
The Internalisation of the Spiritual Values of Surah Al-Fatiyah in Islamic Character Education: A Tafsir Study and Conceptual Analysis.

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received,
2026/01/12
Revised, 2026/01/16
Accepted,
2026/01/19

Keywords

Surah Al-Fatiyah,
Islamic Character
Education, Qur'anic
Spiritual Values,
Thematic Exegesis,
Ta'dib Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary education is increasingly dominated by instrumental rationality that prioritizes cognitive performance, efficiency, and competitiveness, often marginalizing learners' moral and spiritual development. Within Islamic education, this tendency generates epistemological and ethical challenges manifested in value disorientation, weakened moral integrity, and fragile character formation. This study aims to formulate a conceptual model for the internalization of the spiritual values of Surah Al-Fatiyah as the foundation of Islamic character education. Employing a qualitative library-based approach with a conceptual-analytical orientation, the study draws on authoritative classical Qur'anic exegesis as primary sources and contemporary Islamic educational literature as supporting references. Data are analyzed through systematic content analysis encompassing descriptive, interpretative, and applicative-synthetic stages, guided by the double movement approach to ensure contextual relevance while preserving normative substance. The findings reveal that Surah Al-Fatiyah embodies a fundamental, hierarchical, and integrative structure of spiritual values, including tawhid, 'ubudiyah, rahmah, gratitude, guidance, and eschatological accountability. These values are mapped into three interrelated dimensions of Islamic character education spiritual orientation (*ta'alluq billah*), moral disposition (*akhlaqiyah*), and social responsibility (*insaniyyah*) and synthesized into a conceptual model linking educational aims, learning content, pedagogical strategies, institutional culture, and character assessment. Overall, the study positions Surah Al-Fatiyah as an epistemological and pedagogical foundation for ta'dib-oriented Islamic character education in addressing contemporary moral and spiritual challenges.

Citation:

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary education increasingly emphasises cognitive achievement, efficiency, and competitiveness; however, this tendency often neglects the moral and spiritual dimensions of learners. An instrumental orientation in education has been associated with value disorientation, declining personal integrity, and the weakening of social cohesion across various levels of education. Recent studies indicate that educational systems lacking a strong spiritual foundation tend to be less effective in fostering sustainable character formation and prosocial behaviour, particularly within pluralistic and dynamic societies (Dalimunthe, 2023; Hadi & Munawar, 2023; Prasetiya et al., 2020).

Within the context of Islamic education, this condition underscores the urgency of reconstructing educational paradigms that position spirituality as a foundational element rather than a mere complement. The Qur'an, as the primary source of the Islamic worldview, offers a comprehensive ethical and spiritual framework for human development. In this regard, Surah Al-Fatiha occupies a central position as *Umm al-Kitab*, as it encapsulates fundamental spiritual principles such as *tawhid*, gratitude (*al-hamd*), mercy (*rahmah*), guidance (*hidayah*), and awareness of eschatological accountability. These values provide a coherent and relevant moral orientation for the development of Islamic character education in contemporary contexts (Rohmatulloh et al., 2023; Syarifuddin et al., 2021).

Various empirical and conceptual studies in Islamic education demonstrate that integrating Qur'anic spirituality with twenty-first-century competencies can strengthen the affective domain, enhance prosocial behaviour, and support learners' holistic well-being. Nevertheless, existing research predominantly focuses on curriculum design, instructional strategies, and institutional policies, while spiritual values are often treated implicitly or positioned as supplementary elements rather than as the central axis of education (Arif & Aziz, 2022; Mujayyanah et al., 2021; Yana & Sagala, 2025). Conversely, thematic Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir mawdu'i*) of Surah Al-Fatiha has developed within Qur'anic studies, yet its systematic integration into models of Islamic character education remains limited and fragmented (Susilo, 2022; Zulkifli & al., 2022).

