

**THE PARADIGM OF DIGITAL PRIVACY IN INDONESIAN
TAFSIR: A STUDY OF TAFSIR AL-AZHAR ON QS. AL-HUJURĀT
(49): 12 IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION**

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Abstract: Digital privacy has become a global concern amid the widespread personal data breaches, as reflected in regulations such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and reports by Amnesty International. In the context of Indonesian Muslim society, Islamic ethical values have the potential to serve as a normative foundation in responding to digital privacy challenges. QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 which prohibits suspicion, *tajassus* (spying or snooping), and *ghibab* (backbiting or gossip) is highly relevant in today's digital world. This study aims to examine the paradigm of digital privacy through Buya Hamka's interpretation of this verse in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, and to explore its contribution to the development of digital ethics grounded in Qur'anic values. Employing a qualitative interpretive paradigm, this research adopts a thematic and comparative tafsir approach. The object of study is the ethical and normative meaning of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 in a contemporary context. The primary data source is *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, which is analyzed in depth, while secondary sources include literature on digital ethics, privacy policies, and other tafsir work. The analysis technique used is content analysis with a normative-thematic approach to link the moral values of the Qur'an with digital phenomena. The findings show that Buya Hamka interprets the verse in a social-moral framework, going beyond legalistic dimensions. The concept of *tabayyun* (verification), which he emphasizes, emerges as a key principle for information verification and personal data protection. This research highlights the importance of reinterpreting classical tafsir as an ethical response to the advancement of information technology, and as a contribution of Islam to the global discourse on digital ethics.

Keywords: QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12; Digital Privacy; Tafsir Al-Azhar; Qur'anic Ethics

Introduction

Digital privacy refers to an individual's right to maintain the confidentiality, security, and control of their personal information stored or collected digitally. This includes various aspects such as personal data, online activities, geographic location, and electronic communications (Sutriawan et al., 2023). In the modern era, where technology and the internet are used on a daily basis, digital privacy has become increasingly important. With the widespread use of social platforms, applications, and other online services, personal information is often vulnerable to misuse, breaches, and even unauthorized access (Hiranandani, 2010).

The phenomena of privacy violations in the digital era has become an increasingly urgent issue alongside the growing use of information and communication technologies. A report the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFE-net) in the second quarter of 2023 recorded at least 55 digital security incidents, with personal data

breaches being the most dominant type—showing an increase of over 66% compared to the previous period (Muhajir, 2023). In addition, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information in collaboration with Katadata Insight Center in October 2021 revealed that 53.6% of respondents had a low level of personal data protection, as indicated by risky digital behavior (Annur, 2022). These facts indicate that the issue of digital privacy violations is not only technical, but also involves ethical and normative dimensions. Therefore, it is relevant to examine this issue through the perspective of Qur’anic values—particularly through the interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12, which emphasizes the prohibition of *tajassus* (spying or snooping) and the importance of preserving individual dignity.

In this regard, privacy is not only an individual right, but also a complex issue that requires greater attention from various stakeholders, including the government, society, and digital service providers. In the era of digital reform, the growing intensity of online activity frequently raises concerns over privacy. Although online activity has become increasingly accepted, privacy concerns have paradoxically intensified, highlighting the need for adaptive and dynamic legal policies (Putra & Hidayatullah, 2020).

Recurring privacy issues today offer valuable lessons and experiences that emphasize the necessity of protecting one’s privacy. This forms the central focus of the present study, which takes QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 of the Qur’an as a foundational reference in addressing privacy violations in the modern era. This verse is chosen because it explicitly addresses three forms of ethical misconduct that are highly relevant to the digital context: negative assumptions (*su’ al-ẓān*), spying or snooping (*tajassus*), and backbiting (*ghībah*)—which, in practice, may take the form of data spying, unauthorized information disclosure, and online defamation through social media. Hamka’s *Tafsir Al-Azhar* explains that the prohibitions in this verse aim to safeguard individual dignity, honor, and social relations—values that, in today’s context, can be interpreted as efforts to protect a person’s digital rights from unethical behavior in cyberspace. For this reason, QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 is regarded as the most relevant Qur’anic reference for exploring the paradigm of digital privacy in the context of Indonesian tafsir.

Previous research conducted by Suari and Sarjana highlighted the weakness of personal data protection regulations in Indonesia, which still rely on a draft bill and have yet to fully guarantee citizens’ right to privacy (Anggen Suari & Sarjana, 2023). Aliah et al. emphasized the importance of privacy ethics in online counseling practices, where personal data breaches can lead to psychological harm and the breakdown of professional relationships (Himmatun ’Aliah et al., 2024). Winusa and Bustam, using a psychoanalytic approach, pointed out how the phenomena of digital voyeurism on social media reflects privacy violations driven by psychological impulses and a permissive online culture (Bustam, 2021).

