

EDUCATIONAL TAFSIR OF SOCIAL PIETY IN THE QUR'AN: STRENGTHENING ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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Submitted: 08/06//2026

Revised: 21/07/2026

Accepted: 03/08/2026

Published: 08/08/2026

Abstract

Social piety is an important dimension in Islamic education because it connects individual religiosity with social responsibility in a multicultural society. This research aims to analyze the concept of social piety in the Qur'an through the perspective of educational interpretation and formulate its implications for strengthening Islamic character education. This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature research. Data is obtained from verses of the Qur'an related to social piety, such as QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 177, QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7, QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 2, QS. al-Nahl [16]: 90, and QS. al-Ḥ ujurāt [49]: 10–13, as well as classical and contemporary tafsir books. The analysis was carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner with a thematic interpretation approach. The results of the study show that social piety in the Qur'an includes the integration of faith, worship, social concern, help, justice, ihsan, brotherhood, and respect for diversity. These values are the basis for Islamic character education that not only forms ritually obedient individuals, but also caring, fair, inclusive, and socially responsible. This study concludes that the educational interpretation of social piety can be the basis for strengthening Islamic character education in a multicultural society.

Keywords

The Qur'an; social justice; multicultural society; character education; Interpretation of Education.



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INTRODUCTION

Social piety is an important dimension in Islamic education because it links individual religiosity with social responsibility in social life. From the perspective of the Qur'an, religiosity is not only measured by ritual obedience but also by concern for justice, compassion, solidarity, and respect for human dignity. Islamic education has a strategic role in shaping Muslim individuals who are not only obedient in worship but also able to live ethically, inclusively, and responsibly in a diverse society (Hidayat & Rohmawati, 2025). The Qur'an repeatedly associates faith with righteous deeds, prayer with social concern, and piety with justice and human brotherhood. This shows that Islamic character education needs to be directed at the formation of spiritually pious, socially responsible human beings who can provide benefits for common life (Mujahid (Mujahid & Astutik, 2024). In this context, social piety is important to study through an educational interpretive approach, namely by reading Qur'anic verses that emphasize educational values, character building, and social transformation.

In contemporary Muslim society, there is still a tendency to separate ritual piety from social piety. Some Muslims show a strong commitment to ritual worship, including prayer, fasting, and other formal religious practices. However, this commitment has not always been matched by concern for poverty, injustice, social inequality, environmental damage, and inter-group harmony (Setyaningsih & Cantika, 2025). This condition shows the distance between religious formalism and social responsibility. In a multicultural society, such distance can weaken the function of religion as a source of compassion, justice, solidarity, and social peace. The Qur'an criticizes religiosity that stops at symbols and rituals, especially when worship does not give birth to concern for orphans, the poor, and vulnerable groups (Aswar et al., 2025). Therefore, social piety is an important issue in Islamic education because it determines whether religious learning can produce students and a society that are empathetic, inclusive, and responsible, and that contribute positively to life together.

Several previous studies have discussed social piety from various perspectives. Helmiati explained that social piety is a form of religion reflected in care, empathy, and actions that benefit others. The study emphasizes that a Muslim's piety cannot be limited to personal worship, but must be manifested in social involvement. Islamic boarding schools have an important role in instilling the values of social piety in students through religious education, habituation, discipline, and social activities (Fahmi Irfani et al., 2025; Mustain & Burn, 2025; Taufiq et al., 2024). Social piety is also needed to maintain harmony in a diverse society, as it fosters mutual respect, solidarity, and concern

among groups (Bensaid & Machouche, 2019; Huda et al., 2020; Utama & Mubarok, 2024). Training in interpreting social piety verses for the taklim assembly congregation can strengthen the public's understanding of social responsibility based on the teachings of the Qur'an (Hidayah & Zayyadi, 2024; Nurkhakim et al., 2026; Taisir et al., 2025). In addition, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, through the Social Piety Index survey, shows that the social piety of the Indonesian people is in the good category but still needs to be strengthened through education, religious institutions, and daily practices (kemenag.go.id, 2025).

