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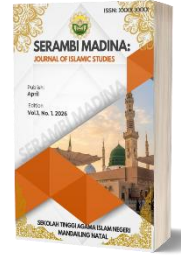
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The Intertextuality of Qur'anic Verses in Shaping Moral Discourse in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Arwansyah, email: arwansyah@uthm.edu.my^{1*}

Alven Putra, email: alvenputra1708@gmail.com²

Edriagus Saputra, email: edriagus.saputra@stain-madina.ac.id³

Muhammad Rezi, email: muhamadrezi@uinbukittinggi.ac.id⁴

Affiliation:

¹ Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, 86400 Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia

² Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup, Bengkulu, Indonesia,

³ Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Mandailing Natal, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Syekh Mohammad Djamil Djambek, Bukittinggi, Indonesia

*Author Corresponding:

Arwansyah

arwansyah@uthm.edu.my



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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the patterns and methods of using Qur'anic verses in the work of Nasa'ih al-'Ibad by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani, explain the intertextual function of these verses in strengthening and clarifying ethical meanings, and assess the relevance of the moral values they contain to the character formation of contemporary Muslim society in the archipelago. This study uses a qualitative approach with a document analysis method on the text of Nasa'ih al-'Ibad which is examined through thematic content analysis techniques. The results of the study indicate that the Qur'anic verses in Nasa'ih al-'Ibad function in two main forms, namely Bayan al-Ta'kid (strengthening the legitimacy of moral values) and Bayan al-Tawdih (explanation of moral concepts such as piety, patience, gratitude, istiqamah, and awareness of the afterlife). Although the number of citations of Qur'anic verses in the text is not dominant quantitatively, their role is very significant qualitatively in framing the meaning and ethical authority that the author wants to instill. This finding confirms that the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values in Nasa'ih al-'Ibad can be used as a model of tradition-based

moral education that is relevant to the moral challenges of contemporary Muslim society, especially in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Keywords: *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*; Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani; Intertextual; Al-Qur'an and Hadith; Moral Education; Islamic Morals in the Archipelago.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pola dan cara penggunaan ayat-ayat al-Qur'an dalam karya *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* karya Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani, menjelaskan fungsi intertekstual ayat-ayat tersebut dalam memperkuat dan memperjelas makna etika, serta menilai relevansi nilai moral yang dikandungnya terhadap pembentukan karakter masyarakat Muslim kontemporer di Nusantara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis dokumen terhadap teks *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* yang dikaji melalui teknik analisis kandungan tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ayat-ayat al-Qur'an dalam *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* berfungsi dalam dua bentuk utama, yaitu *Bayan al-Ta'kid* (penguatan legitimasi nilai moral) dan *Bayan al-Tawdih* (penjelasan konsep akhlak seperti takwa, sabar, syukur, istiqamah, dan kesadaran akhirat). Meskipun jumlah kutipan ayat al-Qur'an dalam teks tidak dominan secara kuantitatif, peranannya sangat signifikan secara kualitatif dalam membingkai makna dan otoritas etika yang ingin ditanamkan oleh pengarang. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai Qur'ani dan Hadis dalam *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* dapat dijadikan model pendidikan akhlak berbasis tradisi yang relevan dengan tantangan moral masyarakat Muslim kontemporer, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan Islam di Indonesia dan Malaysia.

Kata Kunci: *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*; Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani; Intertekstual; Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis; Pendidikan Akhlak; Moral Islam Nusantara.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the role of the Qur'an in the works of Nusantara scholars has emerged as a significant field of inquiry in understanding the intellectual development of Islam in Southeast Asia. (Harahap, 2021) Among the works that have attracted considerable scholarly attention is *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, authored by Shaykh Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani (1813–1897), a distinguished Islamic scholar who made substantial contributions to the fields of Qur'anic exegesis, jurisprudence, Sufism, ethics, and Islamic education. His full name is Muhammad ibn Umar ibn 'Arabi ibn 'Ali, and he is widely known as Muhammad Nawawi al-Shaykh al-Jawi al-Bantani. (Sarkis Yusuf Allan, n.d.) Among the Indonesian community, he is more popularly known by the honorific title K.H. Nawawi, the Son of Banten, reflecting both his esteemed scholarly status and his regional origin. (Karel, S.A, 1984) Shaykh Nawawi was born in 1230 AH/1813 CE in Tanara village, Serang — Tirtayasa District, Banten Regency, West Java, Indonesia. In several works, he is also referred to as *Nawawi al-Tanari* (or Nawawi Tanara), a nisbah that reflects his birthplace. (Chaidar, 1978) Shaykh Nawawi passed away at the age of 84, on 24 Shawwal 1314 AH/1897 CE, at his final residence in Shi'ib 'Ali, Mecca. His works have been widely disseminated across the Nusantara region and continue to serve as core texts in pesantren, surau, and traditional madrasah to this day. (Bruinessen, 2015) *Nasa'ih al-*

