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Digital Spiritual Integrity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Conceptual Model of Ethical AI Use among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teachers

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Abstrak Kecerdasan artifisial (artificial intelligence: AI), terutama AI generatif, mulai masuk ke pekerjaan sehari-hari guru madrasah, tetapi kajian AI dalam pendidikan Islam masih lebih menonjolkan manfaat dan kesiapan teknis daripada integritas etis-spiritual penggunanya. Artikel konseptual ini mengembangkan model Digital Spiritual Integrity (DSI), yaitu konsistensi antara nilai spiritual, etika digital, tanggung jawab profesional, dan integritas pedagogis guru dalam menggunakan AI, serta menelaah hubungannya dengan mutu pendidikan di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) dan Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. Dengan tinjauan literatur integratif-konseptual yang dilengkapi analisis konseptual-normatif, DSI didasarkan pada amanah, tabayyun, ihsan, ikhlas, karamah insaniyyah, dan maqasid al-shariah. Model yang dihasilkan mengusulkan bahwa kepemimpinan spiritual membentuk DSI; DSI memperkuat pembelajaran berbantuan AI yang terverifikasi dan budaya profesional; keduanya berhubungan dengan mutu pendidikan; dan Teacher Digital Flexing Culture (TDFC), yakni kecenderungan menampilkan pencapaian, status, dan kecanggihan teknologi, berperan sebagai kondisi batas yang arahnya bergantung pada orientasi berbagi praktik baik (tahaddus bi-l-ni'mah) atau mencari pengakuan (riya'). Berbeda dari prinsip etika AI tingkat sistem dan kerangka kompetensi, DSI menempatkan integritas pada keputusan sehari-hari guru. Sepuluh proposisi teoretis dan agenda validasi bertahap disajikan tanpa klaim empiris.

Kata Kunci *Integritas Spiritual Digital, Etika AI, Kepemimpinan Spiritual, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Pendidikan Islam*

Abstract Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, is entering madrasah teachers' daily work, yet research on AI in Islamic education stresses benefits and technical readiness more than users' ethical and spiritual integrity. This conceptual article develops the Digital Spiritual Integrity (DSI) model, defined as the consistency among teachers' spiritual values, digital ethics, professional responsibility, and pedagogical integrity in using AI, and examines how it relates to educational quality in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI, Islamic primary schools) and to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. Using an integrative-conceptual literature review with normative conceptual analysis, the article grounds DSI in amanah, tabayyun, ihsan, ikhlas, karamah insaniyyah, and maqasid al-shariah. The resulting model proposes that spiritual leadership shapes DSI; DSI strengthens verified AI-supported learning and professional culture; both relate to educational quality; and Teacher Digital Flexing Culture (TDFC), the tendency to display achievements, status, and technological sophistication, acts as a boundary condition whose direction depends on whether visibility aims at sharing good practice (tahaddus bi-l-ni'mah) or seeking recognition (riya'). Unlike system-level AI ethics principles and competence frameworks, DSI locates integrity in teachers' everyday decisions. Ten testable propositions and a staged validation agenda are presented without empirical claims.

Keywords *Digital Spiritual Integrity, AI Ethics, Spiritual Leadership, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Islamic Education*

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Introduction

A teacher at a madrasah ibtidaiyah (MI, Islamic primary school) can now ask a generative artificial intelligence (AI) application to draft a lesson module, a set of test items, or even an explanation of how to perform ritual purification, all within seconds. What is hard to answer is no longer whether the teacher can operate the tool. It is whether the output is fit for use without checking, who is accountable when it is wrong, and for whom the finished work is ultimately displayed: for students, for colleagues, or for a count of views on social media. These three questions concern integrity, and the literature on AI in Islamic education has not yet addressed them at the level of teacher behavior.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2024) AI competency framework for teachers has in fact already moved the focus from technical skills to a human-centered mindset, AI ethics, AI pedagogy, and professional development. UNESCO's (2023) guidance on generative AI makes a consistent point, namely that human rights, inclusion, and human responsibility must remain the axis of how this technology is used. The shift matters for madrasah. MI teachers do not only teach subjects; they are models for primary-age children, who imitate what they see, including how their teachers behave in digital media.

Research on AI in Islamic education has grown quickly. The systematic reviews by Amilusholihah and Ramadhan (2025) and Muhammad (2025) summarize opportunities for personalization, feedback, and access to knowledge, along with challenges of privacy, teacher readiness, and the need for institutional policy. Arifudin and Akil (2025) argue that AI can support personalized and inclusive learning but cannot replace the teacher's role in moral and spiritual formation. Taha et al. (2025) point to problems of information accuracy, overreliance, and breaches of academic ethics in the use of ChatGPT in Islamic education. Even so, Ikhsan et al. (2026) note that research on AI in Islamic religious education still takes place mostly in higher education, while Hermawan et al. (2025) reach madrasah only at the secondary level. Madrasah ibtidaiyah, where children's digital habits and teachers' example matter most, remains comparatively under-studied.