These conditions indicate a research gap, namely the absence of a conceptual model that explicitly links the spiritual values of Surah Al-Fatiha with educational objectives, learning materials, pedagogical strategies, school culture, and character assessment systems. Recent findings affirm that the internalisation of Qur'anic values becomes more effective when orchestrated comprehensively through curricula, pedagogical practices, educators' role modelling, and institutional culture, rather than through symbolic or partial approaches alone (Romzi et al., 2024; Yanto et al., 2025).

Accordingly, this study aims to formulate a conceptual model for the internalisation of the spiritual values of Surah Al-Fatiha as the foundation of Islamic character education. Employing a thematic exegesis approach and conceptual analysis based on a literature review, the study extracts key value units such as *al-hamd*, *Ar-Rahman*, *al-Malik*, and *al-Hidayah*, and maps them onto dimensions of spiritual, moral, and social character, along with their strategies of internalisation within educational

practice. By bridging the Qur'an's textual values with educational praxis, this research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the revitalisation of spiritual ethics and the humanisation of Islamic education in the contemporary era.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a library research approach oriented towards conceptual and analytical inquiry. The focus of the research is directed at exploring, interpreting, and synthesising the spiritual values of Surah Al-Fātiḥah as the foundation of Islamic character education. Research data were collected through systematic searching and critical examination of relevant written sources. The primary data sources consist of authoritative classical Qur'anic commentaries, namely *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān* by al-Tabārī, *Al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur‘ān* by al-Qurtubī, *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-‘Azīm* by Ibn Kathīr, and *Mafātīh al-Ghayb* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. These works were selected as they represent diverse exegetical approaches within the Islamic scholarly tradition, including *riwāyah*-based, juridical (*fiqhī*), theological, and rational interpretations. Secondary data sources include contemporary academic literature addressing Islamic character education, Qur'anic spirituality, Islamic pedagogy, and educational culture.

Data collection techniques involved documentation and critical reading of exegetical texts and supporting literature, with particular attention to sections relevant to the spiritual values of Surah Al-Fātiḥah. Data analysis was conducted through systematic content analysis to identify and classify units of spiritual meaning embedded in the verses of Surah Al-Fātiḥah, which were subsequently mapped onto dimensions of Islamic character education, namely spiritual (*ta‘alluq billāh*), moral (*akhlāqiyyah*), and social (*insāniyyah*) dimensions. The analytical process integrated normative exegetical approaches with contemporary educational contexts through the double movement method, enabling the contextual actualisation of Qur'anic values without compromising their normative substance. The validity of the interpretations was ensured through source triangulation and cross-madhhab exegetical perspectives, resulting in a coherent conceptual synthesis relevant to the development of Islamic character education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The paradoxical phenomenon within the contemporary educational landscape where rapid technological advancement and expansive access to information coexist with cognitive reductionism and a shallow instrumental orientation has precipitated value disorientation and the erosion of learners' moral integrity. This multidimensional crisis, manifested not only in juvenile delinquency and declining empathy but also in the susceptibility of educated individuals to corruption, fundamentally calls for a robust ethical-spiritual architecture that transcends mere knowledge transmission and moves towards holistic character formation grounded in transcendent values (Dalimunthe, 2023; Hadi & Munawar,

2023; Zaqiah Yuliati et al., 2024). Within this context, the present library-based study convincingly asserts that Surah Al-Fatiha, through a thematic exegetical approach and rigorous content analysis, functions as a highly relevant “core ethical-spiritual architecture.” As *Umm al-Kitab* and a comprehensive synopsis of Islamic teachings, Al-Fatiha possesses an extraordinary capacity to provide substantive responses to critical challenges in contemporary education. This approach does not merely treat Al-Fatiha as a ritualistic text but rather as a comprehensive paradigm containing epistemological and pedagogical foundations for the revitalisation of Islamic character education based on *ta'dib*, as articulated by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (Al-Attas, 1995). His conception of education as the inculcation of *adab* and the cultivation of God-consciousness fundamentally distinguishes Islamic education from secular Western paradigms or instructional models limited to information transmission.

