

The Impact of Quranic Commands and Prohibitions on Ethical Development among UniSHAMS University Students

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Abstract

This research is a study to understand the impact of Quranic commands and prohibitions on building, reforming, and developing ethics. It discusses the problem of moral deviation and weak behavioral commitment in Islamic societies in general and among students of Sharia sciences and other disciplines in particular. The research employs an analytical field method by studying a sample of students from Universiti Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS), an international Islamic university in Kedah, Malaysia. The sample includes students from various levels, specializations, and faculties. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to male and female students, covering three main aspects. Statistical analyses were conducted using the PSPP statistical software, and the research found several results, including: Quranic commands and prohibitions have a significant impact on building ethics and evaluating behavior. The commitment to Quranic principles and religious practices varies among UniSHAMS students and other communities. The university, its curriculum, administration, professors, and environment have a considerable influence on adhering to Quranic commands and ethical commitments. The apparent weakness in certain condemnable behaviors among UniSHAMS student community is a result of weak commitment to certain Quranic commands and prohibitions.

Keywords: Ethics, Student Environment, UniSHAMS, Quran, Commands, Prohibitions.

Introduction

The Holy Quran was revealed by Allah as a book of glad tidings, warnings, and guidance for all mankind. "Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion to His Slave (Muhammad pbuh) that he may be a warner to the 'Ālamīn (mankind and jinn)." (Al-Furqan: 1). It serves as guidance for the righteous, "This is the Book (the Qur'ān), where of there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqūn the pious believers of Islāmic Monotheism who fear Allāh much." (Al-Baqarah: 2). Among its guidance are commands that lead to upright behavior and prohibitions

that warn against deviation and corruption in the morals of individuals and societies. Upon studying the Quranic texts, one finds numerous commands and prohibitions presented in diverse styles and various contexts. These Quranic commands and prohibitions have an impact on building and reforming ethics because the fundamental principle of any moral system relies on obligations, manifested through commands and prohibitions" (Diraz, 1998). The Quran and its commands and prohibitions were revealed for implementation, to shape the behavior and rectify the morals of people, just as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the embodiment of noble character, lived and acted according to the Quran" (Muslim, 1995).

From these premises, this study aims to explore and measure the impact of Quranic commands and prohibitions on society in general and specifically among the students of University Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS), an international Islamic university. This research is part of a multidimensional field study conducted in 2023 on students from different faculties, specializations, and levels at UniSHAMS. Thus, it is limited to presenting some descriptive statistical results derived from the questionnaires distributed to the male and female students of the university.

Research Problem

The Quranic commands and prohibitions are intended to be adhered to, applied, and followed with steadfastness. However, when observing the conditions of Islamic societies, one finds disparities in ethics and behavior resulting from variations in the adherence to Quranic commands and prohibitions. Additionally, there is a noticeable weakness in adhering to noble morals, accompanied by deviations in behavior among some Muslims. This calls for a study of such phenomena to understand the extent of the Quranic influence on their existence and development. It is essential to assess the degree to which the deviation from the Quran and its commands and prohibitions contributes to the weakness and deterioration of ethics.

Research Questions

The research problem revolves around several questions, including

1. Does the student community at UniSHAMS University show interest in knowing and understanding the Quranic commands and prohibitions, and do they strive to apply them?
2. To what extent does this student community adhere to Quranic commands and prohibitions?
3. How far does this student community deviate from the Quranic commands and prohibitions?
4. What is the role of the university's professors, administration, and curriculum in building and maintaining ethics in accordance with the Quranic commands and prohibitions?

Research Objectives

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To identify the impact of Quranic commands and prohibitions on building and developing ethics within society.
- 2- To determine the influence of Quranic commands and prohibitions on building and developing ethics within UniSHAMS University.
- 3- To assess the effect of the university's curriculum, administration, and professors in guiding and instilling moral education among the students at the University.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a theoretical study followed by an analytical field study. The initial phase involves studying Quranic commands and prohibitions and analyzing their impact on building and developing ethics, with a detailed examination of some specific Quranic commands and prohibitions. Subsequently, a field study is conducted among the student community of University Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS), followed by statistical analysis.

