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COMMUNICATION REGULATION IN DEBATE FROM THE QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVE: A THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL STUDY

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Abstrak

Debat merupakan pertukaran pendapat mengenai suatu topik dengan memberikan dalil atau alasan untuk memperkuat setiap pendapat. Tujuan utama debat adalah menyampaikan dan mempertahankan argumen secara efektif. Argumen menjadi kuat ketika didukung fakta, bukti, dan penalaran logis serta disampaikan dengan integritas moral. Oleh karena itu, debat bukan sekadar penyampaian ide, melainkan mengandung muatan moral yang tidak terpisahkan dari ide tersebut. Interaksi antara kecerdasan dan moralitas dalam penyampaian argumen sangat penting, karena kecerdasan menghasilkan argumen berbasis bukti yang kuat, sedangkan moralitas menjamin penyampaian yang etis dan penuh penghormatan terhadap lawan debat. Dalam Islam, debat telah ada sejak zaman para nabi. Al-Qur'an memberikan pedoman penerapan kecerdasan dan moralitas dalam debat para nabi. Analisis ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an mengungkap enam regulasi komunikasi debat, yaitu: (1) berdebat dengan bijak, (2) menjaga kebenaran, (3) menyampaikan kebenaran Islam saat berdebat dengan Ahli Kitab atau berbeda keyakinan, (4) menghindari fitnah dan kerusakan, (5) menghindari debat yang tidak produktif, dan (6) menghindari debat yang memecah belah.

Kata Kunci: *Debat, Regulasi Komunikasi, Etika Al-Qur'an, Perspektif Islam, Argumentasi Moral*

Abstract

Debate is an exchange of opinions on a specific topic by presenting reasons or arguments to support each perspective. The primary purpose of debate is to convey and defend arguments effectively. Arguments become compelling when supported by facts, evidence, and logical reasoning,

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delivered with moral integrity. Thus, debate is not merely an expression of ideas but intrinsically includes moral elements inseparable from those ideas. The interaction between intellect and morality in argumentation is essential, as intelligence produces strong, evidence-based arguments, while morality ensures ethical delivery and respect for opponents. In Islam, debate has been practiced since the time of the prophets. The Qur'an provides guidance on applying intellect and morality in prophetic debates. An analysis of relevant verses reveals six Qur'anic communication regulations for debate: (1) conducting debates wisely, (2) maintaining truthfulness, (3) conveying Islamic truth when debating People of the Book or different beliefs, (4) avoiding slander and harm, (5) refraining from unproductive arguments, and (6) preventing divisive debates.

Keywords: Debate, Communication Regulation, Qur'anic Ethics, Islamic Perspective, Moral Argumentation

INTRODUCTION

Debate is an inevitable social phenomenon in human life, occurring across various contexts, both worldly and religious. In everyday social interactions, differing perspectives arise from individuals' psychological, sociological, ethnic, religious, and experiential backgrounds, leading to diverse interpretations of the same matter. For example, the contrasting views on a half-filled glass—seen as "half full" or "half empty"—illustrate how debates originate from differences in perception(Azizi, 2023; Katu, 2015). Academically, the phenomenon of debate is important to examine because it is not merely a medium for expressing ideas but also a platform for developing evidence-based arguments combined with moral integrity (Marwah, 2021; Rohman & Ismaning Ayu, 2023; Zahratunnisa', 2022). Practically, debates play a strategic role in numerous fields such as education, politics, and religion, making it crucial to understand the characteristics and supporting elements that enable debates to be effective and productive (Hanafy, 2017; Sholeh, 2016).

Previous studies have explored debate from communication, social psychology, and ethical perspectives, identifying how argumentation techniques and rhetorical strategies influence debate outcomes (Fajrussalam et al., 2020; Hamdani & Umar, 2024; Sholeh, 2016). However,

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most research has inadequately integrated morality and ethics as fundamental pillars of debate, particularly from a religious standpoint (Anam et al., 2015; Zahratunnisa', 2022; Zulfatunnisa, 2021). Prior investigations often focused on debating skills and intellectual argumentation without thoroughly examining the role of moral and ethical values in constructing dignified and elegant debates (Azizi, 2023; NOOR, 2021). This gap underscores the importance of exploring the relationship between argumentative intelligence and moral integrity, especially within the Islamic perspective, which provides specific ethical guidelines for conducting debates as an inseparable component of the activity (Amiruddin, 2018; Wari'i, 2019; Zahratunnisa', 2022).

