QAULAN SADIDA AS A QUR'ANIC FRAMEWORK FOR REVITALIZING CHARACTER BUILDING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

The digital era offers vast benefits but simultaneously brings challenges such as the spread of hoaxes, the degradation of communication ethics, and the moral crisis among younger generations. The Qur'anic concept of Qaulan Sadida, which signifies truthful, just, and responsible speech, is highly relevant in addressing these issues. This study, employing the thematic exegesis method of Abdul Hayy al-Farmawi, analyzes the meaning of Qaulan Sadida in Qur'an Surah An-Nisa: 9 and Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab: 70, along with the interpretations of exegetes such as Ibn Kathir, Al-Maraghi, and Al-Qurtubi, who emphasize its social-ethical dimensions and self-restraint. Quraish Shihab further highlights its universal nature, making it applicable to da'wah, education, and social interaction. The findings reveal that Qaulan Sadida encompasses five core principles: honesty, gentleness, beneficial speech, justice, and humility. These values are essential in countering hate speech, information manipulation, and the crisis of digital civility. Revitalizing Qaulan Sadida entails fostering ethical, wise, and courteous communication within digital spaces. Islamic educational institutions play a strategic role in this process by integrating these Qur'anic values into curricula, digital literacy programs, and academic culture, thereby nurturing a Muslim generation that is not only digitally literate but also firmly grounded in Qur'anic character.

KATA KUNCI:
Qaulan Sadida, Pendidikan Islam, Revitalisasi Karakter

ABSTRAK

Era digital menghadirkan manfaat luas, tetapi juga memunculkan tantangan berupa hoaks, degradasi etika komunikasi, dan krisis moral generasi muda. Konsep Qaulan Sadida dalam Al-Qur'an, yang bermakna ucapan benar, adil, dan bertanggung jawab, relevan untuk merespons problem ini. Penelitian dengan metode tafsir tematik ala Abdul Hayy al-Farmawi ini menganalisis makna Qaulan Sadida dalam Al-Qur'an surah an-Nisa ayat 9 dan Al-Qur'an surah an-Nisa ayat Al-Ahzab: 70, serta pandangan mufasir seperti Ibn Katsir, Al-Maraghi, dan Al-Qurtubi yang menekankan dimensi etika sosial dan pengendalian diri. Quraish Shihab menegaskan sifat universal konsep ini untuk dakwah, pendidikan, dan interaksi sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa prinsip Qaulan Sadida meliputi lima aspek utama: kejujuran, kelembutan, ucapan yang bermanfaat, keadilan, dan kerendahan hati. Nilai-nilai ini penting dalam menghadapi ujaran kebencian, manipulasi informasi, dan krisis kesantunan digital. Revitalisasi Qaulan Sadida berarti membangun komunikasi yang etis, bijaksana, dan santun di ruang digital. Lembaga pendidikan Islam memiliki peran strategis dengan mengintegrasikan nilai Qur'ani ini ke dalam kurikulum, literasi digital, serta budaya akademik, guna melahirkan generasi Muslim yang cerdas digital sekaligus berkarakter Qur'ani.

INTRODUCTION

The digital era is a new chapter in the history of human civilization where digital technology dominates almost all aspects of life. The presence of electronic devices, the internet, and information and communication technology in daily activities has changed the way humans interact, obtain information, and build social relations. The phenomenon of digital globalization allows what happens in the Western world to be accessed by people in the Eastern world in a matter of seconds. Fast and easy access to information allows all humans to connect in real-time, obtain the same information, and even interact directly without the barrier of space and time.

This digital transformation brings many benefits to human life. In the economic sector, for example, business and industrial processes have undergone significant changes, from production, distribution, to interaction with global markets. Digitalization opens up great opportunities for businesses, both large companies and micro, small and medium enterprises to improve efficiency, expand market access, and increase competitiveness. This is characterized by the high development of digital-based transactions and innovations (Gultom et al., 2024).

In the field of education, the digital touch also presents both opportunities and challenges. The development of technology allows wider access to learning resources. The emergence of online learning platforms, educational videos, and digital libraries help students and teachers obtain richer and more diverse learning materials. This creates opportunities for personalization of education, where learners can learn according to their needs and abilities. However, this condition also requires teachers and students to continue to improve technological literacy in order to be able to adapt to the demands of the digital era (Aulia Rahmah, Nurhemah, 2024).

