

HIJAB AS MORAL PEDAGOGY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS FROM A CHARACTER EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This study examines the obligation of hijab through the lens of character education by comparatively analyzing the interpretations of classical and contemporary Muslim scholars. Employing a qualitative comparative-analytical library research design, the study analyzes key Qur'anic verses on hijab alongside authoritative classical and modern tafsir works to explore their normative, ethical, and pedagogical dimensions. The findings reveal a fundamental continuity between classical and contemporary scholars regarding the obligatory status of hijab as grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, while also demonstrating a significant shift in interpretative emphasis. Classical exegesis primarily adopts a textual-normative approach focused on legal obligation, bodily coverage, and social protection within early Islamic contexts. In contrast, contemporary interpretations extend this framework by emphasizing character formation, spiritual consciousness, moral agency, identity construction, and contextual adaptability in modern societies. The study further identifies core character education values embedded in the hijab discourse, including obedience, modesty, self-dignity, piety, self-discipline, social responsibility, and ethical identity. These values position hijab as an integrative moral practice rather than a purely formalistic or symbolic requirement. The implications of this research highlight the potential of integrative exegesis to inform inclusive, empowering, and context-sensitive Islamic education that frames hijab as a meaningful ethical choice. The study is limited by its textual focus and lack of empirical investigation. Future research is recommended to incorporate lived experiences, educational practices, and interdisciplinary perspectives to enrich contemporary hijab discourse.

Keywords:

Hijab Obligation; Character Education; Comparative Qur'anic Exegesis

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INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a global educational priority as societies confront moral uncertainty, identity contestation, and ethical challenges intensified by globalization and digital transformation.¹ Within Islamic education, character formation is inseparable from religious understanding, as moral values are embedded in doctrinal teachings and everyday religious practices.² One critical yet contested issue is the understanding of the hijab obligation, which functions not only as a legal-religious command but also as a moral symbol shaping dignity, self-respect, and social responsibility among Muslim women.³ Contemporary debates often polarize between rigid textualism and overly permissive contextualism, creating confusion in educational settings regarding normative guidance and moral agency.⁴ Therefore, examining the hijab through a character education lens constitutes an urgent scholarly problem at the intersection of religion, ethics, and pedagogy.⁵

Previous research has demonstrated that character education is most effective when moral values are integrated with learners' cultural and religious contexts.⁶ Studies on local wisdom and moral literature confirm that ethical internalization is strengthened when values are conveyed through familiar symbolic systems⁷. Moral admiration toward ethical exemplars has also been identified as a significant motivational force in

¹ A O Sitanggang et al., "A Systematic Literature Review: Character Education to Build Tolerance," *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 8, no. 10 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2025201>.

² H Ainissyifa and Y M Nasrulloh, "IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS HIGHER EDUCATION IN GARUT, WEST JAVA," *Ulumuna* 29, no. 1 (2025): 515-42, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v29i1.1371>.

³ P Smagorinsky, "Emotions, Empathy and Social Justice Education," *English Teaching* 23, no. 3 (2024): 332-51, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-06-2023-0055>.

⁴ Smagorinsky.

⁵ A Maimakova et al., "The Impact of Mass Media on Shaping the Moral Character of University Students: An Interdisciplinary Study with Economic Implications," *Economic Annals-XXI* 208, no. 3-4 (2024): 40-54, <https://doi.org/10.21003/ea.V208-06>.

⁶ M Minsih, I Mujahid, and A Mukminin, "THE INTEGRATION OF CULTURE LITERACY IN STRENGTHENING THE PROFILE OF PANCASILA STUDENTS IN SCIENCE LEARNING FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Terapan Universitas Jambi* 9, no. 2 (2025): 609-18, <https://doi.org/10.22437/jiituj.v9i2.41764>.

⁷ Y Wulandari and F Rahmah, "Moral Education Through Minangkabau Oral Tradition: A Semiotic Analysis of 'Budi' Pantun in the Context of Cultural Preservation," *Jurnal Gramatika* 11, no. 1 (2025): 172-88, <https://doi.org/10.22202/jg.2025.viii.9284>.

character development⁸ when accompanied by reflective engagement.⁹ Philosophical and literary approaches further show that virtue ethics can foster deep moral reasoning and personal identity formation. These findings collectively position character education as a holistic process involving cognition, affect, and moral action.

In educational practice, religiously grounded character learning has been linked to positive outcomes across diverse instructional models. Integrative pedagogies that combine religious values with literacy and digital competencies have been shown to enhance tolerance and critical awareness.¹⁰ Studies in Islamic higher education contexts indicate that moderation and moral resilience can be cultivated through curriculum design and educator agency.¹¹ Digital storytelling and value-based media have also been found to deepen moral reflection and student engagement.¹² Such evidence underscores the pedagogical potential of religious norms when framed within character education paradigms.¹³

Scholars have additionally explored moral learning beyond formal instruction, emphasizing the role of media, literature, and technology.¹⁴ Multimodal and popular cultural texts significantly influence ethical interpretation and identity construction.¹⁵ Artificial intelligence and digital

⁸ J J Yanco and M H Kurfi, "The Role of 'Ajami in Hausa Literary Production," *Islamic Africa* 14, no. 2 (2023): 162-77, <https://doi.org/10.1163/21540993-20230004>.

