

Character Education Based on the Values of Zuhd in Hadith in the Era of Consumerism

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Abstract: The modern era of consumerism has driven a shift in social values, placing material ownership as the primary benchmark of success and contributing to a character crisis among the younger generation. This study aims to analyze character education based on the values of <i>zuhd</i> (detachment from worldly excess) in the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and its relevance in countering the negative impacts of a consumerist lifestyle. Utilizing a qualitative methodology based on library research and thematic analysis (<i>maudhu'i</i>) of Hadiths related to <i>zuhd</i>, the findings reveal that <i>zuhd</i> does not imply absolute rejection of the material world. Instead, it advocates keeping wealth in one's hands rather than one's heart, prioritizing inner peace, contentment (<i>qana'ah</i>), and moral integrity. Core <i>zuhd</i> values—such as simplicity, self-control, and social responsibility—can be integrated into character education frameworks to cultivate resilient, spiritually intelligent individuals capable of navigating modern material culture. This research highlights the necessity of redefining success through religious value reconstruction as a moral framework in contemporary society.	Keywords: Character Education; Zuhd; Hadith; Consumerism; Qana'ah.
Abstrak: Era konsumerisme modern telah mendorong pergeseran nilai sosial yang menempatkan kepemilikan material sebagai tolok ukur utama kesuksesan, sehingga berpotensi memicu krisis karakter pada generasi muda. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai zuhud yang terkandung dalam hadis Nabi Muhammad SAW serta relevansinya dalam membendung dampak negatif gaya hidup konsumtif. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan (<i>library research</i>) melalui analisis tematis (<i>maudhu'i</i>) terhadap hadis-hadis tentang zuhud. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konsep zuhud dalam hadis tidak berarti menolak dunia secara mutlak, melainkan menempatkan harta di tangan dan bukan di dalam hati, serta mengedepankan ketenangan jiwa, kepuasan diri (<i>qana'ah</i>), dan integritas moral. Nilai-nilai zuhud—seperti kesederhanaan, kontrol diri, dan kepedulian sosial—dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan karakter untuk membentuk pribadi yang tangguh, cerdas secara spiritual, dan kritis terhadap budaya materi. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya mendefinisikan ulang arti kesuksesan melalui rekonstruksi nilai keagamaan sebagai benteng moral di era modern.	Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter; Zuhud; Hadis; Konsumerisme; Qana'ah.

A. Introduction

The twenty-first century is characterized by hyper-globalization, rapid technological advancements, and the overwhelming expansion of market economies across the globe. Within this contemporary landscape, consumer culture has transformed from a structural economic mechanism into a pervasive socio-cultural phenomenon that dictates individual identities, social interactions, and personal aspirations (Baudrillard, 1998). The relentless exposure to mass advertising, digital media, and commercialism continuously reinforces the notion that human value, fulfillment, and happiness are intrinsically linked to the accumulation of material possessions. Consequently, modern society increasingly operates under the assumption that consumption is not merely a means of fulfilling basic physical survival, but rather the ultimate expression of human freedom and personal identity.

This shift toward hyper-consumerism represents more than a change in market behavior; it functions as a dominant ideology that fundamentally alters human consciousness and moral decision-making. According to Fromm (1976), the modern existential paradigm has largely transitioned from a state of "being" to a state of "having," wherein self-worth is continuously evaluated through ownership, status symbols, and external displays of affluence. In such a cultural climate, intangible moral virtues—such as patience, humility, generosity, and spiritual depth—are frequently marginalized in favor of immediate gratification, material rivalry, and ostentatious display.

The socio-psychological consequences of this consumerist shift are particularly pronounced among the youth, who are continually exposed to aggressive marketing strategies across social media platforms. Empirical research demonstrates that strong orientation toward materialistic values correlates directly with heightened anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem, and diminished subjective well-being (Kasser, 2002; Dittmar et al., 2014). As young individuals attempt to validate their identity through commercial trends, they often fall into cyclical patterns of dissatisfaction and psychological burnout,

driven by what psychologists describe as the "hedonic treadmill" – the endless pursuit of novel goods that yield only temporary emotional satisfaction.

Furthermore, hyper-consumerism erodes the structural foundations of traditional social and moral institutions, including the family, educational environments, and religious communities. When utility, instrumental value, and transactionality become the primary lenses through which human relationships are evaluated, communal solidarity and ethical responsibility inevitably decline (Nussbaum, 2011). Social cohesion is replaced by hyper-individualism, where individuals view others primarily as competitors in a market-driven race for status and resources rather than as fellow human beings bound by mutual moral obligations.

