

Fostering Honesty in the Digital Era: A Tafsir-Based Approach to QS. At-Taubah in Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract

This research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of QS. At-Taubah, specifically focusing on its verses that address honesty as a core Islamic character trait, and to explore its relevance to character education in the digital age. Driven by contemporary moral challenges such as disinformation and technology misuse, this descriptive-analytical qualitative study employs a comprehensive literature review, drawing upon classical and contemporary tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), alongside hadith. Findings indicate that QS. At-Taubah: 119 provides significant moral guidance on honesty, essential for cultivating responsible and integrated student character in both physical and digital realms. Practical implementation of this honesty can be achieved through innovative pedagogical approaches, including digital project-based learning, ethical digital case study simulations, and the integration of integrity values into general curricula. This approach is substantiated by various studies demonstrating that educators' integration of values effectively counters moral decadence, underscoring the critical need for regular teacher training to facilitate this across all subjects. Furthermore, narrative-based approaches and the concept of 'amanah' (trust/responsibility), exemplified by the story of Ka'ab bin Malik, prove effective methods for instilling honesty. In conclusion, Qur'anic value-based education, particularly emphasizing honesty, is crucial for shaping a generation that is ethical, responsible, and adaptable to the demands of the digital age, thereby ensuring moral integrity amidst technological advancements.

Keywords: Character; Honesty; Education; Tafsir; Technology.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara mendalam QS. At-Taubah, terutama ayat-ayat yang membahas kejujuran sebagai sifat karakter inti Islam, serta relevansinya terhadap pendidikan karakter di era digital. Dilatarbelakangi oleh tantangan moral seperti disinformasi dan penyalahgunaan teknologi, penelitian kualitatif deskriptif-analitis ini menggunakan kajian pustaka, melibatkan tafsir klasik dan kontemporer, serta hadis. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa QS. At-Taubah: 119 memberikan panduan moral signifikan terkait kejujuran, yang esensial untuk membangun karakter siswa yang bertanggung jawab dan berintegritas di dunia nyata maupun digital. Implementasi praktis kejujuran ini dapat diintegrasikan melalui pendekatan pedagogis inovatif seperti pembelajaran berbasis proyek digital, simulasi studi kasus etika digital, dan

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integrasi tentang nilai kejujuran dalam kurikulum umum. Pendekatan ini didukung oleh berbagai studi yang menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai oleh pendidik efektif dalam mengatasi dekadensi moral, sehingga pelatihan guru secara reguler sangat penting untuk memfasilitasi integrasi nilai ini di seluruh mata pelajaran. Selain itu, pendekatan berbasis narasi dan konsep amanah, seperti kisah Ka'ab bin Malik, menjadi metode efektif dalam penanaman kejujuran. Kesimpulannya, pendidikan berbasis nilai Qur'ani, khususnya kejujuran, sangat krusial untuk membentuk generasi yang etis, bertanggung jawab, dan adaptif terhadap tantangan era digital, memastikan integritas moral di tengah kemajuan teknologi.

Kata kunci : Karakter; Kejujuran; Pendidikan Islam; Tafsir; Teknologi.

I. Introduction

The digital era has brought about profound changes in various aspects of human life, including education (Fatima, 2023). Unlimited access to information, the proliferation of social media, and advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have delivered significant benefits while simultaneously presenting serious challenges in shaping students' character. One pressing concern is the erosion of honesty as a fundamental moral value. According to Kumar (2025), to effectively face these challenges in the 'Education 4.0' era, it is crucial to prepare educators thoroughly and adapt curricula to evolving needs. Equally important are efforts to bridge the digital divide, protect data privacy, secure adequate funding, and foster openness to change through responsive policies. Developing digital skills and soft skills, as well as promoting collaboration between academic fields and industries, are also key factors in navigating the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Ultimately, amidst all these technological and systemic transformations, nurturing strong character remains essential to ensure that students not only gain knowledge and skills but also uphold ethical values in this rapidly changing world.

