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The Ethics of Community: A Value-Based Exegesis of Surah Al-Hujurat

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ABSTRACT

Background: Surah Al-Hujurat is widely recognised as a foundational chapter of Islamic social ethics, yet many interpretations emphasise legal rulings rather than its underlying moral architecture. **Objective:** This study aims to construct a value-based exegesis that identifies the core ethical principles embedded in the surah as a framework for community formation. **Method:** Employing thematic and deductive textual analysis, the study systematically examines the verses by organising them into three relational dimensions: human interaction with divine authority, intra-community relations among believers, and engagement with broader humanity. **Results:** The findings demonstrate that the surah articulates a coherent ethical system grounded in respectful communication, the verification of information, conflict mediation, the protection of dignity, and the safeguarding of privacy. It further establishes piety as the sole criterion of human worth, transcending lineage, ethnicity, and social status. **Conclusion:** Surah Al-Hujurat offers a comprehensive and enduring moral blueprint for cultivating just and cohesive societies. **Contribution:** This study advances a structured model of value-based exegesis that enriches contemporary Islamic ethical theory and communal discourse. **Originality/Value:** This study bridges a hermeneutical and axiological gap in the field of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and contemporary Islamic social ethics by synthesizing the textual discourse on reconstructing the moral architecture of Surah Al-Hujurat across three relational dimensions (divine authority, intra-faith fraternity, and universal human engagement), moving beyond prevailing legalistic and normative paradigms. By mapping existing thematic and conceptual gaps, this research serves as a strategic reference and contributes to the development of a value-centered conceptual framework for community building and outlines future research trajectories in applied Qur'anic hermeneutics for pluralistic societies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an occupies a foundational position in Islamic intellectual and spiritual tradition, functioning not solely as a source of theological doctrine but as a comprehensive framework for regulating human existence at both the personal and collective levels (Al-Ahdab, 2022). Its guidance extends beyond ritual prescriptions to encompass moral psychology, social interaction, governance, and the cultivation of justice. Among its chapters, Surah Al Hujurat is among the most concentrated articulations of Qur'anic social ethics (Al-Azmeh, 1993). The surah systematically addresses manners of speech, authority relations, conflict resolution, social suspicion, dignity, and human equality, thereby outlining the essential norms required to sustain a morally coherent and spiritually conscious community or ummah. In contemporary contexts characterized by digital misinformation, polarised identities, weakened trust, and fragile social cohesion, the ethical architecture embedded in this chapter becomes especially significant (Al-

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Attas, 1993). Its directives offer not merely moral exhortation but a structured framework for rebuilding communal integrity grounded in revelation.

Within Islamic scholarship, Surah Al Hujurat has long been recognised for its ethical density. Classical exegetes such as Al-Ṭabarī and Al-Qurṭubī carefully documented the historical circumstances of revelation, linguistic nuances, and legal implications of its verses (Al-Bukhārī, 2001). Their works provide indispensable philological and juridical foundations. In the modern period, thinkers like Fazlur Rahman emphasised ethical dynamism and moral coherence in Qur'anic interpretation, while Toshihiko Izutsu contributed semantic analyses that illuminated the Qur'an's moral vocabulary (Al-Dimasyqi, 2016). Although these contributions are methodologically rich, most studies remain either historically descriptive, legally analytical, or thematically selective (Allen, 2013). The comprehensive integration of Surah Al Hujurat's moral directives into a unified ethical system for contemporary community formation remains underdeveloped.

The present research is situated at the intersection of Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic ethics, and Islamic Education (al-Maraghi, 2002). It responds to the urgent need to articulate Islam's social teachings through a value-centred hermeneutical approach capable of addressing present-day communal challenges. Much of contemporary Islamic discourse continues to emphasise regulatory compliance over moral internalisation, resulting in fragmented pedagogical applications (Al-Qaradawi, 2010). Surah Al Hujurat is frequently taught as a collection of isolated prohibitions such as avoiding suspicion, refraining from backbiting, and verifying information without synthesising these instructions into a coherent ethical architecture (al-Qurtubi, 2014). This fragmentation obscures the surah's systematic progression and weakens its transformative potential in educational settings.