Firstly, an introduction to the study community:

University Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS) was established in 1993 as an Islamic center for higher education in Kedah, Malaysia. Initially, it operated as an Islamic higher education center with academic programs twinned with Al-Azhar University in Egypt. Over time, it evolved into an institution known as the Islamic Religious Institute in Kuala Ketil, Kedah Darul Aman, and was officially licensed by the Malaysian Ministry of Education in 1996. Subsequently, it became a university college named "Insaniah" in 2006. Eventually, it expanded and attained full university status, known as University Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS), after receiving its registration certificate from the Ministry of Higher Education on February 5, 2018.

UniSHAMS is owned by the Kedah state government and is situated in Kuala Ketil, Baling, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia. (Source: <https://unishams.edu.my>)

The university consists of 6 faculties and 4 study centers. It offers 42 programs at different levels, starting from the foundation level, diploma, bachelor's degree, and up to the highest level, which is a Doctorate in Philosophy. The current number of UniSHAMS students is a total of 4082, including both male and female students.

Secondly, The Definition Of The Research Sample

The research sample includes male and female students from various faculties at University Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS). These faculties include the Faculty of Islamic Theology, Faculty of Quranic Sciences, Faculty of Sharia and Arabic Language, and the Core Center. Additionally, students from other non-Islamic faculties at the university are also included in the sample. The research sample is diverse, encompassing students from different specializations and educational levels, ranging from the foundation level, diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, up to the doctoral level. The sample also varies based on the living arrangements, with some students residing within the university campus, while others live outside the campus.

Thirdly, Study Instrument and its Axes

In this study, a questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The questionnaire was designed based on the theoretical background and hypotheses of the research, and it included the following components:

1. **Basic Information:** This section collected data about participants' gender, faculty, academic level, and living arrangements.
The questionnaire focused on three main axes:
2. **Axis One: Definition, Importance, and Environment:** This section contained 13 questions that revolved around participants' understanding of Quranic commands and prohibitions, their relationship with Quranic ethics, and the significance and benefits of adhering to them.

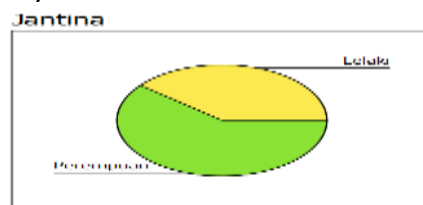
3. Axis Two: Quranic Commands: This section included 11 questions that detailed some specific Quranic commands, such as fulfilling promises, justice, cooperation, modesty, honesty, and trustworthiness, among other Quranic ethics.
4. Axis Three: Quranic Prohibitions: This section comprised 8 questions that discussed certain Quranic prohibitions, such as forbidding arrogance, selfishness, prying into others' secrets, extravagance, lying, and malice, among other Quranic prohibitions.

Discussion and Analysis

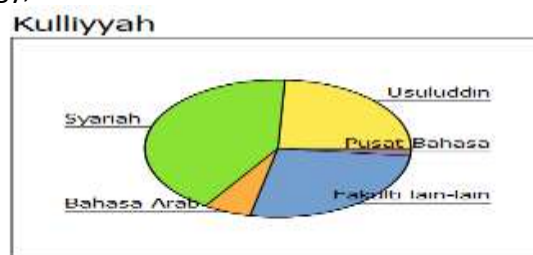
The researchers distributed 120 questionnaires to male and female students from various faculties, specializations, and academic levels at the university. After collecting the questionnaires, the data was entered into the statistical software (PSP) and Excel. Initial simple statistical operations were performed, and the following are the findings and results:

Basic Information or Constant Factors:

The sample of participants exhibited diversity in terms of gender, with 47 males and 73 females, which reflects a noticeable proportionality between the total number of male and female students at the university.