⁹ Y.-L. Chen, "VALUES AND PROBLEMS OF MORAL ADMIRATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHARACTER AND MORAL EDUCATION: AN EXEMPLARIST PERSPECTIVE," *Contemporary Educational Research Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2023): 3-40, [https://doi.org/10.6151/CERQ.202312_31\(4\).0001](https://doi.org/10.6151/CERQ.202312_31(4).0001).

¹⁰ Y E Patras et al., "Integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach, Local Wisdom, and Gamification in Pancasila Education to Develop Students' Multicultural Competence," *Educational Process: International Journal* 14 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.14.45>.

¹¹ Ainissyifa and Nasrulloh, "IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS HIGHER EDUCATION IN GARUT, WEST JAVA."

¹² D Saripudin, K Komalasari, and D N Anggraini, "Value-Based Digital Storytelling Learning Media to Foster Student Character," *International Journal of Instruction* 14, no. 2 (2021): 369-84, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85101584007&partnerID=40&md5=e0b6b5f91169204cbb44638ecc008bdd>.

¹³ Y Nurbayan and A Sanusi, "Integrating Character Values and EdTech Media: A Study of Arabic Teachers' Pedagogical Competence in Bandung Raya," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 24, no. 8 (2025): 248-71, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.8.11>.

¹⁴ D.-S. Nopas and C Ueangchokchai, "From Blade to Belief: Moral Learning through Demon Slayer among ASEAN Youth," *Qualitative Research Journal*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-05-2025-0158>.

¹⁵ L Unsworth, "Multimodal Literacy in a New Era of Educational Technology: Comparing Points of View in Animations of Children's and Adult Literature," *ECNU Review of Education* 7, no. 2 (2024): 384-405, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20965311231179738>.

platforms are increasingly recognized as potential vehicles for value education when guided by ethical sensitivity.¹⁶ Conversely, weak media literacy has been associated with moral misjudgment and uncritical value adoption.¹⁷ These dynamics highlight the importance of critical and reflective moral education in navigating contemporary value discourses.¹⁸

Comparative ethical and cultural studies further enrich character education by revealing shared moral foundations across traditions.¹⁹ Artistic and embodied practices, such as calligraphy and dance, have been shown to cultivate discipline, aesthetics, and ethical awareness. Political and rhetorical analyses of moral language demonstrate how virtue discourse continues to shape collective ethical imagination.²⁰ Educational research also indicates that teachers' beliefs significantly shape how moral and religious values are transmitted in classrooms. Together, these studies affirm that moral education is multifaceted, operating across textual, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions.²¹

Despite this extensive body of scholarship, notable gaps remain in linking religious obligations explicitly to character education frameworks. Studies on religious dress often prioritize juridical or sociological dimensions while overlooking their pedagogical and moral implications.²² Existing research on character education in Islam rarely examines specific

¹⁶ S Alkhraisat, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Shaping Cultural Narratives and Values Education in Eastern Animation: Opportunities, Risks, and Future Directions," *Educational Process: International Journal* 17 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.17.302>.

¹⁷ A Torrego, A Gutiérrez-Martin, and M Hoehsmann, "The Fine Line between Person and Persona in the Spanish Reality Television Show La Isla de Las Tentaciones: Audience Engagement on Instagram," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 13, no. 4 (2021): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.3390/sui3041753>.

¹⁸ N A Amato, "Responding to Representations of Fatphobia in Prose and Comics," *English Teaching* 23, no. 2 (2024): 261–82, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-10-2023-0137>.

¹⁹ D S Pandanari, Y P T Kalumbang, and Y K Permatasari, "Leadership Education Value in Taoism Wu Wei and the Platonism Philosopher King," in *Proceedings of International Conference on Research in Education and Science*, ed. M Shelley and O T Ozturk, vol. 10 (Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia: The International Society for Technology Education and Science, 2024), 15–23, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85217655274&partnerID=40&md5=a1425e778c622d3c23612d9b5089cd7f>.

²⁰ Y Huo, F Moller, and K Kristjánsson, "Virtue Language in the Time of the Coronavirus: A Cross-Cultural Triangulation Study Based on Speeches From Three National Leaders," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 31, no. 3 (2023): 1161–77, <https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.31.3.13>.

²¹ D Koyama and T Watanabe, "Why a Dispositional View of Ecological Literacy Is Needed," *Teaching in Higher Education* 28, no. 5 (2023): 1108–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2023.2198637>.