A significant conceptual gap, therefore, exists between the Qur'anic ideal of a morally refined, epistemically responsible, and socially dignified community and the reductionist ways in which these teachings are often operationalised. The surah presents a carefully sequenced model. It begins by regulating conduct toward divine authority and prophetic leadership. It then restructures internal community relationships through verified communication and conflict reconciliation (Al-Qurṭubī, 1964). It culminates in the declaration of universal human equality grounded in moral consciousness or taqwa. The intrinsic logical relationship between these stages, linking vertical devotion to horizontal ethics, has not been sufficiently articulated as a unified program for community construction (Al-Qushayri, 2018). Without this integration, the transformative depth of the text remains underutilised.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Islamic Education by constructing a textually grounded model of value education or tarbiyah al qiyam derived directly from Surah Al Hujurat's ethical logic (Al-Qushayri, 2018), and Thabari (1999) and Trimingham (1998). Rather than presenting values abstractly, it roots them in revealed structure, demonstrating how epistemic humility, responsible speech, social verification, conflict mediation, and ontological equality function as interconnected principles (Al-Rūmī, 1997). Practically, the framework developed herein provides educators, community leaders, and policymakers with a systematic guide for fostering ethical literacy, social trust, and dignified interaction (Al-Sya'rawi, 2007). For Islamic counselling and spiritual guidance, it offers a Qur'anic psychology of communal life by identifying internal moral pathologies such as suspicion, mockery, and back-biting as foundational causes of social fracture (Shihab, 2004).

Recent developments in Qur'anic studies increasingly employ thematic and hermeneutical methodologies to uncover structural coherence and contemporary relevance (Al-Sya'rawi, 2007). Simultaneously, global educational discourse highlights the necessity of character education and value-based curricula as safeguards against social fragmentation (Al-Ṭabarī, 2000). However, the convergence of these two trajectories, classical revelation and modern value theory, remains underexplored in a systematic manner (Al-Thabathaba'I, 1987). This research bridges that divide by applying a value-based exegetical methodology that reads Surah Al Hujurat as an integrated ethical constitution for community life rather than as a set of discrete moral commands.

The novelty of this study lies in its methodological orientation. Instead of merely cataloguing injunctions, it deduces the animating ethical principles embedded within them. It organises these principles into a graduated model of communal formation that moves from the individual conscience outward to societal structure. By mapping the surah's internal progression, the study demonstrates how vertical ethics, involving the relationship between God and human beings, generate and sustain horizontal ethics, revealing their inseparability within Qur'anic moral reasoning.

This study aims to analyse the ethical values in Surah Al-Hujurat of the Qur'an through a thematic and value-based approach, in order to develop an integrated ethical framework for community building and Islamic education that supports social harmony, ethical communication, and sustainable moral development.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design based on textual analysis to examine the ethical values embedded in Surah Al-Hujurat. Using a deductive and thematic approach, the analysis begins with established concepts of Islamic social ethics and systematically interprets the verses of Surah Al-Hujurat to identify relevant moral principles. The verses are then organised into thematic categories that reflect key relational dimensions: the relationship between human beings and divine authority, intra-community relations among believers, and interactions with broader humanity. Through this process, the study extracts and systematises core ethical values, such as respectful communication, verification of information, conflict mediation, protection of dignity, and recognition of piety as the fundamental measure of human worth, thereby constructing a coherent value-based interpretation of the surah's guidance for community life.

2.2 Research Object

This is a library-based research study that analyses textual sources. The primary research object is the 18 verses of Surah Al-Hujurat. The supporting data are drawn from classical and modern exegetical works. The research was conducted in 2024. The primary subject is the text of Surah Al-Hujurat itself. The sample for supporting analysis includes selected classical commentaries (tafasir) such as those by Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr, as well as relevant modern academic works on Qur'anic ethics and Islamic social philosophy.