Furthermore, this number is distributed among the faculties with varying proportions. The majority of male and female students are enrolled in the Faculty of Sharia, accounting for 41.7% of the sample, followed by other scientific faculties at 26.7%, and then the Faculty of Islamic Theology at 24.2%. On the other hand, the participation is lower from the Faculty of Arabic Language (5.8%) and the Core Center (1.7%). These proportions indicate that the largest number of students at the university are enrolled in the Faculty of Sharia and the Faculty of Islamic Theology, as well as other faculties with scientific specializations.

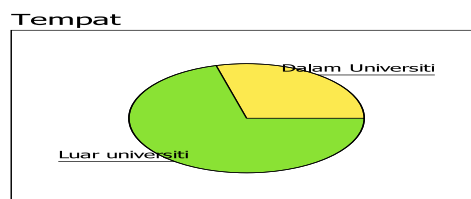


Jantina x Kulliyah

			Kulliyah					Total
			Usuluddin	Syariah	Bahasa Arab	Fakulti lain-lain	Pusat Bahasa	
Jantina	Lelaki	Count	11	21	2	12	1	47
		Total %	9.2%	17.5%	1.7%	10.0%	.8%	39.2%
Perempuan	Perempuan	Count	18	29	5	20	1	73
		Total %	15.0%	24.2%	4.2%	16.7%	.8%	60.8%
Total	Total	Count	29	50	7	32	2	120
		Total %	24.2%	41.7%	5.8%	26.7%	1.7%	100.0%

Regarding the academic level, the majority of participants are at the undergraduate/bachelor's level, followed by those at the diploma level, and then the master's level. There are very few participants from the foundation and doctoral levels.

As for the living arrangements, some participants in the questionnaire reside in the university's on-campus dormitories, as the university requires first-year students to live on campus. Consequently, their number is smaller compared to those living outside the university, with the majority of the latter being more advanced in their academic years. The living arrangements, whether on-campus or off-campus, are influenced by various factors such as financial, psychological, and environmental conditions. In both cases, i.e., living on-campus or off-campus, the researcher hypothesizes that it acts as a contributing factor and supportive or hindering environment in the influence of Quranic commands and prohibitions on students' ethics and behavior.



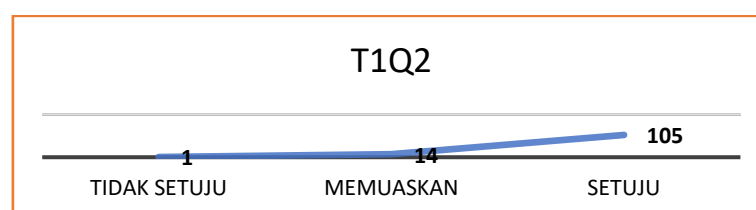
First Axis: Definition, Importance, and Environment

When looking at the statistical results derived from the participants' responses to the questionnaire regarding this axis, the following points become apparent:

In the first question, which pertains to understanding the level of quick response when hearing Quranic commands and prohibitions, it is evident that the responses ranged between acceptance and moderation. The majority of participants (89) answered with agreement, and (31) of them responded with moderation. There were no answers indicating disagreement. This reflects the research hypothesis regarding the sanctity of Quranic commands and prohibitions in the minds of the students, driven by their strong faith, which necessitates prompt implementation of Allah's commands and prohibitions.

