

Beyond Domestication: Reconstructing the Meaning of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 through the Ma'na-cum-Maghza Approach

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Abstract

The interpretation of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33, particularly the phrase *waqarna fi buyūtikunna*, has frequently been associated with women's domestication and restrictions on their public participation. Although previous studies have challenged absolute interpretations of women's confinement, the discussion largely remains focused on whether women are permitted to work or enter the public sphere. This study aims to reconstruct the meaning and significance of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 through the *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach and examine its implications for women's agency and gender justice. Employing a qualitative textual-hermeneutical design, this study uses library research, with Q.S. Al-Ahzab 32–34 as primary data and classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries and relevant gender studies as secondary sources. Data were analyzed through the reconstruction of historical meaning (*al-ma'na al-tarikhī*), historical significance (*al-maghza al-tarikhī*), and dynamic significance (*al-maghza al-mutaharrik*), supported by source triangulation. The findings show that *waqarna fi buyūtikunna* is historically situated within the specific context of the Prophet's wives and should not be universalized as permanent physical confinement for Muslim women. Its enduring ethical significance concerns dignity, propriety, moral integrity, and responsible conduct. These values can be contextualized within contemporary women's education, employment, leadership, and public participation through the principle of ethical agency. The study's novelty lies in shifting the interpretive paradigm from spatial domestication to ethical agency, positioning domestication as a historical form rather than the ultimate *maghza* of the verse. This reconstruction contributes to a Qur'anic framework of gender justice that recognizes women's public agency while maintaining ethical and domestic responsibilities.

Keywords: Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33; *ma'na-cum-maghza*; women's domestication; ethical agency; gender justice

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INTRODUCTION

Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 is one of the Qur'anic verses that occupies an important position in discussions of women, particularly concerning the relationship between the domestic and public spheres (Hadi et al., 2024; Naylul 'Izzah Walkaromah, 2023). The phrase *waqarna fi buyūtikunna* has frequently been understood as an instruction for women to remain in their homes. Within certain religious constructions, this interpretation has subsequently been

used to provide normative legitimacy for restricting women's activities in the public sphere. Such an understanding has not only shaped perceptions of the division of roles between men and women but has also influenced how Muslim societies perceive women's education, employment, leadership, and social participation (Halimah & Zulfiah, 2023). The problem becomes more complex when a statement specifically addressed to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad in Q.S. Al-Ahzab 32–34 is treated as a universal prescription for all Muslim women without adequately considering its socio-historical context, linguistic structure, and ethical objectives. As a result, the notion of “home” may come to be understood not merely as a particular social context of the command but as a permanent boundary for women's existence (Hadi et al., 2025, 2026).

This problem demonstrates that the debate surrounding Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 is not simply a question of whether women are permitted to leave their homes. Beneath this debate lies a more fundamental hermeneutical question concerning how Qur'anic texts should be understood when confronted with changing social contexts (Dinata & Novianti, 2024; Soh et al., 2021). When a verse is interpreted literally and detached from its historical context of revelation, a particular social form from the past may be transformed into a universal norm that is applied without contextual boundaries (Haningsih et al., 2026; Sibawaihi et al., 2025; Suparman et al., 2025). Conversely, when the text is interpreted solely through the demands of contemporary emancipation, there is a risk of neglecting the moral structure and normative dimensions embedded in the Qur'anic text. Therefore, the central question is not merely whether the verse restricts or liberates women, but what meaning the verse conveyed within its historical context, what moral message it sought to establish, and how that message can be meaningfully reinterpreted in a social reality in which women's lives have undergone substantial transformation.

