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Qur'anic Educational Methods: *Qiṣṣah*, *Mau'iẓah*, and *Uswah Ḥasanah* in Surah Yūsuf, an-Naḥl, and al-Aḥzāb

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Abstract

This study examines the Qur'anic educational methods represented by *qiṣṣah* (narrative), *mau'iẓah ḥasanah* (good counsel), and *uswah ḥasanah* (excellent example) in Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3, Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125, and Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21, and proposes a conceptual framework that relates them. It employs qualitative library research with structuring qualitative content analysis. Primary data comprise the three verses, textually related verses, and two *tafsīr* works (Ibn Kathīr and as-Sa'dī); secondary data are scholarly articles published mainly between 2020 and 2026. Trustworthiness was supported by source triangulation, an audit trail of codes, and a search for disconfirming evidence. The results show that *qiṣṣah* in Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3 communicates values through narrative and invites reflection (*'ibrah*); that *mau'iẓah ḥasanah* in Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125 addresses moral awareness through counsel whose quality (*ḥasanah*) is part of its pedagogical force; and that *uswah ḥasanah* in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21 presents values as embodied conduct, set in a context of crisis and conditioned on orientation to God. Building on these results, the study advances a conceptual proposition rather than a textual finding: understanding, internalization, and enactment of values can be read as complementary functions carried primarily by narrative, counsel, and exemplary conduct, respectively, which reinforce one another rather than follow a fixed order stated in the verses. The framework contributes to *tafsīr tarbawī* discussion by relating cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions within one Qur'anic pedagogical frame, and offers Islamic Religious Education teachers a heuristic for combining stories, value reflection, and exemplary conduct. Empirical testing with learners remains necessary.

Keywords: *Qur'anic education; qiṣṣah; mau'iẓah; uswah ḥasanah; tafsīr tarbawī; Islamic education.*

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education must connect religious knowledge with learners' character and conduct. Digital and social changes have expanded access to religious information while raising concerns about value internalization, role models, and consistency between belief and behavior. Recent studies emphasize that religious education contributes to character development when teaching connects values with learners' lived experiences (Metcalfe et al., 2024; Badri & Malik, 2024; Satrisno et al., 2024;

Azzaky et al., 2024). Qur'anic educational methods are therefore important for moving beyond knowledge transmission toward moral awareness and action.

The Qur'an offers a substantial foundation for this pedagogy. Stimpson & Calvert (2021) show that Qur'anic educational philosophy encompasses knowledge, reasoning, action, and oral traditions. Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3, Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125, and Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21 foreground narrative, good counsel, and exemplary conduct. Read together, these verses provide a basis for examining how educational communication can convey values, support reflection, and present values in practice.

Previous studies have generally examined these methods separately. Research on Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125 discusses wisdom, mau'iẓah ḥasanah, and disputation as Qur'anic approaches to teaching (Sholichah et al., 2021; Mubarok et al., 2023; Ulfa et al., 2024). Studies of qiṣṣah emphasize narrative as a means of communicating lessons and forming character (Yusoff, 2023; Rahiem et al., 2020; Haris & Amirudin, 2024), while research on uswah ḥasanah highlights modeling in Islamic character education (Sanusi et al., 2024; Wahidi & Syahidin, 2024; Islam et al., 2025; Asmarani et al., 2024). These studies establish the relevance of each method but provide less explanation of their possible functional relationship.

Broader studies map Qur'anic educational methods and their contemporary applications (Hoeruman et al., 2025), or examine value integration and character development in particular educational settings (Miftahuddin et al., 2024; Hasanah et al., 2024; Nurjannah et al., 2024). However, the three selected modes are often treated as separate topics. This study addresses that gap by comparing their textual and exegetical foundations and proposing a cautious conceptual relationship among them. Amaliyah & Mas'ud (2026) examine learning methods in the Qur'an through a *tarbawī* analysis; and Noviansah (2026) discusses *da'wah* methods in learning for elementary school children. Methodologically, qualitative library research and content analysis have been used to examine Qur'anic educational concepts and practices and to categorize pedagogical principles in educationally relevant verses (Hakim et al., 2022; Amaliyah & Mas'ud, 2026; Artha et al., 2025). Studies of character education further stress that Qur'an- and hadith-based values must be internalized and carried into institutional culture, whether through moral integrity and social responsibility (Khodijah et al., 2024).

Table 1 summarizes the focus of these studies and what each group leaves unaddressed. Within the literature reviewed here, the three modes are mostly examined separately: *mau'iẓah* is treated in relation to the other two elements of Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125 (*ḥikmah* and *jidāl*), narrative is developed as a pedagogy in its own right, and exemplary conduct is developed as a method or model in its own right. Studies that consider several methods together tend to identify or map them (Hoeruman et al., 2025; Noviansah, 2026) without explaining how particular methods relate to one another functionally. The gap is therefore not that the three concepts have been neglected, but that their functional relationship, understood as how values are understood, internalized, and enacted, has not been examined as a distinct question in the studies reviewed. This claim is bounded by the literature reviewed in this study (selection criteria in Table 2) and does not assert that no earlier work has connected the three.