These three studies address crucial issues from legal, ethical, and sociocultural. In contrast, this research takes a different approach by examining the issue of digital privacy through the Islamic values, employing a Qur’anic exegesis perspective. The focus is placed on QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 as interpreted in Tafsir Al-Azhar by Hamka, which offers an ethical-religious perspective on privacy violations in the digital era. This perspective remains underexplored in contemporary digital privacy discourse and thus offers a novel

contribution by expanding the scope of thematic and contextual exegesis studies in the Indonesia.

This study aims to critically analyze how Buya Hamka interprets QS. Al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12 in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, with a particular focus on its relevance to the evolving issue of digital privacy in contemporary Indonesian society. The research not only identifies the privacy-related values embedded within the verse, but also explores how Buya Hamka actualizes the moral messages of the Qur'an in a broader social context. His contextual and sociological interpretative approach demonstrates a deep concern for the realities of a plural and modern Indonesian society, especially in safeguarding individual dignity and honor. Prohibitions such as *tajassus*, *ghibah*, and *su' al-ẓān* are explained by Buya Hamka not merely as individual moral rules but as warnings against the social damage caused by privacy violations and the spread of others' disgrace. This interpretation becomes highly relevant in the current digital reality, where privacy breaches can occur on a massive scale through social media and information technology. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate how *Tafsir Al-Azhar* can contribute to the development of digital ethics based on Qur'anic values in the Indonesian context.

Although QS. Al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12 has been interpreted by both classical and contemporary exegetes, the focus of these interpretations generally remains limited to broad social or individual moral concerns in traditional societies. There is a noticeable lack of Qur'anic exegesis that explicitly links the values embedded in this verse to contemporary digital ethical challenges, particularly in relation to privacy violations facilitated by technology and social media. This study addresses that academic gap by revisiting the Qur'anic exegesis—specifically through the *adabī ijtimā'ī* (ethical-social) approach of Buya Hamka's *Tafsir Al-Azhar*—in order to formulate normative principles for digital privacy ethics in a modern setting. The novelty of this research lies in integrating Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary digital privacy discourse, thereby positioning tafsir not only as a source of moral reference but also as a normative foundation for constructing cyber ethics based on Islamic values.

This study employs an interpretative qualitative paradigm to explore the ethical and normative dimensions of QS. Al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12, particularly the prohibition of *tajassus* (spying), in the context of contemporary digital life. Using a thematic exegesis (*tafsīr maḥdū'ī*) approach, it examines relevant Qur'anic verses related to privacy and their application within modern social realities shaped by digital technology. The primary data source in this study is *Tafsir Al-Azhar* by Buya Hamka, which is examined in depth to understand Islamic ethical perspectives on privacy. Secondary sources include literature on digital ethics, data privacy policies, and other relevant tafsir works for comparison. The data are analyzed using content analysis with a normative-thematic approach, aiming to identify Qur'anic moral values and relate them contextually to privacy violations in digital media. Through this approach, the study seeks to formulate Islamic digital ethics grounded in Qur'anic principles, contributing to a responsive Islamic discourse on technological developments.

Definition and Scope of Digital Privacy

Digital privacy is a fundamental individual right to maintain control over one's personal information within the digital ecosystem. In today's increasingly connected society, private space is no longer confined to the physical realm; it now extends into the virtual sphere, where data, digital footprints, and online interactions form part of one's personal identity. Broadly speaking, digital privacy refers to the effort to protect personal information from unauthorized access, use, or dissemination by individuals, institutions, or corporations (Sutriawan et al., 2023).

The scope of digital privacy includes several interrelated dimensions. *First*, privacy literacy, which refers to users' awareness and understanding of how their personal data is collected, managed, and shared across online platforms. Studies have shown that low digital literacy among Indonesian internet users often leads to the unintentional exposure of sensitive information, making it vulnerable to misuse by third parties (Aldan Nur Zen & Sitanggang, 2023).

Second, digital privacy is grounded in the ethics of technology use, which involves moral principles in accessing, handling, and sharing personal data. On social media, for instance, many users easily disseminate others' private content—such as photos, videos, or conversations—without considering the ethical implications of such actions. Aliah et al. emphasize that weak digital ethics can lead to serious violations of individual dignity and honor, even in professional settings such as online counseling (Aliah, 2024).