Previous studies have examined Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 through various perspectives, including feminism, classical and contemporary exegesis, hermeneutics, and the issues of women's employment and participation in the public sphere (Noor, 2023). Several studies have demonstrated that *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* should not necessarily be understood as an absolute prohibition against women working or participating in social life. Other studies have approached the verse through contextual hermeneutics by taking into account changes in social structures and women's positions within society (Fitriansyah et al., 2026; Sulastri & Firdaus, 2026). Nevertheless, much of the existing scholarship remains oriented toward the question of whether women are permitted to enter the public sphere. In other words, the discussion frequently remains situated within the binary opposition between “domestication” and “emancipation,” while the more fundamental question of how the domestication of women was constructed through interpretive processes, and whether domestication should indeed be regarded as the primary *maghza* of the verse, has received insufficient attention. This unresolved issue constitutes the point of departure for the present study (Edriana Noerdin, n.d.; Khalil, Sara, ABdelsabour, 2018).

This study argues that the interpretation of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 needs to distinguish between the historical form in which the Qur'anic message was articulated and the moral significance embedded within that message (Auliana & Erra Rismorlita, 2017; Zaragoza-Sáez & González-Illescas, 2026). The *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach is employed because it enables the interpretation to move beyond a purely literal reading without severing its connection to the text. The approach begins by examining the linguistic meaning and historical context of the verse in order to identify *al-ma'nā al-tārīkhī*, or historical meaning. It then seeks to identify *al-maghzā al-tārīkhī*, namely the historical significance or principal moral message embedded in the verse, before developing *al-maghzā al-mutaḥarrik*, or

dynamic significance, through which the Qur'anic message can be brought into dialogue with contemporary social realities. In this way, reinterpretation does not begin by imposing modern values upon the Qur'an; rather, it seeks to identify the moral orientation inherent in the text and responsibly transform its significance within a different historical context.

Linguistically and structurally, Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 cannot be isolated from the verses surrounding it. Verse 32 first emphasizes the distinctive position of the Prophet's wives through the expression *lastunna ka-aḥadin min al-nisā'*, indicating that they occupy a particular status and bear responsibilities different from those of women in general (M. Rohmah, 2022; S. Rohmah & Fattah, 2026). Verse 33 then contains the instruction *waqarna fī buyūtikunna*, followed by the prohibition of *tabarruj al-jāhiliyyah al-ūlā*, the command to establish prayer and give zakat, and the instruction to obey Allah and His Messenger. This textual configuration indicates that the verse does not merely constitute a regulation concerning women's physical location but forms part of a broader ethical discourse concerning conduct, dignity, spirituality, and moral responsibility. Consequently, interpreting *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* simply as a prohibition against women leaving their homes risks narrowing the scope of the verse while overlooking its semantic and structural relationship with the other moral imperatives contained within the passage.

Historically, the command should also be situated within the social structure of seventh-century Arabia and the particular position of the Prophet's wives as *ummahāt al-mu'minīn*. Within this context, the home cannot be reduced merely to a symbol of women's subordination; it also functioned as a social space associated with protection, dignity, and the distinct identity of the Prophet's household. The prohibition of *tabarruj*, which immediately follows the command, further demonstrates the Qur'an's concern with women's modes of social presence and interaction. Therefore, the *al-ma'nā al-tārīkhī* of the verse needs to be reconstructed through an analysis of its linguistic structure, historical context, immediate recipients, and the social practices that the Qur'anic discourse sought to regulate. Such an approach makes it possible to distinguish between the social form through which the Qur'anic message was articulated and the moral objective that the message sought to achieve through that particular form.

From this historical context, the *al-maghzā al-tārīkhī* of the verse may be understood as a moral effort to establish a social order that protects dignity, honor, propriety, and moral integrity within the Prophet's household and the wider community. Accordingly, the domestic dimension of the verse remains acknowledged as part of its historical normative context, but it should not automatically be elevated into its sole and universal objective. What deserves to be retained is the ethical principle underlying the instruction. This interpretation produces an important shift from the understanding that "women must remain at home" toward the understanding that women's participation in social life should be accompanied by dignity, moral responsibility, and ethical conduct. Such a shift does not eliminate the value of domestic and family life; rather, it prevents domestication from becoming the exclusive measure of women's religious and moral virtue.