To construct a robust and relevant model of character education, a strong theoretical foundation is indispensable. Al-Attas' philosophy of *ta'dib* serves as the primary framework, defining education as the instilment of *adab* the recognition and acknowledgment of the proper place of all things within the order of creation, rooted in true knowledge (*hikmah*) and the acknowledgment of God. *Adab* transcends mere etiquette, encompassing spiritual and moral discipline aimed at forming civilised, knowledgeable individuals who are conscious of God, with the ultimate objective of attaining *ma'rifah* and preparing for the Hereafter. This model adopts *ta'dib* as its core philosophical lens, viewing the values of Al-Fatiha as a fundamental structure of *adab* that organises human relationships with God, knowledge, and society (Irawati et al., 2022; Mustika & Suyadi, 2021).

In parallel, Fazlur Rahman's double movement method (Rahman, 1982) provides a systematic procedure for recontextualising Qur'anic values to ensure their relevance in the modern era. This method entails two movements: first, understanding the meaning and values of the Qur'an within the historical context of its revelation; second, interpreting and applying those values to address contemporary challenges. This approach avoids the extremes of static traditionalism and uncritical modernism, ensuring that the normative substance of Al-Fatiha remains applicable for instance, by recontextualising *rahmah* as a principle of restorative discipline in modern classroom management (Akbar et al., 2025; Nurdiansyah, 2025). Equally important is a critical assessment of existing character education models, whether secular models that lack a transcendent foundation and are vulnerable to social change, or Islamic models that remain trapped in ritualistic formalism or fragmented approaches. Such models often fail to cultivate strong intrinsic ethical motivation or holistic and adaptive character. The Al-Fatiha-based conceptual model proposed in this study addresses these limitations by offering an integrated, transcendent, and contextual framework grounded in authentic sources and adaptive methodology (Bismala, 2021; Oktavianti et al., 2022).

This study systematically extracts the core meaning units embedded in Al-Fātiḥah as fundamental spiritual values, including *tawhīd*, *‘ubūdiyyah*, *rahmah*, gratitude (*shukr*), guidance (*hidāyah*), and profound awareness of eschatological accountability. Collectively, these values form a robust theological orientation alongside an applicable ethical framework (Hirzulloh, 2024; Susilo, 2022). These values emerge in a hierarchical and systemic structure, affirming that Al-Fātiḥah constitutes a comprehensive paradigm for value internalisation and a solid foundation for Islamic character education, while simultaneously addressing the weak spiritual foundations of modern education that contribute to value disorientation. Conceptually, these findings reinforce the argument that Al-Fātiḥah, as a “miniature of the comprehensive and perfect Islamic teachings” (Shihab, 2002), harmoniously integrates theological, ethical, and social dimensions (Abas et al., 2025; Nurlinda et al., 2025).

At the descriptive-interpretative analytical stage, examinations of the exegeses of Imam al-Ṭabārī and Ibn Kathīr clearly demonstrate that the primary point of departure in Surah Al-Fātiḥah is the affirmation of *tawhīd rubūbiyyah* and *tawhīd ulūhiyyah* through the phrase *al-ḥamd*. Far from being a mere liturgical formula, this praise represents a profound epistemic acknowledgment that all existential reality, value systems, and the purposes of human life are inherently situated within the order of the One God (Maslekhan, 2024; Meliani et al., 2023). From an educational perspective, this crucial finding decisively rejects the assumption that learning is a value-neutral activity. Instead, *tawhīd* demands an orientation that transcends cognitive achievement alone, directing the entire educational process towards the formation of moral integrity and deep spiritual responsibility (Dahuri & Wantini, 2023; Farabi et al., 2023).

Psychologically, *tawhīd* fosters a sense of security, clarity of purpose, and inner tranquillity, while protecting individuals from existential anxiety. Sociologically, it promotes unity, social justice, and resistance to all forms of modern “idolatry.” Thus, *tawhīd* functions as the central axis of character, fundamentally directing intentions, goals, and the ethos of learning itself, transforming education into an act of meaningful worship. This provides a strong conceptual basis for critiquing modern educational models that prioritise efficiency and material achievement without adequately ensuring learners’ moral and spiritual maturity. Without a *tawhīd*-based foundation, education risks producing intellectually capable individuals who remain vulnerable to moral and spiritual crises due to the absence of a transcendent ethical compass (Dalimunthe, 2023; Hadi & Munawar, 2023).

