



QAULAN SADIDAN IN Q S AN NISA VERSE 9 AND ITS ETHICAL RELEVANCE FOR GENERATION Z'S DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

This study examines the meaning of *qaulan sadidan* in Q S An Nisa verse 9 and its relevance for the communication practices of Generation Z in contemporary digital environments. While previous research has described the moral significance of *qaulan sadidan*, few studies have explored how its exegetical interpretations can be connected to current theories of digital communication. This study addresses this gap by combining a thematic reading of classical and modern tafsir with insights drawn from Digital Communication Ethics, Media Ecology, and Self Presentation Theory. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the analysis engages major exegetical works such as those of al Tabari, Ibn Kathir, al Qurṭubi, Wahbah al Zuhayli, Quraish Shihab, and Zainul Arifin in order to map the development of meaning across interpretive traditions. The findings show that classical exegetes frame *qaulan sadidan* as upright and fair speech that protects vulnerable individuals and prevents intergenerational injustice, while contemporary exegetes extend its relevance to education, family communication, and public discourse. When viewed in relation to the digital habits of Generation Z, these ethical principles become highly pertinent. They encourage clarity, verification, empathy, and responsibility in navigating rapid information flows, emotionally charged content, and the risks of misinformation and online aggression. The study therefore proposes a Qur'anic ethical communication framework that integrates exegetical insights with contemporary communication theory. This framework contributes to strengthening both Qur'anic literacy and ethical digital literacy among young Muslims and provides a conceptual basis for further research on Islamic communication ethics in the digital age.

Keywords: *Qaulan Sadidan, Q.S. An-Nisā' 9, Generation Z, Communication Ethics*

A. Introduction

The Qur'an offers guidance on communication that has been interpreted and applied in many different periods and social settings. Among its directives is the instruction in Q S An Nisa verse 9 to employ *qaulan sadidan*, a form of expression that emphasizes moral clarity and uprightness. Classical exegetical scholarship explains that *qaulan sadidan* does not end with propositional truth. Classical commentators often describe it as a form of speech that protects vulnerable people promotes fairness and avoids outcomes that may harm those who rely on others for support (Bahri and Wahyuni 2021). In this sense the concept functions as a binding ethical standard that integrates truthful content with the responsibility to uphold justice and social well-being.

The expansion of digital technologies has reshaped the landscape of communication into one that is rapid visually driven and governed by user attention. These features have become part of the everyday communication landscape for many members of Generation Z. Although digital media provide wide opportunities for expression and participation they also intensify the circulation of misinformation hate speech and symbolic forms of violence (Rifa'i and Marhamah 2020). Although discussions on *qaulan sadidan* are relatively extensive, most of them remain descriptive and do not examine how the concept might be related to current discussions in digital communication studies. Few studies attempt to operationalize the concept as a practical framework that responds to the communication behavior of Generation Z. The present article fills this gap through a thematic reading of Q S An Nisa verse 9 and a theoretical synthesis with Digital Communication Ethics Media Ecology and Self Presentation Theory. Through this approach the study seeks to outline a framework that can speak to the kinds of communication practices commonly found in digital environments.

In the broader field of Quranic studies *qaulan sadidan* is closely linked with educational and familial responsibilities. It is often described as a form of speech that cultivates honesty clarity and firmness within interpersonal relationships so that moral guidance and value transmission may take place in a responsible and transparent manner (Ainissyifa et al 2022; Oktaviyani et al 2022). These aspects connect *qaulan sadidan* with other key Quranic communication principles such as *qaulan ma'rufa* and *qaulan karima* which together create a comprehensive ethical framework (Fahrudin and Marjuki 2022). This framework gains importance today as misinformation and polarized discussions spread quickly and require more careful forms of verification and communication (Husna et al 2025; Syafriani et al 2022).

Digital technology introduces a communication environment that shapes the identity formation emotional dynamics and social orientation of Generation Z. Social media platforms encourage expressive creativity yet they also magnify risks such as hate speech cyberbullying and the normalization of deceptive content strategies (Garrido Moreno et al 2020). Because this generation often navigates communication that is impulsive and heavily influenced by social validation there is a growing need for an ethical framework that extends beyond abstract moral instruction. It must offer guidance that can be practiced within daily digital interaction. At this point *qaulan sadidan* becomes highly relevant as it encourages transparency honesty and objectivity in the dissemination and circulation of information (Alamsyah and Lintang 2025; Amelia and Nasrulloh 2024; Anam 2025). This relevance is supported by several studies that show the role of *qaulan sadidan* in building trust reducing conflict and strengthening the effectiveness of public religious discourse (Afdal et al 2025; Mulyono and Azhar 2024).

