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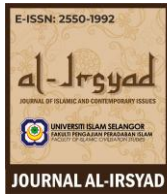
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603-8911 7167 +603-8925 4402
info@kuis.edu.my
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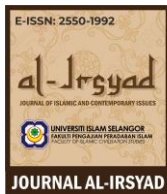
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The Quran as a Source of Ethical and Moral Guidance in Contemporary Society

[Al-Quran Sebagai Sumber Panduan Etika dan Moral dalam Masyarakat Kontemporari]

Haruna Babatunde Jaiyeoba  ^{*}, Thameem Ushama ², & Yusuff Jelili Amuda ³

¹International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART), International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.

²Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion, Abdulhamid Abusulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.

³College of Law, Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, SAUDI ARABIA.

* Corresponding Author: Dr. Haruna Babatunde Jaiyeoba. International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

✉ harunjaiyebab@iium.edu.my. ☎ (+60) 10-3645 054. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8264-9863>.

Keywords:

Contemporary Society, Justice, Compassion and Mercy, Honesty and Truthfulness, Generosity and Charity.

ABSTRACT

Contemporary societies are confronted with a multifaceted range of ethical and moral problems, many of which arise from a confluence of powerful societal forces, including terrorism, globalization, materialism, consumerism, and rapid changes in technology, and social structures. The Quran's moral teachings remain crucial in addressing these issues and providing relevant solutions for modern dilemmas. As such, this study explores the Quran as an important source of ethical and moral guidance for humanity in contemporary society. Content analysis was employed to identify key Quranic verses that have potential implications for ethical and moral conduct in modern society. Keywords such as "justice," "compassion and mercy," "honesty and truthfulness," "stewardship," "humility and modesty," and "generosity and charity" were used to locate relevant verses. A detailed examination of the Quranic verses and analysis of the findings reveal that the Quran indeed emphasizes the importance of several timeless principles, including justice, compassion, honesty, stewardship, humility, and generosity. The findings also demonstrate that the Quran offers a comprehensive framework for ethical conduct relevant to addressing issues such as injustice, dishonesty, environmental degradation, and social inequality in contemporary society. Therefore, this research recommends the incorporation of the Quran's ethical teachings into educational curricula, especially in Muslim-majority societies, to foster a generation grounded in the practical application of Islamic values in modern life.

Contribution: This study highlights the Quran's ethical teachings as vital for addressing modern challenges, recommending their integration into educational curricula to nurture individuals grounded in practical applications of Islamic values in modern life.

Kata Kunci:

Masyarakat Kontemporer, Keadilan, Belas Kasihan dan Belas Kasihan, Kejujuran dan Kebenaran, Kedermawanan dan Amal.

ABSTRAK

Masyarakat kontemporer berdepan dengan pelbagai masalah etika dan moral yang rumit, kebanyakannya berpunca daripada gabungan kuasa-kuasa sosial yang kuat, termasuk keganasan, globalisasi, materialisme, konsumerisme, serta perubahan pesat dalam teknologi, dinamik sosial, dan struktur politik. Tidak dapat dinafikan bahawa ajaran moral al-Quran tetap relevan dalam menawarkan penyelesaian terhadap isu-isu ini. Oleh itu, kajian ini meneroka al-Quran sebagai sumber penting panduan etika dan moral bagi umat manusia dalam masyarakat kontemporer. Bagi mencapai objektif ini, analisis kandungan digunakan untuk mengenal pasti ayat-ayat al-Quran utama yang berpotensi mempunyai implikasi terhadap tingkah laku etika dan moral dalam masyarakat moden. Kata kunci seperti keadilan, belas kasihan dan rahmat, kejujuran dan kebenaran, pemeliharaan, rendah hati dan kesederhanaan, serta murah hati dan sedekah, digunakan untuk menjejaki ayat-ayat berkaitan. Pemeriksaan terperinci terhadap ayat-ayat al-Quran dan analisis dapatan menunjukkan bahawa al-Quran sememangnya menekankan kepentingan beberapa prinsip yang kekal, termasuk keadilan, belas kasihan, kejujuran, pemeliharaan, kerendahan hati, dan kemurahan hati. Dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa al-Quran menawarkan kerangka kerja yang komprehensif untuk tingkah laku etika yang relevan dalam menangani isu-isu seperti ketidakadilan, ketidakjujuran, kemerosotan alam sekitar, dan ketidakseimbangan sosial dalam masyarakat kontemporer. Oleh itu, kajian ini mencadangkan penggabungan ajaran etika al-Quran ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan, terutamanya di negara-negara majoriti Muslim, untuk membina generasi yang berpegang kepada penerapan nilai-nilai Islam secara praktikal dalam kehidupan moden.

