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## **Analysis of Qur'anic Interpretation of Catcalling as Gender Symbolic Violence in Muslim Public Spaces**

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### **Abstract**

*Catcalling, as a form of symbolic gender-based violence, has become a serious issue in urban public spaces, particularly within Muslim societies. This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of catcalling through a Qur'anic interpretive framework, focusing on Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab, to formulate educational and advocative strategies grounded in Islamic spirituality. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach and thematic tafsir methodology, data were collected from in-depth interviews with female catcalling survivors and a textual study of relevant Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions. The findings reveal that catcalling contradicts the principle of karāmah insāniyyah (human dignity) (Q.S. Al-Isra' [17]:70), the prohibition of talmizu (mockery) (Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]:11), and the Qur'anic spirit of gender-equal righteous deeds (Q.S. An-Nahl [16]:97). Moreover, prophetic teachings on ethical speech serve as a moral foundation to reject verbal abuse. The study also finds that spiritual recovery grounded in Islamic values can be an effective curative approach to the psychosocial impact on victims. Preventive strategies involving maqāṣid al-syarī'ah-based education and Qur'anic public campaigns have the potential to foster a culture of respectful and just communication. These findings affirm that Qur'anic interpretation, when applied contextually and practically, can serve as a transformative instrument in addressing gender-based violence. The methodology included in-depth interviews with survivors and semantic-thematic analysis of religious texts.*

**Keywords:** Catcalling; Qur'anic Exegesis; Symbolic Violence; Human Dignity; Maqasid al-Shariah

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## Introduction

In the last decade, the phenomenon of verbal harassment in public spaces or better known as *catcalling* has become a serious concern in the study of gender, psychology, and law. In many major cities around the world, including in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, catcalling has robbed women of comfort and a sense of security in public spaces. The Komnas Perempuan report [1] notes that harassment in public spaces is one of the most common forms of sexual violence experienced by women of productive age [2]. However, many people still consider catcalling as a form of praise or joke that is not harmful. This view reflects the disparity in understanding of gender-based violence, and indicates the importance of a cross-disciplinary approach, including from a religious perspective [3].

The phenomenon of catcalling, as a form of gender-based verbal harassment, has become an increasingly prevalent practice in public spaces, especially in urban areas. This behavior not only reflects the objectification of women's bodies, but also affirms patriarchal power relations that are still firmly rooted in the culture of society [4]. Previous studies have highlighted the psychosocial impact of catcalling on victims, including anxiety disorders, decreased self-esteem, and restrictions on women's access to public spaces [2]. However, the approach used in these studies is still largely secular and has not comprehensively integrated the perspective of Islamic spirituality in dissecting the root of the problem and formulating solutions [6].

On the other hand, Islamic teachings offer a very rich and profound framework of communication ethics. Values such as *karāmah insāniyyah* (QS. Al-Isra' 70), the prohibition of mocking and hurting others (QS. Al-Hujurat 11), as well as the principles of *qaulan baligha* and *Qaulan Layyin* in communication, are normative guidelines that can be used as a basis for responding to the phenomenon of harassment [3]. The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad which states that a true Muslim is one who does not hurt others with his mouth and hands (HR. Bukhari-Muslim) strengthens the position of Islam as a religion that upholds respect for human dignity through the development of communication ethics [4]. Therefore, the urgency of integrating the approach of Qur'an interpretation and hadith in the study of catcalling is becoming increasingly relevant [9].

The main problem that this study seeks to answer is why the practice of catcalling continues and is even more widespread, despite the various forms of social campaigns that have been carried out [10]. This phenomenon not only reflects the lack of effective legal regulation, but also the weak internalization of ethical values in society, especially related to respect for women. Deep-rooted

patriarchal culture makes public spaces a stage of symbolic domination, where women are positioned as objects of visual and verbal entertainment [11]. In this context, verbal harassment such as catcalling is not only an unethical form of communication, but symbolic violence that legitimizes women's subordination.

A common solution to this problem is to develop an interdisciplinary approach that not only maps the sociological and psychological aspects of the victim, but also offers a response rooted in Islamic spiritual values [12]. By using the Qur'an and hadith as normative and applicable references, this approach opens up space for the reinterpretation of sacred texts in response to contemporary social challenges [13]. This approach is not only preventive, but also curative, as it targets the root values and culture that shape people's mindsets and behaviors [5]

In the context of hadith, there is also a hadith that states that verbal words can be a tool of adultery if they are used to convey words that are sexual and degrading. This is reinforced by another hadith that affirms that true Muslims are those who keep their words from hurting others [15]. Therefore, Islamic spirituality plays an important role in shaping a collective ethical awareness of public communication [16]. Islamic communication ethics is not only a personal instrument, but also a value system that can be integrated into social and educational policies.

The research by Jumriani [17] and Khiyaroh [18] also highlights the importance of public ethics in Islam, especially in terms of maintaining politeness and dignity in public spaces. Islamic teachings pay great attention to how one should behave in public spaces, including in the way of speaking and treating others [19]. Therefore, the formulation of educational and advocacy strategies based on Islamic spirituality is a strategic step in building a more ethical and inclusive culture of public communication.