Responding to these conceptual and empirical gaps the present article proposes a synthesis between thematic exegesis of Q S An Nisa verse 9 and contemporary communication theories in order to formulate the Quranic Ethical Communication Framework for Generation Z. The model is grounded in four operational values which are clarity verification empathy and responsibility. These values function as guiding

principles before during and after the production of digital messages. The aim of this study is to analyze the meaning of *qaulan sadidan* through a comparative reading of classical and modern tafsir and to identify its implications for the communication behavior of Generation Z in digital spaces. The study is expected to strengthen Quranic literacy and ethical digital literacy while contributing to the development of an applied communication model suitable for the needs of young Muslims.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the meaning of the verse and to examine how its ethical principles may relate to present day digital communication. This approach is appropriate for examining theological concepts while also relating them to current social phenomena. The primary focus of the study is Q S An Nisa verse 9 with particular attention to the expression *qaulan sadidan*. The verse is examined through a comparative reading of major classical and modern tafsir works to ensure a comprehensive understanding of its interpretive development.

The primary sources consist of the Qur'an and authoritative exegetical texts that represent different methodological orientations within the tradition. These include Ibn Kathir's *Tafsir al Qur'an al Azim*, al Qurṭubi's *al Jami li Ahkam al Qur'an*, Wahbah al Zuhayli's *Tafsir al Munir*, M Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir al Mishbah*, and Zainul Arifin Zakaria's *Tafsir Inspirasi*. Secondary sources include journal articles books and recent studies related to Islamic communication ethics the concept of *qaulan sadidan* and the communication patterns of Generation Z in digital environments. The combination of these sources allows the study to integrate classical exegetical insights with contemporary scholarly debates.

Data were collected through structured library research which involved identifying cataloguing and reviewing written materials that are relevant to the topic. The analysis of these materials follows the thematic method of tafsir known as *tafsir mawdu'i*. This method examines related verses and interpretive comments across different works of tafsir and synthesizes them into a unified conceptual understanding. The analytical procedures include identifying key exegetical narratives coding thematic elements such as honesty justice clarity social responsibility and the protection of vulnerable groups comparing interpretive tendencies between classical and contemporary commentators and identifying points of continuity and expansion in their explanations of *qaulan sadidan*.

The final stage of analysis involves integrating the exegetical findings with three communication theories that include Digital Communication Ethics Media Ecology and Self Presentation Theory. This integration supports the formulation of an applied communication framework that relates Quranic ethical principles to the digital behavior of Generation Z. The credibility of the findings is strengthened through source triangulation by comparing classical and contemporary exegetical interpretations with current academic discussions on communication ethics and digital culture. This approach helps the study draw conclusions that are informed by both classical interpretations and recent academic discussions.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Reconstruction of the Meaning of *Qaulan Sadidan* in Classical Tafsir

The classical exegetical tradition provides the earliest and most foundational understanding of *qaulan sadidan* in Q S An Nisa verse 9. These interpretations are shaped by the legal and ethical concerns surrounding bequests inheritance and the protection of orphans. Although al Tabari Ibn Kathir and al Qurṭubi converge in their view that *qaulan sadidan* functions as corrective speech intended to prevent injustice directed at vulnerable heirs each exegete articulates this understanding through a distinct interpretive emphasis.

Al Tabari anchors his explanation in the narrative context described by Ibn Abbas concerning individuals who are near death and prone to delivering instructions that may disadvantage rightful heirs. For al Tabari the core function of *qaulan sadidan* lies not only in the directive to speak truthfully but also in the ethical responsibility placed upon those who witness the moment of bequest. He explains that witnesses are obligated to guide the testator away from decisions that may perpetuate injustice and harm future generations (Tabari 2001). This interpretation presents *qaulan sadidan* as a mechanism of moral correction carried out by the surrounding community to ensure that social responsibility is upheld across generations. The ethical maxim that one should avoid encouraging actions that one would not accept for oneself or one's own children reinforces the principle of reciprocity and accountability embedded in upright speech.

Ibn Kathir follows a similar interpretive path but strengthens his explanation through prophetic traditions that regulate the permissible extent of bequests. Through the report of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas he clarifies that *qaulan sadidan* does not merely signify honest advice. It includes guidance that is proportionate and does not shift the rights of heirs through excessive or unbalanced instructions (Ibn Kathir 2000). Ibn Kathir's emphasis on piety sincerity and the moral obligation to guide the testator toward what is just illustrates that *qaulan sadidan* combines truthful counsel with a commitment to protect social equity. This highlights the verse as a call to responsible communication that is conscious of its structural consequences.