2.3 Data Collection

The main instrument is content analysis guided by a value-extraction framework. Data collection involved: 1) Close, repeated reading of the surah in Arabic with translation. 2) Systematic review of selected exegetical literature to understand traditional interpretations and contexts. 3) Thematic coding of verses to identify explicit and implicit ethical directives and principles.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data was analysed using qualitative content analysis. The process involved: 1) Categorisation: Grouping verses into thematic clusters (e.g., conduct with authority, intra-community relations). 2) Deductive Analysis: For each verse cluster, deducing the overarching ethical value(s) being promoted (e.g., from a command to verify news, the value of intellectual responsibility is extracted). 3) Synthesis: Integrating the deduced values into a coherent, progressive framework that shows their interrelationships and collective purpose.

2.5 Procedures

The procedure followed these stages: 1) Problem identification and literature review. 2) Development of an analytical framework focused on value extraction. 3) Sequential analysis of Surah Al-Hujurat verse-by-verse and thematically. 4) Consultation of exegetical sources to validate and contextualise findings. 5) Synthesis of results into the proposed ethical model. 6) Discussion of implications and conclusions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The ethical teachings of Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat can be organized into three interconnected relational axes: the relationship with divine authority, the relationship within the believing community, and the relationship with humanity at large. This structure highlights how the surah provides ethical guidance that regulates devotion to God, promotes harmony and responsible conduct among believers, and encourages respect for human dignity and diversity in broader social interactions.

3.1.1 Vertical Ethics: Conduct Before God and His Messenger (Verses 1-5)

The surah opens by regulating the believers' demeanour towards God and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), establishing a hierarchy of respect essential for receiving guidance.

1) Epistemic Humility and Respect: Believers are commanded not to precede God and His Messenger in judgment (49:1). This instils the value of epistemic humility, recognising that divine revelation and prophetic authority supersede personal opinion (Ibn Kathīr, n.d.). It fosters a community grounded in a shared source of truth.

2) Deference and Lowered Voices: The instruction to not raise voices above the Prophet's and to speak to him respectfully (49:2-3) transcends the person of the Prophet to embody the value of deference to legitimate authority and dignified discourse. It protects the sanctity of the communication channel through which divine law is delivered.
3) Verification and Responsible Communication: A profound ethical injunction follows: to verify information from dubious sources to avoid unknowingly harming people and becoming regretful (49:6). This establishes the core Islamic values of truth-seeking, intellectual responsibility, and the grave ethical weight of speech, directly combating slander and misinformation.

3.1.2 Horizontal Ethics I: Internal Community Relations (Verses 7-12)

Here, the focus shifts to intra-community relations, constructing a framework for peace and mutual respect.

1) Divine Grace and Fraternal Love: The reminder that God's mercy has united the believers' hearts, transforming past enmity into brotherhood (49:7, 10), posits *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) as both a divine blessing and a binding ethical obligation. Peacemaking (*iṣlāḥ*) between believing parties is declared a supreme duty (49:9).
2) Prohibition of Derision, Defamation, and Suspicion: Verses 11-12 deliver a powerful trilogy against social toxins. Mockery, defamatory nicknames, and negative assumption (*ẓann*) are strictly forbidden. These prohibitions uphold the values of human dignity, the preservation of honour, and the principle of giving the benefit of the doubt. As the Prophet (PBUH) warned, "Beware of suspicion, for it is the falsest of speech" (Al-Bukhārī, 6064). These rules aim to purify the social environment from the psychological roots of conflict.
3) Privacy and the Sanctity of the Individual: The condemnation of spying and backbiting (49:12) establishes the ethical value of privacy and the inviolability of personal reputation. The famous analogy of backbiting to eating a brother's dead flesh viscerally communicates its repugnance, framing it as a violation of the communal body.

3.2.3 Horizontal Ethics II: The Universal Criterion and Human Brotherhood (Verses 13)

The surah reaches its ethical climax in verse 13, which expands the community's horizon to all of humanity.