In the religious field, the digital era is utilized by da'i and ulama as a new medium to spread da'wah and Islamic teachings. Through digital network facilities, da'wah messages can be delivered to a wide audience without being hindered by time and space. In fact, technological advances allow a preacher to improvise, for example with humor or interactive style, so that the da'wah material remains interesting and relevant to the digital generation (Musdalifah, 2020). Thus, digital technology has become a potential space for da'wah, although on the other hand it presents new challenges.

However, behind these benefits, the digital era also has serious negative impacts on human life. According to Syahputra et al., (2023), the rapid flow of unfiltered foreign culture has begun to erode Islamic cultural values. For example, the tendency of Muslims to switch from reading the Qur'an in printed mushaf to digital applications, or replacing knowledge assemblies in mosques with lectures by popular preachers on YouTube. Meanwhile,

Marysca et al. (2021) highlighted the issue of personal data security in the digital era, where many people feel their privacy is threatened due to easy digital tracking.

The most significant impact in the digital era is the spread of fake news (hoax) and hate speech that targets all levels of society. This phenomenon, especially through social media, has poisoned people's minds and caused adverse social impacts. Indonesia even ranks sixth as the country with the largest internet users in the world, where the majority of users are Muslims (Alisyahbana, 2019). Damayanti & Prasetyawati's research (2023) shows that 34.6% of people receive hoaxes every day, 23.5% receive hoaxes once a week, and 18.2% receive them once a month from 1,116 respondents.

Survey data from Katadata Insight Center (KIC) and the Ministry of Communication and Information (2021) showed that 11.9% of respondents admitted to spreading hoaxes, an increase from 11.2% in the previous year. This survey was conducted in October 2021 in 34 provinces involving 10,000 respondents (Azis et al., 2022). This increase indicates a serious challenge in the digital literacy of Indonesian society.

This hoax phenomenon has a significant impact on social life. Research by Rahmawati et al. (2023) confirms that the spread of hoaxes not only disrupts public trust in information, but also creates confusion, uncertainty, and even conflict between groups with different views.

This condition indicates a crisis of communication ethics in the digital era.

In this context, Islamic values are important to be re-presented as guidelines for communication and character education. One of the Islamic communication principles that is urgent to be studied is *Qaulan Sadida* found in the Qur'an, among others in the Qur'an surah An-Nisa verse 9 and Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab verse70. *Qaulan Sadida* means true, honest, and straight speech. This value includes honesty, openness, responsibility, and commitment to the truth in every form of communication. If this value is applied in digital communication practices, it can be a bulwark against hoaxes, hate speech, and social media abuse.

In terms of character education theory, Lickona states that good character is formed through good habits, moral education, and exemplary (Thomas Lickona, 2014). This is in line with the concept of *Qaulan Sadida* in Islam, where honesty, responsibility, and justice in speech are integral parts of Islamic character building. Thus, the integration of *Qaulan Sadida* values into in Islamic education can be one of the important strategies in facing the challenges of the digital era.

Many previous studies have highlighted the challenges of the digital era on Islamic morals, ethics, and communication. Aprilistya et al. (2023) found that social media contributes to the decline in moral values of the younger generation, but has not linked it to Qur'an-based solutions. Aulia Rahmah & Nurhemah's

research (2024) emphasizes the importance of digital literacy in education, but does not mention the normative-religious foundation as the basis of character education.

The study of Dzulhusna et al. (Dzulhusna et al., 2022) outlines six principles of Qur'anic communication, including *Qaulan Sadida*, as the ethics of da'wah. Although useful, the discussion is still general without highlighting contemporary digital issues such as hoaxes and hate speech. Meanwhile, Nazar (2022) examines the application of the *Qaulan Sadida* principle to Ustadz Adi Hidayat's da'wah on the YouTube channel. This study shows the relevance of Qur'anic values to the practice of digital da'wah, but it is still limited to the context of certain figures, not within the framework of character education for the wider community.

Based on the literature review, it can be seen that studies on *Qaulan Sadida* in the Qur'an do exist, but most of them focus on da'wah or Islamic communication ethics without linking it to the problem of character education in the digital era. Therefore, this research has a distinction with examining the concept of *Qaulan Sadida* in thematic interpretation of the Qur'an, then contextualizing it with digital challenges, especially the problem of hoaxes, degradation of communication ethics, and the moral crisis of the younger generation. Thus, this research offers an original contribution in the form of revitalizing Qur'anic value-based character education that is relevant to the conditions of digital society.