Al Qurṭubi offers the most expansive reading by combining linguistic analysis with legal reasoning. He references Ibn Abbas who states that the verse urges guardians to treat orphaned children as they would wish their own children to be treated after their death. From this point al Qurṭubi extends the meaning of the verse beyond the specific case of bequests. He defines *sadidan* as speech that is both accurate and just and therefore expands its ethical application into broader domains of social responsibility (al Qurṭubi 1964). His reading positions *qaulan sadidan* as a principle through which the precision of speech and the fairness of its consequences become central criteria for evaluating moral conduct.

A synthesis of classical tafsir reveals three major insights. First *qaulan sadidan* is presented as an instrument of moral correction in moments where unjust decisions may affect the welfare of future generations. Second the concept requires guidance that is proportionate and does not inflict structural harm on vulnerable heirs. Third the linguistic and legal analysis offered by al Qurṭubi opens a pathway for understanding *qaulan*

sadidan as a general communication ethic that evaluates speech through its accuracy appropriateness and social consequences. These insights establish a strong interpretive foundation for extending the relevance of *qaulan sadidan* to wider arenas of public and interpersonal communication including contemporary digital environments.

2. Expansion of the Meaning of *Qaulan Sadidan* in Contemporary *Tafsir*

Contemporary exegetes widen the interpretive horizon of *qaulan sadidan* in Q S An Nisa verse 9 by moving beyond the legal and technical discussions of bequests and the protection of orphans. Their interpretations demonstrate that the ethical principles embedded in the verse can be applied to broader fields that include social communication character development education and public discourse. Through this expansion *qaulan sadidan* emerges as a communicative ethic with significant relevance for modern society including the digital behavior of Generation Z.

Wahbah al Zuhayli in *al Tafsir al Munir* retains the legal foundation established by classical exegetes yet brings additional emphasis to the pedagogical and social dimensions of the verse. After outlining the linguistic meaning of *qaulan sadidan* he explains that upright and truthful speech must be in harmony with the objectives of the Sharia which aim to uphold justice and protect the rights of orphans and other vulnerable members of society (Al Zuhayli 2009). He highlights that the divine instruction to fear God in matters related to orphans situates *qaulan sadidan* within a framework of intergenerational empathy. Speech must be guided by an awareness of its long term effects on those who depend on responsible communication. Although grounded in fiqh al Zuhayli's reading positions *qaulan sadidan* as an ethical principle that shapes social responsibility and moral sensitivity.

Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al Mishbah* advances a contextual and psychological approach. He situates Q S An Nisa within a broader discourse on social contracts responsibility and family governance. From this perspective *qaulan sadidan* functions as the basis of effective communication that sustains justice within family structures and nurtures character formation. For Shihab the verse calls for speech that is honest clear and constructive so that communication becomes a deliberate pedagogical practice rather than a spontaneous exchange of words (Shihab 2000). His interpretation shifts the meaning of the verse from its legal context toward the ethics of parenting education and interpersonal guidance. Speech thus becomes a tool for fostering emotional stability and moral clarity within the home.

Tafsir Nusantara scholars such as Zainul Arifin in *Tafsir Inspirasi* highlight the relevance of *qaulan sadidan* for contemporary da'wah and social engagement. Arifin describes *qaulan sadidan* as a form of communication that is both inspiring and firmly grounded in accuracy and moral integrity. He explains that in modern societies which include complex cultural and psychological dynamics the concept functions as an ethical compass for individuals who interact with diverse audiences especially in the era of digital communication (Zakaria 2012). From this perspective *qaulan sadidan* becomes a

communicative ethic that promotes clarity politeness and reliability in public discourse including online settings where messages circulate rapidly and reach varied communities.

The combined reading of al Zuhayli Shihab and Arifin reveals three significant interpretive shifts. First *qaulan sadidan* remains rooted in the commitment to justice and the protection of vulnerable groups which classical exegetes emphasized yet its scope now encompasses broader social and educational contexts. Second the concept of protecting future generations is reinterpreted as the responsibility to cultivate healthy patterns of communication within families and communities so that young people inherit an environment that values morality and fairness. Third the contextual approach of contemporary exegetes opens the possibility for extending *qaulan sadidan* into modern communication ecosystems including digital media. In these environments the concept can act as a normative guide for countering misinformation hostile discourse and manipulative narratives that significantly influence the communication behavior of Generation Z.