The meaning unit of *‘ubūdiyyah* denoting servitude and devotion is powerfully articulated in the verse *iyyāka na ‘budu wa iyyāka nasta ‘in*. Imam al-Rāzī interprets this verse as a theological nexus that unites absolute devotion and total dependence upon God, shaping human existential consciousness as a moral subject bound to Divine will (Farid et al., 2024; Maksum et al., 2023). Within the methodological framework of this study, *‘ubūdiyyah* is positioned across two closely

interconnected character dimensions: spiritual character (*ta'alluq billāh*) and moral character (*akhlāqiyah*). Psychologically, *'ubūdiyyah* cultivates humility, self-discipline, and control over base desires. Sociologically, it encourages service ethics (*khidmah*), social responsibility, and awareness of the human role as God's vicegerent on earth. Worship, in this context, transcends ritual formalism to become a fundamental orientation shaping every action. Consequently, Islamic character education cannot be reduced to the mere habituation of "good behaviour" detached from deep spiritual internalisation; rather, it must progress through systematic stages of understanding, sincere internalisation, and consistent practice (Chaer et al., 2021; Rahmadani & Hamdany, 2023). In this way, *'ubūdiyyah* serves as an essential bridge between theological conviction (*tawhīd*) and ethical manifestation, in harmony with the concept of *ta'dīb*.

The extraction of the value of *rahmah* (compassion and mercy), derived from the Divine attributes *Ar-Rahmān* and *Ar-Rahīm*, strongly affirms the essential humanising dimension of Islamic character education. Imam al-Qurṭubī interprets *rahmah* as the manifestation of Divine compassion that ought to permeate all human relationships (Rustandi & Aufa, 2025). In contemporary educational contexts, and in line with the value actualisation principle of the double movement method, *rahmah* functions as a fundamental pedagogical logic, enabling its recontextualisation for modern challenges for example, in cultivating dignified teacher-student relationships, rejecting symbolic violence, and restoring learners' dignity (Ni'am, 2025; Shahara & Masyithoh, 2025).

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that fostering a culture of *rahmah* positively correlates with supportive, inclusive, and participatory learning environments, even within pluralistic and multicultural societies (Romzi et al., 2024; Yanto et al., 2025). Psychologically, *rahmah* nurtures empathy, compassion, and emotional intelligence; sociologically, it promotes non-violent communication, restorative disciplinary practices, strong social cohesion, and prosocial behaviour. Hence, *rahmah* is not merely a theme of personal morality but a fundamental institutional principle. In this critical interpretation, *rahmah* transcends emotion to become a transformative relational ethic capable of reshaping power dynamics in education into relationships grounded in respect and care, aligning with a humanising educational vision (Zaqiah Yuliati et al., 2024).

The value of gratitude (*shukr*), implicitly embedded in the phrase *al-hamd*, highlights a dimension of academic ethics often neglected by education systems overly focused on competitiveness and material achievement. Ibn Kathīr interprets *shukr* as sincere acknowledgment of God's blessings, giving rise to deep humility and profound moral responsibility (Rustandi & Aufa, 2025). In educational contexts, gratitude reorients learners away from achievement-centred logic, framing knowledge as a trust (*amānah*) accountable to God, humanity, and the natural world.

This transforms learning motivation from mere competition into meaningful and noble dedication (Savira & Gunawan, 2022; Sulastri et al., 2022).

Studies indicate a strong positive correlation between the internalisation of gratitude and sustained learning motivation, enhanced work ethic, and collaborative tendencies among learners (Sukma, 2025; Syarifuddin et al., 2021). Psychologically, gratitude fosters optimism, resilience, and intrinsic motivation; sociologically, it encourages appreciation of others' contributions, distributive justice, and environmental ethics. Thus, gratitude becomes a vital mechanism for cultivating a healthy, productive, and ethical academic culture one that values processes and contributions while mitigating destructive individualism and unhealthy competition (Asfihana, 2021; Sulestri et al., 2024).