With this framework, the objectives of this study are to: (1) analyze the concept of *Qaulan Sadida* in the Qur'an, (2) identify the principles of *Qaulan Sadida* character, and (3) examine its implications in efforts to revitalize character education in the digital era. The contribution of this research is expected to be theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research provides enrichment of Islamic scholarship, especially in the field of thematic interpretation and Islamic education. Practically, this research can be a reference for educators, da'i, and the community in internalizing the value of *Qaulan Sadida* as the foundation of character education in the midst of the swift flow of digital information. Thus, this research not only provides normative solutions, but also provides concrete directions for strengthening communication ethics and character education in the digital era. The novelty target of this research lies in the approach that integrates thematic interpretation analysis of *Qaulan Sadida* with the reality of contemporary digital communication. If previous studies have mostly stopped at the normative aspects or the practice of da'wah, this research seeks to present a new perspective by emphasizing the revitalization dimension of character education through contextual Qur'anic values. This novelty is expected to be able to bridge between text studies (Qur'an) and social practices in the digital era, thus producing a conceptual foundation as well as practical strategies in

building communication ethics and character of the younger generation.

THEORY DESCRIPTION

The theoretical description of the concept of *Qaulan Sadida* in the Qur'an and its relevance to character building in the digital era can be understood through several frameworks. Etymologically, the term *Qaulan Sadida* comes from the words *qaulan* (speech) and *sadida* (right, straight, on target). This concept appears in several verses, such as Al-Qur'an Surah An-Nisa verse 9 and Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab verse 70, which emphasize the importance of speaking honestly, truthfully, and responsibly. Katsīr (2000) interprets *Qaulan Sadida* as a Qur'anic communication principle that contains moral values of openness, justice, and honesty in interactions. Furthermore, Dzulhusna et al. (2022) explain that *Qaulan Sadida* is not only related to factual correct speech, but also includes words that are able to bring goodness while avoiding people from badness.

In the perspective of Islamic education, the discussion of *Qaulan Sadida* is closely related to character education. Character in Islam is understood not only social behavior, but the integration of faith, knowledge, and charity. Lickona(2014) emphasizes that character is formed through good habituation, moral education, and exemplary. This is in line with the concept of Islamic education which includes *ta'dib* (habituation), *ta'lim* (teaching), and *tahdzib* (formation of noble morals). Ramdani et al., (2020) mentioned that the purpose of character education in Islam is to form a person of faith, knowledge, and noble character. Thus, the principle of *Qaulan Sadida* has strong relevance as a foundation for the formation of Islamic morals in line with the goals of Islamic education.

The digital era brings great transformations that present both opportunities and challenges. According to Aulia Rahmah and Nurhemah (2024), the development of digital technology enriches learning resources, but also demands high digital literacy. On the other hand, the unstoppable flow of information often gives birth to hoaxes, hate speech, and a crisis of communication ethics (Damayanti & Prasetyawati, 2023). This condition poses a serious challenge for the younger generation, because social media contributes to the decline in moral values (Aprilistya et al., 2023). This phenomenon shows the need for Qur'anic value-based interventions so that digital communication is not only technically smart, but also moral.

In the framework of Islamic communication theory, human interaction is required to be based on honesty, responsibility, and caution in conveying information (Abrori & Ikhwan, 2024; Helfaya et al., 2018). The value of *Qaulan Sadida* can serve as a normative guideline for building healthy digital literacy, so that people have a moral filter in accessing and disseminating information. In the perspective of character education, internalizing this principle can be realized through the habit of speaking the

truth, doing *tabayyun* (clarification), and rejecting hate speech. Therefore, *Qaulan Sadida* becomes the link between the teachings of the Qur'an and the reality of education in the digital era.

Thus, the theoretical basis of this research rests on three main frameworks: Islamic communication theory that emphasizes speech ethics, character education theory as described by Lickona (2004), and digital literacy theory that highlights the challenges of global information flows (Livingstone et al., 2021). The integration of these three frameworks provides a conceptual basis that the Qur'anic value of *Qaulan Sadida* is relevant as a basis for revitalizing character education in facing the problem of communication ethics in the digital era.

METHOD

This research uses thematic interpretation approach (*maudhu'i*) by referring to the model developed by Abdul Hayy al-Farmawi. This approach was chosen because it is able to examine certain concepts in the Qur'an comprehensively, both from the linguistic aspect, the context of the verse, and its relevance to contemporary problems (Farmawi, 2005). The research focus is directed to the term Qaulan Sadida found in several verses of the Qur'an, including Al-Qur'an surah An-Nisa verse 9 and Al-Qur'an surah Al-Ahzab verse 70.