Most previous studies on catcalling have focused on psychological and sociological approaches, without integrating Islamic spirituality values as part of the solution [20]. Studies by Avezahra and Putri, for example, strongly emphasize aspects of trauma and the psychological burden of victims, but have not linked such healing to a strong approach to religious values [21]. In fact, in the context of a religious society like Indonesia, spirituality-based solutions have significant reach and transformative power [22]. Furthermore, the analysis of Qur'anic texts and hadith related to human dignity, the prohibition of hurting others, and oral ethics has not been widely used in answering the issue of gender-based verbal violence. The study of interpretation is still predominantly normative and not many have focused on an applicative approach in dealing with modern social problems such as catcalling [23]. This gap is also exacerbated

by the lack of research that synergizes the study of law, the phenomenology of victims, and the interpretation of religious texts as a single solution [24].

Contemporary studies of tafsir, especially Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab, show that the verses of the Qur'an have applicability in responding to modern social issues. For example, QS. Al-Hujurat 11 explicitly prohibits any form of speech that degrades self-esteem, with *talmizu* terms that include both open insults and hidden sarcasm [25]. This is in line with the principles of *qaulan sadidan* and *qaulan layyinan* which emphasize the importance of honesty and gentleness in communicating. [26] QS. Al-Isra' 70, which affirms the glory of man, becomes the basis of the concept of *karāmah insāniyyah*, which, when understood contextually, becomes the basis for rejecting all forms of verbal abuse [27].

The choice of Quraish Shihab as the main reference in this study is not without reason. As one of the leading contemporary mufasir in the Islamic world, especially in Indonesia, Quraish Shihab is known for having a moderate, inclusive, and contextual approach to interpretation [28]. His monumental work, Tafsir Al-Misbah, is representative of the renewed understanding of the Qur'an by taking into account the modern social challenges facing Muslim society [29]. His approach not only focuses on the linguistic and historical aspects of the text, but also pays attention to the relevance of the divine message in the daily lives of the people, including issues of social justice, gender, and public ethics [30].

In the context of research on catcalling as a form of verbal abuse, Tafsir Al-Misbah is very relevant because it offers a reading of Qur'anic verses that do not stop at textual laws alone, but emphasize the moral and spiritual values they contain [31]. Quraish Shihab often highlights the importance of respect for human dignity (*karāmah insāniyyah*) and communication ethics, two key pillars in responding to the phenomenon of gender-based verbal violence. For example, his interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 11 which touches on the issue of humiliation and ridicule, opens up a new space for understanding that verbal abuse is a form of violation of the basic principle of respect for others [32].

Moreover, Quraish Shihab's communicative and populist style of interpretation makes his interpretation easily accessible to a wide audience, so it has great potential to be used as an educational reference in public campaigns against verbal abuse [33]. In this case, the use of Tafsir Al-Misbah is not only because of its scientific authority, but also because of its transformative and applicable approach, which is able to answer the challenges of communication ethics in today's public space [34]. Therefore, making his interpretation the main framework of analysis is a strategic step to present contextual and relevant Islamic solutions in responding to the practice of catcalling [35].

The purpose of this study is to analyze the phenomenon of catcalling as a form of verbal harassment in the perspective of Qur'anic interpretation, by tracing how the practice is positioned within the framework of Islamic ethics. This research also aims to examine in depth the verses of the Qur'an related to the ethics of speaking and respect for human dignity, especially as interpreted in Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab [36]. In addition, this study seeks to formulate an educational and advocacy approach rooted in Islamic spiritual values as a preventive and curative strategy against the practice of verbal harassment in public spaces. With this approach, it is hoped that a solution model will be built that is not only normative, but also applicable and transformative in the socio-religious context of the community [37].

This research offers novelty through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates Qur'anic interpretation, psychology, law, and gender studies in analyzing the phenomenon of catcalling as a form of verbal harassment. Unlike previous studies that predominantly used a secular approach, this study puts forward the perspective of Islamic spirituality as a normative and applicative basis in responding to symbolic violence in public spaces [38]. Thus, this research departs from the main question: How can the perspective of the interpretation of the Qur'an, especially through the Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab, be used to understand and formulate strategies to overcome the phenomenon of catcalling within the framework of the values of *maqasid al-shari'ah*? The use of Tafsir Al-Misbah as the primary reference gives a contextual dimension to the verses of the Qur'an, making it more relevant in answering contemporary social challenges [39]. In addition, this study formulates a model of preventive and curative strategies based on the values of *maqasid al-shari'ah* that can be implemented in character education, public policy, and social advocacy campaigns.

## Literature Review

### Catcalling as Gender Symbolic Violence

The term *catcalling* refers to a form of verbal sexual harassment that generally occurs in public spaces. This phenomenon is a manifestation of symbolic violence as understood in Pierre Bourdieu's theory, which is a form of power that is hidden and socially legitimized [40]. In the context of patriarchal culture, the act of catcalling reinforces the symbolic dominance of men over women through language and verbal actions that make the female body a visual object.