Islamic ethical scholarship on AI, meanwhile, is moving in a promising direction. Mohadi and Tarshany (2023) read the privacy and manipulation challenges of AI through maqasid al-shariah, the higher objectives of Islamic law. Sanusi (2025) offers maqasid as an evaluative framework for the digitalization of Islamic education. Hasnan et al. (2026) build a maqasid-based AI model for Islamic education, and Johari (2026) uses the protection of the intellect (hifz al-'aql) to respond to overreliance on AI. These frameworks operate at the level of systems, policy, and technology design. It remains unclear how such values become the professional behavior of a teacher who decides every day which AI outputs to use, which to discard, and what to post in public.

Mainstream AI ethics offers a second reference point. Jobin et al. (2019) mapped a corpus of AI ethics guidelines and found convergence around transparency, justice and fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility, and privacy, but substantive divergence in how these principles are interpreted and implemented. Holmes et al. (2022) argue in the same spirit that ethical intentions are not sufficient in AI in education, and that fairness, accountability, transparency, and agency must be addressed explicitly, including the difference between doing ethical things and doing things ethically. Both lines of work say what ethical AI should look like. Neither says where a

teacher's motivation to act consistently comes from when no one is checking, or how the way teachers present their AI-supported work should be judged.

Spiritual leadership offers one way in. Fry (2003) explains that vision, hope, and altruistic love build a sense of calling and membership, and Fry et al. (2005) developed ways to measure it. In madrasah settings, Sutrisno (2024) links the integration of Islamic spiritual leadership and e-leadership to educational quality in the digital era. Meanwhile, the literature on teachers' digital competence has developed along a separate track. Revuelta-Domínguez et al. (2022) map the wide spectrum of digital teaching competence, and Tzafilkou et al. (2023) developed an instrument that combines pedagogical and professional elements. These two tracks rarely meet in one model, let alone with AI as the context. As a result, there is no account of how the values radiated by a madrasah leader reach a teacher's small decisions in front of a screen.

Questions about behavior are closely tied to teachers' digital identity. Davis and Yi (2022) show that elementary teachers active on Instagram use the platform for community, professional development, and the commercialization of content. Teachers who build a personal brand on social media negotiate personal, professional-pedagogical, and relational authenticity (Nejadghanbar & Shaahdadi, 2025), and algorithms and engagement metrics can reshape how professionalism is understood (Nejadghanbar & Song, 2025). AI sharpens this situation because content that looks professional is now cheap to produce, so the gap between what is displayed and what is actually practiced widens more easily.

This article proposes Digital Spiritual Integrity (DSI) to fill that gap. DSI is understood as the consistency among teachers' spiritual values, digital ethics, professional responsibility, and pedagogical integrity in using AI and in presenting themselves in digital spaces. Its companion construct, Teacher Digital Flexing Culture (TDFC), captures the tendency of teachers to display achievements, status, and technological sophistication, including AI use. The aim of the article is to develop a conceptual model that links spiritual leadership, DSI, AI-based digital learning, professional culture, and MI educational quality, with TDFC as a boundary condition, and to derive testable propositions from it. Three questions guide the discussion. First, why is digital competence alone insufficient to explain integrity in madrasah teachers' use of AI? Second, how can Islamic ethical concepts serve as the foundation of DSI? Third, how does AI change the form and meaning of teachers' digital visibility, and what role does DSI play as its normative guardrail?

The article makes three contributions. Conceptually, DSI moves Islamic AI ethics from the system level to the level of teacher behavior. Theoretically, TDFC is formulated as a boundary condition that is not automatically negative, with a normative distinction between sharing gratitude and showing off for recognition. Contextually, the whole argument is situated in madrasah ibtidaiyah and linked to the agenda of quality education in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (United Nations, 2015). The article presents no field data. All propositions are theoretical proposals awaiting instrument validation and empirical testing.

Methods

Design

This article uses an integrative-conceptual literature review complemented by normative conceptual analysis of Islamic ethical concepts. Unlike a systematic literature review, which

requires a replicable search and selection protocol, the aim here is to bring together several adjacent bodies of literature that are rarely read together, and to build a model and propositions from that meeting. Because no field data were collected, all outputs have the status of theoretical proposals.

Search Strategy, Source Selection, and Verification

Sources were drawn from five bodies of literature and searched in Consensus App between September – Oktober 2026, using keyword combinations in English and Indonesian that covered the five streams AI Agency, teacher`s digital competency, AI Spriritual Digital, Teacher `s digital flexing, ang, spiritual leadership. The search was purposive rather than exhaustive: its aim was to reach the sources that bear most directly on the article's questions, not to enumerate every study.

Selection followed the criteria in Table 1. Priority went to journal articles and international policy documents from the last five years. Earlier works were retained only where they formulated or mapped a foundational concept, namely spiritual leadership theory and the landscape of AI ethics principles. A source was retained only if its DOI resolved to the same bibliographic record. The resulting streams and their analytical functions are shown in Table 2. After selection, all references were checked through Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) registered in Crossref, and volume, issue, and page details were matched to those records.

