THE TWO FACES OF DEEPFAKE:
an Analysis of Contextual Thematic Exegesis

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly reshaped the way information is produced, disseminated, and consumed. Among these advancements, deepfake an AI-generated technique that produces hyper-realistic yet fabricated digital content, emerges as one of the most influential and controversial innovations in contemporary media. Its presence raises not only socio-ethical concerns but also urgent theological and moral questions within Islamic discourse. This study seeks to explore the Qur'anic perspective on deepfake by examining how the Qur'an conceptually frames human creativity, representation, deception, and accountability. Employing a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach, this library research adopts Abdul Mustaqim's thematic-contextual interpretation method due to its strength in connecting classical Qur'anic concepts with modern realities in a flexible yet academically grounded manner. The findings reveal that the Qur'an acknowledges two contrasting dimensions of deepfake: its constructive/beneficial dimension, including its potential as a means of knowledge (Q.S. al-'Alaq/96:4; Q.S. al-Qalam/68:1) and its capacity to support innovation and human welfare (Q.S. Yūsuf/12:70; al-Baqarah/2:164; al-'Ankabūt/29:43; Āl 'Imrān/3:190-191). Conversely, the Qur'an also warns against its destructive/harmful dimension, such as major deceit and false allegations (Q.S. Yūsuf/12:18; al-Nūr/24:11-12; al-Ḥajj/22:30), as well as manipulation and unethical distortion (Q.S. al-Muṭaffifīn/83:1-3; al-Baqarah/2:9).

Keywords: *Deepfake Technology, Qur'anic ethics, artificial intelligence, Islamic moral discourse.*

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi digital yang begitu pesat telah secara signifikan mengubah cara informasi diproduksi, disebarkan, dan dikonsumsi. Di antara kemajuan tersebut, deepfake adalah sebuah teknik berbasis kecerdasan buatan yang menghasilkan konten digital sangat realistis namun bersifat rekayasa yang muncul sebagai salah satu inovasi paling berpengaruh sekaligus kontroversial dalam media kontemporer. Kehadirannya tidak hanya memunculkan persoalan sosial-etis, tetapi juga pertanyaan teologis dan moral yang mendesak dalam wacana keislaman. Penelitian ini berupaya menelusuri perspektif al-Qur'an mengenai deepfake dengan mengkaji bagaimana al-Qur'an memandang kreativitas manusia, representasi, tipu daya, dan akuntabilitas. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif-analitis, penelitian kepustakaan ini menerapkan metode tafsir tematik-kontekstual Abdul Mustaqim karena memiliki metode kombinasi kontekstual dalam menghubungkan konsep-konsep klasik al-Qur'an dengan realitas modern secara fleksibel namun tetap akademis. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa al-Qur'an mengakui dua dimensi yang saling berlawanan dari deepfake: dimensi konstruktif/beneficial yang mencakup potensinya sebagai sarana pengetahuan (Q.S. al-'Alaq/96:4; Q.S. al-Qalam/68:1) dan kemampuannya mendukung inovasi serta kesejahteraan manusia (Q.S. Yūsuf/12:70; al-Baqarah/2:164; al-'Ankabūt/29:43; Āl 'Imrān/3:190-191). Sebaliknya, al-Qur'an juga memperingatkan dimensi destruktif/harmful, seperti penipuan besar dan tuduhan palsu (Q.S. Yūsuf/12:18; al-Nūr/24:11-12; al-Ḥajj/22:30), serta manipulasi dan distorsi yang tidak etis (Q.S. al-Muṭaffifīn/83:1-3; al-Baqarah/2:9).

Kata kunci: Teknologi Deepfake, etika Al-Qur'an, kecerdasan buatan, diskursus moral Islam.

INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, contemporary issues continued to develop, including the contextual understanding of Qur'anic interpretation. Concurrently, technological advancements, starting with the Industrial Revolution 4.0, have brought about a major transformation in human communication, leading into the Industrial Revolution 5.0, which integrates artificial intelligence (AI) into life.[1] One AI-based technology that has become a global spotlight is deepfake, a combination of Deep Learning and digital manipulation technology, capable of falsifying photos, voices, and even videos with high realism. Deepfake operates using two main algorithms: a generator, which creates the fake content, and a discriminator, which analyzes how realistic the manipulation.