In this complex digital landscape, students frequently encounter ethical dilemmas in their use of technology. The pervasive phenomena of disinformation, the spread of hoaxes, and technological manipulation, such as AI-assisted plagiarism, clearly illustrate these challenges (Sozon et al., 2024). These challenges underscore the need for an educational approach that integrates moral values, such as honesty, rooted in religious teachings, into the learning process in the digital era. Honesty, as emphasized in QS. At-Taubah, is a critical trait that distinguishes individuals with moral integrity from those who disregard principles of truth. However, this value is often neglected in education, especially as students become increasingly exposed to a digital reality that tends to normalize unethical behaviors.

Honesty is one of the core values in character education. Nevertheless, the complexities of the digital age pose significant barriers to its application. For instance, disinformation on social media has become one of the greatest threats to the younger generation. The rapid dissemination of false information influences students' mindsets, creates confusion, and, in some cases, may encourage dishonest behavior (Shusas, 2023).

The normalization of lying and the manipulation of facts, fundamentally contradict the principle of honesty taught in Islamic teachings.

On another front, the accessibility of AI technologies has opened new opportunities but also introduced moral risks (Siau & Wang, 2020). Young people often misuse these technologies irresponsibly, as seen in cases of academic plagiarism or data manipulation. Instead of serving as a tool for learning, technology often becomes a means to evade ethical responsibility. A study conducted by Rohmanu (2016) revealed that 53% of 37 postgraduate students admitted to engaging in word-for-word plagiarism. This alarming statistic reflects a deeply rooted problem in academic environments, where the ease of access to digital information is not matched by a proportional emphasis on ethical responsibility. Such behavior is not only a violation of academic integrity but also stands in stark contradiction to the Islamic ethical principle that *al-'ilm amānah*—'knowledge is a trust.' This phrase encapsulates a profound theological and moral obligation, asserting that knowledge, particularly when pursued within an Islamic framework, must be handled with honesty, sincerity, and accountability. The act of plagiarism, therefore, is not merely a technical breach but a spiritual and ethical failure that undermines the sanctity of education. In Islamic education, where the acquisition and transmission of knowledge are considered acts of worship, honesty in academic conduct becomes even more essential. This situation reinforces the argument that Islamic religious education must adapt to address these emerging challenges while maintaining a strong emphasis on universal moral values, including honesty.

Further empirical evidence underscores the profound impact of peer influence on academic integrity. A meta-analysis conducted by Zhao (2022) examining the relationship between students' academic cheating and their perception of peer cheating revealed a significant and medium-sized effect ($r=0.37$). This perception of peer cheating emerged as one of the strongest known factors linked to student academic dishonesty. Interestingly, this effect was found to be even stronger in cultures characterized by high power distance, collectivism, long-term orientation, and restraint, and lower in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance and religiosity. This finding highlights that peer behavior plays a crucial role in student academic cheating, emphasizing the need for strategies promoting academic integrity to consider both peer influence and the student's cultural context.

The cultural shift brought about by the digital age has also affected teaching methods. Islamic religious education curricula have not fully accounted for the influence of social media and technology on students' character development. Yet, Surah At-Taubah clearly contrasts the characteristics of hypocrites, who frequently manipulate facts, with those of honest individuals who steadfastly uphold the truth. Unfortunately, these principles are rarely explicitly integrated into learning processes relevant to the digital era.

This study focuses on the value of honesty as described in the interpretation of QS. At-Taubah. This surah was selected for its highly relevant moral guidance in understanding and internalizing the concept of honesty, as well as distinguishing between honesty and hypocrisy. The interpretation of QS. At-Taubah not only provides theoretical direction but also holds potential for practical application in education tailored to the challenges of the digital era.

The methodology employed in this research is a literature review with a descriptive-analytical approach. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore, interpret, and synthesize moral values from the interpretation of QS. At-Taubah within the context of honesty education. In this way, the research contributes not only to theoretical development but also offers practical solutions applicable to Islamic religious education.

Several relevant studies provide valuable insights into fostering honesty in Islamic education in the digital age. For example, Betawi (2022) discusses the influence of moral storytelling on the integrity of early childhood, including honesty. The findings suggest that culturally based narrative approaches effectively instill empathy, courage, and respect in children. This foundation supports the use of story-based methods in Islamic education as a means to develop a generation of honest and morally upright individuals in an era fraught with ethical challenges.

