

**UNDERSTANDING THE UNITY OF THE QURANIC TEXT: A THEORITICAL
FRAMEWORK BASED ON MAQASID**

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Abstract	<p><i>In Quranic studies, thematic unity is a popular approach to understand the Qur'an. Grouping verses with related concepts together ultimately produces a unified thematic framework. Boosting this framework, another concept, namely Maqasid al-Quran (higher purposes of the Quran), has emerged in contemporary Quranic studies. Purposes (maqasid) of the Quran serve as the foundation for a broader thematic unity in the Quran because purpose (Maqsad) could communicate with different themes in the form of mechanisms (wasa'il) and make them one single thematic unit. Hence, it could be potentially greater than a single theme. In addition, in the purposive (maqasidi) framework of thematic unity, different themes typically assist and validate one another. This article explains the use of Maqasid and their wasa'il (means) to establish a purposive unity (al-wahdah al-maqasidiyyah) in the Qur'anic content. The article also comes out with a conceptual framework for Maqasid unity in the Quran.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Maqasid, al-Tafsir al-Maqasidi, Maqasid Unity, Thematic Unity, Coherence.</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

The Divine Wisdom emphasizes the importance of achieving objectives through actions rather than merely performing rituals, as seen in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These sources clearly demonstrate that if the intended objectives of any Islamic function or ritual remain unrealized, the action lacks substance. For instance, the Qur'an asserts that pilgrimage (*hajj*) gains significance only when it attains righteousness (*al-birr*). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also stressed the importance of achieving action goals. He clarified that rituals lose their significance if their objectives remain unfulfilled. For instance, he pointed out that fasting is not just about abstaining from food but also giving up lying and dishonesty. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Whoever does not give up false speech and acting upon it and ignorance, Allah has no need of him giving up his food and drink" (Hadith. Bukhari. Vol. 3, Book 31, No. 127; Sahih Muslim: Book 6, No. 2563). This hadith emphasizes the significance of abstaining from unlawful behavior, such as lying, backbiting, and other immoral acts, in addition to abstaining from food during a fast. It emphasizes the spiritual significance of fasting, as well as the need for self-control, moral cleansing, and a deliberate effort to maintain upright behavior during the fasting period. As a result, fulfilling a ritual's purpose makes it meaningful. The Qur'an's primary focus is on highlighting the relationship between mechanisms and their objectives.

The purposive method of Quranic interpretation seeks out the text's goals and purposes, clarifies the meaning behind its words, and follows several interpretive

guidelines to improve understanding without deviating from the Quran's main intended message. Thus, a distinct theory of the unity of the Quranic text aside from thematic unity is required. It calls for the creation of a new genre of Qur'anic exegesis, that solely concentrates on the *maqasid* (purposes) dimension of the Qur'an. For the interpretation of the Quran, there are several schools of thought, and each has a unique perspective on how to understand it. These trends include approaches to jurisprudence (Fiqh) that are thematic, linguistic, socio-political, theological, rhetorical (based on *Balagha*), and sectarian. Each of these approaches reveals different aspects of the Quranic message, each with its own objectives and strategies. Despite the frequent discussion of *maqasid* in these exegetical approaches, there is currently hardly any comprehensive method that specifically analyzes the *maqasid* unity of the Quranic text in terms of "*maqasid al-Quran*, which refers to the higher purposes or intentions that underpin the Quran's teachings and injunctions. Therefore, the advent of a distinct *maqasid* trend of exegesis would offer a fresh perspective on understanding the Quran and advance the discussion of Quranic exegesis. This approach would investigate the *maqasid* unity of the Quranic text to improve our understanding of Islam's primary objectives and how they relate to contemporary circumstances.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative methodology to analyze and assess written information from academic literature, specifically concentrating on techniques for understanding the Quran. The library data comprises a diverse range of resources, including books, scholarly journals, and other publications, which serve as the primary reservoir of knowledge for various Quranic interpretation methodologies. The review entails the scrutiny and study of pertinent literature about various methodologies employed in the Quran, the coherence theory within the Quran, and the notion of the unity of Quranic chapters. We establish the commonalities between these approaches by analyzing their approach to *maqasid*, which refers to the main goals of the Quran. The study combines the findings of the literature review and performs a theme analysis to clarify the common *maqasid* elements in various models of Quranic interpretation. Through various means, the recognition of essential concepts, themes, and principles pertaining to the oneness of *maqasid* is evident. The study presents a unique method for achieving coherence in the Quran by recognizing common features and important insights. This paradigm incorporates fundamental components from prior theories of interpretation and combines them into a unified framework that highlights the main goals of the Quran. Furthermore, the research technique not only promotes critical reflection and validation, but also guarantees the rigor and trustworthiness of the provided model. This entails doing an assessment of the model's logical consistency and suitability for the purpose of comprehending the Quran.