Sumbangan: Kajian ini menekankan ajaran etika al-Quran sebagai elemen penting untuk menangani cabaran moden, dengan mencadangkan integrasinya ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan bagi melahirkan individu yang mengamalkan nilai-nilai Islam secara praktikal dalam kehidupan moden.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Quran, known as Islamic Book of Divine Wisdom, is believed among Muslims as the sublime Word of Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Beyond referring to the Quran as a religious text, this Book also serves as a comprehensive guide for mankind in all aspects of life, including laws, beliefs, rituals, and ethical conduct (Djamdjuri & Kamilah, 2021). While proclaiming itself as a guide for all mankind, the Quran says, "It is an admonition for the whole world." (Al-Takwīr [81]: 27). [All Quran translations were retrieved from <https://quran.com/>]. This suggests that if implemented correctly, the teachings of the Quran can significantly

influence Muslims everyday life by helping them to avoid negative behaviours, such as excessive way of life, alcohol consumption, adultery, drug abuse, gambling, greed, jealousy, arrogance, and related others. Besides, it can also serve as guide for Muslims to be compassionate, trustworthy, respectful, conscious of environment, and subservient to the commandments of Allah (“The importance of the Quran”, 2024).

The Quran offers teachings and guidance for Muslims on the best ways to live their lives (Rahman, 1988). Given its importance, Yahya (2003), notes that an accurate understanding of the Quranic verses are essential for those who seek to be guided by it. Hence, this research specifically explores the Quran as an important source of ethical and moral guidance for humanity in contemporary society. As a revelatory text, the Quran offers not only spiritual insights, but also provide a comprehensive framework for ethical and moral guidelines to guide people live a just and righteous life. For centuries, the Quranic teachings as well as its practical guidelines have played crucial role in shaping the ethical landscape, behaviours, and societal norms of Muslim communities (Rahman, 2015). In a similar manner, the Quran’s moral guidance is undoubtedly relevant in the contemporary society, especially given the ethical challenges confronting the world today (Abdullah & Rozani, 2020).

Today, societies are faced with multifaceted range of ethical and moral problems mostly arise from a confluence of powerful societal forces, including terrorism, globalisation, materialism, consumerism, as well as rapid changes in technologies, social, and political dynamic (Gayen, 2023). In addition, issues such as the erosion of social cohesion, economic inequality, human rights violations, environmental degradation, and related concerns (García-castro et al., 2020) have not only become key points of discussion among researchers, practitioners, and government officials, but also demand thoughtful engagement from all moral traditions, particularly in guiding believers today. Although there are various ethical frameworks in existence, the Quran, which offers a much comprehensive time-tested set of ethical and moral principles, remains underexplored despite its widespread influence on over two billion Muslims. For example, several principles of the Quran, such as justice (*al-‘adl*), honesty (*al-sidq*), compassion (*al-rahmah*), stewardship (*al-khilāfah*), etc., provides everlasting framework that can guide both individuals and societies address modern days’ ethical and moral challenges (Saeed, 2006). Thus, there is a need to explore how the Quranic teachings can be applied to contemporary issues.

While efforts have been made to discuss how the Quran teachings can be relevant today, this research is unique and differ in its approach compared with the existing studies, such as the study of Djamdjuri and Kamilah (2021), explores the functions of the Quran as a blessing and guidance for mankind, especially for Muslims in this world; the study of Hasanpour and Rabbani (2021), investigate the potential of the Quran as a social reform tool; the study of Dahlan et al. (2022), analyse the interactions that have led to a deeper understanding of the messages of the Quran and their application in daily life in Indonesia; the study of Junaidi et al. (2023), examine the Quran’s paradigm of social justice that hold the potential to address the social justice challenges prevalent in the modern generation; the study of Mainiyo and Sule (2024), assess the impact of Quran’s moral excellence on the lives of Muslim society towards human moral development, etc.

Although the above studies indicate that the research on the relevance of the Quranic teachings to address today’s issues is not alien to the literature, extant studies have mainly offered partial explanations, especially with lack of study that specifically address how Quran can serve as an important source of ethical and moral guidance in this modern society. With over two billion Muslims in the world who look up to the Quran for moral decision-making and social behaviour, understanding how Quranic ethical teachings and principles are applied today can help provide insights into ideal values and practices of Muslim communities. This is particularly crucial given the globalised world we live in today where cross-cultural understanding has become necessary for fostering peace and cooperation. As noted by Yahya (2003), one of the important duties of every Muslim who has common sense, wisdom, and a conscience is to spread the message of Quran to all people, which this research intends to implement.

Meanwhile, this research is set out to enrich body of knowledge on the applicability of the Quran to the contemporary issues. By conducting this research, the researcher envisages that it will serve as a basis for empowering Muslims to confidently engage with contemporary issues, where both individuals and communities will be able to draw from their faith in building a just society that uphold religious values. It is also envisaged that this research will help resolve complex ethical dilemmas that the modern society faces by leveraging on the Quran timeless principles, such as honesty, compassion, justice, etc. which offer valuable insights for navigating these challenges. Additionally, the research can also inform contemporary ethical discourse with potential to inform policies on human rights, sustainability issues, and relevant others in such that provide a framework for more just and equitable societies.