This reinterpretation becomes particularly significant in the context of contemporary Muslim women's lives. Women today participate not only in family life but also as academics, educators, professionals, organizational leaders, entrepreneurs, social activists, and actors within digital spaces. These transformations create an urgent need for Qur'anic interpretation that is capable of preserving the ethical orientation of the text while responding to changing social realities. Within this context, the *al-maghzā al-mutaḥarrik* of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 can be developed into the principle that women's participation in the

public sphere should not be evaluated merely on the basis of their physical presence outside the home, but in terms of dignity, moral responsibility, integrity, and social contribution. Contemporary social realities, therefore, do not necessarily have to be positioned in opposition to the Qur'anic message, provided that contextualization remains grounded in the ethical orientation of the text.

This perspective also creates an important conceptual space for discussing gender justice from a Qur'anic perspective. Gender justice in this study is not understood as an attempt to make all roles between men and women identical, but as an effort to ensure that differences in social roles do not become a justification for restriction, subordination, or the denial of women's agency. When the verse is situated at the level of ethics, women can be recognized as moral subjects who possess the capacity to make decisions, participate in social life, pursue education, engage in professional activities, and contribute to the public sphere while maintaining responsibility toward family and society. In this way, Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 can be reread through the paradigm of ethical agency, in which women are recognized as moral agents capable of exercising responsible agency across different spheres of life.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to demonstrate that Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 cannot adequately be reduced to a theological justification for the domestication of women. Through the *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach, this study reconstructs the relationship between the historical meaning, historical significance, and dynamic significance of the verse in order to identify a moral message capable of transcending its particular socio-historical form. Accordingly, the study does not seek simply to replace a domesticating interpretation with a feminist interpretation. Rather, it offers a more fundamental reconsideration of how the Qur'anic message concerning dignity, ethics, responsibility, and human worth can be contextualized within the lives of contemporary Muslim women. At this point, the study positions gender justice not as an external concept imposed upon the Qur'an, but as an ethical implication that can emerge from a historically grounded and dynamically oriented reconstruction of the verse's significance.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a textual-hermeneutical approach using the *ma'na-cum-maghza* method. The study focuses on reconstructing the meaning and significance of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33, particularly the phrase *waqarna fī buyūtikunna*, and examining its relevance to contemporary issues of women's agency and gender justice.

The primary data consist of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33, supported by Q.S. Al-Ahzab 32 and 34 as its immediate textual context. Secondary data include relevant classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries, works on Qur'anic hermeneutics, and scholarly studies concerning women, feminism, domestication, gender justice, and *ma'na-cum-maghza*. Data were collected through library research by examining the linguistic, textual, historical, and interpretive dimensions of the selected sources (Wardana et al., 2025; Waruwu et al., 2025).

Data analysis followed the main stages of the *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach. First, the study reconstructed the historical meaning (*al-ma'nā al-tārīkhī*) by analyzing the linguistic structure of the verse, its immediate textual context, and the socio-historical

circumstances surrounding its revelation. Second, the study identified the historical significance (*al-maghzā al-tārīkhī*) by examining the ethical message underlying the command *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* in relation to dignity, propriety, and moral responsibility. Third, the study developed its dynamic significance (*al-maghzā al-mutaḥarrik*) by relating the historical ethical message to contemporary realities of women's education, employment, leadership, and public participation.

To ensure interpretive credibility, the findings were examined through source triangulation by comparing the Qur'anic text, classical and contemporary exegetical interpretations, and relevant contemporary scholarship on gender and women's agency. The analysis then critically compared the reconstructed interpretation with previous studies to determine whether it reinforces, modifies, or challenges existing understandings of women's domestication in Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 (Creswell, 2018, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The analysis of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 through the *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach produces three main findings. First, the command *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* cannot be adequately understood as an absolute prohibition against women's activities outside the home. Second, the historical significance of the verse is more closely related to the preservation of dignity, moral integrity, and responsible conduct than to the physical confinement of women within domestic spaces. Third, when its historical significance is reconstructed into a contemporary context, the verse provides an ethical framework for women's public participation rather than establishing women's permanent domestication.