Rahmat and Yahya (2021) explore the effectiveness of Sufi-based educational models in enhancing honesty among university students in Indonesia. This spiritual approach, which emphasizes values such as *zuhud* (asceticism) and *qana'ah* (contentment), is shown to be more effective than conventional methods. Meanwhile, Suyadi et al. (2021) highlight the role of neuroscience in embedding anti-corruption education within Islamic studies, focusing on reducing corruptive behaviors among students. These studies underscore the importance of integrating spiritual approaches and modern science to build profound moral awareness in education.

Herijanto (2022) compares the concept of *amanah* (trustworthiness) in the Qur'an with the general notion of "trust" in contemporary literature. The Qur'anic concept of *amanah* includes a divine dimension, making it more comprehensive than mere interpersonal responsibility. This comparison enriches the conceptual understanding of honesty and integrity from an Islamic perspective. Lastly, Rasyid et al. (2022) evaluate the role of the Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*) education system in shaping leaders with integrity. This system effectively instills responsibility, honesty, and dedication through the internalization of Qur'anic values.

Collectively, these studies affirm that Islamic education plays a pivotal role in cultivating honesty, paving the way for an interpretive approach based on QS. At-Taubah to provide deep and contextual insights applicable in the digital era. Previous studies on Islamic character education have broadly addressed moral values, and have not yet

systematically examined the exegetical potential of QS. At-Taubah, particularly verse 119, as a dedicated framework for honesty in the digital age. There is a lack of systematic, Qur'an-based approaches to cultivate honesty in Islamic education for the digital age.

The primary aim of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of QS. At-Taubah, particularly its verses addressing honesty as a core Islamic character trait, and its relevance to character education in the digital age. Through interpretive analysis, this research seeks to understand how the Qur'anic concept of honesty can be applied in modern contexts, where disinformation and technological misuse pose significant challenges to the moral development of younger generations.

This study is expected to make significant contributions both conceptually and practically. Conceptually, it enriches the literature on honest education by integrating Qur'anic values, particularly those in QS. At-Taubah, into the challenges of the digital era. It also offers new perspectives on how Islamic moral values can address issues of disinformation and technological misuse. Practically, this research provides a framework for designing an Islamic religious education curriculum that is more relevant to the digital age.

II. Research Methods

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative approach based on a literature review. This approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of religious texts to comprehend the values of honesty in Islam. The research focuses on exegetical literature and hadith as primary sources. The literature review involves examining classical and contemporary exegeses, authoritative hadith compilations, and other works of Islamic scholarship to achieve a comprehensive understanding.

The scholarly approach integrates the disciplines of Quranic exegesis and hadith studies, aiming to incorporate the normative values of the Quran and hadith into discussions of character education. Exegetical works such as *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* serve as primary references to analyze Surah At-Taubah, particularly its verses on honesty and hypocrisy. Additionally, relevant hadiths from collections such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* are examined to support the interpretation of these verses. This approach seeks to strengthen the theoretical arguments of the study through primary Islamic sources.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-narrative method, comprising three key stages: categorization, interpretation, and synthesis of information from various sources. Firstly, in the categorization stage, relevant textual segments from exegetical works and hadith compilations were systematically identified and grouped. This involved extracting verses and narrations directly pertaining to concepts of truthfulness (*sidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), promise-keeping, and the avoidance of hypocrisy. For

instance, specific verses detailing the attributes of truthful believers or narrations describing the consequences of dishonesty were categorized under distinct themes. Secondly, during interpretation, each identified textual segment was thoroughly analyzed within its original context and the broader framework of Islamic scholarship. This involved examining linguistic nuances, historical background (asbab al-nuzul for Quranic verses), and scholarly commentaries to ascertain the precise meaning and moral implications of honesty. For example, the interpretation of QS. At-Taubah: 119 focused on understanding the divine command for constant self-reflection and adherence to truthful company, drawing on established tafsir explanations, while Ka'ab bin Mālik's narrative highlighted honesty's spiritual and social benefits. Finally, the synthesis stage involved integrating the interpreted data to construct a cohesive narrative, connecting timeless Islamic values of honesty with contemporary educational challenges in the digital age. This process wove together insights from Quranic exegesis and hadith with discussions on modern issues such as digital plagiarism, misinformation, and data manipulation, illustrating how principles like *sidq* and *amanah* can serve as a robust ethical framework for digital citizenship. This method ensures the analysis remains grounded in religious texts while addressing modern contexts.

