> ***Translator's note.*** *This is an unofficial English translation of a Turkish-language research article, prepared for reading and reference. The original is: Edip Akyol, "Klasik Siyerin Dijital Anlatımı: Tematik Analiz, Bağlam ve Dijital Pedagojik Dönüşüm," Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 13/2 (September 2026): 83–111, DOI 10.46353/k7auifd.1900861. The original is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) license; this translation is an adaptation shared under the same terms. The English abstract is the author's own and is reproduced as published. Footnotes are collected as endnotes. Bibliographic entries keep original titles; only connective terms (e.g., "ed.", "trans.", "accessed") are rendered in English. Bracketed [TN: …] remarks are the translator's.*

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# Digital Representation of the Classical Sīra: Thematic Analysis, Contextualization and Digital Pedagogical Transformation[1]

*Original title: Klasik Siyerin Dijital Anlatımı: Tematik Analiz, Bağlam ve Dijital Pedagojik Dönüşüm*

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## ABSTRACT (TRANSLATED FROM THE TURKISH *ÖZ*)

In today's world, digitalization is bringing about profound ontological and epistemological changes in the production, circulation, preservation and reception of knowledge. In transmitting religious knowledge to new generations—and in particular the sīra, the foundational text of Islamic history—this transformation makes necessary pedagogical approaches that push the limits of traditional methods and place modern learning paradigms at the center. In the Islamic educational tradition, the sīra has from the very beginning never been perceived merely as a chronological historical narrative or as a mass of information about the past. On the contrary, it has served a central function in building individual character,

transmitting social values, and presenting a normative ideal human model (*al-uswa al-ḥasana*). However, the one-way mode of transmission of classical teaching methods—largely text-centered and dependent on passive listening or memorization—is steadily losing its effectiveness among today's students, who form their cognitive habits in front of digital screens, operate within an eye-centered paradigm, and connect with interactive knowledge. The real crisis in current sīra teaching, especially at the high-school and higher-education levels, is not so much a lack of historical information as the failure of theoretically learned values to be reflected in practice. This leads to a marked pedagogical rupture and a widening semantic distance between the depth of classical sīra literature and the learning styles of new-generation minds.

Taking this fundamental problem as its point of departure, the main aim of this research is to propose “Digital Sīra Pedagogy” (DSP) as an instructional design: an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that moves sīra teaching beyond mere content delivery or knowledge transfer and restructures it using the technological possibilities of the digital age and the findings of the cognitive sciences. The core objective is to transform historical information into ethical principles that resonate with today's students and turn into action. As a concrete field application of this model, the article centers on the multilingual digital curriculum “Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection,” developed by the Criterion Concepts initiative founded by Assad Koshul. The thematic scene-analysis method carried out through excerpts from the high-production series *Omar* (Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar), which form part of this curriculum's instructional design, is described in detail. In this design, digital materials are not used as simple visual stimuli; rather, they are placed, in a case-study format, at the heart of an in-depth pedagogical analysis shaped by the teacher's guidance.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of the research rests on Richard E. Mayer's “Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning,” which advocates the simultaneous use of visual and auditory channels, and David A. Kolb's four-stage “Experiential Learning Cycle,” which is based on the transformation of knowledge into experience. In the context of Mayer's theory, visual and auditory data function as a cognitive scaffold in the student's mind, facilitating comprehension. The scene-analysis process integrated into Kolb's learning cycle, meanwhile, never takes place in a vacuum; it is always built upon the historical context previously established by the teacher and the level of cognitive readiness the teacher has provided, and it guides students through the stages of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The synthesis of these two theoretical approaches provides a theoretical grounding for how a digital visual (a scene) can be turned into an object of academic analysis and, from there, into a process of moral inquiry. The study uses document review and thematic content analysis, which are qualitative research designs.