Third, another critical dimension lies in the legal framework that protects personal data as part of citizens' constitutional rights. Although Indonesia has enacted Law No. 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection, challenges remain in its enforcement and oversight, particularly regarding consistent legal application and sustained public education (Dhianty, 2022). This suggests that legal protection alone is insufficient; a healthy digital culture and collective social responsibility are also essential.

In today's open and permissive digital environment, threats to privacy arise not only from systemic weaknesses but also from widespread social behaviors such as online stalking, *ghibab*, and *tajassus*. These phenomena reflect the moral dimension of privacy violations—one that cannot be fully addressed by positive law alone. This study therefore seeks to offer an alternative perspective by using Buya Hamka's interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 in *Tafsir Al-Azhar* as a primary reference. In this verse, Buya Hamka highlights ethical values such as the prohibition of *tajassus*, *ghibab*, and the command to uphold *husn al-zann* (positive assumption), which together form a moral foundation for a society that upholds mutual respect for dignity and private boundaries. When critically contextualized in the digital landscape, these values have the potential to serve as Islamic ethical principles for protecting users from increasingly pervasive privacy violations.

Thus, the scope of digital privacy in this study is not limited to legal or technical aspects, but is also examined through the perspective of Qur'anic values using a thematic exegesis approach. The research focuses on how privacy ethics are interpreted and articulated by Buya Hamka in this verse, and how those values may be translated into moral principles within the digital lives of contemporary Muslim communities.

To provide a more systematic illustration of the conceptual framework employed in this study, the following diagram outlines the scope and interpretative approach to digital

privacy. It visualizes the interconnected dimensions of privacy literacy, digital ethics, and legal protection, while also extending the discourse through Islamic ethical values as articulated by Buya Hamka in his interpretation of QS. Al-Ḥujurāt (49):12. This framework underscores the notion that safeguarding privacy in the digital age requires an integrated response—one that combines technical measures, normative awareness, and spiritual values capable of fostering moral responsibility in the use of digital technologies.

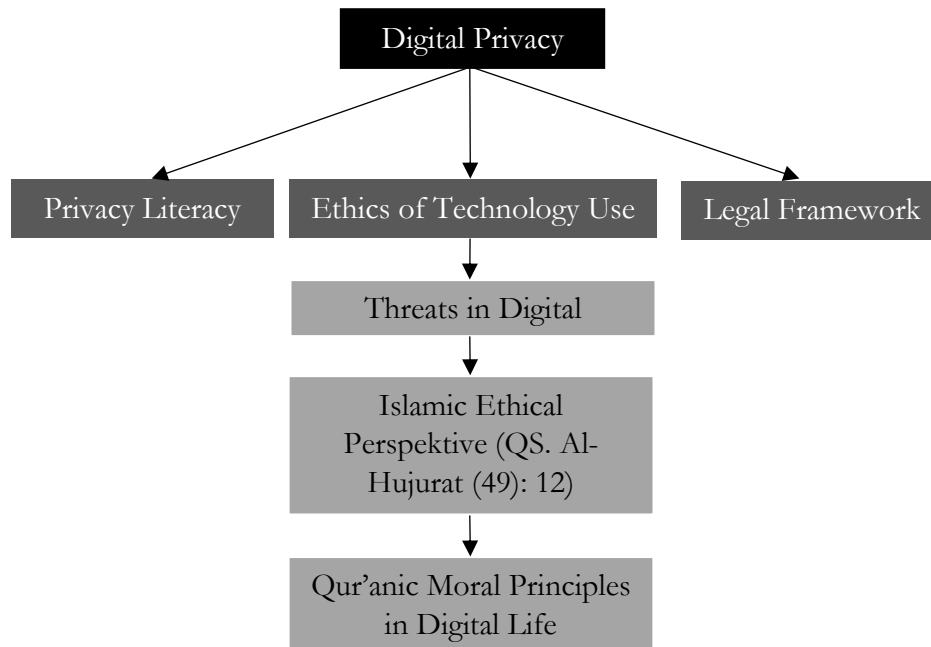


Figure 1. Scope of Digital Privacy and Its Ethical Interpretation

The figure 1 above presents a conceptual framework that delineates the definition and scope of digital privacy in a multidimensional manner. This study does not confine its analysis to legal and technical aspects alone but also incorporates a Qur'anic ethical perspective, as interpreted by Buya Hamka in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. Each element in the diagram represents a strategically interconnected component, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of digital privacy issues.

