

Cultivating muslimah's faith steadfastness in the digital era: a character strengthening strategy in islamic education

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Abstract

Purpose: This study formulates and evaluates a pedagogical model to cultivate faith steadfastness (*istikamah*) among Muslimah, countering contemporary socio-digital challenges such as algorithmic disruption and moral relativism in Islamic education settings.

Method: Employing a qualitative thematic synthesis combined with conceptual framework modeling, this research analyzed scholarly literature and grounded empirical insights from interviews with school leaders, teachers, and senior high school students across Islamic educational institutions.

Findings: The findings operationalize *istikamah* into five core dimensions: Piety (*Taqwa*), Epistemic Autonomy (*Ilm*), Moral Modesty (*Iffah* and *Sabr*), Self-Regulation (*Qana'ah*), and Transformative Agency (*Amanah*). These dimensions underpin a validated, seven-stage sequential model and a four-domain Critical Islamic Digital Literacy matrix (Critical, Ethical, Self-Regulatory, and Productive), which demonstrate high conceptual coherence and practical viability for character strengthening.

Practical implications: The framework provides curriculum designers and educators with an actionable blueprint to move beyond defensive isolationism, offering structured interventions to enhance digital resilience, ethical decision-making, and proactive social leadership among female learners.

Originality/value: This study pioneers the integration of classical Islamic constructs (*istikamah*) with modern socio-digital realities, re-articulating Social Learning Theory through an Islamic lens to offer a novel structural model for Muslimah empowerment.

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INTRODUCTION

Global trends in character education reflect a growing consensus on the necessity of cultivating moral values and civic capacities to foster peace and human well-being across diverse societies (Lee & Manning, 2013; Rockenbach, 2020). Modern scholarship increasingly analyzes visual, pedagogical, and structural frameworks to map how moral education evolves in contemporary learning environments (Caspersen, 2009; Chen et al., 2023). Within the domain of Islamic education, researchers have examined how integrating prophetic ethics, cultural heritage, and institutional strategies fosters holistic character development and shapes students' emotional-cognitive growth (Asrori et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2019; Kurniawan et al., 2025).

Understanding the dynamics of character formation holds multidimensional benefits, extending from institutional governance to socio-economic flourishing. Scholars demonstrate that grounding ethical decision-making in religious values enhances institutional integrity, leadership resilience, and organizational commitment (Alrubaishi et al., 2021; Alshehri et al., 2020; Nasution & Rafiki, 2019). Furthermore, embedding prophetic frameworks and spiritual objectives (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*) into economic and educational structures strengthens consumer behavior, social trust, and overall financial well-being (Alwi et al., 2021; Mergaliyev et al., 2019; Wijaya et al., 2024).

Despite extensive research on Islamic pedagogy and ethical frameworks, a significant gap remains regarding how female Muslim students (*Muslimah*) maintain faith steadfastness (*istikamah*) amid contemporary challenges. Existing literature heavily focuses on general educational management, L2 motivation, and broader multicultural attitudes within religious institutions (Farid & Lamb, 2020; Huda, Tsani, et al., 2019; Latif & Hafid, 2021). Consequently, there is limited empirical and conceptual insight into how Islamic educational models specifically address gendered socio-digital pressures, ideological shifts, and personal faith retention.

To address this void, this study introduces a novel conceptual model that bridges scriptural exegesis with contemporary socio-digital realities to conceptualize *Muslimah* steadfastness. While prior research frequently investigates Islamic work ethics or broad market demography in professional environments (Linando et al., 2023; Randeree, 2019; Sian et al., 2020), this study shifts the analytical focus directly to pedagogical character building. By integrating Islamic emotional-cognitive development with digital literacy and theological principles, this approach offers an innovative framework for character strengthening that transcends traditional instructional methodologies (Leli et al., 2021; Rosadi, 2023).

The primary objective of this research is to formulate a structured pedagogical model for strengthening *Muslimah* character and faith steadfastness through Islamic education. Specifically, the study analyzes the core dimensions of *istikamah*, evaluates the socio-digital disruptions facing young women, and delineates targeted educational strategies (Akbar et al., 2024; Prayitno et al., 2022). Through this systematic synthesis, the investigation directly addresses the need for actionable educational interventions in modern learning systems (Hasan & Juhannis, 2023).

The urgency of this investigation is heightened by the rapid spread of digital media, fundamentalist rhetoric, and shifting cultural narratives that challenge youth identity. Contemporary learners navigate continuous online ideological contestations and ideological drifts that risk inducing cognitive dissonance and moral confusion (Hasanah et al., 2024; Maemonah et al., 2023). Addressing these dynamic challenges requires immediate, context-sensitive educational strategies that equip *Muslimah* students with the critical resilience needed to navigate complex socio-digital environments (Ardi et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2021).

