phrase *'asā an yakūnū khayran minhum* reminds believers that social status cannot determine moral superiority because true honor belongs only to those whom Allah regards as righteous.

The semantic distinctions identified through lexical analysis are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Semantic Classification of Communication Violations in Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11

Qur'anic Term	Lexical Root	Form of Communication	Communication Mode	Primary Social Impact
<i>Yaskhar</i>	<i>Sakhira</i>	Direct ridicule	Speech, behavior, gesture	Degradation of personal dignity
<i>Talmizū</i>	<i>Lamaza</i>	Indirect humiliation	Gestures, insinuation, symbolic communication	Damage to personal reputation
<i>Tanābazū</i>	<i>Nabaza</i>	Public derogatory labeling	Open verbal labeling	Conflict escalation and social polarization

The classification demonstrates that the Qur'an conceptualizes unethical communication as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing explicit ridicule, implicit humiliation, and reciprocal stigmatization. Together, these linguistic categories establish a comprehensive ethical framework for interpersonal communication.

B. Historical Context and Textual Coherence

Analysis of the historical background indicates that Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 was revealed in response to an incident involving derogatory nicknames among the Companions. According to the narration transmitted by al-Suyūṭī, as cited by Huda (2016), the Prophet Muhammad once addressed a Companion using a nickname that the individual disliked. The revelation subsequently prohibited believers from calling others by offensive names, thereby transforming a specific social incident into a universal ethical principle governing interpersonal communication.

Beyond its historical context, the verse exhibits strong coherence within the broader structure of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt. Shihab (2012) explains that the internal organization of the verse progresses systematically from the prohibition of ridicule (*yaskhar*), to indirect humiliation (*talmizū*), and finally to public labeling (*tanābazū*), before concluding with an invitation to repentance. This rhetorical progression illustrates an increasingly comprehensive regulation of communicative behavior.

Externally, the verse functions as the central ethical bridge within the social structure of the sūrah. Verses 9 and 10 establish reconciliation and brotherhood among believers, whereas verses 12 and 13 prohibit suspicion and backbiting while affirming equality based

solely on piety. Consequently, verse 11 serves as the practical ethical mechanism through which communal solidarity is preserved by regulating everyday communication.

The progressive relationship among these verses is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Progressive Ethical Structure of Q. al-Hujurāt (49):9–13

Verse	Main Theme	Function within the Ethical Progression
Q. 49:9	Reconciliation	Establishes external social peace
Q. 49:10	Brotherhood	Forms collective Muslim identity
Q. 49:11	Communication ethics	Regulates verbal interaction
Q. 49:12	Avoiding suspicion and backbiting	Extends ethics to internal attitudes
Q. 49:13	Equality based on piety	Defines the ultimate standard of human dignity

This structural arrangement demonstrates that communication ethics constitute an integral component of the Qur'anic project for establishing harmonious social relations rather than functioning as isolated moral instructions.

C. Key Findings: Qur'anic Ethical Values for Digital Communication

The textual analysis identifies five principal ethical values embedded in Q. al-Hujurāt (49):11. First, the prohibition of ridicule establishes respect for human dignity as the primary foundation of communication. Second, the use of *anfusakum* promotes self-reflection and communal solidarity by equating harm inflicted upon others with harm directed toward oneself. Third, the prohibition of reciprocal derogatory labeling functions as a preventive mechanism against conflict escalation. Fourth, the reminder that those being ridiculed may be "better" before Allah reinforces faith-based moral self-regulation by challenging subjective standards of superiority. Finally, the concluding call to repentance integrates communication ethics into the broader framework of Islamic moral accountability.

These five ethical principles collectively present communication not merely as the exchange of information but as a moral practice intended to preserve dignity, strengthen brotherhood, prevent hostility, cultivate self-awareness, and sustain social harmony.

Overall, the findings indicate that Q. al-Hujurāt (49):11 constructs a multidimensional ethical framework through semantic precision, historical contextualization, and coherent textual organization. The verse systematically regulates communication from lexical choice

to social consequences, providing an integrated foundation for addressing contemporary forms of harmful communication, including ridicule, cyberbullying, hate speech, and digital stigmatization. These findings provide the empirical basis for the following discussion on the relevance of Qur'anic communication ethics in responding to contemporary challenges within digital communication environments.