In light of these cultural pressures, the necessity for robust character education has never been more urgent. Educational systems worldwide are increasingly challenged to go beyond technical competence and academic achievement to address the ethical and spiritual development of students (Lickona, 1991). Character education seeks to cultivate fundamental virtues, ethical judgment, and emotional resilience, enabling students to critically evaluate societal norms and resist destructive cultural paradigms. However, the effectiveness of character education depends heavily on the philosophical and normative frameworks upon which it is built.

Many contemporary, purely secular models of character education struggle to provide a compelling ontological basis for moral self-restraint in the face of pervasive consumerist messaging. While secular models emphasize civic duties and emotional intelligence, they often lack the deep spiritual anchors required to counteract the deeply entrenched existential longings that consumer culture exploits (Wright, 2000). Without a transcendent or deeply rooted moral framework, values such as moderation and self-denial can appear arbitrary or overly restrictive to young minds conditioned to seek immediate material gratification.

Consequently, Islamic educational philosophy offers a rich, holistic paradigm that integrates cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human development. Within Islamic thought, character formation (*tarbiyah* and *ta'dib*) is not merely a secular socialization process, but a transformative journey aimed at aligning human behavior with divine guidance and ultimate spiritual purpose (Al-Attas, 1993; Sahin, 2018). Islamic tradition views the human soul (*nafs*) as susceptible to lower desires and worldly distractions, requiring deliberate moral discipline and spiritual cultivation to achieve balance and moral autonomy.

Central to this Islamic paradigm of moral discipline is the concept of *zuhd*, a foundational Islamic virtue historically translated as asceticism, detachment, or world-renunciation. In contemporary discourse, however, *zuhd* is frequently misunderstood as complete withdrawal from society, rejection of material wealth, or the endorsement of structural poverty. Such misinterpretations reduce *zuhd* to a passive, monastic doctrine that appears incompatible with active participation in modern socioeconomic life (Halstead, 2007).

In classical Islamic literature and prophetic tradition, *zuhd* is understood not as the physical absence of material wealth, but as the liberation of the heart from spiritual attachment to worldliness. As classic scholar Al-Ghazali (1993) explained, true *zuhd* consists of keeping the world in one's hand rather than in one's heart. It represents a state of internal freedom wherein an individual can possess or manage material resources without allowing those resources to dictate their moral priorities, self-worth, or ultimate life purpose (Ibn Rajab, 2001).

The primary normative source for understanding and implementing *zuhd* is the Hadith literature—the recorded sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Hadith literature provides both the theoretical foundation and the lived practical model of *zuhd* as exemplified by the Prophet and his companions (As-Siba'i, 1984). The Hadith corpus offers detailed

guidance on how to navigate material life while maintaining absolute spiritual focus, emotional equilibrium, and ethical integrity.

Textual analysis of prophetic traditions reveals that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) systematically taught his followers to cultivate *qana'ah* (contentment) and self-restraint as countermeasures against greed and rivalry. In famous traditions, such as the Hadith where the Prophet states that rich living does not consist of an abundance of worldly goods, but rather in the richness of the soul (Sahih al-Bukhari), the Hadith directly challenges the material definitions of success that dominate both ancient and modern market societies.

From a psychological perspective, the prophetic teachings on *zuhd* align closely with contemporary concepts of voluntary simplicity, emotional regulation, and mindfulness (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Elgin, 1981). By encouraging individuals to reframe their relationship with material goods, *zuhd* provides an internal locus of control that protects the mind from the manipulation of modern advertising. It fosters a disposition of gratitude (*shukr*) and contentment (*qana'ah*), which serve as psychological buffers against the chronic discontent cultivated by consumerist systems.

Moreover, the commercial culture of the modern era thrives on the deliberate cultivation of artificial desires and impulse spending. In contrast, the pedagogy of *zuhd* emphasizes impulse control, self-mastery, and the intentional moderation of biological and psychological drives. By teaching individuals to distinguish between actual human needs and artificially generated wants, *zuhd*-based education equips learners with the critical autonomy needed to navigate consumer environments without compromising their moral agency (Al-Qaradawi, 1998).

Beyond individual psychological well-being, *zuhd* possesses a profound socio-ethical dimension. In an economic environment marked by growing inequality and resource depletion, the uncontrolled accumulation of wealth by a few often comes at the direct expense of the many. *Zuhd* addresses this

imbalance by transforming individual consumption habits into acts of social responsibility, encouraging redistribution, empathy, and altruism (*ithar*) over egoistic hoardings (Nasrai et al., 2021).