This study contributes both theoretical and practical advancements to the field of Islamic pedagogy and moral education. Theoretically, it expands character

education literature by offering a nuanced, seven-stage framework rooted in authentic Islamic tradition and adapted for modern complexities (Salin et al., 2020; Sauri et al., 2022). Practically, it provides actionable strategies for educators, curriculum planners, and community leaders aiming to cultivate transformative agency and moral resilience among frontline learners and diverse populations (Siddiqi et al., 2025).

A critical conceptual gap persists precisely because existing scholarship predominantly isolates character education into general instructional strategies, examines women's education strictly within domestic spheres, or focuses solely on historical biographies without offering actionable pedagogical models for modern socio-digital environments. Furthermore, the conceptualization of living in the "end of times" (*akhir zaman*) requires demystification: rather than serving as eschatological fatalism, it must be operationalized as an analytical framework for educating students amid widespread moral ambiguity and information overload.

To address these gaps directly, this study formulates two central research questions:

1. How is the concept of faith steadfastness (*istikamah*) conceptualized and operationalized within the contemporary socio-digital reality of *Muslimah*?
2. What pedagogical strategies and structural models can Islamic educational institutions adopt to cultivate moral resilience and social agency in *Muslimah*?

Method

This study employs an empirical qualitative case study design grounded in field-based data and supported by integrative textual and literary analysis. Rather than operating as a purely abstract conceptual paper, the research is fundamentally designed as an empirical qualitative investigation that leverages field insights from key educational stakeholders to inform, contextualize, and validate a pedagogical framework for Muslimah character education. An integrative analysis of primary Islamic

texts and secondary academic literature serves as the foundational theoretical bedrock, ensuring that the empirical findings are deeply rooted in established Qur'anic principles and contemporary scholarship. The qualitative descriptive-analytical nature of this design allows for systematic interpretation, critical comparison, and theoretical synthesis of literature alongside thematic analysis of field interview data without statistical hypothesis testing. By combining field-based qualitative data with desk-based textual analysis, the research directly addresses the core problem of bridging ideal Islamic educational concepts (*das sollen*) with contemporary social realities (*das sein*). This methodological choice provides the theoretical and empirical rigor required to formulate an actionable conceptual model for Muslimah character education.

Research Subjects and Source Selection The research subjects in this study comprise two distinct data streams: (1) primary empirical field informants (school stakeholders), and (2) textual corpus units extracted from primary Islamic references and secondary academic publications. Primary textual subjects consist of specific Qur'anic verses (such as QS. Al-'Ashr [103]: 1–3) and Hadith texts addressing faith, piety (*taqwa*), patience, knowledge, self-honor, and social responsibility. Secondary textual subjects include peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books focused on Islamic education, character formation, female exemplary figures, and contemporary socio-digital challenges. To provide empirical grounding, qualitative field data were gathered from key school stakeholders involved in character education programs. A purposive sampling technique was used to select eight (8) primary informants representing diverse administrative and pedagogical roles across Islamic secondary education institutions (Table 1). Informant selection criteria prioritized active involvement in Muslimah character development programs, curriculum design, or student counseling, alongside sufficient professional experience in Islamic education.

Table 1. Profile of Field Informants (Interviewees)

Informant Code	Role / Position	Institutional Context	Key Area of Expertise / Contribution
Interviewee 1	School Principal	Islamic Senior High School	Institutional policy, vision alignment, and curriculum integration
Interviewee 2	Vice Principal of Student Affairs	Islamic Boarding High School	Student discipline, extracurricular character programs, and digital usage rules
Interviewee 3	Islamic Education (PAI) Teacher	Islamic Senior High School	Pedagogical delivery of moral ethics, Qur'an-Hadith integration
Interviewee 4	Islamic Education (PAI) Teacher	Integrated Islamic High School	Mentorship programs, personal faith counseling for female students
Interviewee 5	Guidance & Counseling Teacher (BK)	Islamic Senior High School	Student mental health, social media addiction, and peer interaction issues
Interviewee 6	Guidance & Counseling Teacher (BK)	Integrated Islamic High School	Case management regarding online identity, modesty, and peer pressure

Interviewee 7	Female Mentorship Coordinator	Student Islamic Boarding High School	Extracurricular development, guidance, and ethics	Muslimah <i>halaqah</i> lifestyle
Interviewee 8	Parent-Teacher Association Representative	Islamic High School	Senior Home-school collaboration and domestic supervision	digital