Biography of Buya Hamka

Buya Hamka, whose full name was Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, was a prominent Indonesian Islamic scholar, literary figure, and intellectual, born on February 16, 1908, in West Sumatra. His strong Islamic intellectual foundation was shaped early on by his family background, particularly his father Haji Rasul, a leading Minangkabau cleric and founder of Sumatera Thawalib. In addition to traditional pesantren education, Hamka actively read the works of Islamic reformist thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, and other modern Arab scholars. He also engaged with Western thought in philosophy, literature, and politics, which broadened his worldview and sharpened his social awareness (Mustaminah, 2023; Zanuba & Musolli, 2023).

Beyond his role as a religious scholar, Buya Hamka was also known as a journalist, novelist, and Muhammadiyah activist. This multidisciplinary experience gave him a unique capacity to respond to the shifting social dynamics of Indonesian society. His involvement

in journalism and activism—such as his role as editor of *Panji Masyarakat*—further developed his critical perspective on contemporary issues, including those related to public morality, intergroup relations, and ethics in public discourse (Kamal & Mulyana, 2019).

His most significant intellectual contribution in the field of Qur’anic interpretation is *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, a monumental work he wrote during his political imprisonment in the Old Order era. This tafsir stands out not only as one of the first comprehensive exegeses written in the Indonesian language but also for its contextual and communicative approach. Buya Hamka did not merely offer literal explanations of Qur’anic verses; he endeavored to relate them to the socio-cultural realities of Indonesian society (Musyarif, 2019).

Throughout *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Buya Hamka demonstrates a deep sensitivity to social values such as respect for personal dignity, the prohibition of exposing others’ disgrace, and the importance of cultivating positive assumptions in interpersonal relations. One of the clearest examples is found in his interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49):12, which prohibits *tajassus* (spying) and *ghibah* (backbiting). He writes:

“The Qur’an does not merely prohibit peering into others’ homes or eavesdropping on their conversations, but also forbids harboring negative suspicions. For from suspicion arises tajassus, and from tajassus arises ghibah...” (Tafsir Al-Azhar, Juz 26, p. 118)

When placed in the context of digital privacy, Hamka’s statement closely parallels the behavior of internet users today. Practices such as cyberstalking, doxing (publishing personal data without consent), and sharing private content without the owner’s permission have become increasingly normalized. Buya Hamka had long recognized the social dangers of such actions in their traditional form, and his tafsir provides an ethical framework that can be extended to the digital age.

In interpreting verses that address manners and social etiquette—such as the prohibition against calling others by offensive nicknames (QS. Al-Hujurāt (49):11)—Hamka underscores the importance of preserving human dignity in the public sphere, which can also be understood as a call to foster a respectful and ethical digital environment. He reminds us that human dignity must be protected, not demeaned or turned into a source of mockery, even under the guise of “entertainment” (Wahdina, 2022).

Hamka frequently draws on analogies from everyday life, including the modern social developments of his time. His social and intellectual background enabled him to bridge the sacred text with contemporary needs, including ethical challenges in the digital realm. For instance, when interpreting the concept of *amānah* (trust) in QS. al-Mu’minūn (23): 8, he expands its meaning beyond the physical or political to include the responsibility of safeguarding entrusted information—a principle highly relevant to today’s data privacy concerns (Sahal & Sulastri, 2023).

In summary, Buya Hamka’s social background, intellectual breadth, and activism shaped not only the depth of his perspective but also made *Tafsir Al-Azhar* a living, adaptable work that continues to address the evolving challenges of the times. His Qur’anic ethical approach in interpreting social verses holds great potential as a foundation for developing Islamic digital ethics, especially concerning privacy protection and the preservation of individual dignity in an era dominated by social media and information technology (Hidayat, 2015).

Interpretation of Surah Al-Hujurāt

In the context of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, this verse was revealed as a response to social behaviors during the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), particularly the growing tendency among some individuals to engage in negative assumptions and mockery (Patonah dkk, 2022). Surah Al-Hujurat: 12 reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

“O you who believe! Avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumptions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.” (QS. Al-Hujurāt (49):12)

This verse conveys strong moral and ethical guidance that remains relevant in the context of both offline and digital social interactions. In Tafsir Al-Azhar, Buya Hamka identifies three prohibited behaviors in this verse: *ẓann* (negative assumptions), *tajassus* (spying or snooping), and *ghibab* (backbiting) (Husni dkk., 2023). All three not only damage social harmony but also violate the ethical and privacy principles upheld in Islam.

