

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

An overall summary of the study is presented in this chapter. The main goal of the current study is to compare the methodology of Hamka in Tafsir al-Azhar and M. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir al-Misbah regarding the interpretation of plants in the Quran. Therefore, some conclusions have been made based on the results of the study as well as a few recommendations for further research in the future.

5.2 Summary

This study has found that there are various terms in the Quran that mean plants or are related to plants. A total of 165 terms have been identified based on the classification of plants studied which are specific plant names, unspecified plant names, and plant parts. The greatest number of terms obtained are the date palm, tree, and fruit from each group respectively.

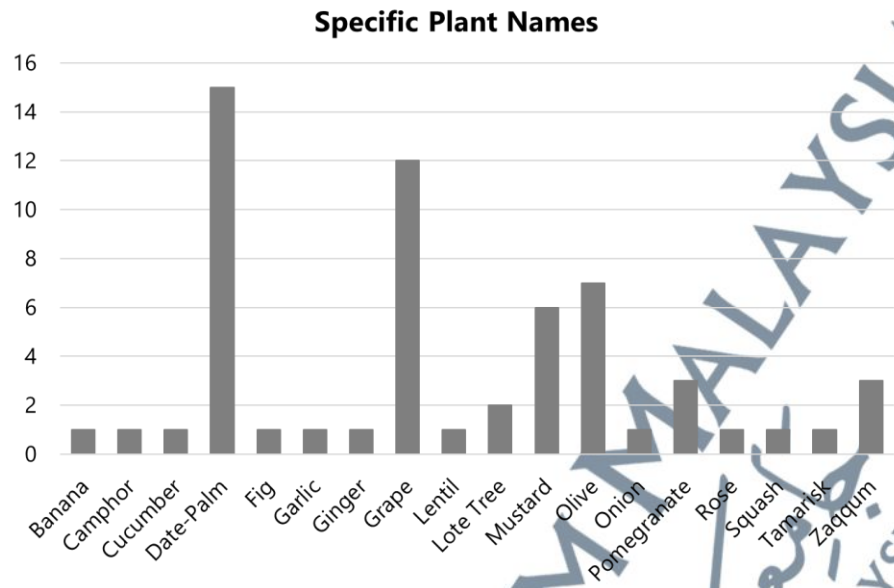


Figure 5. 1: Specific Plant Names

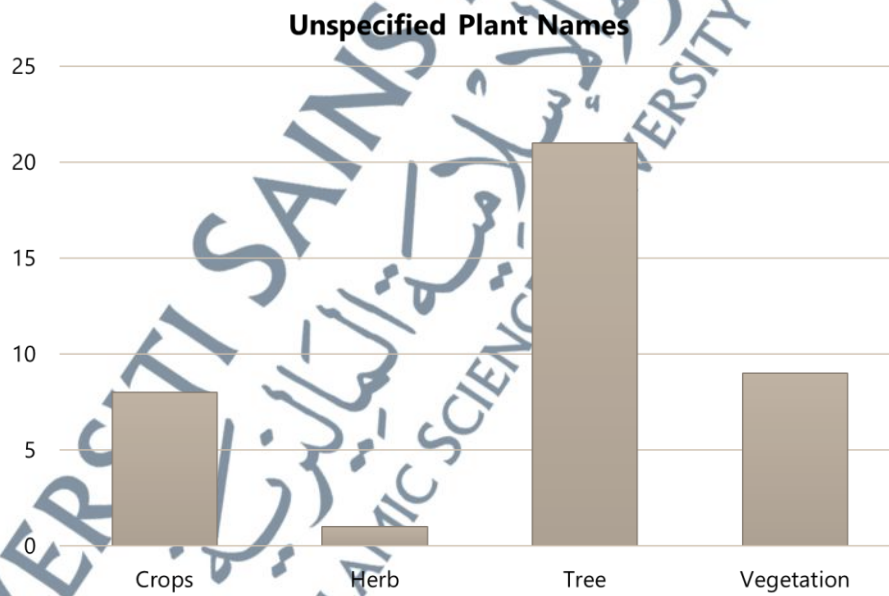


Figure 5. 2: Unspecified Plant Names

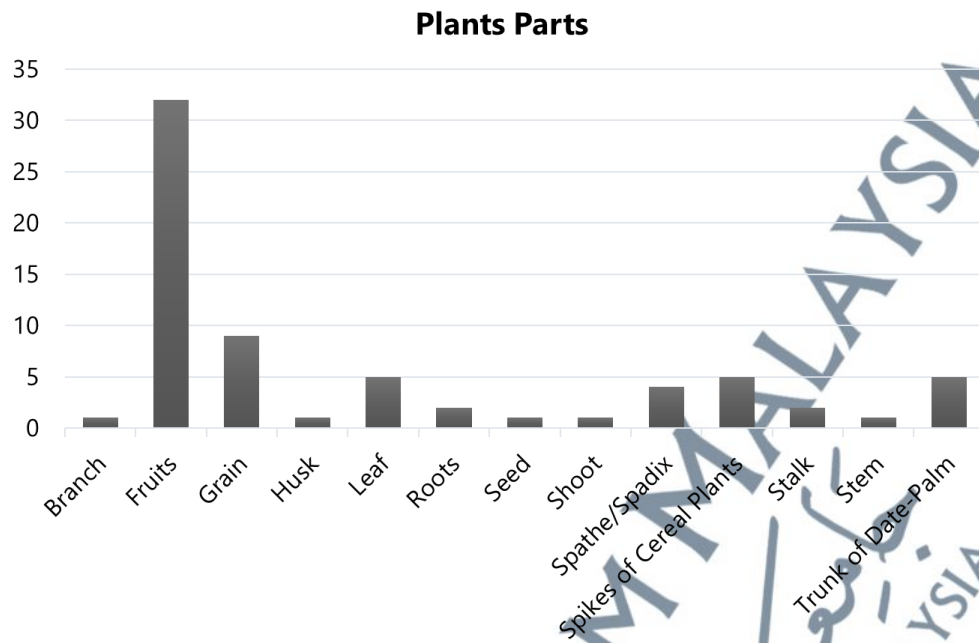


Figure 5. 3: Plant Parts

The specific plant names are then categorised into the holy plant, aromatic plant, nutritious plant, and fine particles. The results show that the nutritious plant category consists of the highest number of plants figured than the rest.

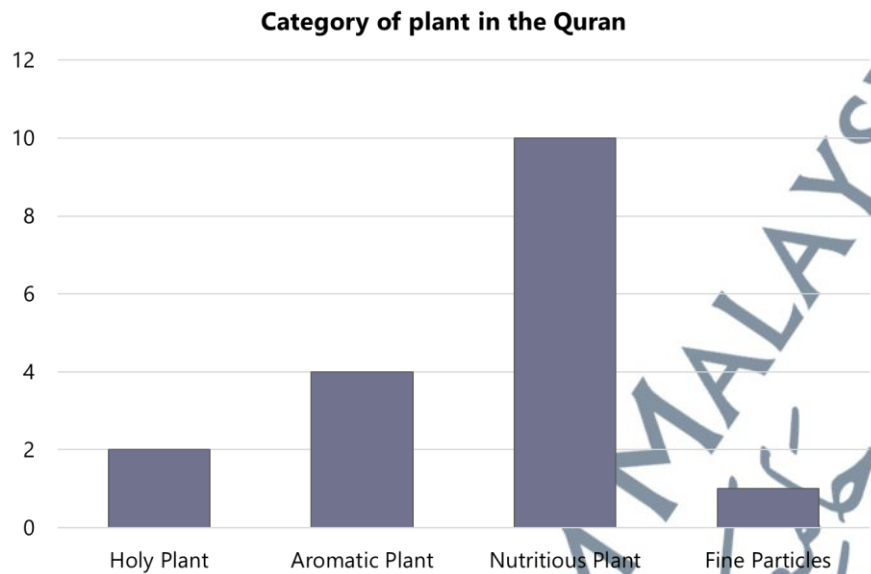


Figure 5. 4: Plant Categories

In discussing the methodology of Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab in interpreting the plants, it has been concluded that the plants mentioned in the Quran revolve around five different themes such as the punishments of Allah, the power of Allah, the parables in the Quran, the stories of prophets and the past events, as well as the favours of Allah. Generally, the most obvious finding to emerge from this study on those themes is that both Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab associate the plants with the omnipotence of Allah in their whole interpretation. This is because Allah is the creator of the universe. Indeed, He wants all mankind to worship Him by studying and understanding the miracles of His creation.