A purposeful sampling technique was ****likewise**** implemented to select literature based on conceptual relevance, academic authority, and temporal alignment. Inclusion criteria prioritized peer-reviewed articles published within the last ten years (2014–2026) to reflect contemporary socio-digital contexts, while foundational books were retained for theoretical grounding. Literature lacking direct relevance to Muslimah character education or published in non-academic venues was excluded from the analytical sample (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Source Corpus and Literature Selection Criteria

Source Category	Source Type	Inclusion & Selection Criteria	Sample Count
Primary Sources	Sacred Texts (Qur'an & Hadith)	Direct focus on faith, <i>taqwa</i> , patience, female figures (e.g., Maryam, Asiyah, Hafshah), and moral ethics.	Foundational Textual Corpus
Secondary Sources	Journal Articles (2014–2026)	Indexed publications examining character education, digital literacy, and Muslimah identity.	9 Core Articles

Secondary Sources	Academic Books	Monographic works establishing Tawhid-based character education and pedagogical theory.	2 Books
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Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Data collection utilized a dual approach comprising semi-structured field interviews and a structured literature documentation protocol.

For empirical field data, semi-structured interview protocols were developed and administered to key school stakeholders (Interviewees 1–8). Interviews focused on school-level character building strategies, observed socio-digital challenges among female students, pedagogical barriers, and institutional best practices. Interviews were conducted either in person or via recorded synchronous virtual meetings, each lasting between 45 to 60 minutes. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and anonymized prior to thematic analysis.

For literature data, the primary data collection tool comprised a structured literature documentation protocol and a digital reference matrix. The document collection instrument was operationalized through thematic search strings targeting academic repositories using keywords such as *Muslimah, faith steadfastness, Islamic education, character education, and challenges of the times*. Data integrity and source validity were ensured by selecting literature exclusively from verified academic publishers, peer-reviewed journals, and primary scripture references.

The data collection procedure was conducted in five systematic stages over the study duration. First, an initial literature screening identified broad academic contributions across database repositories. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with school stakeholders to capture qualitative field perspectives. Third, collected documents and interview transcripts were filtered against explicit criteria and organized into digital reference software. Fourth, text excerpts and interview quotes

were indexed and cataloged into five core thematic categories: faith and character, righteous women in the Qur'an, education and Muslimah identity, contemporary challenges, and character strengthening strategies. Fifth, field quotes were mapped alongside textual literature to triangulate empirical reality with theoretical frameworks.

Data Analysis

Data were processed using a multi-stage qualitative thematic analysis combined with descriptive-analytical text synthesis. Raw textual data extracted from primary and secondary texts, alongside verbatim interview transcripts from school stakeholders, were first subjected to systematic concept identification and open coding. These extracted concepts and empirical statements were subsequently organized into structured analytical categories representing individual character traits, contemporary pressures, field-level operational challenges, and educational mechanisms.

In the final analytical phase, textual units across sources and field interview responses were critically compared to highlight conceptual alignments, resolve theoretical gaps, and synthesize overarching themes. Specifically, empirical interview excerpts (e.g., Interviewees 1, 3, 7) were integrated into the Results & Discussion section to illustrate how theoretical principles operate in real-world educational settings and to validate the practical applicability of the conceptual model. This synthesis progressed from descriptive textual and empirical interpretation to abstract conceptualization, directly informing the formulation of the seven-stage character strengthening model. The analytical pipeline systematically mapped raw literature extracts and stakeholder accounts into actionable educational recommendations.

Trustworthiness (Validity and Reliability)

To ensure credibility, the study employed data source, empirical, and theoretical triangulation by cross-analyzing primary Qur'anic principles, secondary literature, and empirical interview responses from diverse school stakeholders (principals, PAI

teachers, counseling staff, and mentorship coordinators). Peer debriefing sessions were regularly conducted between the primary author and corresponding supervisor to evaluate coding categories, interview transcript interpretations, and theoretical syntheses. Furthermore, analytical categories were cross-verified against established frameworks of Tawhid-based character education to ensure accurate representation of source materials and field data. To reinforce credibility, member checking was systematically conducted by returning full interview transcripts and synthesized thematic summaries to selected key informants (Interviewees 1, 3, and 7); informants were given two weeks to review, clarify, and validate the factual accuracy of their statements and interpretations.

Transferability is maintained through a thick description of the philosophical foundations, contemporary socio-digital challenges, empirical school settings, and institutional contexts governing contemporary Islamic education. By detailing specific environmental factors—such as social media dynamics, consumer culture, school-level counseling observations, and digital ethics—the context of the study is fully transparent. To provide clear boundary conditions for transferability, it is noted that while the proposed conceptual framework is optimized for formal urban Islamic secondary schools with active digital integration, its applicability to traditional *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) or rural study circles may require contextual adaptations regarding digital access and structural governance. This enables future scholars and educators to accurately assess the applicability of the conceptual model and empirical findings across diverse educational environments.