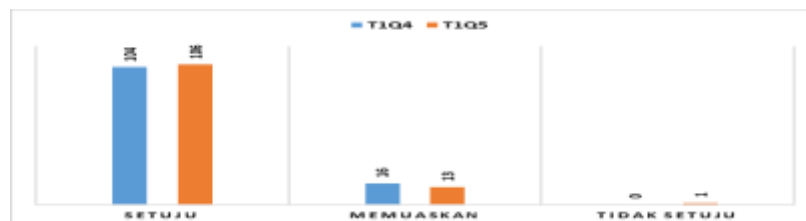
T1Q1	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Memuaskan	1.68	31	.48
Setuju	1.58	89	.50
Total	1.61	120	.49

In the second question, regarding the manifestation of the results of Quranic commands and prohibitions in the students' personal lives, we find that the highest percentage was in agreement (105), followed by moderation (14), and only one participant disagreed. This illustrates what the theoretical study has concluded, that the implementation of Quranic commands and prohibitions has positive effects and results that reflect on the life, security, and happiness of a Muslim. Those who chose moderation or disagreement might have considered the realization and existence of the perfect effects of Quranic commands and prohibitions in their lives.



In the question regarding knowledge of Quranic commands and prohibitions, the responses were distributed between acceptance (104) and moderation (16). This means that the students of UNISHAMS University have awareness of the boundaries set by Quranic commands, the seriousness of adhering to them, as well as the prohibitions and warnings against falling into sinful behavior. This awareness reflects on their implementation and practice of Quranic commands and prohibitions in their ethics and interactions within the university community.

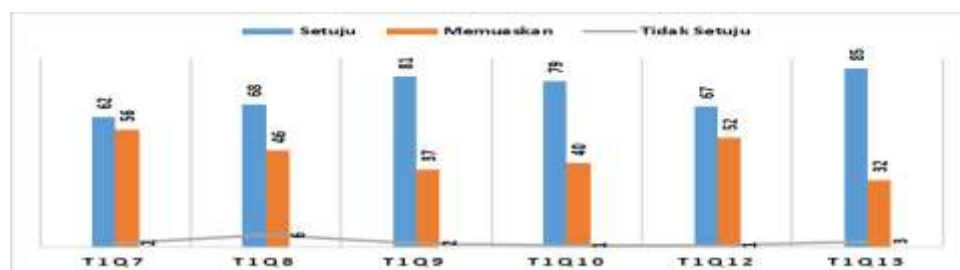
Similarly, in the question regarding distinguishing between the levels of Quranic commands and prohibitions in terms of obligation, recommendation, permissibility, dislike, and prohibition.



As for the sixth question about adherence to Quranic commands and prohibitions, whether before understanding them or understanding them first and then adhering to them, the responses were divided among the three evaluations. (30) Individuals answered with acceptance, (40) with moderation, and (50) with non-acceptance. This reflects the motivational aspect of faith, wherein Quranic commands and prohibitions are seen as divine orders that should be embraced with faith first and then further explored in their related issues and rulings.

T1Q6	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Tidak Setuju	1.76	50	.43
Memuaskan	1.55	40	.50
Setuju	1.43	30	.50
Total	1.61	120	.49

The responses to the rest of the questions in this axis were distributed with varying proportions between acceptance, moderation, and very few instances of non-acceptance, as shown in the following figure:



These statistical results reveal that the participating male and female students possess a certain level of ethics and commitment to Quranic commands and prohibitions, but they still need further reinforcement and reminders within the student community.

Furthermore, the influence of social customs and cultural openness on the level of awareness and application of Quranic commands and prohibitions in the students' daily lives is evident. (114) respondents acknowledged the existence of this influence, which sometimes hinders their adherence to Quranic commands and prohibitions.

Moreover, (109) participants stated that the university environment and its curriculum play a supportive role in reminding them of Quranic commands and prohibitions, acting as a strong reinforcement for their commitment to these principles.

Additionally, (117) respondents, accounting for (97.5%) of the participants, affirmed that university professors serve as positive role models in adhering to Quranic commands and prohibitions, providing a strong incentive for the students to apply Quranic ethics in their behavior and lives.

Second Axis: Quranic Commands

This axis consisted of (11) questions that highlight the impact of certain Quranic commands on the ethics of the students. Upon descriptive analysis of the data collected for the questions in this axis and their five-point rating scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree), the following findings emerged:

The mean values of the questions in this axis were close, ranging between (4, 5), with variations in the ratings based on the relationship between each question and the research hypothesis.