RESULTS

Theory of Thematic Unity in the Quran

Thematic interpretation of the Quran is a field that focuses on studying Quranic themes according to their intended purposes, whether via one or multiple chapters. It may be considered a technique within the field of Quranic exegesis, alongside analytical and comprehensive interpretation (al-Rumi, 1986). While analytical interpretation dissects each verse or set of verses separately, evaluating linguistic, theological, jurisprudential, and rhetorical factors, thematic interpretation looks at specific Quranic verses that address a common topic and goal and explores them completely. This technique incorporates numerous passages, independent of their linguistic variances or places in the Quran. Thematic interpretation therefore goes into a single component of the Quran, exploring it in depth while considering the larger context of similar issues throughout the Quran. Thematic interpretation may take three primary forms: thematic interpretation of Quranic terminology, thematic interpretation of Quranic topics, and thematic interpretation of Quranic chapters (surahs). This technique assists in gaining a greater knowledge of the

Quran's content and implementing its lessons in all parts of life (Muslim, 2005). When reading the Quran, we typically use the following variables under the concept of thematic unity: Selecting subjects; gathering verses surrounding the theme; putting verses according to the sequence of revelations; adding interpretations to these passages; categorizing various parts of the theme; finding lessons.

Two popular models of the thematic interpretation of the Quran are presented below:

Variables in Thematic Unity models	Sattar	Khalidi
Selecting the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A word/terminology from Quran • Synonymous or derivatives • Antonyms • Similar ideas • A given title based on the Quranic meanings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word with derivatives • Relating literal meanings with Quranic theme • Relating Quranic word with textual context of the verse
Gathering verses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literal meaning • Synonymous idea • Antonymous idea • Close in meaning 	
Classifying the verses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting in order of succession of revelation • Classifying as Makkan or madinan 	
Understanding the verses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give meaning of the verses with conformity of correctness • Analyze the verses. • Knowing <i>asbab nuzul, umum khusus, tadarruj</i> • Finding lessons from verses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical dimension of the verse – social, educational, and social.
Synthesizing the elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequencing the elements based on priority such fundamentals (usul) over sub-classes (furu). • Clustering the ideas and elements to develop a collective framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being limited to Quran only • Referring to <i>tafsir al-Mathur</i> if it explains the verse. • Complete investigation of verses • Following general characteristics of the Quran • Making it in the line of fundamentals of the Quran and its objectives • Highlighting the practical dimensions of the themes • Having contemporary cultural awareness • Making a neutral investigation

Table1: Two models of thematic interpretation of the Quran.

The 'thematic exegesis school' has taken steps towards a more 'purposeful Qur'anic exegesis'. The method of reading the Qur'anic text in terms of themes, principles, and higher values is based on a perception of the Qur'an as a 'unified whole.' Based on this holistic approach, the small number of verses related to rulings, which are traditionally called the 'verses of the rulings', will extend from a few hundred verses to the entire text of the Qur'an (Auda, 2008). A theme can be defined as a main idea, which may be cognitive knowledge of

something. When approached within a *maqasid* framework, it can serve as a meaningful tool. The theme falls under objective.