According to Gardner [10] *catcalling* is not just an ordinary comment, but part of a degrading and disturbing "street harassment". This is in line with

Fairchild and Rudman's findings that women who experience *catcalling* experience negative psychological effects such as anxiety, loss of security, and long-term trauma. A study by Fileborn & O'Neill [42] also highlights how verbal harassment creates an intimidating atmosphere that curbs women's participation in public spaces.

## Communication Ethics in Islam

Islam views the oral as one of the important instruments that can bring benefits or harms. The Prophet's hadith states that "A true Muslim is one who is saved by his mouth and hands" (HR. Bukhari-Muslim). This shows that communication ethics are not just social norms, but part of Islamic identity.

Ismatullah [7] in his research emphasized that the Qur'an compiles various concepts of communication ethics which are referred to as *qaulan sadīdan*, *qaulan baligha*, *qaulan layyinān*, and *qaulan ma'rūfan* (QS. Al-Ahzab: 70, QS. Al-Isra': 23, QS. An-Nisa': 63). Each of these terms indicates a form of communication that prioritizes honesty, clarity, gentleness, and kindness. Therefore, any form of communication that insults, mocks, or degrades is not in line with the principles of Qur'anic communication.

## The Concept of Karāmah Insāniyyah and Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah

The concept of *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) is a central principle in Islamic ethics. QS. Al-Isra' [17]:70 states that man has been glorified by Allah with the grace of reason, freedom, and moral capacity. In the commentary of Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab emphasizes that insulting human beings – including through speech – is a form of violation of the glory that Allah gives [43]

Maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, in this case, in particular *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (safeguarding honor) and *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* (safeguarding the safety of the soul), becomes a normative framework that requires the protection of individual dignity. This perspective is in line with the thinking of Jasser Auda who developed a maqāṣid framework based on contemporary social realities.

## Gender and Verbal Violence in an Islamic Perspective

Classical and contemporary Islamic studies have discussed the position of women in Islam from various sides. However, the theme of symbolic violence, such as catcalling, is still minimally discussed in classical interpretation studies. Efforts such as those made by Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Misbah became pioneers in bridging normative texts with social realities.

Hasan [44] emphasizes that Islam advocates equal moral responsibility between men and women as shown in QS. An-Nahl [16]:97. When women are

used as objects of insult in the public sphere, society fails to apply the values of equality and respect taught by Islam.

## Trauma and Recovery of Catcalling Victims

Catcalling not only impacts women's self-esteem, but also leaves deep psychological trauma. A study by Avezahra [5] revealed that victims experienced anxiety disorders, embarrassment, and even PTSD. Secular approaches generally lead to psychological counseling, but for religious societies such as Indonesia, spirituality-based approaches are more acceptable and effective.

In the context of Islam, the values of *sabr* (patience), *taqwa* (piety), and *dzikrullah* can be elements of spiritual restoration. Studies by Mohiuddin et al. (2020) show that Islamic spirituality can be an important part of trauma intervention, particularly through a community approach.

## Anti-Catcalling Education and Da'wah Strategy Model

Strengthening Qur'an-based moral education is one of the main solutions in tackling *the catcalling culture*. Fadhillah & Rohmaniyah (2023) emphasize the importance of a gender justice-based educational curriculum in Islamic educational institutions. Islamic boarding schools and madrassas can be a strong basis for cultural change.

Meanwhile, social media-based da'wah also plays a big role in spreading Qur'anic values about communication ethics. Narrative sourced from QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:11 and hadith about the prohibition of hurting others can be used as effective educational content among young Muslims.

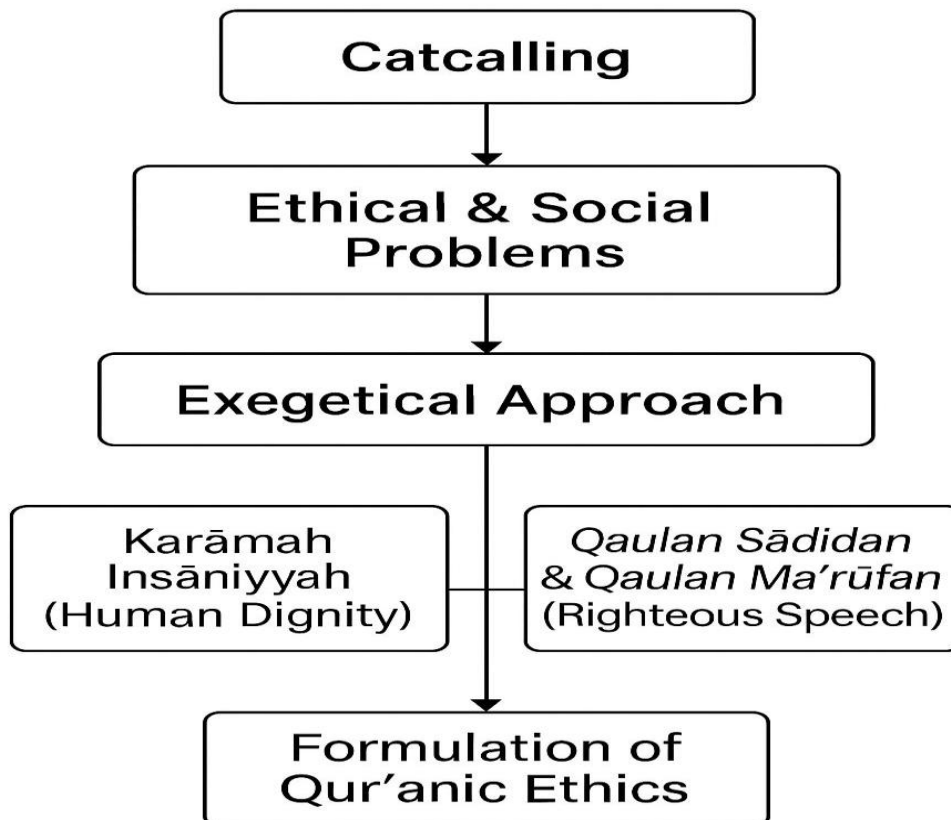
This literature review shows that the phenomenon of catcalling can be approached integrally through Islamic concepts such as *karāmah insāniyyah*, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, Qur'anic communication ethics, and spirituality-based recovery approaches. This addition of literature strengthens the theoretical basis of your article and makes it more comprehensive to address academic and social challenges in a balanced manner.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, which is integrally combined with the thematic interpretation method (*tafsir maudhu'i*) as prepared by Abdul Mustaqim. The choice of this approach is based on the need to explore the deep meaning of the subjective experiences of women victims of catcalling, while linking it to normative perspectives in Islamic teachings, particularly through the interpretation of relevant Qur'anic verses. The phenomenological approach provides space for an understanding of the inner, psychological, and social dimensions of the experience of verbal abuse, while the