III. Result and Discussion

A. QS. At-Taubah on Honesty and Truthfulness

The *maqāṣid* (objectives) of QS. At-Taubah encompasses several key themes that form the essence of its moral and spiritual messages. First, the surah emphasizes the importance of unwavering faith in Allah SWT as the foundational principle of life. Second, it highlights the urgency of loyalty in fulfilling promises and commitments, reflecting both individual and collective integrity. Third, the discourse on *jihād* as an effort to safeguard religion and uphold truth underscores the significance of social responsibility in Islam. Fourth, the critique of hypocrisy underscores the necessity of honesty in every aspect of life. Fifth, the call to repentance and self-improvement underlines the opportunity for every individual to return to the path of righteousness (Ṭanṭāwī, 1997, Volume 6, pp. 185–193). The relevance of these *maqāṣid* to the theme of honesty is highly significant, as honesty serves as the fundamental basis for cultivating sincere faith, maintaining commitments, and fostering social harmony. In QS. At-Taubah, one specific verse explicitly addresses the concept of honesty, namely verse 119:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ١١٩﴾

"O you who believe, fear Allah and be with those who are truthful!"

The majority of Quranic commentators explain that the context of this verse's revelation pertains to the story of Ka'ab bin Mālik and his two companions. This narrative, linked to the Battle of Tabūk, serves as a vivid example of honesty, remorse, and acceptance of repentance in Islam. When Ka'ab bin Mālik failed to participate in the

expedition without a valid excuse, he realized his mistake and chose to be truthful by openly admitting his negligence before the Prophet Muhammad (ṣallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam). The Prophet’s decision to withhold judgment until Allah revealed guidance illustrates the importance of wisdom in addressing transgressions, providing space for reflection and self-improvement. Subsequently, Allah accepted Ka’ab repentance, as declared in His words: "Certainly, Allah has turned in mercy to the Prophet, the Muhajirun, and the Ansar..." (QS. At-Taubah: 117-119) (ad-Damāminī, 2009, Volume 8, p. 129). This verse underscores the virtue of honesty, particularly through the command to “be with those who are truthful” (wa kūnu ma’a aṣ-ṣādiqīn).

Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate:

حدثنا يحيى بن بكير، حدثنا الليث، عن عقيل، عن ابن شهاب، عن عبد الرحمن بن عبد الله بن كعب بن مالك، أن عبد الله بن كعب بن مالك، وكان قائد كعب بن مالك، قال: «سمعت كعب بن مالك يحدث، حين تخلف، عن قصة تبوك: فوالله ما أعلم أحدا أبلاه الله في صدق الحديث أحسن مما أبلاني، ما تعمدت منذ ذكرت ذلك لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى يومي هذا كذبا، وأنزل الله عز وجل على رسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم: {لقد تاب الله على النبي والمهاجرين {إلى قوله}: وكونوا مع الصادقين}

Narrated by Yahya ibn Bukair, from Al-Layth, from Uqail, from Ibn Shihab, from Abdurrahman ibn Abdullah ibn Ka’ab ibn Malik, from Abdullah ibn Ka’ab ibn Malik, who was the guide for Ka’ab ibn Malik. He said: “I heard Ka’ab ibn Malik narrate his story about not participating in the Battle of Tabuk. He said: ‘By Allah, I do not know anyone upon whom Allah has bestowed a test in truthfulness of speech better than the test He bestowed upon me. From the moment I told the truth to the Messenger of Allah (ṣallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) until this day, I have never intentionally lied. Then Allah revealed the verse to His Messenger: “Indeed, Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhajirun, and the Ansar...” (QS. At-Taubah: 117) up to His words: “...be with those who are truthful” (QS. At-Taubah: 119).” (al-Bukhārī, 2001, Volume 6, p. 71, no. 4678)