All *maqasid* are themes, but not all themes are *maqasid*. For example, in the Quran, we cannot categorize the concept of Allah as *maqasid*. Thus, it is a theme. Issues that are epistemological in nature could be classified as themes. This is due to its focus on the issue's knowledge base, which is solely within the realm of cognition. A theme or subject requires qualifiers to be understood. So, it's not self-explanatory. For a specific goal, a theme exists. A theme lacks substance if its qualities do not meet the criteria. The question, "Why does a theme exist?" could serve as a fundamental qualification for dealing with a theme. This is because a theme can only exist if it has a cause. If there is a cause behind a theme, it is the objective.

The relationship between the theme and *maqasid* can be described as follows: While all *maqasid* can be considered themes, not all themes fall under this classification. *Maqasid* is only attributed to the bigger themes that embody higher ideals, since they symbolize the superior objectives to be attained. For instance, prayer (*solat*) serves as a theme, but it is not a *maqasid*; rather, it is a mechanism. However, Taqwa serves as both a theme and a *maqasid*. Therefore, themes consist of purpose (*maqasid*) and mechanism (*wasa'il*). There are two sorts of connections between themes: higher-order and lower-order. Higher-order functions operate within a broader framework of objectives, whereas lower-order functions operate within their own restricted domain.

The analysis of Quranic texts using a thematic approach has several limits. When we categorize verses based on a common topic from several sections of the Quran, we may unintentionally disregard their original contextual significance. Therefore, it is crucial to first comprehend the context of each verse in its original surah. The thematic approach emphasizes the relationships between comparable themes; however, the *Maqasid* framework goes beyond that by integrating different themes under the same purpose. Collecting verses with a similar theme from different sections of the Quran can create some complications. This includes separating each verse from its original context, losing its connection to the surrounding verses, and potentially weakening the intended goals of the surah it is part of. However, we could provide a straightforward solution to the previously mentioned problem by connecting and linking each verse under a theme to the theme's objectives. This will add a new dimension of meaning with a thematic approach to the Quran.

Coherence theory is a concept that focuses on the relationship between each verse of the Quran with its preceding and succeeding verses; the connection between one chapter of the Quran with its preceding and succeeding chapters; the correspondence between the last verse and the opening verse of a given surah; and the relation between the first verse of a surah and the last verse of the preceding surah (Farrin, 2014). In a broad sense, this theory highlights Quran's structural integrity. In this context, Farrin cites Al-Arabi, who states that the Quran's verses unite like a single word, harmoniously associated, and structurally even (Farrin, 2014). From a fresh viewpoint, Farrin asserts that Roland Meynet developed three methods for arranging the structural integrity of "the whole Quran" (Farrin, 2014) in biblical texts: "(1) parallelism, where the structure takes the form AB/A'B' (the parallel string can be longer, of course, as in ABC/A'B'C'). (2) chiasm, or inverted parallelism, where the structure takes the form AB/B'A'. (3) by concentrism, which is similar to chiasm but incorporates a unique central element: AB/C/B'A'10" (Farrin, 2014).

Muhammad al-Maghribi's illustration of coherence is a good example of how to achieve this goal. Khan (2006) quotes him saying, "To understand coherence among the ayat of the entire Quran, you should first identify the objectives (*al-gharad*) for which the surah in question stands, then find the premises (*al-muqaddimat*) that lead to the objective, then trace the different levels of these premises in terms of how close or far away they are from the objective, and finally take note of the implied rulings and subsequent arguments that satisfy listeners' minds" (al-Biqai, 1995). This sentence says that there is coherence when there is a connection between the main goal of the surah and the premises that help achieve the goals.

We can identify these premises as 'wasa'il' because they serve as a means to achieve the objectives. Khan (2006) summarizes the coherence frameworks of three pioneers of the subject namely al-Maghribi, al-Biqai, al-Farahi and Islahi as follows: "by considering suggestions of al-Maghribi and al-Farahi and practical implementation of these suggestions by al-Biqai and al-Islahi, one may conclude that the main principles to establish link among ayat of a surah are: (1) determination of the central theme of the surah, (2) a summarization of various levels of premises dealt with in the surah, (3) identification of addressees to know the context, (4) deliberation over certain words in an ayah and certain words or the message in its preceding or succeeding ayah, (5) recognition of socio-historical background of an ayah or ayat or passage, (6) selection of landmark theses in the surah, and (7) application of a general tafsir principle i.e. al-Quran Yufassiru al-Quran (the Quran interprets the Quran)" (Khan, 2006: 7).