Ibad is one of the notable works of Shaykh Nawawi. The full title of the book, as stated in its introduction, is *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad fi Bayan al-Alfaz al-Munabbihat 'ala al-Isti'dad li Yawm al-Ma'ad*, which may be translated as "Counsels for the Servants: An Exposition of Admonitory Expressions on Preparing for the Day of Return (the Hereafter)."

This work is a commentary (*sharh*) on a text authored by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani. According to the author's own statement on the final page, the writing of *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* was completed on Thursday, 21 Safar 1314 AH. (Louis Ma'luf, n.d.) *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* is regarded as one of the most significant works in the field of *targhib wa tarhib* (spiritual exhortation and admonition), and it has been widely utilized by Muslim communities across the Nusantara region, particularly in Indonesia.

However, previous studies on this work have tended to emphasize aspects of hadith, wisdom literature, and poetic expressions, while the role of Qur'anic verses in supporting these hadiths and *athar* has received relatively little analytical attention. This has resulted in a notable academic gap that calls for further exploration.

Within the broader framework of Islamic scholarship, the relationship between the Qur'an and hadith is not merely that of the first and second sources of law; rather, it also constitutes a dynamic interplay of discourse, meaning-making, and moral legitimation. (Samsir et al., 2025) At the level of social practice, both function to shape behavior, moral character, work ethic, and the life orientation of Muslim communities. Therefore, examining how the Qur'an is engaged and articulated in texts such as *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* provides valuable insight into the processes of knowledge transmission, value internalization, and the transformation of religious culture in the Nusantara region.

In contemporary developments, there is a growing need to revisit classical texts not merely as inherited legacies, but as ethical frameworks that remain relevant to modern issues such as moral crises, hedonistic culture, the digitalization of behavior, and the search for religious identity among Muslim youth. (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021) The moral messages conveyed in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* remain highly significant, as the work offers a model of ethical education grounded in advisory discourse rooted in the Qur'an. Therefore, this study not only elucidates the text but also demonstrates the relevance of its meanings within today's social context, particularly in fostering religious character formation in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Based on a preliminary review, the role of Qur'anic verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* can be categorized into two principal forms: (1) *Bayan al-Ta'kid*, in which verses are employed to reinforce, affirm, and provide legitimacy to statements derived from hadith, wisdom literature, or poetry. The term *al-bayan* refers to an expression that clarifies or unveils the intended meaning of something through the most eloquent and precise wording. (Dasuki Ahmad, 2012) In *Mu'jam al-Wasit*, the term *al-bayan* is defined as an explanation and a demonstrative proof (*hujjah*) for something intended to be expressed. (Ibrahim Mustafa, 1960) Meanwhile, the term *al-ta'kid* refers to the act of reinforcing a statement with supporting elements so that it becomes clearer and more easily understood. (Ibrahim Mustafa, 1960) Thus, *Bayan al-Ta'kid* may be understood as an exposition of a matter that is reinforced by another supporting element. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal defined *Bayan al-Ta'kid* as the act of clarifying what is intended by something for instance, elucidating the meanings conveyed in the Qur'an and similar texts. (Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, 2010) However, in this study, the author defines *Bayan al-Ta'kid* as the manner in which the author of *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* incorporates Qur'anic verses as reinforcing elements to strengthen the statements of scholars, the hadith of the Prophet, narratives, poetic expressions, and the author's own reflections.

The second category is (2) *Bayan al-Tawdīh (Taqṣīd)*. The term *al-tawdīh* denotes clarity and explicitness—namely, that which is evident and unambiguous, as opposed to what is obscure or vague. (Ibrahim Mustafa, 1960), Meanwhile, the term *taqṣīd* refers to the path or direction toward which one intends to proceed. (Abu Mazaya al-Hafiz, 2010) Thus, *Bayan al-Tawdīh (Taqṣīd)* refers to the clarification of something that is intended or directed toward a particular meaning. Imam Malik ibn Anas explained that *Bayan al-Tawdīh (Taqṣīd)* involves elucidating the intended meanings of specific verses or statements when their implications are not yet fully clear. (Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, 2010) However, in this study, the author defines *Bayan al-Tawdīh (Taqṣīd)* in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* as the manner in which the author incorporates Qur'anic verses as explanatory tools to articulate the intended meanings and objectives of particular expressions. These verses are employed to clarify moral values or concepts directly—especially key notions such as *taqwa* (God-consciousness), *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude), *istiqāmah* (steadfastness), and *murāqabah* (spiritual awareness of God's presence).

