Unveiling Ethical Foundations: Integrating Lessons from Quranic Narratives of 'Ad and Thamud into Built Environment Education

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Abstract: *In the field of built environment education, there is a growing recognition of the need for pedagogical methods that go beyond technical knowledge to include broader ethical and societal dimensions. Thus, this study explores the moral teachings within Quranic narratives, specifically focusing on the stories of 'Ad and Thamud, to extract insights relevant to the built environment. This initiative is expected to foster cultural sensitivity, enhance professional practice, and contribute to scholarly discourse in both built environment education and religious studies. Ultimately, by uncovering ethical foundations and incorporating timeless wisdom from Quranic narratives, this study aims to address critical gaps in pedagogical approaches and advance the field of built environment education. Hence, the study's objectives include examining these Quranic stories, extracting pertinent lessons, contextualizing them within built environment education, and formulating actionable recommendations. Using qualitative content analysis, Quranic verses related to the narratives of 'Ad and Thamud are analysed for themes relevant to urban planning, sustainability, environmental stewardship, social justice, and ethical leadership. These themes are synthesized to highlight their relevance within built environment education. The outcomes of this study offer a deeper understanding of the ethical and societal dimensions within the built environment discipline. Recommendations for educators and curriculum developers are provided to facilitate the seamless integration of these insights into educational frameworks.*

Keywords: Built Environment Education, Curriculum Integration, Ethical Dimensions, Qualitative Content Analysis, Quranic Narratives

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1. Introduction

The field of built environment education has traditionally focused on the development of practical skills and technical knowledge. However, there is a growing recognition that this approach is insufficient, as it fails to address the broader ethical and societal dimensions inherent in the design and construction of the built environment (Nakib, 2015). This shift towards a more holistic and culturally sensitive educational approach is critical, as the built environment has a profound impact on the lives of individuals and communities.

In response to this need, this study explores the moral teachings within Quranic narratives, specifically focusing on the stories of 'Ad and Thamud, to extract insights relevant to the field

of built environment education. This initiative is expected to foster cultural sensitivity, enhance professional practice, and contribute to scholarly discourse in both built environment education and religious studies.

The Quran, as the primary source of guidance for Muslims, provides a wealth of wisdom and ethical principles that can be applied to various aspects of life, including the built environment, according to Alkouatli (2018). The Islamic tradition emphasizes the importance of education, recognizing it as a fundamental right and a trust that must be fulfilled with the utmost care and responsibility (Nakib, 2015; Abdalla et al., 2022). By uncovering the ethical foundations and incorporating the timeless wisdom from Quranic narratives, this study aims to address critical gaps in pedagogical approaches and advance the field of built environment education (Mogra, 2017; Nor & Malim, 2014).

Ultimately, the objectives of this study are to examine these Quranic stories, extract pertinent lessons, contextualize them within built environment education, and formulate actionable recommendations.

1.1 The Narrative of 'Ad and Thamud in the Quran

The Quranic narrative of the ancient Arabian tribes of 'Ad and Thamud is a captivating tale that provides insight into the divine message and the consequences of moral corruption and unbelief. The Quran frequently references these tribes as a cautionary example for mankind, highlighting the importance of faith, obedience, and righteous conduct.

The stories of 'Ad and Thamud are interwoven throughout the Quran, with detailed accounts of their rise and downfall. The Quran portrays these tribes as prosperous and technologically advanced, yet they succumbed to arrogance, idolatry, and the rejection of the divine message brought by the prophets Hud and Salih, respectively (Amrulloh & Ikhwan, 2021). The Quran emphasizes the severe punishment that befell these tribes as a consequence of their disbelief and transgressions, serving as a stark reminder of the consequences of straying from the path of righteousness.

The narrative of 'Ad and Thamud in the Quran is not merely a historical account but a profound lesson for humanity. The Quran uses these stories to illustrate the importance of heeding the warnings of the prophets, maintaining a humble and righteous attitude, and submitting to the will of the Almighty. Through the vivid depictions of the rise and fall of these ancient civilizations, the Quran encourages believers to reflect on the transient nature of worldly power and the eternal significance of faith and moral integrity.