Other research also reinforces the importance of the relationship between Islamic values, education, and social responsibility. Individual piety and social piety must be understood in an integrated manner, as they are inseparable parts of the religious diversity of the Islamic (Ahmad et al., 2025; Sa'dullah et al., 2024; Surbakti et al., 2024). Globalization and digital culture can weaken social solidarity if religious education is not directed to strengthen ethical awareness and concern for the community (Azmira, 2026; Bahiyah, 2025; Nabriz et al., 2026). In addition, the challenges of the Society 5.0 era demand that Islamic education produce individuals who are not only adaptive to technological developments but also socially responsible (Fajrussalam et al., 2020; Fatoni & Sukari, 2024; Mutammam et al., 2025). These various studies show that social piety has been widely studied in relation to religious behavior, pesantren education, social harmony, and community life. However, most studies still tend to discuss social piety from sociological, moral, or institutional perspectives and have not specifically situated it within the framework of educational interpretation derived directly from the interpretation of Qur'anic verses.

The gap in this research lies in the limited number of studies that specifically read social piety as a concept of Qur'anic education through an educational interpretation approach and relate it to strengthening Islamic character education in a multicultural society. Previous research has shed light on the importance of social piety but has not elaborated in depth on how the verses of the Qur'an educate humans to practice social care, justice, compassion, cooperation, and respect for diversity. In addition, discussions of social piety often still rely on general references and contemporary social analysis, while the use of classical and contemporary tafsir textbooks has not been adequately supported. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to read social piety through the framework of educational interpretation. This study examines verses such as QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 177, QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7, QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 2, QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 90, and QS. Al-Ḥ ujūrāt [49]: 10–13 with reference to classical and contemporary books of commentary. Through this

approach, social piety is understood not only as a moral attitude but also as a value of Qur'anic education that strengthens the development of Islamic character in a multicultural society.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the concept of social piety in the Qur'an from an educational interpretive perspective. In particular, this study aims to explain the meaning of social piety in the verses of the Qur'an, examine the interpretation of classical and contemporary mufasir on social responsibility, and formulate the implications of social piety values for strengthening Islamic character education in a multicultural society. This research is expected to contribute to the development of the study of Islamic education, especially by showing that Qur'anic education is not only aimed at forming ritually obedient individuals but also at forming Muslims who have social responsibility, uphold justice, develop compassion, build cooperation, and respect diversity.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach, specifically library research (*Library Research*)(Zed, 2014). This approach was chosen because the research focused on examining the concept of social piety in the Qur'an from an educational interpretive perspective, rather than statistically testing field data. Literature research is used to study the verses of the Qur'an, the interpretation of the mufasir, and scientific literature relevant to Islamic education, character education, and multicultural society. The primary data in this study are the verses of the Qur'an (Ministry of Religion, 2019) related to social piety, such as QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 177, QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7, QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 2, QS. al-Nahl [16]: 90, and QS. al-ḤUjūrāt [49]: 10–13. The main data sources are obtained from classical and contemporary tafsir books, such as *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* (Al-Ṭabarī, 2001), *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓḥmmmm*. (Ibn Kathīr, 1999), *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Al-Qurṭubī, 1964), *Tafsīr al-Marāghī* (Al-Marāghī, 1946), *Tafsīr al-Azhar* (Hamka, 1982), and *Tafsīr al-Mishbah* (Shihab, 2002).