1) Ontological Equality and the Purpose of Diversity: The declaration of a single human origin ("from a male and a female") establishes the ontological equality of all people. Diversity into "nations and tribes" is presented not as a basis for hierarchy but for *li-taʿārafū*" that you may know one another" (49:13). This frames diversity as a divine sign intended for mutual recognition, exchange, and cooperation, not conflict (Al-Qurṭubī, 1964).
2) Righteousness as the Sole Criterion: The verse dismantles all parochial standards of worth: "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (49:13). This establishes *taqwā* (God-consciousness and righteous conduct) as the only valid measure of individual merit, radically challenging prejudices based on ethnicity, lineage, wealth, or power. It is the cornerstone of an ethical meritocracy.

The analysis demonstrates that Surah Al Hujurat constructs a coherent, three-tiered ethical architecture that unfolds progressively across its verses (Al-Zuhaily, 2009). Rather than presenting isolated moral injunctions, the surah organises its guidance into an integrated system that begins with the moral formation of the individual, advances toward the structuring of intra-community relations, and culminates in a universal ethic governing humanity at large. This layered structure confirms that the surah is not merely reactive to specific incidents but programmatic in its ethical vision.

The first tier, comprising verses 1-5, establishes what may be termed vertical ethics. These verses regulate the believer's posture before divine authority and prophetic guidance. The analysis identifies core values embedded in this section, including epistemic humility, deference to legitimate authority, dignified discourse, disciplined speech, truth-seeking, and intellectual responsibility. The prohibition against advancing opinions ahead of divine and prophetic instruction cultivates cognitive restraint, while the injunction against raising one's voice instils communicative refinement and reverence. Together, these directives shape a morally attentive self whose knowledge claims and expressions are governed by humility and accountability. The findings indicate that without this foundational inner discipline, subsequent social ethics would lack spiritual grounding.

The second tier, covering verses 7-12, develops horizontal ethics within the believing community. Here, the surah transitions from the formation of the individual conscience to the regulation of social interaction. The extracted values include fraternal solidarity (ukhuwwah), proactive reconciliation (islah), preservation of personal dignity, prohibition of mockery and negative suspicion, verification of information, and respect for privacy. The directive to verify news before acting upon it establishes an epistemology of responsibility that prevents injustice born of misinformation. The prohibition of ridicule, defamation, and intrusive suspicion safeguards psychological and social dignity. The command to reconcile disputing parties introduces an active model of peacemaking rather

than a passive model of coexistence. Collectively, these values construct a trust-based communal order in which moral restraint serves as social protection.

The third tier, articulated in verse 13, expands the ethical horizon beyond the internal community toward humanity as a whole. This verse formulates a universal anthropology grounded in ontological human equality. All human beings are described as originating from a single male and female, thereby negating racial, tribal, and ethnic hierarchies. Diversity is presented as purposeful, expressed through the principle of li taʿarafu, so that communities may come to know one another. The ultimate criterion of distinction is taqwa, or moral consciousness, not lineage, ethnicity, or social status. The findings confirm that this verse reframes identity from inherited markers toward ethical merit, thereby universalising the surah's moral vision.

When synthesised, these three tiers reveal a deliberate progression. The model begins with cultivating a rightly oriented self grounded in reverence and epistemic discipline. It then moves outward to structure harmonious internal relations through dignity, verification, and reconciliation (Applied Social Psychology, 2017). Finally, it culminates in a universal ethic that regulates engagement with the broader human family based on equality and righteousness. This progression illustrates that vertical devotion generates horizontal justice and that communal harmony depends upon the prior purification of individual character.

The results, therefore, demonstrate that Surah Al Hujurat presents a comprehensive ethical constitution for community life. Its architecture integrates spiritual humility, social responsibility, and universal human dignity into a unified framework. By mapping this progression systematically, the study confirms that the surah provides not only moral instruction but a structured program for building a cohesive, ethically grounded society from the individual conscience outward to global human relations.