The first finding emerges from the textual position of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 within verses 32–34. The command in verse 33 is preceded by the statement “*Yā nisā'a al-nabiyyi lastunna ka-aḥadin min al-nisā'*” (O wives of the Prophet, you are not like other women) in verse 32. This textual context is significant because it establishes a specific addressee and a distinctive moral position for the Prophet's wives. Therefore, the expression *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* should not immediately be transformed into a universal legal command applicable in precisely the same form to all Muslim women. The linguistic and intratextual analysis instead indicates that the command is embedded within a broader ethical discourse concerning the exemplary status of the Prophet's household.

The second finding concerns the meaning of *qarna* and the broader structure of the verse. The command to remain settled in the home is immediately connected with the prohibition of *tabarruj al-jāhiliyyah al-ūlā*, the establishment of prayer, payment of zakat, and obedience to Allah and His Messenger. The structure demonstrates that the verse does not construct “the home” as an isolated legal space. Rather, the home functions within a wider ethical framework of dignity, religious responsibility, and protection from forms of public conduct associated with the moral norms criticized by the Qur'an. Consequently, the historical meaning of *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* is better understood as a directive toward dignified and morally responsible conduct than as a universal principle of female spatial confinement.

The third finding emerges at the level of *al-maghzā al-mutaḥarrik*. When the historical ethical message is brought into contemporary circumstances, the principle of maintaining

dignity and moral integrity does not necessarily require women to remain physically confined to domestic spaces. Contemporary women participate in education, professional employment, leadership, social organizations, community development, and digital public spaces. The dynamic significance of the verse therefore lies in maintaining ethical boundaries while allowing women to exercise their capacity as moral agents. The reconstructed principle can be formulated as follows: the Qur'anic concern is not primarily where women are located, but how women exercise their presence, agency, and responsibility within social life.

This reconstruction produces a further finding that is important for the discourse of gender justice. Women should not be conceptualized merely as objects whose mobility must be controlled, but as moral subjects who are capable of making ethical decisions and assuming social responsibility. Domestic roles remain legitimate and important, but they cannot automatically be transformed into a theological justification for eliminating women's agency outside the home. Thus, the research shifts the interpretive question from "Are women allowed to leave the home?" to "What ethical principles should govern women's participation in public and domestic life?"

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 contains a distinction between the historical form of the command and its ethical significance. This distinction is central to the *ma'na-cum-maghza* framework, which seeks to reconstruct the historical meaning of the Qur'anic text and subsequently identify its historical and contemporary significance. Within this framework, the physical setting of the Prophet's wives in their homes represents the historical form of the instruction, whereas dignity, propriety, moral responsibility, and the avoidance of *tabarruj* represent deeper ethical concerns that can be contextualized across historical periods.

This finding challenges a literalist interpretation that treats *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* as a universal command requiring all Muslim women to remain within domestic spaces. A recent study comparing al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr demonstrates that the difference in interpretive methodology produces substantially different implications. Al-Qurṭubī tends toward a broader domestication-oriented interpretation, while Ibn Kathīr gives greater attention to the specific status of the Prophet's wives and therefore does not straightforwardly transform the verse into a universal restriction on women. The present study supports the contextual tendency found in Ibn Kathīr but goes beyond it. Whereas the comparative study primarily demonstrates differences between exegetes, this research reconstructs the ethical significance of the verse through *ma'na-cum-maghza* and consequently proposes ethical agency as the contemporary conceptual bridge.

This result also supports Lutfiani's earlier hermeneutical study, which argues that Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 should not be used to restrict women exclusively to domestic responsibilities and recognizes women's rights in education, careers, and social life. However, the present study does not simply repeat the conclusion that women have the right to participate in the public sphere. Such a conclusion remains focused on the question of permission. The present study moves one analytical level deeper by asking why the verse was revealed and what ethical principle remains meaningful when its historical form is transferred into a different social context. Therefore, the contribution of this research is not merely the affirmation of women's public participation, but the reconstruction of the Qur'anic ethical framework that makes such participation morally accountable.