The existence of deepfake is two-aspects. On one hand, this technology is beneficial in the film and education industries, such as bringing historical figures to life or de-aging actors in Hollywood films, like in Star Wars. However, on the other hand, deepfake can pose a serious threat, particularly in the spread of disinformation. One famous international case involved the CEO of a British energy company who was

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[1] Mortigor Afrizal Purba dan Agus Defri Yando, *Revolusi Industri 4.0* (Cv Batam Publisher, 2020), hlm. 6–28.

defrauded through a voice deepfake into transferring €243,000.[2] In addition, the deepfake videos of Mark Zuckerberg in 2019 and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in 2020 demonstrated the dangerous potential of political manipulation. In Indonesia, a deepfake video of President Jokowi speaking in Mandarin also circulated widely, even though the original footage was actually a speech delivered in English in 2015. According to the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, 95,820 deepfake videos were spread globally in 2023. Based on a 2019 MASTEL survey, 87.40% of hoaxes are spread through social media, with 91.80% of the content being political in theme and 76.20% related to SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Inter-group Relations). [3]

The deepfake phenomenon can trigger various digital crimes such as cybercrime and cyberlaw violations, as well as the spread of content that contradicts moral values. *Dār al-Ifta* of Egypt asserts that manipulating someone's audio or video with AI to display something unreal is prohibited in Islam, as it contains elements of falsehood and distortion of facts. Given the ease of access to and creation of deepfake content, attention from all parties, including netizens, regulators, and academics, is needed to use and respond to this technology wisely. [4] In Islam, the concept of *tabayyun* (information verification) is highly emphasized to prevent easily believing information whose origin is unclear. Therefore, digital literacy and awareness of the impact of deepfake are key to facing the challenges of this technological era. This aligns with the word of Allah. in Q.S. al-Ḥujurāt /49: 6, which explains how a believer should act when responding to news. Namely, upon receiving news, it must first be investigated before declaring it true/false or spreading it.

This research possesses significant novelty as it focuses specifically on the study of AI-based deepfake technology from the perspective of the Qur'an using thematic interpretation method. Although previous studies have discussed the issues of hoaxes and digital ethics, they have not directly made the manipulative deepfake technology the primary object of analysis. Earlier research on hoaxes and social media ethics of Herawati, Lubis, Syarifah laid the groundwork for analyzing verses concerning falsehood but did not specifically address deepfake. While one similar study exists of Faras Paria in 2024 that examines deepfake, that research was limited to a single verse (Q.S. al-Baqarah/2: 42) using analytical interpretation method. By choosing the

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[2] Henry Ajder, *Deeptrace: The State of Deepfakes (Landscape, threats, and impact)* (Amerika Serikat: Deeptrace, 2019), hlm. 14.

[3] Mastel, "Hasil Survey Wabah HOAX Nasional 2019", *MASTEL Living Enabler* (blog), April 2019, https://mastel.id/hasil-survey-wabah-hoax-nasional-2019/.

[4] Itsna Hidayatul Khusna dan Sri Pangestuti, "Deepfake, Tantangan Baru untuk Netizen (Deepfake, A New Challenge for Netizen)", *PROMEDIA (PUBLIC RELATION DAN MEDIA KOMUNIKASI)*, vol. 5, no. 2, http://journal.uta45jakarta.ac.id/index.php/kom/article/view/2300.

thematic method, this study will gather and analyze all relevant Qur'anic verses pertaining to the positive, negative, and ethical aspects of deepfake usage. This comprehensive approach ensures a wider scope and richer analytical depth, establishing it as a new contribution and a more holistic effort in formulating a Sharia guide regarding this contemporary technological phenomenon.

This research is a library-based investigation utilizing a qualitative approach and a descriptive-analytical method. The primary data consists of Qur'anic verses meaningfully relevant to the theme of AI-based deepfake, including aspects of honesty and falsehood, which are comprehensively gathered. Secondary data are sourced from relevant books, journals, and scientific works. The analysis employs a contextual thematic interpretation method proposed by Abdul Mustaqim begins with determining the specific theme to be examined, followed by collecting all Qur'anic verses related to that theme. These verses are then interpreted carefully by considering semantic, semiotic, and hermeneutic aspects, including linguistic structure, historical context, and the interrelationship (munāsabah) between the verses. The discussion is organized into a coherent academic framework and enriched with relevant hadiths as well as scholarly opinions. Finally, the interpretations are reviewed holistically to derive meanings that are contemporary, comprehensive, and contextually relevant. [5]