Linguistically, the word “ظن” (*ẓan*) in Arabic refers to assumption or speculation, often implying a negative connotation when lacking strong evidence. In this context, it refers to baseless suspicion that can spark slander or interpersonal conflict. The word “تجسس” (*tajassus*) derives from the root word ج س س, meaning to secretly search for someone’s private matters or flaws. In the digital context, it can include spying on personal data, unauthorized access to digital information, or eavesdropping on communication, all clearly condemned by Islamic ethical standards. Meanwhile, “غيبه” (*ghibab*) refers to speaking ill of someone in their absence, even if the information is true. Buya Hamka likens this to “eating the flesh of one’s brother,” as graphically depicted in the verse. In the digital sphere, this takes the form of negative comments, the spread of shameful information, or defamation via social media platforms.

By examining these three key terms semantically, it becomes clear that the Qur’an provides explicit boundaries for privacy and ethical communication that are highly contextual to the challenges of the digital age. Therefore, this verse serves as a normative foundation for developing a digital privacy paradigm in Islam, especially through contextual interpretations such as those offered by Buya Hamka. To clarify the relationship between linguistic meaning, exegetical interpretation, and digital ethical relevance, the following table presents a synthesized summary:

Table 1. The Summary of the Ethical Meaning of Surah Al-Hujurat: 12 in the Digital Context
According to *Tafsir Al-Azhar*

Keywords	Linguistic Meaning	Interpretation by Buya Hamka	Relevance in Digital Ethics
<i>Ẓan</i> ظن	Assumption or speculation (often baseless)	Negative assumptions are forbidden as they	Avoid forming judgments based on fragmented digital information;

		cause slander and conflict	refrain from being judgmental on social media
<i>Tajassus</i> تجسس	Secretly seeking others' flaws or private matters	Spying violates honor and the right to privacy	Prohibits cyberstalking, data tapping, and online surveillance
<i>Ghibah</i> غيبة	Speaking ill of someone behind their back	Described as “ <i>eating the flesh of one’s brother</i> ”; highly despicable	Includes spreading shameful content, defamatory remarks, and online slander

The table above demonstrates how Qur’anic teachings, when interpreted contextually, can inform practical ethical guidelines for the digital age. The verse emphasizes the need for moral discipline in all forms of interaction, particularly in preventing slander and gossip that disrupt social harmony. Human diversity whether racial, ethnic, or otherwise must not be a basis for ridicule, but rather a foundation for mutual respect and understanding. This resonates with Quraish Shihab’s view that diversity is a divine design to be honored (Huda, 2021).

In today’s society, the ethical values embedded in QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 are increasingly vital for nurturing respectful and constructive social relations. The verse fosters strong social capital by encouraging mutual protection over suspicion or harm (Mu’min dkk., 2024). In digital contexts, these values require clear application. The prohibition of *tajassus* corresponds to the rejection of practices such as cyberstalking and doxing. The ban on *ghibah* applies directly to online defamation or the spread of shameful content. Meanwhile, the warning against *ẓan* urges caution against forming judgments based on incomplete or unverified digital information. Collectively, these prohibitions offer a moral framework for ethical digital conduct—grounded in privacy, dignity, and social responsibility. Ultimately, QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 calls on Muslims to uphold core moral values across all spheres of life. By avoiding suspicion, rejecting slander, and embracing diversity, it encourages the cultivation of a just, inclusive, and ethically conscious society—deeply relevant amid the complexities of the digital era.

Analysis of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12

In today’s digital age, privacy has become more than just a personal matter, it’s a crucial social value that shapes how people interact online (‘Aliah, 2024). A lack of awareness regarding the importance of privacy may lead to data misuse and serious violations of personal boundaries. Therefore, education on cyber ethics and digital privacy awareness is crucial in shaping the character and digital responsibility of younger generations. At the same time, legal challenges continue to emerge in response to society’s rapid digital transformation. Governments and legal institutions are faced with the challenge of securely accessing and managing data while respecting individual privacy rights. Adaptive and proactive regulations are thus required to support responsible digital transformation and mitigate potential risks (Bahram, 2023).

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), privacy violations are not only seen as social or legal infractions but also carry significant religious consequences. According to the interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12, *tajassus*, *ghibah*, and *sū’ al-ẓan* are

categorized as sins that infringe upon *ḥuqūq al-'ibād* (interpersonal rights). Islam teaches that asking forgiveness from God isn't enough in such cases, one must also make amends with the people affected. In some situations, these actions could even warrant legal punishment (*ta'zīr*) if they result in real psychological, moral, or financial harm (Martinelli et al., 2023).

