

Education for Sexuality in Light of Surah An-Nur: Guidance on Ethical Behaviour and Conduct

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Abstract:

This paper examines sexuality education from an Islamic perspective, focusing on the moral guidance found in Surah An-Nur. It highlights Qur'anic principles of modesty, chastity, and community responsibility, and contextualizes them for contemporary challenges such as globalization, digital exposure, and delayed marriage. By integrating these teachings into educational frameworks, the study proposes a culturally responsive approach to sexuality education that promotes ethical behavior, mutual respect, and resilience among youth. The findings demonstrate that Surah An-Nur offers timeless guidance for developing curricula that are both pedagogically effective and rooted in Islamic values.

Key words:

Sexuality Education; Surah An-Nur; Islamic Teachings; Moral Conduct; Ethical Behavior

المخلص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة موضوع التربية الجنسية من منظور إسلامي، مع التركيز على التوجيهات الأخلاقية الواردة في سورة النور. وتبرز المبادئ القرآنية المتعلقة بالحياء والعفة والمسؤولية المجتمعية، وتضعها في سياق التحديات المعاصرة مثل العولمة والانفتاح الرقمي وتأخر سن الزواج. ومن خلال دمج هذه التعاليم في الأطر التعليمية، تقترح الدراسة مقاربة ثقافية أصيلة للتربية الجنسية تعزز السلوك الأخلاقي والاحترام المتبادل والقدرة على التكيف لدى الشباب. وتؤكد النتائج أن سورة النور تقدم إرشادات خالدة لبناء مناهج تعليمية فعّالة تربويًا ومرتكزة على القيم الإسلامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التربية الجنسية؛ سورة النور؛ التعاليم الإسلامية؛ السلوك الأخلاقي؛ التصرف الأخلاقي

1. Introduction:

Sexuality education has become one of the most debated issues in contemporary societies, particularly in the digital age where technological advancements and social media have transformed cultural norms and interpersonal relationships. The rapid spread of globalized values often conflicts with traditional frameworks, creating confusion and alienation among youth. In Muslim-majority contexts, this tension is especially pronounced, as universal models

of sexuality education promoted by international organizations must be reconciled with deeply rooted religious and ethical principles.

UNESCO (2018) advocates for comprehensive, rights-based sexuality education, yet its implementation in Islamic societies requires careful adaptation to preserve moral integrity and cultural authenticity (Rasmussen & Shoveller, 2021). Without such adaptation, communities risk either rejecting sexuality education altogether or adopting frameworks that undermine their ethical foundations. This dilemma underscores the urgent need for faith-based approaches that remain scientifically sound while respecting religious values.

Islamic teachings, particularly those found in the Qur'an and Sunnah, provide a holistic framework for addressing sexuality. Surah An-Nur, with its emphasis on modesty, chastity, and community responsibility, offers timeless guidance that can be contextualized for modern challenges such as exposure to pornography, delayed marriage, and shifting gender dynamics. By grounding sexuality education in these principles, educators can promote ethical conduct, mutual respect, and social responsibility.

1.1 Research Questions

1. What principles of sexuality education can be derived from Surah An-Nur?
2. How do these principles compare with contemporary sexuality education frameworks?
3. What practical implications emerge for curriculum development in Islamic educational contexts?

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This paper seeks to analyze the teachings of Surah An-Nur related to sexuality and ethical behavior, demonstrating their relevance in formulating effective sexuality education programs that respect Islamic values while addressing contemporary challenges.

1.3 Background:

Sexuality education refers to a comprehensive approach to teaching individuals about various aspects of human sexuality, including physical, emotional, social, and ethical dimensions. It encompasses knowledge about human anatomy, reproduction, relationships, consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual health. According to (UNESCO et al., 2018), sexuality education is defined as "a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about identity, relationships, and intimacy." Researchers and scholars emphasize the importance of age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and scientifically accurate content, aiming to equip individuals with the skills needed to make informed decisions regarding their sexual health and understand the consequences of their actions. It also promotes respect for diversity and encourages healthy communication about sexuality, fostering the development of respectful and fulfilling interpersonal relationships. The bellow definition and objectives of SE are mentioned by the Holy Quran and Sunnah from more than 14 centuries. Attas (1991) as cited by (Febriani & Al, 2025, 132) emphasizes that the goal of Islamic education is to achieve a balance between the spiritual and intellectual aspects, both of which are interrelated in the formation of character . And to help Muslims to control and regulate their sexual desire and protect them from prohibited acts like adultery. (Ihwani & al, 2017) Contemporary discussions on sexuality education often highlight the need for ethical frameworks that align with cultural and religious beliefs. Surah An-Nur (The Light), with its

profound emphasis on moral conduct, provides essential guidelines for addressing issues of sexuality within an Islamic framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Islamic Teachings on Sexuality