Studies on the works of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani have been widely conducted across various fields of Islamic scholarship, particularly in the disciplines of Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism, and moral education. Nevertheless, only a limited number of studies have given specific attention to the role of Qur'anic verses in shaping moral meaning within his works, especially in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*.

Most previous research has tended to focus on historical, biographical, or textual methodological aspects, while the intertextual relationship between the Qur'an and hadith, wisdom literature, and poetic expressions within the work has not been explored in depth. For instance, Bruinessen classifies *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* as a moral text widely utilized within traditional pesantren education systems, yet his analysis primarily emphasizes its function as an instrument for moral discipline without examining the underlying Qur'anic discourse that structures and informs it. (Bruinessen, 2015) Similarly, Dhofier explains that texts such as *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* play a significant role in shaping the religious *habitus* within pesantren, yet he does not explore how Qur'anic verses function as a source of moral legitimation within the text. (Dhofier, Z, 2011)

Another study conducted by Majid compares *Hidayat al-Habib* from the Malay ethical tradition with *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, revealing similarities in their pedagogical approach based on advisory discourse (*al-maw'izah*). However, the study does not examine the semantic function of Qur'anic verses in structuring the layers of meaning within the text. (Majid, 2017) Arwansyah Kirin examines the methodology of hadith transmission in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, focusing on the evaluation of chains of transmission (*sanad*) and the grading of hadith. However, the study does not extend its analysis to the reciprocal relationship between hadith and Qur'anic verses as an interconnected textual system that mutually elucidates one another. (bin Kirin et al., 2022) Meanwhile, Asy'ari highlights the position of *kitab kuning* in the transmission of Islamic knowledge and finds that works such as *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* function as a medium for the internalization of moral values through processes of *talaqqi* (direct learning) and scholarly exposition. However, his study places greater emphasis on the educational dimension rather than on an analysis of the text's structural composition. (Asy'ari, M, 2019) On the other hand, Azhari emphasizes the role of classical ethical works in shaping character and spiritual discipline among coastal Muslim communities in the Nusantara. However, his study does not address the textological aspects that connect the Qur'an and hadith within such works. (Azhari et al., 2024)

From a contemporary perspective, Campbell argues that modern Muslim societies are increasingly seeking new forms of moral authority within the digital sphere. In this context,

classical texts such as *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* hold the potential to serve as sources of moral values that can be recontextualized and actualized in the cultivation of character within digital communities. (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021) However, the study does not examine this text directly. Meanwhile, Samsir *et al.* argue that the integration of contextual and textual approaches in classical exegesis can produce a more holistic and relevant understanding of contemporary issues. (Samsir et al., 2025) This approach serves as an important foundation for the present study in analyzing how Qur'anic verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* function both as instruments for reinforcing moral legitimacy (*Bayan al-Ta'kid*) and as clarifiers of ethical concepts (*Bayan al-Tawdih*).

Based on this review, the research gap can be formulated into three main points: (1) previous studies have largely focused on biography, the history of pesantren, and hadith methodology, without providing an in-depth analysis of the function of Qur'anic verses in shaping moral discourse; (2) there remains a limited number of studies that approach *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* as an intertextual work integrating the Qur'an, hadith, poetry, and wisdom literature; and (3) there is a lack of research linking the function of Qur'anic verses in this work to the development of character among contemporary Muslim societies.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the dual function of the Qur'an as both a reinforcement of moral legitimacy and an elucidator of ethical meaning, while also assessing its relevance in fostering ethical awareness and spirituality within the context of contemporary religious life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the results of a literature search related to the research theme, conducted through the Dimensions database, the following findings were identified:

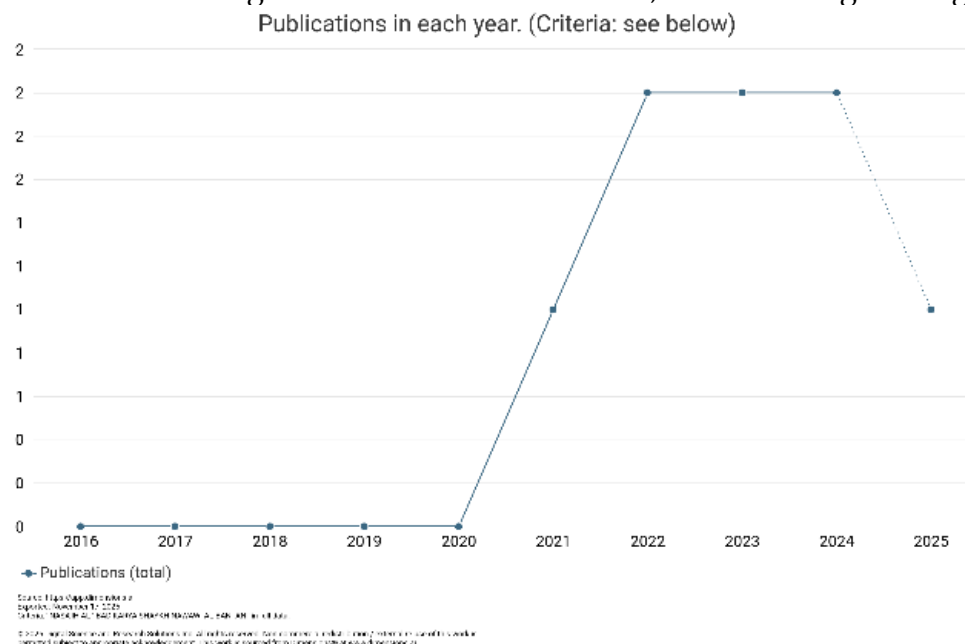


Figure 1: Publication Trends on the Research Topic

Based on the search results obtained through the Dimensions database, a total of nine related publications were identified. The graph illustrates the development of publications on *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani from 2016 to 2025. The data indicate that no publications were recorded during the period 2016–2020. The

trend began to rise in 2021 with one publication, reaching its peak between 2022 and 2024 with two publications each year. In 2025, there is a slight decline, with only one publication recorded. This pattern suggests that academic interest in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* has grown significantly since 2020, although a modest decrease in research productivity is observed in the most recent year. Therefore, the author presents three previous studies relevant to the theme of this article. First, the study conducted by Arwansyah bin Kirin et al., (2022) entitled "*The Methodology of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani in Commenting on the Hadiths of Nasa'ih al-'Ibad**." This study employs a qualitative research design, primarily utilizing library research and content analysis to examine Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's interpretation of hadith in his work *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*. The aim of the study is to identify and analyze the specific interpretive methods employed by Shaykh Nawawi, as well as to ascertain his scholarly standing and depth of expertise in the field of hadith through this work.

The primary data source is *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* itself, complemented by secondary sources such as books, journals, and academic articles. The findings indicate that Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani predominantly adopts the *ijmālī* (concise or general) method in interpreting hadith, which involves presenting brief explanations of hadith meanings in clear and accessible language. In applying this *ijmālī* approach, he employs both textual and intertextual interpretive techniques. Textual interpretation involves explaining hadith based on its original wording (*matn*), while intertextual interpretation includes clarifying variations in hadith texts, interpreting one hadith through another, drawing upon the statements of scholars, and incorporating Arabic poetry. This comprehensive approach underscores Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's significant expertise and intellectual depth in the field of hadith.

Second, the study conducted by Kirin et al., (2021) This study employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing a library-based approach to analyze the content of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's work, *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*. The primary data source is the book itself, while secondary sources include relevant books, journals, and scholarly articles. The theoretical framework implicitly draws upon the classification of hadith based on their authenticity, distinguishing between *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *ḍa'īf*, *ḍa'īf jiddan*, and *mawḍū'*.

The research specifically focuses on 236 hadith drawn from chapters 5 to 10 of *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*. The findings reveal that, of these 236 hadith, 68 are classified as *ḍa'īf* (28.8%), 22 as *ḍa'īf jiddan* (9.3%), and 65 as *mawḍū'* (27.5%). Consequently, nearly 50% of the *ḍa'īf* and *mawḍū'* hadith in these chapters cannot be used as a basis for legal rulings or authoritative reference due to their rejected status. Only 23.0% of the hadith may be considered acceptable for *faḍā'il al-a'māl* (virtuous deeds), provided they meet certain scholarly criteria. Third, the study conducted by Kharis & Fudhaili, (2025) entitled "*The Credibility of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani in Ḥadīth Studies: A Study of His Sanad and Ḥadīth Book*." This research adopts a qualitative approach, employing a historical framework. It involves the analysis of primary sources—particularly documents authored by Shaykh Nawawi himself—alongside other archival materials.

The study aims to present, in a descriptive and qualitative manner, Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's scholarly expertise in the field of ḥadīth.