interpretation of *maudhu'i* is used to string together and interpret the verses of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad that are directly related to the values of respect for human dignity, oral ethics, and the prohibition of verbal violence.

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework



The strength of this method lies in its ability to construct an interdisciplinary analytical framework, in which the empirical experiences of victims are analyzed alongside the spiritual and ethical foundations in Islamic teachings. In this context, Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab is used as a primary source in the interpretation of the text, given its relevance and applicability in grounding the Qur'an's messages to contemporary social realities, including gender issues and public communication [45]. The contextual and communicative interpretation of Quraish Shihab allows for a more lively reading of the verses of the Qur'an, especially in discussing principles such as *qaulan sadīdan*, *qaulan layyinan*, and *karāmah insāniyyah*.



Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with female catcalling victims who live in urban areas and are between 18 and 35 years old. The informants were selected purposively with the criteria of having experienced catcalling at least twice in the last six months and being willing to provide a narrative openly [46] The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to keep the flow natural but still focus on the research theme. The entire interview process was recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic methods. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from literature studies which include scientific journals, media reports, legal regulations related to sexual violence, as well as classic and contemporary tafsir books, such as Tafsir Ibn Katsir, al-Maraghi, al-Qurtubi, and of course Tafsir Al-Misbah as the main focus. The search for verses and hadith is carried out systematically based on central themes such as the prohibition of verbal harm, the value of politeness in communication, and respect for individual honour.

**Table 1.** Categories and Forms of Catcalling Based on Interviews

No	Category Catcalling	Examples of Expressions/Behaviors	Effects on Victims
1	Physical Comments	"Very nice, can you get in touch?"	Feeling objectified, uncomfortable
2	Whistling and Sound	Long whistling when a woman passes by	Fear and feeling watched
3	Sexual Questions	"Would you like to be a part of it, sweetheart?"	Anger and feeling harassed
4	Condescending Calls	"Eh, it's cute!"	Shy, want to leave quickly
5	Disruptive Nonverbal Actions	Staring hard while licking your lips	Anxiety and trauma

Data analysis was carried out through two parallel channels. First, thematic analysis of the interview results to identify patterns of victim experiences such as fear, trauma, social exclusion, and internalization of shame. Second, the analysis of thematic interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an and hadith which are classified based on issues of communication ethics and respect for others. In this stage, the technique of interpretation analysis is carried out through a semantic approach, which is to trace the meaning of words lexically

and contextually, for example, the term *qawlan ma'rūfan* (good words) is examined in various verses to reveal the ethical meaning behind the use of the word. This analysis is combined with the *maqāsid al-shari'ah* approach to identify sharia objectives, such as *hifz al-'ird* (safeguarding honor), that are relevant in evaluating verbal harassment phenomena such as catcalling. This approach is also enriched by contemporary thinking, especially those that focus on gender justice and power relations in the public space. The process of analysis not only emphasizes the literal meaning, but also pays attention to the social and moral context of religious texts. To maintain the validity and reliability of the research results, a triangulation strategy is used, namely by comparing the findings of interviews, documentation, and the results of interpretation of religious texts. This triangulation not only strengthens the credibility of the data, but also allows for integration between empirical, normative, and spiritual dimensions.

This method was chosen because it is able to answer the key questions in this study, namely why and how the phenomenon of catcalling occurs in the context of religious societies such as Indonesia, and how Islamic teachings, especially through *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, can provide ethical and applicative responses. The integration of sharia *maqasid* values such as *hifzh al-nafs* (safeguarding the soul) and *hifzh al-'irdh* (safeguarding honor) strengthens the theological basis in the preparation of educational and advocacy strategies based on Islamic spirituality. Thus, the methodology used in this study not only connects social reality with sacred texts, but also seeks to present the interpretation of the Qur'an as an instrument of ethical and transformative social change.