DISCUSSION

Deepfake as a Contemporary Technology

Deepfake is a blend of the words deep learning and fake, which literally means deep forgery or *al-tajyīf al-ʿamīq* This technology allows for the manipulation of photos, videos, or audio to make a person appear to be doing or saying something that never actually happened.[6] Its core technology is the Generative Adversarial Network (GAN), developed in 2014. GAN consists of two algorithms: the Generator, which attempts to create the fake content, and the Discriminator, which repeatedly analyzes the content to distinguish between authentic and fake material. Deepfake first came into public spotlight in 2017 through an anonymous Reddit user who uploaded fake pornography videos featuring celebrities.[7] Some common tools used to create deepfakes include Deep Art Effects, FaceApp, MyHeritage, and Zao. Meanwhile, deepfake detection

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[5] Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur`an dan Tafsir* , III(Yogyakarta: Idea Press Yogyakarta, 2017), hlm. 79–80.

[6] Ash Carter dan Laura Manley, *Deepfakes* (Harvard Kennedy School: Technology and Public Purpose Project, 2020), hlm. 2.

[7] Daniel L Byman, *Deepfakes and International Conflict* (Washington DC: Foreign Policy at Brookings, 2023), hlm. 3–4.

technologies such as Video Authenticator and Reverse Engineering are being developed to identify this manipulative content.[8]

Deepfake detection can be accomplished through both manual inspection and the use of technology-based tools. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommends several manual indicators to help identify these sophisticated forgeries. Viewers should look for inconsistent lighting and shadows within the image or video, as well as odd or unnatural eye movements, such as the subject rarely blinking. Other telltale signs include facial distortions, like a double chin or eyebrows. In cases involving audio, key indicators are poor or inconsistent sound quality and the voice being out of sync with the speaker's lip movements. Beyond these visual and auditory cues, several technology-based solutions exist, including applications like Video Authenticator and Reverse Engineering, which are designed to automatically detect deepfakes.[9]

According to Cyber Risk Management [10], the five main types of deepfakes include *text deepfake*, the development of Artificial Intelligence Generated Text enables AI to produce writing that resembles human output. Examples include product descriptions or policy announcements that sound natural but are actually created by machines. However, deepfake texts often lack emotional depth and cohesion in their delivery. *Deepfake videos* are the most commonly used and highly influential form of synthetic media, affecting various aspects of public life. Examples include a mouth-swap video created by filmmaker Jordan Peele that made Barack Obama appear to speak words he never said, as well as manipulated footage of journalist Jim Acosta that seemed to show aggressive behavior during a White House press conference. Other forms include a puppet-style deepfake of David Beckham speaking nine different languages for a malaria awareness campaign, a face-swap clip in which Bill Hader seamlessly transforms into Tom Cruise while impersonating him, and an audio deepfake used in the documentary *Roadrunner* to recreate the voice of Anthony Bourdain. There is also *Audio deepfakes* enable the creation of highly convincing synthetic voices that closely resemble a real person's speech, using applications capable of replicating voices through extensive analysis of original audio samples. This technology has been used in cases such as fraud schemes where criminals imitate the voice of a company executive to request unauthorized fund transfers. *Social media deepfakes* are also employed to create fake profiles designed to deceive the public or gain financial benefit, such as

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[8] Hendra Jaya, Sabran, dan Muh. Ma`ruf Idris, *Kecerdasan Buatan* (Makassar: Fakultas MIPA Universitas Negeri Makassar, 2018), hlm. 3.

[9] Homeland Security, *Increasing Threat of Deepfake Identities* (Amerika Serikat: Homeland Security, 2020), hlm. 33.

[10] Chiradeep Basumallick, "Deepfake Types, Examples, Prevention", *Spiceworks Inc* (blog), 2022, https://www.spiceworks.com/it-security/cyber-risk-management/articles/what-is-deepfake/.

fabricated accounts used to manipulate stock-related conversations on professional platforms. Additionally, *real-time deepfakes* allow individuals to alter their faces instantly during video conferences or live broadcasts through tools that enable streamers or influencers to modify their appearance for entertainment, anonymity, or even fraudulent activities.