After Allah accepted the repentance of the three companions who did not join the Battle of Tabuk, He issued a warning to the Muslims not to repeat such actions—abandoning the Prophet (ṣallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) during jihad. This is emphasized in His words: “O you who believe, fear Allah and be with those who are truthful” (QS. At-Taubah: 119) (ar-Rāzī, 1999, Volume 16, p. 166). Truthfulness emerges as a key trait that distinguishes believers from hypocrites. Al-Biqā’i highlights that the honesty of these three companions in admitting their mistakes led to Allah accepting their repentance (al-Biqā’ī, 1984, Volume 9, p. 41). Ibn Aṭīyyah further elaborates that this verse’s relevance lies in demonstrating that their honesty not only saved them individually but also provided a moral example for the community, encouraging avoidance of hypocritical behavior (Ibn Aṭīyyah, 2001, Volume 3, pp. 94–95).

Thus, this verse serves as a collective admonition, fortifying the value of truthfulness as a central principle in religious and social life. It ensures the community is united in faith and truth. Ka'ab ibn Malik's honesty in admitting his absence during the Battle of Tabuk to the Prophet (ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) provides a significant lesson in sincerity toward Allah and His Messenger. Allah tests His servants through various situations—whether good or bad—to evaluate their sincerity in fulfilling religious obligations (al-Birmāwī & Ṭālib, 2012, Volume 12, p. 186). In the case of Ka'ab ibn Malik and his two companions, the Prophet (ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) delayed making a decision about them until Allah revealed His decree regarding their stance. Conversely, the hypocrites, who presented dishonest excuses, were not granted repentance by Allah (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, Volume 8, p. 282). This underscores the fact that honesty in adhering to religious obligations brings ease, removes difficulties, and elevates one's rank in the sight of Allah. This story serves as compelling evidence that truth and honesty transcend worldly life, bringing blessings that extend into the hereafter.

The phrase “ma'a aṣ-ṣādiqīn” in QS. At-Taubah: 119 conveys the idea of being in the company of truthful individuals, which encompasses benefits even for those with the lowest levels of truthfulness. Al-Biqā'i affirms that merely being among truthful people positively influences a person's behavior and faith (al-Biqā'i, 1984, Volume 9, p. 42). Moreover, some scholars, such as Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn Abbas, have proposed an alternative reading of the phrase: “min aṣ-ṣādiqīn”, as noted by aṭ-Ṭabarī and Abu Hayyan (Abī Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, 2000, Volume 5, p. 522; aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001, Volume 12, pp. 68–69). This reading emphasizes that a Muslim should not only be with truthful individuals but also become one of them.

Consequently, the Prophet Muhammad (ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) taught:

، عن عبد الله بن مسعود، قال: قال رسول الله: عليكم بالصدق؛ فإنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَصْدُقُ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صِدِّيقًا. وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْكَذِبَ؛ فَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا.

From Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, he reported that the Messenger of Allah (ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Adhere to truthfulness, for truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. A person continues to speak the truth until they are recorded with Allah as a truthful person (ṣiddīq). And beware of lying, for lying leads to wickedness, and wickedness leads to Hellfire. A person continues to lie until they are recorded with Allah as a liar." (al-Bukhārī, 2001, Volume 8, p. 25, no. 6094; an-Naisābūrī, 2011, Volume 4, p. 2012, no. 2607)

The majority of exegesis—including aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk, Nāfi', Sa'īd ibn Jubair, and Ibn Juraij—agree that the phrase ma'a aṣ-ṣādiqīn in QS. At-Taubah: 119 refers to being in the company of the Prophet Muhammad (ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) and his companions (aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001, Volume 12, pp. 67–69). This interpretation is reinforced by Abdullah

ibn Umar's statement, which specifies that the verse directs Muslims to take the Prophet (ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) and his companions as role models of truthfulness (as-Suyūṭī, n.d., Volume 4, p. 316; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1419, Volume 6, p. 1906). This approach underscores the critical importance of truthfulness as a defining characteristic embodied by the Prophet (ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) and his companions, while also establishing it as the foundation for building a strong and trustworthy community of believers.