Digital privacy violations, in this regard, are understood as transgressions against *ḥaq shar'i* (legally protected rights), which carry both worldly and spiritual consequences. This reflects the Qur'an's moral teachings as not merely abstract ideals, but as normative legal and ethical principles relevant to addressing modern digital challenges (Martinelli et al., 2023). To further demonstrate the relevance of these Qur'anic values to contemporary privacy issues, the following table outlines how the principles of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 directly correspond to current digital privacy violations:

Table 2. Comparison of the Value of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 and the Issue of Digital Privacy

No.	Qur'anic Value (QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12)	Digital Privacy Violation	Ethical and Fiqh Implications
1.	Prohibition of negative assumptions (<i>su' al-z'ann</i>)	Spreading unfounded or harmful opinions online	Violates communication ethics; considered sinful; can incite slander/conflict (<i>ḥuqūq al-'ibād</i>)
2.	Prohibition of spying or snooping (<i>tajassus</i>)	Hacking, surveillance, unauthorized location tracking	Active privacy breach; subject to <i>ta'zīr</i> and legal accountability
3.	Prohibition of backbiting (<i>ghībah</i>)	Sharing someone's private info without consent	Requires apology or compensation if harm is caused
4.	Principle of verification (<i>tabayyun</i>)	Hoaxes, fake news, unverified claims	Islam stresses fact-checking before spreading it to the public.
5.	Upholding dignity and honor	Body-shaming, doxing, online shaming	Violates human dignity; entails moral and legal accountability (<i>ḥuqūq al-'ibād</i>)
6.	Avoiding slander (<i>fitnah</i>) and manipulation	Deepfakes, clickbait, provocative media content	Categorized as major slander; entails serious social and spiritual consequences

As the table shows, QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 explicitly warns against unethical behaviors in the verse, “*wa lā tajassasū wa lā yaghtab ba'dukum ba'dā*,” meaning “Do not spy on one another, nor backbite each other.” These three prohibitions (*su' al-z'ann*, *tajassus*, and *ghībah*) form the ethical foundation for maintaining healthy and respectful social relationships. Scholars have long emphasized that this warning is not limited to personal ethics but also forms a collective moral framework for a peaceful and harmonious society (Fathni et al., 2023).

In the digital context, these prohibitions hold even broader implications. They directly address ethical challenges such as misinformation, online surveillance, and hate speech. Moreover, this verse can be expanded to serve as the foundation for a digital ethics framework grounded in Islamic values, especially through the concept of *ḥuqūq al-'ibād*

(interpersonal rights). Upholding others' privacy on social media, refraining from sharing shameful content without permission, and avoiding premature judgments based on digital fragments are acts of honoring others' rights in Islam. Digital infractions such as doxing, hacking, and defamatory comments fundamentally violate the dignity and personal rights protected under Islamic teachings (Bunga et al., 2022). On the other hand, the principle of *ḥuqūq Allāh* (*ḥuqūq al-'abd*) teaches that obedience to divine commands including those concerning speech and behavior in digital spaces is both a worldly and spiritual responsibility. Cyber ethics in Islam is not merely a matter of social decorum, but a reflection of faith and religious commitment. QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 thus offers not only general moral guidance, but also a normative basis for Islamic digital ethics—integrating duties to fellow humans (*ḥuqūq al-'ibād*) and to God (*ḥuqūq Allāh*). As such, it provides a robust ethical foundation for the development of policy and education programs in digital civility informed by Qur'anic values.

Tafsir Al-Azhar by Buya Hamka adopts an *adabi-ijtima'i* approach, which means it interprets Qur'anic verses not only through textual analysis but also by taking into the social and cultural context of contemporary society (Aini, 2021). Hamka emphasized that backbiting and baseless suspicion damage interpersonal relationships and foster injustice (Salsabila dkk, 2023). He explained that such behaviors contradict the very essence of Islamic ethics, which stress the importance of preserving others' honor and dignity. Citing Allah's warning, he reminded Muslims to know and understand one another—values that lie at the heart of humanistic and social ethics. This aligns with the belief that diversity in society is not a cause for division, but rather an opportunity for mutual understanding and respect (Sukmasari, 2020).

