

Qur'anic Ethics and the Construction of Social Character

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ABSTRACT: *The development of social character has become an important concern in contemporary Islamic education because various forms of verbal violence, social stigma, prejudice, gossip, and discrimination continue to affect interpersonal relations. The Qur'an provides a comprehensive ethical framework for building a harmonious social order, particularly through QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13. This study aims to analyze the construction of social character contained in these verses through Sayyid Qutb's interpretation in Fi Zilalil Qur'an. This research employed a qualitative approach using thematic library research. The primary source was Sayyid Qutb's Fi Zilalil Qur'an, while secondary sources included classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries and literature on Islamic education, moral education, and character formation. Data were analyzed through thematic interpretation by identifying ethical prohibitions, positive social values, and the educational transformation process implied in the verses. The findings reveal that QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 constructs social character through three interconnected dimensions. First, the protection of human dignity is developed through the prohibition of ridicule, insult, offensive labeling, suspicion, spying, and backbiting. Second, social solidarity is built through recognition of human diversity, mutual acquaintance, equality, and the rejection of arrogance. Third, the formation of social character is constructed through a transformative process involving the purification of negative behavior, the cultivation of virtuous conduct, and the development of spiritual awareness. In Sayyid Qutb's interpretation, Qur'anic ethics is not limited to individual morality but functions as a foundation for building a healthy social order. This study argues that QS. Al-Hujurat 11–13 provides a relevant conceptual framework for Islamic character education, particularly in responding to contemporary challenges involving verbal violence, social exclusion, prejudice, and identity-based discrimination.*

Perkembangan karakter sosial telah menjadi perhatian penting dalam pendidikan Islam kontemporer karena berbagai bentuk kekerasan verbal, stigma sosial, prasangka, gosip, dan diskriminasi terus memengaruhi hubungan antarmanusia. Al-Qur'an menyediakan kerangka etika yang komprehensif untuk membangun tatanan sosial yang harmonis, khususnya melalui QS. Al-Hujurat ayat 11–13. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konstruksi karakter sosial yang terkandung dalam ayat-ayat tersebut melalui interpretasi Sayyid Qutb dalam Fi Zilalil Qur'an. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan tematik. Sumber utama penelitian adalah Fi Zilalil Qur'an karya Sayyid Qutb, sedangkan sumber sekundernya meliputi tafsir Al-Qur'an klasik dan kontemporer serta literatur mengenai pendidikan Islam, pendidikan moral, dan pembentukan karakter. Data dianalisis melalui interpretasi tematik dengan mengidentifikasi larangan-larangan etis, nilai-nilai sosial positif, serta proses transformasi pendidikan yang tersirat dalam ayat-ayat tersebut. Hasil penelitian

menunjukkan bahwa QS. Al-Hujurat ayat 11–13 membangun karakter sosial melalui tiga dimensi yang saling berkaitan. Pertama, perlindungan terhadap martabat manusia dibangun melalui larangan mengolok-olok, menghina, memberikan label atau julukan yang merendahkan, berprasangka, memata-matai, dan melakukan ghibah. Kedua, solidaritas sosial dibangun melalui pengakuan terhadap keberagaman manusia, saling mengenal, kesetaraan, dan penolakan terhadap kesombongan. Ketiga, pembentukan karakter sosial dikonstruksi melalui proses transformatif yang melibatkan penyucian dari perilaku negatif, penanaman perilaku luhur, dan pengembangan kesadaran spiritual. Dalam interpretasi Sayyid Qutb, etika Al-Qur'an tidak terbatas pada moralitas individu, tetapi berfungsi sebagai landasan untuk membangun tatanan sosial yang sehat. Penelitian ini berpendapat bahwa QS. Al-Hujurat ayat 11–13 menyediakan kerangka konseptual yang relevan bagi pendidikan karakter Islam, khususnya dalam merespons tantangan kontemporer yang berkaitan dengan kekerasan verbal, pengucilan sosial, prasangka, dan diskriminasi berbasis identitas.

Keywords: *Qur'anic Ethics, Social Character, Al-Hujurat, Sayyid Qutb, Islamic Character Education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of human character is one of the fundamental objectives of education. Education is not limited to the transmission of knowledge but also involves the formation of attitudes, values, habits, and patterns of social interaction. In Islamic education, character formation is closely related to the development of akhlak, which refers to the internal disposition that is manifested in human behavior and social relations (Ruswandi et al., 2022).

The urgency of character education has become increasingly significant in the context of contemporary social life. Social interaction is frequently marked by verbal hostility, ridicule, stigmatization, prejudice, gossip, and discrimination. The development of digital communication has also expanded the space in which negative forms of communication can occur (Dimyathi et al., 2025). Insults and derogatory labels can be disseminated rapidly, while assumptions about other people may develop without sufficient knowledge or verification (Rochmat et al., 2024).