Table 1. Source selection criteria

Criterion	Included	Excluded
Source type	Peer-reviewed journal articles; international policy documents; pioneering works that formulate a concept	Sources without scholarly grounding or an identifiable bibliographic record
Recency	Last five years; earlier works only where they formulate or map a foundational concept (e.g., Fry, 2003; Jobin et al., 2019)	Earlier works that do not formulate a foundational concept
Relevance	Directly addresses one of the five streams in Table 2 in an educational, Islamic ethical, or teacher-behavior context	Work on AI technical design without educational or ethical implications
Verifiability	DOI resolving to the same bibliographic record	No verifiable DOI

Table 2. Literature streams and their analytical functions

Literature stream	Analytical function	Key references
AI ethics	Reference point for system-level principles	Jobin et al. (2019); Holmes et al. (2022); UNESCO (2023)
Spiritual leadership	Source of values and mechanism of influence	Fry (2003); Fry et al. (2005); Sutrisno (2024)

Literature stream	Analytical function	Key references
Teacher digital competence	Distinguishing ability from integrity	UNESCO (2024); Revuelta-Domínguez et al. (2022); Tzafilkou et al. (2023)
AI in Islamic education	Opportunities, risks, and contextual gaps	Amilusholihah and Ramadhan (2025); Muhammad (2025); Ikhsan et al. (2026)
Islamic ethics and AI	Normative foundation of DSI	Mohadi and Tarshany (2023); Sanusi (2025); Hasnan et al. (2026)
Teacher identity and self-presentation	Theoretical basis of TDFC	Davis and Yi (2022); Nejadghanbar and Song (2025); Lu et al. (2024)

Analytical Procedure

Synthesis proceeded in five steps. First, for each retained source the core construct, its level of analysis (system, institution, teacher, or student), and its main findings were extracted into a concept matrix. Second, the matrices of the streams were compared to locate constructs that are addressed at one level but not at another, which produced the research gaps reported in the Results. Third, Islamic ethical concepts, namely amanah (trust), tabayyun (verification), ihsan (excellence), ikhlas (sincerity), exemplary conduct, human dignity (karamah insaniyyah), and maqasid al-shariah, were traced to their Qur'anic and hadith references and matched to dimensions of teacher behavior. A concept was assigned to a DSI dimension only when it governs a behavior that can be observed in AI use or digital presentation. Fourth, constructs were linked into a model where a source or the normative analysis supplied a plausible mechanism, and links without such a mechanism were left out. Fifth, each link was written as a proposition with its relationship type, theoretical rationale, and testing approach.

Four conceptual precautions were applied throughout: TDFC is not equated with the teacher influencer; DSI is not equated with religiosity or digital competence; AI is not positioned as a replacement for the teacher; and educational quality is treated as an outcome that must be operationalized through tested instruments in later research. Verses of the Qur'an and hadith are used as a value foundation, not as material for new interpretation. Review by experts in Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, and jurisprudence remains necessary before these concepts are used in instruments.

Methodological Limitations

This approach gives room to build concepts, but that room has a price in caution. Purposive source selection means the article does not claim to have covered the whole literature. Conclusions about research gaps are therefore framed as a reading of the sources reviewed, not as a claim that the topic has never been studied. Readers should also note that several sources on AI in Islamic education are literature reviews and conceptual studies, so their empirical support remains limited. This is one reason the model is offered as propositions to be tested, not as established findings.

Results

Synthesis Map and Research Gaps

A reading across the literature stream shows that each stream answers part of the question and leaves the rest open (Table 3). AI ethics principles are formulated at the level of systems and guidelines and are interpreted differently across contexts. The literature on digital competence explains whether teachers are able to select and use technology but does not ask whether that use is consistent with the values they hold. The literature on AI in Islamic education records opportunities and risks but stops at the level of applications and policy. The literature on Islamic ethics and AI provides a rich maqasid framework that has not yet been translated into indicators of teacher behavior. The literature on teacher identity on social media understands visibility and professionalism, but almost all of it comes from language teachers or influencer teachers, not madrasah teachers. The MI context hardly appears in any stream.