This study aims to address this gap by examining debate not only as an exchange of arguments but as a communicative activity that harmoniously combines intelligence and morality. Specifically, this paper discusses how moral and ethical principles, as taught in the Qur'an, can be applied to build productive and respectful debates (Anam et al., 2015; Azizi, 2023; Zahratunnisa', 2022). This approach is expected to contribute academically by incorporating an ethical dimension into debate studies and practically by offering guidelines for debaters to integrate moral values into their argumentation delivery (Anam et al., 2015; Jafar & Hamiruddin, 2022; Kamarusdiana, 2019).

The study hypothesizes that debates integrating intellectual argumentation with moral and ethical principles based on Islamic teachings will result in more constructive and harmonious interactions. In other words, morality acts as a moderating variable that strengthens argumentative effectiveness and reduces destructive conflicts within debates (Azizi, 2023; Budiono, 2020; Usman, 2009). This paper will examine the relationship between intellectual reasoning and moral application in debates as guided by the Qur'an and how both mutually support achieving positive and constructive debate outcomes (Amiruddin, 2018; Anam et al., 2015; Azizi, 2023; NOOR, 2021; Wari'i, 2019; Zahratunnisa', 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on debate has extensively explored the relationship between argumentative competence and debate outcomes, as well as its impact on social interaction and decision-making. Generally, existing

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literature reveals three primary trends: first, an emphasis on argumentative intelligence and rhetorical strategies to win debates; second, studies on ethics and morality in debate communication, albeit more limited; and third, religious approaches that highlight debate as an activity grounded in spiritual and moral values, particularly within the Islamic context (Marwah, 2021; Rohman & Ismaning Ayu, 2023; Widigdo, 2013). These trends demonstrate that while debate is understood as an exchange of arguments, there is considerable diversity in theoretical focus and methodological orientation across studies (Muhammad Hildan Azizi, 2023; Sholeh, 2016; Wahyuddin et al., 2023).

The first trend focuses on the cognitive and rhetorical aspects of debating, with primary attention on developing argumentative techniques, logic, and effective communication strategies. These studies often employ quantitative approaches such as experiments or discourse analysis to assess argumentative success based on evidence strength and rhetorical skills. This line of research underscores the importance of intellectual ability in constructing logical and persuasive arguments as a key factor in winning debates and influencing public opinion (Alfiyah & Khiyaroh, 2022; Kadri, 2020; Rafdi Al Wafi et al., 2022).

The second trend involves studies centered on communication ethics and morality in debates. Typically qualitative, this research examines the norms, values, and ethical principles governing how arguments should be presented to respect opponents and maintain harmonious social relationships (Kadri, 2020; Rafdi Al Wafi et al., 2022). Drawing from communication philosophy and ethical theory, these studies highlight how debates can be conducted according to moral principles. However, the scope remains limited and often lacks comprehensive integration with argumentative intelligence (Baharuddin et al., 2025; Muhammad Hildan Azizi, 2023; Riza & Yusniah, 2025; Suri, 2022).

The third trend emerges within religious studies, particularly Islamic scholarship, which views debate as an activity fundamentally rooted in moral and spiritual principles (Sholeh, 2016; Wahyuddin et al., 2023). This research focuses on interpreting Qur'anic verses and Hadiths that regulate ethical debate conduct, emphasizing the harmony between intellectual acumen and moral integrity (Muhammad Hildan Azizi, 2023; Sholeh, 2016).

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Usually normative and textual, these studies employ hermeneutic and qualitative methods to affirm morality as an inseparable element of debate (Khalil et al., 2023; Nova Yanti Maleha et al., 2024; Riza & Yusniah, 2025).