This study has identified nine methods that have been constructed by Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab in their interpretation. The first six methods are the similarities discovered that are used by both authors, which are applying socio-cultural-based explanation, historical narratives, describing the characteristics of plants, referencing

other Quranic verses, stating the scholars' opinions, and clarifying the benefits of the plants. Meanwhile, the other three methods which are explaining the plants based on the Arabic linguistics, citing the scientific fact from Tafsir al-Muntakhab, and referencing hadith are only adopted by M. Quraish Shihab which indicates the differences between both scholars. However, some significant differences still occur in their ways of interpretation even though they use similar methods:

5.2.1 Socio-Cultural Based Explanation

a) The plant terms in the Quran consist of general and specific meanings. The meanings can be varied. Hamka provided many examples of plants that are easily found in his local community and around Southeast Asia. Since he was an Indonesian and wrote the Malay-language Quranic interpretation that focuses on the people in the Malay world, he also associated some activities and culture of the community with the plant interpretation. Occasionally, he brought forth the socio-culture of the Middle East and African countries depending on the context of the verses. However, Hamka has wrongly applied the socio-cultural explanation to verse 17 of surah al-Insān in his interpretation by mentioning the new tradition of Arab which has not coincided with Arab culture when the Quran was revealed.

b) The employment of the socio-culture method by M. Quraish Shihab is not as frequent as Hamka. He tended to interpret the native plants in the Middle East by this method as he believed that the preference of God mentioning fruits in the region is closely related to the living culture of the Arabs.