	T2Q1	T2Q2	T2Q3	T2Q4	T2Q5	T2Q6	T2Q7	T2Q8	T2Q9	T2Q10	T2Q11
N Valid	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.25	3.92	4.22	4.17	4.30	4.39	4.15	3.95	4.19	4.03	4.09
Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	Sangat bersetuju	Setuju	Setuju	Setuju	Sangat bersetuju	Sangat bersetuju	Setuju	Setuju	Sangat bersetuju	Sangat bersetuju	Sangat bersetuju
Std Dev	.85	.90	.76	.80	.75	.75	.77	.99	.83	.93	.98

In a general overview, the responses confirm the research hypothesis positively. For instance, in the question regarding the command to fulfill promises, uphold justice, cooperate, be truthful, and maintain trustworthiness at the level of administration, professors, and students, the majority of responses were in the "good" and "very good" rating, indicating the presence of these commands and a commitment to uphold them within the university among the administration, professors, and students. This is particularly significant considering that the university is Islamic, and the Quranic studies are mandatory in all faculties, programs, centers, and academic levels.

T2Q6

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Kurang memuaskan	1	.8%
	Memuaskan	16	13.3%
	Setuju	38	31.7%
	Sangat bersetuju	65	54.2%
Total		120	100.0%

The previous table demonstrates the impact of Quranic recitation on improving behavior and adherence to these Quranic commands and others. We find that (54%) of the respondents rated it as "very good," and (31%) rated it as "good." The lower percentages indicated as "acceptable" or "moderate" can be attributed to the fact that some students might not be native Arabic speakers, and they may need translations, explanations, and clarification of meanings while reading the verses of the Quran.

Third Axis: Quranic Prohibitions

Upon examining the following table, which illustrates the participants' responses to the eight questions in this axis, the following points become evident:

	T3Q1	T3Q2	T3Q3	T3Q4	T3Q5	T3Q6	T3Q7	T3Q8
N Valid	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.74	3.04	3.81	4.10	4.04	1.91	3.41	4.27
Median	1.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
Mode	Tidak Bersetuju	Memuaskan	Setuju	Sangat bersetuju	Sangat bersetuju	Tidak Bersetuju	Memuaskan	Sangat bersetuju

In the first question, which addresses the prohibition of arrogance and selfishness, the majority of participants, at a rate of (70%), denied possessing these blameworthy traits. This aligns with the research hypothesis, which indicates that students in an Islamic university strive to uphold commendable ethics and distance themselves from reprehensible behavior. As for the percentages given for the other ratings in this question, they suggest the presence of some of these traits occasionally, attributed to a weak faith and drifting away from the Quranic commands and prohibitions. Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Religion is all about ethics; whoever excels in ethics, excels in religion" (Ibn Qayyim, 1996). Conversely, the opposite is also true; a person's weak faith is reflected in their ethics.

T3Q1

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Tidak Bersetuju	84	70.0%
Kurang memuaskan	6	5.0%
Memuaskan	15	12.5%
Setuju	7	5.8%
Sangat bersetuju	8	6.7%
Total	120	100.0%

In the second question, which addressed the prevalence of lying and animosity in the student community, the highest percentage of responses was in the "moderate" category (28%). Meanwhile, the percentage of those denying the existence of such behavior was (13.3%), and those affirming the presence of such unethical conduct in the student community accounted for (12.5%). These varying results indicate that within the university community, there are some instances of blameworthy behaviors and ethics, likely influenced by students coming from different educational levels. This emphasizes the students' need to be aware of Quranic commands and prohibitions, to learn and constantly be reminded of them through the university's curriculum, administration, and professors.