Islamic teachings provide a comprehensive perspective on various aspects of sexuality, focusing on modesty, ethical behavior, and the sanctity of marital relations. While existing literature offers insights into individual themes, this paper seeks to synthesize these perspectives through the lens of Surah An-Nur.

2.2 The Role of Surah An-Nur

Surah An-Nur outlines moral expectations for individuals and communities, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct in interpersonal relationships.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Approach:

This study employs a textual analysis approach, examining the verses of Surah An-Nur to extract principles relevant to sexuality education.

3.2 Data Sources:

Primary sources include the Quranic text itself, Prophet's (Peace and Blessings of ALLAH be upon him) Hadith, classical Tafseer literature, and scholarly discussions addressing the implications of these verses in modern contexts.

4. Findings:

4.1 Key Themes in Surah An-Nur:

• Modesty (Haya):

The surah emphasizes modesty in behavior and dress, reinforcing the importance of dignity and respect. Verse 31 highlights: "And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [ordinarily] appears thereof..." (Quran 24:31). ﴿ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [سورة النور: 31]

• Sexual Ethics and Marriage:

Sexual desire is a natural need for humans, both males and females alike. Sexual urges emerge with puberty; therefore, our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) commanded us to separate between a brother and his sister in bed once they reach the age of ten. Abu Dawud(495), Ahmed (6689), Al-Hakeem (708) وأحمد (495)، "وفرقوا بينهم في المضاجع" أبو داود (495)، (708) والحاكم (6689) God instituted marriage so that both men and women could satisfy their sexual desires in a wholesome manner within the sanctity of marriage. Verse 32 encourages: "And marry those among you who are single and [those who are] fit among your male and female slaves..." (Quran 24:32). ﴿ وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُعْزِمِهِمْ ۗ﴾ [سورة النور: 32] In his commentary on this verse, Ibn Kathir said: These noble verses contain a number of clear and decisive rulings and binding commands. The Almighty's statement, "And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male and female slaves," is a command to marry. A group of scholars have held that it is

obligatory upon everyone who is able to do so. They cited as evidence the apparent meaning of the Prophet's statement, peace and blessings be upon him: "O young men, whoever among you is able to marry should do so, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity. And whoever is not able should fast, for it will be a shield for him." This was narrated by Ibn Mas'ud and recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim. قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم : " يا معشر الشباب ، من استطاع منكم الباءة فليتزوج ، فإنه أغض للبصر ، وأحصن للفرج ، ومن لم يستطع فعليه بالصوم فإنه له وجاء . " أخرجاه من حديث ابن مسعود .

• Community Responsibility:

Surah An-Nur advocates for community accountability in maintaining societal morals. Verse 30 advises: "Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them..." (Quran 24:30). ﴿ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَكْرَمُ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ ﴾ [النور: 30] In his explanation

nation to this verse Kurtubi said The eyes are the greatest gateway to the heart and the most enduring path of the senses leading to it. Accordingly, it is common for one to fall into temptation through this gateway. Therefore, there must be a warning against it, and lowering the gaze is obligatory from all that is forbidden and anything that may lead to temptation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'Beware of sitting along the roads.' They said: 'O Messenger of Allah, we have no choice but to have discussions in our gatherings.' He said: 'If you insist on sitting, then give the road its due rights.' They asked: 'What are the rights of the road, O Messenger of Allah?' He replied: 'Lowering the gaze, avoiding harm, returning greetings, enjoining what is good, and forbidding what is wrong.' This was narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and is reported in both Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim عليه قال : صلى الله عليه وسلم - : "إياكم والجلوس على الطرقات فقالوا : يا رسول الله ، ما لنا من مجالسنا بد نتحدث فيها. فقال : فإذا أبيتم إلا المجلس فأعطوا الطريق حقه قالوا : وما حق الطريق يا رسول الله؟ قال: غض البصر، وكف الأذى، ورد السلام، والأمر بالمعروف، والنهي عن المنكر." رواه أبو سعيد الخدري ، خرجه البخاري ، ومسلم