Such problems indicate that the crisis of social character is not merely an individual problem. It is also a problem concerning the quality of social relationships and the development of a civilized community. Therefore, character education needs to address not only individual behavior but also the ethical principles that regulate relationships between individuals and groups (Suhendi, 2024).

The Qur'an contains extensive guidance concerning human interaction. Among the Qur'anic passages that provide a comprehensive framework for social ethics is QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13. These verses contain a series of ethical principles concerning the prohibition of ridiculing others, insulting, using offensive names, excessive suspicion, spying, backbiting, and social arrogance. At the same time, the verses emphasize human equality, diversity, mutual recognition, and piety as the basis of human dignity (Hemalia & Ronaydi, 2024).

The significance of these verses lies in their comprehensive structure. QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 does not merely provide isolated prohibitions. The verses construct a systematic ethical framework. The first part regulates language and interpersonal behavior. The second part regulates the inner attitudes that may lead to social conflict. The final part provides a positive anthropological foundation by explaining that human diversity is created so that people may know one another and that true human nobility is determined by piety.

Sayyid Qutb's *Fi Zilalil Qur'an* provides an important perspective for examining this ethical framework. His interpretation emphasizes the relationship between faith, moral consciousness, individual transformation, and social life. The Qur'anic message, in Qutb's view, must be manifested in concrete human behavior. Faith is therefore not merely a theoretical belief but a force that transforms the individual and social environment (Abdillah et al., 2025).

Previous research has examined QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 from the perspective of moral education. However, this study develops a different focus by examining the verses as a construction of social character. The study does not merely identify individual moral values but analyzes how the ethical principles in the verses form a sequential framework for protecting human dignity, building social solidarity, and transforming individual morality into a civilized social order (Sahliah et al., 2026).

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the construction of social character in QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 based on Sayyid Qutb's interpretation in *Fi Zilalil Qur'an*. The study focuses on three questions: (1) What forms of negative social behavior are criticized in QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13? (2) What positive social values are constructed through these verses? and (3) How can the interpretation of Sayyid Qutb be understood as a conceptual foundation for Islamic character education?

II. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a thematic library research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focused on interpreting meanings, values, and ethical concepts contained in QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13. The primary source of the research was Sayyid Qutb's *Fi Zilalil Qur'an*, particularly his interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13. The selection of this source was based on Qutb's distinctive approach, which connects Qur'anic interpretation with issues of faith, morality, social relations, and the development of human society. His interpretation emphasizes that Qur'anic values must be translated into concrete behavior and social life. Secondary sources consisted of classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries, books on Islamic education and moral education, and academic literature discussing Qur'anic ethics, character formation, and social relations.

Data were collected through several stages. First, the relevant Qur'anic verses and their interpretation in *Fi Zilalil Qur'an* were identified. Second, the interpretation was read and organized according to the ethical themes that emerged from the text. Third, relevant concepts from other commentaries and educational literature were used to enrich the interpretation. The data were analyzed thematically through three stages. The first stage involved identifying negative social behaviors prohibited in the verses, including ridicule,

insult, offensive labeling, suspicion, spying, and backbiting. The second stage involved identifying positive values, including respect, human equality, mutual recognition, solidarity, and piety. The third stage involved synthesizing these themes into a conceptual framework for social character formation. The validity of the interpretation was strengthened through source triangulation by comparing Sayyid Qutb's interpretation with other Qur'anic commentaries and relevant literature on Islamic education and moral development.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Protection of Human Dignity as the First Foundation of Social Character

The first ethical dimension constructed in QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 is the protection of human dignity. The Qur'an prohibits people from ridiculing, humiliating, insulting, or degrading others because outward differences cannot be used as a reliable measure of human worth. The prohibition contained in these verses indicates that the Qur'anic ethical framework begins by placing the dignity of every human being within a protected moral sphere. Before discussing broader social relations, the Qur'an first regulates how individuals perceive, speak about, and treat one another (Zubair, 2026).

Sayyid Qutb explains that ridicule may occur when individuals with wealth, physical strength, intelligence, beauty, social status, or other advantages consider themselves superior to others. Such behavior emerges from the assumption that visible characteristics determine human value. A person may perceive another as inferior because of physical appearance, economic condition, intellectual capacity, social position, or other external characteristics. However, this assumption contradicts the Qur'anic perspective because the true value of a human being cannot be fully measured through physical or material characteristics (Khodijah et al., 2024).

The prohibition of ridicule therefore contains a fundamental critique of social arrogance. Ridicule is not merely a form of inappropriate humor or verbal expression. It reflects an attitude in which one person places himself or herself above another person. The person who ridicules others implicitly assumes that he or she possesses a superior position from which the other person can be judged, mocked, or humiliated. In this sense, ridicule represents a distortion of human relationships because it transforms differences into instruments of domination (Ahmad, 2025).