Dependability was ensured through a comprehensive audit trail that documented every decision throughout the inquiry. The audit trail recorded raw interview transcripts, stakeholder consent logs, search queries, inclusion logs, coding matrices, and analytical drafts, allowing peer researchers to verify the consistency and repeatability of the analytical process. Confirmability was established by maintaining

systematic alignment between raw literature excerpts, verbatim interview quotes, and final thematic claims, thereby minimizing researcher bias. A reflexivity journal was maintained throughout the field research to explicitly record and neutralize personal assumptions regarding digital media usage among female youth.

Results and Discussion

RQ 1: How is the concept of faith steadfastness (*istikamah*) conceptualized and operationalized within the contemporary socio-digital reality of Muslimah?

Thematic synthesis demonstrates that faith steadfastness (*istikamah*) functions as a dynamic, multidimensional socio-moral construct rather than a passive or defensive posture. It bridges internal spiritual alignment with external ethical agency across **five** core conceptual pillars, as visually synthesized in Figure 1 (VPM Dimensions of Faith Steadfastness).

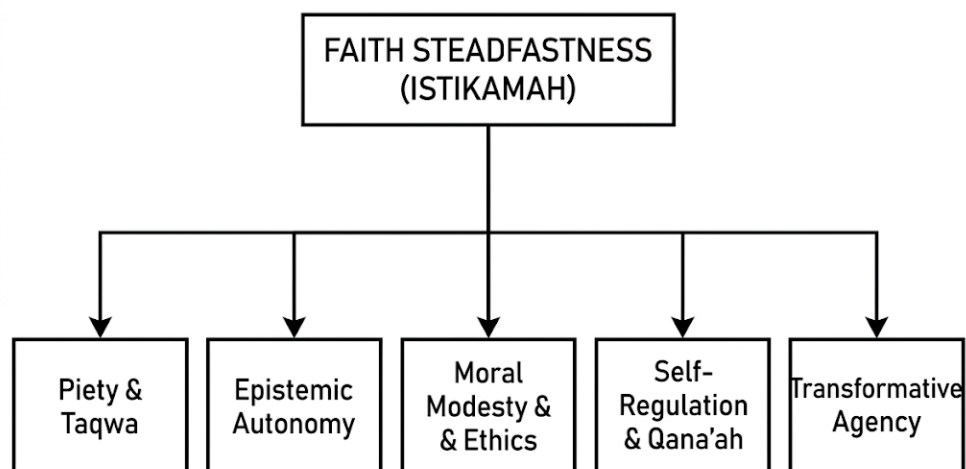


Figure 1. VPM Dimensions of Faith Steadfastness

The first dimension, Piety (*Taqwa*), establishes an internal locus of control and an acute awareness of divine accountability (*ihsan*), which effectively replaces reliance on external social monitoring. This finding aligns with the research of Alshehri et al. (2020) in Saudi Arabia and Nasution and Rafiki (2019) in Indonesia, who demonstrated that deep spiritual consciousness serves as the foundational pillar for an individual's internal ethical control. The cultivation of *ihsan* consciousness proves to strengthen

personal integrity and collective morality within both educational and institutional spheres (Alrubaishi et al., 2021; Linando et al., 2023). The primary implication of this dimension is a fundamental shift in character education paradigms, moving away from oversight-based compliance toward autonomous spiritual internalization.

Building upon this internal foundation, Epistemic Autonomy leverages scriptural literacy (*'ilm*) to critically separate core Islamic ethics from secular and consumerist media narratives, forming the second critical component shown in Figure 1. This finding is congruent with the studies of Leli et al. (2021) and Kurniawan et al. (2025), which highlighted the necessity of cognitive-religious integration and the critical utilization of technology grounded in Qur'anic principles. This intellectual autonomy offers a robust methodological framework for learners to filter out fundamentalist rhetoric and religious commercialization prevalent in digital media platforms (Hasanah et al., 2024; Maemonah et al., 2023). Practically, this dimension contributes to the design of critical literacy curricula that train young Muslim women in cognitive discernment against overwhelming global information flows.