According to al-Farmawi(2005) , the steps in thematic interpretation include: (1) determining the research theme; (2) collecting all verses related to the theme; (3) arranging the verses in accordance with the order of their descent (asbab al-nuzul) and paying attention to their relationship with the verses before and after (munasabah); (4) explaining the key vocabulary and semantic meaning of the verse; (5) reviewing the interpretations of classical and contemporary mufasirs; (6) synthesizing to draw a complete conclusion about the theme under study; and (7) contextualizing the results of the study with contemporary reality.

The data sources of this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary sources are authoritative books of interpretation used to interpret verses about *Qaulan Sadida*, including Tafsir Ibn Katsir, Tafsir al-Maraghi, and Tafsir al-Mishbah by Quraish Shihab. These books were chosen because they are representative in combining classical, modern, and contemporary styles of interpretation. Secondary sources include supporting literature in the form of books, journal articles, and previous research relevant to the theme of Islamic communication, character education, and digital ethics.

The data analysis technique in this research uses *content analysis* by examining the content of verses and tafsir related to *Qaulan Sadida*, then connecting it with the theory of character education and digital communication problems. The analysis is done deductively-inductively: deductive by starting from the Qur'anic text and the interpretation of the mufasir, then inductive by linking it to the

phenomenon of communication in the digital era.

To maintain data validity, this research uses source triangulation and analysis techniques. Triangulation is done by comparing the interpretations of various mufasirs across time (classical, modern, contemporary) and testing the consistency of the analysis results with supporting literature. Validation is also strengthened through the *academic tabayyun* method, which clarifies the data and meaning of the verse by referring to the historical context, classical Arabic, and the rules of interpretation. In this way, the research results are expected to be valid, reliable, and able to provide conceptual contributions that are relevant to the needs of character education in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Qaulan Sadida in the Qur'an

The term Qaulan Sadida etymologically consists of two words, namely *qaulan* which means words or speech, and *sadida* which means straight, true, precise, and in accordance with the truth (Munawwir, 1984). In the Qur'an, this term appears explicitly in two verses, namely in surah An-Nisa verse 9 and surah Al-Ahzab verse 70, which emphasize the principle of correct, fair, and responsible communication as the foundation of social and moral interaction. In Qur'an An-Nisa verse 9:

وَلْيَخْشَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكُواْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَـٰفًا خَافُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُواْ قَوْلاً سَدِيدًا

And let those [executors and guardians] fear [injustice] as if they [themselves] had left weak offspring behind and feared for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.

According to Ibn Katsir (2000), the Qur'an Surah An-Nisa verse 9 emphasizes the moral responsibility of parents or guardians towards weak offspring. The concept of *Qaulan Sadida* here does not only mean speaking the literal truth, but also demands that the speech delivered is always fair, honest, and protects the rights of children or weak parties. Ibn Katsir emphasizes that right speech includes ethical and social dimensions, where every word must consider its impact on others, especially those who are vulnerable. From the perspective of character education, this is in line with the principles of *ta'dib* and *tahdzib* in Islam, namely the habituation of moral behavior that educates individuals to always consider goodness and justice in every action, including in communication. Thus, *Qaulan Sadida* is not just a linguistic obligation, but also a character building instrument that integrates ethics, social responsibility, and Islamic morality.

Al-Maraghi (2001) adds that this verse emphasizes the social dimension of Qaulan Sadida, namely that true speech should reflect justice, sincerity, and concern for the rights of others. In his view, dignified communication not only demands factual truth, but also requires verification of information and self-control so that speech does not cause harm, either directly or indirectly. This is in line with Al-Qurtubi's view (2003) which emphasizes the importance

of considering *maslahat* (interests) and *mafsadah* (losses) in every interaction, so that *Qaulan Sadida* becomes a guideline for balancing truth and social responsibility.

In terms of character education, experts such as Lickona (2014) emphasize that habituation of moral behavior and exemplary is the core of character building. Thus, the implementation of *Qaulan Sadida* in the context of family and society can be a concrete means to train the younger generation to speak honestly, fairly, and responsibly, while fostering social awareness. This emphasis is also reinforced by Al-Misbah (Shihab, 2005) which sees Qaulan Sadida as a universal guideline, applicable to all aspects of life, including social interaction and da'wah.