The findings show that scene-based instructional design shaped within the Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP) framework goes beyond classical pedagogy, which presents

events as a sequential chronicle. The model has the capacity to move the student from the position of an outside spectator to that of an active subject who personally produces meaning. This reflective observation process, in which visual and auditory data are processed together, directly supports the development of higher-order cognitive skills by enabling students to relate critical turning points in the life of the Prophet to their own modern ethical problems. One of the most important results of the study is that the dynamic structure offered by DSP supports “Virtue-Value” construction and provides a strong foundation for closing the gap between abstract theoretical acceptances in the student's mind and concrete actions in practical life. In conclusion, this research does not reduce the digitalization of sīra teaching to the technical use of screens; it presents it as a scalable, modern subject-education practice, consistent with universal constructivist educational principles, that aims to turn the sīra into an active, action-oriented process of character building.

**Keywords:** Islamic History, Digital Sīra Pedagogy, Scene-Based Learning, Experiential Learning, Character Building, Thematic Analysis.

## ABSTRACT (AUTHOR'S ENGLISH ABSTRACT, AS PUBLISHED)[2]

Digitalisation has brought significant ontological and epistemological changes to how knowledge is produced, circulated, preserved, and received. This shift requires pedagogical approaches that move beyond traditional methods and adopt modern learning paradigms to transmit religious knowledge, particularly the sīra (the foundational text of Islamic history), to new generations of learners. Within the Islamic educational tradition, sīra has never been understood merely as a chronological historical narrative or as a repository of information about the past. Instead, it has served as a central educational tool for individual character building, the transmission of societal values, and the presentation of a normative ideal human model (al-uswa al-ḥasana). However, the predominantly text-centric, one-way transmission model of classical teaching -which relies heavily on passive listening and rote memorization- is gradually losing its effectiveness. Today's students develop their cognitive habits within interactive and highly visual digital environments, demanding more participatory forms of education. In the context of high schools and higher education, the main challenge in current sīra education is not a lack of historical information. Rather, it is the persistent difficulty of translating theoretically learned values into practical, everyday life. This situation creates a distinct pedagogical disconnect and a widening semantic gap between classical sīra literature and modern learning habits. To address this specific issue, this study aims to move sīra education beyond basic content delivery. It proposes an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, “Digital Sīra Pedagogy” (DSP), designed to utilize digital technologies and insights from cognitive sciences as a modern instructional design. The goal is to transform historical facts into actionable ethical guidelines that resonate with contemporary students. As a concrete field application of this theoretical model, the study focuses on the multilingual digital curriculum “Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection,” developed by the Criterion Concepts

initiative. Specifically, the study examines the thematic scene analysis method, which uses selected excerpts from the historical television series Omar (‘Umar) within this instructional design. In this framework, digital video materials are not used as simple visual stimuli. Instead, they serve as the basis for in-depth pedagogical analysis in a case study format, carefully guided by the teacher acting as a moderator. The research is conceptually grounded in two major educational theories: Richard E. Mayer's “Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning,” which advocates the simultaneous use of visual and auditory channels, and David A. Kolb's four-stage “Experiential Learning Cycle,” which focuses on transforming knowledge into experience. According to Mayer's theory, visual and auditory data act as a cognitive scaffold, facilitating the student's comprehension process. Furthermore, the scene analysis process in Kolb's cycle builds directly upon the historical context and “cognitive readiness” previously established by the teacher, guiding students through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The synthesis of these two theoretical approaches conceptually grounds how a digital visual (scene) can be transformed into an object of academic analysis and, subsequently, into an ethical inquiry process. This qualitative study utilizes document analysis and thematic content analysis techniques. The findings indicate that scene-based instructional design within the DSP framework successfully moves beyond classical pedagogy, which often presents historical events as a sequential chronicle. The DSP model encourages students to shift from being external observers to becoming active participants who personally generate meaning. This reflective observation process integrates visual and auditory data, directly supporting the development of higher-order cognitive skills by allowing students to relate critical decision-making moments in the Prophet's life to their own modern ethical dilemmas. Moreover, the DSP structure supports “Virtue-Value” construction and provides a practical framework to bridge the gap between abstract educational theories and concrete moral actions. Ultimately, this research presents the digitalisation of sīra education not merely as technical screen usage in the classroom, but as a scalable educational application aligned with constructivist principles, aiming to transform sīra instruction into an action-oriented character-building process.