Following this introductory section, the remainder of this research is structured as follows: Section Two discusses the Quranic foundations of ethics and morality and reviews relevant literature on the Quran as a source of ethical and moral guidance. Section Three explains the methodology adopted in conducting this study. Section Four analyses the findings from the Quran. Finally, Section Five concludes the research and offers recommendations based on the findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Quranic Foundations of Ethics and Morality*

This section discusses the Quranic foundations of ethics and morality. The Quran, and by extension the Hadith Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), are the two foundational sources of *Sharāh* (Islamic law) governing the belief framework, jurisprudence, theology, moral, ethics, thought, social order, life activities, economic and finance, politics, cultural bounds, moral principles, educational norms, intellectual codes, etc. (Jaiyeoba & Osmani, 2024; Khan, 2010). The Quran's teachings offer a comprehensive framework that promote compassion, justice, and harmony in human interactions with respect to its role in ethical and moral guidance. According to Yahya (2003), the Quran contains facts and accurate information and individuals who take it as their sole criteria in life are guided to Allah's Mercy. In essence, the Quran is an authentic guide to the mankind, especially to those seeking perfection and reality. This is evident in the following verses where Allah says:

{This is clear insight for mankind, and guidance and mercy for people who have firm faith}. (Al-Jāthiya [45]: 20)

{The Quran was revealed, as a guidance for humanity and clear proofs of guidance and criterion (between right and wrong)}. (Al-Baqarah [2]: 185)

By implications, the above verses confirm the Quran as a complete framework for life, guiding humanity not just on how to live righteously but as a source of comfort and mercy in times of difficulty, especially for those with firm faith and conviction in Allah. This implies that individuals who adopt the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as guide would have a better lifestyle compared with others (Mainiyo & Sule, 2024). By remembering that they live in accordance with what has been ordained by Allah, they will always respond to issues with peace of mind knowing that every occurring event is the destiny that Allah has chosen for them. Their behaviours and characters indicate their adherence to the Quranic values in such a way that demonstrate clear conscience and experience the spiritual peace has brought about upon them. To this effect, Allah says:

{O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord, and healing for what is in the breasts, and guidance and mercy for the believers}. (Yūnus [10]: 57)

In guiding people to the right path, the Quran lays down rules for what is right and what is wrong. Individuals who are committed to live by Allah's judgments based on its lay down rules and regulations, especially those who are inclined to true guidance, can easily find their way to the true path. This is made possible because the Quran can be easily understood by every sincere person given that its descriptions of moral perfection and judgments are extremely clear, intelligible, and easy (Yahya, 2003). Its timeless ethical and moral teachings, including honesty and integrity, justice, compassion, humility, and stewardship are robust framework for building strong character and just society in the contemporary world (Hasanpour & Rabbani, 2021; Rahman, 2015). Adhering to these Quranic values by Muslims are crucial for leading live of integrity, making significant contributions to societal well-being, and upholding moral excellence in all aspects of life.

While emphasising the Quran as an important guide for Muslims, Akhter and Rehman (2020), note that Islam, the religion of peace and security (Ushama, 2015), dislikes the act of dishonesty, deception, lies, corruption, betrayal, and deception. To this effect, Allah says in surah al-Baqarah [2] verse 42, "And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]." Islam intends a peaceful society by categorically pointed out the right and wrong paths and promised those who adopt the right path the ultimate rewards in this world and hereafter. This is because Islam envisages that the progress and prosperity of any society depend upon people's honesty and integrity, indicating that society will be peaceful when people living in it are honest. Akhter and Rehman discuss further that our contemporary societies are going to downfall with time because many of these societies have ignored the teachings of the Quran. As a result, unethical values, such as dishonesty, kidnapping, robbery, violence, lies, betrayal, murder, corruption, etc., are seen everywhere today. While this discussion ends this subsection, this section proceeds with the review of literature in this domain.

2.2 *Review of Literature on Quran as a Source of Ethical and Moral Guidance*

This section reviews pertinent literature on the Quran as a source of ethical and moral guidance. In an attempt to explain the functions of the Quran as a blessing and guidance for mankind and Muslims in particular,

Djamdjuri and Kamilah (2021) document that the Quran is a light that appears in the hearts of Muslims that lead them to the straight path. While illustrating how the Quran has served as a reference for large amount of human rights and ethical code of conduct, Rahman (2015), identify encompassing kindness (*ihsān*), justice (*‘adl*), faithfulness (*amānah*), covenant (*mīthāq*), modesty (*hayā’*), guarding women reputation (*hifdh al-‘ird*), virtues (*faḍā’il*), freedom (*hurriyah*), and human dignity (*karāmat al-insān*) as important attribute to promote moral and ethical behaviours for the common good of Muslim society. According to Rahman (2015), the people inability to differentiate between what is right and wrong is the main reason for the decline of ethical behaviours.

Ushama (2015), analyses whether Islam is a religion of ease or hardship from the perspective of the Quran and Sunnah, it was concluded that Islam has the feature of ease and elimination of hardship in its injunctions. Shehu Mainiyo et al. (2021), explore the role of the Quran and Hadith in character building by stressing on the Islamic moral values. They document that the Quran mandated Muslims to be their brothers’ keepers by possessing ethical characters, such as kindness, generous, and polite to one another. Good characters also include not telling lies, not backbiting, not spreading unverified and false news, not slandering, and not engaging in other unethical deeds. They noted that the Islamic ethical and moral values, as stipulated in the Quran, are vital for a just and healthy society. It was, therefore, concluded that abiding by these prescribed Islamic code conducts by Muslims would help create a peacefully society with total absence of unethical behaviours, such as murder, rape, theft, incest, prostitution, kidnaping, etc.