Deepfake technology brings widespread and significant impacts. On the beneficial side, deepfakes are utilized for Education and Training through realistic simulations (e.g., risk-free surgical practice), and in Entertainment and Arts, such as bringing back deceased actors (e.g., Paul Walker in Fast & Furious 7.[11] However, the impacts are also profoundly harmful, including the spread of Misinformation and a Crisis of Trust that harms the public), causing Reputational Damage and Personal Impact through deepfake pornography, and raising Legal and Ethical Issues because existing laws are often unprepared to handle the misuse of this technology.[12]

Falsehood in Perspective Islam

Lying or *kadzaba*, is strongly condemned in Islam, a term that appears in the Qur'an in various forms up to 266 times. *Al-kadzib* is a compound form of the word *kadzibun*, which means "a perpetrator of falsehood." It is derived from the verb *kazaba*, which in linguistic dictionaries means "to lie" or "to fabricate." In its linguistic sense, *al-kadzib* refers to presenting something in a manner that contradicts the actual reality. Meanwhile, in the technical definition used by scholars, *al-kadzib* is understood as conveying information that does not correspond to the truth. Some scholars state that al-kadzib means reporting something in a way that is not in accordance with the actual facts of the matter.[13] Kadzaba signifies not just verbal falsehood but also the rejection of truth, slander, and the concealment of facts, aligning with other similar terms like *ifk*, *fitnah*, *khud'a*, *qaul al-zūr*, *buhtan*, *iftara*, *taḥrif*, and *garūr*. While lying fundamentally contradicts the core value of honesty, the Prophet Muhammad *Saw.* granted exceptions in three specific scenarios for a greater good (*maṣlahat*) during war for strategy, reconciling people in dispute, and communication between spouses to maintain domestic harmony.[14]

Al-kadzib has several different types of meaning. First, *al-kadzib* can refer to falsehood expressed through words and actions, as stated in Q.S. al-Naḥl/16:105, which

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[11] Rianne Houghton, "Tech behind Paul Walker's Fast 7 Appearance Explained", Digital Spy, Mei 2018, https://www.digitalspy.com/movies/a856882/paul-walker-brother-fast-and-furious-7-cast-technology-explained/.

[12] Samer Hussain Al-Khazraji, "Impact of Deepfake Technology on Social Media: Detection, Misinformation and Societal Implications", *The Eurasia Proceedings of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (EPSTEM)*, vol. 23, 434.

[13] `Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn `Ali, *Kitab Al-Ta`rifat*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al- `Araby, 1996), 235.

[14] Idnan Idris, *Al-Qur'an dan Kebohongan: Kajian tentang Kazib dalam Perspektif Islam* (Jakarta: Penerbit Islamika, 2018), hlm. 45.

explains that a person who lies in speech or behavior is considered to have committed falsehood. Second, *al-kadzib* may also refer to falsehood related to one's beliefs, not merely spoken words. This is reflected in Q.S. al-Wāqi'ah/56:2, which describes a person who denies the truth inwardly and refuses to accept it as a genuine conviction. Third, *al-kadzib* can mean deceiving oneself through one's own actions. This includes claiming or doing something contrary to reality, particularly in matters of intention and behavior, as seen in Q.S. al-'Alaq/96:16, which underscores the importance of aligning words and deeds as a reflection of inner truthfulness.

However, Al-Ghazālī in his work *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* established strict ethical boundaries for these exceptions. *First,* lying is permitted only when it serves a clear, legitimate purpose and is driven by sincere intentions aimed at achieving good and preventing greater harm. Any lie motivated by personal gain, deception, or the intention to hurt others remains forbidden, even if it outwardly appears to fit conditions of permissibility; the intention must be solely for the benefit of the community rather than selfish interests. *Second*, lying must not become a habit or be practiced excessively, as this would transform an initially permissible act into a prohibited one. For example, in reconciling two conflicting parties, it is sufficient to convey the good words or deeds each has expressed about the other without inventing additional stories. This principle resembles emergency situations in which an otherwise forbidden act becomes temporarily allowed, such as consuming prohibited food when no lawful food is available and one faces severe hunger. Once the emergency ends, continuing such an act without necessity becomes forbidden again. [15] *Third*, lying must bring real benefit and must not result in greater harm; it is allowed only when no other solution is available and when it serves as the last resort to achieve a greater good. [16]