²² D B Lee and D Kang, "Environmental Literacy in Ethnic Korean Textbooks in China," *Cogent Education* 10, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2256201>.

religious practices, such as the hijab, as instruments of moral formation.²³ Moreover, tensions between conservative and liberal interpretations frequently remain unresolved, limiting balanced educational discourse.²⁴ This indicates a need for integrative analysis that bridges classical authority, contemporary interpretation, and educational relevance.²⁵

Addressing this gap, the present study focuses on character education perspectives in understanding the obligation of hijab through a comparative analysis of classical and contemporary Islamic scholars. The study aims to examine how differing interpretive traditions construct moral values, self-discipline, and ethical agency embedded in hijab discourse.²⁶ By situating hijab interpretation within character education theory, the research seeks to contribute a balanced and pedagogically grounded framework for Islamic education. This approach also responds to contemporary challenges faced by Muslim women in navigating identity, morality, and social expectations. Ultimately, the study aspires to enrich interdisciplinary scholarship by offering an educationally meaningful understanding of hijab that supports the formation of resilient, dignified, and morally conscious Muslim character.²⁷

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a comparative-analytical library research design to examine the understanding of the hijab obligation from a character education

²³ V A Putri, H Suwono, and B Lukiati, "Major Domain of Socioscientific Decision Making: Preliminary Questionnaire Development," in *AIP Conference Proceedings*, ed. H Suwono, H Habiddin, and D Rodic, vol. 2330 (Universitas Negeri Malang, Department of Biology, Malang, East Java, Indonesia: American Institute of Physics Inc., 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0043263>.

²⁴ Maimakova et al., "The Impact of Mass Media on Shaping the Moral Character of University Students: An Interdisciplinary Study with Economic Implications."

²⁵ Keng-Boon Ooi, "TQM and Knowledge Management: Literature Review and Proposed Framework," *African Journal of Business Management* 3, no. 11 (2009): 633-43, <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM09.196>.

²⁶ P H Witono, A Prasajo, and C Megawati, "Pancasila and Saving Lifestyle: A Case Study in Bina Nusantara University Jakarta Students," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, ed. Sumardi, vol. 747 (Bina Nusantara University, Department of Industrial Engineering, Jakarta, Indonesia: IOP Publishing Ltd, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/747/1/012009>.

²⁷ H Zhu, Y Qiu, and Y Xie, "The Construction of a COPAE Project-Based Learning Model for Primary School Chinese Language Empowered by Digital Intelligence Technology," ed. K T Chui et al. (South China Normal University, School of Education, Guangzhou, China: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc., 2024), 24-28, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ISET61814.2024.00014>.

perspective. This design was selected because the object of analysis consists of classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegetical texts that require in-depth interpretation of meaning, context, and educational implications. The qualitative paradigm enabled a nuanced exploration of normative, ethical, and pedagogical dimensions embedded in religious interpretations. A comparative framework was applied to systematically contrast interpretive patterns across different scholarly periods. This methodological orientation aligns with the study's aim to integrate textual analysis with character education theory.

The research procedures began with the identification of relevant Qur'anic verses concerning hijab, specifically QS. Al-Ahzab (33): 59 and QS. An-Nur (24): 31. Authoritative classical and contemporary tafsir works were then selected based on their scholarly influence and representativeness within Islamic exegetical traditions. Relevant sections of these texts were carefully read to capture interpretive arguments, legal reasoning, and moral emphases. Notes were taken to document key concepts, terminologies, and educational values articulated by each scholar. The procedures were conducted iteratively to ensure comprehensive coverage of the interpretive material.

Primary data sources consisted of classical tafsir texts, including works attributed to Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurthubi, and Al-Tabari, as well as contemporary interpretations such as Tafsir Al-Misbah, Tafsir Al-Azhar, and Tafsir Fi Zhalil Qur'an. Secondary data sources included scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and academic publications addressing character education and hijab discourse in Islamic studies. Data management was conducted manually through systematic documentation and categorization of textual excerpts. No digital text-mining software was employed, as close reading was prioritized to preserve interpretive depth. This approach ensured fidelity to the original texts and their intellectual contexts.

Data collection was carried out using documentation techniques, involving the systematic retrieval, reading, and recording of relevant interpretive passages. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis combined with a tafsir muqarin (comparative exegesis) approach. Analysis proceeded through several stages, including identifying interpretive positions, classifying character education values, and

comparing classical and contemporary perspectives. The final stage involved synthesizing the findings to articulate their relevance for contemporary Islamic education. This analytical process enabled the identification of both continuity and transformation in moral and educational emphases across interpretive traditions.

To ensure reliability and validity, the study applied source triangulation by comparing multiple authoritative tafsir texts across different periods. Analytical consistency was maintained through the use of clearly defined categories for character education values derived from established educational theory. Interpretive transparency was ensured by grounding all analytical claims directly in textual evidence from the primary sources. Reflexivity was applied throughout the analysis to minimize researcher bias in interpreting normative religious texts. These measures collectively strengthened the trustworthiness and academic rigor of the study's findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study addresses the question of how character education perspectives inform the understanding of the obligation of hijab through a comparative reading of classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegesis. Contemporary scholarship on character education emphasizes the integration of moral values, religious understanding, and contextual awareness as a foundation for ethical formation in learners. Within Islamic higher education, moderation and value-based interpretation have been identified as crucial for sustaining religious identity amid social change. These insights provide a relevant intellectual backdrop for examining hijab not merely as a legal injunction but as a vehicle of moral and character development. Accordingly, this study situates the discourse on hijab within broader debates on value internalization and ethical education. This framing underscores the relevance of revisiting exegetical traditions to address contemporary educational challenges.