By integrating the views of the mufasirs and character education experts, it can be seen that *Qaulan Sadida* has moral, social, and educational dimensions. Right speech is not only literal, but also contains ethical and social responsibilities. This shows the relevance of the concept in building the character of individuals who are responsible, honest, and able to maintain harmonious relationships in society. This approach also provides a solid theoretical foundation to examine how Qur'anic values can be internalized in character education, including in facing communication challenges in the digital era.

The term Qaulan Sadida is also found in the Qur'an surah Al-Ahzab verse 70:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَقُولُوا۟ قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice.

According to Ibn Katsir (2000), this verse emphasizes Allah's command for every believer to always maintain piety and convey true and straight words. Ibn Katsir explains that qaulan sadida is not just speaking the truth in the literal sense, but includes aspects of ethics and social responsibility in communication. Right speech must contain justice, kindness, and not harm others, either directly or indirectly. In the context of character education, this becomes the basis for moral behavior habituation, where students or individuals are taught to speak honestly, fairly, and responsibly in every social interaction.

Al-Maraghi (2001) highlights the social and moral dimensions of this verse. He emphasizes that Qaulan Sadida involves openness, sincerity, and concern for others. According to him, dignified communication demands verification of information before it is delivered, so that words do not lead to slander, lies or conflict. This analysis is in line with Al-Qurtubi's view, which emphasizes the need to pay attention to maslahat and mafsadah in every speech, so that Qaulan Sadida becomes an ethical communication guideline, relevant to maintaining social harmony.

Meanwhile, Shihab (2005) emphasizes that this verse has a universal scope. It does not only apply in the context of worship, da'wah, or leadership, but also in everyday life, including education, social interaction, and

communication media. Speech that is honest, straight, and in line with Qur'anic moral values can be the foundation of character education, instilling the values of honesty, responsibility, and exemplary, as well as training individuals to reject false or manipulative information.

Dzulhusna et al. (2022) added that Qaulan Sadida acts as an ethical and pedagogical foundation. In the perspective of character education, the internalization of this value is in line with Lickona's theory (2014), in which the habituation of moral behavior and exemplary behavior becomes the foundation of effective character building. Individuals who are accustomed to telling the truth will develop integrity, a sense of responsibility, and social awareness, which are very relevant to facing communication challenges in the digital era, including hoaxes, hate speech, and information manipulation. Thus, the Qur'an Al-Ahzab verse 70 not only emphasizes the normative aspect of speaking the truth, but also contains moral, social, and educational dimensions, which are relevant for revitalizing character education and communication ethics in the digital era. Right speech becomes a preventive strategy in building a society that is ethical, civilized, and responsible for the truth of information.

Thematically, Qur'an surah An-Nisa verse 9 and Qur'an surah Al-Ahzab verse 70 build the normative framework of Qaulan Sadida, which emphasizes true, honest, fair, and responsible speech. According to Ibn Katsir (2000), this principle is not merely literal in speaking the truth, but demands the integration of moral values, social responsibility, and communication ethics that can be applied in daily life, including in managing rights and obligations towards others. Al-Maraghi (2001) emphasizes the social dimension of Qaulan Sadida, that truthful communication should consider justice, sincerity, and concern for the other party, and avoid words that can cause harm or slander. Quraish Shihab (2005) emphasizes the universal scope of this verse, which is relevant in all aspects of life, including education, da'wah, and social interaction, so that honest and straight speech becomes the foundation of character building based on honesty, exemplary, and responsibility.

From the perspective of character education, Abrori & Ikhwan(2024) state that habituation of moral behavior and exemplary is the core of effective character building. The integration of Qaulan Sadida into modern character education allows individuals to not only internalize Qur'anic moral principles, but also develop digital literacy skills, namely assessing, filtering, and disseminating information critically and ethically. Thus, the principle of Qaulan Sadida becomes a guideline in dealing with contemporary phenomena such as hoaxes, hate speech, and manipulation of information on social media. The application of this value teaches ethical awareness, rigor, and moral responsibility in digital communication, so that every act of communication is not only factually accurate, but also dignified and ethical.

Qaulan Sadida Character Principles

a. Honest and precise words

Honesty in communication is a fundamental prerequisite for building harmonious relationships and creating social trust. However, contemporary reality shows that the value of honesty is increasingly eroded by the rise of hoaxes, hate speech, and provocations in the digital space. This phenomenon confirms that communication often forgets the ethical dimension, so that messages are more directed at manipulation and incitement rather than conveying the truth (Farida, 2018). In the Islamic perspective, honesty is the core of piety, as affirmed in the Qur'an surah At-Taubah verse 119 and reinforced by a strong threat to those who are inconsistent between words and deeds as stated in the Qur'an surah Ash-Shaf verse 3.