3.2. Discussion

The central research problem concerned whether Surah Al Hujurat should be understood as a collection of situational rulings or as a coherent ethical system capable of guiding contemporary community formation (Bruckmayr, 2017). The findings clearly indicate the latter. Through thematic and structural analysis, the surah reveals a unified moral architecture in which each directive is interlinked with broader value principles. The verses are not isolated responses to historical incidents but components of a deliberate ethical design that integrates spiritual discipline, social responsibility, and universal human dignity (Asani, 2002).

By identifying the interdependence between vertical reverence and horizontal justice, the study addresses the problem of fragmentation in current pedagogical and interpretive approaches (Chelini-Pont, 2013). Respect for divine and prophetic authority cultivates epistemic humility and communicative restraint, which, in turn, become prerequisites for just social engagement (Cook, 2000). This moral preparedness within the individual logically extends to responsible interaction within the community, ultimately requiring a universalist outlook grounded in taqwa. Thus, the surah's internal coherence directly resolves the research concern regarding its systemic unity.

Previous scholarship has often focused on specific ethical themes in the surah, such as conflict mediation, backbiting, and social equality (Geertz, 1977). Classical exegetes like Al-Ṭabarī and Al-Qurṭubī provided detailed contextual and juridical analysis. At the same time, modern scholars such as Fazlur Rahman and Toshihiko Izutsu explored broader ethical and semantic dimensions of the Qur'an (Geertz, 2013). However, these works typically examined themes independently rather than mapping the surah's ethical progression as a unified system.

The novelty of this research lies in synthesising those individual insights into a progressive, integrated framework. Rather than isolating speech ethics from conflict resolution or equality from communal discipline, the study demonstrates their structural continuity (Zubair, 2013). A limitation of the present approach is its prioritisation of thematic synthesis over extensive historical critical analysis of each verse's specific context of revelation (Gilsenan, 2000). Nevertheless, this methodological focus is deliberate, aimed at uncovering normative coherence rather than reconstructing historical detail.

One of the most significant findings is the interdependent nature of the surah's ethical layers. The discipline of verified speech introduced in the early verses becomes foundational for preserving dignity in later communal interactions (Gilsenan, 2000). Without epistemic restraint and truth seeking, the prohibitions against mockery, suspicion, and backbiting would lack practical enforceability (Hanafi, 2006). Ethical communication, therefore, functions as the backbone of communal stability (Holt et al., 1970).

Another major finding concerns the protective function of taqwa as a universal evaluative criterion. By defining moral consciousness as the sole measure of human worth, the surah prevents the believing community from descending into tribalism or exclusivist superiority. The universal ethic of verse 13 safeguards the internal solidarity

described in verses 7 to 12 from degenerating into insular group identity. This integration confirms that the surah's ethics are structurally preventive, designed to avert both internal fragmentation and external injustice.

The structural progression uncovered in this study implies that ethical community building is neither spontaneous nor superficial (Jafari, 2020). It requires intentional cultivation of intellectual humility and spiritual discipline before social harmony can be achieved (Karama & Khater, 2020). Ethical conduct is presented not as behavioural compliance alone but as the outward manifestation of inward refinement (Khairulnizam & Saili, 2009). The surah thus proposes a model of moral formation that begins with consciousness and culminates in just social order.

Furthermore, the movement from internal regulation to universal recognition signals a cosmopolitan orientation rooted in piety (Khaldun, 2015). The surah does not confine ethical responsibility to a single community but extends it to humanity as a whole (Kidwai, 1996). Diversity is framed as purposeful and relational, reinforcing the idea that moral excellence must be expressed through cross-communal engagement (Knysh, 2017). This meaning broadens the surah's relevance beyond its immediate historical audience.

The graduated ethical model identified in this study aligns with the broader moral framework articulated by Zubair (2022; 2024), who described the Qur'an as advancing from personal transformation to societal reform. The emphasis on internal moral consciousness as the engine of social justice parallels his understanding of the Qur'anic moral worldview as dynamic and integrative (Zubair, 2023). The findings, therefore, resonate with established interpretations that view revelation as ethically programmatic rather than merely legislative.