Restating the main findings, the analysis confirms that both classical and contemporary scholars ground the obligation of hijab firmly in Qur'anic and prophetic sources. The consistency of this normative foundation aligns with broader findings that character-oriented norms remain effective when rooted in clear ethical frameworks. Classical exegetes

predominantly emphasize juridical clarity and social protection, reinforcing obedience as a central moral virtue. This legal-moral emphasis reflects an educational model oriented toward rule compliance and communal order. Such an approach highlights the formative role of law in shaping early Islamic moral consciousness.

Further results reveal that classical interpretations strongly associate hijab with moral restraint and social safeguarding. This orientation resonates with educational theories that identify moral emotions, such as modesty and self-regulation, as key components of ethical development²⁸ By framing hijab as a means of preventing social harm, classical scholars implicitly promote a preventative ethics model. This model prioritizes communal harmony and personal discipline over individual expression. The findings thus illustrate how classical tafsir embeds character formation within a protective social ethos.

Another significant finding concerns contemporary interpretations, which extend the meaning of hijab toward internalized values and personal awareness. Such an emphasis parallels arguments that moral education should cultivate reflective admiration for ethical ideals rather than mere conformity. Contemporary scholars stress intention, consciousness, and identity as integral to religious practice. This shift marks an expansion from external compliance to internal moral reasoning. Consequently, hijab is reframed as a symbol of character integrity rather than solely a legal marker.

When comparing these results with previous studies, the character-based reading of hijab aligns with research demonstrating that responsibility and self-discipline are effectively nurtured through value-oriented frameworks. The integration of ethical meaning into practice mirrors findings in pedagogical studies where moral values enhance learner engagement and responsibility. This comparison supports the argument that hijab, when taught through character education, can foster deeper moral commitment. It also suggests continuity between religious moral formation and contemporary educational strategies. Thus, the study's findings reinforce the pedagogical relevance of value-based interpretation.

The results also support earlier observations that effective character education depends on contextual sensitivity and pedagogical competence.

²⁸ Smagorinsky, "Emotions, Empathy and Social Justice Education."

Studies on religious pedagogy highlight persistent challenges in translating moral values into meaningful educational practice (Nurbayan & Sanusi, 2025). The contemporary exegetical emphasis on context responds directly to these challenges by adapting normative teachings to lived realities. This alignment indicates that contextual tafsir can bridge doctrinal consistency and educational applicability. Therefore, the findings corroborate calls for adaptive yet principled moral education.

Explaining these findings, the divergence between classical and contemporary approaches can be attributed to differing social realities and educational needs. Contextualized moral instruction has been shown to strengthen identity formation and ethical resilience (Minsih et al., 2025). Classical scholars addressed immediate concerns of social order, while contemporary scholars respond to issues of identity, agency, and globalization. This historical shift explains the expanded moral vocabulary surrounding hijab in modern tafsir. Nevertheless, cautious interpretation is required to avoid reducing normative obligations to subjective preferences.

The implications of these findings are significant for Islamic education, particularly in curriculum development and pedagogical strategy. Integrative models that combine moral values, religious norms, and contemporary relevance have proven effective in strengthening character education.²⁹ Understanding hijab as a character-forming practice encourages educators to move beyond formalistic instruction. It also supports learner-centered approaches that foster internal motivation. Such implications point toward a more holistic model of religious education.

More broadly, framing hijab within character education contributes to discourses on empowerment and ethical agency. Research on value-based education indicates that moral identity is strengthened when learners perceive practices as meaningful rather than coercive.³⁰ By emphasizing dignity, self-respect, and responsibility, hijab can be positioned as an empowering moral choice. This perspective counters

²⁹ F Fahrurrozi, R S Dewi, and U Hasanah, "Study on the Effectiveness of STREAM-Based 21st Century Learning Models to Improve Students' Digital Literacy in the Jakarta Area," in *AIP Conference Proceedings*, ed. A Saregar et al., vol. 2595 (Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Elementary School Teacher Education Department, Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia: American Institute of Physics Inc., 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0125120>.

³⁰ Witono, Prasoj, and Megawati, "Pancasila and Saving Lifestyle: A Case Study in Bina Nusantara University Jakarta Students."

reductionist narratives that portray religious dress as merely restrictive. Ultimately, the study highlights the potential of integrative exegesis to inform ethical, inclusive, and context-sensitive Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

1. The Concept of Jilbab in the Qur'an and Hadith

The term "jilbab" in Qur'anic terminology is explicitly mentioned in QS. Al-Ahzab (33): 59, which states: "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks over their bodies. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Linguistically, the word "jilbab" (جِلْبَاب) derives from the root word jalaba, which means an outer garment that covers the body or a large veil used to cover a woman's entire body except for the face and palms.