5.2.2 Historical Narratives

- a) Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab explained certain plants based on the historical narratives concerning the historical events in Islam in relation to the punishments, parables, prophets, past events, and Islamic laws.

5.2.3 Describing the Characteristics of Plants

- a) Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab portrayed the characteristics of plants to facilitate the readers in understanding the context discussed. In addition, it is also used to emphasise the difference between plants in heaven and on earth. This serves as clarification that everything in heaven has nothing similar to anything on earth that is known by man even if it is called by the same name.

5.2.4 Referencing Other Quranic Verses

- a) Both authors refer to other Quranic verses as one of the important methods for their interpretation either as an explanation, affirmation, direct interpretation, or evidence for their commentary. Despite this, the rational-based interpretation approach is more dominant than the interpretation of the Quran with the Quran.

5.2.5 Stating the Scholars' Opinions

- a) When discussing the opinions of scholars, Hamka rarely mentioned their names except for the views of Quthrub, Qatadah, and a few Indonesian scholars.

- b) M. Quraish Shihab oftentimes drew on the views of al-Biqa'i, Ibn Ashur, Sayyid Qutb, and Fakhruddin al-Razi in his commentary. Surprisingly, he also accepted the opinion of Tabatabaei, a Shiite scholar. His action could cause controversy and doubt among the Muslims since many Shiite opinions are clearly against the Quran and hadiths. Sometimes, he only discussed the views of some scholars without stating their names specifically.
- c) In discussing the differences regarding the opinion of the scholars, Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab tended to be assertive in standing on their viewpoint if there was any contradiction in the disputation.

5.2.6 Explaining the Benefits of the Plants

- a) Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab explained the benefits of certain plants for mankind, nature, and the relationship between mankind and nature concisely as a clearer description of their interpretation.

Next, back to the differences found regarding the methodology between both authors in this study, M. Quraish Shihab practiced the elaboration of plant terms based on the perspective of Arabic linguistics with various examples and descriptions from scholars. However, he applied this method only on several terms. Furthermore, M. Quraish Shihab also interpreted the plant term by referencing hadith as an explanation of the verse and proof for the statement. He expressed the matn (text) by translation only.

Although there are flaws in it in terms of the writing of hadith, it does not diminish its worth as a Malay Quranic interpretation that has provided the in-depth commentary in a more understandable way. Moreover, M. Quraish Shihab has been constantly citing the scientific fact from Tafsir al-Muntakhab. It is the main reference for him in order to state the factual information about plants. In this issue, M. Quraish Shihab clearly stated the acquired source regarding science and this matter is a unique feature of his in Tafsir al-Misbah from the aspect of explaining the scientific facts.

5.3 Recommendation

The findings of this research provide insights that plants could be studied from various aspects due to their great importance in human life. The study of the plants mentioned in the Quran is a study that has great potential to be developed in the future. There are several issues related to plants that are not discussed in this study. Some recommendations for the benefit of knowledge are as follows:

- i. Future researchers should conduct more comprehensive studies on the comparison of the plant interpretation in Quranic commentaries by Malay scholars in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia either by verses, chapters, or the complete 30 juz of the Quran. Such studies are still limited in the Malay Archipelago.
- ii. A focused study on the concept of garden or landscape through the depiction of plants in heaven as mentioned in the Quran and its comparison with traditional Malay landscape should be done. This can enhance the

empowerment of knowledge in the fields of botany and other related fields in Malaysia.

- iii. Malaysia is rich in a variety of plants and its culture. Further studies to compare the use of plants in the Quran and Sunnah in the Malay tradition should be carried out to assess the impact of assimilation of Malay culture and Islam from a new perspective.
- iv. Study on the appropriateness or neediness to refer to the views of Shiite scholars in the interpretation of the Quran because it could confuse the public who do not understand the discipline of Quranic sciences in depth.
- v. In achieving Malaysia's prosperity, this research shows that the Quran also emphasizes the importance of plants to agricultural activities and the well-being of human life. Year by year, Malaysia's reliance on agricultural imports has grown gradually resulting in high food bills (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DoSM], 2022; Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal, 2021). Therefore, Malaysia should take advantage of its high potential land for agricultural diversification (Bahagian Perancangan Strategik, 2021; Walker et al., 2015) instead of concentrating on certain industrial crops like oil palm, rubber, and cocoa (Bakar, 2009). There are a lot of opportunities for Malaysians to develop the cultivation of tropical crops on a greater scale by adopting modern technology which would eventually boost the national economic growth (DoSM, 2022). At the same time, this effort would create job opportunities for youths by becoming modern farmers and thus, could lessen the rate of unemployment, especially among the fresh graduates. As a result,

the large production of food crops in the country would secure its dependency on imported food.

Hopefully, this study is beneficial to all Muslims, especially to the people in the Malay world. Besides, this study is to glorify the Quran as the primary guidance in Islam. The authorities should make various efforts in order to ensure that the works of tafsir do not be disregarded without being disseminated, especially to the Muslim community.