Despite the valuable insights from these three trends, existing studies tend to overlook a systematic integration of argumentative intelligence and morality within the context of productive and dignified debate. Research on argumentative skills often neglects the ethical dimension in depth, while ethical studies frequently remain separate from analyses of intellectual argumentation. Religious approaches tend to be normative without empirically examining how these two aspects interact in contemporary debating practice.

Therefore, this study proposes a novel direction by investigating debate as a communicative process that harmoniously combines argumentative intelligence and morality based on Qur'anic perspectives (Jafar & Hamiruddin, 2022; Kamarusdiana, 2019). It specifically focuses on how integrating these aspects can foster debates that are not only logically effective but also ethically sound and constructive. This approach aims to contribute both theoretically and practically by developing an elegant and dignified debate model aligned with Islamic values while remaining relevant in contemporary social contexts (Alfiyah & Khiyaroh, 2022; Kadri, 2020).

The Qur'an provides clear guidance on how debates should be conducted. This guidance is explicitly presented in Surah An-Nahl, verse 125:

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُۗ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ

> "*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.*" (Qur'an, An-Nahl 16:125)

Through this verse, Allah SWT instructs that debates must be carried out with kindness and propriety. Mustafa Al-Maraghi, in his tafsir, explains that during a debate, responses should be better and more refined than opposing replies (Azizi, 2023; NOOR, 2021; Zahratunnisa', 2022). Such

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responses should be delivered gently, using polite and considerate language. According to Hamka, this verse serves as a fundamental guideline for debating: one should counter arguments with superior arguments. Moreover, debaters must distinguish the issues being discussed from personal feelings such as dislike or affection toward the person they are debating with (Kamarusdiana, 2019; Usman, 2009; Wari'i, 2019). Wahbah Zuhaili, in his tafsir, also emphasizes that debates should be conducted in the best manner possible — using soft, compassionate speech and selecting the most appropriate arguments (Alfiyah & Khiyaroh, 2022; Sholeh, 2016; Suri, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study focuses on a literature review as its primary unit of analysis, specifically examining textual sources related to the themes of intelligence and morality in debate based on Qur'anic verses. Thus, the research centers on artifacts in the form of books, articles, journals, and relevant online sources. This unit of analysis was selected to gain a deep understanding of the conceptual and theological guidance on debating within the Islamic context (Lexy J. Moleong, 2019; Qomar, 2005). The research design employed is qualitative, adopting a literature research approach. This study does not involve primary data collection or experimental methods but systematically analyzes various literary sources concerning intelligence and morality in debate. This approach enables the researcher to interpret the meanings embedded in religious and academic texts while connecting relevant theories to build a comprehensive conceptual framework (Ibrahim, 2015; Rita Fiantika et al., 2022; Sugiarto, 2022).

The data sources consist of secondary data obtained from diverse written and digital literature. Data were collected from Qur'anic tafsir books, scholarly articles, academic journals, and online news related to debate and communication ethics. These sources were chosen based on their relevance and credibility to support an in-depth examination of the relationship between intelligence and morality in debate from an Islamic perspective (Qornain et al., 2022; Sugiono, 2010, 2016). Data collection techniques involved library research, including the systematic gathering,

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selection, and documentation of information from the identified literature sources. This process was conducted methodically by identifying, selecting, and organizing data relevant to the research focus. Additionally, discussions and reflections with peers were conducted to enrich understanding and validate the data (Cresswell, 2012; Kapitány, 2020).

Data analysis was conducted through a qualitative descriptive process following Sugiyono's framework, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, irrelevant information was filtered out to retain only the most pertinent data. The reduced data were then systematically presented to facilitate further interpretation and analysis. The final stage involved logically drawing conclusions based on the findings. To ensure data validity, this study applied credibility tests through data triangulation and peer discussions as forms of validation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Meaning of Debate

Etymologically, the word "debate" derives from the root word "bat," which means "to strike" or "to hit." Thus, "debate" can be understood as a meeting or conversation where the parties involved "strike" or challenge each other's arguments or views. This term is accepted in various languages, including Indonesian, and refers to an activity or process in which two or more parties formally discuss or argue a topic with the aim of reaching a conclusion or influencing public opinion. Debate can occur in various contexts, including politics, academia, or everyday social interactions (Anam et al., 2015; Azizi, 2023; Rafdi Al Wafi et al., 2022).