Furthermore, the Quranic narratives of 'Ad and Thamud are characterized by a remarkable stylistic approach. The Quran utilizes a captivating and compelling storytelling technique to convey its messages, drawing the reader or listener into the narrative and evoking a deeper level of understanding and reflection. The dialogues and descriptions in these narratives are carefully crafted to engage the audience and reinforce the Quran's themes of monotheism, divine power, and the consequences of moral corruption (Amrulloh & Ikhwan, 2021; Amrulloh et al., 2022). In conclusion, the narrative of 'Ad and Thamud in the Quran is a captivating and profound account that serves as a powerful lesson for humanity. Through these stories, the Quran emphasizes the importance of faith, obedience, and moral integrity, and the dire consequences of unbelief and transgression.

1.2 Integrating Ethical and Societal Dimensions into Built Environment Education: Lessons from Quranic Narratives

Built environment education has traditionally focused on technical and design-oriented aspects, often neglecting critical ethical and societal dimensions. Recognizing the significant impact of the built environment on communities and the environment, there is an increasing need to incorporate these broader considerations into architectural and urban planning curricula (Fatani et al., 2019).

Integrating cultural and religious perspectives can profoundly impact students' professional and personal development (Spínola, 2021). By exposing them to diverse values and belief systems, students can develop a holistic understanding of their role as built environment professionals, emphasizing the needs and well-being of the communities they serve. This approach fosters a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of the natural, built, and social environments, encouraging a more inclusive and sustainable mindset.

Pedagogical strategies for incorporating these broader aspects may involve case studies, design studios, and interdisciplinary collaborations that explore the intersection of ethical, societal, and environmental considerations. By embracing these perspectives, educators can empower students to become more responsible, compassionate, and socially conscious professionals, ultimately contributing to creating built environments that are aesthetically pleasing and aligned with the well-being of individuals and communities (Alkouatli, 2018; Abdalla et al., 2022; Skinner, 2018; Olweny, 2018).

The Quranic narratives highlight the importance of considering the well-being of individuals and communities, as well as preserving the natural world, in the design and construction of the built environment (Tayeb et al., 2015). By integrating the moral teachings found in these narratives, educators can develop a more holistic and socially responsible curriculum, empowering students to become ethical and socially conscious professionals (Skinner, 2018).
The principles that have shaped traditional Muslim architecture, such as balance, unity in diversity, and the organic interrelatedness of the created world, can serve as a foundation for incorporating Quranic values into built environment education. These principles, rooted in the Quran, can cultivate a deeper understanding of the ethical and societal dimensions of the built environment (Nakib, 2015).

By incorporating the ethical and societal dimensions found in Quranic narratives into the built environment education curriculum, students can gain a deeper understanding of their professional responsibilities and the potential impact of their work on individuals, communities, and the environment. This holistic approach can better prepare future architects, urban planners, and other built environment professionals to address the complex challenges facing society and contribute to the creation of sustainable, equitable, and socially conscious built environments.

1.3 The Role of Religious and Cultural Narratives in Shaping Sustainable Development Practices

Sustainable architectural practices have gained increasing importance in recent years as the world grapples with the pressing challenges of climate change and resource depletion (Rostami et al., 2014). Beyond the technical aspects of sustainable design, there is a growing recognition that the principles of sustainability are deeply rooted in the cultural and religious narratives of various civilizations.
The Quran, a sacred text central to the Islamic faith, contains numerous stories and parables that offer insights into the principles of sustainability. Two notable examples are the stories of the ancient tribes of 'Ad and Thamud, which provide a glimpse into the consequences of

unsustainable practices and the importance of living in harmony with the natural environment. The story of 'Ad, for instance, depicts a prosperous civilization that ultimately succumbed to its own hubris and disregard for the environment. Similarly, the tale of Thamud highlights the importance of balance and moderation in resource utilization, as the tribe's excessive exploitation of natural resources led to their downfall. These ancient narratives resonate with contemporary sustainable design principles, such as the emphasis on balance, unity in diversity, and the organic interrelatedness of the built environment with natural features like the sun, wind, and water (Skinner, 2018; Qadir & Zaman, 2019).