The coherence hypothesis focuses mostly on examining the internal consistency and logical linkages within the Quranic text. The objective is to comprehend the interconnections and reinforcements between various sections of the Quran, offering valuable insights into the overarching message and themes of the text. Nevertheless, a drawback of this theory is its failure to prioritize the comprehensive comprehension of the precise objectives or intentions conveyed by the verses of the Quran.

Although coherence theory offers useful insights into the structural and rhetorical elements of the Quran, it may not comprehensively address inquiries into the historical or contextual factors that led to the revelation of specific verses. Thus, depending exclusively on coherence theory may restrict the thorough comprehension of the Quran, as it does not expressly prioritize the broader objectives of the Quran.

Scholars of the field assume that every surah has a central objective, which plays a principal role in understanding the meanings and wisdom of its verses. *Maqasid al-Suwar* (Rumi, 1986) develops thematic unity in the Quran and coherence between verses and chapters (surah). Scholars define *Maqasid al-Suwar* with a variety of connotations. Al-Biqai asserts that understanding a chapter's objective reveals the coherence between its verses and story structures (al-Biqai, 1995). Darraz posits that each surah possesses a central theme, upon which the integrity of the entire surah rests (Darraz, 1997). Al-Farahi asserts: "It serves as the primary argument for the desired outcome (*matalib al-khitab*) in Allah's discourse." It represents the surah's overall fundamental concerns. According to Al-Farahi (1968), it is the primary focus of the surah's objectives and goals. Al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, a medieval *maqasid* theorist, also mentions that 'talab', or Allah's expectations from the Muslims through the Quran, is one of the main objectives of the Quran (Ibn Abd al-Salam, 1995). Al-Shatibi stated, "Every knowledgeable person understands that the purpose of a discourse is not the comprehension of a phrase, but rather the comprehension of its expression and meaning" (Ibn Abd al-Salam, 1995: 409). Understanding the purpose of each surah is a crucial step towards fulfilling the Qur'anic revelation. *Tadabbur* (contemplation) does not take place unless one understands the meanings and purposes of each surah (Shatibi, 2017). Explaining the following verse, Al-Qasimi said, "Will they not then ponder on (*tadabbur*) the Qur'an?" If the Qur'an had come from a source other than Allah, they would have discovered significant inconsistencies in it (al-Quran. al-Nisa': 82).

DISCUSSION

The Theory of Purposive Interpretation of the Quran (*Al-Tafsir al-Maqasidi*) is an approach to understanding the Quran that focuses on the purposes it sets out. It highlights the purposes and wisdom for which Allah revealed the Quran. This approach showcases the greatness of the Quran and clarifies the objectives it came to fulfill. It also focuses on revealing the linguistic implications of Quranic words in accordance with its general objectives, as words in the Quran can have multiple linguistic dimensions and various readings of the Quran. These include tradition (*hadith*), context, relevance, and reasons for revelation. All these help us figure out what the Quran is trying to aim for. The *Maqasid* trend in the exegetical works of the Qur'an in contemporary times received considerable attention

from the prominent exegetes, and scholars significantly focused on this trend. Even scholars such as Muhammad Abduh, Ibn Ashur, Mawdudi, and Izzat Darwazah strongly argued that introducing the Qur'an's objectives (*maqasid*) should be one of the principles of tafsir.