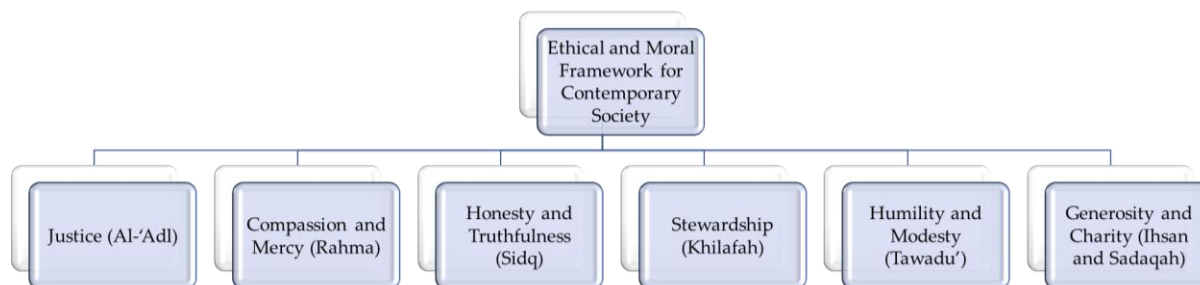
Yousefzadeh et al. (2023), advocate for the societal reform based on the Quran’s ethical guidelines given that the contemporary Muslim societies are faced with endemic corruptions. Their research shows that those ethical and moral behaviours emphasised in the Quran, such as enjoining good and forbidding evil, be soft and sympathetic in speaking, rejecting the agents of corruption, avoiding association with corrupters, creating a healthy environment, etc. are crucial for achieving a peaceful Muslim society. Azadboni (2014), argues that there are generally two basic kinds of perspective as to how the nature of the Quran as a guidance should be understood. Accordingly, the first perspective considers the Quran as divine revelation that cover everything that man needs in his life; the second perspective considers the Quranic teachings as a general divine guidance for mankind to enhance and activate human nature. Usman et al. (2023), explore the Quranic perspective on Islamic tolerance towards other faiths and belief systems. Their findings reveal that Allah instructs His servants to be fair and just to both Muslims and non-Muslims, regardless of their identity or origin, and to allow them the freedom to practice their faith.

Junaidi et al. (2023), examine the Quran’s paradigm of social justice, which holds the potential to address the social justice challenges prevalent in the modern generation. Using a qualitative research design and content analysis as the primary methodology, supported by descriptive and thematic analysis to present the gathered data, they identify fifteen Quranic verses intricately linked to the principles of social justice, including the dignified ranking of humanity, freedom of humanity, equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities, and respect for human rights. Abdullah and Rozani (2020), explicate the features of *Balda Tayyiba Wa Rabb Ghafūr* as a foundation for building a sustainable nation from a Quranic perspective. Their study reveals that achieving a sustainable nation requires an Islamic administration encompassing various aspects, including politics, a *Rabbānī* (divine) holistic education system, a fair economic system, and a sustainable environment. In summary, although the review of literature has indicated that studies have been conducted in this domain of research; however, specific studies that explore the Quran as an important source of ethical and moral guidance in the contemporary society are hard to find. In fact, our literature search suggests that this study is probably the first of its kind to comprehensively discuss the Quran as an important source of ethical and moral guidance in the contemporary society.

Based on the Quran and in line with the review of extant literature, Figure 1 presents the ethical and moral framework for contemporary society. The figure illustrates how the Quranic principles can support a balanced and harmonious society.

Figure 1

Ethical and Moral Framework for Contemporary Society



3. METHODOLOGY

This research explores the Quran as an important source of ethical and moral guidance in the contemporary society, particularly to expose mankind to relevant principles established by the Quran to ensure peaceful and harmonious society. Given the nature of this study, a qualitative approach by way of content analysis was deemed most appropriate for this research (Jaiyeoba, Jamaludin, Busari, & Amuda, 2024; Jaiyeoba & Azam, 2023; Junaidi et al., 2023). Among others, content analysis is considered most appropriate because it allows for the systematic examination of the Quranic text to identify key ethical and moral themes (Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017). In line with the adopted research approach, an inductive approach was used to uncover insights and patterns in the relevant verses related to contemporary ethical and moral issues. Besides, the primary source of data collection for this research is the Quran.

Furthermore, the design of this research follows three processes of review of literature, identification of relevant Quranic verses, and analysis of the Quranic verses including their implications to the contemporary society. At the first stage, review of literature was conducted to build strong theoretical foundation for this study as well as to develop ethical and moral framework for the contemporary society, as shown in Figure 1. At the second stage, an in-depth examination of the Quran was conducted to identify relevant Quranic verses that hold potential implications for ethical and moral conduct. To ensure widespread coverage of the Quran, verses with specific reference to ethical and moral principles were selected. At this stage, keywords, including “justice,” “compassion” and “mercy,” “honesty” and “truthfulness,” “stewardship,” “humility” and “modesty,” and “generosity” and “charity” were used to identify relevant verses.