The comparative study of ancient and modern sustainable practices reveals the potential benefits of incorporating religious and cultural wisdom into sustainability education. By understanding the cultural and religious underpinnings of sustainability, architects and designers can develop a more holistic approach to sustainable design (Olweny, 2018; Salman, 2019; Alkhalidi, 2013). This approach not only fosters a deeper connection between the built environment and the natural world, but also promotes a sense of stewardship and responsibility towards the environment, which is a central tenet of many religious and cultural traditions. Furthermore, the integration of religious and cultural narratives into sustainability education can contribute to the preservation of local identity and vernacular architecture, as these traditions often encapsulate time-tested strategies for sustainable living (Salman, 2019).

In conclusion, past research has demonstrated the significant influence of religious and cultural narratives, particularly those found in the Quran, on the development of sustainable architectural practices. By incorporating these narratives into sustainability education, architects and designers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of the principles of sustainability, and ultimately contribute to the creation of a more sustainable built environment.

1.4 Cultural Sensitivity and Ethical Leadership in Built Environment Education: Insights from Quranic Teachings

The built environment professions, such as architecture, urban planning, and construction, play a crucial role in shaping the physical and social fabric of communities. However, these fields have long been criticized for their Western-centric and often insensitive approaches to cultural contexts, particularly in developing nations (Alkhalidi, 2013; Borucka & Macikowski, 2017).

The significance of cultural sensitivity and ethical leadership in built environment professions cannot be overstated. Professionals in these fields are tasked with designing and constructing spaces that must cater to the diverse needs, values, and traditions of the communities they serve. Failing to account for cultural nuances can lead to the creation of built environments that are disconnected from the local context, undermining the well-being and social cohesion of the inhabitants. Ethical leadership, on the other hand, is essential for guiding decision-making processes that prioritize the common good and long-term sustainability of the built environment.

Strategies for integrating these insights into built environment education may include the incorporation of case studies that examine the social and environmental consequences of culturally insensitive design, as well as the exploration of traditional Islamic architectural principles and their potential for sustainable, community-centric development (Skinner, 2018; Tayeb et al., 2015; Salman, 2019).

Ultimately, the integration of cultural sensitivity and ethical leadership within built environment education can contribute to the creation of built environments that are responsive

to local needs, respectful of cultural diversity, and aligned with the principles of sustainability and social justice.

2. Methodology

Research Design
This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach, specifically utilizing a deductive content analysis framework adapted from Elo and Kyngäs (2008). This method is suitable for systematically analysing textual data, allowing for the extraction and synthesis of relevant themes from Quranic narratives.

Data Collection
The primary data for this study consists of Quranic verses related to the narratives of 'Ad and Thamud. These verses are examined using two prominent Quranic commentaries: Tafhim al-Quran by Abul A'la Maududi and Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran by Sayyid Qutb. These sources provide in-depth exegesis and interpretations that are crucial for understanding the ethical and societal dimensions embedded in the narratives.
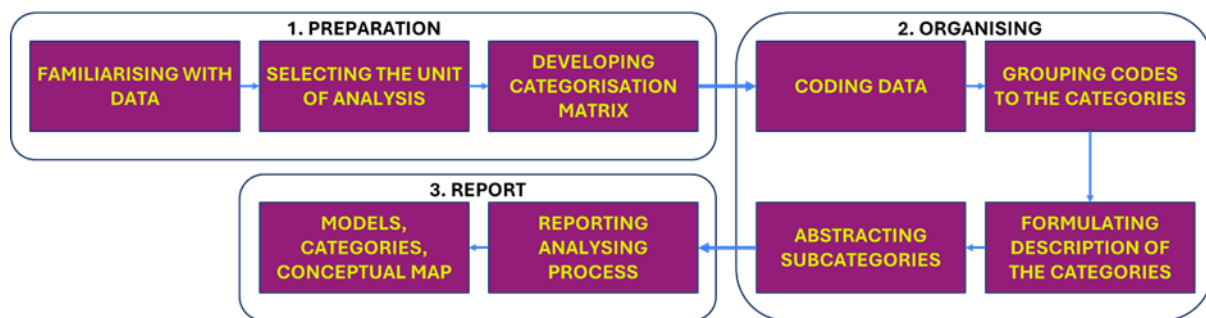