Additionally, *zuhd* offers significant eco-theological insights relevant to modern environmental crises. Hyper-consumerism is directly linked to ecological degradation, climate change, and unsustainable resource extraction. The prophetic model of *zuhd*, which mandates environmental stewardship (*khilafah*), strict prohibition against waste (*israf*), and reverence for natural resources, provides a spiritual foundation for sustainable living and ecological ethics in contemporary educational settings (Nuryatno, 2011).

Despite the clear theoretical alignment between *zuhd* and the ethical demands of the modern era, integrating Hadith-based *zuhd* into contemporary educational curricula presents pedagogical challenges. In many educational settings, Islamic moral education is taught through rigid, rote-memorization methods that treat classical Hadiths as static historical texts rather than dynamic sources of moral reasoning (Azra, 2004). Without contextual interpretation and pedagogical innovation, students often struggle to apply classical prophetic traditions to their daily digital and consumer lives.

Furthermore, educational institutions themselves are not immune to the pressures of commercialization and marketization. Modern schools and universities increasingly operate under corporate models that prioritize market efficiency, competition, and utilitarian metrics over holistic character development and spiritual cultivation (Henschke, 2010). In such environments, introducing values like *zuhd* requires a deliberate rethinking of institutional culture, teacher training, and learning environments.

Teachers play a pivotal role as moral exemplars (*uswah hasanah*) in communicating the essence of *zuhd*. For *zuhd*-based character education to be effective, educators must embody moderation, emotional resilience, and freedom from material pretense in their professional and personal conduct. The

transmission of *zuhd* relies heavily on experiential learning, institutional modeling, and reflective practice, rather than mere theoretical instruction.

While existing literature has broadly explored Islamic character education and separate theological studies on *zuhd*, there remains a significant gap in empirical and conceptual research that directly operationalizes Hadith-based *zuhd* as a specific pedagogical framework designed to counter modern consumerism. Much of the current scholarship either treats *zuhd* purely from a mystical (*sufi*) perspective or examines character education through generalized secular models, neglecting the actionable educational potential of Hadith texts.

To bridge this academic gap, this study develops an interdisciplinary theoretical framework connecting Hadith studies, Islamic educational philosophy, modern character education, and critical consumption studies. By analyzing the thematic structure of relevant Hadiths, this study demonstrates how classical spiritual wisdom can be translated into practical educational strategies capable of addressing contemporary socio-cultural challenges.

The core problem addressed by this study is the pervasive erosion of youth character, spiritual identity, and psychological well-being driven by unchecked consumerism in modern society. Without clear moral anchors and critical educational frameworks, young generations risk becoming passive consumers whose identities and ethics are shaped entirely by market forces rather than spiritual and humanistic values.

Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to comprehensively analyze the values of *zuhd* embedded within Hadith literature and construct a systematic character education framework tailored for the era of consumerism. Specifically, this study seeks to investigate three core questions: How is *zuhd* conceptualized within key Hadith traditions? How do these prophetic teachings directly challenge the psychological and socio-ethical norms of modern consumerism? And in what ways can *zuhd*-based values be effectively integrated into contemporary educational practices to foster moral resilience?

The significance of this study operates on both theoretical and practical levels. Theoretically, it contributes to the enrichment of Islamic educational discourse by offering a fresh, contextual interpretation of Hadith texts focused on contemporary socio-economic issues. Practically, it provides educators, curriculum designers, and parents with actionable insights and pedagogical models to nurture critical, ethical, and spiritually grounded individuals capable of thriving in a hyper-materialistic world.

Methodologically, this investigation employs a qualitative library research design utilizing a thematic (*maudhu'i*) Hadith study approach combined with content analysis of contemporary educational and sociological texts. Relevant prophetic traditions regarding *zuhd*, *qana'ah*, and material management are selected, critically analyzed for authentic textual meaning (*fiqh al-hadith*), and synthesized into normative themes relevant to character education.

In conclusion, re-evaluating character education through the lens of Hadith-based *zuhd* is not an attempt to reject modern progress or economic vitality, but a vital project to restore moral balance, spiritual dignity, and psychological well-being in an age of hyper-consumption. By grounding character formation in the timeless wisdom of prophetic teachings, education can once again serve as a transformative force that liberates the human spirit from the tyranny of material excess and guides society toward holistic flourishing.