According to Muhammad 'Abduh, a desired exegesis of the Qur'an presents understandings of the Quran according to its higher objective, which is guiding mankind toward the way of happiness in this world and hereafter (Abduh, 1993). He again asserts that an overemphasis on aspects like Qur'anic styles, syntax, past stories, *gharib al-Qur'an*, legal discussion, theological debate, advice, and mysticism may overshadow the main purpose of the Qur'an and shroud its original meanings (Abduh, 1993). However, Ibn Ashur, in the fourth introduction of his tafsir book namely *al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, makes it vital for an exegete to look into the *maqasid* of the Qur'an. He asserts that an exegete's main task should be to illustrate the Qur'an's objective. He bases the evaluation of a tafsir's value on its approach to the *maqasid* dimension. He strongly opposes any kind of interpretation contradicting the objectives of the Qur'an. Thus, in order to interpret the Qur'an, an interpreter must possess knowledge of its *maqasid* (Ibn Ashur, 2000).

In the introduction to his exegetical work *al-Tafsir al-Hadith* (the Modern Exegesis) and his book "*al-Qur'an al-Majid*," Izzat Darwaza outlines an "*exemplary methodology of understanding the Qur'an and its exegesis*." He then delineated the best ways of understanding the Qur'an, among which "*the Qur'an's fundamentals (usus) and their means*" (Darwaza, 2000: 141). According to him, these two represent the entire contents of the Qur'an. The former is the essence because it contains the purposes of revelation and the prophet's mission, whereas the latter is the secondary means. It is crucial for the reader of the Qur'an to observe this distinction between fundamentals and means, as it prevents them from losing focus and becoming lost in the intricate details. Several contemporary exegetical works fairly reflect scholars' urge to apply the *maqasid* approach in the exegesis of the Qur'an. Exegetes generally approach the *maqasid* trends of exegesis in two ways: firstly, by describing the themes and purposes of the whole surah at the forefront of the exegesis of that very surah; and secondly, by focusing on the purpose of any specific verse. This approach seems to be becoming a phenomenon in the contemporary era, though it still lacks exclusive *maqasid* coverage.

A proposed framework for *Maqasid* unity

1. Select a purpose (*maqsad*) from the Quran with clear, irrefutable textual evidence.
2. Discover the Quranic themes that revolve around the chosen purpose.
3. Explain how each of these means becomes a catalyst to achieve the selected purpose.
4. Create a cluster containing all the catalysts discovered by the supporting means.
5. Examine the barriers to the chosen *maqsad*, including counter-*maqsad* and obstructive methods.
6. Explain how the Quran refutes the counter-*maqsad* and prescribes approaches to overcome the obstructive means.
7. Provide a comparative analysis of the supporting and opposing ideas and means.
8. Explain how these two clusters put forward a unified, fresh explanation for the selected *maqsad* and the relevant themes.
9. Develop a step-by-step, practical action framework to pursue the selected *maqsad*.
10. Relate the selected *maqsad* with other *maqasid* that are connected through the same means.
11. Draw a *maqasid* association supported by the same means.

CONCLUSION

Although some tafsir approaches occasionally touch upon *maqasid* issues, there has not been a comprehensive strategy that solely aims to uncover the unified *maqasid* approach to the Quranic text. This approach could provide a new outlook on understanding the Quran. A *maqasid*-based approach to understanding the Quran would provide a thorough perspective on the Quranic text by analyzing how its various commands and teachings align

with Islam's broader objectives. This approach would go beyond the examination of individual verses or legal rulings to elucidate the broader goals and intentions embedded in the language of the Quran. The notion of *Maqasid*-based unity underscores the ethical and moral framework delineated in the Quran, with a special emphasis on concepts such as justice, compassion, fairness, and the intrinsic worth of human beings.

This framework explores how various chapters of the Quran contribute to the achievement of these overarching goals in personal, social, and political settings. The propensity towards unity emphasizes the enduring significance of the Quranic message in addressing current issues and difficulties. In order to completely understand the *maqasid* framework of the Quran, an interdisciplinary approach focused on oneness would require the integration of knowledge and perspectives from other fields such as law, ethics, philosophy, and sociology. A *maqasid*-based unity framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of the various teachings of the Quran, in contrast to other systems that focus on specific parts. Overall, establishing a distinct *maqasid* unity framework would provide a novel and valuable viewpoint for comprehending the Quran. The analysis of the *maqasid* unity of the Quranic text would enhance our understanding of Islam's fundamental goals and their significance in modern-day circumstances.

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