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), debate is defined as a discussion and exchange of opinions on a matter by providing reasons to defend each party's viewpoint: for example, debates regarding presidential candidates attract public attention. Wiyanto explains that "debate is a clash of opinions on a particular topic between proponents and opponents through organized formal dialogue." Ismawati states that "essentially, debate is a contest of arguments between individuals or groups aiming for victory on one side. Each participant tries to defeat their opponent to claim the position of being right" (Sholeh, 2016; Usman, 2009; Wahyuddin et al., 2023).

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Based on the above expert opinions, the author concludes that debate is a form of argumentative communication involving two or more parties holding differing views on a proposal or issue. The goal of debate is to evaluate and determine the merit of a proposal through exchanging arguments and evidence. In debating, there are two main parties: those who support and defend the proposed argument and those who reject, deny, or oppose the affirmative's position. Therefore, debate is an important activity in various contexts—education, politics, and society—because it enhances critical thinking, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities (Kadri, 2020; Kamarusdiana, 2019; NOOR, 2021).

2. The Concept of Communication Regulation in Debate According to the Qur'an

The Qur'an is a holy book whose verses are arranged meticulously and explained in detail. It is revealed by Allah, the Most Wise and All-Knowing. The Qur'an contains Allah's call to all humanity to stand firmly against various forces that strive to deny the essence of truth and dispute its fundamentals. Therefore, it is necessary to face them concretely and realistically with language styles that are satisfying, supported by definite arguments and firm rebuttals. The Qur'an uses the term *jadal*, which means debate. In Indonesian, *jadal* is interpreted as debate, defined as discussion and exchange of opinions with mutual reasoning to defend one's views. Debate, as *jadal*, has been a human trait since ancient times, and thus the Qur'an acknowledges this nature (Baharuddin et al., 2025; Samosir, 2023).

In the Qur'an, the terms *jadal* and *mujadalah* are commonly used to describe debate. Generally, both refer to the exchange of arguments between two parties aiming to uphold or refute a view. However, the Qur'an provides specific guidelines on how debate should be conducted. Linguistically, *jadal* derives from the root *jadala-yajdulu-judul*, meaning to debate. It is synonymous with terms like argument, debate, and dispute. Terminologically, *jadal* refers to exchanging ideas competitively to overcome the opponent, as debates often involve strengthening one's own position while attempting to refute the opponent. The meaning of *jadal* varies depending on context; it can signify debate, dispute, refutation, or excessive argumentativeness (Alfikri, 2022; Ridho et al., 2023; Syahruddin,

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2020). The Qur'an uses *jadal* to describe both positive and negative debates, depending on intention and method.

According to several mufassirun (Qur'anic commentators), the meaning of *jadal* depends greatly on context. Al-Qurtubi states that *jadal* can be positive or negative: if conducted with wisdom and to establish truth, it is justified; but if done for wrongful purposes, such as defending falsehood or merely winning an argument, it is blameworthy. Ibn Kathir explains that *jadal* can denote disputes by those attempting to reject the truth brought by the prophets, condemning those who argue without knowledge to deny truth, exemplified by prophet–people confrontations (Awang et al., 2021; Toseef et al., 2022). At-Tabari interprets *jadal* as an effort to defend one's views rightly or wrongly, often describing debates by disbelievers opposing prophets. Fakhruddin Ar-Razi highlights two facets of *jadal*: positive when seeking truth and justice, negative when intending to mislead or demean others (Alfikri, 2022; Braslauskas, 2021; Downey & Bedard, 2019).