Figure 1: Deductive content analysis framework (adapted from Elo & Kyngäs (2008))

Data Analysis
The deductive content analysis framework by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) is selected for its structured approach to analysing qualitative data. This framework facilitates the categorization of data into predefined themes.

Coding Process
- Two raters/coders are involved in the coding process to ensure reliability and validity.
- The raters will independently code the contents of the selected Quranic commentaries according to the predefined themes: environmental stewardship, urban planning, sustainability, social justice, and ethical leadership.
- Any discrepancies between the raters will be discussed and resolved through consensus to maintain consistency in the coding process.

Theme Identification
- Verses related to the narratives of 'Ad and Thamud are extracted and analysed.
- The content from the commentaries is systematically coded to identify and categorize themes relevant to the study.
- The identified themes are synthesized to highlight their relevance within built environment education.

Presentation of Findings

The findings from the content analysis will be presented in a thematic analysis summary, illustrating the relationship between the identified themes and their implications for built environment education. This analysis will provide a clear and concise visual representation of the data, facilitating easier comprehension and application of the insights derived from the Quranic narratives.

By using this structured methodology, the study aims to systematically analyse and synthesize the ethical and societal teachings found in the Quranic narratives of 'Ad and Thamud, thereby contributing valuable insights to the field of built environment education.

3. Results and Discussions

The findings from the qualitative content analysis reveal several key themes from the Quranic narratives of 'Ad and Thamud that are highly relevant to built environment education. These themes, extracted and synthesized from the commentaries Tafhim al-Quran by Abul A'la Maududi and Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran by Sayyid Qutb, offer profound insights into ethical and societal dimensions crucial for the built environment discipline.

The findings and discussions, based on the themes, are as follows:
i. Theme: Environmental Stewardship
Verses   : Quran 7:65-72 (Story of 'Ad)
Insights   : Tafhim al-Quran: Emphasizes humility and care for the environment.
              : Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran: Highlights the consequences of environmental neglect.
Discussion: The Quranic narratives emphasize the importance of environmental stewardship, highlighting the consequences of environmental neglect and the necessity for humility and care in our interactions with the natural world (Skinner, 2018). By integrating these lessons on environmental stewardship, built environment education can encourage students to prioritize sustainability in their professional practices, ensuring that their designs and constructions do not harm the environment (Nakib, 2015).

ii. Theme: Urban Planning
Verses   : Quran 26:141-159 (Story of Thamud)
Insights   : Tafhim al-Quran: Discusses the proper use of resources and ethical planning.
              : Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran: Stresses the importance of responsible urban development.
Discussion : The Quranic narratives also provide valuable insights into the ethical dimensions of urban planning, stressing the proper use of resources and the importance of responsible urban development (Skinner, 2018). This theme promotes ethical decision-making in urban planning, highlighting the necessity for planners to consider the ethical implications of their work and ensuring that urban development is carried out responsibly and sustainably (Aziz, 2021).

iii. Theme: Sustainability
Verses   : Quran 7:73-79 (Story of Thamud)
Insights   : Tafhim al-Quran: Focuses on long-term resource management.
              : Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran: Warns against resource exploitation.
Discussion: The emphasis on sustainability in the Quranic narratives is vital for integrating principles of long-term resource management into the built environment curriculum. The warnings against resource exploitation and the focus on long-term resource management prepare students to think critically about resource use and to develop solutions that prevent exploitation and ensure the longevity of resources (Skinner, 2018).
iv. Theme: Social Justice

Verses   : Quran 41:15 (Story of 'Ad)
Insights   : Tafhim al-Quran: Advocates for justice and equality in society.
             : Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran: Condemns arrogance and social inequality.