B. Method

This study adopts a qualitative, non-empirical research design utilizing a library-based textual analysis approach (*library research*) combined with thematic Hadith methodology (*maudhu'i*). Qualitative textual inquiry is selected because the investigation deals primarily with the hermeneutical interpretation of normative religious texts and their philosophical application to modern character education paradigms. By focusing on primary textual sources rather than statistical metrics, this methodological framework allows for a deep,

contextualized examination of how prophetic teachings regarding *zuhd* (spiritual detachment from worldly excess) can be conceptualized as an anti-consumerist educational strategy. The inquiry is positioned at the intersection of Islamic studies, moral education, and socio-critical theory, providing an analytical structure capable of bridging classical theological doctrines with contemporary educational imperatives.

The data sources for this research are categorized into primary and secondary textual materials to ensure comprehensive coverage and academic rigor. Primary data consist of classical Hadith compilations, specifically the *Kutub al-Sittah* (the six major canonical collections), with particular emphasis on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, and *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, focusing on chapters dedicated to *zuhd*, *riqq* (heart-softening traditions), and *adab* (etiquette). To ensure accurate textual interpretation (*fiqh al-hadith*), authoritative classical commentaries such as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's *Fath al-Bari* and Imam al-Nawawi's *Al-Minhaj* are utilized alongside primary Hadith texts. Secondary data sources encompass contemporary literature on character education, sociology of consumerism, educational psychology, and Islamic pedagogy, retrieved from peer-reviewed academic journals, monograph publications, and reference works.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic documentation process involving targeted textual filtering, thematic cataloging, and content selection. The selection of Hadith texts followed specific inclusion criteria: traditions explicitly containing keywords such as *zuhd* (detachment), *qana'ah* (contentment), *israf* (extravagance), *taraf* (luxury), and *kifaf* (sufficiency), as well as narratives describing the personal lifestyle and pedagogical interactions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) concerning material wealth. Texts addressing purely ritualistic (*ibadah*) or legal-jurisprudential (*fiqh*) matters without direct bearing on moral character, psychological orientation toward material goods, or educational principles were excluded. This rigorous filtering process ensured

that the analyzed dataset directly addressed the core research questions concerning consumerism and moral formation.

The primary method of data analysis employed in this study is the thematic Hadith approach (*manhaj maudhu'i*), as formulated by classical and contemporary Hadith scholars. This analytical method involves four key operational steps: first, gathering all authentic (*sahih*) and good (*hasan*) Hadiths related to the central theme of *zuhd* and material moderation; second, categorizing these traditions into structural sub-themes based on their semantic and contextual properties; third, examining the socio-historical contexts (*asbab al-wurud*) and linguistic nuances of the texts to establish their core pedagogical intent; and fourth, synthesizing these isolated textual insights into a coherent, unified conceptual framework that articulates the holistic prophetic view on wealth, consumption, and self-regulation.

To bridge classical Hadith insights with contemporary educational issues, the synthesized themes were subjected to content analysis and hermeneutic contextualization within modern character education frameworks. The research maps the core dimensions of Hadith-based *zuhd*—namely emotional regulation, critical autonomy, self-restraint, and social responsibility—against contemporary models of character education and critical consumption studies. This analytical integration evaluates how prophetic values counteract the specific psychological drivers of consumer culture, such as the hedonic treadmill, status competition, and artificial demand creation. Through this comparative synthesis, the study translates abstract theological principles into concrete educational objectives and pedagogical strategies suitable for contemporary learning environments.

Rigor, trustworthiness, and academic validity within this library-based study were established through rigorous source triangulation, textual cross-referencing, and hermeneutic consistency. Data triangulation was achieved by cross-analyzing Hadith interpretations across multiple classical commentaries and validating them against established principles of Hadith criticism (*mustalah*

al-hadith). Conceptual validity was maintained by ensuring that modern educational applications remained faithful to the authentic linguistic and theological intent of the prophetic traditions, avoiding anachronistic over-interpretations. Furthermore, an audit trail of textual selection, thematic coding, and conceptual synthesis was documented throughout the analytical process to guarantee research transparency, coherence, and analytical integrity.