The findings indicate that his credibility as a ḥadīth scholar is supported by several key aspects. First, he extensively incorporates ḥadīth narratives in his written works. Second, he demonstrates a profound understanding of *dirāyah al-ḥadīth* (critical analysis of ḥadīth) through his engagement with numerous authoritative texts, as evidenced in *al-'Iqd al-Farīd min Jawāhir al-Asānīd* by Shaykh Yāsīn al-Fādānī. Third, his own works—such as *Tanqīḥ al-Qawl* and *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*—contain detailed discussions of ḥadīth. Although often presented as commentaries (*sharḥ*) on earlier texts, these works reflect a deep mastery of both *dirāyah* and *riwāyah* (transmission) of ḥadīth, including their origins, chains of transmission (*sanad*), and methodological principles.

Based on the three studies above, it is evident that research on *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani has largely concentrated on aspects such as the methodology of ḥadīth commentary, the quality and classification of ḥadīth, and his scholarly credibility in the domains of *riwāyah* and *dirāyah*. However, these studies have not specifically addressed the intertextual dimension of Qur'anic verses employed in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, particularly their role in shaping moral meaning.

Arwansyah bin Kirin *et al.* (2022), for instance, focus on the *ijmālī* method and textual-intertextual approaches in ḥadīth commentary, yet do not examine how Qur'anic verses are positioned as supporting texts or as formative elements of ethical values. Kirin *et al.* (2021) place greater emphasis on the classification of ḥadīth authenticity, thereby leaving unexplored the moral construction that emerges from the dialogical relationship between ḥadīth and Qur'anic verses. Meanwhile, the study by Kharis and Fudhaili (2025), although affirming Shaykh Nawawi's scholarly competence in ḥadīth, does not address how the integration of Qur'anic verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* contributes to reinforcing its moral messages.

Thus, a significant research gap remains—namely, the need for an intertextual analysis that specifically examines how Qur'anic verses interact with ḥadīth within *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, and how this interaction shapes, reinforces, and reconstructs the moral values articulated by Shaykh Nawawi. Addressing this gap is crucial, as it offers new insights into the moral hermeneutical framework of the text, while also enriching the broader discourse on intertextuality within the corpus of Nusantara Islamic literature.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a documentary textual analysis design, focusing on an in-depth interpretation of textual meanings. This approach is chosen because *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* is a work grounded in moral exhortation, constructing meaning through a network of texts that includes Qur'anic verses, hadith, poetry, scholarly wisdom, and exemplary narratives.

Therefore, understanding the content and structure of meaning within this text requires a mode of reading that emphasizes linguistic context, discursive structure,

and the ethical intentions of the author, as suggested by Bowen. (Bowen, 2009) The primary data source in this study is the text *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad fi Bayan Alfaz Munabbihat 'ala al-Isti'dad li Yaum al-Ma'ad* by Shaykh Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani, specifically the edition published by Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah. The secondary data sources consist of academic works such as journal articles, dissertations, intellectual biographies, as well as studies addressing the scholarly traditions of pesantren and Islamic moral discourse.

The data analysis process is conducted through three main stages. First, the stage of data collection and identification of Qur'anic verses within the text, in which all verses cited or interpreted in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* are compiled and classified based on their position and contextual usage – whether preceding, following, or reinforcing hadith. Second, the coding and classification stage of the intertextual functions of the verses, which involves analyzing the semantic role of each verse using two principal categories: *Bayan al-Ta'kid* (reinforcement of moral legitimacy) and *Bayan al-Tawdih* (clarification of ethical concepts and meanings). These categories are developed based on an intertextual analytical framework within classical tafsir studies, as articulated by Samsir. (Samsir et al., 2025) Third, the stage of moral discourse analysis and social relevance, in which the moral meanings generated from the use of these Qur'anic verses are examined through an Ethical Discourse Analysis approach. This analysis aims to explore how *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* structures key moral concepts such as *taqwa* (God-consciousness), *sabr* (patience), *zuhd* (asceticism), and *shukr* (gratitude); how it guides the social behavior of its readers; and how its teachings remain relevant for the cultivation of character within contemporary Muslim society. (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021) Thus, this research methodology not only traces the position of Qur'anic verses within the text, but also elucidates their role in shaping moral understanding and their application within the contexts of education and contemporary Muslim social life.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

An Overview of the Patterns in the Use of Qur'anic Verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*