In the social context, Islam emphasizes the necessity of creating virtuous environments that support truthfulness. The command to "be with those who are truthful" indicates that individuals are influenced by the communities they belong to (at-Tuwaijirī, 2010, p. 1121). As explained by al-Biqā'ī, merely being among truthful individuals can yield significant benefits, even for those who may not yet fully embody the values of truthfulness themselves (al-Biqā'ī, 1984, Volume 9, p. 42). Therefore, selecting companions and associates from among the righteous is a vital step in fostering both character development and faith.

Truthfulness also carries considerable implications in worldly affairs, particularly in commerce and social interactions. Islam teaches that Muslim traders must exhibit honesty and trustworthiness, as such practices not only build mutual trust but are also regarded as acts of worship (Afānah, 2005, p. 222). The divine command in QS. At-Taubah: 119 provides a robust moral framework for every Muslim to uphold integrity in all their activities. In doing so, truthfulness becomes the cornerstone for fostering mutually beneficial and harmonious collaborations.

Moreover, truthfulness is a fundamental requirement for the validity of one's monotheistic belief. The declaration *lā ilāha illallāh* must be affirmed in the heart, articulated by the tongue, and demonstrated through concrete actions (at-Tuwaijirī, 2010, Volume 1, p. 32). Truthfulness serves as evidence of genuine faith, connecting a Muslim to Allah while also reinforcing healthy social relationships. In this regard, safeguarding one's speech from falsehood is among the most foundational branches of faith and a marker of strong spiritual integrity (al-Ḥalīmī, 1979, Volume 3, p. 4).

The divine statement, *wa kunū ma'a aṣ-ṣādiqīn* (QS. At-Taubah: 119), signifies that those who truly understand and reflect on Allah's verses are obligated to adhere to truthfulness in speech, sincerity in actions, and purity of heart. A person who fulfills these three principles will be among the *al-abrār*—the righteous ones who are pleased by Allah, the Most Forgiving (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, Volume 8, p. 289).

Ultimately, this analysis underscores how the profound guidance on honesty in QS. At-Taubah, particularly verse 119 and the compelling narrative of Ka'ab bin Mālik, offers an indispensable moral compass. It provides practical frameworks for cultivating integrity and addressing the multifaceted challenges of disinformation and technological misuse, thereby fostering a generation truly equipped for the digital age.

The profound guidance on honesty from QS. At-Taubah, particularly verse 119 and the compelling narrative of Ka'ab bin Mālik, offers an indispensable moral compass. This guidance can be translated into a practical framework for cultivating integrity in the digital age, crucial for addressing contemporary challenges such as disinformation and the misuse of technology.

In an era where information spreads rapidly, often unverified, the Qur'anic emphasis on *ṣidq* (truthfulness) directly combats disinformation. The command to "be with those who are truthful" (QS. At-Taubah: 119) implies an active responsibility to seek, verify, and disseminate accurate information, while actively avoiding falsehood. Similarly, *amānah* (trustworthiness/stewardship), deeply intertwined with honesty, safeguards against technology misuse. Individuals in the digital sphere are accountable for their digital footprint, data privacy, and responsible use of tools, encompassing the avoidance of digital plagiarism, respecting intellectual property, and refraining from online fraud or cyberbullying.

Ultimately, this framework underscores that the moral imperative for honesty in QS. At-Taubah transcends traditional contexts, extending powerfully to the digital landscape. It provides actionable guidance for fostering resilient character in contemporary society by promoting inward truthfulness (*ṣidq al-qalb*), diligent information verification (*tahqīq al-akhbār*), digital accountability (*amānah fī al-isti'māl al-raqmī*), and fostering communities of truth-seekers (*ma'a al-sādiqīn*), all while encouraging repentance and rectification (*tawbah wa islāh*) for digital missteps.