Criteria of Qur'anic Verses to the Principles of Deepfake

According to Oemar Bakry considers knowledge and technology as tools that enable humans to appreciate Allah's creations in this world. Mastery of these tools becomes a key factor in the advancement of a nation's civilization.[17] However, Abdul Mustaqim explains several types of thematic research, one of which is conceptual thematic research. He states that the Qur'an does not explicitly define certain concepts but instead provides the underlying meanings implied within the Qur'anic text.[18] The Qur'anic verses referenced in this study were selected based on their relevance to the

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[15] Hamka, *Bohong di Dunia* , 1 ed.(Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2017), hlm. 61.

[16] Abû Hâmid Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ghazâlî, *Ihya' Ulûm al-Dîn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1993), hlm. 1029–30.

[17] Anisa Nilam Cahya, "MODEL REPRESENTASI KONTEMPORER: Studi Pemikiran Oemar Bakry Terhadap Ilmu Pengetahuan Dan Teknologi", *Jurnal Moderasi*, vol. 3, no. 2, 39, https://doi.org/10.14421/jm.2023.32.03.

[18] Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur`an dan Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2015), hlm. 61–62.

concept of deepfake, particularly in illustrating its beneficial potential and harmful risks. Verses that highlight beneficial potential emphasize good intentions, the pursuit of knowledge, humanitarian benefits, moral education, and reflective understanding of divine wisdom. Deepfake, as a product of human creativity, can serve to disseminate knowledge, support education, and stimulate innovation in ways aligned with these Qur'anic principles. Such constructive uses correspond to verses like Q.S. al-'Alaq/96: 4, al-Qalam/68: 1, Yūsuf/12: 70, al-Baqarah/2: 164, al-'Ankabūt/29: 43, and Āli 'Imrān/3: 191. In these contexts, deepfake technology becomes a medium for delivering moral messages, reconstructing historical narratives, or presenting scientific simulations that help humanity appreciate the divine wisdom embedded in creation, reflecting gratitude for Allah's greatness through the advancement of knowledge and technology.

Conversely, the Qur'an also outlines criteria for verses addressing the harmful risks associated with deepfake misuse, such as deception, manipulation, and the spread of falsehoods. Misapplications of deepfake, like fabricating information, creating false accusations, undermining someone's dignity, or violating the rights of others, align with the harmful behaviors condemned in verses such as Q.S. Yūsuf /12: 18, al-Nūr /24: 11–12, al-Hajj/22: 30, al-Baqarah/2: 9, and al-Muṭaffifīn/83: 1–3. These verses collectively warn against dishonesty, injustice, and moral corruption. In this narrative, deepfake technology becomes a potential instrument of fraud, slander, and unethical manipulation, standing in opposition to Qur'anic principles of truthfulness, fairness, and respect for human dignity.

Contextual Thematic of Deepfake

The Qur'an offers guidance relevant to the beneficial of deepfake, emphasizing good intentions, public interest, knowledge, and education. This concept is rooted in the virtue of the pen as a means of knowledge (Q.S. al-'Alaq/96:4; Q.S. al-Qalam/68:1), which is a great favor for the spread of knowledge[19] and a pen to be science key[20] or the pen symbolizes the documentation of revelation.[21]

According to background history al-Qalam/68:1 is highlights the excellence of knowledge and revelation. Scholars explain that it affirms the falsehood of the Quraysh, who accused the Prophet Muhammad of being insane, while Hamka said that others emphasize the connection between the "pen" in Surah al-'Alaq and Surah al-Qalam as a profound symbol within Islamic civilization. History records how the pen played a crucial role in the codification of revelation, from the time of the Prophet to the

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[19] Abu Ja`far Muhammad bin Jarir Al-Thabari, *Tafsir Ath-Thabari Juz `Amma* , vol. 2(Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007), hlm. 527.

[20] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur`an* , vol. 15(Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2011), hlm. 455.

[21] Buya Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 10* , I(Depok: Gema Insani, 2015), hlm. 7561–66.

standardization of the written al-Qur'an under Utsmān ibn Affān. Islamic civilization flourished with scholarly works, yet the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols illustrates the devastating consequences when knowledge is neglected, as thousands of books were thrown into the Tigris River until its waters turned black with ink. The Prophet Muhammad also taught that the pen was the first creation of God and that it wrote all decrees, reinforcing its essential role in preserving knowledge and revelation.