The analysis reveals that Shaykh Nawawi does not quote the Qur'an extensively or merely as a decorative element; rather, he selectively employs specific verses with clear rhetorical functions – particularly when he intends (1) to reinforce the authority of moral meaning, or (2) to clarify the ethical values being conveyed. In other words, within this work, the Qur'an functions as a key determinant of meaning, affirming and anchoring the truth that the author seeks to establish. Based on the analysis of the text and its semantic functions, it can be observed that:

| No. | Qur'anic Verse Used | Position/Context in the Text | Primary Function | Moral Value Formed |
|-----|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|-----|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Q.S. al-Mujādalah 58:11 | Affirmation of the virtue of knowledge and scholars | <i>Bayan al-Ta'kīd</i> | Knowledge, dignity, and honor |
| 2 | Q.S. al-Baqarah 2:180 | Elucidation of a hadith concerning bequests | <i>Bayan al-Ta'kīd + Tawdīh</i> | Responsibility and trustworthiness |
| 3 | Q.S. al-Jumu'ah 62:8 | Explanation of a poetic expression on death | <i>Bayan al-Tawdīh</i> | Awareness of the Hereafter |
| 4 | Q.S. Āli 'Imrān 3:102 | Clarification of the concept of <i>taqwa</i> and obedience | <i>Bayan al-Tawdīh</i> | Self-discipline |
| 5 | Q.S. al-Zumar 39:53 | Reinforcement of themes of hope and repentance | <i>Bayan al-Ta'kīd</i> | Divine mercy and hope |

Table 1. Classification of Qur'anic Verses

Intertextual Analysis Based on the Thematic Examples Presented

First, Knowledge as a Source of Honor

The statement of a scholar cited by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani, “*There is no alienation for the knowledgeable, and no homeland for the ignorant.*” (Abu Mazaya al-Hafiz, 2010), constitutes a moral statement rich in social and spiritual meaning. Within the context of *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, this expression is not merely an ethical exhortation, but also a philosophical assertion regarding the position of knowledge as the foundation of human dignity. Shaykh Nawawi further reinforces this meaning by citing the verse of Allah in Q.S. al-Mujādalah [58]: 11: “*Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge by degrees.*” This citation functions as *Bayan al-Ta'kīd*, serving as a form of religious legitimation that strengthens the previously articulated moral claim. Through this verse, Shaykh Nawawi affirms that a person's honor is not determined by social status, wealth, or lineage, but by the level of faith and depth of knowledge.

The intertextual function between the scholarly aphorism and the Qur'anic verse demonstrates how Shaykh Nawawi constructs ethical argumentation through two layers of authoritative sources: the intellectual tradition (*hikmah al-'ulama'*) and divine revelation (the Qur'an). This approach elevates the moral position of the learned within society as bearers of knowledge who transcend spatial and social boundaries. In other words, knowledge renders a person universal—accepted wherever they go, as the value of their knowledge surpasses geographical and cultural limitations. Conversely, ignorance alienates an individual even within their own homeland, as they lack meaningful contributions to their social environment.

Through the integration of wisdom literature and Qur'anic verses, Shaykh Nawawi formulates a model of moral education that emphasizes three core character values: respect for knowledge, diligence in its pursuit, and awareness of its significance in social life. These values are not merely individual but inherently social, as a society that esteems knowledge is more likely to be civilized, rational, and oriented toward moral progress. Thus, the message conveyed in this text is not only an encouragement to seek knowledge, but also a reflection on the value structure of

society, which ought to place knowledge and scholars in positions of honor as guardians of conscience and civilization.

In the context of Islamic education within pesantren, this teaching remains highly relevant. Students (*santri*) are not only encouraged to master knowledge, but also to internalize the moral values underlying it—namely humility, social responsibility, and service to the community. Through *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, Shaykh Nawawi instills the perspective that knowledge is not merely a means of attaining status, but a path toward moral excellence and closeness to Allah. This represents the actualization of *Bayan al-Ta'kid*—not only as a rhetorical reinforcement of meaning, but as a formative force in cultivating deep ethical and spiritual consciousness within the reader.

Second, Death as an Inevitable Reality

"O you who are preoccupied with the affairs of this world, truly you have been deceived by your long-held illusions. Why do you remain heedless until death approaches? Death will come upon you suddenly, and the grave is the coffin of all your deeds. Be patient in the face of the fears of this world, for no one dies except when their appointed time has come." (Abu Mazaya al-Hafiz, 2010) It serves as a powerful moral admonition against humanity's tendency to become engrossed in worldly affairs, neglecting the transient nature of life. This verse reflects Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani's spiritual concern over human behavior, highlighting how attachment to the material world, greed, and long-held illusions (*tūl al-amal*) distance the heart from awareness of death and the hereafter.