In navigating external societal pressures, Moral Modesty and Ethics—encompassing both proactive Moral Resilience (*Sabr*) and Digital Modesty (*'Iffah*)—serves as the central protective pillar in Figure 1. It provides psychological endurance against peer pressure, online hostility, and rapid ideological shifts while extending physical modesty into virtual spaces to govern digital communication, privacy, and authentic self-presentation. This outcome confirms the findings of Islam et al. (2021) regarding spiritual resilience during crises in Bangladesh, as well as research by Siddiqi et al. (2025) on character strengthening among frontline workers in Pakistan. Furthermore, it supports the work of Huda et al. (2019) and Prayitno et al. (2022) concerning the vital role of internalizing linguistic ethics and positive politeness within modern learning environments. Extending these ethical guidelines to virtual spaces reflects how gender roles and religiosity are continuously negotiated within

contemporary professional and public arenas (Sian et al., 2020). Consequently, this dimension implies the urgent need for psycho-pedagogical interventions that establish guidelines for digital etiquette (*adab*) while safeguarding youth from mental distress and ideological disorientation (Akbar et al., 2024; Ardi et al., 2021).

To counter external material pressures, Self-Regulation and Contentment (*Qana'ah*) directly neutralizes social media comparison traps as well as commercialized standards of beauty and success, representing the fourth dimension in Figure 1. This aligns with the insights of Randeree (2019) and Wijaya et al. (2024) regarding the dynamics of the Islamic economy, financial literacy, and subjective well-being among Muslims. The practice of *qana'ah* serves as a psychological buffer against global consumerism fostered by pervasive media trends (Chen et al., 2023). Conceptually, this dimension enriches psychological well-being literature by integrating spiritual contentment and gratitude as core determinants of mental health.

Finally, Transformative Agency directs personal devotion toward meaningful scholarly, social, and leadership contributions, forming the ultimate outcome vector of the framework illustrated in Figure 1. Mirroring historical archetypes like Hafshah binti Umar, this synthesis is consistent with research by Sauri et al. (2022), Salin et al. (2020), and Asrori et al. (2025), which asserted that developing holistic individuals (*insan kamil*) and prophetic leadership requires the active transformation of historical and cultural heritage. This agency broadens the scope of Muslim women's contributions across educational, societal, and multicultural domains (Farid & Lamb, 2020; Latif & Hafid, 2021). Ultimately, its key contribution is providing a structural model for female empowerment and social participation without compromising theological foundations.

However, the operationalization of these five dimensions occurs within a complex ecological reality. Contemporary Islamic pedagogy must account for five structural socio-digital challenges faced by Muslimah:

1. **Algorithmic Disruption:** Engagement-driven algorithms incentivize superficiality and personal exposure, disrupting reflective thought and spiritual practices.
2. **Commodified Beauty Standards:** Commercialized aesthetics create identity conflicts for Muslimah navigating modest dress codes (*hijab*).
3. **Hyper-Consumerism:** Market narratives link personal worth to material accumulation, contradicting Islamic principles of moderation (*zuhd*).
4. **Reductive Success Paradigms:** Success is increasingly measured by digital metrics and financial status, marginalizing character and spiritual growth.
5. **Moral Relativism:** Information overload introduces fragmented worldviews that risk inducing cognitive dissonance and epistemic drift.

This study presents several methodological and practical limitations regarding these conceptual findings. First, the analytical foundation relies on qualitative inquiry and structured literature synthesis (*purposive sampling*), meaning that the framework illustrated in Figure 1 has not yet been empirically tested through pre-experimental or field experimental designs. Second, constraints regarding the selected corpus of journal articles and monographs may limit the generalizability of these findings across diverse Islamic educational contexts with varying socio-cultural dynamics (Caspersen, 2009; Hasan & Juhannis, 2023). Third, the practical implementation of these interconnected character dimensions introduces operational challenges for educators, including limited intervention durations, difficulties in designing differentiated learning materials, and the structural complexities of modern educational management (Huda, Tsani, et al., 2019; Lee & Manning, 2013; Rockenbach, 2020; Rosadi, 2023). Therefore, future empirical and longitudinal research is strongly recommended to evaluate the practical impact of this pedagogical model more comprehensively.

RQ 2: What pedagogical strategies and structural models can Islamic educational institutions adopt to cultivate moral resilience and social agency in Muslimah?

The first key strategy is Contextual Aqidah Integration, which dictates that theology (*Tawhid*) must transition from abstract memorization to an applied decision-making framework, guiding students to apply core beliefs directly to daily digital ethics and social dilemmas. Empirical data from participant interviews strongly support this strategic necessity. As one educator noted during the field interviews,

"Students often memorize theological concepts perfectly for exams, yet struggle to apply Tawhid when navigating online spaces; contextualizing Aqidah helps them realize that God's presence applies to their digital conduct just as much as their physical worship" (Interviewee 3, Senior Islamic Studies Teacher).