Tafsir Al-Azhar goes beyond ritualistic interpretations, emphasizing the social dimensions of Qur'anic ethics in fostering a harmonious society. Through his interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12, Hamka underscores the importance of avoiding negative assumptions, strengthening social bonds, and upholding mutual respect. One of the central messages of this verse is the principle of *tabayyun* (verifying information before accepting or sharing it) which Hamka identifies as a crucial ethical stance for Muslims. This principle holds significant relevance in today's digital age, where unverified information can spread rapidly, leading to misunderstanding and social conflict (Izzati & Kaaffah, 2020) (Fadhilah & Deswalantri, 2022).

Overall, the analysis of QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 through *Tafsir Al-Azhar* demonstrates that Islamic teachings on privacy and communication ethics are highly relevant to digital realities. In an age marked by disinformation and digital incivility, Muslims are called to implement the moral principles of this verse to uphold integrity and social harmony. A deep understanding of this verse proves essential not only in the spiritual realm but also in everyday practice, particularly in digital engagement. These principles include the need for verification, cautious communication, and awareness of the consequences of misinformation. They provide ethical guidance for individuals and society to interact more responsibly in the digital world.

Based on the above discussion, the following concept map illustrates the relationship between the moral values in QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12, the social interpretation presented in *Tafsir al-Azhar*, and their application in modern digital ethics.