To reinforce this ethical message, Syaikh Nawawi cites the words of Allah in QS. al-Jumu'ah [62]:8 — "*Indeed, the death from which you flee will surely meet you...*" This verse functions as a *Bayan al-Tawdih*, an elucidation of the meaning conveyed in the preceding poem. Through this Qur'anic reference, the moral lesson of the verse becomes more explicit and gains divine legitimacy: death is an inevitable reality that cannot be avoided by anyone, at any time or place. This emphasis demonstrates Syaikh Nawawi's distinctive method of cultivating moral awareness — connecting Sufi wisdom with the theological foundation of the Qur'an, thereby achieving a balance between emotional resonance and the normative authority of the sacred text.

The function of *Bayan al-Tawdih* here shows how the Qur'an serves as a source for explaining and reinterpreting traditional moral teachings. Syaikh Nawawi not only reminds humans of death but invites his readers to grasp the spiritual significance behind it. Death is not merely the end of biological life; it is a mirror reflecting the moral journey of humans during their worldly existence. Awareness of mortality guides one toward a simpler, more balanced life, harmonizing worldly and spiritual pursuits, and fostering continuous self-reflection. Thus, his teaching cultivates three central character values: simplicity, balance between worldly and spiritual affairs, and reflective awareness of oneself and one's deeds.

From the perspective of ethical education, Syaikh Nawawi's instruction embodies a profound spiritual dimension. He teaches that consciousness of worldly impermanence is not intended to reject life itself but to place it proportionally within

the framework of the ultimate goal — the hereafter. This awareness fosters *zuhud*, a detachment that does not renounce the world entirely but positions it as a means rather than an end. Syaikh Nawawi thus instructs on balancing work and worship, worldly achievements and preparation for the afterlife.

Through the integration of didactic poetry and Qur'anic verses, *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* presents a holistic vision of Islamic moral education: it engages intellect, heart, and behavior. It does more than deliver moral guidance rhetorically; it awakens existential consciousness regarding the meaning of life and death. In today's world, marked by hedonism, materialism, and spiritual neglect, this message is increasingly relevant — a call to restore inner balance, reorient life's priorities, and cultivate character rooted in awareness of the hereafter.

Third: Embracing Hope and the Path of Repentance

The theme of Allah's mercy is one of the central spiritual teachings strongly emphasized by Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*. Through the prayers and wisdom woven throughout his work, Syaikh Nawawi seeks to instill the understanding that Allah's mercy surpasses His wrath, and that every human being, no matter how great their sins or shortcomings, still has a door of hope to return to Divine compassion.

It is within this context that he cites the words of Allah in QS. al-Zumar [39]: "*Do not despair of Allah's mercy. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.*" (Abu Mazaya al-Hafiz, 2010).

This verse functions as a *Bayan al-Ta'kid*, a theological reinforcement of the moral message previously conveyed through counsel and supplication. In this role, the verse is not merely a rhetorical complement but a source of divine legitimacy, emphasizing that despair (*ya's*) constitutes a spiritual weakness contrary to the essence of faith. Thus, Syaikh Nawawi not only instills psychological optimism but also establishes a theological foundation for hope (*raja'*) balanced with fear (*khauf*). He rejects spiritual extremes — whether despairing of Allah's mercy or becoming arrogant in the false security of being safe from His punishment — and encourages believers to navigate a proportional path between these two poles.

This message carries profound pedagogical significance in the context of spiritual education. For Syaikh Nawawi, mercy is not merely an abstract concept; it is the foundation for moral development and inner balance. He aims to instill in his readers the understanding that true faith arises from both the awareness of one's own weakness and complete trust in the expansiveness of Allah's forgiveness. By internalizing this verse, a believer is expected to cultivate spiritual optimism, steadfast conviction, and confidence in God's mercy and pardon — core character values central to the Islamic spiritual journey.

In the socio-religious context, Syaikh Nawawi's teaching can also be read as a critique of forms of religiosity that are devoid of compassion, emphasizing fear and divine punishment instead. By placing mercy at the heart of moral instruction, he underscores that Islamic education should inspire hope, rather than induce anxiety or

despair. Allah's mercy becomes a source of moral strength, nurturing empathy, tolerance, and gentleness in social relations.

Thus, the integration of Sufi wisdom and Qur'anic verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* reveals the comprehensiveness of Syaikh Nawawi's ethical vision: shaping individuals who recognize their limitations yet remain optimistic and trusting in Allah's mercy. This teaching not only reinforces personal faith but also offers a model of hopeful, compassionate spirituality, highly relevant for cultivating the character of Muslims amid the challenges of modern life, which often lead to spiritual fatigue and a loss of direction.