The Qur'anic prohibition is particularly significant because it does not limit the prohibition to a particular social group. The expression used in the verse encompasses the possibility that men may ridicule other men and women may ridicule other women. This demonstrates that the ethical principle applies universally to human interaction. No individual has the moral right to degrade another person merely because of differences in appearance, status, ability, or social background.

This interpretation demonstrates that the prohibition of ridicule is based on a deeper principle: the recognition of human dignity. The Qur'an seeks to prevent the creation of a social hierarchy based on physical appearance, economic status, intellectual ability, or social position. Human beings may possess different abilities and social functions, but such differences cannot be used as a justification for humiliating others. The existence of

difference should therefore be understood within the framework of mutual respect rather than superiority and inferiority.

The prohibition of insulting and using offensive names further reinforces this principle. Language is not merely a communication tool. It can become a means of humiliating and damaging another person's dignity. A derogatory name may become a social label that continues to affect an individual's identity and relationships. Repeated verbal labeling can create stigma, strengthen social exclusion, and influence how an individual is perceived by others.

In this context, the Qur'anic prohibition of offensive names demonstrates the importance of ethical responsibility in communication. Words may appear temporary, but their social and psychological effects can be long-lasting. An insult may damage a person's self-confidence, create resentment, and weaken social trust. Therefore, the ethical regulation of language in QS. Al-Hujurat is not a minor aspect of social morality but an important mechanism for protecting the integrity of human relationships (Milyanto & Ridlwan, 2024).

The concept of human dignity also establishes an important connection between individual morality and social character. A person who respects the dignity of others will be more likely to develop empathy, restraint, humility, and respect in social interaction. Conversely, a person who habitually ridicules or humiliates others may contribute to the formation of a social environment characterized by fear, insecurity, and hostility (Murtadlo et al., 2025).

From the perspective of character education, this principle has significant implications. Character education should not focus exclusively on preventing physical violence. It must also address verbal and symbolic forms of violence, including mocking, humiliating, labeling, and degrading speech. In many cases, verbal violence may be normalized as humor or ordinary social interaction, even though it can significantly affect the dignity and psychological well-being of others (Mokodenseho et al., 2024).

Therefore, Qur'anic social character begins with the ability to recognize the dignity of others. This recognition requires individuals to develop the awareness that every person possesses value that cannot be determined solely by external characteristics. In the context of Islamic education, students should be guided to understand that differences in appearance, ability, social background, and achievement are not legitimate reasons for humiliation or exclusion (Jauhari & Panggabean, 2025).

The ethical framework of QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 consequently establishes respect for human dignity as the first foundation of social character. The process begins with the elimination of ridicule and degrading language, continues through the development of respect and empathy, and ultimately contributes to the formation of social relations based on equality and mutual recognition. Thus, the Qur'anic prohibition of ridicule and insult should be understood not merely as a list of behavioral restrictions but as a foundational principle for constructing a society in which human dignity is respected and protected.

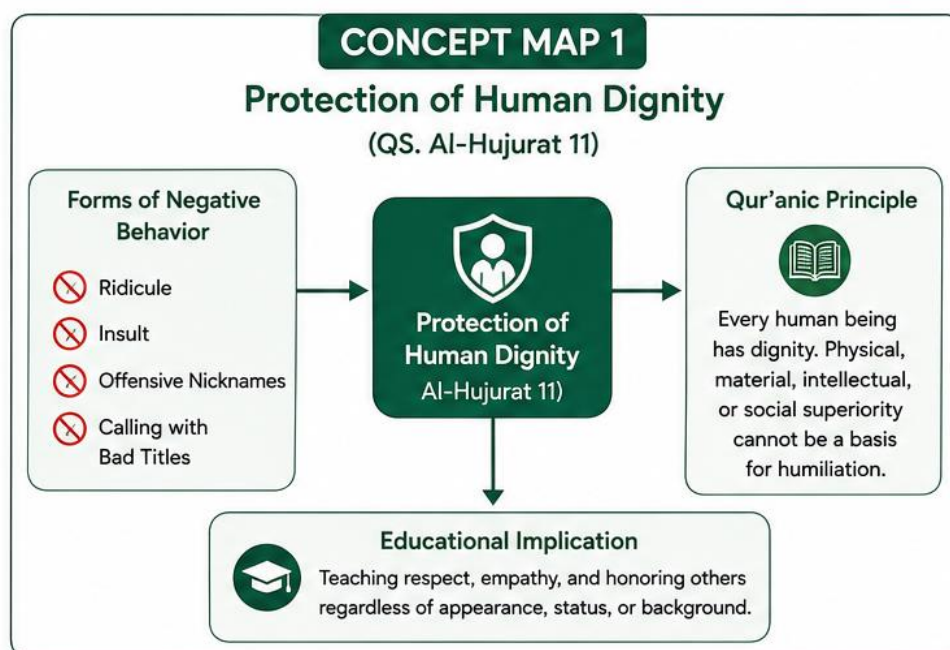


Figure 1. Protection of human dignity

Controlling Inner Attitudes: From Suspicion to Social Conflict

The second ethical dimension constructed in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 12 concerns the regulation of internal attitudes and the protection of social relationships from destructive forms of thought and behavior. If the previous verse focuses primarily on visible forms of social interaction, such as ridicule, insult, and offensive labeling, verse 12 moves to a deeper level of human morality. It regulates the internal attitudes and social practices that may gradually damage relationships, namely excessive suspicion, spying, and backbiting.