**Keywords:** Islamic History, Digital Seerah Pedagogy, Islamic Education, Scene Analysis, Cognitive Multimedia Learning, Experiential Learning.

## INTRODUCTION

The *Sīrat al-Nabī* (the Prophet's biography) is a foundational point of reference for the religious memory, identity formation, normative value system and social orientation of Islamic societies. Having shaped Muslims' understanding of character, authority, justice and collective responsibility over the centuries, this accumulated body of knowledge has served as a living guide in many fields, from jurisprudence to education. Indeed, the Islamic scholars of the classical period (jurists and philosophers) approached the sīra not merely as a series of events but in a highly analytical way—drawing meaning from the text, constructing analogies to contemporary problems and generating moral values. At the same time, the report-centered (*riwāya*-based) historiography built by authors such as Ibn Saʿd, al-Balādhurī, Ibn Isḥāq, al-Wāqidī and al-Ṭabarī is unquestionably indispensable for the reliable transmission of sīra knowledge to our day. However, when this transmissive structure—whose real purpose was to preserve historical data—is cut off from the high-level analytical depth of the Islamic intellectual tradition and turned, in today's mainstream school curricula, into a mass of information based directly on memorization, it limits students' ability to build context between events and to analyze them. Today this reductive transmission model is being seriously tested by the profile of the learner of the digital age. Yet visual media or interactive digital platforms put forward to overcome this inefficiency are not, in themselves, magic formulas that create analytical thinking; ultimately, they are tools dependent on the teacher's pedagogical vision. Moreover, visualizing a sīra scene carries the risk of narrowing the viewer's perspective by imposing the producer's (director's/screenwriter's) own mental limits and personal interpretation. It is precisely at this point that Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP)—which differs from a mere practice of "digital viewing"—offers an analytical framework that decodes the construction within the visual through deepening and reflective questions applied under the teacher's guidance, moving the student out of the role of passive recipient of the visual and turning the scene into an object of critical analysis. The ultimate goal is to repair the ever-deepening "pedagogical rupture" between the sīra and the meaning-making processes of new-generation minds, without harming the spirit of the sīra.

A review of the relevant literature shows that academic studies on digitalization in sīra teaching and religious education are concentrated in certain areas. Studies in the first group focus mostly on sīra methodology and historical development,[3] while those in the second group discuss the content analysis and pedagogical adequacy of textbooks. A third group of studies falls under the heading of "digital religious education,"[4] but generally treats digitalization as a "tool." No study was found in the literature that directly examines digital curricula through scene-based analysis, or holistically examines contemporary thematic-analysis-oriented teaching models, or proposes a systematic discipline under the name "Digital Sīra Pedagogy." It must be emphasized at this point that restructuring sīra teaching requires the inclusion not

only of historical data but also of other disciplines. Indeed, in Islamic historiography the role of sciences such as sociology, psychology, economics and politics is no less than that of chronology or paleography. By implementing this interdisciplinary vision through digital tools, Digital Sīra Pedagogy makes possible a multidimensional analysis of phenomena. Instead of a historical narrative trapped in the question "what happened," a holistic approach that examines the cause-and-effect relationships, social dynamics and psychological dimensions of phenomena provides the depth of meaning the modern learner needs.

Rather than merely filling an existing gap in the literature, this study aims to build the field's own literature and to concretize the interdisciplinary vision mentioned above; to this end it centers on the contemporary digital curriculum (educational model) titled "Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection." Although the roots of visual sīra narrative go back to Mustafa Akkad's film *The Message* (*Çağrı*), today's digital pedagogy aims to transform this legacy from a single film into a sustainable, inquiry-based curriculum (as in the example of the *Omar* series). This curriculum, which uses the *Omar* series as its primary visual and narrative source, is worth examining for showing how scenes are pedagogically mobilized through thematic organization, inquiry prompts and reflective tasks. Arguing that the solution does not consist merely of transferring classical texts to digital platforms, the study introduces the 'Digital Sīra Pedagogy' (DSP) model as an original theoretical framework proposed to the literature by the author. As a concrete field application of this theoretical foundation, the digital curriculum "Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection," developed by the Criterion Concepts initiative (Assad Koshul), was examined and the program's alignment with DSP principles was analyzed.[5] By examining this curriculum with qualitative methods, the research aims to reveal how digitalization carries sīra teaching from a transmissive model to an active and transformative learning process.