In addition to QS. Al-Ahzab, another verse often associated with the concept of hijab is QS. An-Nur (24): 31, which mentions the obligation for Muslim women to cover their private parts and not display their adornments except what is normally apparent. This verse states: "And tell the believing women to reduce their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands..." These two verses serve as the primary legal foundations in discussions of the obligation of jilbab for Muslim women.

In the tradition of hadith, there are many narrations that clarify the concept of jilbab and the boundaries of women's private parts. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "O Asma', once a woman reaches puberty, nothing should be seen of her except this and this" (while pointing to the face and palms). This hadith indicates that Islam provides clear boundaries regarding the parts of the body that may or may not be displayed. Another hadith narrated by Imam Muslim states that a woman is private parts, so when she goes out, Satan beautifies her (in the eyes of men). These hadiths affirm that the command to cover private parts is not merely about clothing but also relates to safeguarding honor and preventing temptation.

Substantively, the concept of jilbab in the Qur'an and hadith encompasses several important dimensions. First, the theological dimension, where jilbab is a form of obedience to Allah and an implementation of faith. Second, the moral dimension, where jilbab symbolizes purity, honor, and self-protection from sinful acts. Third, the social dimension, where jilbab serves as the identity of Muslim women, distinguishing them from non-Muslim women and protecting them from social disturbances. These three dimensions demonstrate that jilbab is not merely physical attire but a manifestation of faith values and character that every Muslim woman must possess.

2. **Perspectives of Classical Scholars on the Obligation of Jilbab**

Classical scholars held relatively consistent views on the obligation of jilbab for Muslim women based on literal interpretations of Qur'anic verses and the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ibn Kathir in *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim* interprets QS. Al-Ahzab (33): 59 by emphasizing that jilbab is clothing that covers the entire body, including the head and chest, leaving only one eye for seeing the path. According to him, this command was revealed to distinguish free women from slaves, while also protecting them from disturbances by wicked people who often harassed women on the roads during the Jahiliyyah period. Ibn Kathir's interpretation reflects the 7th-century Arabian social context where physical and social protection of women was a primary priority.

Al-Qurtubi in *Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an* provides a more detailed explanation, stating that jilbab is an absolute shari'i obligation for all pubescent Muslim women. He explains that jilbab must cover the entire body except the face and palms, based on the consensus of the salaf scholars and authentic hadiths. Al-Qurtubi also affirms that the command to wear jilbab is not limited to the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but is an eternal and universal law for all generations of Muslim women until the end of time. His view reflects a strict fiqh approach oriented toward the textual nash.

Al-Tabari in *Tafsir Al-Tabari (Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an)* interprets the jilbab verse by emphasizing aspects of protection and

honor. He explains that the word "yudnina" in the verse means "to draw" or "to let down," indicating that the jilbab must cover the entire body down to the bottom. The primary purpose of this command, according to Al-Tabari, is so that Muslim women are more easily recognized as honorable women and thus not disturbed by evil people. This interpretation shows that jilbab, in the view of classical scholars, functions as a "social protector" that distinguishes Muslim women from other groups of women who do not safeguard their honor.

In general, classical scholars agree that jilbab is fardh 'ain (an individual obligation) for every pubescent and sane Muslim woman. They also agree that the boundaries of a woman's private parts in front of non-mahram men are the entire body except the face and palms, although some scholars opine that the face is also included in the private parts that must be covered. This difference of opinion indicates ijtiḥād in technical matters, but the basic principle of the obligation to cover private parts remains agreed upon. The perspectives of classical scholars are very important as normative and theological foundations in understanding the obligation of jilbab that directly derives from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

3. **Perspectives of Contemporary Scholars on the Obligation of Jilbab**

Contemporary scholars develop more contextual interpretations of jilbab verses by considering the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of modern society. M. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Misbah interprets QS. Al-Ahzab (33): 59 by emphasizing that jilbab is a symbol of Muslim women's identity and honor that must be adapted to the conditions of the times without eliminating its shari'i essence. According to him, the command to wear jilbab is not only about physically covering private parts but also reflects an inner attitude full of shame (haya'), purity, and self-honor. Shihab also emphasizes the importance of character education in understanding jilbab, so that Muslim women do not wear it merely due to social demands or family pressure but because of spiritual awareness and deep understanding of Islamic values.

Hamka in Tafsir Al-Azhar provides a very distinctive explanation by combining spiritual, social, and Indonesian nationalism perspectives. He interprets the jilbab verse by emphasizing that Muslim women's clothing must reflect modesty, honor, and Islamic identity in accordance with women's nature. Hamka also criticizes jilbab practices that are merely symbolic without being accompanied by good morals and calls for Indonesian Muslim women to understand jilbab as part of character education that shapes noble personalities, not just following fashion trends or social pressures. Hamka's view is highly relevant to Indonesia's pluralistic context facing modernization challenges.