The Intertextual Function of Qur'anic Verses in Shaping the Moral Discourse of *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*

The study's findings indicate that the use of Qur'anic verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani is neither peripheral nor secondary, but carries significant rhetorical and epistemic functions in shaping the moral framework of its readers. Although, quantitatively, the number of Qur'anic citations does not dominate the overall narrative of the work, qualitatively, they play a crucial role in framing meaning, reinforcing arguments, and clarifying the ethical objectives intended to be instilled in the reader's soul. These findings challenge earlier assumptions by some scholars who regarded *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* as a loosely structured moral narrative lacking strong Qur'anic referentiality. (Majid, 2017) In the context of intertextuality, the relationship between the Qur'an, hadith, wisdom (*hikmah*), and poetry in this work does not operate linearly, but rather as a textual network of meaning. Qur'anic verses function as a central node, providing normative legitimacy to the accompanying texts. This aligns with the view of Samsir et al., who argue that classical Islamic texts should not be understood atomistically, but rather as structures of meaning that mutually support and reinforce one another. (Samsir et al., 2025) Thus, *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* demonstrates a model of reading hadith through a Qur'anic framework, rather than the other way around. This finding also offers a critique of previous studies, such as that of Arwansyah Kirin, which focused primarily on the chains of transmission (*sanad*) and the authenticity assessment of hadith in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*, without examining the function of the Qur'an that accompanies and contextualizes these hadith. (bin Kirin et al., 2022) By demonstrating that the Qur'an functions to reinforce (Bayan al-Ta'kid) and clarify (Bayan al-Tawdih) the meaning of hadith, this study enriches the discourse on the Qur'an–Hadith relationship from a functional perspective, rather than merely a hierarchical one. This is significant because, within the Islamic scholarly tradition, the Qur'an–Hadith relationship is not simply that of primary and secondary sources of law, but a dialogue of meanings that shapes the ethos of religious life.

Socially, the role of the Qur'an in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* is also linked to the process of value internalization within the pesantren culture. Values such as piety (*taqwa*), simplicity of life, dedication to seeking knowledge, awareness of mortality, and hope in Allah's mercy are not merely taught as abstract concepts; they are conveyed

through spiritual rhetoric that shapes the consciousness and religious experience of readers. This demonstrates that the text is not merely cognitive, but performative — a text that actively molds the attitudes and inner orientation of its audience. (Dhofier, Z, 2011) The relevance of *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* becomes even more pronounced when considered in a modern context, where Muslim communities — particularly the younger generation — face challenges of moral crisis, a culture of hedonism, and identity fragmentation driven by the digital age. (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021) In this context, the moral values articulated through the integration of the Qur'an and Hadith in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* provide a framework for ethical restoration grounded in traditional authority while remaining applicable to contemporary settings. Thus, the renewed use of this text in modern moral education is not merely an act of heritage preservation, but an effort to revitalize values.

Accordingly, this study demonstrates that the function of Qur'anic verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* is strategic and systematic, rather than merely supplementary. It highlights two intertextual functions — Bayan al-Ta'kid and Bayan al-Tawdih — as a model for analyzing the Qur'an–Hadith relationship. The study also establishes that the work holds normative relevance for character formation in contemporary Muslim societies and offers a significant theoretical contribution to the study of Islamic moral texts and Nusantara manuscript scholarship.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the use of Qur'anic verses in *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani is not peripheral, but occupies a strategic position in shaping and reinforcing the moral meanings the text seeks to convey. Although the number of Qur'anic citations in the text is not quantitatively dominant, their function is qualitatively significant, particularly in providing religious legitimacy and clarifying ethical meanings conveyed through hadith, wisdom (*hikmah*), and poetry. Through intertextual analysis, two main functions of the Qur'anic verses in this work are identified: Bayan al-Ta'kid (reinforcing the legitimacy of values) and Bayan al-Tawdih (clarifying the meaning and moral concepts). This dual function illustrates that the Qur'an–Hadith relationship in the Nusantara scholarly tradition is not merely a hierarchical source of law, but a dialogue of meaning that shapes the ethical framework. These findings complement previous studies that focused more narrowly on the *sanad* and transmission of hadith without assessing the structure of its meaning discourse. Overall, this research affirms that *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* is not only a work of spiritual counsel, but also a text of moral education relevant for character formation in contemporary Muslim communities. The integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values in this work provides a model of tradition-based moral education that remains applicable to modern spiritual challenges. Therefore, this study opens avenues for further research, particularly in exploring the application of this text in formal

education, pesantren curricula, and spiritual development programs for younger generations.

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