## Method

**Research Design:** This study is designed according to the "Case Study" design,[6] one of the qualitative research approaches, focusing on the pedagogical structure and meaning-construction processes in sīra education. The primary focus of the research is not to measure learning outcomes with quantitative data but to understand how classical sīra knowledge is pedagogically reconstructed in contemporary digital learning environments. In this respect, the study is fully consistent with the tradition of qualitative educational research that prioritizes interpretation, contextual analysis and conceptual coherence.[7] The "Criterion Concepts" curriculum,[8] chosen to represent the research universe, was treated as a "bounded system," and through this case study the theoretical and practical coherence of the "Digital Sīra Pedagogy" (DSP) model proposed by the author was analyzed. The research is also positioned at the intersection of the disciplines of religious education, digital pedagogy and curriculum studies, and treats sīra teaching not as mere content transfer but as a structured learning experience shaped by specific pedagogical assumptions.

**Data Sources and Corpus:** The primary data source of the research is the digital curriculum titled ‘Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection,’ developed by Assad Koshul (Criterion Concepts), whose visual/narrative foundation is the television series ‘Omar.’[9] Before proceeding to the analysis, it is essential to state that this series, used as a dataset, is not merely an artistic and commercial fiction but a thematic work that passed through the historical and scholarly oversight of an expert board. Indeed, the curriculum under examination is structured on the basis of this series, using its scenes and narrative arcs as pedagogical entry points. Accordingly, the study treats ‘Omar’ not simply as a historical drama but as a “visualized sīra corpus” that reproduces classical narratives through contemporary digital storytelling. The secondary dataset consists of the instructional guidelines and supplementary materials in the Learning Management System (LMS), the digital platform through which the curriculum is delivered to students. These digital contents were incorporated into the process in the context of data triangulation in order to analyze the pedagogical coherence of the proposed Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP) model.

**Analytical Framework:** The analysis was conducted through an integrated, three-layer qualitative framework whose parts complement one another:

- **Thematic Analysis:** This layer focuses on identifying and categorizing recurring themes in selected sīra scenes, such as leadership, justice, *shūrā* (consultation), moral responsibility, patience and social order. The themes were examined not in isolation but relationally—how they are pedagogically framed and revisited in different contexts.
- **Contextual Interpretation:** Beyond thematic identification, this layer analyzes how historical cases are situated within their own circumstances in the instructional design. Particular attention was paid to how communal pressure, political constraints, ethical dilemmas and conditions of uncertainty are made visible to the student, thereby enabling classical sīra narratives to connect meaningfully with contemporary moral and educational issues. For example, in the guidelines for the relevant lesson (Lesson 33) of the Criterion Concepts curriculum, the Quraysh leaders' violation of the tribal values they held most sacred, for the sake of protecting their own political authority, is not glossed over as a mere historical fact. It is analyzed through the political-science concept of ‘political interest/opportunism,’ and students are enabled to relate this historical hypocrisy to the value erosion experienced by today's modern institutions (for example, violations of press freedom and freedom of expression) (context transfer).[10]
- **Pedagogical Transformation:** The final layer of analysis examines how digital tools—such as scene-based learning, multimedia integration, inquiry prompts and LMS-supported reflection—transform traditional text-centered sīra teaching into an inquiry-focused, student-centered pedagogical model.

