



Contextualization of Jihad Verses in the Qur'an: A Thematic Study and Its Implications for National Education

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the contextual meaning of *jihad* verses in the Qur'an and analyze their relevance to national education values. By using a thematic interpretation (*tafsir maudhū'ī*) approach, the study focuses on verses that are often misunderstood, such as QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 190 and QS. At-Taubah [9]: 5. Through this method, the research highlights that *jihad* in the Qur'an is not limited to physical warfare but embraces broader values such as self-discipline, social contribution, and the pursuit of justice. The study also critically discusses the implications of understanding these verses in relation to the development of character education and religious moderation in Indonesia. The findings show that a contextual reading of *jihad* verses can significantly contribute to shaping a tolerant, democratic, and peace-oriented national identity. This article offers an academic contribution in bridging Islamic textualism with the civic values of the modern nation-state.

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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, as the holy scripture of Muslims, contains various commands that must be understood not only textually but also contextually. One significant yet frequently misunderstood theme is the concept of *jihad*. The term *jihad* and its derivatives appear forty-one times in the Qur'an, indicating its importance in the life of Muslims (Baqi, 2001). Unfortunately, certain extremist groups interpret *jihad* narrowly as merely physical warfare, disregarding the historical background and the true intent of the verses (Stevanus et al., 2021). Such a misinterpretation has led to theological confusion and even social conflict.

Indeed, Islam, as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation), upholds justice, peace, and the

common good. Therefore, a contextual exegetical approach is essential for understanding the Qur'anic verses on *jihad*, so as to avoid rigid or even distorted interpretations (Junaedi, 2020). This study emphasizes the importance of a thematic (*maudhū'ī*) approach to classify *jihad* verses according to the period of revelation (Makkiyah and Madaniyah), the social context, and the universal values they convey.

This study also addresses the relevance of understanding *jihad* within the Indonesian national context. As a nation characterized by religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity, Indonesia requires a religious narrative that is inclusive, peaceful, and moderate. Therefore, the recontextualization of *jihad* verses needs to be linked to nation-building, value-based education, and the strengthening of

religious moderation. Previous studies, such as those by Suriati (2019) and Ulum (2021), have examined *jihad* in the contexts of dakwah, intellectuality, spirituality, or mentality, but have not specifically connected it to civic and national education. This is where the novelty of the present study lies.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the Qur'anic verses on *jihad* contextually using a thematic exegesis approach, as well as to examine their implications for character education and national values in Indonesia. This research is expected to provide an academic contribution to strengthening moderate and constructive religious literacy amid the ideological challenges faced by the nation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design. Its focus is to examine the *jihad* verses in the Qur'an through the thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhū'ī*) approach, which traces a specific theme comprehensively across various Qur'anic verses (Fajri et al., 2023). This method was chosen for its ability to reveal the unity of meaning in the *jihad* verses across diverse historical, social, and spiritual contexts.

The primary sources of this research are the Qur'an and classical tafsir works such as *Tafsir al-Ṭabarī* and *Tafsir al-Marāghī*, as well as contemporary interpretations like *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* by Quraish Shihab. The secondary sources consist of Islamic literature, scholarly journals, and articles relevant to the themes of *jihad*, contextual exegesis, and national character education.

The data were analyzed in three stages: (1) identifying the *jihad* verses in the Qur'an and classifying them based on their context (Makkiyah and Madaniyah), (2) analyzing the content and meaning of the verses through reference to tafsir works, and (3) conducting a contextual reflection on Indonesian national values, particularly in fostering a moderate, tolerant, and peace-loving character.

The validity of the data was reinforced through source triangulation of tafsir references and confirmation with modern scholarly literature, both in the fields of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic education. Thus, the findings of this analysis are expected to present a comprehensive, contextual understanding of *jihad* that is oriented toward the development of a civil society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Jihad and Its Derivatives in the Qur'an

The term *jihad* in Arabic originates from the root word jahada, which means "to strive earnestly" or "to exert great effort" (Wassil, 2009). In the Qur'an, this term and its derivatives appear forty-one times, carrying a range of meanings that do not solely refer to warfare (Baqi, 2001). During the Makkiyah period, *jihad* verses predominantly emphasized patience, perseverance in *dakwah* (religious outreach), and spiritual struggle. In contrast, in the Madaniyah period, *jihad* began to include physical self-defense within the context of legitimate warfare (Mansur & Oktaveri, 2019).