B. The Significance of Honesty in QS. At-Taubah for Character Education in the Digital Age

Character education focusing on honesty in the digital era requires a more holistic approach, one that not only teaches correct behavior but also fosters a deep understanding of the consequences of dishonesty in both physical and digital realms. In this context, academic integrity and digital ethics emerge as critical issues. A study by Sozon et al. revealed that factors such as high academic pressure, a lack of awareness about integrity, and the misuse of technology contribute to cheating and plagiarism in higher education institutions (Sozon et al., 2024). Therefore, the application of honesty as emphasized in QS. At-Taubah becomes increasingly relevant as a foundation for character formation among students and learners in the digital era.

Research on honesty also demonstrates its positive impact on physical and mental well-being. A study by Weziak-Bialowolska et al. found that individuals with traits of honesty and integrity tend to exhibit better physical health and experience less depression (Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2021). This underscores the values of honesty, aligned with the principles in QS. At-Taubah, not only reinforce social integrity but also contribute to personal well-being.

In the digital era, individual well-being heavily depends on how one interacts with technology and information. Honesty, in this context, becomes a key factor in protecting oneself from the negative effects of the digital world, such as the spread of fake news, digital manipulation, or social media addiction. Hence, character education that emphasizes honesty, as taught in QS. At-Taubah, is essential for developing individuals who not only possess moral integrity but are also accountable for their digital behavior.

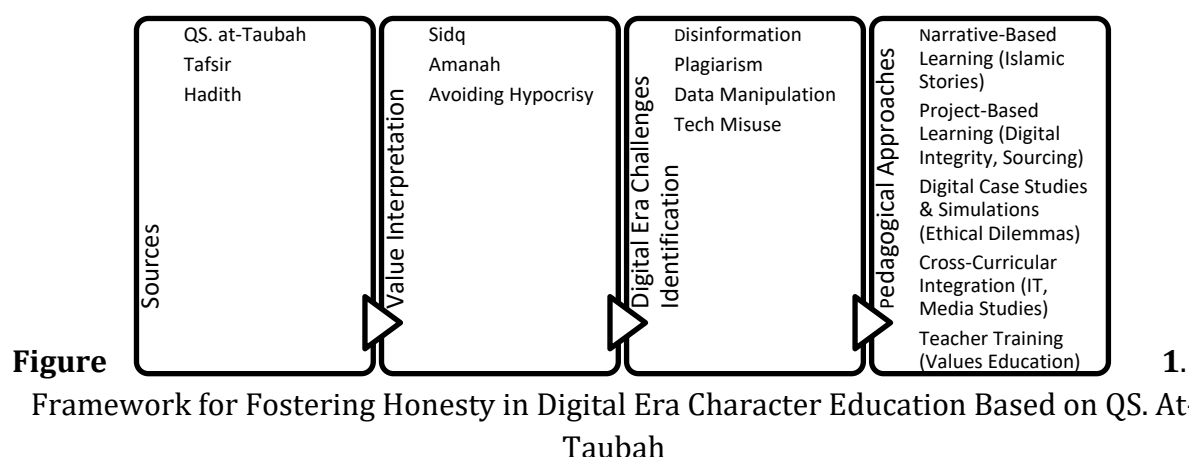
Character education that integrates Islamic values, particularly the honesty reflected in QS. At-Taubah, can be implemented through various educational models. In the context of Islamic education, honesty can be instilled through narrative-based approaches that convey moral lessons via stories containing ethical messages. This approach has proven effective in fostering children's character, particularly in cultivating honesty and empathy (Betawi, 2022).

The concept of amanah in the Qur'an, as elaborated by Herijanto, is also highly relevant for developing honest character. Amanah in the Qur'an encompasses not only responsibilities between humans but also obligations toward Allah. This renders amanah a more comprehensive concept than the general notion of "trust" in conventional literature. It teaches that honesty must be practiced with sincere intentions for Allah, framing it as an act of worship. In character education, the application of amanah can strengthen students' understanding of their moral responsibilities, not only toward fellow humans but also toward God (Herijanto, 2022).

Building upon narrative-based approaches and the concept of amanah, practical implementation of honesty, as emphasized in QS. At-Taubah, can be further strengthened through specific educational models in the digital age. Project-based learning, for instance, offers a tangible avenue for fostering digital integrity (Prasetyo et al., 2023). Students could be assigned digital projects, such as creating multimedia presentations or managing online content, where they are explicitly required to cite sources accurately, avoid plagiarism, and ensure factual veracity. Such assignments would be complemented by reflective sessions where students analyze the ethical challenges encountered and how the principle of honesty, rooted in amanah, guided their choices and reinforced their responsibility towards knowledge and truth.