From these perspectives, mufassirun agree that *jadal*'s meaning varies with context and intent. If used to uphold truth and justice appropriately, *jadal* is positive; if used to defend falsehood, reject truth, or win arguments unjustly, it becomes blameworthy. From the author's research, several Qur'anic communication regulations on debate are identified as follows:

a. Debate Should Be Conducted Wisely

The Qur'an urges calling to Allah's path with wisdom and good instruction, especially when addressing those who reject or doubt Islam. This is evident in Surah An-Nahl, verse 125:

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُۗ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ

"*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is rightly guided.*"

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The urgency of wisdom in debate here is to guide others to truth kindly and wisely without causing hostility. Psychologically, a wise approach softens minds and facilitates acceptance. Many conflicts arise from delivering truth without wisdom.

b. Debate Must Uphold Truth

Each party must maintain truthfulness in debate, avoiding distortion or misinformation. When Islamic truth confronts misleading arguments, debates conducted with proper knowledge and etiquette become crucial in defending truth, as expressed in Surah Al-Kahfi, verse 54:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍۗ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ اَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

"*And We have certainly diversified for the people in this Qur'an from every [kind] of example; but man has ever been, most of anything, [prone to] dispute.*"

This verse illustrates human tendency to argue, and the Qur'an's role in clarifying truth through constructive debate, which fosters intellectual and spiritual growth beyond mere winning or losing.

c. When Debating People of the Book or Those of Different Beliefs, Convey Islamic Truth Politely

The Qur'an advises presenting Islamic truth respectfully when debating People of the Book or others with differing beliefs. Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 46 states:

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُۖ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ وَقُوْلُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِالَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَاُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ وَاِلٰهُنَا وَاِلٰهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَّنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ

"*And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.'*"

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This guidance aims to prevent conflict and antipathy, ensuring debates intended to convey truth do not provoke hostility.

d. Debate Should Avoid Slander and Harm

Debates must avoid slander and causing harm. While debates aim to convince, arguments should not include false accusations or damage. Islam commands honesty in all aspects of life. Surah Al-Maidah, verse 8 instructs:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوّٰمِيْنَ لِلّٰهِ شُهَدَآءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰٓى اَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا ۗ اِعْدِلُوْا ۗ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do."

e. Avoid Unproductive Debates

While debate aims to prevail, it should avoid unproductive or fruitless arguments, such as pointless quarrels driven by ego or hatred. Maintaining harmony and unity is vital. Allah says in Surah Ghafir, verse 4:

مَا يُجَادِلُ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِى الْبِلَادِ

"No one disputes concerning the verses of Allah except those who disbelieve, so do not be deceived by their [uninhibited] movement throughout the land."
The Qur'an stresses *jadal*'s role in establishing truth and justice, emphasizing it must be done with wisdom, etiquette, and proper intention to be constructive rather than divisive.

f. Avoid Debates That Cause Division

Allah warns against using debate to sow discord. Surah Al-An'am, verse 159 states:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَّقُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ وَكَانُوْا شِيَعًا لَّسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِيْ شَيْءٍ ۗ اِنَّمَآ اَمْرُهُمْ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ

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"*Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects - you, [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allah; then He will inform them about what they used to do.*" This verse reminds believers to avoid arguments that fracture unity and community cohesion.

CONCLUSION

Debate is indeed necessary when trying to convince others of ideas or teachings that are not yet fully understood. Although the purpose of debate is to persuade, it must still adhere to the guidelines or regulations set by Allah. At least six regulations warrant attention: first, debates should be conducted wisely; second, debates must always uphold the truth; third, when debating with the People of the Book or those of differing faiths, the truth of Islam should be conveyed; fourth, debates should avoid slander and harm; fifth, unproductive debates must be avoided; and sixth, debates should never aim to cause division.

One important principle to keep in mind is maintaining a balanced relationship both with God (known as *hablun minallah*) and with fellow human beings (known as *hablun minannas*). By doing so, life becomes harmonious and free from disgrace, as stated in Allah's words in Surah Ali Imran, verse 112: "*Disgrace has been decreed upon them wherever they are unless they hold fast to the rope of Allah and the rope of the people. And they have invoked anger upon themselves and have been put into torment because they disbelieved in the verses of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed.*"

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