**Analysis Process:** The analysis was carried out in three successive stages. First, representative scenes relating to core pedagogical themes and decision-making moments were selected from the series on Ḥaḍrat ʻUmar (Omar ibn al-Khattab). In the second stage, the curriculum materials associated with these scenes were subjected to qualitative document review, focusing on instructional design, inquiry questions and reflective tasks. In the third stage, the identified themes and pedagogical patterns were interpreted in light of the literature on religious education and digital pedagogy. Rather than describing the entire curriculum scene by scene, the study prioritizes analytical depth aimed at uncovering the underlying pedagogical logic.

**Limitations:** This research is limited to the analysis of a single digital curriculum and its primary visual source. The study does not include empirical data on students' performance, perceptions or long-term learning outcomes. Nevertheless, by focusing on curriculum design and epistemological orientation, the research provides a conceptual and analytical foundation for future empirical research on digital sīra education and pedagogical innovation in Islamic educational contexts.

## 1. CLASSICAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE PEDAGOGICAL LIMITS OF SĪRA TEACHING

Classical sīra literature took shape within the broad framework of Islamic historiography, which was deeply concerned with the accurate preservation and transmission of knowledge. Early authors such as Ibn Isḥāq,[11] al-Wāqidī,[12] Ibn Saʻd[13] and al-Ṭabarī[14] treated the sīra primarily as a historical corpus whose epistemic reliability rested on sound chains of transmission (*isnād*) and chronological consistency. Within this paradigm, the principal scholarly task was to document events faithfully and place them in a reliable timeline.

This epistemological orientation also deeply shaped the way the sīra has been taught over the course of history. Looking back to the origins of sīra teaching, one sees that the classical pedagogy formed in the first five centuries after the Hijra relied largely on narration and dictation (*imlā'*). This memorization-centered system, in which the student was a passive recipient and the teacher an absolute transmitter, was successful in its own era because it served juristic and political purposes; today, however, it can remain limited to establishing only a reverence-based, one-way relationship with the Prophetic actions.[15] Indeed, in the literature Islamic pedagogy is defined less as technical knowledge transfer than in terms of 'heart-to-heart interactions between teacher and student, oral culture and the memorization of sacred texts.' As Hardaker and Sabki note, learning in this tradition is shaped by a didactic approach that facilitates memory.[16] However, this approach based on memorization and chronology is also a subject of serious criticism in modern studies of Islamic historical methodology. For example, Şaban Öz likens treating history solely as a series of consecutive events to the past of a calendar.[17] According to Öz, historiography has moved from a narration of history in the form of events listed

chronologically one under another to an era of situating phenomena. In this context, the fact that what is essential in history is not mere transmission but interpretation and philosophy makes it necessary for the sīra to be placed on an analytical footing.[18] Similarly, Adnan Demircan draws attention to the problem of “fragments cut off from the whole,” noting that a purely chronological narration that does not center the subject can prevent a sound evaluation of the period.[19] Although these criticisms in the literature are directed at sīra “historiography” and the mode of presentation in the sources, the fact that sīra curricula and textbooks in our educational system are largely designed as linear summaries of these sources (history books) has carried the chronological limitations of historiography directly into classroom teaching (pedagogy). Thus, the classical sources' excessive focus on the question “what happened?” and on chronological flow has fixed modern course content at the same level and prevented learners from seeing the multidimensional relationships behind phenomena.

Today's sīra curricula theoretically aim to lead students toward analytical thinking by setting objectives based on ‘learning outcomes/achievements’ rather than mere knowledge transfer. However, existing research and textbook reviews in the religious-education literature show that, despite these objectives in the official programs, traditional chronological-transmission reflexes still dominate in the structure of textbooks and in classroom teaching practices. From an educational perspective, the transmission-centered habits that persist in this gap between the curriculum's theoretical goals and classroom practice have various limitations in contemporary learning contexts. First, the cognitive processes underlying Prophetic decisions generally remain implicit. Students encounter historical outcomes, but they lack systematic guidance for examining the reasoning processes, alternatives, constraints or ethical tensions that shaped those outcomes. Leadership, strategy and moral reasoning are present at the core of the sīra, but they are rarely brought to the fore as objects of structured analysis. Second, this transmissive model offers limited support for ‘context transfer.’ While students may feel admiration for the Prophetic character, they may struggle to apply sīra principles to modern situations involving institutional leadership, intra-communal conflict or moral uncertainty. Third, the authority-centered nature of classical transmission can hinder inquiry and discovery. As a result, students settle for developing merely a culture of reverence without acquiring the analytical tools necessary for reasoning and action.