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation, namely by tracing, reading, recording, and classifying verses of the Qur'an, interpretation of mufasir, books, journal articles, and the results of previous research relevant to the theme of social piety and Islamic character education. The collected data were then analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method with a thematic interpretation approach (*mawḍū'ī*). The analysis stage is carried out by identifying verses related to social piety, examining the mufasir's interpretations of these verses, grouping the educational values they contain, and then formulating their implications for strengthening Islamic

character education in a multicultural society. With this method, the research seeks to show that social piety is not only a moral concept but also a value of Qur'anic education that can shape a religious, caring, just, inclusive, and socially responsible Muslim person.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results of this study present the main data on the verses of the Qur'an related to social piety. The presentation of this data aims to facilitate reading of the relationship among the verses, the study's focus, the interpretation's reference, the subject of interpretation, and the educational value it contains. The chosen verses substantially contain messages about virtue, concern for vulnerable groups, help, justice, brotherhood, and respect for diversity. The references used include classical and contemporary tafsir books so that the meaning of the verse can be read more comprehensively from the perspective of educational interpretation. Thus, the research results on the educational values of social piety in the Qur'an are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Data on Verses and Values of Social Piety Education in the Qur'an

No	Verses of the Qur'an	Focus Sentence	References Tafsir	Interpretation Tree	Educational Value
1.	QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 177	The meaning of true virtue	<i>Jāmi' al-Bayān; Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr; Tafsīr al-Azhar</i>	Virtue is not limited to the direction of the qibla or ritual symbols, but includes faith, worship, concern for relatives, orphans, the poor, travelers, and beggars.	Integration of faith, worship, social care, responsibility, and honesty.
2.	QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7	Criticism of ritual piety without social concern	<i>Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr; Tafsīr al-Marāghī; Tafsīr al-Mishbah</i>	People who deny religion are characterized by rebuking orphans, not encouraging feeding the poor, being negligent in prayer, engaging in riya, and refusal to provide help.	Empathy, concern for weak groups, sincerity of worship, and social responsibility.
3.	QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 2	Help in kindness	<i>Jāmi' al-Bayān; Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr; Tafsīr al-Azhar</i>	The commandment of <i>ta'āwun 'alā al-birr wa al-taqwā</i> indicates the obligation to cooperate in good and the prohibition of cooperation in sin and enmity.	Cooperation, solidarity, mutual cooperation, and collective responsibility.
4.	QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 90	Justice and courtesy	<i>al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān; Tafsīr Ibn</i>	Allah commands justice, courtesy, and giving to relatives, and forbids heinous acts, disobedience, and enmity.	Social justice, compassion, balance, and respect for the rights of others.

			<i>Kathīr; Tafsīr al- Mishbah</i>		
5.	QS. al-Ḥ ujurāt [49]: 10–13	Fraternity and respect for diversity	<i>Jāmi' al- Bayān; Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr; Tafsīr al- Mishbah</i>	Believers are brothers, humans are created into nations and tribes to know each other, and glory is determined by piety.	Fraternity, tolerance, respect for human dignity, and multicultural awareness.

The results of the study show that the Qur'anic verses studied contain the core values of social piety that are relevant to strengthening the education of Islamic character in a multicultural society. QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 177 affirms that true virtue does not only lie in ritual symbols or orientations, but also includes faith, worship, concern for relatives, orphans, the poor, travelers, and needy groups. QS. Al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7 presents the Qur'an's criticism of religious practices that fail to foster social concern, especially for orphans and the poor. Furthermore, QS. Al-Mā'idah [5]:2 presents the principle of helping in kindness and piety as the basis for the formation of social solidarity. QS. Al-Naḥl [16]: 90 contains the values of justice, ihsan, and respect for the rights of others, while QS. Al-Ḥ ujurāt [49]: 10–13 affirms the importance of brotherhood, peace, and respect for human diversity.

Based on references to classical and contemporary interpretations, these verses show that social piety is an integral part of Qur'anic education. The interpretations of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qur'an ṭubī, al-Marāghī, Hamka, and Quraish Shihab show that values such as faith, worship, empathy, justice, cooperation, brotherhood, and respect for human dignity are inseparable from the formation of the Muslim person. In the context of educational interpretation, these findings confirm that Islamic education is not only sufficient to form ritually obedient students but also to build a social character that is caring, fair, cooperative, tolerant, and responsible. Thus, the results of this study show that social piety in the Qur'an can be a conceptual basis for strengthening Islamic character education in a multicultural society.