Table 3. Research gaps and how DSI differs from existing concepts

Stream or existing concept	What it addresses	Gap relevant to this article	How DSI differs
AI ethics principles (Jobin et al., 2019; Holmes et al., 2022)	Transparency, fairness, accountability, privacy, and agency in AI systems and their use	Principles are interpreted and implemented differently; little on the teacher's value source or on digital self-presentation	Locates integrity in teachers' decisions and grounds it in *amanah*, *tabayyun*, and *ihsan*
AI in Islamic education	Applications, personalization, efficiency, ethics, readiness	Stops at applications and policy; MI context rarely studied	Links AI use to the spiritual-professional integrity of MI teachers
Islamic ethics and AI (*maqasid*)	*Maqasid* frameworks for systems and policy	Not translated into indicators of teacher behavior	Derives four behavioral dimensions and initial indicators
Teacher digital competence (UNESCO, 2024)	Technical, pedagogical, and professional ability; AI ethics as one competency	Measures ability, not consistency between values and conduct	Adds value consistency and digital responsibility
Spiritual leadership	Vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, culture, quality	Teacher-level mechanism unspecified	Supplies a teacher-level mediator (DSI)
Teacher identity on social media	Branding, authenticity, professionalism, metrics	Mostly language or influencer teachers; AI-based visibility not addressed	Madrasah teachers, AI-based visibility, and a normative sharing versus showing-off distinction

A note on the term digital integrity is needed, because it is used in several senses in discussions of academic and professional conduct. Among the sources reviewed, none defines it as a teacher-level construct that combines spiritual values, AI use, and digital self-presentation.

The nearest neighbors are the accountability and transparency principles in AI ethics and the ethics component of digital competence frameworks, both compared with DSI in Table 3. This is a reading of the sources reviewed, not a claim that no such concept exists elsewhere.

Digital Spiritual Integrity and its Islamic Foundations

DSI is defined as the degree of consistency among a teacher's spiritual values, ethical behavior, professional responsibility, pedagogical practice, and digital representation, including in the use of AI. Spiritual leadership theory (Fry, 2003) supplies a general framework of vision, hope, and altruistic love, but the content of the values concerned needs to be formulated from the tradition in which madrasah are rooted. The conceptual analysis yields five foundations.

The first foundation is amanah (trust). The Qur'an forbids believers to betray the trust placed in them (al-Anfal 8:27), and the hadith on every leader's responsibility for those under their care (narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim) underlines the accountable nature of trust. Teachers hold a trust over students' learning, development, and data. Using AI shifts some of the work, but it does not shift the trust. The second foundation is tabayyun (verification) and caution in knowledge, which rests on the command to verify news before acting on it (al-Hujurat 49:6) and the prohibition against following what one has no knowledge of (al-Isra' 17:36). Generative AI output often looks convincing yet can be wrong, including when it cites religious texts, so it needs to be treated like news whose source must be traced, not as an authority. The tradition of care in the transmission of reports can serve as an analogy here.

The third foundation is ihsan and muraqabah (awareness of being observed by God). The Hadith of Jibril (narrated by Muslim) defines ihsan as worshipping God as if one sees Him, and if one cannot, knowing that He sees. This awareness explains consistency of behavior when no audience is present, which is the core of the word integrity. In digital work it means being honest about the role of AI in a piece of work, being careful with student data, and keeping practice in the classroom aligned with the image on the screen. The fourth foundation is ikhlas, riya' (showing off), and tahaddus bi-l-ni'mah (speaking of God's blessings). The Qur'an condemns deeds done for show (for example, al-Baqarah 2:264) but also encourages speaking of the Lord's favors (ad-Duha 93:11). The difference lies in orientation: sharing for benefit and gratitude versus displaying for recognition. This distinction supports the position of TDFC as a boundary condition.

The fifth foundation covers exemplary conduct, human dignity, and maqasid. Teachers are role models (uswah hasanah; al-Ahzab 33:21), and human dignity (al-Isra' 17:70) is the reason AI must not replace educational relationships, moral judgment, and human accountability. The maqasid framework is used as an evaluative heuristic, as developed by Sanusi (2025) for the digitalization of Islamic education and by Mohadi and Tarshany (2023) for AI ethics: protection of religion (validity of religious content), life (children's safety and wellbeing), intellect (critical thinking and prevention of dependency), lineage (protection of children and families), and wealth (protection of data and resources). Hasnan et al. (2026) warn that AI use without normative guidance risks doctrinal distortion, cognitive dependency, and privacy violations, while Ahmad et al. (2025) show that adab (etiquette), amanah, ihsan, and intention can serve as a foundation for adolescents' digital competence. These findings reinforce the direction of the proposed foundations, although they do not yet touch teacher behavior.

The foundations are mapped onto four proposed DSI dimensions (Table 4). The indicators in the table are initial indicators for content validation and have not been tested.

Table 4. DSI dimensions, Islamic foundations, and examples of initial AI-related indicators

DSI dimension	Islamic foundation	Example of initial indicator
Spiritual value alignment	*Ikhlas*, *ihsan*, *muraqabah*	The intention to use AI is directed at the benefit of learning; digital behavior is consistent when no audience is present
Ethical digital behavior	*Amanah*, *tabayyun*, *hifz al-nafs*, *hifz al-mal*	Verifying AI output; not uploading student data or photos to AI platforms without permission; being open about AI use
Professional consistency	*Amanah*, honesty (*sidq*)	Social media claims match classroom practice; the role of AI in a piece of work is stated honestly
Pedagogical integrity	*Uswah hasanah*, *karamah insaniyyah*, *hifz al-'aql*	AI does not replace the teacher's relationship and judgment; AI use strengthens, not weakens, students' critical thinking

DSI differs from three neighboring constructs. It differs from religiosity because it assesses the application of values in digital action, not the degree of belief. It differs from digital competence because it does not measure technical ability. It differs from authenticity because it demands conformity with ethical standards and professional responsibility, not merely conformity with oneself. A teacher can be very devout yet careless with student data, very capable yet neglected verification, or very authentic yet fall short of pedagogical standards.