Table 1. Selected Previous Studies and The Remaining Gap

Focus	Representative studies	Contribution	What remains unaddressed
Mau'iẓah in Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125	Sholichah et al. (2021); Mubarok et al. (2023); Ulfa et al. (2024); Badri & Malik (2024)	Read the verse as a source of educational method (wisdom, good counsel, disputation); link good counsel to affective approaches	Counsel is examined alongside *ḥikmah* and *jidāl*, not in relation to narrative or exemplary conduct
Narrative (*qaṣaṣ*, storytelling)	Yusoff (2023); Rahiem et al. (2020); Haris & Amirudin (2024)	Narrative pedagogy; storytelling for moral learning and character formation	How narrative connects to explicit value guidance and to the modelling of conduct is not specified
uswah ḥasanah	Sanusi et al. (2024); Utami (2023); Islam et al. (2025); Wahidi & Syahidin (2024); Asmarani et al. (2024)	Exemplary conduct as a character-formation method or instructional model	Exemplarity is examined as a stand-alone method; its relation to prior understanding and internalization is not specified
Several methods considered together	Hoeruman et al. (2025); Noviansah (2026); Amaliyah & Mas'ud (2026)	Identify or map a range of educational methods	Methods are identified side by side; the functional relationship among particular methods is not the focus
Value internalization in institutions	Khodijah et al. (2024); Miftahuddin et al. (2024); Hasanah et al. (2024); Nurjannah et al. (2024)	Qur'an-based character education, internalization, and school culture	Relationships among specific Qur'anic methods are not analyzed

This study analyzes the pedagogical characteristics of qiṣṣah, mau'iẓah, and uswah ḥasanah in the selected verses, identifies associated educational values, and proposes a conceptual framework relating the three methods. It asks: (1) What pedagogical characteristics distinguish each method? (2) What educational values are associated with them? and (3) How might their functions be related within Qur'anic education? The contribution is a text-based conceptual proposition, not an empirical claim about learning outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach and a library-research design. This choice reflects the nature of the research objects: Qur'anic texts, books of exegesis, and scholarly literature concerning Qur'anic education. The study does not seek to measure relationships between variables or collect data from respondents; rather, it interprets meanings, categories, and pedagogical constructions in written sources. Its orientation is that of *tafsīr tarbawī*: reading Qur'anic verses and their exegesis in order to draw out educational implications. This approach is appropriate for examining *qiṣṣah*, *mau'iẓah*, and *uswah ḥasanah*.

Data Sources and Selection Criteria

Primary data. The units of analysis are three verses: Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3, Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125, and Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21. They were selected purposively because each contains an explicit expression associated with a mode of educational communication (*aḥsana al-qaṣaṣ*, *al-mau'iẓah al-ḥasanah*, and *uswatun ḥasanah*). To avoid reading each verse in isolation, textually related verses were consulted as supporting

evidence following the principle of *munāsabah* (correlation between verses): Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 2 and 111; Q.S. an-Nisā' (4): 63; Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 9–11 and 22; and Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff (61): 2–3. These supporting verses are not additional units of analysis; they are used to test and refine readings of the three primary verses.

Tafsīr sources. The verses were read through two *tafsīr* works: *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr and *Taysīr al-Karīm ar-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān* by as-Sa'dī (Ibn Kathīr, 2000; As-Sa'di, 2002). The two works were chosen to combine a classical exegesis built largely on transmitted reports (Ibn Kathīr) with a later work known for concise, accessible explanation of meanings and lessons (as-Sa'dī), so that the pedagogical reading would not rest on a single exegetical style. *Secondary data* are scholarly journal articles and Islamic education literature on Qur'anic educational methods, narrative, counsel, exemplary conduct, and value or character education, primarily published between 2020 and 2026. The inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to each type of source are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Data Sources and Selection Criteria

Source type	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Qur'anic text	Verses containing an explicit key expression of an educational mode; related verses only when textually linked (*munāsabah*) to one of the three verses	Verses that address education only implicitly or have no lexical or contextual link to the three key expressions
Tafsīr	Works that comment on all three verses; classical and modern; full text available; used in Islamic education scholarship	Popular or thematic summaries without verse-by-verse exegesis; works that do not cover the three verses
Scholarly literature	Journal articles and books on Qur'anic educational methods, narrative, counsel, exemplary conduct, or value and character education; published mainly 2020–2026; full text accessible	Non-scholarly sources; sources unrelated to the three methods; duplicates

Transliteration

Arabic terms and names are transliterated following the Joint Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Nos. 158/1987 and 0543b/U/1987 (22 January 1988), for example *qiṣṣah*, *mau'iẓah*, *uswah ḥasanah*, and the surah names Yūsuf, an-Naḥl, and al-Aḥzāb. Verse references are written Q.S. (surah name) (surah number): (verse). Author names and publication titles keep the spelling of the original.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using structuring qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023) with a thematic-comparative orientation, in which coding and theme development move from textual units to broader patterns of meaning (Coates et al., 2021). In this article a *code* is a short label attached to a meaning unit; a *sub-category* groups codes that share an analytical element; a *main category* groups sub-categories belonging to one of the three educational modes; and a *theme* is a pattern that cuts across the main categories. The three main categories were formed deductively from the research questions: *qiṣṣah* as narrative pedagogy, *mau'iẓah* as value-internalization pedagogy, and *uswah ḥasanah* as exemplary pedagogy. Because these categories were set in advance, they structure the analysis but are not treated as findings in themselves. Sub-categories and codes were therefore developed inductively from the

verses and *tafsīr*, and the analysis deliberately searched for text segments that did not fit the categories (see Trustworthiness below).