It must be stressed that these limitations do not stem from any deficiency in the sīra itself. On the contrary, classical sīra literature contains rich insights on strategic foresight, crisis management and community building. What is missing are the pedagogical scaffolds that would make these dimensions cognitively explicit and visible to learners. This gap points to a pedagogical, not a textual, problem. In this context, the epistemic limitation highlighted by Assad Koshul, the designer and education strategist of the curriculum in question, is very apt: presenting the sīra only as a chronological story has made it difficult for Muslims to internalize the Prophet's legacy as a functional model through which they can think about current

life and contemporary crises. In Koshul's words, the sīra has often been taught as ‘passive history,’ and aspects such as decision analysis, strategic thinking, leadership, emotional balance and cognitive resilience have not been sufficiently addressed.[20]

In the cognitive world of a new generation that makes sense of the world through screens (audio-visually) and has interactive learning habits, this passive, transmission-centered classical model creates a serious pedagogical blockage. Examined in the context of the educational-sciences literature, classical sīra teaching is seen to predominantly bear the features of the ‘Subject-Centered Curriculum Design’ conceptualized by Ornstein and Hunkins. In this traditional design, the teacher is the expert who transmits knowledge directly, while the student is the passive recipient of knowledge.[21] Carried out through direct lecturing and memorization of topics, this process falls short in modern educational paradigms because it leaves students' interests and needs in the background and makes no room for current social developments. This picture, rooted in the limits of traditional epistemology, makes necessary a fundamental paradigm shift in sīra teaching—not merely at the level of tools, but at the level of mindset. It is here that ‘Digital Sīra Pedagogy,’ as conceptualized in this study, emerges as a holistic solution model formulated precisely to overcome this pedagogical blockage.

## 2. DIGITALIZATION AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF SĪRA LEARNING

Digitalization entails a fundamental ontological change in the nature of religious discourse. In the space of digital culture, the religious phenomenon is shifting from an oral/textual structure into a visual and dramaturgical object of representation. In new-generation minds, meaning is now constructed less through successive words than through successive images. Yet this visualization also brings with it the risk that religion, stripped of its sacred essence, will become a mere object of spectacle.[22] As Abdulaziz Kıranşal notes, AI-supported simulations in particular—by reducing miracles to mere supernatural visual effects or producing images that exceed the limits of representation—carry serious theological risks that clash with Islam's historical sensitivities and damage the traditional conception of the prophet.[23]

In this process of transformation, Neil Postman's warning through the concept of “Technopoly” is of vital importance. For Postman, technology is not a neutral tool but an ideology that redefines cultural codes, symbols and the perception of reality. Digitalization carries the risk of fragmenting the grand story of the sīra and turning it into a context-less heap of information.[24] Kıranşal carries this ideological threat into the specific domain of the sīra, drawing attention to the transhumanist and secular philosophical underpinnings of algorithms. This structure threatens to reduce events such as Badr or Ḥudaybiya—in which revelation directly intervened—to mere military or diplomatic successes, turning the sīra into an ordinary historical narrative severed from its normative and divine dimension.[25]

Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP) constitutes a point of resistance precisely against this multi-layered danger. Rather than rejecting technology, DSP manages it through the disciplines of inquiry and contextualization, aiming to eliminate the risk Postman points to—culture's surrender to technology—and to reconstruct the sīra within a meaningful whole. This pedagogical resistance is essential for a new generation that forms its cognitive habits and learning practices in front of digital screens. This new situation, also described in contemporary media studies as the ‘eye-centric paradigm,’ has meant that meaning and truth have become phenomena that are largely seen and watched, not merely heard. DSP therefore reconstructs the sīra, in an age dominated by visual culture, as a deep way of seeing and understanding that speaks to the perceptual world of today's student yet does not imprison it in the superficiality of the visual. This reconstruction is not merely a generational matter but also a global ‘digital religion’ phenomenon. The digitalization of the sacred is a defining characteristic of postmodern social change. This process of the ‘digital simulation of the sacred,’ discussed in the literature through examples such as ‘Virtual Hajj,’ shows that even physical and spatial acts of worship can be carried into digital space.[26] The process rests on an even broader foundation with the concept of ‘Digital Preaching’ (*Dijital Tebliğcilik*). According to Oyman, this new form of communication through digital platforms such as Netflix is reformulating existing religious discourse and transforming belief practices and individuals' perception of the sacred.[27] In this context, sīra teaching, by reconstructing historical and spiritual reality through digital scenes, constitutes a pedagogical reflection of this global wave.

The digitalization of religious knowledge has not only given sīra education new tools; it has also begun to fundamentally transform learners' practices of encountering and interacting with religious narratives. For many students, and especially young people, first contact with the sīra now begins not with a text but with an image, a scene, a short video clip or a dramatized moment. For example, the AI robot named ‘Bashir,’ which answers visitors' questions at the International Museum of the Prophet's Life in Morocco, is one of the most concrete manifestations of this interactive, new-generation mode of encounter.[28] What must be emphasized here, however, is not the glorification of technology merely as an element of attraction. Presenting historical events in dramatized form in digital settings or through interactive AI interfaces has deep pedagogical value far beyond being an instrumental novelty that appeals only to the ear or the eye. This multimodal structure moves learning out of the passive act of listening and functions as a powerful cognitive scaffold that triggers visual memory, spatial perception and contextual inquiry, deepening the analytical bond the student forms with historical data. Usually discussed in technical or media-oriented terms, this change in fact has deep epistemological consequences that deserve closer examination.

Digital environments by their nature prioritize immediacy, visualization and interaction. In this medium, knowledge is encountered in fragments rather than in linear sequences, and meaning is generally constructed through comparison,

repetition and emotional resonance. In such an environment, the classical chronological sīra narrative, in which events follow one another along an unbroken historical line, does not always match the ways learners make sense of what they see and hear. Consequently, traditional pedagogical approaches face the risk of losing their effectiveness—not because the content has lost its value, but because the learner's mode of engagement has changed radically. One of the most visible outputs of this transformation is the rise of the scene-based learning approach. Digital sīra representations in documentaries, animations or dramatized series tend to organize meaning around key moments rather than broad, lengthy narratives. A single encounter, a moment of decision or a crisis becomes a focal point from which broader themes can be drawn.

At this point, it is essential to clarify the pedagogical limits of DSP and the levels of education it addresses. Secondary-school and undergraduate students—the main focus of this study—remember the tension of a scene, the moral weight of a choice or the emotional texture of a moment more vividly than the exact historical position of the event. At these levels, DSP is a tool for making sense of historical data and building context. At the graduate (advanced academic) level, on the other hand, the model ceases to be a direct means of knowledge transfer and becomes an object of media and textual criticism in which the sociological, ideological and algorithmic backgrounds of digital sīra representations are interrogated. For the general public, the scenes function more as popular ‘digital preaching’ and awareness-raising. Therefore, the scene-based structuring proposed in this article aims not at an academic critique of knowledge but at turning the sīra into a meaningful whole in new-generation minds at the undergraduate level and below.

This development presents both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, when visual representations are offered as a long, uninterrupted viewing experience, they risk turning the student into a passive consumer and oversimplifying complex historical realities in fast-flowing scenes. Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP), however, overcomes the risk of the visual pacifying the viewer not by running the series continuously like a film, but by presenting thematic short clips (micro-scenes) of only a few minutes, selected specifically for each lesson. Rather than a long, fast-moving cinematic experience, these pedagogically bounded clips of a few minutes lighten the student's cognitive load and focus attention on a single event, on the characters' tension and on the moment of decision. Immediately after the short clip is watched, the teacher turns that thematic event into an object of analysis and invites students to ask: What options were available at this moment? What risks were involved? Which principles guided the decision? Such structured analytical questions shift attention from the fast-flowing question of ‘what happened’ to the question of ‘how and why it happened,’ examined through a focused clip.