Moreover, simulations and digital case studies provide a controlled environment to explore real-world ethical dilemmas (Caulfield & Lee, 2022; Lewis et al., 2016; Picard & Courtois, 2023). Educators can present scenarios involving the spread of misinformation, digital manipulation, or online fraud, prompting students to critically analyze these situations through the lens of honesty and amanah. This approach not only enhances their ability to identify and respond to digital dishonesty but also deepens their understanding of the comprehensive nature of amanah, encompassing responsibilities towards both humanity and the divine.

Furthermore, integrating these values into general subject curricula is crucial. For instance, teaching ethical data handling in IT classes or responsible content creation in media studies ensures that honesty, derived from QS. At-Taubah, is perceived not merely as a religious concept but as a universal principle applicable across various academic and digital contexts. This approach aligns with findings from Khathi, Govender, and Ajani (2021), who highlight that the integration of values education by teachers remains an effective strategy to address moral decadence within the educational system. Their qualitative study, underpinned by Kohlberg's theory of moral cognitive development, revealed that while teachers perceive moral education differently, there is a consensus that selected subjects can be instrumental for integrating moral values within schools. Consequently, their research advocates for adequate and regular training for teachers on classroom pedagogy to effectively integrate moral values through all subjects, emphasizing the critical role of educators in fostering these principles.



The principle of honesty in QS. At-Taubah serves as a foundational pillar for cultivating good character and moral integrity, which are particularly relevant in the context of character education in the digital age. Character education emphasizing honesty equips individuals, especially the younger generation, to address ethical challenges in the digital world, where cheating and technological misuse are pervasive issues. Consequently, integrating honesty into Islamic-based education, as taught in QS. At-Taubah, is crucial for building a society that values honesty, accountability, and well-being in the digital era.

In essence, fostering honesty, deeply rooted in QS. At-Taubah's principles and practically implemented through diverse pedagogical strategies, is paramount for

equipping individuals to navigate the complex ethical landscape of the digital age, thereby fulfilling the core objective of cultivating resilient character in contemporary society.

IV. Conclusion

Honesty, as profoundly emphasized in QS. At-Taubah, is a cornerstone for shaping individual and communal character. The Surah highlights sincere faith, loyalty to promises, and rejection of hypocrisy (QS. At-Taubah: 119). Ka'ab bin Mālik's narrative exemplifies how honesty averts dire consequences, elevating spiritual standing. Embracing this trait helps individuals avoid duplicity, draw closer to Allah, and strengthen faith-rooted social solidarity. In the digital era, honesty's educational relevance is paramount. Amidst rapid technological advancements, honesty forms a critical foundation for robust digital ethics. Character education, informed by QS. At-Taubah, guides learners to circumvent digital transgressions like plagiarism and misinformation. Practical integration is crucial via pedagogical approaches such as project-based learning, demanding factual integrity, and digital simulations for ethical dilemmas. This aligns with educational research advocating consistent teacher training to integrate moral values across all subjects, fostering an academic and social culture grounded in truth within the digital sphere.

This study significantly contributes by providing a tafsir-based framework for fostering honesty in the digital realm from QS. At-Taubah. It bridges religious texts with contemporary educational challenges, offering a novel perspective on integrating Qur'anic values into digital ethics curricula, complete with practical pedagogical examples. However, limitations exist. The study primarily interprets QS. At-Taubah regarding honesty and proposes applications without empirical data from actual educational interventions. Discussions on digital ethics are broad, lacking depth in specific technological contexts or diverse cultural nuances. Future research should empirically test the effectiveness of the proposed pedagogical approaches from QS. At-Taubah in digital environments. Studies could also explore honesty's manifestation across various digital platforms and cultural contexts for a nuanced understanding. Additionally, investigating the role of teacher training programs designed to integrate Qur'anic ethical values into digital literacy curricula would be beneficial for practical implementation.

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