Sayyid Qutb in Tafsir Fi Zilalil Qur'an interprets the jilbab verse from the perspective of the Islamic movement and the formation of an Islamic-charactered society. According to him, jilbab is not only an individual obligation but also part of the Islamic social system aimed at preserving societal purity and preventing the spread of sexual immorality. Qutb emphasizes that jilbab is a manifestation of the collective awareness of the Muslim ummah to build a civilization different from modern Jahiliyyah civilization that exploits women's bodies. In his view, jilbab is a symbol of resistance against Westernization and secularization that threaten Muslim identity.

Other contemporary scholars like Yusuf Al-Qaradawi opine that in implementing jilbab law, the principles of maqashid syariah (objectives of shariah) must be considered, which include the protection of religion, soul, intellect, lineage, and property. He emphasizes that the most important thing is to maintain the essence of purity and honor, not just clothing formalities. This approach shows that contemporary scholars are more flexible in understanding the form and model of jilbab as long as it meets shari'i requirements: covering private parts, non-transparent, non-tight, and not resembling men's clothing or distinctive non-Muslim attire.

Overall, the perspectives of contemporary scholars show continuity with the views of classical scholars in terms of the basic principles of the jilbab obligation, but with the addition of contextual dimensions such as character education, spiritual awareness, Islamic identity, and adaptation to modern socio-cultural realities. The

fundamental difference lies in the interpretation method, where contemporary scholars more emphasize aspects of wisdom, objectives, and universal values of the jilbab command, not just its formal legal aspects.

4. **Character Education Values in Understanding the Obligation of Jilbab**

Understanding the obligation of jilbab contains various character education values that are very important in shaping the noble-charactered personality of Muslim women. The first value is obedience to Allah SWT. A Muslim woman's willingness to wear jilbab is a manifestation of faith and submission to Allah's command, as mentioned in QS. Al-Ahzab (33): 36 that believers have no choice when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter. This value of obedience becomes the primary foundation in Islamic character education because it teaches the principle that divine will must take precedence over personal desires or social pressures.

The second value is shame (haya'), which is one of the branches of faith and noble character in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Faith has over seventy branches, the highest of which is the statement La ilaha illallah, and the lowest is removing harm from the path, and shame (haya') is one of the branches of faith." Jilbab becomes an external symbol of the shame in a Muslim woman's heart, namely shame in displaying private parts and adornments to non-mahram people. Haya'-based character education is very important in the modern era that tends to normalize private parts and erode shame as a moral value.

The third value is self-dignity and women's dignity. As explained in QS. Al-Ahzab (33): 59, the purpose of jilbab is "so that they may be recognized and thus not harmed." This verse indicates that jilbab functions to protect Muslim women's honor from disturbances and harassment. In the context of character education, this value teaches that women have the right to be respected not because of their physical appearance but because of the nobility of their morals. Jilbab becomes a tool to reject the objectification of women's bodies and affirms that a woman's true value lies in her character and integrity.

The fourth value is purity and piety. Jilbab teaches Muslim women to maintain their purity from unlawful gazes and touches. This aligns with Allah's word in QS. An-Nur (24): 31, which commands Muslim women to lower their gazes and guard their private parts. Character education through jilbab forms moral awareness that the body is a trust from Allah that must be kept pure. Muslim women are educated not to make their bodies objects of spectacle or sexual attraction but as means of worship and fulfilling noble roles as servants of Allah.

The fifth value is Islamic identity and pride as Muslim women. Jilbab becomes a visual marker that distinguishes Muslim women from non-Muslim women, as mentioned in the context of the revelation of the jilbab verse to distinguish free women from slaves in early Islam. In the modern context, jilbab becomes a strong symbol of Islamic identity amid globalization and Westernization currents. Character education through this identity value teaches Muslim women to be proud of their Islam and not easily influenced by foreign cultures that contradict Islamic values. Muslim women who wear jilbab with full awareness will grow into confident, resilient individuals with a clear sense of self.

The sixth value is self-discipline and consistency. Wearing jilbab every day requires high commitment and discipline, especially in facing various temptations to remove it or wear non-shari'i compliant jilbab. Character education through this discipline value trains Muslim women to be consistent in upholding principles, not easily shaken by fashion trends or peer pressures, and to have firmness of heart in maintaining commitments to Allah. Discipline in wearing jilbab also trains patience and perseverance in fulfilling religious obligations despite challenges.

The seventh value is social empathy and collective responsibility. As explained by Sayyid Qutb, jilbab is not only an individual obligation but also part of the Islamic social system aimed at preserving societal purity. Muslim women who wear jilbab contribute to creating a social environment free from temptation and sin. Character education through this value teaches that individual actions have social impacts, and every Muslim woman has a moral

responsibility not to become a source of temptation for others. Thus, jilbab teaches social concern and collective awareness in building a noble-charactered society.