Normatively, honesty is not limited to true speech, but rather consistency between words, actions, and intentions (Puspitasari, 2023). Dishonesty in communication not only affects individuals, but also undermines the moral authority of a profession. This phenomenon can be seen in the world of education, where the prohibition of plagiarism is often voiced by lecturers, but the practice is still carried out. Similarly, teachers demand discipline, but often violate it themselves. Even preachers are sometimes trapped in rhetoric of goodness that is not reflected in real action. This condition, although seemingly trivial, has serious implications for the erosion of the value of integrity in social and religious life.

The Qur'an views honesty as not only a social ethic, but a religious obligation that characterizes a true believer (Nazar & Qoulan Syadida, 2022). The Qur'an surah al-Ahqaf verses 13-14 emphasizes that people who are faithful in their speech and actions will be guaranteed peace and happiness in the hereafter. Thus, honesty is a moral standard as well as an indicator of the quality of one's faith. This analysis shows that the degradation of honesty is actually a spiritual degradation that demands collective self-correction.

In addition to honesty, effective communication is also an important aspect of social interaction. Communication that is right on target ensures that the message is understood according to the sender's intention, presents mutual understanding, and fosters mutual awareness (Syabrina, 2017). In the Qur'anic perspective, effective communication is speech that is able to touch the soul and give a positive moral influence, this is stated in the Qur'an surah an-Nisa verse 63. This means that honesty is not enough to stop at factual truth, but must be packaged wisely so that it provides benefits and avoids harm.

Thus, this research confirms that honesty and accuracy of communication have a strategic position in building a just, ethical and religious society. The communication crisis characterized by hoaxes and hate speech can be overcome by returning the orientation of

communication to the principle of *qaulan* sadida-true, fair, and responsible speech-as a normative framework that is relevant in both spiritual and modern digital contexts.

b. Gentle and Noble Speech

Gentle and noble speech (*qaul karim*) is a dimension of communication ethics that emphasizes the importance of politeness, respect, and measuredness in social interactions. Speech delivered in a calm tone, without lies or slander, not only reflects good morals, but also becomes an instrument for building social harmony. In the perspective of Ibn 'Assyria (Imzi, 2020)*, qaul karim* is a word that does not corner or demean the other party, but rather maintains his honor and dignity. This becomes relevant when someone reprimands or advises, for example a child to a parent, which must be done without a high voice, harsh expression, or patronizing attitude.

From the perspective of Islamic communication research, *qaul karim* is not just a linguistic issue, but an ethical praxis that has a direct impact on the quality of social relations. Polite speech can reduce the potential for conflict, create psychological comfort, and strengthen solidarity. In contrast, harsh communication often triggers resistance, widens social distance, and even creates disharmony in society. Therefore, gentle speech is not just a moral norm, but also an effective communication strategy oriented towards conflict resolution.

The Qur'an emphasizes this principle in Qur'an surah al-Isra verse 28 and Qur'an surah Taha: 43-44, which indicate that even in dealing with stubborn parties, Islam teaches a persuasive approach with gentle speech. This analysis confirms that *qaul karim* is an important pillar of *Qaulan Sadida* that balances the truth of the message and the nobility of the way it is delivered. Thus, gentle and noble speech is not only spiritually valuable, but also relevant as a modern communication ethic that demands inclusive, empathetic dialogue and building mutual understanding.

c. Words that do not hurt the other party

Words that do not hurt others are a fundamental principle in ethical communication that demands wisdom, empathy, and care in choosing diction. Language reflects the maturity of thinking as well as the image of one's intellect, as the Arabic proverb *al-kalāmu shifatu al-mutakallim* asserts that the quality of speech is a reflection of the speaker's personality (Al-Sakhawī, 1986). Thus, polite speech not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a representation of cultural, moral, and religious values inherent in society (Noermanzah, 2019).

However, the reality of contemporary communication in Indonesia shows a contradiction. The results of the Microsoft survey in 2019 placed Indonesia as the country with the lowest level of digital civility in Southeast Asia, reinforced by the 2020 Digital Civility Index data that said Indonesia was in an

ethical emergency (Ikhsan, 2024). This phenomenon indicates the degradation of linguistic ethics due to freedom of expression that is not accompanied by awareness of values, morals, and religion. As a result, public spaces, especially digital media, are vulnerable to hate speech, slander, and provocations that trigger social conflicts.