These three behaviors demonstrate that social conflict often begins not with visible action but with internal attitudes. A person may initially develop an unverified assumption about another individual. This assumption may then produce curiosity, distrust, and a desire to investigate the private affairs of others. When personal weaknesses or private information are discovered, they may subsequently become the subject of conversation and gossip. Thus, the Qur'anic sequence illustrates how a negative internal attitude can gradually develop into destructive social behavior (Zubair, 2026).

Sayyid Qutb emphasizes that suspicion can damage the moral quality of social relationships. Individuals who allow themselves to be controlled by unverified information may develop negative assumptions about others without sufficient evidence. This situation creates a social environment in which individuals are judged not on the basis of facts but on the basis of assumptions and personal interpretations. As a result, trust between individuals becomes weakened.

The problem of suspicion lies in its ability to transform uncertainty into negative judgment. A person may not possess sufficient knowledge about the behavior or intention of another person, yet still construct a negative interpretation. Once such an interpretation has been formed, subsequent information may be interpreted selectively to confirm the initial assumption. In this way, suspicion can create a distorted perception of others and become the beginning of social conflict.

The Qur'anic prohibition of excessive suspicion therefore represents an ethical demand for intellectual and moral restraint. Individuals are encouraged not to construct negative judgments without sufficient knowledge. This principle is particularly important in social environments where information can circulate rapidly and where individuals may easily form conclusions without verification.

From the perspective of social character, the control of suspicion requires the development of several virtues, including fairness, patience, self-control, and the willingness to seek clarification. A morally mature individual does not immediately accept every assumption as truth. Instead, such a person recognizes the limitations of personal knowledge and avoids making unjustified judgments about others (Mokodenseho et al., 2024).

When suspicion is allowed to develop without control, it may lead to the violation of privacy. The prohibition of spying in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 12 reflects the Qur'anic protection of individual privacy. Every person possesses personal rights that must not be violated without legitimate justification. Human beings have the right to personal security, privacy, and protection from the unnecessary exposure of their weaknesses (Milyanto & Ridlwan, 2024).

Spying represents a significant transformation in the relationship between individuals. Instead of accepting the limits of another person's privacy, the individual actively attempts to discover information that is not voluntarily disclosed. Such behavior reflects a lack of respect for personal boundaries. In this context, the Qur'anic prohibition of spying demonstrates that social ethics includes not only what individuals say publicly but also how they treat the private sphere of others.

The protection of privacy is essential for the development of social trust. A social relationship cannot develop harmoniously if individuals constantly fear that their personal weaknesses will be investigated and exposed. When privacy is respected, individuals can interact with a greater sense of security. Conversely, when privacy is violated, social relationships may become characterized by suspicion, fear, and defensiveness.

The connection between suspicion and spying is therefore significant. Suspicion may generate the desire to seek confirmation, while the act of spying may provide access to private information. However, the discovery of private information does not necessarily justify its disclosure or discussion. This is where backbiting becomes another important dimension of the Qur'anic ethical prohibition.

Backbiting represents the culmination of this destructive process. When a person searches for the weaknesses of others and then discusses them in their absence, social relations become damaged. The problem is not only that information about another person is communicated, but that the information concerns a weakness or characteristic that the person would not want to be discussed. The act of backbiting therefore combines the violation of personal dignity with the destruction of social trust (Murtadho et al., 2024).

Sayyid Qutb describes the Qur'anic analogy of backbiting as an extremely repulsive act in order to demonstrate its moral seriousness. The analogy provides a powerful moral image that encourages individuals to understand the ugliness of the behavior rather than treating it as an ordinary form of conversation. The use of such an image demonstrates that the

Qur'anic ethical method seeks to develop moral consciousness through both rational understanding and emotional awareness (Saihu & Aziz, 2020).

Backbiting also illustrates the relationship between speech and social responsibility. Speech does not merely communicate information; it can influence how others perceive a person. When negative information is discussed in someone's absence, the person concerned loses the opportunity to explain, clarify, or defend himself or herself. Consequently, backbiting creates an unequal social situation in which one person's reputation may be damaged without the possibility of direct response.