TDFC and AI-Based Visibility

Lu et al. (2024) show that self-presentation on social media can encourage social comparison and a tendency toward conspicuous consumption, and Nejadghanbar and Song (2025) show that platform metrics can become a new proxy for professional value. These findings are not transferred directly to madrasah teachers but are used as theoretical mechanisms. The argument is that AI strengthens the relevance of those mechanisms through three paths. First, AI lowers the cost of producing professional-looking content such as slides, teaching materials, videos, and visuals, so showable outputs become easier to make and can be detached from the depth of the learning process. Second, AI use itself can become a status symbol, for example through displaying the names of tools, training certificates, or an image as an AI-literate teacher. Third, impression and reaction metrics can shift attention from pedagogical goals to audience recognition. All three open the risk of a gap between what is displayed and what is practiced, which is the problem addressed by the consistency dimension of DSI.

TDFC is formulated as a pattern of teachers' digital self-presentation with six proposed dimensions: (1) display of professional status, (2) display of achievements, (3) display of lifestyle or material goods, (4) display of symbols or religiosity, (5) orientation toward digital recognition, and (6) display of technological and AI sophistication. The sixth dimension is added to make the link to AI explicit, but it should be treated with care at the validation stage. If exploratory

analysis does not support separating it, this dimension can be merged with the achievement dimension.

Normatively, TDFC is not automatically problematic. Sharing the results of AI-based learning with colleagues can be tahaddus bi-l-ni'mah that benefits the professional community. The problem arises when the orientation shifts to seeking recognition or status (riya'). Because orientation is inward and cannot be inferred from behavior alone, further research needs to measure it through items on the purpose of sharing and the expectation of recognition and, where possible, complement them with content analysis of posts.

Conceptual Model and Construct Architecture

The model (Figure 1) places spiritual leadership as the source of value orientation that shapes teachers' DSI. DSI serves as the mechanism that bridges that value orientation to educational quality along two paths: verified AI-based digital learning and professional culture. TDFC acts as a boundary condition on the relationship between these two paths and quality. The model deliberately does not add a direct path from spiritual leadership to quality as a main argument, because that relationship has already been studied at the level of the madrasah head (Sutrisno, 2024); what is asked here is the mechanism at the teacher level. AI is also not treated as a variable that automatically produces quality. Its influence depends on how teachers select, verify, adapt, and use its output for pedagogical purposes, and DSI serves as the normative compass in that process.

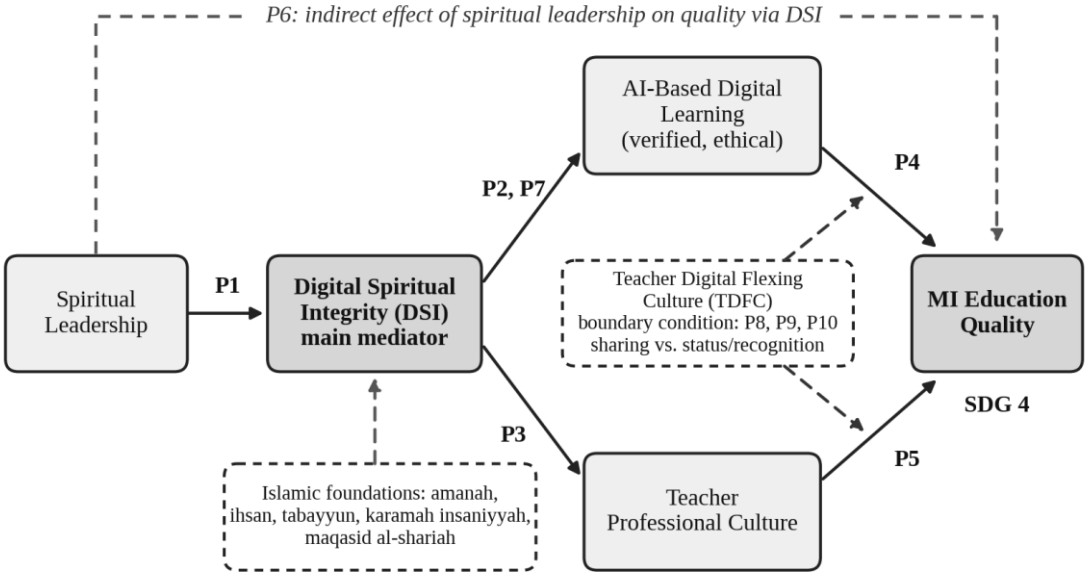


Figure 1. Conceptual model of Digital Spiritual Integrity for AI use by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers (P = proposition)

Table 5 summarizes the role, status, and initial dimensions of each construct. Two constructs, DSI and TDFC, are new and must undergo staged validation, whereas the other constructs are adapted from instruments that already have a validity basis.