Discussion

Social Piety as an Integration of Faith, Worship, and Social Responsibility

Social piety, as an integration of faith, worship, and social responsibility, is clearly evident in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 177. This verse emphasizes that virtue is not enough to be understood as an outward orientation or a formal symbol of religiosity, such as simply facing the east and west. However, it must be realized in the unity of belief, worship, and social action. Al-Ṭabarī in *Jāmi' al-*

Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān explains that the meaning of *Al-Birr* in the verse refers to complete obedience, that is, obedience rooted in faith in Allah, the last days, angels, the book, and the prophets, and is seen in real deeds to others. Ibn Kathīr in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓĥmmmm*. It also emphasizes that perfect virtue includes true faith, the performance of prayers, the fulfillment of zakat, the fulfillment of promises, patience in times of hardship, and concern for relatives, orphans, the poor, travelers, beggars, and groups in need. Thus, this verse shows that the piety in the Qur'an is not partial, but comprehensive (Al Soukkary, 2023; Widodo & Zakaria, 2026) because it includes theological, ritual, moral, and social dimensions, faith is the spiritual basis; worship is a form of servitude; and social responsibility is tangible evidence that faith and worship have formed a character that cares about human life.

From the perspective of educational interpretation, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:177 provides the basis for the view that Islamic education should be directed toward the formation of a human being who is balanced between individual piety and social piety. Religious education is not enough to teach cognitive aspects in the form of knowledge about faith, fiqh, and worship procedures, but also to instill social awareness so that students can apply religious values in daily life. The value of caring for orphans, the poor, travelers, and vulnerable groups shows that Islamic education has a social mission to form empathetic, generous, responsible, and sensitive individuals who are sensitive to the inequality around them. These findings reinforce the view (Hayati et al., 2019) that social piety is a form of religion expressed through actions that benefit others. This means that a person cannot be said to have complete piety if his ritual worship does not foster honesty, care, justice, and social benefits. In the context of Islamic character education, this verse is an important foundation for integrating spiritual learning with social practices, for example, through the habit of sharing, social care activities, community service, and strengthening the attitude of responsibility towards others. Thus, Islamic character education based on educational interpretation should build awareness that true worship fosters fair, respectful, caring, and beneficial behavior in a multicultural society.

Qur'anic Criticism of Religious Formalism

The Qur'an's criticism of religious formalism is evident throughout the Qur'an. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7. This surah shows that religiosity that stops at rituals, symbols, and outward appearances is not enough to build true piety unless it is accompanied by social concern. The Qur'an even calls people who rebuke orphans and do not encourage feeding the poor as religious liars. Ibn Kathīr, in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, interprets "religious liar" as a person who has no affection for orphans and

shows no concern for the needs of people with low incomes. Al-Marāghī, in *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, explains that true worship should give rise to an inner sensitivity to social suffering, rather than becoming a mere formal routine that loses moral meaning. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsīr al-Mishbah*, emphasizes that prayers performed with negligence, *riya*, and without social impact cannot constitute complete piety. Thus, QS. Al-Mā'ūn provides a fundamental critique of religious practices that appear ritually pious yet lack empathy, sincerity, and partiality towards the weak.