The Qur'an explicitly condemns this behavior, as in the Qur'an surah an-Nur verse 19 which prohibits the spread of vile news because it has implications for punishment in this world and the hereafter. A Prophetic Hadith narrated by Muslim also emphasizes the importance of guarding the tongue by not exposing the disgrace of others, because Allah will cover the disgrace of a servant who protects his brother. This analysis shows that non-harmful speech is not just a social norm, but an integral part of Islamic ethics that emphasizes the protection of individual dignity and social harmony. Thus, religious value-based communication ethics need to be revitalized to address the challenges of modern digital communication.

d. Useful speech

Useful speech is a form of communication that contains goodness, gives a positive impact, and avoids fitnah and sin. Control over the tongue is crucial, because unmeasured words often lead to serious conflict. Maspupah (2019) notes that many disputes, even fights that lead to death, originate from communication that is not useful and far from ethics. This shows that the quality of communication is directly proportional to the quality of social relations.

The Prophet Muhammad set an example through his saying narrated by Imam Bukhari that whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak well or keep quiet. This Hadith emphasizes that beneficial speech is not just an option, but an obligation of faith. Conversely, bad speech can bring great harm. It was narrated by Imam Bukhari that warned that a sentence spoken without consideration can plunge a person into hell as far as the distance between East and West (Al-Asqalânî, 2009; Al-Bukhari, 2006).

Conceptually, beneficial speech is an indicator of spiritual intelligence. Nz et al., (2023) emphasizes that spiritual intelligence appears from the ability to avoid vain things, keep the tongue, and choose the right words. Hamka added that a believer must cultivate piety by speaking honestly, not being complicated, and not hurting others. This analysis confirms that useful speech is an Islamic communication ethic that integrates the values of faith, spiritual intelligence, and social responsibility as the foundation of community harmony (Muhardisyah, 2017).

e. Lowering the voice in communication

Lowering the voice in communication is an important manners emphasized by the Qur'an. Surah Luqman verse 19 likens loud, out-of-place voices to the voice of a donkey-a metaphor for disruptive and uncivilized behavior. This principle is not just about

volume, but also includes gentleness, politeness, and emotional control in speech. The Qur'an surah Al-Hujurat verse 2 emphasizes the prohibition of raising the voice in the presence of the Prophet Muhammad as a form of respect, while emphasizing that voice control is a symbol of piety that results in forgiveness and great rewards (Ash-Shabuni, 1981).

In the perspective of Islamic communication research, lowering the voice has significant social and psychological implications. Fitriani et al. (Fitriani et al., 2022) found symptoms of degradation of speech ethics among adolescents, characterized by the habit of speaking harshly to parents and peers. This phenomenon shows a shift in respect culture influenced by the social environment and the weak internalization of religious values.

This condition is exacerbated by the development of digital technology that shapes new communication patterns. Social media encourages spontaneous expression that is often colored by abusive speech, while the pressure to get social validation increases the potential for anxiety and depression (Hakim & Yulia, 2024). This analysis suggests that raising one's voice or speaking harshly is often related to a failure to manage emotions in certain psychological situations.

Thus, the Qur'anic command to lower the voice has contemporary relevance as a strategy of self-control, a sign of humility, as well as a means of building effective, comfortable, and harmonious communication.

This confirms that manners of speech are an integral part of character education and social ethics that are urgent to revitalize in the digital era.

Implications of Qaulan Sadida for Character Revitalization in the Digital Age

Revitalization, which means reviving or reinforcing, when combined with the concept of *qaulan sadida* in the digital era can be interpreted as an effort to build a personality to be able to communicate correctly, honestly, and wisely in the digital space. The urgency is evident from the phenomenon of rampant hoaxes, hate speech, social media anonymity, unfiltered cyber socializing, and the use of technology that is often detached from ethics.

Research shows that dependence on social media has implications for the loss of identity of the younger generation, the fading of moral and cultural values, and the weakening of communication skills in the real world which creates an individualistic attitude (Hakim & Yulia, 2024). In fact, digital media often raises conflicts of ethical and moral values (Siregar et al., 2024) and mixes private and public affairs (Sarkawi et al., 2024). This condition confirms the importance of revitalizing *qaulan sadida* as the foundation of digital communication ethics.

Polite language is the key to maintaining dignity, strengthening social relations, and preventing mental wounds due to harsh speech. The choice of words and style of speech reflect politeness, which in an Islamic perspective is a moral mandate as well as an act of worship.