Additionally, the results correspond with contemporary discussions in virtue ethics, which prioritise the cultivation of stable character traits as prerequisites for right action. The surah's focus on humility, disciplined speech, reconciliation, and moral consciousness reflects a virtue-centred framework in which social justice flows from inner formation (Kokan, 1960). This convergence strengthens the theoretical credibility of the integrated model presented here.

Studies addressing Qur'anic egalitarianism have highlighted verse 13 of Surah Al Hujurat as a foundational text affirming human equality (Ma'roof, 1995). The present findings support and expand these conclusions by situating taqwa within a broader ethical progression (Maqqari al-Tilmisani, 1631). Equality is not presented as an isolated declaration but as the culmination of a disciplined communal process that begins with reverence and responsible communication (Mubarak, 1935).

Research on Islamic peacebuilding and communication ethics has similarly underscored the importance of reconciliation and verified speech (Nashir, 2015). The current analysis corroborates these insights while demonstrating their structural placement within a larger moral system (Nieuwkerk et al., 2016). By integrating speech ethics, conflict mediation, and universal equality into one framework, the study offers a more comprehensive account of how these themes function together (Patji, 1991).

An alternative interpretation might argue that Surah Al Hujurat primarily addresses political obedience within the early Muslim community, particularly regarding leadership and authority (Putra et al., 2019). From this perspective, the initial verses could be read as reinforcing hierarchical order in a formative state context. Such a reading emphasises historical immediacy over normative universality (Ridwan & Robikah, 2019).

However, the value-based analysis presented here demonstrates that the principles embedded in these verses extend beyond their immediate political circumstances (Saerozi, 2017). Epistemic humility, verification of information, dignified discourse, and universal equality are not contingent upon a single historical episode (Saged, 2021). They articulate enduring norms governing authority, communication, and social identity in any community (Schimmel, 1985). The surah's structure, therefore, supports a timeless ethical reading rather than a purely situational one (Shareef & Bad'iuddin, 2008).

Surah Al Hujurat ultimately presents an integrated ethical system in which each tier reinforces the others. The vertical ethics of verses 1 to 5 cultivate reverence, restraint, and disciplined cognition, ensuring that the community remains anchored in legitimate guidance. This inner orientation shapes responsible speech and intellectual humility, preventing impulsive judgment and misinformation.

These cultivated virtues then manifest in the horizontal ethics governing believer-to-believer relations in verses 7-12, generating a social environment characterised by trust, dignity, and proactive reconciliation. Finally, the universal declaration of verse 13 expands this ethic outward, affirming shared human origin and moral equality. The values articulated in the surah are not mere etiquette but foundational principles necessary for justice and communal flourishing. By addressing disrespect, unverified speech, prejudice, and intrusion at their roots, the surah constructs a resilient community capable of sustaining harmony internally and projecting ethical engagement globally.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

Theoretical Implications: This study formulates a systematic model of value-based exegesis (tafsīr qiyamī) that integrates ethical philosophy with Qur'anic interpretation. Rather than treating moral verses as fragmented instructions, the model reconstructs them into a coherent ethical architecture rooted in normative principles such as dignity (karāmah), justice (ʿadl), brotherhood (ukhuwwah), and moral accountability (taqwā). By doing so, it strengthens contemporary Islamic ethical theory and expands the methodological scope of Qur'anic hermeneutics. The framework positions the Qur'an not merely as a doctrinal source, but as a dynamic ethical constitution capable of guiding social transformation across contexts.

Practical Implications: At the applied level, the research translates Qur'anic ethical principles into an operational curriculum framework for Islamic Education. It moves beyond ritual-centred instruction toward structured character formation that integrates cognition, affect, and behaviour. The proposed framework supports educators in designing lesson plans, learning outcomes, and assessment models grounded in moral values such as respect, verification of information, conflict mediation, and social responsibility. In community settings, it offers guidance for youth development programs and civic engagement initiatives that cultivate ethical literacy and communal solidarity.