Discussion: The Quranic narratives also highlight the importance of social justice, emphasizing the ethical responsibilities of those in positions of power and the need to ensure that the benefits of development are equitably distributed (Monaziroh & Choirudin, 2021). This theme encourages built environment professionals to consider the social implications of their work, fostering a sense of moral obligation and a commitment to serving the common good (Khalil, 2019; Halstead, 2007; Mohamad et al., 2022).

v. Theme: Ethical Leadership

Verses   : Quran 26:123-140 (Story of 'Ad)
Insights   : Tafhim al-Quran: Highlights the role of leaders in maintaining justice.
             : Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran: Emphasizes accountability and ethical governance.

Discussion: The Quranic story of the 'Ad people, as highlighted in Tafhim al-Quran, underscores the pivotal role of leaders in maintaining justice and ethical governance (Dini, 2020). The Tafsir fi Zilal al-Quran further emphasizes the need for accountability and ethical responsibility among those in positions of authority (Dini, 2020). These principles are particularly relevant in the built environment, where decisions made by professionals can have far-reaching implications on the well-being of communities. Ethical leadership is not just about individual behaviour, but also about cultivating an organizational culture that prioritizes integrity, transparency, and the collective good (Antunez et al., 2023). Leaders in the built environment must be able to effectively communicate their values and vision, while also fostering a collaborative environment that encourages ethical decision-making (Dini, 2020).

Integrating these lessons into built environment education can be addressed in three main areas: curriculum development (Barbiero et al., 2021), pedagogical strategies (Martínez-Ramos et al., 2021) and professional development (Ellison, 2004; Kheswa et al., 2014).

a. Curriculum Development

i. Integration of Islamic values such as *amanah* (trust), *taqwa* (God-consciousness), '*adl* (justice), and *rahmah* (compassion) into the curriculum as foundational principles. This can be achieved by embedding Quranic narratives as case studies that illustrate the consequences of neglecting these values in urban planning, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.

ii. Develop thematic modules around environmental stewardship, urban planning, sustainability, social justice, and ethical leadership. These modules should include Quranic verses, Hadith, and Islamic historical examples to highlight practical applications of these values.

iii. Align learning outcomes with both technical competencies and spiritual objectives, such as fostering *taqwa* in decision-making and encouraging *ihsan* (excellence) in design and construction practices.

iv. Example: A course titled "Ethical Sustainability in the Built Environment" with components on Quranic narratives, Islamic values, and modern sustainability practices.

b. Pedagogical Strategies

i. Design assignments and projects that require students to apply Islamic principles. For example, projects on eco-friendly design can emphasize *shukr* (gratitude) for natural resources and *zuhd* (moderation) in their use. Urban planning projects can focus on achieving *maslahah* (public welfare) and '*adl* (justice) by addressing community needs.

ii. Encourage critical discussions on Quranic narratives and their relevance to modern challenges. Use reflective journaling to help students explore how values such as *tawakkul* (reliance on Allah) and *amanah* guide their professional practices.

iii. Present students with real-life challenges, such as designing sustainable housing for low-income communities, and require them to apply values like *rahmah* (compassion) and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) in their solutions.

iv. Collaborate with other fields (e.g., Islamic studies, environmental science) to provide a holistic perspective, allowing students to see how Islamic values permeate various aspects of professional and personal life.

v. Example: Assign students a project to design a green mosque, incorporating *taqwa* and *shukr* by using renewable energy and sustainable materials.

c. Professional Development

i. Organize professional development workshops for educators to deepen their understanding of Islamic values and how these can be integrated into teaching and learning. Themes could include ethical leadership, *taqwa* in resource management, and *'adl* in urban planning.

ii. Develop mentorship programs where students and professionals are paired with experts who model ethical and value-driven practices in the built environment. This fosters shura (consultation) and *amanah* in professional relationships.

iii. Offer training on Islamic principles of leadership, such as *qist* (fairness) and *rahmah* (compassion), for future leaders in architecture, urban planning, and sustainability. This can include role-playing exercises and leadership simulations.

iv. Encourage professionals to engage in lifelong learning about sustainable practices, resource management, and social justice from an Islamic perspective, fostering ongoing *ihsan* (excellence) and *taqwa*.

v. Example: Offer seminars for educators and industry professionals on "Embedding Islamic Values in Built Environment Practices.