Table 5. Construct architecture

Construct	Role	Status	Initial dimensions
Spiritual leadership	Predictor	Established/adapted	Vision; hope/faith; altruistic love
DSI	Main mediator	New/proposed	Value alignment; digital ethics; professional consistency; pedagogical integrity
AI-based digital learning	Mediator	Adapted	Planning; implementation; evaluation; feedback; verification of AI output
Professional culture	Mediator	Adapted	Collaboration; professional learning; responsibility; quality culture
TDFC	Boundary condition	New/proposed	Status; achievement; lifestyle; symbolic/religious; recognition; AI sophistication
Educational quality	Outcome	Adapted	Instructional quality; learning engagement; teacher performance; innovation; quality culture

Theoretical Propositions and Their Foundations

The model contains three kinds of relationship. Direct paths (P1 to P5) link adjacent constructs. Indirect paths (P6 and P7) state that DSI carries the influence of spiritual leadership to the downstream constructs. Moderation (P8 to P10) states that TDFC changes the strength of the two paths into educational quality. Each proposition is stated below, and Table 6 gives its relationship type, theoretical rationale, and a testing approach so that its consistency and testability can be judged.

P1. Spiritual leadership is positively related to teachers' DSI.

P2. DSI is positively related to the quality of AI-based digital learning.

P3. DSI is positively related to teachers' professional culture.

P4. The quality of AI-based digital learning is positively related to educational quality.

P5. Professional culture is positively related to educational quality.

P6. Spiritual leadership is related to educational quality indirectly through DSI and its two downstream paths (AI-based digital learning and professional culture).

P7. DSI mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and the quality of AI-based digital learning.

P8. TDFC moderates the relationship between the quality of AI-based digital learning and educational quality: the relationship is stronger when a sharing-of-practice orientation is high (P8a) and weaker when status, material, recognition, or AI-sophistication display is high (P8b).

P9. TDFC moderates the relationship between professional culture and educational quality in the same dimension-specific direction as P8.

P10. The moderating effect of TDFC is dimension-specific, so TDFC should be modeled by its dimensions and not as a single score.

Table 6. Propositions, theoretical rationale, and testing approach

No.	Relationship	Theoretical rationale	Testing approach
P1	Direct	Vision, hope, and altruistic love build a sense of calling and membership (Fry, 2003; Fry et al., 2005); the leader's exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*) transmits value orientation	Structural path; spiritual leadership scale adapted from Fry et al. (2005)
P2	Direct	Verification (*tabayyun*) and trust (*amanah*) govern how AI output is selected and checked; UNESCO (2024) places ethics and a human-centered mindset within AI competence	Structural path; new AI-learning quality scale including verification of output
P3	Direct	Values-consistent conduct supports responsibility and a quality culture (cf. Sutrisno, 2024)	Structural path
P4	Direct	AI supports learning when used for pedagogical purposes under teacher control (Arifudin & Akil, 2025; UNESCO, 2023)	Structural path
P5	Direct	Professional culture is linked to quality in madrasah (Sutrisno, 2024)	Structural path
P6	Indirect (serial)	The leader-quality link is already studied at the madrasah-head level (Sutrisno, 2024); the open question is the teacher-level mechanism	Bootstrapped indirect effects; no direct path is hypothesized
P7	Mediation	Follows from P1 and P2: values reach AI practice through integrity	Bootstrapped indirect effect
P8	Moderation	Platform metrics can become proxies for professional value (Nejadghanbar & Song, 2025); the distinction between *tahaddus bi-l-ni'mah* and *riya'* predicts opposite directions	Interaction terms by TDFC dimension; orientation items plus interviews and content analysis
P9	Moderation	Sharing supports collaboration, whereas status display can displace pedagogical goals (Davis & Yi, 2022)	Interaction terms by TDFC dimension
P10	Dimension-specific	Self-presentation can foster comparison and conspicuous display (Lu et al., 2024), while orientation cannot be inferred from behavior alone	Dimension-level models; test whether a six-factor or merged structure fits

Discussion

From Competence to Integrity

The most fundamental implication of this model is the need to distinguish competence from integrity. Revuelta-Domínguez et al. (2022) show how wide the spectrum of digital teaching competence is, and Tzafilkou et al. (2023) integrate pedagogical and professional elements into their measurement instrument. Yet both answer whether teachers can use technology, not whether their use can be justified. The difference becomes sharp with generative AI, because its output looks convincing and requires the very verification that technical skills do not ask for. The UNESCO (2024) framework has in fact already built ethics and a human-centered mindset into teachers' AI competence. DSI adds something absent from that framework, namely an explicit source of values. For MI teachers, that source is amanah, tabayyun, and ihsan, not merely a list of principles to be obeyed.