Managerial Implications: For Islamic organisations and community institutions, the study provides normative guidelines for governance and policy design. It outlines principles for institutional culture that prioritise human dignity, structured conflict-resolution mechanisms, transparent communication, and merit-based inclusion, anchored in piety rather than lineage, ethnicity, or social status. These guidelines assist leaders in developing codes of conduct, mediation procedures, and membership policies that reflect Qur'anic ethical standards while addressing contemporary organisational challenges.

Methodological Implications: Methodologically, the research demonstrates the effectiveness of deductive value analysis as a qualitative approach to engaging religious texts. By identifying foundational ethical axioms within the Qur'anic discourse and systematically deriving their social implications, this method bridges textual study and real-world application. It shows that religious texts can be analysed not only descriptively or historically, but normatively and constructively, yielding actionable ethical frameworks grounded in scriptural authority.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes a coherent, textually-grounded ethical framework to the sciences of Islamic Education and Qur'anic studies. It advances knowledge by systematically mapping the values of Surah Al-Hujurat, thereby providing scholars, educators, and practitioners with a definitive reference model for understanding and teaching Islam's social ethics. It contributes to the idea of the Qur'an as a "community constitution" built on a hierarchy of interrelated virtues.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study is limited to a textual and conceptual analysis. It does not employ empirical methods to measure the application or reception of these values in contemporary Muslim communities. Furthermore, the analysis, while consulting classical exegesis, prioritises a thematic and value-oriented synthesis over an exhaustive historical-critical analysis of each commentary.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Future research should: 1) Conduct empirical studies on how the values from Al-Hujurat are understood and practised in diverse Muslim societies. 2) Develop and test educational modules based on this framework in Islamic schools. 3) Apply the same value-based exegetical methodology to other Qur'anic chapters with strong social themes (e.g., Surah Al-Nisā', Surah Al-Māʿidah) to build a comprehensive Qur'anic social ethics. 4) Explore interdisciplinary comparisons between this framework and other religious or secular ethics of community.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Surah Al-Hujurat provides a comprehensive, systematically organised ethical framework for cultivating a morally cohesive society. By emphasising the development of humility, truthfulness, and

self-accountability in relation to God, the surah establishes a foundation for interpersonal conduct and community ethics. This internal moral orientation naturally extends to social interactions, guiding believers to foster a brotherly community rooted in dignity, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. Furthermore, the surah underscores that honour is not determined by social status, wealth, or lineage, but by conscious piety (*taqwā*), offering a universal principle that transcends time and context for building just and inclusive communities.

The surah's teachings move seamlessly from individual character formation to collective social responsibility, highlighting the interconnectedness of internal virtue and external behaviour. Believers are instructed to regulate their speech, avoid spreading falsehoods, and intervene constructively when harm or injustice arises, illustrating that moral conduct is actionable, socially directed, and context-sensitive. In doing so, Surah Al-Hujurat bridges private devotion and public ethics, providing a moral compass that integrates respect for human dignity, accountability, and peaceful conflict resolution. Its ethical directives address both the heart and the societal framework, establishing a holistic model of ethical life grounded in divine guidance.

The enduring relevance of Surah Al-Hujurat lies in its capacity to inform contemporary challenges of social fragmentation, misinformation, and moral decay. By offering concrete behavioural guidelines alongside universal ethical principles, it equips communities with a normative blueprint for nurturing trust, justice, and mutual understanding. The study further suggests that value-based exegesis can serve as a productive methodological approach for exploring other Qur'anic chapters that regulate social relations, thereby enriching Islamic ethical scholarship and providing actionable insights for education, community development, and organisational governance. Ultimately, the surah exemplifies how faith and ethics converge to shape both individual character and collective societal well-being.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author declares that the entire research and writing process for this article was conducted independently. The author assumes full responsibility for all data associated with this research. No other individual contributed as a co-author or made any significant contribution to the content of this work.

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