From the perspective of educational interpretation, QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7 teaches that religious education should not be oriented only to memorization, mastery of fiqh material, the performance of rituals, or religious symbols, but should be directed toward the formation of the learner's social character. Learning to pray, for example, is not enough to explain the terms, harmony, and readings; it also needs to be related to the values of honesty, humility, care, and responsibility towards others. This verse is the antithesis of the practice of religious education that is too formalistic, namely, education that emphasizes only cognitive and ritual aspects but lacks sensitivity to poverty, inequality, and social suffering. However, these findings also strengthen the study (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Ichsan et al., 2024), which shows the importance of training in interpreting social verses for the community, so that religious understanding does not stop at the normative level but moves towards more applicable social awareness. In the context of Islamic character education, QS. Al-Mā'ūn can serve as a basis for developing care-based learning, such as orphan compensation programs, care for the poor, social services, and the habit of sharing. Thus, Islamic education grounded in educational interpretation must transform worship from merely a personal activity into a moral force that shapes students to be more empathetic, sincere, caring, and responsible in a multicultural society.

Helping as the Basis of Social Education

Findings on QS. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 2 shows that social piety is built through the principle of *Squirt*, that is, helping in virtue and piety. Al-Ṭabarī explains that *Al-Birr* encompasses all forms of obedience to Allah, while *Al-Taḳwa* relates to the effort to avoid His prohibitions. Ibn Kathīr interprets this verse as a general principle in building social cooperation that brings benefits. In the interpretation of education, this verse serves as the basis for Islamic education to develop the abilities of working together, care, solidarity, and collective responsibility. This value is relevant to a multicultural society because living together requires an ethics of cross-group cooperation. These findings corroborate research (Islamic et al., 2024; Nasruddin, 2026) showing that pesantren can

instill the value of social piety through habituation and social activities. Thus, Islamic education needs to make social collaboration part of character building.

Justice and Ihsan as an Orientation for Islamic Character Education

Justice and Ihsan, as the orientation of Islamic character education, are clearly evident in QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 90. This verse contains Allah's command to be just, to do mercy, to give to relatives, and to stay away from heinous acts, disobedience, and enmity. Al-Qur'an ṭubī in *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* explains that this verse is very comprehensive because it gathers the main points of social good while closing the door to various forms of moral and social harm. Ibn Kathīr in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* interprets justice as a balanced and upright attitude and grants rights to those who are entitled. At the same time, Ihsan reflects a higher quality of kindness because it not only fulfills formal obligations but also shows compassion, openness, and concern for fellow human beings. Thus, QS. Al-Naḥl [16]:90 shows that social piety is not only concerned with the weak but also with the enforcement of justice, respect for human rights, and the prevention of behavior that is destructive to common life. This verse affirms that a socially pious society must be built on the principles of justice, ihsan, and moral responsibility.

From the perspective of educational interpretation, QS. Al-Naḥl [16]: 90 provides the basis for Islamic education to form a person who is just, polite, caring, and respectful of others' rights. Religious education is not enough to teach only religious norms and knowledge; it must also instill the character of justice in students' relationships with family, friends, teachers, society, and the wider social environment. The value of ihsan in this verse also teaches that students need to be guided to do good not only out of obligation but also out of moral awareness and sincerity, to bring benefits to others. These findings corroborate the findings of (Latifah & Nurhikmah, 2024) that individual piety and social piety cannot be separated because true worship must give birth to a just, empathetic, and responsible attitude in social life. However, this finding is also a criticism of religious education practices that have not sufficiently instilled social justice as the main character. If religious education emphasizes only memorization, ritual, and formal obedience, then the values of justice and ihsan risk being absent from real behavior. Therefore, Islamic character education must be directed toward the formation of human beings who are not only personally obedient but also able to uphold justice, spread ihsan, prevent social evil, and bring about benefits in a multicultural society.

Social Righteousness and Multicultural Awareness

The social piety and multicultural consciousness in the Qur'an are evident in al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 10–13. This verse affirms that believers are brothers, so they are commanded to mend relations in the event of disagreements. In addition, the Qur'an explains that humans were created from both men and women, then made into nations and tribes to get to know one another. Al-Ṭabarī in *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* explains that the diversity of nations and tribes is Allah's decree so that humans build social relations through the process of getting to know each other, not boasting about each other or demeaning other groups. Ibn Kathīr in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* affirms that the glory of man is not determined by fate, tribe, descent, social status, or worldly position, but by piety to Allah. Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsīr al-Mishbah*, interprets this verse as the basis for respect for human differences and dignity, because diversity is not an excuse for conflict but rather a means of building broader and more meaningful relationships. Thus, QS. Al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 10–13 shows that social piety is not only related to caring for the weak but also includes the ability to build brotherhood, maintain peace, respect human dignity, and accept diversity as part of sunnatullah.