D. Qur'anic Communication Ethics as a Moral Framework for Digital Citizenship

The findings demonstrate that Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 constructs a comprehensive ethical framework for communication by prohibiting three escalating forms of verbal aggression: *yaskhar* (mockery), *talmizū* (ridicule or insult), and *tanābazū* (negative labeling). Rather than functioning as isolated prohibitions, these expressions represent successive layers of communication ethics that protect human dignity, preserve social cohesion, and cultivate moral responsibility. The semantic progression identified in this study indicates that the Qur'an addresses not only explicit verbal abuse but also subtle forms of symbolic violence that gradually undermine interpersonal trust and communal harmony. This confirms that Qur'anic communication ethics extend beyond linguistic correctness to encompass the ethical consequences of speech within society (Shihab, 2002; Ibn 'Āshūr, 2000; Al-Qurṭubī, 1964).

The first ethical value emerging from the prohibition of *lā yaskhar qawmun min qawmin* is the protection of human dignity. Quraish Shihab (2002) explains that *yaskhar* originates from the root *sakhira*, denoting ridicule motivated by assumptions of superiority over others. The phrase *'asā an yakūnū khayran minhum* challenges such assumptions by reminding believers that true human worth is determined only by God rather than by social status, ethnicity, wealth, or intellectual achievement. Consequently, mockery constitutes not merely a violation of interpersonal etiquette but an ethical transgression against the Qur'anic doctrine of human equality. This interpretation corresponds closely with contemporary Islamic ethical scholarship, which regards the preservation of dignity (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) as one of the essential objectives of Islamic law and social morality (Siddiqi, 1997; Saeed, 2013; Hefni, 2017).

From the perspective of digital communication, this principle acquires even greater significance. Cyberbullying commonly operates through ridicule directed at physical appearance, gender, ethnicity, disability, or religious identity. Such practices replicate precisely the communicative behavior prohibited by *lā yaskhar*. Contemporary research demonstrates that online humiliation frequently causes long-term psychological trauma, depression, social isolation, and diminished civic participation (Brown, 2017; UNESCO,

2023). Therefore, the Qur'anic prohibition against mockery should be understood as a preventive ethical mechanism designed to safeguard human dignity before communicative violence develops into systematic online harassment.

The second ethical principle derives from the expression *lā talmizū anfusakum*, which introduces the values of self-reflection (*muḥāsabah*) and communal solidarity. Ibn 'Āshūr (2000) interprets *lamz* as ridicule conveyed not only through explicit language but also through facial expressions, gestures, insinuations, or symbolic communication intended to humiliate another person. Significantly, the Qur'an employs the expression *anfusakum* ("yourselves") rather than "others," implying that insulting fellow believers is equivalent to insulting oneself because the Muslim community constitutes an integrated moral body. This rhetorical construction transforms communication from an individual activity into a collective ethical responsibility.

Such an understanding aligns with broader Islamic communication theory, which emphasizes that speech always carries social consequences beyond the immediate interaction (Burhanudin & Rojali, 2022; Rafidawati, 2024). Communication therefore becomes a vehicle for preserving solidarity rather than merely transmitting information. This perspective resonates with sociological analyses of religious communities, where language functions as a mechanism for maintaining collective identity and mutual trust (Hefner, 2000; Campbell, 2013). Instead of encouraging unrestricted self-expression, the Qur'an prioritizes relational accountability by framing communication as an act affecting the integrity of the entire community.

Within digital environments, the prohibition of *lamz* addresses contemporary phenomena such as digital gossip, doxxing, character assassination, malicious comments, and persistent surveillance of personal profiles. Unlike traditional face-to-face interactions, digital platforms enable subtle ridicule to circulate indefinitely through screenshots, reposts, and algorithmic amplification. Studies on online toxicity demonstrate that these indirect forms of humiliation frequently produce psychological harm comparable to explicit hate speech (ElSherief et al., 2018; Saud & Dewanti, 2025). Consequently, the Qur'anic command to avoid *lamz* provides an ethical foundation for resisting emerging forms of symbolic violence characteristic of contemporary social media ecosystems.

The third ethical value concerns conflict prevention through the prohibition *lā tanābazū bil-alqāb*. According to Al-Qurṭubī (1964), *tanābazū* signifies reciprocal exchanges of offensive labels that invite retaliation and escalate interpersonal hostility. Unlike *lamz*,

which may remain implicit, *tanābazū* involves public identification through degrading names or stereotypes. The Qur'an therefore condemns negative labeling because it institutionalizes prejudice, legitimizes discrimination, and transforms temporary disagreement into permanent social division. This interpretation is reinforced by Shihab (2002), who argues that derogatory labels eventually replace authentic personal identities and perpetuate hostility within society.