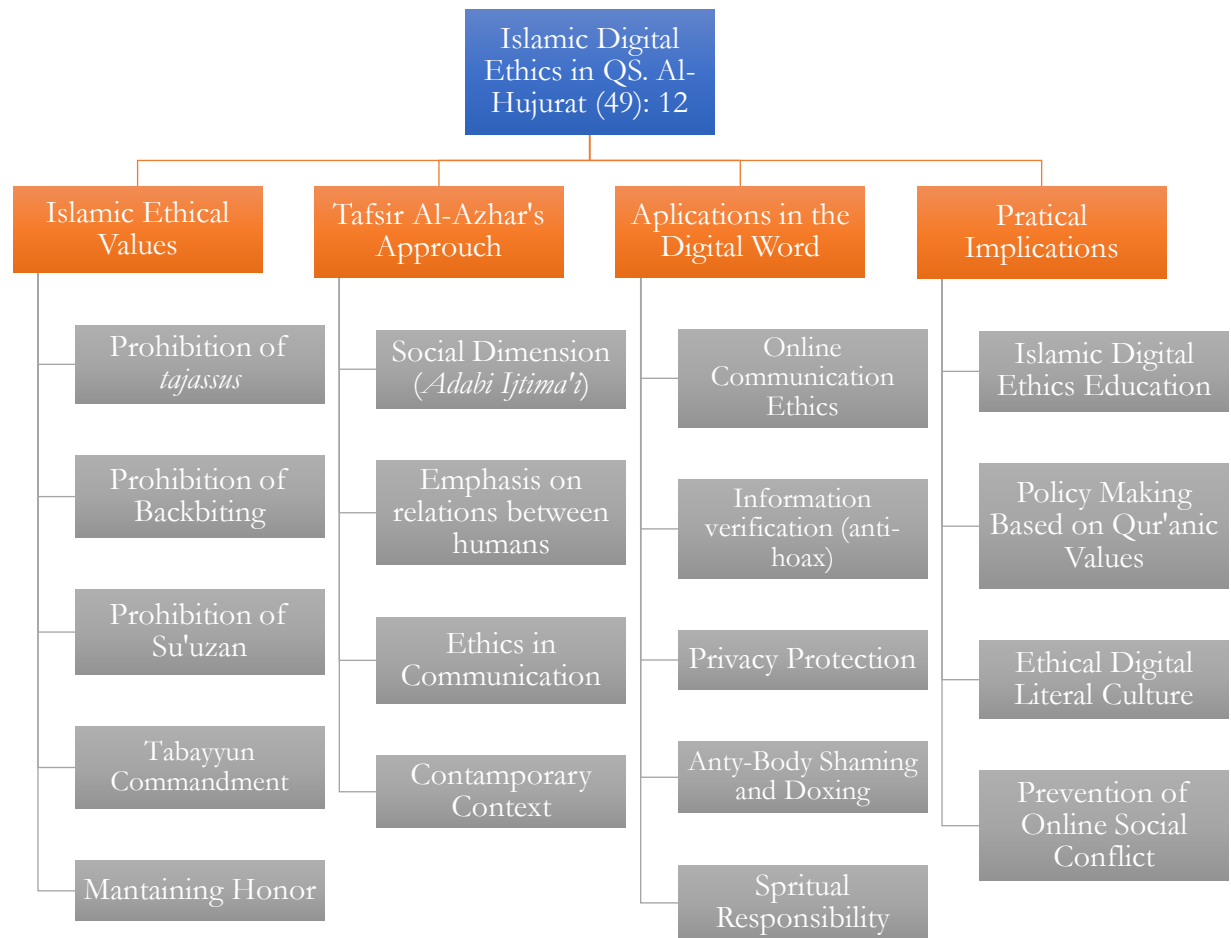


Figure 2. Digital Ethics Concept Map in QS. Al-Hujurat: 12

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the relationship between the moral values found in QS. Al-Ḥujurāt (49): 12, the social interpretation offered in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, and their relevance to modern digital ethics. This concept systematically illustrates how the ethical dimensions of the Qur'an are not only normative and transcendental but also responsive to contemporary challenges, particularly regarding digital privacy. At the first level, it builds upon three core prohibitions outlined in the verse: *su'uzan* (negative assumptions), *tajassus* (spying), and *ghibab* (gossip or backbiting). These acts represent violations of Islamic social ethics rooted in the principle of *ḥuqūq al-'ibād*, or interpersonal rights. Buya Hamka interprets these prohibitions as moral directives to uphold individual dignity and prevent social harm caused by misinformation, excessive suspicion, or shaming others (Hamka, 2015).

In the context of digital society, these values are rearticulated into present-day online practices. For instance, *su'uzan* is reflected in the spread of unverified negative opinions, *tajassus* in acts of hacking, surveillance, or illegal data tracking, while *ghibab* manifests in digital gossip, such as body shaming or doxing. The concept map demonstrates that each of these digital behaviors carries both moral and legal consequences in Islam, involving not only social responsibility (towards others) but also spiritual accountability (towards God).

Figure 2 also incorporates the principle of *tabayyun* (information verification) as a proactive moral value in Islam. It serves as an ethical filter in receiving and disseminating information, making it especially relevant for countering misinformation and fake news in today's digital era. The inclusion of *tabayyun* in the concept map reinforces the idea that digital ethics is not only about avoiding misconduct but also about promoting responsible and constructive communication. Structurally, the map lays out the interconnectedness between Qur'anic principles, social tafsir (*Tafsir Al-Azhar*), and contemporary issues. The *adabi-ijtimā'i* approach employed by Buya Hamka emphasizes that Qur'anic interpretation must be contextual and sensitive to socio-cultural dynamics. Thus, the values of QS. Al-Hujurāt should be seen not merely as moral prohibitions but as a normative foundation for formulating practical Islamic digital ethics.

Consequently, this concept map contributes to the development of a more holistic Qur'an-based digital ethical framework. It opens pathways for strengthening digital regulations that go beyond technical and legal considerations to include moral and spiritual dimensions. Within this framework, QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12 can serve as a normative model for shaping civilized digital privacy and data protection policies.

In sum, Figure 2 is not just a visual aid, but also a conceptual synthesis that bridges sacred texts, social interpretation, and the realities of digital life. It connects classical Islamic ethical discourse with the practical needs of contemporary Muslim society, offering a responsible and transformative response to the complexities of the digital age.

Conclusion

The increasingly complex issue of digital privacy in the modern era demands an ethical foundation that is not only based on law and technology but also rooted in transcendental values. This study shows that QS. Al-Hujurāt (49): 12, through *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, can be used as a concrete ethical reference for shaping a digital ecosystem that respects individual rights, dignity, and integrity. Beyond prohibiting *sū' al-zann*, *tajassus*, and *ghibah*, this verse represents an Islamic ethical framework encompassing two main dimensions; *ḥuqūq al-'ibād* (interpersonal rights) and *ḥuqūq al-'abd* (spiritual responsibility to Allah). This makes Buya Hamka's interpretation not only morally relevant but also practically applicable in formulating ethical and civilized digital norms.

By bringing the interpretation with contemporary reality, this study offers a synthesis that the Qur'an can be a source of dynamic digital ethics, not merely normative or symbolic. This broadens the perspective that religious texts, when read contextually and socially, can serve as foundational tools in responding to the modern challenges, including complex issues such as digital privacy. In the future, this research opens opportunities for a more functional and strategic approach to tafsir. Future research may explore other verses related to digital communication, compare interpretive perspectives across schools of thought and cultural context, and integrate Islamic values in the development of public policies concerning data security. Thus, tafsir becomes more than just a moral reflection, it an instrument of social transformation in the digital era.

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

Diana Durrotul Lum'ah: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation,

Visualization, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing. **Suqiyah Musafa'ah:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Validation, Project administration and Writing – review & editing. **Muhammad Ihsan Mahbub:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Validation, review & editing

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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