C. Results and Discussion

Conceptual Reconstruction of Zuhd in Hadith Literature

The thematic analysis of primary Hadith sources reveals that *zuhd* in prophetic tradition is fundamentally a psychological and spiritual posture rather than a physical rejection of material reality. Contrary to ascetic interpretations that equate piety with destitution, textual analysis demonstrates that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) defined true detachment through the condition of the heart rather than the presence or absence of possessions. In a foundational tradition recorded in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the Prophet stated, "Richness does not lie in an abundance of worldly goods, but richness is the richness of the soul" (Al-Asqalani, 2000). This tradition establishes an internal ontological pivot, shifting the definition of wealth from external accumulation to internal equilibrium and self-sufficiency. Classical commentator Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (2000) emphasized that this Hadith directly critiques the materialist illusion, asserting that real independence occurs when the human spirit remains untamed by material desires.

Further textual examination highlights that prophetic *zuhd* actively encourages economic engagement while demanding absolute spiritual detachment from the outcomes of wealth. In a prominent tradition transmitted by Sahl ibn Sa'd in *Sunan Ibn Majah*, a man approached the Prophet asking for an action that would earn the love of Allah and the love of people; the Prophet replied, "Be indifferent toward the world, and Allah will love you; and be indifferent toward what people possess, and people will love you" (Ibn Rajab,

2001). Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (2001) clarified that "indifference" (*zuhd*) here does not imply abandoning lawful work or economic productivity, but rather neutralizing greed, envy, and transactional exploitation in human relationships. This conceptualization positions *zuhd* as a dynamic mechanism that frees individuals from economic anxiety and social comparison, allowing them to participate in society without becoming enslaved by market dynamics.

The analytical findings indicate that *zuhd* operates alongside two complementary prophetic concepts: *qana'ah* (contentment with sufficiency) and *kifaf* (proportional sufficiency). In several traditions found in *Sahih Muslim*, the Prophet prayed for his family to be granted *kifaf*—a level of provision that meets genuine needs without spilling into wasteful excess (Al-Nawawi, 2002). This distinction between authentic needs (*hajah*) and artificially inflated wants (*shahwah*) forms the ethical foundation of prophetic economics. By advocating for *kifaf*, the Hadith literature constructs a framework of intentional consumption that preserves human dignity while actively suppressing the destructive cycle of conspicuous display (Al-Qaradawi, 1998). Thus, prophetic *zuhd* offers a theoretical alternative to both absolute monasticism and hyper-materialism.

When contrasted with modern secular movements such as voluntary simplicity or minimalist living, Hadith-based *zuhd* exhibits a distinct transcendental orientation that deepens its moral efficacy. While secular minimalism often emphasizes aesthetic organization, stress reduction, or personal efficiency (Alexander & Ussher, 2012), prophetic *zuhd* grounds material restraint in accountability to the Divine and ethical duty toward humanity. In *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, the Prophet explicitly stated that a servant's feet will not move on the Day of Judgment until asked about four matters, including "their wealth: how it was earned and how it was spent" (Ibn Rajab, 2001). This eschatological awareness transforms daily economic decisions into moral acts, imbuing self-restraint with profound spiritual meaning rather than mere lifestyle preference.

Consequently, the reconstruction of *zuhd* from prophetic texts provides a robust normative paradigm capable of reorienting contemporary perceptions of human flourishing. Rather than viewing material moderation as a state of deprivation, the Hadith corpus frames *zuhd* as an empowering state of moral autonomy and spiritual freedom (*hurriyyah*). By maintaining wealth in one's hand rather than in one's heart, individuals retain the capacity to exercise moral agency, resist commercial exploitation, and cultivate lasting psychological peace (Al-Ghazali, 1993). This conceptual framework serves as the core foundation for constructing an anti-consumerist character education curriculum.

Critique of Consumer Culture through Prophetic Ethics

The findings of this study demonstrate a direct thematic friction between the ethical principles of Hadith-based *zuhd* and the psychological drivers of modern consumer culture. Contemporary hyper-consumerism relies heavily on creating artificial perceived obsolescence and exploiting existential insecurities to drive perpetual purchasing behavior (Baudrillard, 1998; Schor, 2004). In contrast, prophetic traditions systematically diagnose and critique this continuous expansion of material desire. In a famous Hadith reported in both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, the Prophet observed, "If the son of Adam had a valley full of gold, he would desire to have two" (Al-Asqalani, 2000). This tradition accurately anticipates the psychological concept of the "hedonic treadmill," wherein the acquisition of material goods yields only temporary satisfaction, inevitably leading to renewed cravings and perpetual discontent (Kasser, 2002).