The procedure had six steps. (1) *Initial text work*: repeated reading of each verse, its related verses, and the relevant *tafsīr* passages, with memos on key expressions, context, and addressee. (2) *Segmentation* of the texts into meaning units. (3) *First-cycle coding*: assigning codes close to the wording of the text. (4) *Sub-category formation*: grouping codes under analytical elements (mode of presentation or communication, characteristics, learning process, educator's role, learner's role, intended outcome, and educational values). (5) *Cross-category comparison*: comparing the three main categories to identify similarities, differences, and recurring themes (understanding and reflection, internalization, enactment). (6) *Conceptual synthesis*: relating the themes to one another and testing the resulting relationship against disconfirming evidence and relevant educational theory. Table 3 gives a worked example of the coding, and the complete coding structure is presented in Table 5.

Table 3. Worked example of the coding procedure

Meaning unit (source)	Code	Sub-category	Main category	Theme
"We narrate to you the best of narratives" (*naḥnu naquṣṣu 'alayka aḥsana al-qaṣaṣ*), Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3	Narrating to a listener; quality of narrative	Mode of presentation	*qiṣṣah*	Understanding and reflection
"a lesson for those of understanding" (*'ibratun li-ulī al-albāb*), Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 111 (supporting)	Lesson drawn by reflective people	Intended outcome	*qiṣṣah*	Understanding and reflection
"Good counsel" (*al-mau'iẓah al-ḥasanah*), Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125	Counsel qualified as good	Communication characteristics	*mau'iẓah*	Internalization
"An effective word concerning themselves" (*fī anfusihim qawlan balīghan*), Q.S. an-Nisā' (4): 63 (supporting)	Message addressed to the inner self	Intended outcome	*mau'iẓah*	Internalization
"An excellent example for whoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often" (*uswatun ḥasanah li-man kāna yarjū Allāh…*), Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21	Exemplar made available; condition of God-orientation and remembrance	Educator's and learner's roles	*uswah ḥasanah*	Enactment
"Why do you say what you do not do?" (*lima taqūlūna mā lā taf'alūn*), Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff (61): 2 (supporting)	Consistency between word and deed	Educator's role	*uswah ḥasanah*	Enactment

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, 1985)(Lincoln & Guba,

1985), applied to qualitative thematic analysis as described by Nowell et al. (2017). *Credibility* was supported by source triangulation: each verse was interpreted using both *tafsīr* works, cross-checked against related verses and prior scholarship, and interpretations were retained only when supported by the verse text and at least one of the two *tafsīr* works. *Dependability* was supported by an audit trail: the codes, their sources, and their grouping are recorded in Table 5, and the coding was repeated after an interval to check consistency. *Confirmability* was supported by analytic memos, a deliberate search for disconfirming evidence (for example, elements of the verses that the three categories do not capture, discussed in the Discussion), and peer debriefing with. *Transferability* is limited by design: the framework is a conceptual proposition from three verses, and the thick description in the Results is intended to let readers judge its relevance to other contexts.

RESULTS

The Results are organized around the three research questions. Section A presents the textual data and the coding structure on which the results rest; Section B answers the first question (pedagogical characteristics); Section C answers the second (educational values); and Section D answers the third (the integrated conceptual framework). Interpretation in dialogue with previous studies and educational theory is reserved for the Discussion.

A. Textual Data And Coding Structure

Table 4 presents the primary textual data, with English renderings of the verses in the author's own wording and the key expression on which each category rests. Two points of precision follow from the text. First, the expression in Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3 is *aḥsana al-qaṣaṣ* (accusative, as the object of *naquṣṣu*); the study cites it in its lemma form *aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ* when discussing the concept. Second, none of the three verses uses a term for "method" (such as *uslūb* or *ṭarīqah*). *qiṣṣah*, *mau'iẓah*, and *uswah ḥasanah* are therefore analytic labels applied to expressions of educational communication in the text, and this interpretive step is made explicit throughout.

Table 4. Primary Textual Data

Verse	Rendering	Key expression	Primary meaning
Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3	We narrate to you [Muhammad] the best of narratives, through what We have revealed to you in this Qur'an, though before it you were among the unaware.	*naquṣṣu 'alayka aḥsana al-qaṣaṣ*	The best of narratives (the act of narrating addressed to a listener)
Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125	Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel, and argue with them in the best manner.	*al-mau'iẓah al-ḥasanah* (alongside *bi-l-ḥikmah* and *jādilhum*)	Good counsel or admonition
Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21	In the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example, for anyone who hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often.	*uswatun ḥasanah*	An excellent example

Table 5 shows the complete coding structure, from codes through sub-categories and main categories to themes. It also serves as the audit trail for the analysis: each code is linked to its textual source and to the *tafsīr* basis.