At the final stage, identified verses were analysed. The specific verse was assessed to understand its prominence in the Quran’s ethical framework. Similarly, the context to which each specific theme appears was critically evaluated to discover its moral and ethical implications. This was done by analysing the historical context of each verse identified and its applicability to contemporary moral and ethical issues. Finally, the findings from the content analysis were interpreted in relation to how the Quran’s moral guidance can help address ethical issues faced by individuals and societies today.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE QURANIC ETHICAL AND MORAL PRINCIPLES

As earlier discussed, the Quran, as an ethical and moral guidance, is characterised by its universality and holistic approach to societal issues. The Quran offers a framework that is comprehensive enough to navigate ethical and moral challenges at both individual and community level. These attributes make the Quran a timeless source of ethical and moral values suitable for promoting social harmony, personal integrity, and global justice in contemporary society. As identified in Figure 1, the ethical and moral system of the Quran covers core principles and values that can guide individuals towards spiritual growth, human interactions, and good governance. Using content analysis, this section presents the findings from the Quran on the six themes believed to have implications for ethical issues faced by individuals and societies today. These six themes are justice, compassion and mercy, honesty and truthfulness, stewardship, humility and modesty, and generosity and charity.

4.1 Justice (*al-'Adl*)

Justice (*al-'adl*) is one of the most fundamental principles in Islam highly emphasised in the Quran. This concept represents an important value governing personal morality, societal interactions, governance, and legal systems. Semantically, justice refers to fairness, balance, and appropriate distribution of rights and responsibilities among people (Alikhani, 2023). Also, *Cambridge Dictionary* defines justice as the quality of being fair and right. Given the importance of Justice, believers are commanded to be just in their dealings with one another, whether on issues related to personal relationships or legal matters. As documented by Rahman (2015), justice is the basis of ruling and foundation of peaceful and harmonious society. Through justice, the weak feels strong and the powerful is not tempted by his power.

Having examined the Quran, it can be inferred that justice is crucial for the legitimacy of leadership and governance and have strong implications for ethical and moral guidance in contemporary society. Therefore, governments, institutions, and leaders in contemporary societies are morally obliged to set up justice systems that ensure equality before the law and treat everyone fairly, irrespective of gender, race, wealth, relationships, or social status. Any kind of injustice in the legal system, social discrimination, and economic disparities go against the principle of justice as established in the Quran. At the economic level, the Quran encourages fair distribution of resources in a manner that benefits the entire society and discourages the concentration of wealth among a few. As such, Islam emphasises on fair trading, charity (*ṣadaqah*), and the proper use of wealth for the welfare of everyone in the society. Also, the Quran demands fairness in all kind of relationships, whether personal, familial, or professional. Similarly, the Quran lays out strict guidelines for fairness in a family matter, such as inheritance or divorce. The Quran also commands justice, good conduct, and giving to relatives and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression. It offers guidelines for several other issues, like ethical behaviour in business transactions, equitable treatment of others, and respect for contracts. Some of the verses of the Quran that directly address the concept of justice are quoted as follows:

{Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing}. (Al-Nisā [4]: 58)

{O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted}. (Al-Nisā [4]: 135)

{Indeed, Allah commands justice, good conduct, and giving to relatives and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded}. (Al-Naḥl [16]: 90)

{And do not approach the orphan's property except in a way that is best until he reaches maturity. And give full measure and weight in justice. We do not charge any soul except with what it can bear. And when you speak (or judge), be just, even if it concerns a close relative, and the covenant of Allah fulfil. This has He instructed you that you may remember}. (Al-An'ām [6]: 152)

4.2 Compassion and Mercy (*al-Raḥmah*)

Compassion and mercy (*al-Raḥmah*) are other concepts deeply emphasised in the Quran and fundamental attribute of Allah, by His name *al-Raḥmān* (The Most Compassionate). *Rahma* is an encompassing Arabic term that covers compassion and mercy (Düzgün, 2017). While compassion emphasises the empathetic concern for others' wellbeing – both human and non-human, mercy advocates for the forgiveness and leniency towards one another (Mezrigui, 2015). Both compassion and mercy as Islamic concepts represent the true spirit of Islam and are central to the Islamic ethical and moral principles. They highlight the crucial aspect of the relationship between Allah and humanity, which are expected to be reflected in human behaviour toward others (Alharbi & Al Hadid, 2019).

The examination of the Quran reveals that compassion and mercy are the foundations of human interactions, especially given the prevalence of conflict, inequality, and division in contemporary society. The Quran teaches that being compassionate and merciful towards others would lead to more harmonious, empathetic, and peaceful coexistence. These principles are crucial for alleviating the suffering of vulnerable people. With deep sense of mercy and empathy, the needs of vulnerable people, such as the poor, refugees, or individuals affected by crises, can be easily addressed. Compassion and mercy are also crucial for interpersonal conduct. Being compassionate and merciful at the individual level entail being kind in daily interactions, forgiving

even when wronged, and showing empathy towards those in need, whether emotional, financial, or spiritual. Similarly, these concepts foster cooperation, trust, and respect in family, workplaces, or communities. Besides, while justice is essential, justice tempered with mercy is crucial for ensuring that rigid application of laws does not result in unnecessary harm. Some of the verses of the Quran that directly address the concepts of compassion and mercy are quoted as follows:

{And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds}. (Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 107)

{[...] Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy: that any of you who does wrong out of ignorance and then repents after that and corrects himself, indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful}. (Al-An'ām [6]: 54)

{The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy}. (Al-Hujurāt [49]: 10)