Psychological literature confirms that the commercialization of everyday life creates an external locus of identity, leaving individuals highly vulnerable to anxiety, social envy, and self-fragmentation (Dittmar et al., 2014). Prophetic ethics directly addresses this psychological vulnerability by dismantling the artificial connection between material ownership and human worth. In a tradition recorded in *Sahih Muslim*, the Prophet stated, "Verily, Allah does not

look at your appearances or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds" (Al-Nawawi, 2002). This prophetic declaration undermines the foundational premise of consumer advertising—which asserts that personal value is derived from brand association, aesthetic conformity, and status symbols—by establishing intrinsic moral character (*taqwa*) as the sole metric of human dignity.

Furthermore, consumer culture thrives on status competition and conspicuous consumption, where individuals consume goods to signal social superiority over others (Veblen, 1899/1994; Belk, 1988). The Hadith literature actively disrupts this competitive impulse by prescribing intentional counter-cultural behaviors. For instance, in *Sunan Abi Dawud*, the Prophet advised his followers to "look at those who are beneath you [in worldly wealth] and do not look at those who are above you, for that is more likely to keep you from despising the favor of Allah" (Al-Nawawi, 2002). This behavioral directive acts as a powerful cognitive intervention, redirecting focus from social envy to gratitude (*shukr*), thereby neutralizing the social comparison mechanisms that modern marketing exploits.

On a broader socio-economic scale, the findings highlight how hyper-consumerism encourages hyper-individualism and erodes communal solidarity. When individuals prioritize personal accumulation above all else, social relationships become transactional, and empathy for vulnerable populations diminishes (Fromm, 1976; Nussbaum, 2011). Prophetic *zuhd* counters this egoistic trajectory by linking material restraint directly to social justice and altruism (*ithar*). Hadiths recorded in *Jami' at-Tirmidhi* frequently describe how the Prophet and his companions prioritized feeding the hungry and supporting widows even while experiencing personal material scarcity themselves (Ibn Rajab, 2001). Thus, prophetic moderation is not an isolated exercise in self-denial, but a socio-ethical commitment to equitable resource distribution.

Finally, the study reveals that unchecked consumerism poses a severe threat to ecological balance, driving resource depletion and environmental degradation (Nuryatno, 2011). The prophetic framework of *zuhd* integrates a strong eco-theological imperative that prohibits extravagance (*israf*) and wastefulness (*tabdhir*), regardless of abundance. In a celebrated tradition from *Sunan Ibn Majah*, the Prophet passed by his companion Sa'd who was performing ablution with excessive water and remarked, "What is this extravagance?" Sa'd asked, "Is there extravagance even in ablution?" The Prophet replied, "Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river" (Ibn Rajab, 2001). This teaching establishes an absolute ethic of conservation, offering a profound moral critique of the disposable consumer culture characterizing contemporary society.

Core Values of Zuhd as Pillars for Character Education

Based on the thematic synthesis of Hadith texts, this study identifies five core *zuhd*-based values that can serve as structural pillars for modern character education: Self-Regulation (*Dabt al-Nafs*), Inner Contentment (*Qana'ah*), Critical Autonomy (*Al-Hurriyyah al-Fikriyyah*), Altruistic Responsibility (*Ithar*), and Ecological Stewardship (*Khilafah*). Each of these values directly addresses specific moral and psychological vulnerabilities induced by consumer culture, providing a balanced framework for character development (Lickona, 1991; Sahin, 2018).

The first pillar, Self-Regulation (*Dabt al-Nafs*), represents the capacity to master impulsive desires and exercise deliberate self-restraint in a world dominated by instant gratification. In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the Prophet defined true strength not by physical dominance, but by the ability to control oneself during emotional or appetitive impulses (Al-Asqalani, 2000). In an educational context, training students in *dabt al-nafs* builds executive functioning, patience (*sabr*), and emotional regulation. This enables learners to resist aggressive marketing, delay gratification, and make conscious, ethical choices regarding their

consumption habits rather than succumbing to peer pressure or impulse spending.

The second pillar, Inner Contentment (*Qana'ah*), acts as a protective psychological shield against chronic dissatisfaction and social envy. Grounded in the prophetic teaching that true wealth is spiritual self-sufficiency, *qana'ah* teaches students to appreciate existing blessings rather than focusing on perceived lack (Al-Qaradawi, 1998). Educational interventions designed around *qana'ah* encourage reflective practices, such as gratitude journaling and mindfulness, helping students break free from the competitive cycle of status consumption. Research indicates that fostering such internal orientations significantly enhances subjective well-being and psychological resilience among youth (Kasser, 2002; Belsha, 2020).