Modern scholarship on hate speech similarly identifies labeling as one of the principal mechanisms through which discrimination becomes normalized in digital environments (Brown, 2017; United Nations, 2021). Identity-based labels attached to religious, ethnic, racial, or political groups frequently initiate cycles of reciprocal hostility that extend beyond individual interactions. Research on social media polarization further demonstrates that repeated labeling contributes to echo chambers, ideological fragmentation, and declining democratic dialogue (Cinelli et al., 2021; Lim, 2017). Accordingly, the Qur'anic prohibition of *tanābazū* should be interpreted not only as an interpersonal ethic but also as a strategy for preventing structural polarization within digitally networked societies.

The fourth ethical principle emerging from the concluding statement *wa man lam yatub fa ulā'ika hum al-ẓālimūn* concerns moral accountability grounded in faith. Ibn Kathīr (1999) explains that repentance concludes the verse because verbal misconduct constitutes a spiritual injustice requiring ethical transformation rather than merely legal correction. Communication is therefore regulated not solely by external norms but by internal consciousness (*taqwā*) that recognizes every spoken or written word as morally accountable before God. This theological dimension distinguishes Qur'anic communication ethics from purely secular models of digital civility, which generally rely on legal sanctions or institutional moderation alone.

The concept of *taqwā* as an internal communication filter offers an important contribution to contemporary discussions of digital citizenship. Modern media literacy increasingly promotes reflective practices such as "think before you post" or "pause before you post" to reduce impulsive online behavior (Ribble, 2015). The Qur'anic perspective enriches these approaches by adding transcendental accountability, whereby ethical restraint arises not only from social expectations but also from spiritual consciousness. Such integration between digital literacy and religious ethics broadens existing frameworks for responsible online participation while remaining consistent with contextual approaches to Qur'anic interpretation that emphasize the enduring relevance of Qur'anic values across changing social environments (Saeed, 2013; Bunt, 2018).

Finally, the *munāsabah* structure of Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):9–13 reveals that communication ethics ultimately aim to establish *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) and social tolerance. Positioned between commands promoting reconciliation and prohibitions against suspicion, spying, and backbiting, verse 11 functions as the ethical center of a broader Qur'anic vision of harmonious communal life. Rather than regulating isolated linguistic acts, the verse constructs a comprehensive model of social interaction grounded in respect, empathy, and mutual recognition. Within increasingly polarized digital societies, these five interconnected ethical principles—human dignity, self-reflection, conflict prevention, moral accountability, and communal solidarity—provide a coherent normative framework for cultivating inclusive digital communication. Collectively, they demonstrate that Qur'anic communication ethics anticipate many contemporary challenges associated with cyberbullying, hate speech, identity politics, and online polarization, thereby offering enduring ethical guidance for responsible communication in the digital age (Hefner, 2000; Campbell, 2013; United Nations, 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11 provides a comprehensive ethical framework for communication that remains highly relevant to addressing the challenges of digital communication in the age of social media. Through a *tahḥīlī* interpretation, five interconnected ethical values were identified: respect for human dignity, self-reflection and communal solidarity, prevention of reciprocal conflict, faith-based moral accountability, and *ukhuwwah* grounded in tolerance. These values correspond directly to contemporary manifestations of online misconduct, including cyberbullying, digital gossip, identity-based hate speech, negative labeling, and social polarization. Rather than functioning merely as moral exhortations, the verse establishes a coherent system of communication ethics that integrates linguistic discipline, spiritual consciousness, and social responsibility, thereby positioning communication as an ethical act accountable before both society and God.

The principal contribution of this study lies in the development of a Qur'an-based ethical framework for digital communication derived from the semantic, historical, and contextual interpretation of Q. al-Ḥujurāt (49):11. Unlike previous studies that generally discuss Islamic communication ethics or hate speech separately, this research systematically connects the Qur'anic concepts of *yaskhar*, *talmizū*, and *tanābazū* with contemporary digital communication problems and demonstrates their applicability to online environments. By integrating classical Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary scholarship on digital ethics, hate

speech, and social media communication, this study extends the relevance of Qur'anic ethical principles beyond traditional interpersonal interaction toward responsible digital citizenship. The proposed framework also offers a normative foundation for Islamic digital literacy programs, religiously informed online communication guidelines, and educational initiatives promoting respectful and inclusive engagement in multicultural digital societies.

Despite these contributions, the study remains limited by its exclusive reliance on library research and its focus on a single Qur'anic passage interpreted primarily through the *tahḥīlī* method. Consequently, the proposed ethical framework has not yet been empirically examined within actual social media practices or among diverse Muslim online communities. Future research may expand the analysis by incorporating other Qur'anic verses concerning communication ethics, comparing interpretations across different exegetical traditions, or employing qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate how Qur'anic communication ethics influence digital behavior, online civic engagement, and strategies for countering hate speech across various social media platforms.

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