These seven character education values demonstrate that jilbab in Islam is not merely attire but a comprehensive education system that holistically shapes Muslim women's character spiritually, morally, socially, and psychologically. Integrating these values into contemporary Islamic education is very important to produce generations of Muslim women who not only wear jilbab physically but also embody the meanings and values contained within it.

5. **Comparison of Classical and Contemporary Approaches**

A comparison between the approaches of classical and contemporary scholars in understanding the obligation of jilbab shows continuity as well as development in interpretation methodology. In terms of similarities, both classical and contemporary scholars agree that jilbab is an absolute shari'i obligation for Muslim women based on Qur'anic and hadith evidences. Both also agree that the minimum boundaries of women's private parts that must be covered are the entire body except the face and palms, although there are differences of opinion regarding the status of the face. This agreement demonstrates consistency in the basic principles of Islamic law that do not change with the passage of time.

In terms of differences, classical scholars tend to use a textual-normative approach that emphasizes fiqh legal aspects and literal compliance with nash. Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi, and Al-Tabari interpret the jilbab verse with a focus on legal dimensions (obligatory/fardh), private parts boundaries, and 7th-century Arabian social context. Their interpretations are more rigid and less flexible toward cultural differences and temporal conditions. In contrast, contemporary scholars like Quraish Shihab, Hamka, and Sayyid Qutb use a contextual-substantive approach that considers wisdom, maqashid syariah, and socio-cultural relevance in the modern era.

The second difference lies in the emphasis on the objectives (maqashid) of the jilbab obligation. Classical scholars more emphasize aspects of physical and social protection of women from men's

disturbances, as well as social status differentiation (free women vs. slaves). This context is highly relevant to early Islam when societal structures were still based on slavery systems and women often experienced harassment on the streets. Meanwhile, contemporary scholars expand the purpose of jilbab to more universal dimensions, namely character formation, Islamic identity, protection from sexual objectification, and resistance against materialistic cultures that exploit women's bodies. This expansion of meaning shows that contemporary scholars seek to address contemporary challenges while preserving the essence of Islamic teachings.

The third difference lies in the methods of da'wah and application of jilbab law. Classical scholars tend to use instructional approaches and legal sanctions (ta'zir) for violators of the jilbab obligation, in accordance with the Islamic governance systems of that time. In contrast, contemporary scholars more emphasize educative and persuasive approaches through enhancing spiritual awareness and deep understanding of the values behind the jilbab command. This approach is more suitable for modern pluralistic and democratic societies, where religious law cannot be imposed institutionally but must grow from individual awareness.

The fourth difference is in the flexibility of form and model of jilbab. Classical scholars tend to provide very detailed specifications on how jilbab should be worn, including length, color, and manner of wearing. Meanwhile, contemporary scholars are more flexible regarding the form and model of jilbab as long as it meets shari'i criteria: covering private parts, non-transparent, non-tight, and not resembling men's clothing or distinctive non-Muslim attire. This flexibility provides space for Muslim women to adapt jilbab to cultural conditions, climate, and professions without sacrificing shariah principles.

Although there are differences in methodology and emphasis, both classical and contemporary approaches make important contributions to building a comprehensive understanding of jilbab. The classical approach provides a strong normative and theological foundation, ensuring that the jilbab obligation does not undergo distortion or excessive relativism. Meanwhile, the contemporary

approach provides contextualization and practical application relevant to contemporary challenges, so that jilbab teachings can be understood and practiced meaningfully by current generations of Muslim women. Integrating both approaches is very important to produce an authentic yet adaptive understanding of jilbab: textual yet contextual, normative yet humanistic.

6. Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education

Understanding the obligation of jilbab from a character education perspective has very high relevance to the Islamic education system in Indonesia in the contemporary era. In the context of the moral crisis afflicting young generations, where values of modesty, purity, and self-honor are increasingly eroded by hedonistic and materialistic cultures, jilbab-based education can become one solution to rebuild resilient and dignified Muslim women's character. Research shows that Muslim women who understand and embody the meaning of jilbab tend to have higher moral awareness, stronger self-confidence, and better resistance to negative influences from free associations.

In the context of formal education, the character education values contained in understanding jilbab can be integrated into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum through learning that is not only informative but also transformative. Learning about jilbab should not merely convey dry fiqh laws but must explore the spiritual, moral, and social values contained within it. Effective learning methods include reflective discussions, case studies, role models from exemplary Muslim women figures, and direct practice in daily school life. This holistic approach aligns with the Pancasila Student Profile vision that emphasizes forming faithful, pious, noble-charactered, globally diverse, and independent characters.

Jilbab education also has relevance to the religious moderation program promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. A moderate understanding of jilbab that is not extremely textual but also not excessively liberal can prevent the emergence of radical or secular attitudes in religion. Contemporary scholars like Quraish Shihab and Nasaruddin Umar have shown that a contextual and substantive understanding of jilbab can accommodate Indonesia's

cultural diversity without sacrificing shariah principles. Such education is important to create generations of Muslim women who are devout in religion yet tolerant, upholding Islamic identity yet respecting differences.