Table 5. Coding Structure: Codes, Sub-Categories, Main Categories, and Themes

Main category	Sub-category	Illustrative codes	Textual source and *tafsīr* basis	Theme
Qiṣṣah as narrative pedagogy	Mode of presentation	Narrating to a listener; highest-quality narrative	Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Understanding and reflection
	Main characteristics	Concrete events and characters; trials; moral choices and consequences	Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 4–101; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Understanding and reflection
	Learning process and outcome	Understanding the message; drawing a lesson (*'ibrah*)	Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 2, 111; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Understanding and reflection
Mau'iẓah as value-internalization pedagogy	Communication characteristics	Invitation; counsel qualified as *ḥasanah*; paired with *ḥikmah* and *jidāl*	Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Internalization
	Target and outcome	Message addressed to the inner self; moral and spiritual awareness	Q.S. an-Nisā' (4): 63; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Internalization
Uswah ḥasanah as exemplary pedagogy	Exemplar and learner	Exemplar made available; benefit conditioned on hope in God and the Last Day and abundant remembrance	Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Enactment
	Context	Values practised under crisis (the Confederates)	Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 9–11, 22; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Enactment
	Educator's role	Consistency between word and deed	Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff (61): 2–3; Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī	Enactment

B. Pedagogical Characteristics of the Three Methods (RQ1)

1. *Qiṣṣah* as Narrative-Based Education: Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3

According to as-Sa'di, Allah's declaration that He relates the best of stories to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) demonstrates the superiority of Qur'anic narratives in terms of their truthfulness, elegance of expression, and depth of meaning. The stories in the Qur'an are not merely a series of past events, but rather divine revelations containing guidance and lessons for human life. The phrase "by revealing to you this Qur'an" indicates that the Prophet Muhammad's knowledge of these stories originates entirely from Allah's revelation. This revelation is a favor and an honor bestowed by Allah upon His Messenger. Prior to receiving revelation,

the Prophet did not possess detailed knowledge of the Book's contents nor the reality of the guidance later conveyed through the Qur'an. As-Sa'di further explains that the Qur'an was made a light through which Allah guides whichever of His servants He wills. After affirming the excellence of Qur'anic stories, this verse introduces the story of Prophet Joseph (Yusuf), his father, and his brothers as a narrative filled with profound lessons and exceptional virtues (As-Sa'di, 2002).

Ibn Kathir emphasizes that the Qur'an presents the "best of stories" (*Ahsan al-Qashas*) because of its absolute truthfulness (*shidq*), eloquence (*fasahah*), clarity of expression (*balaghah*), and profound wisdom. The narratives in the Qur'an are completely sufficient for human guidance and spiritual elevation, rendering reliance on unverified historical reports or distorted scriptures unnecessary (Ibn Kathīr, 2000).

Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3 describes the account of Prophet Yūsuf as *aḥsana al-qaṣaṣ*, commonly rendered "the best of narratives." The verse does not explicitly define an "educational method." Accordingly, this study does not treat it as a direct technical definition of *qiṣṣah*; rather, it interprets the pedagogical function of narrative from three textual indications: the communicative act (*naquṣṣu 'alayka*, a narration addressed to a listener); the stated aim of the Qur'anic presentation (Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 2, that people may understand); and the surah's own statement of purpose (Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 111, that these accounts hold a lesson for people of understanding). The narrative that follows presents trials and moral choices through concrete characters: envy among brothers, temptation, imprisonment, elevation to office, and reconciliation.

Table 6. Pedagogical Analysis of Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3

Analytical element	Finding
Key expression	*aḥsana al-qaṣaṣ*
Textual basis	Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3; supporting verses Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 2 and 111
Tafsīr basis	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
Mode of presentation	Narrative or story, addressed to a listener (*naquṣṣu 'alayka*)
Main characteristics	Concrete events, characters, conflict, trials, moral choices, and consequences
Learning process	Listening or reading → understanding events → reflection
Educational values	Patience, steadfast faith, self-control, honesty, forgiveness, and trust in God (see Table 9)
Educator's role	Presenter of the narrative and facilitator of reflection
Learner's role	Reader or listener who interprets meaning and draws lessons
Intended outcome	Moral reflection and strengthened value awareness

Qiṣṣah therefore involves more than the act of storytelling. A narrative enables learners to encounter moral questions through concrete characters and events. Rather than simply being told that patience is important, learners can consider how patience is tested, how individuals respond to conflict, and how particular choices lead to consequences. The Qur'anic text itself signals that the movement from "knowing what happened" to "drawing a lesson" is intended (Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 111), which is why guided reflection (*tadabbur*) after the story is treated here as a component of the method.