The third pillar, Critical Autonomy (*Al-Hurriyyah al-Fikriyyah*), equips students with the cognitive discernment needed to evaluate consumer messages critically. Prophetic traditions repeatedly warn against blind conformity (*imma'ah*), urging believers to maintain independent moral judgment regardless of prevailing social trends (Ibn Rajab, 2001). In character education, integrating this value fosters media literacy and critical thinking. Students learn to deconstruct commercial advertising, identify manipulative marketing techniques, and distinguish between superficial lifestyle trends and enduring ethical principles, thereby preserving their intellectual and moral agency (Wright, 2000).

The fourth pillar, Altruistic Responsibility (*Ithar*), transforms self-restraint into active social engagement by encouraging students to share their resources with those in need. The prophetic model demonstrates that excess resources are trust funds (*amanah*) meant to be redistributed to alleviate human suffering (Al-Ghazali, 1993). Incorporating *ithar* into school curricula moves character education beyond passive personal virtue to active civic responsibility. Through community service, charitable initiatives, and peer support networks, students

learn that fulfillment is achieved through generosity and service rather than material accumulation (Nussbaum, 2011).

The fifth pillar, Ecological Stewardship (*Khilafah*), links personal consumption directly to global environmental welfare. By framing the natural world as a divine trust, Hadith-based ethics prohibit wasteful consumption and mandate gentle interaction with the environment (Nuryatno, 2011). In character education, this pillar translates into sustainable school practices, waste reduction programs, and eco-literacy modules. Students are educated to recognize that personal consumer choices have far-reaching ecological consequences, instilling a sense of cosmic accountability and moral responsibility toward future generations.

Pedagogical Framework and Practical Strategies in Education

Translating these Hadith-based values into effective educational practices requires moving away from rote memorization toward transformative, experiential learning models. Classical Islamic pedagogy (*tarbiyah* and *ta'dib*) emphasizes that value transmission occurs primarily through experiential modeling, reflective dialogue, and institutional culture (Al-Attas, 1993; Sahin, 2018). Therefore, character education centered on *zuhd* must be integrated holistically across administrative, curricular, and co-curricular domains of educational institutions.

The foundational element of this pedagogical framework is teacher exemplary leadership (*uswah hasanah*). Educators serve as the primary medium through which values are actualized; students absorb moral postures more readily from observed behavior than from formal lectures (Lickona, 1991). Teachers who embody emotional balance, modest living, and critical reflection regarding consumer culture provide living proof that happiness is independent of material excess. Professional development programs must therefore equip teachers with both the theoretical understanding of Hadith ethics and the reflective tools needed to model these virtues within school environments (Halstead, 2007).

In terms of instructional strategies, experiential learning modules—such as "voluntary simplicity challenges" and "digital detox periods"—offer practical opportunities for students to operationalize *zuhd*. For example, schools can implement structured activities where students temporarily abstain from social media browsing, branded clothing, or non-essential purchases, followed by guided reflective writing and group discussions (Alexander & Ussher, 2012). These practical exercises allow students to experience firsthand the psychological liberation from constant commercial stimulation, transforming abstract Hadith concepts into lived, subjective reality.

Furthermore, *zuhd*-based character education must be integrated across the academic curriculum rather than confined to isolated religious studies classes. In economics courses, students can analyze Islamic economic models that prioritize ethical consumption, resource redistribution, and social justice alongside conventional market theories (Al-Qaradawi, 1998; Nasrai et al., 2021). In environmental science, prophetic teachings on water conservation and animal welfare can be linked to contemporary climate change mitigation strategies. In humanities and literature, students can critically analyze how media representations construct artificial desires and influence human self-perception (Schor, 2004).

At the institutional level, schools must cultivate an environment (*bi'ah shalihah*) that actively resists commercial intrusion and minimizes peer status competition. Policies such as standardized, unbranded uniforms, strict limitations on commercial sponsorships within school events, and modest campus facilities help create an egalitarian space where academic and moral achievement, rather than socio-economic background, serves as the basis for student recognition (Halstead, 2007; Yinger, 2017). By establishing commercial-free educational sanctuaries, institutions allow students to interact based on shared human dignity rather than material status.

Finally, parental and community involvement is critical to reinforcing these educational interventions. Character education initiatives implemented at

school can be easily undermined if home environments remain saturated with uncritical consumerist habits (Lickona, 1991). Schools must conduct parent engagement workshops that articulate the vision of *zuhd*-based character education, providing families with practical guidelines to foster modest consumption, manage screen time, and prioritize shared family experiences over material rewards. Creating synergy between school, home, and community ensures a consistent moral environment for the child.