From this perspective, QS. Al-Hujurat verse 12 establishes a comprehensive ethical chain:

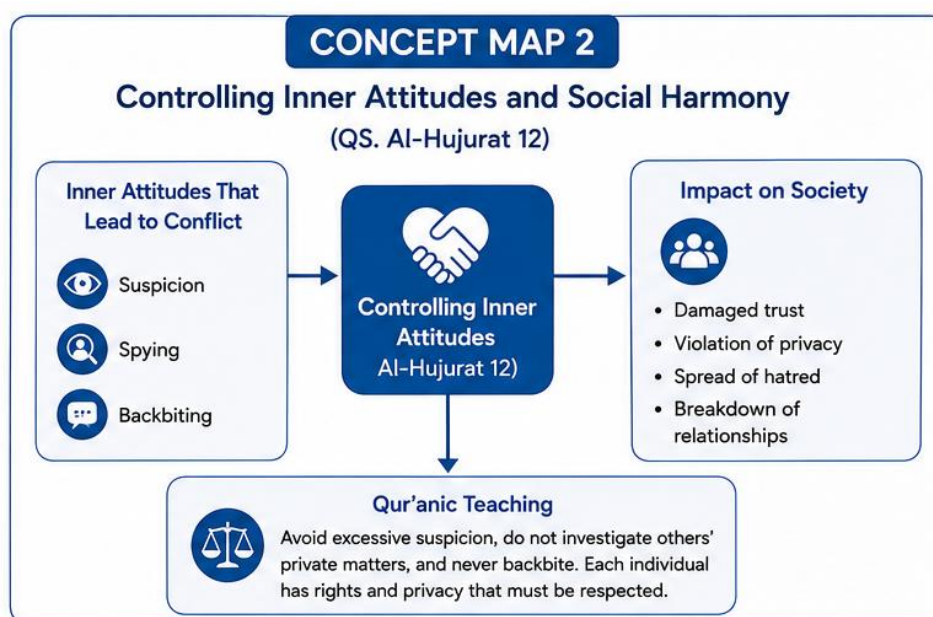


Figure 2. Controlling inner attitudes and social harmony

This sequence demonstrates that the Qur'an addresses social conflict at its earliest stage. Rather than waiting until open hostility emerges, the Qur'anic ethical framework seeks to prevent conflict by regulating the attitudes and behaviors that produce it.

The regulation of inner attitudes is therefore an essential component of social character. A person may appear to behave politely in public while internally maintaining suspicion and negative assumptions about others. For this reason, character education cannot focus solely on external behavior. It must also develop the ability to control thoughts, assumptions, curiosity, and emotional reactions.

In the context of Islamic education, this principle has significant implications for the development of students' social character. Students should be guided to distinguish between facts and assumptions, avoid spreading unverified information, respect the privacy of others, and understand the harmful consequences of discussing another person's weaknesses. Such education is particularly relevant in contemporary communication environments, where information can easily be shared and personal matters can quickly become public (Nurmalina, 2022).

Accordingly, the ethical framework of QS. Al-Hujurat verse 12 moves from the regulation of internal attitudes to the protection of social relationships. The prohibition of suspicion

protects individuals from unjustified judgment; the prohibition of spying protects personal privacy; and the prohibition of backbiting protects reputation and social trust. Together, these principles demonstrate that Qur'anic social ethics seeks to establish a community in which individuals are not only prevented from harming others through direct actions but are also educated to control the internal attitudes that may ultimately produce social conflict.

Thus, controlling inner attitudes constitutes a fundamental stage in the construction of social character. Social harmony cannot be achieved merely by regulating visible behavior while allowing suspicion, curiosity, and negative judgment to develop unchecked. The Qur'anic framework requires a deeper transformation of the individual, beginning with the purification of perception and intention and extending to responsible social interaction. Through this process, the prevention of suspicion, spying, and backbiting becomes an important foundation for building trust, protecting human dignity, and creating a harmonious social order (Mappanyompa et al., 2025).

Human Diversity as the Foundation of Social Recognition

QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 presents a positive framework for social relations by explaining that human beings are created from a common origin and then made into different nations and tribes so that they may know one another. This verse provides an important ethical foundation for understanding human diversity. Difference is not presented as a deviation from the ideal of human society, but as part of the order of creation. Consequently, diversity should not automatically become a source of conflict, exclusion, or superiority.

In Sayyid Qutb's interpretation, human diversity does not constitute a basis for conflict or social domination. Although human beings differ in race, ethnicity, color, language, culture, and social background, they originate from a common human foundation. This common origin establishes a fundamental relationship among human beings. Differences may exist at the level of identity and social characteristics, but these differences do not eliminate the basic equality of human beings.

From this perspective, the Qur'anic understanding of diversity challenges the tendency to construct social hierarchies based on group identity. When individuals consider their own ethnic, cultural, racial, or social group superior to others, diversity is transformed into a source of arrogance. Such an attitude contradicts the Qur'anic purpose of human diversity. Difference should lead to mutual recognition rather than hostility, and to cooperation rather than social exclusion.