**Table 2.** Research Design

Component	Description
Approach	Interdisciplinary Qualitative (Phenomenology + Thematic Interpretation)
Purpose	Understand the experience of catcalling victims and analyze them in interpretation
Method	In-depth interviews, Study of Qur'an texts and Hadith
Analytical Techniques	Thematic Analysis and Semantic Interpretation
Validation	Data triangulation (empirical, normative, spiritual)

## Results and Discussion

### Ethical Interpretation of Catcalling in the Perspective of the Qur'an

Catcalling is a form of harassment in public spaces that is usually characterized by unwanted comments, body movements, or whistling, and is often directed at women and other groups. This action cannot be considered as praise, but rather as behavior that degrades and objectifies a person. The main problem in catcalling lies not only in the content of the speech, but in the implied power relations and the psychological impact it causes. Catcalling positions the victim as if they have to submit to the perpetrator, thus reinforcing the notion that the perpetrator has power or domination over them [4]

The results of this study show that catcalling is expressly contrary to the principles of Islamic ethics as stated in the Qur'an and hadith. QS. Al-Isra' [17]:70 affirms the principle of *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) as a natural right inherent in every individual. In Tafsir Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab explains:

"This verse begins with Allah's oath, namely with 'qad' (قَدْ) which affirms the glory of man (Adam's descendants) by being blessed with various advantages. A beautiful body, the ability to speak and think, and knowledge, are proof of human privilege. Freedom of choice is also given, allowing them to determine the path of life. Allah glorifies man by providing various conveniences. They were given access to explore the land and seas by means of transportation, both created directly by God and created by His inspiration [43]

This explanation strengthens the argument that the act of catcalling, which degrades the dignity and freedom of individuals, especially women, is a form of violation of human dignity as outlined in Divine revelation. Thus, the response to this phenomenon is not only social or legal, but also spiritual and theological.

QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:11 conveys the prohibition of mocking, reproaching, and calling others by bad nicknames. In Tafsir Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab explains that:

"The word *yakhsar* (يَسْخَرُ) means to make fun of, that is, to mention the shortcomings of others with the aim of laughing at them, either by speech, deeds, or behavior... This is a form of indoctrination and persecution."

This explanation confirms that verbal insults, including in the form of gestures or sarcasm, are prohibited actions because they injure the honor of

fellow human beings. This verse is particularly relevant to the phenomenon of catcalling, which is a form of verbal ridicule with sexual nuances and is carried out openly in public spaces. In addition to violating the norms of decency, the act is also contrary to Islamic teachings on respect and brotherhood between human beings.

QS. an-Nahl [16]:97 provides a solid foundation for understanding the position of Islam in encouraging women's active participation in ethical and dignified social life. This verse uses the word "min zakar wa untsa'" which affirms the principle of gender equality and juxtaposes it with the word "charity" which shows the importance of charity. Not only in the spiritual dimension but also in constructive social contributions. The word "صَالِح" (shâlih) in the verse is understood as a good, harmonious, and beneficial action, which maintains and improves social conditions so that they continue to function in accordance with the values of goodness.

In the context of the phenomenon of catcalling, which reflects immoral verbal behavior and damages the dignity of women, this interpretation shows that the act is contrary to the meaning of righteous deeds. Quraish Shihab explained that pious deeds are not only maintaining existing values, but also repairing something that is broken, or even improving the value and function of a social condition. Therefore, the behavior of catcalling, which actually damages the comfort of public spaces and disturbs the dignity of women, is the antithesis of the pious deeds commanded by the Qur'an. Furthermore, the explicit affirmation of men and women in this verse is a criticism of patriarchal norms that often underestimate women's voices and participation in public spaces. This verse also encourages women to play an active role in building society, including in voicing their rejection of forms of verbal harassment such as catcalling. Thus, the interpretation of QS. an-Nahl [16]:97 provides a theological justification that efforts to combat verbal abuse are part of pious deeds and equal social-spiritual responsibilities between men and women.

The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad which reads A Muslim is a person who other Muslims are saved by his mouth and hands (HR. Bukhari-Muslim) is also an important foundation in evaluating catcalling. This hadith makes it clear that hurtful verbal behavior, including verbal sexual harassment, is contrary to the character of a true Muslim. Even in Muslim hadith no. 6925 it is explained that verbal communication can be a means of adultery when used to convey words that have a nuance of orgasm. Therefore, catcalling is also categorized as oral adultery, which Muslims should avoid.

When compared to previous studies, this research approach shows excellence in integrating Islamic spiritual values and contemporary social

phenomena. Most of the psychological and sociological literature on catcalling, such as those of Avezahra and Putri, highlights the psychological impact of the victim without providing a spiritual foundation as a form of value intervention. In fact, the *maqashid al-shari'ah* approach, especially the principle of *hifzh al-'irdh* (protection of honor), provides a strong theological framework for understanding the importance of maintaining human dignity, including in public communication.