Complementing these values, *hidāyah* (guidance), articulated in the supplication *ihdīnā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, represents a powerful synergy between reason and revelation, as elucidated by Imam al-Rāzī. This synergy indicates that human beings are not merely destined to "know" cognitively but are ultimately guided to "become" individuals of superior moral and spiritual quality (Rustandi & Aufa, 2025). At the level of character education, *hidāyah* functions as a moral guidance framework integrating critical thinking with a stable value compass, directly addressing critiques of contemporary education that excels in cognitive skill production yet fails to cultivate genuine moral maturity.

Research consistently supports that a *hidāyah*-oriented approach encourages learners to consider the ethical consequences of knowledge and actions while fostering deep social responsibility for the utilisation of knowledge as a trust (*amānah*) (Sukma, 2025; Zulkifli et al., 2022). Psychologically, *hidāyah* enhances critical thinking, moral reasoning, and wisdom; sociologically, it promotes ethical leadership, just collective decision-making, and commitment to the common good. In this way, *hidāyah* effectively bridges the gap between intellectual competence and ethical commitment one of the central challenges of twenty-first-century education (Muhsin, 2021; Saimima, 2022).

Based on the extraction of these fundamental values, the applicative synthesis stage of this study successfully formulates a comprehensive conceptual model for the internalisation of Al-Fātiḥah's values. This model explicitly links spiritual values with educational objectives, learning content, innovative pedagogical strategies, school culture, and character assessment (Susilo, 2022; Zulkifli et al., 2022). It provides an integrated and systematic framework ensuring that every educational component synergistically contributes to holistic character development grounded in Al-Fātiḥah's values. Fundamentally, the model positions these values as a "core value framework" driving character internalisation across three dimensions: spiritual (*ta'alluq billāh*), moral (*akhlāqiyyah*), and social (*insāniyyah*).

Structurally, these values operate hierarchically and reinforce one another: beginning with *tawhīd* as the foundation, progressing to *'ubūdiyyah* as devotional manifestation, consolidating *rahmah* and *shukr* as interactional ethics, and culminating in *hidāyah* as the ultimate moral compass. This framework asserts that character constitutes an integrated order of *adab*, internalised through deep understanding, sincere internalisation, and consistent practice—rendering it highly relevant for addressing value disorientation in contemporary education. The model is firmly rooted in Al-Attas' concept of *ta'dīb*, wherein Al-Fātiḥah's values function as fundamental structures governing human relationships with God, knowledge, and society (Ahmad, 2021; Nuryanti & Hakim, 2020).

At the level of educational objectives, the model formulates character outcomes as a harmonious integration of faith (*īmān*), knowledge (*'ilm*), and action (*'amal*). *Tawhīd* aims to cultivate God-centred life orientation and personal integrity; *'ubūdiyyah* reinforces intentional consistency and self-discipline; *rahmah* fosters deep empathy and restorative conflict resolution; *shukr* strengthens academic humility and responsibility; and *hidāyah* develops ethical decision-making and wisdom. These outcomes affirm that Islamic character education transcends mere social conformity, seeking instead to form morally accountable and spiritually conscious individuals within a transcendent horizon (Dalimunthe, 2023; Hadi & Munawar, 2023).

In terms of learning content implementation, the extracted value units are strategically mapped into coherent learning themes across the Islamic Education curriculum and the school's hidden curriculum. Values such as gratitude, compassion, and eschatological accountability are integrated across disciplines, ensuring that spiritual values function as the core axis of learning rather than peripheral additions (Rohmatulloh et al., 2023; Syarifuddin et al., 2021).

At the pedagogical level, the model integrates three primary internalisation mechanisms: meaning-making, habituation, and exemplification. Character pedagogy moves beyond moral instruction towards reflective, experiential learning rooted in thematic exegesis of Al-Fātiḥah (Arif & Aziz, 2022; Romzi et al., 2024).