The invention of the pencil by Nicolas Conté in 1795 marked a significant milestone in the history of writing tools, followed by the development of pens and eventually digital technologies such as computers and smartphones. These innovations greatly accelerated the spread of information. Modern technology, including deepfake, can also be used positively, as demonstrated by a synthetic video of David Beckham speaking nine languages for a malaria awareness campaign. This illustrates that technology can serve as an effective medium for education and the dissemination of knowledge, continuing the function of the pen in a more advanced form.[22]

Furthermore, the Qur'an commands the wise use of intellect (*'aql*) for innovation and good benefit. Verses such as Q.S. Yūsuf/12:70 shows how Prophet Yūsuf employed intelligent strategies to achieve his goals without harming others. This illustrates how reason can be used positively in planning and innovation, while Q.S. al-Baqarah/2:164, Allah invites humans to reflect on the phenomena of nature as signs of His greatness. The verse emphasizes that reason is the primary tool for understanding the universe and deepening faith. Scholars explain that the intellect encompasses both thought and feeling, and together they play an essential role in shaping human understanding of knowledge and life. Meanwhile, Q.S. āli-'Imrān/3:190-191, Allah describes how people of sound intellect constantly remember Him and reflect upon His creation. Muḥammad Rasyīd Ridhā emphasizes that this verse encourages humans to pay attention to the signs of Allah's greatness in the creation of the heavens and the earth. The Prophet Muhammad also had the habit of reciting this verse when looking at the sky and reciting verses about the signs of Allah's greatness in the creation of the universe. This shows that contemplation of the natural world is a means of strengthening faith and drawing closer to Allah.[23] Q.S. al-'Ankabūt/29:43 emphasizes the importance of knowledge in understanding the parables presented in the Qur'an. Muḥammad Quraish Shihāb explains that these parables are not merely stylistic expressions, but tools for deep reflection that can be understood according to each individual's level of knowledge.

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[22] Leander Sodji, "How We Made David Beckham Speak 9 Languages | Synthesia", , diakses 5 Agustus 2024, https://www.synthesia.io/post/david-beckham.

[23] Muhammad Rasyîd `Alî Ridhâ, *Tafsîr Al-Manâr* , vol. 4(Mesir: Al-Haiah Al-Mishriyyah Al-`Âmah lil Kitâb, 1990), hlm. 244–45.

This shows that the intellect must be used to grasp the divine message in a broader and more meaningful way.[24]

The various verses presented show that the Qur'an provides a strong theological and ethical foundation for the positive and responsible use of technology, including deepfake. The verses about the pen (Q.S. al-'Alaq/96:4; al-Qalam/68:1) affirm that the processes of writing, spreading knowledge, and documenting truth are great divine blessings that form the basis of Islamic civilization, indicating that any modern technology that expands the benefit of knowledge aligns with the spirit of revelation. The story of Prophet Yūsuf's strategy in Q.S. Yūsuf/12:70 demonstrates the legitimacy of creativity, innovation, and intelligent planning when directed toward noble purposes without causing harm. The verses concerning the use of reason—Q.S. al-Baqarah/2:164, Q.S. āli-'Imrān/3:190–191, and Q.S. al-'Ankabūt/29:43—emphasize that humans are commanded to think critically, reflect upon natural phenomena, observe the signs of God's greatness, and grasp the symbolic meanings of revelation with intellectual depth appropriate to their level of understanding. Scholars explain that sound intellect works alongside the heart to produce correct comprehension, ensuring that knowledge does not remain merely technical but becomes a means of drawing closer to God. Thus, these verses collectively provide the principle that technology, including deepfake, can serve as a "modern pen" that brings about public benefit—so long as it is used with good intentions, guided by ethics, and directed toward education, public awareness, and the strengthening of knowledge and faith.

The critical thinking encouraged by the Qur'an becomes increasingly relevant in the age of technological development. Digital innovations provide broader access to knowledge, from exploring the universe to advancements in biology and physics. Technology must be used wisely and responsibly, aligned with spiritual values so that it remains a beneficial tool. One example of technological utilization is deepfake technology in synthetic media. This technology is applied in learning, such as interactive videos that present historical figures speaking to students. Although deepfakes can be misused for information manipulation, their use in education and entertainment demonstrates their positive potential. For instance, in the series *A Shop For Killers* (2024), audio deepfakes were employed to enhance acting quality and captivate viewers. By understanding the Qur'anic command to use reason, humans can employ technology wisely. Technological progress should serve as a means to enhance knowledge, improve quality of life, and fulfill the mandate of being stewards on earth in the best possible way.