4.2 Implications for Sexuality Education:

- **Ethics and Morality:** Incorporating values such as modesty, respect, and integrity into sexuality education curricula.
- **Gender Relations:** Teaching the importance of mutual respect and understanding between the genders, as underlined in the verses.
- **Preventive Education:** Address issues such as consent and healthy relationships, ensuring sensitivity to cultural and religious values.

5. Discussion

5.1 Integrating Islamic Values into Curriculum

Surah An-Nur provides a coherent ethical framework for sexuality education that emphasizes modesty, chastity, and community responsibility. Educators can translate these values into curriculum components that promote respect, integrity, and self-control. For instance, the injunction to lower the gaze (24:30) can be contextualized as digital modesty in the age of social media, while the encouragement of marriage (24:32) can inform youth support programs addressing delayed marriage. By embedding Qur'anic principles into age-appropriate modules, curricula can remain culturally authentic while addressing modern challenges.

5.2 Challenges and Opportunities

Implementing Qur'an-based sexuality education faces challenges such as cultural resistance, lack of trained educators, and exposure to globalized media. Yet these challenges also present opportunities. Educators can collaborate with parents and community leaders to design culturally responsive modules, while policymakers can integrate preventive education to counter harassment and pornography. Comparative approaches that draw on both classical tafsir and contemporary hermeneutics enrich interpretive diversity and ensure relevance to modern contexts.

5.3 Countering Pornographic Websites

One of the most pressing challenges in the digital age is the widespread availability of pornographic content. Surah An-Nur's emphasis on modesty and chastity provides a preventive framework for addressing these dangers. Through sexuality education, young people can be made aware of the risks associated with prohibited practices, including addiction, distorted perceptions of relationships, and moral decline. Preventive modules, awareness campaigns, and faith-based resilience strategies can help counter these influences and promote healthier attitudes toward sexuality.

5.4 Practical Recommendations

1. **Curriculum Development:** Incorporate Qur'anic principles into modules addressing modesty, consent, and healthy relationships.
2. **Community Engagement:** Foster dialogue among educators, parents, and religious leaders to ensure shared responsibility.
3. **Preventive Education:** Develop awareness campaigns targeting digital risks, particularly pornography and online harassment.
4. **Comparative Approaches:** Use both classical tafsir and contemporary hermeneutics to ensure interpretive richness and practical relevance.

6. Conclusion

This paper demonstrates the enduring relevance of Surah An-Nur in informing an ethical approach to sexuality education rooted in Islamic values. Its teachings on controlling one's gaze, covering one's body, and dressing modestly are fundamental in preserving dignity and fostering respect between genders. By contextualizing these principles for modern challenges such as globalization, digital exposure, and delayed marriage, educators can design curricula that not only prevent deviance and harmful practices but also cultivate resilience, dignity, and integrity among youth.

Moral education, grounded in Surah An-Nur, serves as both a behavioral guide and a means of character formation, equipping individuals to navigate social change without compromising ethical integrity. Future research should move beyond textual analysis to empirical implementation, testing Qur'an-based sexuality education in schools and communities. Such studies could measure outcomes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, thereby strengthening the case for faith-based yet scientifically sound approaches.

In conclusion, Surah An-Nur offers a framework that bridges tradition and modernity, enabling sexuality education to be both culturally authentic and pedagogically effective.

7. Future Directions

While this study provides a textual and conceptual framework, future research should move beyond analysis to empirical implementation. Pilot programs in schools and universities could test Qur'an-based sexuality education modules, measuring outcomes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. Comparative studies across different Muslim-majority contexts would also highlight how cultural variations influence implementation. Finally, interdisciplinary collaboration between Islamic scholars, psychologists, and educators could produce comprehensive curricula that are both faith-based and scientifically sound.

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