In the context of *tafsir*, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* by Quraish Shihab has the advantage of not only providing a linguistic interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, but also bridging the sacred text with the social reality of modern society. This is different from classical interpretations that tend to be normative. Quraish Shihab consistently emphasizes the aspect of dialogical ethics, as in the interpretation of QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:11, where he highlights that any form of humor, even one wrapped in humor, can be a tool of insult that hurts brotherhood [43]. On the other hand, many studies of Islamic law and gender tend to address gender-based violence in the structural realm, but have not optimally integrated the theological-ethical aspects of the *hadith* and the Qur'an in formulating preventive and educational measures. This research fills this gap by linking the dimensions of law, interpretation, and social advocacy simultaneously.

These findings have significant implications both scientifically and practically. Scientifically, this study reinforces the idea that the interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith* can be developed applicatively to respond to contemporary social challenges, including the issue of verbal violence such as catcalling. This encourages the development of contextual thematic interpretation approaches, and opens up a space for dialogue between Islamic studies and social sciences and law. In addition, the principles of *karāmah insāniyyah* and *hifzh al-'irdh* can be a new theoretical foundation in the development of Islamic-based public communication ethics. These findings also reinforce the narrative that Islam not only rejects verbal violence from a legal and ethical point of view, but also invites every individual, both male and female, to make efforts to improve and protect human values. The concept of righteous charity in the Quraish Shihab *tafsir* expands the understanding of Islamic ethics into the realm of constructive social action, making the rejection of catcalling a tangible form of implementation of the Qur'anic values that are participatory, just, and progressive.

Practically, this research encourages the formation of an educational system that makes spiritual values the foundation of character education, especially in forming a culture of polite communication. The concepts of *qaulan baligha* and *qaulan layyinan* taught by the Qur'an can be integrated into religious

education curricula, personality training, and community empowerment programs to build collective awareness of the importance of maintaining the oral and dignity of others [6] Moreover, these findings also contribute to public policy, especially in designing regulations that are not only repressive, but also value-based preventive. By using tafsir and hadith as ethical references, this approach offers a middle ground between rigid legal formulation and a permissive patriarchal culture of verbal abuse. Overall, these results show that catcalling is not just a legal or social issue, but also an ethical and spiritual one. Thus, countermeasures require synergy between the normative approach of sacred texts and social advocacy based on Islamic values. This approach is the main advantage and contribution of this research.

**Table 3.** The Relevance of Qur'an Verses to the Catcalling Phenomenon

No.	Verses of the Qur'an	Key Concepts	Interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah	Relevance to Catcalling
1	QS. Al-Isra' [17]:70	Karāmah Insāniyyah	God glorifies man with intellect, freedom, and physicality	Catcalling violates the honor and freedom of the individual
2	QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:11	Prohibition Talmīzu (Mocking)	Offending the shortcomings of others is a form of persecution	Catcalling includes verbal taunts and sexual insults
3	QS. An-Nahl [16]:97	Equality of pious deeds	Men and women are judged based on their deeds	Verbal abuse is contrary to ethical piety

## The Psychological and Social Impact of Catcalling on Victims

The results of interviews with a number of women in urban areas of Indonesia show that catcalling has a serious and multi-layered psychological impact. In the short term, victims experience sudden discomfort, fear, and anxiety when faced with verbal abuse. Furthermore, the long-term effects include psychological trauma such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, social anxiety disorder, and loss of security in public spaces [47] Many victims report increased excessive vigilance, avoiding certain routes, and limiting outdoor activities, even during the day.

Some respondents said that they began to doubt their self-esteem and body comfort as a result of repeated sexual comments from strangers. This effect not only disrupts emotional balance, but also damages self-image and triggers shame, anger, or guilt. Symptoms of internalization of stigma were also identified, where victims feel that they are the cause of the harassment, for example because of certain clothes or body expressions. This reflects the symptoms of secondary victimization, which is a condition in which the victim feels blamed by society for what happened to them.

Avina and O'Donohue, in their study, support that verbal abuse such as catcalling is a form of psychological violence that has an impact equivalent to physical or sexual violence [48]. Verbal disorders can cause PTSD symptoms such as traumatic flashbacks, hyperarousal, and avoidant behaviors that interfere with social and emotional functioning. This study also showed a link between verbal abuse and social anxiety disorder. Djudiyah [3] noted that many victims avoid public activities such as riding public transportation or walking for fear of being harassed again. This is in line with Davidson's findings [16], which stated that catcalling contributes to an increase in social phobia among young urban women.

The main advantage of this research is the strengthening of the local dimension through direct interviews with victims in various major cities of Indonesia, which enriches the global literature with the socio-cultural context of Indonesia. This includes a culture of shame, religious stigma, and permissive norms towards perpetrators, which form patterns of social acceptance of verbal abuse. Nevertheless, the spiritual recovery dimension is also important to underline as an integral part of trauma coping strategies. In the context of Islam, the practice of *dhikr*, prayer, and involvement in the Islamic community can strengthen the psychological resilience of the victim and provide a more holistic space for recovery. Values such as *sabr* (patience), *taqwa* (piety), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) are not only normative references, but also a source of inner strength for the victim in restoring self-esteem and social trust. This study recommends the integration of spiritual approaches into community-based psychosocial recovery services, such as mosque-based counseling, Islamic support groups, and public education on the protection of human dignity in a religious perspective.