A similar tendency can be found in the hermeneutical study of Al-Ahzab 33 from the perspective of Abid al-Jabiri. That research concludes that women may participate in the public sphere while maintaining their domestic responsibilities and observing Islamic ethical boundaries. The present study supports this conclusion concerning the legitimacy of women's public participation but modifies its conceptual foundation. The earlier study still frames the issue through the balance between public and domestic roles. The present research argues that the public-domestic dichotomy itself should not become the primary interpretive framework. Such a dichotomy can unintentionally preserve the assumption that women's social presence requires special justification. Through *ma'na-cum-maghza*, the more fundamental issue is ethical agency: women participate in society as responsible moral subjects while maintaining dignity and accountability.

The findings are also relevant to recent research using *ma'na-cum-maghza* in gender-related Qur'anic interpretation. Contemporary studies applying this approach have increasingly emphasized the reconstruction of Qur'anic messages from historical contexts toward ethical values such as gender justice, moral agency, and equality. For example, research on Q.S. Yusuf 23-24 argues that *ma'na-cum-maghza* can reveal a Qur'anic ethical framework that recognizes women as moral agents rather than merely sexual objects. Likewise, research on Q.S. Al-Nisa 4:32 argues that the approach can reconstruct the historical meaning of the verse while developing contemporary significance in the direction of gender justice and recognition of women's agency.

The present research therefore supports the broader theoretical orientation of contemporary *ma'na-cum-maghza* scholarship but extends its application to the discourse of women's domestication in Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33. The extension is important because the problem in this verse is not simply unequal gender relations, but the tendency to identify a historically situated form—remaining in the house—with the universal objective of the Qur'anic command. The present study demonstrates that such identification produces an interpretive reduction: the ethical objective of the verse becomes overshadowed by the physical location of women.

This finding becomes increasingly relevant when compared with studies of the contemporary circulation of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 on social media. Research examining Islamic memes found that the verse is frequently reproduced through a textual reading that constructs the ideal Muslim woman as one who remains at home and limits her social mobility. The resulting representation establishes women as domestic entities and reinforces a restrictive gender ideology. The present research rejects the reduction of the verse to this domestication narrative. More precisely, it rejects the assumption that the spatial command itself constitutes the complete and timeless message of the verse. The Qur'anic ethical message is broader than the social representation subsequently constructed from it.

The distinction between historical form and ethical significance also provides an important response to contemporary hermeneutical research. A recent study using Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics similarly argues that Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 must be understood through its historical context and cannot simply be transferred literally into contemporary social conditions. The present study supports the contextualization argument but differs in its methodological emphasis. Ricoeurian analysis emphasizes the process of distancing, decontextualization, and recontextualization, whereas *ma'na-cum-maghza* explicitly organizes the reconstruction into historical meaning, historical significance, and dynamic significance. This allows the present study to articulate more precisely what is retained

from the verse and what is reconstructed: the historical form is contextual, while its ethical concern with dignity, propriety, and moral responsibility possesses continuing significance.

Accordingly, the research does not support either extreme position. It does not support a literalist-domestication thesis that interprets the verse as a permanent prohibition against women's presence in public life. At the same time, it does not support an uncritical emancipation thesis that simply removes all normative considerations from the verse. Instead, the research proposes a third position: ethical contextualism. In this position, the Qur'anic command remains normatively relevant, but its contemporary application is determined by the ethical objective reconstructed from its historical context rather than by reproducing the historical social form literally.

This position constitutes the principal novelty of the study. Previous studies have generally moved in one of three directions: defending women's domestic role, demonstrating women's right to participate in public life, or contextualizing the verse through various hermeneutical approaches. The present study moves beyond these positions by arguing that the central interpretive problem is the equation of spatial domesticity with the Qur'anic moral objective. Through *ma'na-cum-maghza*, domestication is repositioned from being the assumed final meaning of the verse to being a historically situated form through which a broader ethical concern was expressed.

The novelty can therefore be formulated as the concept of ethical agency beyond domestication. Ethical agency means that women are recognized as autonomous moral subjects who are responsible for their conduct, capable of making decisions, and entitled to contribute to social life. The ethical requirements emphasized in Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33—dignity, modesty, religious responsibility, and avoidance of morally problematic forms of display—remain relevant, but these requirements should regulate women's participation rather than eliminate their participation.