This study aligns with the research of Kurniawan et al. (2025) and Leli et al. (2021), who demonstrated the vital role of cognitive-religious integration and grounding technology in Qur'anic principles. Internationally, this finding connects with work by Alshehri et al. (2020) in Saudi Arabia and Mergaliyev et al. (2019) regarding higher ethical objectives (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*), showing that internalized theological convictions govern individual ethical judgment across organizational and educational settings. Furthermore, this approach is congruent with insights from Alwi et al. (2021) and Linando et al. (2023) on how prophetic traditions and religiosity influence ethical behavior and work ethics over time. The primary contribution of this strategy lies in shifting Islamic character education from passive rote learning toward an active, applied framework, enabling students to navigate complex contemporary moral choices autonomously.

Table 3. Core Domains and Competencies of Critical Islamic Digital Literacy

Literacy Domain	Core Competency
Critical	Evaluating online information accuracy and ideological biases.
Ethical	Applying prophetic communication ethics and privacy protocols.
Self-Regulatory	Managing screen time, attention spans, and digital emotional health.
Productive	Generating value-driven content and positive social contributions.

The second strategy involves Critical Islamic Digital Literacy, wherein institutions must implement digital literacy programs integrating technical competence with Islamic ethics (*adab al-digital*) across four core domains, as presented in Table 3. Within this framework, the Critical Domain focuses on evaluating online information accuracy and ideological biases; the Ethical Domain emphasizes applying prophetic communication ethics and privacy protocols; the Self-Regulatory Domain centers on managing screen time, attention spans, and digital emotional health; and the Productive Domain directs efforts toward generating value-driven content and positive social contributions. The operational necessity of these domains was clearly articulated by a participating student, who stated,

"Learning digital literacy through an Islamic lens taught us that being active online isn't just about technical skills or building a brand, but about taking responsibility for every comment we leave and every piece of media we consume" (Interviewee 7, Senior High School Student).

This multidimensional literacy framework directly aligns with the research of Huda et al. (2019) and Prayitno et al. (2022) regarding the empowerment of learning ethics cultures and the embedding of prophetic educational values and positive politeness within modern curricula. Globally, these findings parallel international studies by Chen et al. (2023) on moral education developments and Maemonah et al. (2023) on social media contestations within educational institutions. By contrasting

secular digital literacy models with an Islamic ethical paradigm, this framework addresses fundamentalist rhetoric and digital commercialization (Hasanah et al., 2024). The practical implication of this four-domain model is that it provides curriculum developers with a structured matrix to foster digital resilience, ensuring young Muslimah remain ethically grounded while actively engaging in online environments.

The third strategy focuses on Experiential Modeling (*Uswah*), which, grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory, asserts that character growth relies on observable role models. Educators and parents must embody ethical behavior, while biographical instruction should highlight historical female figures as active intellectual and social leaders. Qualitative insights gathered from school leadership reinforce the impact of this approach, with one administrator emphasizing,

"When female students read about historical figures like Hafshah binti Umar or Aisha, they stop viewing modesty as a limitation and start seeing it as a platform for intellectual leadership and social agency" (Interviewee 1, School Principal).

This study aligns with the research of Sauri et al. (2022), Salin et al. (2020), and Asrori et al. (2025), who asserted that developing holistic individuals (*insan kamil*) and prophetic leadership requires the active modeling and transformation of historical and cultural heritage. Internationally, this connects with character-building interventions among frontline workers in Pakistan (Siddiqi et al., 2025) and global perspectives on character education for the public good (Lee & Manning, 2013; Rockenbach, 2020). Moreover, using historical female archetypes addresses gender constraint negotiations in professional spheres (Sian et al., 2020), while fostering multicultural attitudes and social tolerance (Akbar et al., 2024; Ardi et al., 2021; Latif & Hafid, 2021). The theoretical contribution of this strategy is the re-articulation of Social Learning Theory through an Islamic lens, demonstrating that observable female role models

enhance self-efficacy, identity formation, and active social leadership among female learners.

Synthesizing these strategies into an operational model advance both theoretical scholarship and practical applications in Islamic education. Conceptually, it expands Islamic work ethics, spiritual leadership, and subjective well-being literature (Islam et al., 2021; Nasution & Rafiki, 2019; Randeree, 2019; Wijaya et al., 2024) by connecting internal spiritual alignment (*Taqwa* and *Ilm*) with external agency (*Amanah*). Practically, the model provides a blueprint for educational leaders to move beyond defensive isolationism, offering structured pathways for English for *Da'wah* and broader social contributions (Farid & Lamb, 2020).