2. *Mau'iẓah* as a Method of Value Internalization: Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125

Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125 places good counsel alongside wisdom and disputation conducted in the best manner. This combination suggests that education cannot rely solely on intellectual argument; it also requires communication that addresses learners' awareness, feelings, and moral orientation. It should be noted that "internalization" is not a term of the verse. It is used here as an analytic construct for the process by which counsel moves from being heard to being appropriated, and it is warranted by textual indications rather than by the wording of Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125: the qualification of counsel as *ḥasanah*, and the related instruction in Q.S. an-Nisā' (4): 63 to address people with an effective word "concerning themselves" (*fī anfusihim*).

As-Sa'di explains that this verse commands the invitation of all people, both Muslims and non-Muslims, to the straight path of Allah—a path comprising beneficial knowledge and righteous deeds. In its execution, proselytization (*da'wah*) must account for the condition, comprehension, readiness, and capacity of the target audience. The call is to be conveyed through *al-mau'izhah al-hasanah* (good preaching or wise counsel). As-Sa'di further clarifies that such counsel can be delivered by explaining the benefits of Allah's commandments and the harms of His prohibitions, highlighting the honor of those who obey, and outlining the rewards for compliance as well as the consequences of transgression. Thus, good counsel not only imparts knowledge but also fosters awareness and motivation toward righteous conduct (As-Sa'di, 2002).

Ibn Kathir's Perspective: This involves persuasive exhortation combined with *At-Targhib* (encouragement through the mention of divine rewards and mercy) and *At-Tarhib* (gentle warning against the consequences of transgression). The instruction must be delivered with compassion, soft speech, and sincere intent, preventing defensive or resistant reactions (Ibn Kathīr, 2000).

Table 7. Pedagogical Analysis of Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125

Analytical element	Finding
Key expression	*al-mau'iẓah al-ḥasanah*
Textual basis	Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125; supporting verse Q.S. an-Nisā' (4): 63
Tafsīr basis	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
Approach	Counsel, instruction, reminders, and lessons
Communication characteristics	Good (*ḥasanah*), persuasive, and responsive to the recipient's circumstances; paired with wisdom and disputation in the best manner
Primary target	Moral and spiritual awareness
Learning process	Hearing → understanding values → recognizing their importance → being encouraged to practise them
Educator's role	Guide and provider of counsel
Learner's role	Recipient of the message and active participant in reflection
Intended outcome	Value internalization and changes in attitude (analytic construct)

The term *ḥasanah* is central to this interpretation. *Mau'iẓah* is not simply the act of giving advice; it involves giving advice in a good and appropriate manner. Its success therefore depends not only on the content of the message but also on

how that message is communicated. The study treats *mau'iẓah* as an interpretive bridge between narrative and action: a narrative provides material for reflection, while counsel helps learners understand what should be learned and why a particular value matters.

3. *Uswah Ḥasanah* as Exemplary Education: Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21

Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21 provides a strong foundation for the concept of exemplary conduct in Islamic education. Whereas *qiṣṣah* operates through narrative and *mau'iẓah* through verbal guidance, *uswah ḥasanah* works by representing values in observable behavior. Two textual features qualify this reading. First, the benefit of the example is conditioned: it is for those who hope for Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah often. Exemplarity thus presupposes an orientation in the learner, not only conduct in the model. Second, the verse occurs in the context of the Battle of the Confederates (al-Aḥzāb; see Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 9–11 and 22), so the Prophet's example is more than an abstract norm: it is situated in a crisis and shows how values are practised under difficult conditions.

As-Sa'di explains that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) serves as an exemplary model for the believers. In the context of this verse, this leadership by example is particularly evident in his personal presence and direct involvement on the battlefield. Rather than merely instructing others to face hardship, he actively carried out those responsibilities himself. The Prophet is characterized as a figure of nobility, moral perfection, and bravery. Consequently, believers are expected to follow his example in confronting challenges, fulfilling obligations, and demonstrating steadfastness in times of struggle. As-Sa'di further clarifies that the Prophet's example is not confined to warfare, but encompasses all other aspects that guide his followers. The phrase uswah hasanah underscores the imperative of adopting the Prophet as a role model for conduct. This emulation is intrinsically linked to faith in Allah, hope for the Hereafter, and the practice of remembering Allah (dhikr). These three elements demonstrate that following the Prophet is not merely an imitation of outward actions, but also the cultivation of a spiritual orientation that drives an individual to consistently embody Islamic values. From an educational perspective, this interpretation suggests that moral values are more readily comprehended and internalized when learners observe their real-life application. Educators, therefore, ought to integrate the teaching of values with observable behaviors, such as honesty, responsibility, patience, discipline, and the courage to uphold the truth (As-Sa'di, 2002).

Ibn Kathir emphasizes that the Prophet's conduct serves as the supreme model not merely in military conflict, but across all domains in his speech, actions, states, patience and perseverance (Ibn Kathīr, 2000).