In this sense, the research supports previous studies in rejecting absolute female domestication, but rejects the assumption that the principal contribution of reinterpretation is merely to legitimize women's work outside the home. The study instead proposes that the Qur'anic message should be understood through a shift from spatial control to ethical responsibility, from domestication to agency, and from gendered restriction to gender justice. This shift represents the distinctive contribution of the study to contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics.

The resulting interpretive model can be summarized as:

Historical Context → Historical Meaning → Historical Significance → Dynamic Significance → Ethical Agency → Gender Justice

Through this model, *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* is not discarded, but reconstructed. Its historical significance remains important as an ethical call to dignity and responsible conduct, while its contemporary significance no longer requires the universal physical confinement of women. The verse consequently becomes relevant to contemporary Muslim women not by reproducing the seventh-century social form, but by translating its ethical orientation into contemporary contexts of education, employment, leadership, family life, and public participation.

Thus, the study concludes that Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 should not be positioned as a theological foundation for women's domestication, but as a Qur'anic framework for ethical public participation. The verse does not abolish domestic responsibility, but neither does it establish domestic confinement as the universal essence of Muslim womanhood. The more fundamental *maghza* lies in the formation of morally responsible, dignified, and socially accountable human beings. In this reconstruction, gender justice does not mean eliminating differences in family or social roles, but preventing those differences from being converted into permanent restrictions on women's moral agency.

N o.	Previous Study	Main Finding of Previous Study	Finding of the Present Study	Position of Present Study	Contribution/N ovelty
1	Cahyani (2022), <i>Nalar Feminisme dalam QS. Al- Ahzab Ayat 33</i>	Q.S. Al- Ahzab 33 can be interpreted from a feminist perspectiv e and should not be used to restrict women solely to domestic roles.	The verse should not be reduced to a binary between domesticit y and emancipat ion; its deeper significanc e concerns dignity, moral responsibi lity, and agency.	Supports & extends	Shifts the discussion from feminist permission for women to enter public space toward reconstruction of the Qur'anic <i>maghza</i> .
2	Lutfiani (2019), <i>Hak-Hak Perempuan dalam Surat Al-Ahzab Ayat 33</i>	Women possess rights in education, work, careers, and social participati on.	Women's public participati on is legitimate when understoo d within the ethical framewor k of the verse.	Supports, but goes beyond	Moves from the question of women's rights to the deeper ethical foundation governing those rights.
3	Study on women's domestication according to al- Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr (2025)	Al-Qurṭubī tends toward a domesticat ion- oriented reading, while Ibn	The specific addressee and textual context demonstr ate that	Supports contextual reading	Reconstructs the contextual distinction through <i>ma'na- cum-maghza</i> rather than merely comparing

		Kathīr gives greater attention to contextual differences concerning the Prophet's wives.	the command cannot automatically be universalized as physical confinement of all women.		exegetical positions.
4	Abid al-Jabiri hermeneutical study (2023)	Women may participate in the public sphere while maintaining domestic responsibilities and Islamic ethical boundaries .	The public-domestic binary should not become the primary interpretive framework; the key issue is ethical agency.	Modifies	Introduces ethical agency as a conceptual bridge between historical meaning and contemporary gender relations.
5	Study on women's careers and Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 (2022/2025)	The verse does not constitute an absolute prohibition against women working outside the home.	The central issue is not merely whether women may work outside the home, but what ethical principles should govern their social participation.	Supports & reconstructs	Moves the discourse from permission to ethical responsibility and agency .
6	Study of <i>tabarruj</i> using <i>ma'na-cum-maghza</i> (2021)	The verse contains historical and contemporary	The ethical significance of the verse extends	Extends	Expands <i>ma'na-cum-maghza</i> from the ethics of appearance to the wider question of