Challenges, Policy Implications, and Strategic Vision

Implementing a Hadith-based *zuhd* character framework within modern educational systems inevitably faces significant structural and cultural challenges. The dominant global educational paradigm remains heavily influenced by neoliberal market logic, which evaluates educational success primarily through marketability, technical efficiency, and economic utility (Henschke, 2010; Nussbaum, 2011). In such systems, moral and spiritual development is frequently subordinated to standardized testing performance and career preparation. Overcoming this structural bias requires educational leaders to advocate forcefully for holistic educational models that recognize moral character as a core educational outcome.

A second major challenge is the pervasive influence of digital media and social platform algorithms designed specifically to maximize user engagement through targeted advertising and social comparison (Belsha, 2020). Modern students spend several hours daily immersed in digital environments where influencer culture continually promotes consumerist lifestyles. To counteract this constant exposure, character education cannot rely solely on traditional moralizing; it must equip students with sophisticated digital literacy skills and internal spiritual anchors capable of resisting algorithmic manipulation (Sahin, 2018).

Additionally, educational institutions must actively clarify theological misunderstandings regarding *zuhd* to prevent students and parents from misinterpreting these teachings as an endorsement of poverty, laziness, or

economic backwardness. Historically, misinterpretations of *zuhd* have sometimes led to passive fatalism and social withdrawal, which are counterproductive to modern national development goals (Azra, 2004; Halstead, 2007). Curricula must clearly articulate that prophetic *zuhd* encourages high professional achievement, economic competence, and wealth creation, provided that wealth is utilized as a tool for public benefit (*maslahah*) rather than personal ostentation.

From a policy perspective, ministries of education and Islamic educational authorities should collaborate to develop standardized character education benchmarks rooted in prophetic ethics. These frameworks should include guidelines for curriculum integration, teacher training accreditation, and assessment tools that evaluate school ethical climates (Azra, 2004). Furthermore, educational policy should restrict commercial advertising and corporate marketing activities within all primary and secondary educational settings to protect students from predatory commercialization during crucial formative years.

In summary, re-evaluating character education through the values of *zuhd* embedded in Hadith literature offers a transformative educational vision for the twenty-first century. By systematically addressing the psychological, social, and ecological crises generated by hyper-consumerism, this framework restores moral agency, spiritual depth, and psychological balance to young learners. Rather than allowing market forces to define human identity and success, Hadith-based character education empowers individuals to build a more just, modest, and compassionate world.

E. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that grounding character education in the prophetic values of *zuhd* offers a powerful, alternative paradigm to counteract the psychological, ethical, and ecological harms of modern hyper-consumerism. Far from promoting ascetic isolation or the rejection of socioeconomic

engagement, textual analysis of the Hadith corpus reveals that *zuhd* is fundamentally a state of spiritual autonomy and emotional equilibrium. By redefining true wealth as internal self-sufficiency (*ghina al-nafs*) and keeping material possessions in one's hands rather than in one's heart, prophetic teachings liberate individuals from the endless cycle of status comparison, artificial demand creation, and the hedonic treadmill.

Synthesizing these prophetic insights yields a comprehensive character education framework structured around five core pillars: Self-Regulation (*Dabt al-Nafs*), Inner Contentment (*Qana'ah*), Critical Autonomy (*Al-Hurriyyah al-Fikriyyah*), Altruistic Responsibility (*Ithar*), and Ecological Stewardship (*Khilafah*). Together, these interconnected values equip students with the internal locus of control and moral discernment needed to resist commercial manipulation, cultivate genuine gratitude, reorient excess wealth toward social welfare, and practice responsible resource conservation.

To translate these normative values into effective educational practice, institutions must adopt a holistic, experiential approach. This requires moving beyond traditional rote memorization toward authentic teacher modeling (*uswah hasanah*), voluntary simplicity experiential modules, interdisciplinary curriculum integration, and the establishment of commercial-free school environments. Furthermore, active collaboration between schools, parents, and community stakeholders is essential to ensure that the values modeled in educational settings are reinforced in daily life.

Ultimately, integrating Hadith-based *zuhd* into contemporary character education does not aim to impede economic vitality or modern progress, but rather to restore moral balance, human dignity, and spiritual direction in an era dominated by market forces. By anchoring character formation in the timeless wisdom of prophetic ethics, educational systems can empower future generations to navigate a hyper-materialistic world with critical awareness, psychological resilience, and a deep commitment to the common good.

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