At the level of school culture, Al-Fātiḥah's values are operationalised into institutional ethos through restorative discipline, non-violent communication, collaborative ecology, and ethical academic traditions. Empirical findings strongly indicate that institutional culture exerts a more stable and enduring influence on character formation than fragmented curricular interventions (Prasetiya et al., 2021; Yanto et al., 2025; Zaqiah Yuliati et al., 2024).

Finally, in assessment, the model advocates a paradigm shift from checklist-based evaluations to formative assessments capturing value consistency in authentic behaviour. Instruments include comprehensive *adab* rubrics, reflective portfolios, and project-based ethical assessments (Susilo, 2022; Zulkifli et al., 2022).

In conclusion, integrating Al-Fātiḥah into Islamic character education is not a symbolic or superficial endeavour but a fully operational framework capable of restoring fragile spiritual foundations, strengthening holistic personal integrity, and reinforcing social cohesion. As a core ethical-spiritual architecture, Al-Fātiḥah offers a universal paradigm for cultivating civilised, responsible, and transcendentally conscious character amid increasingly complex global challenges (Anwar et al., 2024; Sholihah & Maulida, 2020).

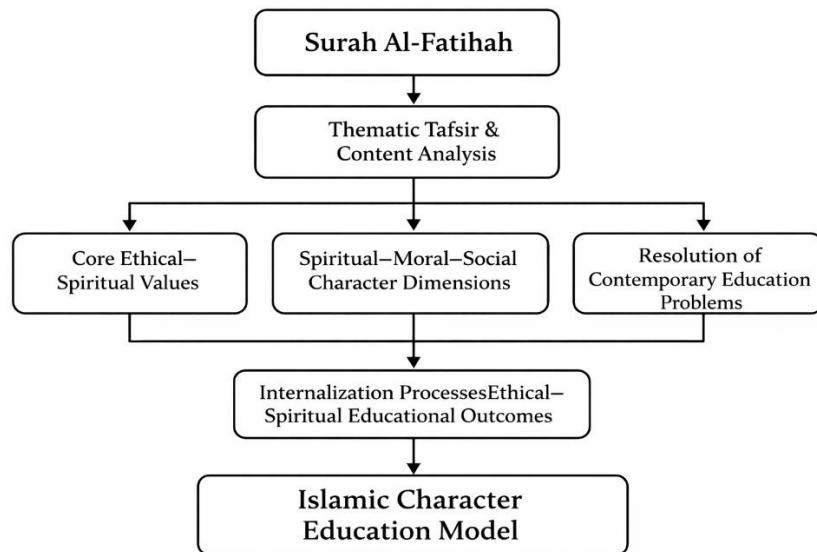


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Surah Al-Fātiḥah as the Foundation for Character Education.

CONCLUSION

Based on thematic exegetical analysis and conceptual library research, this study concludes that Surah Al-Fātiḥah embodies a structure of spiritual values that is fundamental, hierarchical, and systemic, rendering it highly relevant as a conceptual foundation for Islamic character education. The values of *tawhīd*, *'ubūdiyyah*, *rahmah*, gratitude (*shukr*), and guidance (*hidāyah*) are organised as an integrated whole that shapes the theological, ethical, and social orientation of human beings. Consequently, Al-Fātiḥah should not be understood merely as a ritual text, but rather as a Qur'anic paradigm that forms worldviews, guides action orientations, and frames moral accountability. These findings affirm that Islamic character education must be grounded in a holistic spiritual foundation, rather than being limited to behavioural habituation or formal compliance alone.

The primary contribution of this study lies in the formulation of a conceptual model for the internalisation of Al-Fātiḥah's values, which systematically links Qur'anic values with educational objectives, learning content, pedagogical strategies, school culture, and character assessment. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the position of Al-Fātiḥah as an epistemological and pedagogical source through the integration of classical Qur'anic exegesis with the *ta'dīb* paradigm and value

recontextualisation approaches. Within a contemporary educational context characterised by cognitive reductionism and instrumental orientation, this study offers an alternative framework for Islamic character education that is oriented towards the formation of civilised individuals endowed with moral integrity and spiritual and social responsibility.

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