		significance related to women's dignity, safety, and ethical appearance.	beyond appearance to women's broader participation as responsible moral subjects.		women's social agency.
7	Contemporary <i>ma'na-cum-maghza</i> studies on gender justice (2025–2026)	The method can reconstruct Qur'anic meanings toward gender justice, moral agency, and contemporary ethical concerns.	Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 can be reconstructed toward gender justice without eliminating the verse's normative ethical dimensions.	Supports & applies	Applies the gender-justice trajectory of <i>ma'na-cum-maghza</i> specifically to the problem of women's domestication.
8	Literalist/domestication-oriented interpretations	<i>Waqarna fi buyūtikunna</i> is treated as a general command requiring women to remain in domestic spaces.	Domestic residence represents a historical form of the command rather than its complete and universal <i>maghza</i> .	Challenges/subjects	Establishes the distinction between historical form and enduring ethical significance .

This study theoretically contributes to contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics by reformulating the interpretation of Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 from a paradigm of spatial domestication to ethical agency. While previous studies have largely established that the verse does not constitute an absolute prohibition on women's public participation, this research demonstrates that the more fundamental interpretive issue lies in the tendency to equate the historical form of *waqarna fi buyūtikunna* with its universal and timeless meaning. Through the *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach, the study distinguishes between the historical form of the command and its enduring ethical significance, showing that domesticity is not necessarily the ultimate *maghza* of the verse. Instead, the historically grounded message concerns dignity, propriety, moral integrity, and responsibility. When

reconstructed into the contemporary context, these values generate the principle of ethical agency, whereby women are recognized as morally responsible subjects who may participate in public life without abandoning the ethical orientation of the Qur'anic message. Thus, the study supports previous scholarship that challenges absolute domestication, but simultaneously modifies it by shifting the analytical focus from women's "permission" to enter the public sphere toward the Qur'anic ethical conditions of their agency. This constitutes the study's principal novelty: Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 is not reconstructed merely as a theological justification for women's public participation, but as an ethical framework that transforms the meaning of domestication into dignity-based and morally responsible agency, providing a Qur'anic foundation for gender justice without erasing domestic responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Q.S. Al-Ahzab 33 should not be interpreted solely as a theological basis for women's domestication. Through the *ma'na-cum-maghza* approach, the analysis demonstrates that *waqarna fī buyūtikunna* is historically situated within the specific social and moral context of the Prophet's wives and therefore cannot be automatically universalized as a permanent restriction on women's mobility. The historical meaning of the verse is closely connected to dignity, propriety, moral integrity, and responsible conduct, while domestic residence represents one historical form through which these values were articulated.

The reconstruction of its dynamic significance shows that the Qur'anic ethical message remains relevant to contemporary Muslim women without requiring the literal reproduction of its historical spatial form. Women's participation in education, employment, leadership, social activities, and public life can therefore be understood within the ethical framework of dignity and responsibility emphasized by the verse. In this sense, the study supports previous research that challenges absolute domestication but goes beyond studies that merely establish women's right to enter the public sphere. The central contribution of this research is the shift from the question of permission to participate toward the question of ethical agency.

The study consequently proposes ethical agency beyond domestication as its principal conceptual contribution. This perspective recognizes women as moral subjects who possess social agency while remaining accountable to Qur'anic ethical principles. Gender justice, therefore, does not require the elimination of domestic responsibility, but prevents historically specific domestic arrangements from becoming universal restrictions on women's agency. The study contributes to contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics by demonstrating how *ma'na-cum-maghza* can mediate between textual normativity and changing social realities through the distinction between historical form and enduring ethical significance.

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data interpretation, and manuscript preparation. Their support and contributions were instrumental in completing this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Muhammadun Nurul Haq contributed to the conceptualization of the study, development of the research framework, methodology, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript preparation. Ahmad Lubaid contributed to data collection, literature review, data organization, and interpretation of the research findings. Aisha Chidinma Adebayo contributed to the development of the theoretical framework, analysis and interpretation of data, and critical revision of the manuscript. Abdulaziz Kamilov contributed to data collection, documentation, data analysis, manuscript review, and editing. All authors contributed to the discussion and interpretation of the findings, critically reviewed the manuscript, approved the final version, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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