The concept of ta'aruf provides an important foundation for social character. The term does not merely mean knowing another person's name, identity, or social background. It implies a process of mutual recognition through which individuals become aware of the existence, identity, and dignity of others. Ta'aruf therefore requires an attitude of openness toward difference and a willingness to engage with others without immediately judging them through stereotypes or preconceived assumptions (Shofwan & Munib, 2023).

This principle also indicates that social interaction should be based on recognition rather than domination. To know others means to acknowledge that they possess their own identity, experiences, cultural background, and dignity. Such recognition is important because social conflict often emerges when differences are not understood but instead interpreted through prejudice. The Qur'anic concept of ta'aruf consequently encourages

individuals to transform difference into an opportunity for learning and mutual understanding.

The principle is highly relevant to contemporary education. Schools and educational institutions consist of students from different family backgrounds, cultures, abilities, economic conditions, and social environments. These differences constitute an important part of the educational environment. However, if diversity is not accompanied by ethical education, it may become a source of exclusion, bullying, stereotyping, and discrimination (Murtadho et al., 2024).

The Qur'anic perspective offers a different orientation. Diversity is not a problem to be eliminated but a reality that should be transformed into cooperation and mutual recognition. In this context, Islamic education has an important role in developing students who are able to interact respectfully with individuals from different backgrounds. Education should not merely teach students to tolerate differences but should also encourage them to recognize diversity as an opportunity to develop empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility (Hasanah et al., 2022).

The connection between diversity and social character can therefore be understood through the following process:

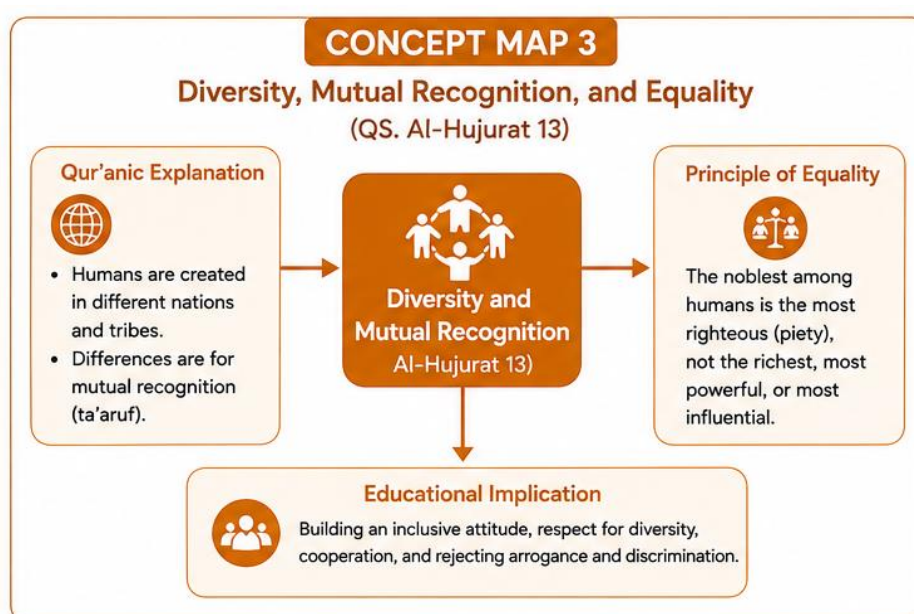


Figure 3. Diversity, mutual recognition, and equality

This process demonstrates that ta'aruf is not a passive form of social awareness. It is an active ethical process that requires individuals to overcome prejudice and develop a willingness to understand others. Through this process, differences can become a source of social strength rather than conflict.

Accordingly, QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 constructs human diversity as a foundation for social recognition. The verse teaches that the existence of different nations and tribes should not be used to establish superiority or inferiority among human beings. Instead, diversity should encourage mutual knowledge, respect, and cooperation. In the context of social character education, this Qur'anic principle provides a conceptual basis for developing

inclusive individuals who are capable of respecting differences and contributing to harmonious social relations (Aisah & Albar, 2021).

Equality and the Rejection of Social Arrogance

The Qur'anic concept of equality is not based on the elimination of human differences. Rather, it rejects the use of difference as a basis for arrogance, discrimination, and the construction of unjust social hierarchies. Human beings may differ in their social positions, material conditions, physical characteristics, intellectual abilities, cultural backgrounds, and other aspects of life. However, these differences do not determine the ultimate value and dignity of a human being.

According to Sayyid Qutb's interpretation, human diversity must be understood within the framework of a common human origin. No individual or group possesses an inherent right to consider itself superior merely because of its wealth, social status, physical appearance, ethnicity, or power. The Qur'anic standard of nobility is piety. This principle shifts the basis of human evaluation from external and material characteristics to moral and spiritual quality.