From the perspective of educational interpretation, QS. Al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 10–13 is very relevant as the basis for strengthening Islamic character education in a multicultural society. This verse teaches that Islamic education must form students who are not only personally religious but also have an inclusive, tolerant, dialogical attitude and can live peacefully with different groups. The value of brotherhood in this verse calls for religious education to foster awareness that fellow human beings should be treated with respect, regardless of ethnicity, culture, language, social class, or religious background. These findings reinforce the view of (Arimatea & Sukarna, 2024; Rahmadin & Astutik, 2025), which places social piety as the key to harmony in diverse lives, because mature religiosity should foster mutual respect and concern among groups. However, this verse is also a criticism of the practice of religious education, which can still be exclusive if it emphasizes group identity without fostering a broader awareness of humanity. In the context of Islamic character education, the values of QS. Al-Ḥujurāt can be implemented through tolerance education, cross-cultural dialogue, peaceful conflict resolution, the habit of respecting differences, and the strengthening of anti-discrimination attitudes. Thus, Islamic education based on educational interpretation needs to be directed to form students who are spiritually pious, socially polite, and inclusive in the life of a plural society.

Implications of Educational Interpretation for the Strengthening of Islamic Character Education

Based on the findings of the verses and the interpretation of the mufasir, social piety can be understood as the value of Qur'anic education that forms a religious, caring, fair, cooperative, and multicultural character. The interpretation of education does not only read verses as a normative message, but also as the basis for the formation of students' attitudes and behaviors. The value of care in QS. Al-Mā'ūn, justice in QS. Al-Naḥl, help in QS. Al-Mā'idah, and the appreciation of diversity in QS. Al-Ḥujurāt can be integrated into the curriculum, habituation, example, and social activities. This finding strengthens the views of Ardiansyah and Basuki, who emphasize the role of Islamic educational institutions in facing the challenges of Society 5.0. However, this study expands on previous findings by affirming the basics of educational interpretation in tafsir books. Thus, social piety is an important foundation for the education of Islamic character in a multicultural society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions, it can be concluded that social piety in the Qur'an is an important part of Islamic character education, integrating faith, worship, and social responsibility. Interpretation of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 177 shows that true virtue does not stop at ritual symbols, but must be manifested in concern for relatives, orphans, the poor, travelers, and vulnerable groups. QS. Al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–7 affirms the Qur'an's critique of formalistic religiosity that fails to foster social empathy. QS. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 2 teaches cooperation in goodness, QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 90 affirms the value of justice and ihsan, while QS. Al-Ḥ ujurāt [49]: 10–13 provides the basis for fraternal education, respect for human dignity, and awareness of multiculturalism. From the perspective of educational interpretation, these verses show that Islamic education aims not only to form students who are ritually obedient but also to form individuals who are caring, fair, cooperative, tolerant, and responsible in social life.

This research emphasizes that strengthening Islamic character education in a multicultural society requires integrating social piety values into the curriculum, habituation, example, and social activities, as well as strengthening the roles of families, schools, Islamic boarding schools, mosques, and communities. Islamic education, based on an educational interpretation, can be a means of forming Muslims who are religious and inclusive, and able to build a harmonious, just, and socially oriented social life for the common good. Further research is recommended to develop this study through an empirical approach in schools, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, or multicultural Muslim communities to see the implementation of social piety values in educational practice. In

addition, subsequent research can develop a learning model for social piety-based educational interpretation or an instrument to measure students' social character based on the values of the Qur'an.

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