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[24] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur`an* , vol. 9(Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), hlm. 502.

The harmful of deepfake technology align with the Qur'anic prohibitions against all forms of major lies, slander, and information manipulation that compromise honor and justice. Major lies and slander, which possess significant destructive social power, are illustrated by the story of Prophet Yusuf in Q.S. Yūsuf/12: 18 through false visual evidence, this verse illustrates the manipulation of information by the brothers of Yūsuf, who used false visual evidence (a shirt stained with blood) to deceive Prophet Ya'qūb. Their act was not only a lie but also a betrayal that caused deep emotional suffering for Prophet Ya'qūb. and the *ḥadīś al-Ifk* that afflicted Aisha *r.a.* in Q.S. al-Nūr/24 : 11-12)[25] and *asbāb al-nuzūl* according by al-Suyūthī. Allah explains that this incident was a test and not merely an act of evil. Those who spread false accusations or fabricate lies will face severe punishment. Next, The Qur'an also explicitly forbids *qaul al-zūr* (false speech/witness) in Q.S. al-Ḥajj/22: 30, *Zūr* includes false testimony, which undermines justice and social harmony. The Prophet Muhammad also emphasized in his hadith that lying and giving false testimony are among the major sins.[26]

In the digital age, lies and slander spread more easily through social media and digital platforms. Technological advancements such as deepfake allow highly realistic manipulation of video and audio to disseminate propaganda or defame individuals and groups. Examples include a deepfake of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urging his troops to surrender to Russia; the documentary *Roadrunner*, which used AI to recreate Anthony Bourdain's voice; a 2019 deepfake of Mark Zuckerberg claiming he controlled all Facebook data; and Jordan Peele's use of deepfake technology to mimic Barack Obama's voice and mouth movements. These phenomena show that falsehood can take many forms with far-reaching impacts. Therefore, Islam emphasizes the importance of honesty, verifying information, and safeguarding dignity and justice in social life.

Fraud is a form of deception that has harmful effects on social life. In modern society, fraud appears in many forms, such as information manipulation, fake news, and cybercrime, which not only harm individuals but also undermine social trust. Deception creates injustice, triggers conflict, and erodes social integrity. Abraham Lincoln once said, "*You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.*" This statement highlights that deception will eventually be exposed, and truth will ultimately prevail.

In the Qur'an, Allah strongly condemns acts of fraud, as stated in Q.S. al-Muṭaffifîn/83: 1-3. The term *tathfîf* refers to taking even a small portion of another

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[25] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur`an* , vol. 7(Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), hlm. 299–301.

[26] Wahbah Al-Zuhailî, *Al-Tafsîr al-Munîr fî `Aqidah wa al-Syâri`ah wa al-Manhaj* , vol. 9(Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013), hlm. 207.

person's rights in measurement or weight, while *muṭaffif* is the one who commits such an act. The verse explains that this form of dishonesty can occur by taking more when receiving or giving less when delivering goods.[27] Fraud is also committed by the hypocrites, as described in Q.S. al-Baqarah/2: 9. The hypocrites attempt to deceive Allah and the believers by outwardly displaying faith while concealing disbelief in their hearts. They seek worldly gain by pretending to believe, although their behavior is filled with falsehood. Their primary goal is to earn the trust of the believers so they can pass on their secrets to enemies, such as the polytheists and the Jews. In the end, they only harm themselves, unaware that their deception will lead to destruction in both this world and the Hereafter.[28]