This position also distinguishes the model from the existing stream of Islamic AI ethics. Mohadi and Tarshany (2023), Sanusi (2025), Hasnan et al. (2026), and Johari (2026) offer maqasid frameworks useful for technology designers, policymakers, and institutional managers. DSI complements them from a different direction, namely from the teacher's workplace. A madrasah's AI policy is only as good as the habits of the teachers who carry it out. At that point, questions about honesty in naming AI's role, the habit of checking religious citations before using them, and care with student data become matters of everyday behavior, not merely the contents of a policy document.

Spiritual Leadership as Value Infrastructure

In this model, spiritual leadership is treated as value infrastructure, not an additional variable. Fry (2003) and Fry et al. (2005) explain that vision, hope, and altruistic love build a sense of calling and membership. When the madrasah head affirms a vision, sets an example, and instills a sense of responsibility, those values can be translated into teachers' digital practice. Sutrisno (2024) shows that combining Islamic spiritual values and technology-based leadership can be linked to educational quality in madrasah. This model extends the focus from the madrasah head to teachers' digital behavior, so the question shifts from "does leadership affect quality" to "through what behavior does that influence reach the classroom."

This role also carries a practical message. Teachers rarely reject technology because they do not want to learn; more often they do not know the limits their institution considers appropriate. A madrasah head who openly states how AI may and may not be used, including by giving examples, fills that gap more effectively than a general prohibition. Propositions P1 and P7 test this possibility.

AI as a Strengthener, not a Replacement for Teachers

The model positions AI as a strengthener of learning capacity. Teachers still determine learning goals, choose sources, judge the fit of AI output, understand their students, and build educational relationships. Arifudin and Akil (2025) reach a similar conclusion: AI can support personalized and efficient learning without replacing the teacher's role in moral and spiritual formation. Johari (2026) reinforces it from the side of dependency, positioning AI as a complementary tool that must not displace human moral reasoning and pedagogical leadership.

In the language of the Islamic foundations, this is a consequence of karamah insaniyyah. Moral judgment and accountability belong to humans, so the parts of a teacher's work that concern the accuracy of religious evidence, the treatment of children, and value judgments cannot be handed fully to a machine. MI students, who still need intensive guidance, make this principle all the more important. AI use in the classroom should be controlled by the teacher and accompanied by a human-in-the-loop mechanism, meaning the teacher checks, adjusts, and takes responsibility for AI output before it reaches the child. Further research needs to test not only how often AI is used but how it is used and with what checks.

TDFC: Between Sharing and Showing Off

Why is TDFC placed as a moderator and not as an outcome already judged negative? Because teachers do need to share. Good practices, student work, and classroom innovations that are shared can promote learning among teachers, and the literature on teachers on Instagram shows that community and professional development functions run alongside commercialization (Davis & Yi, 2022). The authenticity that teachers negotiate on social media is likewise not automatically problematic (Nejadghanbar & Shaahdadi, 2025). The theoretical problem lies in orientation. When visibility turns into the pursuit of status and social validation, and when platform metrics begin to replace pedagogical goals (Nejadghanbar & Song, 2025), the relationship between the quality of digital learning and educational quality may weaken. The distinction between tahaddus bi-l-ni'mah and riya' gives normative language to this difference and a reason for madrasah to draft social media guidelines that are developmental, not merely supervisory.

One important note concerns measurement. Intention cannot be read from a post. Two teachers can upload the same photo, one to share how they teach and one to be admired. Further research should therefore combine orientation items in questionnaires with interviews and content analysis. Without these steps, TDFC risks being read as a moral label on teachers, which this article is trying to avoid.

Relevance of the Madrasah Context and the Region

The model emerges from the context of madrasah ibtidaiyah in Indonesia, but its discussion does not stop there. Several studies published in Indonesian journals (Amilusholihah & Ramadhan, 2025; Arifudin & Akil, 2025; Hermawan et al., 2025) and Malaysian journals (Ahmad et al., 2025; Johari, 2026; Taha et al., 2025) move on overlapping themes, namely the use of AI and digital technology in Islamic education with attention to ethics, intellect, and trust. This overlap shows that questions about teacher integrity are not specific to one country but a shared need of Islamic educational institutions in the region. Differences in conditions still need attention. State and private madrasah, urban and rural areas, and unequal infrastructure readiness may change the strength of relationships in the model. Further research across madrasah and, where possible, across countries will therefore test whether DSI functions similarly in different contexts or needs its indicators adjusted.

Original Contribution Relative to Previous Findings

It is worth stating plainly what this article does not claim as new. That AI brings both benefits and risks to Islamic education (Amilusholihah & Ramadhan, 2025; Muhammad, 2025),

that maqasid can be used to evaluate digitalization (Mohadi & Tarshany, 2023; Sanusi, 2025), that spiritual leadership is related to quality in madrasah (Sutrisno, 2024), that digital competence is multidimensional (Revuelta-Domínguez et al., 2022), and that platform metrics reshape professionalism (Nejadghanbar & Song, 2025) are findings on which the model builds.