By combining scientific and Islamic approaches, this study shows that catcalling is not only a violation of social ethics and patriarchy, but also a violation of human and spiritual values. Therefore, efforts to overcome it need to go beyond the legal aspect alone and include the restoration of dignity, victim assistance, and public culture reform based on the values of justice, compassion, and respect for others.

**Table 4.** The Ethical Values of Communication in the Qur'an and Their Relevance

No.	Qur'ani Terms	Ethical Meaning & Significance	Applications in Preventing Catcalling
1	Qaulan Sadīdan	True and honest speech	Reject harassing or objectifying communications
2	Qaulan Balīghan	Clear and targeted speech	Encourage constructive criticism
3	Qaulan Layyinan	Gentle and polite speech	Resist intimidating intonation and verbal tone
4	Qaulan Ma'rūfan	Kind and socially acceptable speech	Encourage communication that maintains the dignity of the interlocutor

### Catcalling Prevention Strategy Based on Islamic Spirituality

This research reveals that one of the most promising approaches in preventing the phenomenon of catcalling is through strengthening Islamic spirituality which is integrated in moral education and ethical communication. The findings show that the internalization of Qur'anic values that emphasize honor, manners, and respect for others, can form the character of a society that rejects all forms of verbal harassment in public spaces. Moral education, especially through the Tarbiyah Islamiyyah approach, plays an important role in shaping the moral consciousness of individuals from an early age. In this context, Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren, madrasas, and public schools with religious curricula, become strategic mediums to instill the values of *hifzh al-'irdh* (maintaining honor) and *hifzh al-nafs* (maintaining the safety of life) as sharia maqasid that must be maintained [49]

In this context, Islamic educational institutions such as the Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School in Jakarta and Madrasah Mu'allimaat Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta have implemented a maqasid al-shari'ah-based curriculum that emphasizes the values of *hifz al-'ird* (maintaining honor) and *hifz al-nafs* (maintaining the safety of life). In the Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School, for example, moral education and muamalah jurisprudence are integrated with discussions of contemporary issues such as digital ethics and public communication manners. Meanwhile, at Madrasah Mu'allimaat, gender



awareness training and character development are developed in extracurricular activities based on thematic interpretation. These two institutions show that formal education based on Qur'anic values can be an initial bulwark in the prevention of abusive behavior.

In addition to formal education, the role of the Muslim family and community is crucial in creating a culture of polite communication. Interviews with community leaders and women activists in urban Muslim communities show that family *da'wah* and the habit of *adabiyyah* communication in the home environment are able to instill the values of politeness and self-control in children, especially adolescent boys. This strategy is considered more effective when accompanied by example and direct supervision from parents, teachers, and local religious leaders [21]. states that spiritual education not only teaches religious rituals, but also internalizes the values of gender justice, respect for others, and the importance of maintaining human honor and dignity. This study strengthens these findings by showing that internalizing Qur'anic values through education can prevent the formation of toxic masculinity behaviors that are at the root of catcalling.

In the context of social advocacy, Fileborn & Trott [42] explain that feminist activism has been successful in driving social change through public campaigns and legal regulation. This research expands on this approach by integrating Islamic spiritual values as a normative basis in public advocacy. Digital campaigns and social media preaching that use Qur'anic narratives about the ethics of speaking and the prohibition of hurting others, have proven to be more effective in reaching Muslim communities that are still tied to religious authorities. This is the strength of this approach because it is able to combine normative and advocacy aspects in one cohesive socio-religious strategy. Another advantage is the proposed policy based on *sharia maqasid*. This approach is not simply legalistic, but offers a policy model that emphasizes the protection of the dignity and safety of individuals comprehensively. The integration of *maqasid* in public policy allows the creation of regulations that are not only repressive to the perpetrators, but also preventive through education and character development of citizens.

The scientific implication of these findings is the need to reposition the role of Islamic spirituality in the discourse on gender violence prevention. So far, the study of gender violence has focused heavily on legal and sociological approaches, while religious aspects are often positioned as a inhibiting factor because they are interpreted conservatively. This research shows that when interpreted progressively and contextually, Islamic teachings actually become a transformative force in shaping gender-fair social behavior and communication manners. Practically, these findings support the importance of integrating gender

awareness curricula in Islamic education. This curriculum not only includes the teaching of classical jurisprudence, but also the strengthening of Qur'anic values such as the prohibition of talmizu (mockery), the recommendation of qaulan baligha and qaulan layyinan, as well as respect for human kindness. The implementation of this curriculum must be supported by teacher and speaker training, so that these values not only become cognitive doctrines, but also social practices that live in daily life.

Furthermore, the linkage between these results and previous findings confirms that catcalling prevention cannot be done sectorally. Synergy between spiritual, educational, and advocacy approaches is needed. Public culture reform, social media campaigns, digital da'wah, and public policy advocacy must move in tandem to create sustainable social change. Thus, prevention strategies based on Islamic spirituality not only form moral individuals, but also create a social order that upholds gender dignity and justice.