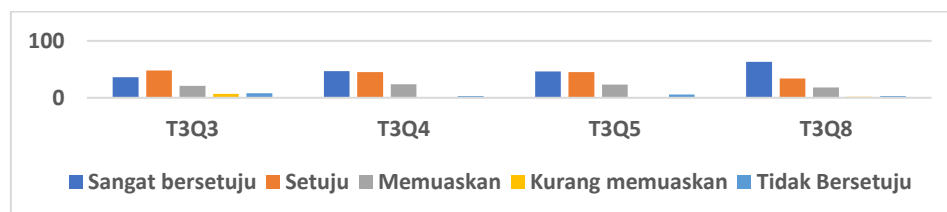
T3Q2

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Tidak Bersetuju	16	13.3%
Kurang memuaskan	24	20.0%
Memuaskan	34	28.3%
Setuju	31	25.8%
Sangat bersetuju	15	12.5%
Total	120	100.0%

Similarly, in the question about the participants' adherence to their friends' secrets and whether they disclose them, we find that the majority of respondents (84%) denied engaging in such behavior. This indicates the influence of Quranic prohibition against prying into others' affairs, spying, and disclosing secrets on the ethics and conduct of the male and female students at UNISHAMS University. A small percentage (16%) acknowledged some instances of behaviors that might contradict Quranic prohibitions, which might exist among some students. As known, the level of commitment and righteousness varies based on educational levels, specializations, understanding of religious and societal awareness.

		T3Q6	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Tidak Bersetuju	72	60.0%
	Kurang memuaskan	14	11.7%
	Memuaskan	15	12.5%
	Setuju	11	9.2%
	Sangat bersetuju	8	6.7%
Total		120	100.0%

A result similar to the previous ones is also evident in the question about extravagance and wastefulness, which the Quran forbids. The percentage of respondents who rated this behavior as "strongly agree" or "agree" was (26%), while the percentage indicating the existence of such blameworthy conduct in the student community but in a small proportion was (7.5%). This result emphasizes the need for the university authorities and professors to provide more Quranic awareness, particularly in warning against extravagance and wastefulness in all aspects of life. Regarding the question about the role of understanding Quranic prohibitions, along with the role of modesty and fear of falling into social disgrace as factors facilitating adherence to Quranic prohibitions, the responses were mostly distributed between moderation, approval, and strong agreement.



This confirms the necessity of having awareness of Quranic commands and prohibitions, along with reinforcing positive social ethics in the surrounding environment. This is essential for the purpose of continuous education and ongoing monitoring to ensure steadfastness in adhering to Quranic commands and prohibitions

The Results

After conducting both theoretical and field studies, the research yields several findings as follows:

- 1- Quranic commands and prohibitions have a significant impact and role in building ethics and evaluating behavior. As individuals acquire knowledge about these commands and prohibitions, Muslim individuals tend to adhere to them, which reflects in their behavior and interactions in life.
- 2- The UniSHAMS student community, like any other community, shows variations and diversity in the level of religious commitment to Quranic commands and prohibitions. Some individuals who are aware of these commands and prohibitions follow them diligently, while others who are unaware might require guidance and direction.
- 3- The study confirms that the practical implementation of Quranic commands and prohibitions is predominant among university students, especially since it is an Islamic university with the goal of nurturing committed Muslim individuals following the Islamic principles.
- 4- The study highlights the significant influence of the university, its curriculum, administration, professors, and overall environment on the adherence to Quranic commands and prohibitions and the resulting ethical commitment.
- 5- The study reveals some weaknesses in adhering to certain Quranic commands and prohibitions, leading to the existence of some blameworthy behaviors within the UniSHAMS student community.

Recommendations

The study recommends conducting further field research that focuses on the specific means that aid in adhering to Quranic commands and prohibitions in society as a whole and within the student community, in particular. Additionally, the study advises the university administration, professors, and students to pay attention to Quranic commands in terms of familiarizing themselves with them, understanding their significance, and implementing them. It is essential to explore specific methods, activities, and programs that promote steadfastness in following these commands.

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