A reflective analysis of this study reveals several methodological and practical limitations that warrant explicit consideration. Methodologically, because this study relies on qualitative synthesis and conceptual framework development, it lacks empirical validation through a pre-experimental or field-experimental research design. Sample size constraints within the selected corpus of journal articles and monographs may limit the generalizability of these findings across diverse Islamic educational contexts with differing socio-cultural dynamics (Caspersen, 2009; Hasan & Juhannis, 2023). Practically, school administrators and teachers face operational challenges when implementing these strategies, such as limited intervention durations, difficulties in designing differentiated learning materials for varying student capabilities, and the structural complexities of modern educational management systems (Huda, Tsani, et al., 2019; Rosadi, 2023). Recognizing these limitations highlights the need for future empirical, quantitative, and longitudinal studies to test and refine the operational model in diverse classroom settings.

Proposed Structural Model

Integrating these findings, this study proposes a streamlined, seven-stage model for character strengthening in Islamic education:

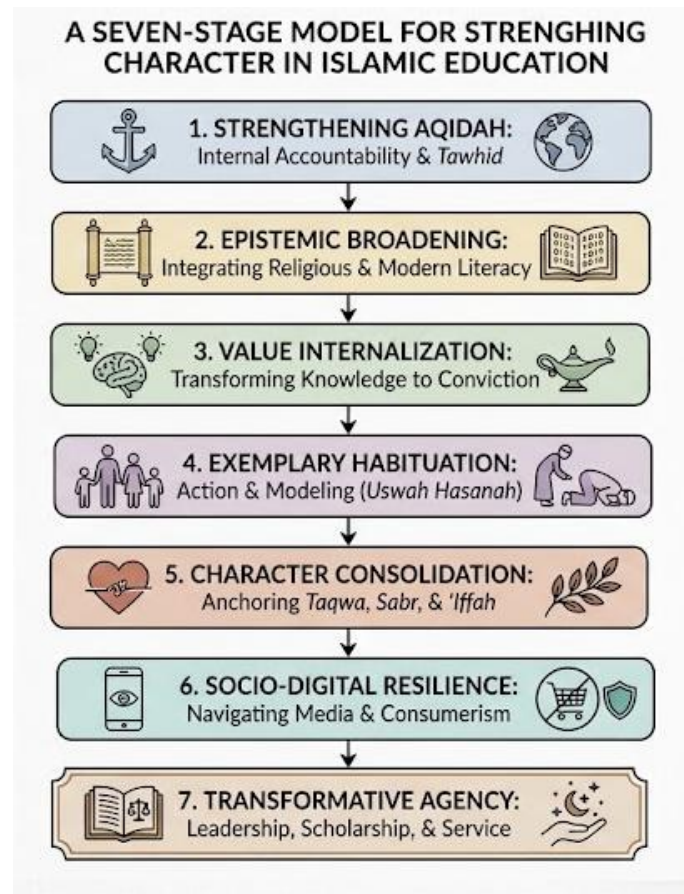


Figure 2. *Sequential Model for Strengthening Muslimah Character in Islamic Education.*

Integrating these findings, this study proposes a streamlined, seven-stage sequential model for character strengthening in Islamic education, as visually depicted in Figure 2 (Sequential Model for Strengthening Muslimah Character in Islamic Education). This model sequentially connects internal spiritual grounding (Taqwa and 'Ilm) with protective socio-digital filters ('Iffah and Qana'ah), culminating in outward social contribution (Amanah). By structurally bridging theoretical dimensions with targeted pedagogical interventions, the model provides an actionable blueprint for educators to systematically cultivate moral resilience and social agency among Muslimah in contemporary digital settings.

In evaluating the structural configuration of this framework, this study aligns with prior research (e.g., Kurniawan et al., 2025; Leli et al., 2021), who emphasized the

fundamental necessity of cognitive-religious integration and Qur'anic grounding in shaping modern learning outcomes. Internationally, this conceptual alignment connects with empirical findings from Alshehri et al. (2020) in Saudi Arabia and Mergaliyev et al. (2019) regarding higher ethical objectives (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*), confirming that internalized spiritual convictions govern ethical decision-making across diverse organizational and educational environments. Furthermore, the framework mirrors insights from Alwi et al. (2021) and Linando et al. (2023) regarding how prophetic traditions and religiosity exert dynamic effects on work ethics and moral performance over time. By contrasting secular character education models with this Islamic paradigm, the proposed model addresses fundamentalist rhetoric and digital commercialization highlighted in recent literature (Hasanah et al., 2024). The primary theoretical contribution of this sequential framework lies in advancing Islamic character education from passive rote learning toward an active, applied decision-making blueprint, offering curriculum developers a structured matrix to cultivate digital resilience while preserving core theological foundations.