{It is by Allah's mercy that you are gentle to them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned you}. (Āli 'Imrān [3]: 159)

{And if you should count the favours of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful}. (Al-Nahl [16]: 18)

4.3 Honesty and Truthfulness (*al-Ṣidq*)

Honesty and truthfulness (*al-Ṣidq*) are essential moral values deeply emphasised in the Quran that have strong implications for ethical and moral guidance in contemporary society. *Sidq*, an Arabic term, refers to honesty and truthfulness. As important Islamic principles, honesty and truthfulness are applicable universally and highly praised virtues that promote integrity, righteousness, and justice (Nor 'Azzah et al., 2014). The concepts imply being truthful to Allah, to oneself, to other people, and to live in a manner that reflects integrity, loyalty, and transparency in all aspects of life. The Quran encourages Muslims to speak truthfully, live truthfully, act with integrity, and avoid deceit in all aspects of life, thereby promote accountability, justice, and moral uprightness. Similarly, the Quran also warns against false testimony and dishonesty (Fazeli, 2018). The concepts are the backbone of personal integrity, social harmony, and peaceful society.

The examination of the Quran reveals the importance of these concepts in building a strong ethical foundation for contemporary societies given the level of today's deception, dishonesty, and corruption. The importance of these Quranic concepts is magnified in today's complex societies. It can be inferred from the Quran that honesty and truthfulness have strong implications for building trust between individuals, institutions, and governments. Whether personal, societal, or professional, honesty and truthfulness are the foundation for strong relationships. Honesty and truthfulness are capable of fostering harmony and unity in contemporary society. Since unwholesome behaviours, such as lies, deception, corruption, fraud, betrayal, and dishonesty often lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and divisions, societies that value honesty and truthfulness will be able to bridge gaps between communities, reduces tension, and promotes social cohesion.

Honesty and truthfulness are crucial for upholding integrity among leaders, whether in business, politics, household, etc. While these concepts can help build confidence and respect, dishonesty can lead to societal unrest and instability. Thus, leaders are expected to always act with integrity. At the individual level, these concepts foster accountability because individuals who are truthful are more likely to acknowledge their mistakes, learn from them, and work towards self-improvement. With respect to business and economic dealings, being honest and truthful ensure ethical trading, fair pricing, and respect for contracts. Therefore, upholding honesty and truthfulness in business and financial transactions can help build positive reputation and long-term success. Some of the verses of the Quran that directly address the concepts of honesty and truthfulness are quoted as follows:

{And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]}. (Al-Baqarah [2]: 42)

{O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are truthful}. (Al-Tawbah [9]: 119)

{O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do}. (Al-Mā'idah [5]: 8)

{Woe to those who give less [than due], who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss}. (Al-Muṭaffifīn [83]: 1-3)

4.4 Stewardship (*al-Khilāfah*)

Stewardship (*al-Khilāfah*) is another concept emphasised in the Quran that has far-reaching implications for ethical and moral guidance in contemporary society. Stewardship specifically refers to human's role as vicegerents on Earth. This concept implies that humans are responsible for managing and caring for the resources, environment, and other forms of life on Earth in a manner that is just and sustainable. Stewardship advocates for sustainable practices in such that reduce harm to the environment. The concept of stewardship is encompassing as it stresses on environmental ethics, leadership integrity, accountability, and social justice (Qureshi et al., 2024). It encourages humans, as vicegerents of Allah on Earth, to act responsibly and sustainably, remembering that their actions have consequences in this life and in the Hereafter. It encourages humans to always reflect on their responsibilities towards the Earth and its inhabitants (Blankinship et al., 2024).

The examination of the Quran reveals that stewardship, as a foundational principle in Islam, has strong implications for contemporary society. The examination suggests that humans carry profound responsibility for environmental conservation and sustainability. It suggests that humans are trustees of the Earth, not absolute owners, who must protect and preserve the Earth for future generations. In contemporary society, this concept calls for ethical and collective actions on issues, such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and overconsumption. Besides, this concept also implies that resources are a trust from Allah to all humanity. As such, society has a duty of ensuring equitable distribution of available resources. Unethical practices, such as exploitation, hoarding, or monopolisation of resources, are against ethical responsibilities as outlined in the Quran. In modern society, fair access to essential resources, such as water, food, and healthcare, are essential for peaceful and social cohesion. Some of the verses of the Quran that directly address the concept of stewardship are quoted as follows:

{And it is He who has made you successors (*khalīfah*) upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful}. (Al-An'ām [6]: 165)

{Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successors (*mustakhlafīn*). For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be a great reward}. (Al-Ḥadīd [57]: 7)

{It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection}. (Al-Mulk [67]: 15)

{Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession (*khilāfah*) upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them [...]}. (Al-Nūr [24]: 55)

4.5 Humility and Modesty (*al-Tawāḍu'*)

Humility and modesty (*al-Tawāḍu'*) are essential Islamic principles highly emphasised in the Quran that provide strong foundation for ethical and moral behaviours in contemporary society. While humility entails acknowledging one's limitations and avoiding arrogance, modesty encourages dignity, decency, and simplicity in one's appearance, actions, and interactions with others (Khatami & Tawa, 1993). They entail individuals' ability to recognise their limitations, submit to the will of Allah, and treat others with kindness and respect. These concepts, which aim to shape the conduct of individuals with others, are ethical virtues of being humble and modest in behaviours and attitude. They promote a balanced behaviour and attitude that is neither arrogant nor self-deprecating. In a clear contrast to arrogance, pride, and materialism, the practice of humility and modesty often foster stronger relationships and deeper connection with others (Rahman, 2015).