This perspective challenges social systems that measure human value through wealth, status, physical appearance, or power. In such systems, individuals may be treated differently according to their economic resources, social influence, or physical characteristics. The Qur'anic framework rejects this form of social arrogance because external advantages are not permanent indicators of human worth.

In the context of Islamic character education, this principle means that students must be educated to respect others regardless of their social, economic, ethnic, cultural, or physical background. Education should develop an awareness that every individual deserves respect and fair treatment. Differences in achievement or ability may exist, but they should not become a justification for humiliation, exclusion, or discrimination.

The concept of equality also has important implications for inclusive education. Students should not be categorized as superior or inferior solely because of their social, economic, ethnic, or physical differences. An inclusive educational environment should provide opportunities for all students to participate, interact, and develop their potential (Muzaki et al., 2026).

Thus, the Qur'anic concept of equality is closely connected to humility and respect. It does not deny diversity but prevents diversity from becoming a source of arrogance. Through this principle, QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 establishes that true human nobility is not determined by external identity but by moral and spiritual quality. Equality therefore becomes an important foundation for developing social character and building educational environments based on dignity, justice, and mutual respect.

From Individual Morality to Social Civilization

One of the important contributions of Sayyid Qutb's interpretation is the connection between individual morality and social order. The Qur'anic prohibition of ridicule, insult, suspicion, spying, and backbiting is not merely concerned with personal behavior. These prohibitions are designed to protect the structure of social relations and prevent destructive attitudes from developing into broader social conflict.

From this perspective, social civilization begins with the moral transformation of individuals. A society cannot be considered harmonious merely because it possesses formal rules or institutional structures. Its quality is also determined by the moral character of the individuals who participate in social life. When individuals respect the dignity of others, control their suspicions, protect privacy, and avoid damaging speech, these personal virtues gradually contribute to the development of trust and social stability.

Qutb emphasizes that the formation of an ideal society cannot occur suddenly. It requires a gradual and continuous process of moral development. A healthy social order begins with the transformation of individuals because social institutions and communities are ultimately formed through human relationships. If individuals are dominated by arrogance, prejudice, suspicion, and the desire to expose the weaknesses of others, social harmony will remain difficult to achieve.

This sequence illustrates that social civilization is not constructed only through external regulation. It also depends on the internalization of moral values. For example, the prohibition of backbiting becomes socially meaningful when individuals develop self-control and understand the importance of protecting the dignity of others.

Thus, Islamic character education should not be limited to the teaching of moral concepts. It must create a process through which values are internalized and practiced consistently. Students should not merely know that ridicule, prejudice, and backbiting are morally wrong; they should also develop the awareness and practical ability to avoid such behavior in daily interactions.

Accordingly, the Qur'anic framework demonstrates that the construction of a civilized society begins with individual transformation. When moral values become part of individual character, they can gradually influence interpersonal relationships and contribute to the development of a social order based on dignity, trust, respect, and solidarity (Fattah & Roniyah, 2026).

Takhalli, Tahalli, and Tajalli as a Model of Character Transformation

The ethical framework contained in QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 can be further understood through the concepts of takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli. These three concepts provide a useful framework for explaining the process through which Qur'anic ethical teachings are transformed into individual character (Romzi et al., 2024). Rather than viewing character formation as a single act of moral instruction, this framework presents it as a gradual process involving the elimination of negative traits, the development of positive virtues, and the internalization of spiritual consciousness (Shofwan & Munib, 2023).

1. Takhalli: Eliminating Negative Social Behavior

Takhalli refers to the process of emptying oneself from negative moral characteristics. In the context of QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13, this stage involves the elimination of ridicule, insult, offensive labeling, excessive suspicion, spying, backbiting, and arrogance. These behaviors represent attitudes and actions that damage human dignity and weaken social relationships.

The process of takhalli is essential because positive character cannot develop effectively if destructive habits remain deeply embedded in the individual. A person may understand the importance of respect and solidarity, but these values will be difficult to practice

consistently if the individual continues to maintain prejudice, arrogance, or a habit of humiliating others.

Therefore, takhalli represents the process of moral awareness and self-correction. Individuals are first required to recognize negative behavior, understand its consequences, and make a conscious effort to abandon it. In this sense, character transformation begins with the ability to identify what must be removed from the self.

2. Tahalli: Developing Positive Social Virtues

After negative characteristics have been eliminated, the process continues through tahalli. Tahalli refers to adorning oneself with positive moral qualities. The positive values derived from QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 include respect, mutual recognition, equality, humility, solidarity, empathy, and social responsibility.

At this stage, character education moves beyond the prohibition of bad behavior and actively develops positive patterns of interaction. Individuals are not merely taught not to ridicule others; they are also encouraged to respect and appreciate them. They are not merely prohibited from backbiting; they are guided to protect the dignity and privacy of others.

Tahalli therefore represents the constructive dimension of character education. It transforms moral instruction into positive habits and social behavior. The individual begins to develop a consistent disposition to treat others with respect, recognize human differences, and maintain social relationships based on trust and responsibility.