Table 1. Mapping of Jihad Verses in Makkiyah and Madaniyah Surahs

No	Surah & Verse(s)	Place of Revelation	Word Form(s) in Arabic
1	Al-Furqan: 52	Makkah	جَاهِدْ , جِهَادًا
2	Fatir: 42	Makkah	جَهْدَ
3	Al-An'am: 109	Makkah	جَهْدَ
4	Luqman: 15	Makkah	جَاهِدًا
5	An-Nahl: 38, 110	Makkah	جَهْدَ
6	Al-'Ankabut: 6, 8, 69	Makkah	يُجَاهِدُوا , جَاهِدَا , جَاهِدُوا
7	Al-Hajj: 78	Madinah	جَاهِدُوا , جِهَادِهِ
8	Al-Baqarah: 218	Madinah	جَاهِدُوا
9	Al-Anfal: 72, 74, 75	Madinah	جَاهِدُوا
10	Ali 'Imran: 142	Madinah	جَاهِدُوا
11	Al-Mumtahanah: 1	Madinah	جِهَادًا
12	An-Nisa: 95	Madinah	المُجَاهِدُونَ , المِجَاهِدِينَ
13	Muhammad: 31	Madinah	المُجَاهِدِينَ
14	An-Nur: 53	Madinah	جَهْدَ
15	Al-Hujurat: 15	Madinah	جَاهِدُوا
16	At-Tahrim: 9	Madinah	جَاهِدْ
17	As-Saff: 11	Madinah	يُجَاهِدُونَ
18	Al-Ma'idah: 35, 53, 54	Madinah	جَاهِدُوا
19	At-Tawbah: 16, 19, 20, 24, 41, 44, 73, 79, 81, 86, 88	Madinah	جَاهِدُوا , جَاهِدْ , جَاهِدُوا , جِهَادٍ ,
			جَاهِدُوا , يُجَاهِدُوا , جَاهِدْ , جُهْدَ , يُجَاهِدُوا , جَاهِدُوا .

Ibn Faris, in *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, explains that the root of the word *jihad* is associated with the meaning of *masyaqqah* or hardship (Al-Lughawi, 2002). This implies that *jihad* refers to the utmost effort in facing difficulties for the

sake of defending the truth. This indicates that *jihad* is a dynamic concept encompassing moral, spiritual, social, and even intellectual struggle (Yassin, 1984).

A Contextual Approach to the Qur'anic Verses on Jihad

Understanding the verses on *jihad* requires a contextual approach that incorporates *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the overarching objectives of Islamic law). Without such an approach, verses like Qur'an 9:5 (*At-Tawbah*) are often misinterpreted as legitimizing universal violence, whereas in reality, they were revealed in the context of treaty violations by the polytheists of that time (Al Maraghi, 1946; Shihab, 2007). Similarly, Qur'an 2:190 (*Al-Baqarah*) emphasizes that warfare is permitted only against those who initiate aggression, and it strictly prohibits transgression (Ath Thabari, 2000).

Exegetes such as Al-Ṭabarī and Al-Marāghī agree that the *jihad* verses must be read in their entirety and linked to their historical context. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that *jihad* is, in essence, the struggle to establish peace and justice. Thus, a thematic and contextual approach enables us to understand that *jihad* is not merely a physical act but also a struggle to uphold humanitarian values, as it offers solutions to contemporary challenges of diversity (Anggoro, 2019).

The Relevance of Jihad in the National Context

In the context of a modern nation-state such as Indonesia, *jihad* can be understood as active contribution to preserving national unity and advancing society. In the present day, *jihad* does not necessarily take a physical form but can be manifested through strengthening education, empowering the Muslim community economically, and engaging in fair and peaceful social participation (Al Maliki, 1994).

This concept of social *jihad* is crucial to instill amid ideological challenges and sectarianism (Yaman, 2021). Through a proper understanding of the *jihad* verses,

Muslims in Indonesia can take on the role of agents of peace rather than sources of conflict. Thus, *jihad* becomes a constructive spirit in building the nation's civilization (Syafi'i & Fikriawan, 2021).

Implications of Understanding Jihad Verses for Moderation and Civic Education

A contextual reading of the *jihad* verses offers significant potential for shaping a moderate and tolerant character. In character education, *jihad* values such as earnestness, steadfastness in principles, and moral courage can serve as a foundation for civic and national education (Idris et al., 2023).

A correct understanding of *jihad* can also serve as a counter-narrative tool against extremism (Rakhmani et al., 2024). Islamic education that emphasizes the meaning of *jihad* as non-violent struggle, social service, and the pursuit of knowledge will foster a generation that is both spiritually resilient and nationally conscious (Al-Hilal, 2018). Thus, the *jihad* verses can serve as a positive inspiration in building a peaceful and civilized nation (Rothman, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study affirms that the understanding of *jihad* in the Qur'an cannot be limited solely to the aspect of physical warfare. *Jihad* is a multidimensional concept encompassing spiritual, social, intellectual, and cultural struggles. Through thematic and contextual exegesis, the *jihad* verses can be interpreted as a call to build a just, peaceful, and dignified society.

This understanding is highly relevant in the context of Indonesia's pluralistic nationhood. In its correct meaning, *jihad* can serve as a constructive spirit in shaping national character, strengthening religious moderation, and preventing ideological deviations. Therefore, active roles from educators,

Islamic scholars, and educational institutions are essential to mainstream this contextual interpretation within the Islamic education curriculum.

This article makes an academic contribution by bridging Islamic texts (*nash*) and the realities of nationhood. By situating the *jiḥād* verses within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and national values, Islam can continue to serve as a peaceful and solution-oriented civilizational force amid the dynamics of the modern nation.

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