Table 8. Pedagogical Analysis of Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21

Analytical element	Finding
Key expression	*uswatun ḥasanah*
Textual basis	Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21; supporting verses Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 9–11 and 22, and Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff (61): 2–3
Tafsīr basis	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
Exemplary figure	Prophet Muhammad
Educational form	Direct example and exemplary conduct

Condition for benefit	Hope in Allah and the Last Day, and abundant remembrance of Allah
Core values	Steadfastness, orientation to God, and consistency between word and deed (see Table 9)
Learning mechanism	Observing → identifying → emulating → practising habitually → internalizing
Educator's role	Model of behavior
Learner's role	Active observer and learner through emulation
Intended outcome	Values embodied in conduct

This context strengthens the argument that learning through exemplary conduct becomes more meaningful when learners can see the relationship between a value and concrete action. It places a substantial responsibility on educators, because their everyday behavior is the medium through which values are shown.

C. Educational Values Developed Through the Methods (RQ2)

Table 9 lists the values identified for each category together with the textual evidence on which each rests, so that the source of each value can be traced.

Table 9. Educational Values, Textual Evidence, and *Tafsīr* Basis

Category	Value	Textual evidence	*Tafsīr* basis
Qiṣṣah	Patience (*ṣabr*)	Ya'qūb's "beautiful patience" (*fa-ṣabrun jamīl*), Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 18, 83; Yūsuf's statement on patience and piety, 12: 90	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Self-control	Yūsuf refuses temptation and seeks refuge in God, Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 23–24, 33	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Honesty	Yūsuf addressed as *aṣ-ṣiddīq*, Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 46	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Forgiveness	Yūsuf pardons his brothers, Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 92	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Trust in God (*tawakkul*)	Ya'qūb's reliance on God, Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 67	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Steadfast faith	Yūsuf affirms the creed of his forefathers, Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 37–38	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
Mau'iẓah	Moral and spiritual awareness	Effective word addressed to the self, Q.S. an-Nisā' (4): 63	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Courtesy in communication	Counsel qualified as *ḥasanah*, Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125; gentle speech aimed at remembrance, Q.S. Ṭāhā (20): 44	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
Uswah ḥasanah	Steadfastness	Conduct in the crisis of the Confederates, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 9–11, 22	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Orientation to God and remembrance	Condition of benefit, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Consistency between word and deed	Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff (61): 2–3	Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī
	Courage, responsibility, sacrifice, obedience		Ibn Kathīr; as-Sa'dī

D. An Integrated Conceptual Framework (RQ3)

The analysis shows that three functions recur across the verses: communicating values (what is conveyed and how), internalizing them (how the message is appropriated), and enacting them (how values appear in conduct). Table 10 maps how each category treats each function. Each category carries all three functions to some degree, but each foregrounds a different one: narrative foregrounds communication and reflection, counsel foregrounds internalization, and exemplary conduct foregrounds enactment.

Table 10. Communication, Internalization, and Enactment Across The Three Categories

Function	*qiṣṣah* (Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3)	*Mau'iẓah* (Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125)	*uswah ḥasanah* (Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21)
Communication of values	Narration addressed to a listener (*naquṣṣu 'alayka*); values carried by events and characters	Invitation and counsel in a good manner (*ud'u*, *ḥasanah*)	Values communicated through behavior; the exemplar is made available (*kāna lakum*)
Internalization	Reflection and lesson-drawing (*'ibrah*, Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 111)	Word addressed to the self (Q.S. an-Nisā' (4): 63); quality of counsel	Inner orientation as the condition of benefit (hope in God, remembrance)
Enactment	Choices and consequences shown in the characters' conduct	Learners encouraged to practise the values (Table 7)	Observable conduct under crisis; consistency of word and deed

From this mapping the study proposes the framework in Table 11. It is a conceptual proposition developed by the authors from the preceding analysis; it is not a sequence stated in the verses. The verses do not themselves order the three methods. The order proposed here is a pedagogical ordering justified by the primary emphasis of each category (Table 10) and by the educational logic that understanding a value, appropriating it, and practising it are mutually dependent. The proposition is that narrative builds understanding, counsel guides internalization, and exemplary conduct enables enactment, and that the three reinforce one another. The stages overlap and can recur; they are not rigid steps.

Table 11. Proposed Conceptual Framework of Qur'anic Educational Methods

Stage (primary emphasis)	Method	Pedagogical question	Main process	Expected outcome
I	*qiṣṣah*	What happened, and what can be learned from it?	Narrative and reflection	Understanding and awareness
II	*Mau'iẓah*	What values should be believed in and internalized?	Counsel, guidance, and internalization	Moral and spiritual awareness
III	*uswah ḥasanah*	How can these values be enacted?	Observation and emulation	Observable conduct

Integration	*qiṣṣah* ↔ *mau'iẓah* ↔ *uswah ḥasanah*	How does knowledge become character?	Understanding ↔ internalization ↔ practice	Qur'anic character

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings in the order of the three research questions. It first considers the pedagogical characteristics of each method in light of previous studies (RQ1), then the educational values associated with them (RQ2), and finally the proposed conceptual framework together with its theoretical interpretation and its contextual and practical implications (RQ3).