By embedding these Islamic values—*tawakkul*, *ihsan*, *maslahah*, *shukr*, *zuhd*, *taqwa*, *'adl*, *rahmah*, *ukhuwwah*, *amanah*, and *qist*—into the educational framework, students not only gain technical and professional expertise but also internalize a deeply rooted ethical and spiritual approach. This holistic integration ensures that their contributions to the built environment reflect Islamic principles of sustainability, justice, and compassion, serving both the present and future generations.

4. Conclusion

This study has successfully explored the moral teachings within the Quranic narratives of 'Ad and Thamud to extract insights relevant to the field of built environment education. By utilizing a deductive content analysis framework adapted from Elo and Kyngäs (2008), key themes of environmental stewardship, urban planning, sustainability, social justice, and ethical leadership were identified and synthesized from the verses and commentaries.

The summary of the key findings are as follows:

i. **Environmental Stewardship:** The narratives emphasize humility and care for the environment, underscoring the importance of sustainable design and planning. This prepares students to integrate sustainability into their professional practices (Nakib, 2015; Alkouatli, 2018; Fatani et al., 2019).

ii. **Urban Planning:** The stories highlight the proper use of resources and ethical planning, promoting responsible urban development. This encourages future professionals to consider the ethical implications of their work (Nakib, 2015; Fatani et al., 2019; Tayeb et al., 2015).

iii. **Sustainability:** Long-term resource management and warnings against exploitation highlight the necessity of integrating sustainability principles into educational curricula, preparing students to think critically about resource use (Alkouatli, 2018; Skinner, 2018; Rostami et al., 2014).

iv. **Social Justice:** The narratives advocate for justice and equality, condemning arrogance and social inequality. This theme enhances students' understanding of social justice in urban contexts, ensuring their work contributes to equitable and just communities (Nakib, 2015; Alkouatli, 2018; Nor & Malim, 2014; Skinner, 2018).

v. **Ethical Leadership:** Emphasizing the role of leaders in maintaining justice and ethical governance, the narratives prepare students to assume leadership roles with a strong sense of accountability and ethical responsibility (Alkouatli, 2018; Mogra, 2017; Dini, 2020; Antunez et al., 2023).

The findings demonstrate that incorporating ethical and societal dimensions derived from Quranic narratives into built environment education can significantly enhance professional practice and foster cultural sensitivity. This approach contributes to a more holistic, responsible, and culturally sensitive educational framework, addressing critical gaps in current pedagogical approaches (Nakib, 2015; Alkouatli, 2018; Fatani et al., 2019; Skinner, 2018).

Hence, the study suggested for the improvement of the current curriculum of built environment study through the following recommendations:

i. **Curriculum Development:** Integrate themes of environmental stewardship, urban planning, sustainability, social justice, and ethical leadership into the built environment curriculum (Nakib, 2015; Alkouatli, 2018).

ii. **Pedagogical Strategies:** Employ case studies, design studios, and interdisciplinary collaborations to explore the intersection of ethical, societal, and environmental considerations (Nakib, 2015; Alkouatli, 2018).

iii. **Professional Development:** Encourage educators and curriculum developers to incorporate these ethical and societal dimensions into their teaching methods, ensuring that future professionals are well-equipped to address the complex challenges of the built environment (Nakib, 2015; Alkouatli, 2018; Fatani et al., 2019).

By uncovering the ethical foundations and timeless wisdom from the Quranic narratives of 'Ad and Thamud, this study advances the field of built environment education. It offers a deeper understanding of the ethical and societal dimensions within the discipline and provides actionable recommendations for integrating these insights into educational frameworks. This holistic approach ensures that future built environment professionals are not only technically proficient but also culturally sensitive and ethically responsible, ultimately contributing to the creation of sustainable, equitable, and socially conscious built environments.

Acknowledgements

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