3. Tajalli: Developing Spiritual Consciousness

The third stage is tajalli, which represents the emergence of deeper spiritual awareness. At this stage, the individual understands that social ethics are not merely social conventions or external rules but are connected to faith and responsibility before Allah.

This spiritual awareness provides a deeper foundation for ethical behavior. An individual does not behave respectfully merely because of social pressure, fear of punishment, or the desire to maintain a positive public image. Rather, moral behavior becomes connected to an internal awareness of accountability before Allah.

In this context, tajalli represents the internalization of Qur'anic ethics. The values of respect, equality, humility, and social responsibility become part of the individual's moral and spiritual consciousness. The individual understands that how one treats other human beings is also related to one's relationship with Allah (Anam & Sya'roni, 2026).

The three stages can therefore be understood as a model of character transformation:

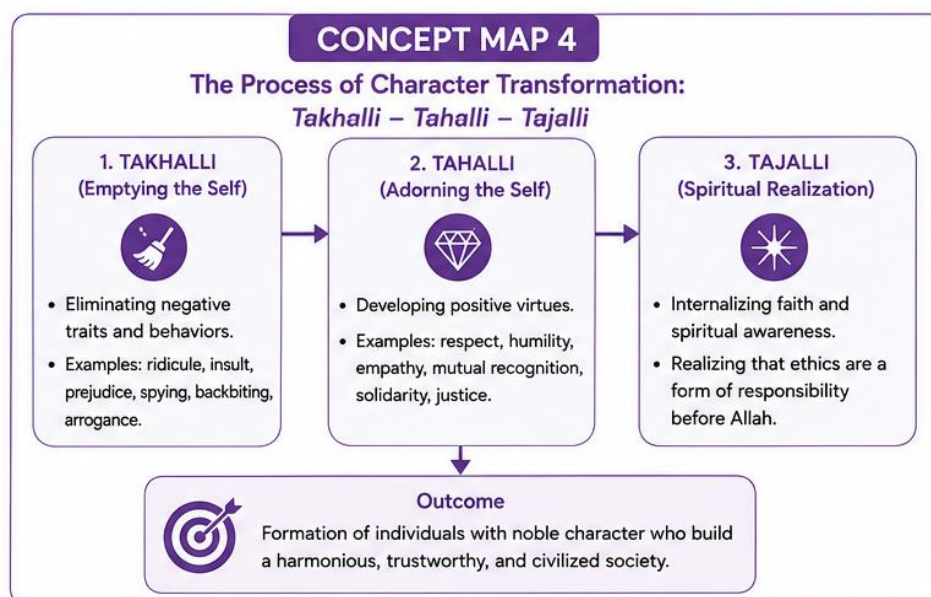


Figure 4. Takhalli–Tahalli–Tajalli

This process illustrates that the construction of social character involves both negative and positive dimensions. The individual must first remove destructive attitudes and behaviors, then cultivate positive social virtues, and finally develop a deeper spiritual consciousness that sustains ethical behavior.

The model may also be understood as a gradual movement from moral purification to moral construction and finally to spiritual internalization. Takhalli creates the necessary space for positive character. Tahalli fills that space with virtues that shape social interaction. Tajalli provides the spiritual foundation that enables those virtues to be practiced consistently and sincerely.

In the context of Islamic character education, this model offers an integrated approach. Education should not only communicate moral rules but also guide learners through a process of transformation. Students need to understand which behaviors must be abandoned, which virtues must be developed, and why ethical conduct is spiritually significant.

The final outcome is an individual who is capable of respecting human dignity, recognizing diversity, rejecting arrogance, protecting the privacy of others, and maintaining responsible social relationships. Thus, takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli provide a conceptual model for explaining how Qur’anic ethical principles can move from textual guidance to internal character and ultimately to consistent social behavior.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for the development of social character. Based on Sayyid Qutb’s interpretation in *Fi Zilalil Qur’an*, the verses construct social ethics through three major dimensions. First, the Qur’an protects human dignity by prohibiting ridicule, insult, offensive labeling, prejudice, spying, and backbiting. Second, the Qur’an develops social solidarity through the recognition of human diversity, ta’aruf, equality, and the rejection

of arrogance. Third, the formation of social character occurs through a transformative process consisting of takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli. The main contribution of this study lies in understanding QS. Al-Hujurat verses 11–13 not merely as a collection of moral prohibitions but as an integrated framework for social character education. The verses demonstrate that the development of a civilized society begins with the transformation of individual attitudes, language, and behavior. In the context of Islamic education, this framework can be applied to respond to contemporary challenges involving verbal violence, bullying, prejudice, social exclusion, and identity-based discrimination. Character education based on the Qur’anic framework should therefore combine the elimination of negative behavior, the development of positive social values, and the internalization of spiritual consciousness.

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