The classical and contemporary perspectives create a holistic understanding of *qaulan sadidan*. Classical tafsir provides a firm normative foundation that emphasizes accuracy justice and the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals. Contemporary tafsir preserves these values but also demonstrates how *qaulan sadidan* can be operationalized in parenting education da'wah and digital communication. Through this synthesis *qaulan sadidan* emerges as a comprehensive Qur'anic principle that integrates legal moral psychological and social dimensions. It requires that speech serve as an instrument of protection empowerment and social repair rather than a spontaneous verbal act that may perpetuate injustice or create new forms of social harm.

3. Integration of the Exegetical Understanding of *Qaulan Sadidan* with Digital Communication Theory

A thematic examination of classical and contemporary tafsir demonstrates that *qaulan sadidan* functions as an ethical instrument that operates at several levels. It requires truthful and upright expression, ensures fairness in social consequences, promotes intergenerational responsibility, and prevents harm within communal life. For analytical clarity this study organizes these insights into four conceptual dimensions. These are truthfulness and firmness, justice oriented communication, responsibility toward future generations, and the prevention of social damage. When these dimensions are placed in dialogue with modern theories of digital communication they reveal a strong degree of conceptual alignment.

Digital Communication Ethics presents communication as a moral act that requires accuracy in information, transparency in intention, and accountability for social impact. The dimension of truthfulness and firmness within *qaulan sadidan* supports the ethical requirement to verify information before it is released into digital circulation whether as a post a comment or a forwarded message. The dimensions of justice and harm prevention clarify that accuracy alone is not sufficient in digital ecosystems. A message that is factually correct may still violate the ethical spirit of *qaulan sadidan* if its purpose

is to humiliate, incite hatred, or disadvantage vulnerable individuals. Ethical communication therefore requires an evaluation of both content and consequence.

Media Ecology explains that media technologies are not neutral channels but environments that shape patterns of thought and interaction. Social media platforms accelerate communication, encourage rapid judgments and reward messages that attract attention. In such an environment, the norms of upright communication risk being replaced by the pursuit of visibility. The dimension of intergenerational responsibility within *qaulan sadidan* offers an ethical argument that communication should be guided by long term considerations. It urges users to evaluate how patterns of speech influence the communicative culture inherited by younger audiences. This perspective highlights the moral implications of normalizing hostile or deceptive language as a form of entertainment in digital spaces.

Self-presentation Theory addresses the ways individuals manage impressions in public arenas. Within digital environments, Generation Z frequently expresses identity through curated images, short videos, and stylized captions. These practices may shift from self-expression toward the manipulation of public perception. The dimensions of truthfulness and justice in *qaulan sadidan* challenge such tendencies. They encourage authenticity and prohibit forms of expression that distort reality, mislead audiences, or exploit others for personal validation. This includes exaggerated claims, curated distortions of self and content, and the use of religious or emotional narratives to attract engagement without accuracy.

The following table illustrates the operational relationship between the four exegetical dimensions of *qaulan sadidan* and theoretical perspectives in communication studies. It also presents examples of relevant behavior in digital settings among Generation Z.

Table 1
Operational Integration of Exegetical and Communication Theory Insights

Dimension of <i>Qaulan Sadidan</i>	Theoretical Perspective	Examples of Digital Behavior among Generation Z
Truthfulness and firmness	Digital Communication Ethics and Self Presentation	Checking sources before sharing, avoiding the use of misleading religious or emotional titles, refraining from altering factual material in order to increase engagement
Justice oriented communication	Digital Communication Ethics with emphasis on fairness	Avoiding doxxing, humiliation, or public cancellation without evidence, choosing non-discriminatory language when addressing social issues
Intergenerational responsibility	Media Ecology and its focus on	Considering the long term effects of viral content, refusing to normalize harsh or degrading speech as entertainment

	environmental impact
Prevention of social harm	Digital Communication Ethics and Media Ecology

This integration reveals that the ethical expectations conveyed by *qaulan sadidan* resonate strongly with the concerns raised in modern communication theory. The concept encourages a communicative discipline that evaluates not only the content of speech but also its broader social implications. This makes *qaulan sadidan* a relevant and adaptable framework for guiding the digital practices of Generation Z.

4. Ethical Implications of *Qaulan Sadidan* for the Communication Practices of Generation Z

Generation Z engages in communication within a digital environment characterized by speed, visual density, and attention driven interaction. These conditions shape how information is produced, consumed, and redistributed. While this environment offers unprecedented opportunities for creativity and social connection it also magnifies exposure to misinformation, online aggression, and identity based polarization. Several studies identify this duality and argue that the dynamics of digital media encourage simplified narratives dramatic expression, and symbolic aggression that can escalate into cyberbullying and the widespread circulation of false information (Dlamini 2020; Garrido Moreno et al 2020; De Oliveira et al 2015; Giumetti and Kowalski 2022). This tension makes the ethical principles embodied in *qaulan sadidan* particularly relevant. The concept does not function as a simple moral slogan. It offers a systematic framework for evaluating the quality of digital communication and encourages speech that is truthful, contextually appropriate, fair in its impact, and responsible in its consequences.