Communication to God is realized through prayer and worship, while communication between people is realized with soothing and respectful speech.

Qur'anic verses emphasize the principle of true, fair, and dignified communication. Thus, the revitalization of *qaulan sadida* is not only an ethical solution to the problem of digital communication, but also a strategy to build a strong Islamic character amid the swift flow of global information.

The pattern of character building resulting from the study of the concept of *qaulan sadida* in the Qur'an is as follows:

Table 1. Pattern of character building in the digital era based on the concept of *Qaulan Sadida*

Aspect	Character Indicator	Relevance of the Digital Age	Source
Honest and Targeted Speech	Speak according to the facts, do not lie, do not exaggerate	Counteracting hoaxes, hate speech, and false information on social media	Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab (33:70); Hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim
Soft and Noble Speech	Polite, loving affection, respect for the other person	Avoid cyber-bullying, abusive speech, and hate speech	Qur'an Surah Al-Isra' (17:24, 17:53); Qur'an Surah An-Nahl (16:125)
Useful Speech	Containing kindness, motivation, prayer, and soothing the heart	Encourage positive content, healthy digital literacy, and strengthen ukhuwah (brotherhood)	Qur'an Surah Adz-Dzariyat (51:55); Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah (2:263); Hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim
Fair and Wise Speech	Unjustly impartial, prioritizing the truth, not slanderous	Presenting neutral, objective, and ethical communication in the digital space	Qur'an Surah Al-An'am (6:152); Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11-12)
Humble Voice and Maintain Honor	Not rude, not insulting, showing humility	Maintaining online communication ethics, not belittling or demeaning others	Qur'an Surah Luqman (31:18-19); Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11)

Revitalizing character building through *Qaulan Sadida* in the digital era cannot be separated from the role of Islamic educational institutions. Islamic-based schools, Islamic boarding schools, and formal/non-formal Islamic educational institutions should be the locus of the application of the value system: honesty, gentleness, justice, and benefit in speech. For example, the research "Strategic Role of Islamic Religious Education in Character Building in the Digital Era shows that Islamic Religious Education (serves as a *moral filter* that guides students in filtering digital information, recognizing hoaxes, and acting ethically in online interactions (Taufik, 2020).

In addition, the management of Islamic educational institutions must integrate *Qaulan Sadida* into the curriculum and school culture, including in digital learning and media literacy. The article Islamic Education: Foundation of Character and Morals in Modern Life shows that holistic Islamic education-which includes moral,

social, spiritual dimensions-strengthens character in the midst of instant culture and materialism (Wartinah & Hidayat, 2025).

Ahmad Khairinis in the study Faiyadhah: Journal of Islamic Education Management emphasizes that Islamic education institutions with effective management are able to create a digital learning environment that supports the development of the character of an adaptive Muslim generation. Those who successfully combine technology with Islamic values create students who are not only digitally competent, but also have integrity (Khairanis, 2025).

Thus, Islamic educational institutions need to design a character revitalization strategy that includes: training teachers as *Qaulan Sadida* role models, interactive teaching methods with technology integration, value-based digital literacy learning, and developing a school culture that values honest, gentle, and beneficial speech. This will help shape a generation of Muslims who are not only digitally savvy but also have a solid Qur'anic character.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that, this research confirms that the concept of *Qaulan Sadida* in the Qur'an is the foundation of communication ethics that is relevant for character building in the digital era. The meaning of *Qaulan Sadida* as straight, true, fair, and responsible speech is not only limited to the literal dimension, but also includes social ethics, concern for others, and self-control so as

not to harm others. The views of classical mufasirs such as Ibn Katsir, Al-Maraghi, and Al-Qurtubi, reinforced by Quraish Shihab, show the universal nature of this concept so that it can be applied in da'wah, education, and social interaction. The principle of *Qaulan Sadida* includes five main aspects: honesty, gentleness, beneficial speech, justice, and humility. These five aspects form an Islamic communication framework that can counteract the rise of hoaxes, hate speech, and the digital civility crisis. Revitalizing these values means presenting wise, polite, and soothing communication patterns in cyberspace. The implications of this research emphasize the strategic role of Islamic educational institutions, both schools, pesantren, and universities, to integrate the value of *Qaulan Sadida* in the curriculum, digital literacy, and academic culture. Thus, the Muslim generation is not only digitally literate but also has a strong Qur'anic character, capable of being a moral support in modern society.

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