The examination of the Quran reveals that these principles have strong implications for the contemporary society. Because these principles encourage treating others with respect, having mindset that is deeply rooted in humility and modesty can promote social cohesion and eliminate discrimination based on wealth, status, gender, or race. Besides, humility and modesty in leadership stress on service rather than authority. With this mindset, leaders are more likely to accept constructive feedback, listen to others, maintain spiritual consciousness, adopt ethical approach to governance and management, and prioritise the needs of their followers over their personal gain. By encouraging modest behaviour and appearance, these concepts remind

individuals to focus on their character and inner values rather than superficial displays of wealth or power. Some of the verses of the Quran that directly address the concepts of humility and modesty are quoted as follows:

{And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth humbly, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace}. (Al-Furqān [25]: 63)

{And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers}. (Al-Shu'arā' [26]: 215)

{Assuredly, Allah knows what they conceal and what they declare. Indeed, He does not like the arrogant}. (Al-Naḥl [16]: 23)

{And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like whoever is arrogant and boastful. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys}. (Luqmān [31]: 18-19)

4.6 Generosity and Charity (*al-Iḥsān* and *al-Ṣadaqah*)

Generosity (*al-Iḥsān*) and charity (*al-Ṣadaqah*) are crucial Islamic principles repeatedly emphasised in the Quran. Generosity is the act of doing good, a willingness to give help, the quality of going above and beyond what is required, and the condition of striving for excellence in one's actions performed with sincerity for the sake of Allah (Irfan et al., 2021). Charity, on the other hand, covers both obligatory and voluntary charity in Islam. While the obligatory form of charity is a religious duty for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria of wealth, voluntary form of charity is expended out of compassion, kindness, love, and a sense of duty to help those in need (Abba & Ngah, 2020). Generosity and charity are essential for promoting equity, empathy, and social cohesion. These principles encourage Muslims to focus on collective well-being and spiritual growth rather than being materialistic and self-centre.

The examination of the Quran indicates that these principles have serious implications for ethical and moral guidance in contemporary society and are crucial for building a more just, compassionate, harmonious, and equitable society. Given the prevalence of income disparity in contemporary society, these principles can help bridge the gap between the rich and the poor by encouraging the wealthy to support the less fortunate thereby providing immediate relief, alleviating poverty and hunger, and fostering economic balance in the society. Similarly, the acts of generosity and charity can strengthen community and social bonds since they promote interdependence and collective well-being as against individualism. As acts of worship in Islam, generosity and charity do not only benefit the recipient but help the giver grow spiritually. As means of purifying individual wealth, these acts can lead to personal fulfilment, contentment, and closer connection to Allah. Some of the verses of the Quran that directly address the concepts of generosity and charity are quoted as follows:

{The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed of grain that sprouts seven ears; in every ear, there are a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing}. (Al-Baqarah [2]: 261)

{And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction by refraining. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good}. (Al-Baqarah [2]: 195)

{Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but righteousness is in one who believes in Allah [...], and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves}. (Al-Baqarah [2]: 177)

{Zakat expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakat] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveller – an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise}. (Al-Tawbah [9]: 60)

In summary, this section presents the content analysis conducted to explore and understand the implications of the Quran for the ethical issues faced by individuals and societies today. The six themes identified and analysed in this study are justice, compassion and mercy, honesty and truthfulness, stewardship, humility and modesty, and generosity and charity. The findings reveal that justice is crucial for the legitimacy of leadership and governance, with significant implications for ethical and moral guidance in contemporary society. Compassion and mercy are highlighted as the foundations of human interactions, particularly in addressing the

prevalence of conflict, inequality, and division in today's world. Honesty and truthfulness are essential for building trust between individuals, institutions, and governments. Humanity's role as stewards of the earth underscores the profound responsibility for environmental conservation and sustainability. A mindset deeply rooted in humility and modesty can promote social cohesion and eliminate discrimination based on wealth, status, gender, or race. Finally, generosity and charity can help bridge the gap between the rich and the poor by encouraging the wealthy to support the less fortunate, thereby providing immediate relief, alleviating poverty and hunger, and fostering economic balance within society.

5. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, this study offers a significant contribution to the understanding of ethical and moral guidance as derived from the Quran. It provides a theoretical framework that integrates Quranic principles with contemporary ethical discourses. Through the analysed themes of justice, compassion and mercy, honesty and truthfulness, stewardship, humility and modesty, and generosity and charity, the present study has suggested a robust theoretical lens through which scholars and practitioners can interpret and address modern societal challenges. Interestingly, these theoretical implications extend across multiple disciplines, including ethics, sociology, environmental studies, leadership, and organisational behaviour.