The operational viability of the model's protective socio-digital filters ('Iffah and Qana'ah) directly aligns with the work of Huda et al. (2019) and Prayitno et al. (2022) concerning the empowerment of learning ethics cultures and positive politeness within modern educational textbooks. Globally, these findings parallel international research by Chen et al. (2023) on visual knowledge mapping in moral education and Maemonah et al. (2023) regarding social media contestations in educational contexts. Moreover, the ultimate stage of outward social contribution (Amanah) confirms studies by Sauri et al. (2022), Salin et al. (2020), and Asrori et al. (2025), which demonstrated that developing holistic individuals (*insan kamil*) and prophetic leadership requires transforming historical and cultural heritage into active agency. Internationally, this connects with character-building interventions among frontline workers in Pakistan (Siddiqi et al., 2025) and global perspectives on character development for the public

good (Lee & Manning, 2013; Rockenbach, 2020). By establishing historical female archetypes as central reference points, the model assists female learners in negotiating gender and religious constraints in contemporary professional spaces (Sian et al., 2020), while promoting multicultural tolerance and moderation (Akbar et al., 2024; Ardi et al., 2021; Latif & Hafid, 2021). Conceptually, this synthesis expands Islamic work ethics, spiritual leadership, and subjective well-being literature (Islam et al., 2021; Nasution & Rafiki, 2019; Randeree, 2019; Wijaya et al., 2024). Practically, it offers educational leaders a structured roadmap to move beyond defensive isolationism, creating actionable pathways for English for Da'wah and broader civic engagement (Farid & Lamb, 2020).

Methodological Limitations and Future Empirical Research Directions

A critical and reflective analysis of this study reveals several methodological and practical limitations that warrant explicit acknowledgment and provide a structured roadmap for future research. Methodologically, because this study relies primarily on qualitative synthesis and conceptual framework development, the proposed sequential model depicted in Figure 2 serves as a theoretical prototype that currently lacks direct empirical validation through field testing, pilot implementation, or quasi-experimental research designs. Furthermore, sample size constraints within the selected corpus of journal articles and monographs may limit the generalizability of these findings across diverse Islamic educational institutions with varying socio-cultural environments (Caspersen, 2009; Hasan & Juhannis, 2023).

Practically, school administrators and classroom educators face significant operational challenges when implementing this seven-stage model, including restricted intervention durations, difficulties in designing differentiated instructional materials for students with varying cognitive capabilities, and the structural complexities inherent in modern educational systems management (Huda, Tsani, et al., 2019; Rosadi, 2023). To address the absence of empirical field testing, future studies

should employ Educational Research and Development (R&D) frameworks or longitudinal mixed-methods designs to empirically validate, pilot, and quantitatively measure the operational efficacy of this 7-stage model in real-world classroom environments.

Conclusion

This study establishes that cultivating faith steadfastness (*istikamah*) among Muslimah in contemporary Islamic education requires a paradigm shift from protective isolationism to dynamic socio-moral agency. Addressing the core research objectives, the central finding reveals that *istikamah* operates as an integrated five-dimensional construct—spanning Piety (*Taqwa*), Epistemic Autonomy (*'Ilm*), Moral Modesty (*'Iffah* and *Sabr*), Self-Regulation (*Qana'ah*), and Transformative Agency (*Amanah*)—that directly counters the digital pressures of algorithmic disruption, hyper-consumerism, and moral relativism. This takeaway was reached through a systematic qualitative synthesis and thematic integration, mapping internal theological convictions against modern ecological realities to construct a seven-stage sequential pedagogical model.

This mechanism demonstrates how grounding students in applied *Tawhid* and critical digital literacy fosters self-regulated ethical filters, enabling young women to actively project values into the public sphere. To address the methodological limitations of this study—specifically the lack of empirical field testing and constraints regarding sample generalizability across diverse institutional settings—future research should prioritize quantitative and longitudinal experimental designs to measure the operational efficacy of this seven-stage model across varied educational environments. Ultimately, this research envisions a broader transformation in Islamic pedagogy, where character education moves beyond passive compliance to nurture intellectually autonomous, digitally resilient, and socially empowered Muslimah capable of leading and contributing meaningfully to a multicultural global society.

Author Contribution

OSD: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Visualization. SUR: Formal Analysis, Writing – Review & Editing. DJ: Data Curation, Visualization. NN: Formal Analysis, Validation. SWT: Validation, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or professional affiliations that could have appeared to influence, bias, or compromise the objectivity and impartiality of the research presented in this manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

The authors confirm that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, large language models (LLMs), or AI-assisted writing applications were utilized in the conceptualization, drafting, data analysis, figure generation, or editing of this manuscript. The entirety of the work was authored solely by the listed authors, who assume full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the content.

Additional Information

Not applicable. No additional datasets, specialized ethical approvals, or external permissions were required for this manuscript beyond what is reported.

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