In the digital and social media era, jilbab education faces new challenges as well as opportunities. On one hand, there is the phenomenon of hijrah and increasing religious awareness among millennial and Gen Z generations, which is heavily influenced by digital da'wah content and Muslim women communities on social media. On the other hand, there is also the phenomenon of jilbab that is merely symbolic or a fashion statement without being accompanied by deep understanding of its spiritual and moral values. Therefore, contemporary Islamic education needs to develop Islamic digital literacy that guides young generations to consume and produce educational, inspirational content about jilbab in accordance with shariah guidance.

In the family education context, parents play a central role in instilling jilbab understanding from an early age through exemplary behavior, habituation, and warm dialogue. Research shows that intrinsic motivation for wearing jilbab is stronger and more enduring compared to extrinsic motivation based solely on social pressure or formal obligation. Therefore, family jilbab education must emphasize aspects of love for Allah, pride as Muslim women, and deep understanding of the wisdom behind the jilbab command, not just prohibitions or threats. This humanistic and dialogical approach will produce Muslim women who wear jilbab with full awareness and sincerity, not out of coercion or fear.

Institutionally, Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, pesantrens, and Islamic universities need to develop policies and school cultures that support voluntary and educative jilbab implementation. Jilbab policies should not be coercive or discriminatory but must be accompanied by spiritual mentoring programs, psychological counseling, and creating conducive environments. Educational institutions also need to provide dialogue spaces for students to express questions, doubts, or difficulties in

implementing jilbab, so they feel heard and guided with full compassion, not judged or forced.

Finally, understanding jilbab from a character education perspective is also relevant to women's empowerment efforts in Islam. Jilbab should not be understood as a symbol of oppression or restriction of women's mobility but as an empowerment tool that protects women's dignity and frees them from sexual objectification. Contemporary Islamic education needs to affirm that hijab-wearing Muslim women have full rights to contribute in public spaces, pursue higher education, have careers, and contribute to society. Thus, jilbab becomes a symbol of Muslim women's strength and independence, not weakness or dependency. Integrating this empowerment perspective will produce generations of Muslim women who wear jilbab with full awareness, confidence, and the ability to become positive agents of change in society.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the obligation of hijab through the lens of character education by comparing the interpretative approaches of classical and contemporary Muslim scholars. By situating the discussion within Qur'anic exegesis, prophetic traditions, and educational values, the research aimed to elucidate how differing hermeneutical methods shape the understanding of hijab not only as a legal injunction but also as a formative ethical practice.

The findings demonstrate that both classical and contemporary scholars converge on the normative status of hijab as a religious obligation grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, while diverging in their interpretative emphases and methodological orientations. Classical scholars predominantly adopt a textual-normative approach that stresses legal obligation, bodily coverage, and social protection within the historical context of early Islamic society. In contrast, contemporary scholars maintain the same foundational principles but extend the interpretation toward contextual, moral, and educational dimensions, highlighting spiritual consciousness, identity formation, and adaptability to modern socio-cultural realities. Across both perspectives, hijab emerges as a

multidimensional concept encompassing theological obedience, moral integrity, social responsibility, and personal dignity.

The study further reveals that understanding hijab through a character education framework uncovers a set of core values, including obedience to God, modesty, self-dignity, piety, identity, self-discipline, and social empathy. These values position hijab as an integrative educational instrument that contributes to holistic personality development rather than a purely external or formalistic practice. Such a framing underscores the role of hijab in cultivating moral agency and ethical awareness, thereby enriching contemporary discourses on Islamic education and women's empowerment.

The implications of these findings are significant for the field of Islamic education and religious studies. Integrating classical normative foundations with contemporary contextual insights enables a balanced and humanistic understanding of hijab that is both doctrinally sound and pedagogically meaningful. Framing hijab within character education challenges reductionist views that depict religious dress as restrictive, instead presenting it as a conscious moral choice that reinforces dignity, self-respect, and ethical responsibility. This integrative exegesis offers a constructive contribution to the development of inclusive, value-based, and context-sensitive Islamic educational models.

Despite these contributions, this study is limited by its reliance on textual and conceptual analysis without empirical investigation into lived experiences or educational practices. The scope is also confined to selected prominent scholars, which may not fully capture the diversity of interpretations across different regions or intellectual traditions. Consequently, the findings should be understood as analytical rather than representative of all Muslim perspectives.

Future research is therefore recommended to complement this normative-comparative approach with empirical studies on how hijab is understood and internalized within educational, familial, and social settings. Further exploration of gender, pedagogy, and digital culture in shaping contemporary perceptions of hijab would also deepen understanding. Expanding comparative analysis to include a broader range of scholarly voices and interdisciplinary perspectives may enhance the relevance of hijab discourse in addressing the ethical and educational challenges faced by Muslim societies today.

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