The normative foundation of this framework can be traced to two layers of exegetical interpretation. The classical tradition positions *qaulan sadidan* within situations that are vulnerable to intergenerational injustice such as bequests and the distribution of inheritance. The act of correcting harmful speech in these contexts becomes a form of protection for those who possess limited power and limited means of defending their rights (al Qurṭubi 1964). Contemporary exegetes broaden this context. They explain that *qaulan sadidan* carries pedagogical, psychological, and social significance and that it provides an ethical basis for clear, sincere, and purposeful communication within family life and public discourse (Al Zuhayli 2009; Shihab 2000). Both exegetical layers encourage the development of communication habits that combine accuracy, fairness, and accountability.

The first ethical implication concerns the accuracy of expression. Digital platforms amplify the circulation of misleading claims not only because users are uninformed but also because the architecture of digital media rewards speed and

emotional resonance over careful verification. The internalization of *qaulan sadidan* can transform this communicative habit. It encourages users to pause before forwarding material, to read contextual information, to distinguish between factual statements and opinion, and to avoid emotionally provocative titles that encourage anger or fear before the content is fully understood (Boudana and Segev 2017). In this sense *qaulan sadidan* introduces a discipline of digital communication in which uprightness is expressed not only through the content of speech but also through the process of producing and distributing information.

The second implication concerns justice and the social impact of communication. Digital environments often blur the line between critique and symbolic violence. Harsh commentary, public shaming, and the exposure of private information are frequently justified as forms of accountability. However many of these practices inflict harm on individuals and communities and can easily escalate into mass harassment. The ethical commitments embedded in *qaulan sadidan* offer a corrective lens for evaluating these tendencies. Speech that is formally correct can still violate the ethical requirement of fairness when it humiliates others, reinforces stereotypes, or incites hostility. Ethical communication therefore requires users to focus on issues rather than personal attacks, to avoid generalizations that stigmatize identity groups, and to consider the potential harm that vulnerable individuals may experience before content is posted or shared.

The third implication concerns accountability in self-presentation and content creation. A growing number of digital messages appear to offer religious, psychological, or motivational guidance yet many of these messages rest on simplified interpretations or selectively edited information. Such content can mislead audiences, exacerbate anxiety, or normalize the use of clinical labels without professional grounding. The principles of *qaulan sadidan* require communicators to demonstrate responsibility by providing accurate references, avoiding unwarranted generalizations, and making corrections when errors occur. This is particularly important in contexts where creators shape public perception or influence the self-understanding of young audiences (Elisa Febriana and Ulfa Amalia 2024).

Taken together the ethical implications of *qaulan sadidan* do not operate as a series of prohibitions. Instead they function as a set of evaluative tools that encourage truthful communication, fairness in impact, and readiness to assume responsibility for consequences. This ethical orientation highlights that improvements in digital communication cannot rely solely on technical literacy. They require ethical awareness and the cultivation of communication habits that reflect the Quranic commitment to upright speech.

D. Conclusion

The study shows that the meaning of *qaulan sadidan* in Q S An Nisa verse 9 is built upon a long exegetical tradition in which classical scholars present it as speech that must be honest, balanced, and attentive to the rights of those who are socially vulnerable. Their discussions on bequests, guardianship, and the protection of orphans reveal that

upright communication is closely tied to justice and the ethical management of responsibility across generations. Contemporary commentators extend these insights by placing *qaulan sadidan* within wider pedagogical and social contexts. They highlight its role in guiding communication within families, shaping character, and supporting trustworthy public discourse. Read together, these interpretations show that *qaulan sadidan* is not a narrow legal instruction but a principle of communication that requires accuracy, fairness, and sensitivity to social consequences.

When connected with the challenges faced by Generation Z in digital environments, these ethical foundations offer practical relevance. Rapid information flows, emotionally charged content, and increased exposure to misinformation and online aggression create a setting in which the discipline of *qaulan sadidan* becomes highly needed. The study demonstrates that the values implied in the verse encourage users to verify information, maintain clarity, avoid harm, and take responsibility for the effects of their communication. These insights inform the development of a Qur'anic communication framework that emphasizes clarity, verification, empathy, and responsibility as guiding values for digital interaction. Through this integration, the study contributes to efforts to strengthen both Qur'anic literacy and ethical digital literacy among young Muslims and provides a conceptual basis for future empirical research on Qur'anic communication ethics.

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