**Table 5.** The Contribution of the Prophet's Hadith in the Concept of Catcalling Prevention

No.	Hadith of the Prophet	Moral and Ethical Messages	Relevance to Catcalling
1	"True Muslims do not hurt verbally..." (HR. Bukhari-Muslim)	Islam emphasizes oral care as a characteristic of Muslims	Catcalling is contrary to the character of a Muslim
2	"Verbal is part of adultery..." (HR. Muslim no. 6925)	Verbal can convey sin through obscene words	Catcalling falls under the category of oral adultery
3	"Whoever believes in Allah... should speak well or be silent."	The principle of verbal restriction only on the beneficial	Encourage verbal control in public spaces

The implications of this study also include the importance of strengthening a community approach based on Islamic spirituality as a collective means in building a culture of mutual respect in public spaces. As revealed in field interviews, many victims feel they do not have a safe place to tell their stories or seek support. Therefore, the development of a *support group* based on the mosque community or the taklim council can be an alternative solution that is affordable and culturally relevant. Such initiatives can facilitate spiritual assistance, women's rights education, and safe spaces for psychosocial recovery.

In addition, the results of this study show a *new collective consciousness* among the younger generation of Muslims who reject patriarchal culture and symbolic violence. Digital movements such as *anti-catcalling* campaigns on social media that quote verses from the Qur'an and hadith show that Islamic narratives can be used progressively to deconstruct permissive social norms against harassment. The use of religious language as a basis for advocacy makes communication ethical messages more acceptable and has strong moral legitimacy in a religious society.

Furthermore, this approach encourages the *recontextualization of Islamic da'wah* in contemporary social justice issues. Da'wah is no longer only understood as the transmission of ritual teachings, but also as an effort for value-based social transformation. By referring to the verses on *qaulan layyinan* and *karāmah insāniyyah*, dai and ustazah can act as agents of change who voice the importance of respect for others in the public sphere. An empathy-based da'wah strategy, not just indoctrination, is key in targeting young and urban groups who are more resistant to rigid normative narratives.

### **The Importance of Spiritual Communities as a Safe Space for Catcalling Victims**

In the context of Indonesia's religious and communal Muslim society, spiritual community-based approaches such as mosques, taklim assemblies, or recitation groups have great potential as a safe space for women victims of catcalling. Many women who experience verbal abuse not only suffer psychological wounds, but also lose social trust, a sense of security, and even a previously strong religious identity. In this case, the spiritual community plays an important role not only as an institution of worship, but also as a space for recovery with divine and collective nuances.

These spaces can be places to build women's solidarity, open dialogue between members, and instill Qur'anic values such as *ta'āwun* (mutual help), *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity), and *rahmah* (compassion). As revealed by Effendy, mosques are not only a center of ritual worship, but also a community center that is able to foster social awareness and liberation from injustice. In this context, spiritual communities that are open to issues of symbolic and gender violence can facilitate education, spiritual mentoring, and Qur'anic ethical advocacy in response to catcalling.

Furthermore, this community can also be a pioneer in building a religious narrative that sides with the victim and rejects the normalization of verbal violence. Ustaz and ustazah who are active in the community can insert sermon or study materials that emphasize the value of *qaulan karīman* (noble words) and

the prohibition of verbal mischief. Thus, this spiritual approach not only restores inwardly, but also expands the field of Islamic da'wah that is relevant to contemporary social realities.

**Table 6.** Social Actor-Based Catcalling Prevention Strategies

No	Social Actors	Form Strategy	Examples of Practice in the Field
1	Institution	Integration of Qur'anic ethical values in the curriculum	Learning thematic interpretation and social fiqh
2	Mosque Community	Thematic da'wah and support groups	Regular studies on oral ethics and trauma healing
3	Government	Maqāṣid al-Syari'ah-based regulations	Local regulations on harassment in public spaces
4	Social Media & Muslim Influencers	Digital campaigns on ethical communication	Qur'ani narration in TikTok, Instagram content

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the practice of catcalling is a form of gender-based symbolic violence that is contrary to Islamic ethical and spiritual values. Through a thematic interpretation approach to the verses of the Qur'an, especially QS. Al-Isra' [17]:70, QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:11, and QS. an-Nahl [16]:97, as well as the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, found that Islam explicitly forbids forms of communication that degrade human dignity. Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Misbah makes an important contribution in grounding divine messages to respond to contemporary social issues such as catcalling, emphasizing the principles of *karāmah insāniyyah* and communication ethics such as *qaulan sadīdan* and *qaulan layyinan*.

These findings show that Islamic spirituality can be used as a normative and applicative foundation in shaping an ethical and inclusive culture of public communication. The integration of sharia maqasid values, such as *hifzh al-'irdh* and *hifzh al-nafs*, into education, da'wah, and public policy, has been proven to be able to encourage preventive and curative strategies against verbal

harassment. Its practical implications include the development of a gender-conscious-based religious curriculum, cultural reform of family and community communication, and social advocacy that makes Qur'anic values a foothold for change. Thus, this research not only presents a new perspective in the study of Qur'anic interpretation, but also offers a transformative model of social intervention in an effort to build a safe, equitable, and dignified public space for all.

### Author Contributions

**Mega Puspita:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Nawir Yuslem:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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