A. Pedagogical Characteristics of the Three Methods (RQ1)

1. *Qiṣṣah* as Narrative-Based Education: Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3

Regarding narrative, the analysis supports Yusoff (2023), who presents Qur'anic qaṣaṣ as a basis for narrative pedagogy, and Haris & Amirudin (2024), who connect storytelling in Qur'an instruction with character formation. This study adds that qiṣṣah is not merely storytelling: its educational value includes helping learners draw lessons through guided tadabbur. Whether narrative alone produces these outcomes remains an empirical question.

2. *Mau'iẓah* as a Method of Value Internalization: Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125

Regarding counsel, the findings align with Ulfa et al. (2024), who discuss mau'iẓah ḥasanah alongside wisdom and disputation, and Badri & Malik (2024), who emphasize affective approaches to religious character. The present study highlights ḥasanah as a quality of communication and relates counsel to narrative and example. However, isolating mau'iẓah also narrows the wider method described in the verse. Khodijah et al. (2024) similarly frame Qur'an- and hadith-based character education around moral integrity and social responsibility.

3. *Uswah Ḥasanah* as Exemplary Education: Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21

Regarding exemplary conduct, the findings align with studies of uswah ḥasanah in character formation and Islamic Religious Education (Sanusi et al., 2024; Wahidi & Syahidin, 2024; Islam et al., 2025; Asmarani et al., 2024). This analysis further emphasizes the conditions attached to the example in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21—orientation toward Allah, the Last Day, and remembrance of Allah—and the verse's setting in a time of crisis.

B. Educational Values Developed Through the Methods (RQ2)

The values identified in Table 9 show that the three modes are associated with different kinds of educational content. The values linked to *qiṣṣah* (patience, self-control, honesty, forgiveness, trust in God, and steadfast faith) are dispositions displayed by characters who face trials, so learners meet them as choices with consequences rather than as abstract statements. This is consistent with studies that treat narrative as a means of moral learning and character formation (Rahiem et al., 2020; Yusoff, 2023; Haris & Amirudin, 2024). The values linked to *mau'iẓah* are of a different kind: moral and spiritual awareness concerns what the learner comes to recognize, whereas courtesy in communication concerns how the educator speaks.

This supports reading *ḥasanah* as a quality of communication and fits studies that connect Qur'an-based religious education with affective approaches (Badri & Malik, 2024). The values linked to *uswah ḥasanah* (steadfastness, orientation to God and remembrance, and consistency between word and deed) concern conduct and the conditions under which conduct is sustained, in line with studies that present modelling as a means of character formation in Islamic education Education (Sanusi et al., 2024; Wahidi & Syahidin, 2024).

Two qualifications apply. First, the values are not confined to one mode. Patience (*ṣabr*) is drawn from the narrative of Yūsuf and Ya'qūb, and steadfastness from the conduct described in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 9–11 and 22; the two overlap in meaning although they rest on different texts, which supports reading the methods as complementary rather than as carrying separate sets of values. Second, the values differ in how directly the text supports them. Those that rest on explicit verse wording, such as *fa-ṣabrun jamīl* (Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 18, 83) and the condition attached to *uswatun ḥasanah* (Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21), are more firmly grounded than values such as courage and responsibility, which rest mainly on as-Sa'dī's reading of the Prophet's conduct. Table 9 should therefore be read as a list of values that the verses and *tafsīr* make available for teaching, not as outcomes shown to be achieved in learners.

C. An Integrated Conceptual Framework (RQ3)

1. The Framework as a Conceptual Proposition

The framework should be read for what it is. Three verses from three different surahs, revealed in different contexts and addressing different audiences, do not by themselves establish a sequence. What the textual analysis supports is narrower: each verse foregrounds a distinct educational function, and the functions are complementary. The order narrative, counsel, and example is the authors' pedagogical construction, and it is open to challenge.

Several Qur'anic passages complicate a linear reading. Luqmān's counsel is embedded in a narrative (Q.S. Luqmān [31]: 13–19), showing that mau'iẓah need not follow qiṣṣah. Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 111 already links narrative with drawing lessons, and exemplary figures appear within stories. Moreover, Q.S. al-Mumtaḥanah (60): 4 identifies Ibrāhīm as an excellent example, so uswah is not limited to the Prophet Muhammad. The framework is therefore a heuristic of primary emphases and mutual reinforcement, not a fixed sequence. It also simplifies the pairing of counsel with wisdom and disputation in Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125 and the spiritual orientation included in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21.

At the broader level, the framework accords with Stimpson & Calvert (2021), who argue that Qur'anic education exceeds knowledge transfer, and with Hoeruman et al. (2025), who identify other methods such as practice, repetition, and dialogue. This study focuses on three methods and proposes a possible relationship among them; the role of other methods remains an important limitation.

2. Theoretical Interpretation of the Findings

The cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in the framework are not new to educational thought, and comparison with established theory clarifies what

is distinctive and what is shared (Table 12). The comparison is used to clarify the proposal, not to validate it, because these theories arise from different epistemological foundations.