The original contribution lies in four moves that these findings do not make by themselves. First, DSI shifts the level of analysis. Jobin et al. (2019) show that AI ethics principles converge yet diverge in interpretation and implementation, and Holmes et al. (2022) distinguish doing ethical things from doing things ethically. DSI takes that implementation gap to the teacher and answers it with a value source, not with another list of principles. Second, DSI defines integrity as consistency between practice and representation, which neither competence frameworks nor maqasid frameworks measure. Third, TDFC is theorized as conditional and not as negative in itself, in contrast with accounts that foreground commercialization (Davis & Yi, 2022). Fourth, the argument is placed in madrasah ibtidaiyah, where the literature reviewed is thinnest.

Points of tension remain. UNESCO (2024) treats ethics as one competency among others, whereas DSI treats it as the source from which competent use should be judged; whether the two are empirically separable is what tests of discriminant validity must show. Jobin et al. (2019) also warn that principles are interpreted differently across contexts, so an Islamic grounding is one situated interpretation and not a universal standard. Finally, the novelty claimed here is conceptual. Until DSI and TDFC are validated, the model should be read as a structured hypothesis.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the model extends spiritual leadership theory from the focus on leaders and organizations to the mechanism of teachers' digital professional behavior, offers DSI as a construct linking spiritual values with ethical and pedagogical digital behavior, and positions TDFC as a professional-cultural construct that allows testing of variation in the effects of digital visibility. An interesting direction for further research is to test whether DSI is also an antecedent of TDFC orientation, that is, whether teachers with high DSI tend toward a sharing orientation. This relationship is not included as a proposition to keep the model lean, but it deserves separate testing.

Practically, there are four implications. First, madrasah heads need to develop exemplary conduct and AI-use policies that combine competence, ethics, privacy, verification of information, and responsibility. Second, teacher professional development needs to go beyond technical training to AI ethics literacy, source verification, pedagogical design, and digital reflection. Third, madrasah social media guidelines should be educative and developmental. Fourth, quality indicators for digital policy can be linked to SDG 4. Within that framework, AI and digitalization contribute to quality, inclusive, and relevant education (United Nations, 2015), not because of the technology itself, but when it is used to improve learning quality, support differentiation, and strengthen teacher professionalism without sacrificing ethics, privacy, and human agency.

Research Agenda and Limitations

Empirical validation can proceed in stages so that the two new constructs are not burdened with untested assumptions. The first stage is content validation by seven to ten experts from Islamic education management, primary education, educational technology, Islamic ethics, and

psychometrics, followed by cognitive interviews with five to eight teachers to reduce social desirability bias. The next stage is a pilot study of roughly 80 to 120 teachers for exploratory analysis of the dimensional structure, followed by a main study of roughly 350 to 500 teachers from several MI and state MI (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri, MIN) in different regions to test the model through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) or partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM). Because teachers are nested in madrasah, multilevel modeling should be considered. Tests of discriminant validity, common method bias, and social desirability bias need particular attention because DSI and TDFC concern sensitive behavior. Follow-up qualitative studies are needed to understand how teachers make sense of AI, spirituality, and digital visibility in everyday life.

The limitations of this article need to be stated plainly. The model is conceptual and has no data, so its propositions should be read as theoretical hypotheses. DSI and TDFC are new constructs whose dimensions may change after validation. Part of the literature on teacher identity on social media comes from language teachers or influencer teachers, so direct generalization to MI is not justified. The grounding in Islamic concepts is normative-conceptual and requires review by experts in exegesis, hadith, and jurisprudence. Finally, the link to SDG 4 is a conceptual implication and not a direct measurement of SDG 4 indicators.

Conclusion

This article proposes Digital Spiritual Integrity (DSI) as a teacher-level mechanism that links spiritual leadership to the quality of AI-supported learning. Its main theoretical contribution is threefold. It relocates Islamic AI ethics from system-level frameworks to teachers' everyday decisions, it defines integrity as consistency between practice and digital representation, and it treats Teacher Digital Flexing Culture (TDFC) as a boundary condition whose direction depends on an orientation of sharing or of seeking recognition. The ten propositions are theoretical and await validation of both new constructs.

For madrasah educational management, the implications are specific. Madrasah heads should issue AI-use guidelines that name values teachers already know (amanah, tabayyun, ihsan), model their application, and require human-in-the-loop checking of AI output before it reaches children. Teacher development programs should add AI ethics, source verification, and student-data protection to technical training. Social media guidelines should separate sharing practice from seeking recognition and be developmental rather than punitive. Quality assurance can add integrity indicators to the monitoring of digital policy, linked to SDG 4. The next step is to validate the DSI and TDFC instruments and test the model across madrasah.

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