The Qur'anic verses presented collectively demonstrate a comprehensive ethical framework that strongly condemns deception, manipulation, and falsification—principles that directly apply to the harmful misuse of deepfake technology. The story of Prophet Yūsuf in Q.S. Yūsuf/12:18 illustrates how fabricated visual evidence can inflict profound emotional harm and violate trust, reflecting the destructive nature of modern digital deception. Similarly, the incident of al-Ifk in Q.S. al-Nūr/24:11–12 shows how fabricated accusations can damage honor and social integrity, and Allah warns that those who spread such lies will face severe consequences. The prohibition of *qaul al-zūr* in Q.S. al-Ḥajj/22:30 further emphasizes that false testimony and dishonest speech undermine justice, while prophetic teachings classify lying and false witness among the gravest sins. Fraud, described in Q.S. al-Muṭaffifīn/83:1–3, represents another form of deceit that corrupts social order by taking away others' rights, even in small measures. This principle directly parallels digital fraud, misinformation, and fake content that distort reality and erode public trust. The Qur'an also exposes the inner deception of hypocrites in Q.S. al-Baqarah/2:9, who disguise falsehood behind outward displays of righteousness, showing that deception ultimately harms the deceiver. Across all these verses, the Qur'an affirms that dishonesty in any form—whether through fabricated stories, visual manipulation, or deceptive behavior—creates injustice, spreads corruption, and destroys the fabric of society. Thus, harmful deepfake practices are fundamentally incompatible with Qur'anic ethics, which demand truthfulness, justice, and the preservation of human dignity.

In the modern era, fraud has become increasingly sophisticated through the use of technology, such as deepfakes and cybercrime. Deepfakes are used to produce manipulative videos that can damage someone's reputation or even influence public

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[27] Wahbah Zuhaili (al), *Tafsir al-Munir fi al-Aqidah wa al-Syari'ah wa al-Manhaj* , vol. 14(Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013).

[28] Ahmad bin Musthafâ Al-Maraghî, *Tafsîr Al-Maraghî* , vol. 1(Mesir: Syirkah Maktabah wa Mathba`ah Musthafâ al-Bâbî al-Halabî wa Auladuhu, 1946), hlm. 50.

opinion, especially in political campaigns. Identity theft is also widespread through phishing attacks or the exploitation of personal data on social media. Criminals can gain access to victims' accounts for illegal purposes, such as stealing funds or conducting fraudulent online transactions. Digital financial fraud is also on the rise, including fake investment schemes and cryptocurrency scams that exploit the public's limited understanding of technology. One notable deepfake case involved scammers impersonating the voice of a CEO of a British energy company, convincing him to transfer €220,000 to a bank account in Hungary. [29], Another example is fraud carried out through fake social media profiles, such as the fabricated identity of Maisy Kinsley on LinkedIn and Twitter, which interacted with Tesla stock traders, indicating a likely attempt to manipulate the market for illegal financial gain.[30]

CONCLUSION

Islam conceptualizes deepfake technology as a morally neutral instrument whose ethical status is determined by human intention, modes of utilization, and the social consequences it produces. This study demonstrates that, from a Qur'anic perspective, deepfake may serve constructive purposes when employed as a medium of knowledge, education, and technological innovation that contributes to public benefit. Such uses align with the Qur'anic emphasis on intellectual engagement, creativity, and responsible human agency in managing technological advancements.

At the same time, the Qur'an provides a clear ethical framework for identifying the potential harms associated with deepfake technology. When used to fabricate information, manipulate identities, spread false accusations, or facilitate fraud and market deception, deepfake practices fall within the Qur'anic prohibitions against major falsehood (*al-ifk*), false testimony (*shahādat al-zūr*), deception, and economic injustice. These harmful applications not only violate individual rights but also undermine social trust and moral order.

Accordingly, this study argues that addressing the challenges of deepfake technology requires an integrative approach that combines Qur'anic ethical principles with contemporary legal and regulatory mechanisms. Strengthening ethical awareness, developing clear normative guidelines, and implementing effective regulations are essential to minimizing the negative impacts of deepfake while preserving its beneficial potential. Future research may further explore interdisciplinary frameworks that connect

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[29] Catherine Stupp, "Fraudsters Used AI to Mimic CEO's Voice in Unusual Cybercrime Case", *Wall Street Journal*, Agustus 2019, bag. WSJ Pro, https://www.wsj.com/articles/fraudsters-use-ai-to-mimic-ceos-voice-in-unusual-cybercrime-case-11567157402.

[30] Ian Sample, "What Are Deepfakes – and How Can You Spot Them?", *The Guardian*, Januari 2020, bag. News, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jan/13/what-are-deepfakes-and-how-can-you-spot-them.

Islamic ethical thought with digital governance to respond more comprehensively to emerging technologies.

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