Practically, this study provides a comprehensive means to address modern challenges in personal, organisational, and societal contexts. Specifically, the Quran's emphasis on justice serves as a foundational principle for promoting fairness and equality across all spheres of life. Thus, the Quranic teachings on justice can inspire policymakers to develop laws and practices that uphold the rights of all citizens, ensuring equity regardless of race, gender, or social status. Similarly, organisations can adopt these teachings to establish workplace policies that promote fair treatment, merit-based opportunities, and impartial conflict resolution. This underscores that justice is not only central to individual interactions but also crucial for building trust and legitimacy within institutions. In addition, the Quranic teachings on compassion and mercy resonate deeply in the context of social welfare and communal support. These Quranic teachings encourage both individuals and organisations to embody empathy, which can be reflected in programmes aimed at alleviating the struggles of the less privileged. For example, healthcare systems can adopt compassionate care models that prioritise the dignity of patients. Also, governments can design welfare policies that ensure vulnerable populations, such as refugees or those living in poverty, are treated with kindness and provided with opportunities for a better life.

Furthermore, the Quranic teachings on honesty and truthfulness are crucial for establishing trust and credibility in both personal and professional settings. These virtues can serve as the foundation for ethical business practices, where transparency in communication and transactions is paramount. By prioritising honesty and truthfulness, businesses can foster environments of accountability that ensure that decisions and actions are guided by integrity. In both governmental and business organisations, public trust can be rebuilt through the consistent application of these principles, thereby enhancing societal cohesion and stability. Moreover, the Quranic teachings on stewardship have profound implications for addressing contemporary environmental and sustainability challenges. Humanity's role as stewards of the earth underscores the importance of sustainable resource management and ecological conservation. Relevant entities, including individuals, businesses, governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), can draw upon these teachings to promote practices that mitigate environmental degradation, such as reducing carbon emissions, preserving biodiversity, and encouraging sustainable agriculture. Framing environmental stewardship as a moral and spiritual responsibility can inspire widespread community participation in creating a sustainable future.

Besides, the Quranic teachings on humility and modesty encourage individuals to remain grounded and respectful in their interactions with others. In a world increasingly marked by materialism and ego-driven behaviours, these teachings foster interpersonal relationships based on mutual understanding and cooperation. This highlights the need to integrate these principles into the curricula and initiatives of educational institutions and community programmes to combat arrogance and promote social harmony. Leaders in various institutions should embody humility by leading by example and prioritising the needs of their stakeholder's over personal gain. Finally, the Quranic teachings on generosity and charity are particularly crucial in addressing issues of poverty and inequality. Promoting a culture of giving at both personal and institutional levels not only helps redistribute wealth but also strengthens social bonds and collective responsibility. Organisations can draw upon these teachings to inspire greater contributions from individuals and corporations. It is important to note that the principle of generosity, as envisioned by the Quran, extends beyond monetary support to include time, skills, and emotional care, fostering a more compassionate and supportive society.

6. CONCLUSION

Today, societies face increasing social and ethical complexities, and the moral teachings of the Quran remain highly relevant in offering solutions. As such, this study has explored the Quran as an important source of ethical and moral guidance for humans in contemporary society. Using content analysis to identify key Quranic verses relevant to modern ethical and moral challenges, detailed examination of Quranic verses reveals that the Quran offers a comprehensive framework for ethical conducts relevant to contemporary society. The Quran emphasises the importance of several timeless principles, including justice, compassion and mercy, honesty and truthfulness, stewardship, humility and modesty, and generosity and charity, that can provide solutions to issue of injustice, dishonesty, environmental degradation, and social inequality, etc. in contemporary society. Given that these principles promote personal responsibility, collective well-being, and social cohesion, practicing them by individuals and societies can help address many contemporary challenges in a way that foster justice, harmony, and compassion in modern contexts.

This research, therefore, recommends that incorporating ethical teachings of the Quran into curricula of educational institutions, especially in the Muslim-majority societies, can help develop a generation of individuals grounded in practical applications of Islamic values in modern life. Similarly, individuals at the helm of affairs are encouraged to draw from the teachings of Quran to promote ethical leadership and governance. True practice of these values can enhance trust between leaders and citizens, foster social justice, and reduce corruption. Furthermore, individuals are encouraged to embody Quranic ethical principles in their personal lives. Principles in the areas of honesty and generosity are crucial for strengthening social bonds and improve societal harmony. This research also encourages the promotion of sustainable use of resources and protection of the environment from the perspective of the Quran and religious teachings, particularly to motivate institutions and individuals to take responsibility for the planet. Moreover, authors call on researchers and scholars in this domain to continue to explore how the Quran can help address contemporary moral issues, especially through interdisciplinary approaches. Such research could offer fresh insights into how Quranic teachings can be applied to address modern challenges. In addition, this research encourages future studies to examine the interdisciplinary exploration of Quranic ethics in areas such as environmental sustainability and governance. Future research could also incorporate quantitative data, such as survey findings on ethical issues within Muslim communities, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the Quran serves as a source of ethical and moral guidance in contemporary society. Future studies could also consider referencing ethical principles from other frameworks, such as Western philosophy or other religious traditions, to enrich and demonstrate the Quran's universal applicability.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Jaiyeoba, H. B. prepared the initial draft, while Ushama, T. and Amuda, Y. J. verified the accuracy of the Quranic verses and enhanced the manuscript.

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