Table 12. Comparison of The Framework with Relevant Educational Theories

Function	Qur'anic emphasis	Comparable theory	Convergence and divergence
Understanding (*qiṣṣah*)	Narrative leading to reflection and lesson	Narrative construction of meaning (Bruner, 1991); the cognitive process "understand" (Krathwohl, 2002)	Convergent in treating narrative as meaning-making. Divergent in that Qur'anic narrative is revealed and carries normative authority, and the text itself states its lesson (Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 111).
Internalization (*mau'iẓah*)	Counsel addressed to the inner self, in a good manner	Affective domain, from receiving to characterization by a value (Krathwohl et al., 1964)	Convergent in treating internalization as a gradual process by which a value becomes part of the person. Divergent in tying counsel to religious orientation and to the quality (*ḥasanah*) of communication, not only to the learner's response.
Enactment (*uswah ḥasanah*)	Exemplary conduct; condition of orientation to God	Observational learning (Bandura, 1977); moral knowing, feeling, and action (Lickona, 1991)	Convergent in the role of modelling and observation. Divergent in that motivation is framed as hope in God and remembrance rather than largely through reinforcement; and Lickona's three components are interdependent rather than ordered, which supports the non-linear reading proposed above.

3. Contextual Considerations

A learner may recognize a value through a story and understand its significance through counsel, yet still fail to practise it without concrete examples in the educator's life. The framework is also consistent with studies that emphasize structured processes for integrating Islamic values into the culture and practices of Islamic boarding schools Miftahuddin et al. (2024) and that connect Qur'anic character formation with spiritual value internalization and exemplary leadership in school culture Hasanah et al. (2024).

The suitability of these methods depends on learners' circumstances. *qiṣṣah* is more meaningful when stories are selected and presented in accordance with learners' developmental stages and experiences; overly abstract narratives may lose their educational value, so educators should select appropriate stories, conflicts, characters, and reflective questions. Similarly, *mau'iẓah* should not be equated with

lengthy lecturing: the word *ḥasanah* highlights the quality of communication, and advice that disregards learners' psychological conditions, understanding, or experiences may lose its persuasive power. Contemporary work on Qur'anic education likewise emphasizes integrating values through internalization rather than simply presenting content (Nurjannah et al., 2024). For *uswah ḥasanah*, the educator's personal conduct is especially important: exemplarity cannot be reduced to telling learners to imitate a teacher; it requires consistency between what is taught and what is practised. The framework therefore has implications for the professionalism and personal integrity of Islamic Religious Education teachers.

4. Practical Implications for Islamic Religious Education

The framework offers a heuristic for classroom teaching through three connected stages (Table 13), which teachers can adapt, reorder, or repeat according to learners and content.

Table 13. Practical Implications of The Narrative–Internalization–Exemplification Framework

Stage	Educator's implementation	Learner activity	Learning outcome
Qiṣṣah	Present a Qur'anic story in a context-sensitive manner	Read or listen, discuss, and reflect on the story	Understanding and reflection
Mau'iẓah	Identify values and provide appropriate guidance	Evaluate the values, connect them with daily life, and make commitments	Value awareness
Uswah ḥasanah	Demonstrate conduct consistent with the values being taught	Observe, emulate, practise, and develop habits	Behavior and character
Integration	Connect the three stages and revisit them as needed	Reflect and engage in repeated practice	Qur'anic character

The framework may be applied in instruction on Islamic creed and morals, the Qur'an and hadith, Islamic Religious Education, character education, and religious development activities. For example, a teacher may begin with the story of Prophet Yūsuf, guide learners to identify patience and self-control through *mau'iẓah*, and then demonstrate these values through the teacher's own behavior and structured learner activities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study finds that qiṣṣah, mau'iẓah ḥasanah, and uswah ḥasanah, as examined through Q.S. Yūsuf (12): 3, Q.S. an-Naḥl (16): 125, and Q.S. al-Aḥzāb (33): 21, have distinct but complementary pedagogical emphases. Qiṣṣah communicates values through narrative and invites reflection; mau'iẓah ḥasanah supports moral and spiritual awareness through good counsel; and uswah ḥasanah presents values through exemplary conduct, within the conditions specified by the verse. The study's central contribution is a conceptual proposition: understanding, internalization, and enactment can be read as mutually reinforcing functions primarily foregrounded by

narrative, counsel, and exemplary conduct. This is an analytical framework derived from the textual analysis, not a sequence explicitly prescribed by the verses; the functions overlap and may recur.

Theoretically, the framework contributes to tafsīr tarbawī by relating the communication, internalization, and enactment of values within one Qur'anic pedagogical frame, while clarifying its points of convergence with and divergence from established educational theories. Practically, it offers Islamic Religious Education educators a heuristic for integrating Qur'anic stories, reflective and value-oriented counsel, and consistent exemplary conduct. These implications should be interpreted cautiously because the study is limited to three primary verses, a small set of supporting verses, and two tafsīr works; the proposed framework has not been empirically evaluated with learners. Future research should broaden the exegetical corpus and investigate the framework in schools, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and non-formal settings through qualitative fieldwork, mixed-methods studies, classroom action research, or quasi-experimental designs. Such studies could examine for whom, in which contexts, and through what mechanisms the integration of qiṣṣah, mau'iẓah ḥasanah, and uswah ḥasanah supports character development.

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