Digitalization also has the potential to reshape the learner's role. In classical teaching environments, knowledge and authority flow largely in one direction—from text to teacher and from teacher to student. Breaking this one-directionality, however, is not a process that happens automatically just by showing students a

digital video. In the DSP model, digital platforms are not a magical alternative that replaces quality lesson planning, teacher–student interaction or pedagogical assessment (feedback). On the contrary, they are a structured educational tool used under the teacher's own moderation and guidance. Within a well-constructed lesson design, the teacher encourages students to explore, compare and progress at their own pace. Guided by the teacher, learners move between materials, re-watch the short scenes to be analyzed, and engage with content in non-linear ways. Thus the visual material or digital infrastructure does not remove the teacher or meaningful learning from the picture; quite the opposite, it offers a multidimensional ground for interaction in which the teacher can ask in-depth questions and immediately correct misunderstandings. This does not eliminate the need for scholarly guidance, but it moves the teacher's role from absolute transmitter of knowledge to moderator of an analytical process who frames learning as a guided process of inquiry rather than a completed transmission. It should be stressed that this transformation must not be understood as a break from the classical teaching tradition or as a mere ‘change of material’ (using visuals instead of books). Of course, no material by itself has the magical power to raise a student from passive reception to the level of an inquiring individual. But the multimodal digital content used in the DSP model offers new pedagogical possibilities that a plain text cannot. It gives the teacher the opportunity to freeze the scene and have students analyze nonverbal communication and spatial atmosphere, to make visible the psychological tension of moments of crisis, and to open alternative scenarios for discussion. Digital sīra learning does not replace textual authority or historical rigor; rather, it turns them into an enriched cognitive scaffold within a learning environment shaped by visual culture. The real question, therefore, is not merely a change of material but how the epistemic effects of this material can be integrated into sīra education without compromising scholarly integrity. From this perspective, digitalization functions less as a technological/instrumental update than as a pedagogical catalyst that invites educators to make explicit and visible what usually remains implicit in classical narration (the logic behind actions, contextual constraints and transferable principles).

This change prepares the ground for a new approach that can be defined as Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP). Bringing classical sources into dialogue with contemporary learning cultures, this pedagogy also redefines the roles of the actors in the process. In this ecosystem, the digital material (film/scene) is not a transmitter in itself but a cognitive stimulus that initiates the process. The real agent of the system is the moderating teacher, who constructs the thematic organization and directs guided reflection through deepening questions. The student, in turn, is not a mere spectator but an active analyst who, under the teacher's guidance, analyzes the scene and draws his or her own conclusions. By centering this triadic interaction among digital tool, moderating teacher and active student, DSP thus aims to preserve the depth of the sīra while making its intellectual and ethical dimensions more accessible to modern learners. The following section will address how this pedagogical orientation has begun to take concrete form.

## 3. DIGITAL SĪRA PEDAGOGY (DSP): CONCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES, AIM AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Before turning to the practical applications, instructional design and analytical methods of Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP)—a newly constructed interdisciplinary conceptualization in the literature—it is necessary to clarify the boundaries of this concept and what it means for the theology academy. Traditional sīra teaching is built on an epistemology that is largely text-centered, based on a chronological sequence, and in which the teacher is the transmitter and the student the recipient. However, the cognitive habits of a new generation that makes sense of the world through the visual and auditory possibilities offered by digital screens are seriously at odds with this classical one-way transmission model. Digital Sīra Pedagogy is a theoretical and practical instructional design developed precisely to intervene in this pedagogical rupture.

This model does not regard digitalization in sīra education as a technical embellishment such as merely bringing a smart board into the classroom or filming the events. DSP is a paradigm shift that radically changes the way knowledge is organized, presented to the student and internalized by the student. Its basic aim is to move the sīra out of the form of a chronological heap of history to be memorized and to turn it into a dynamic map of meaning that can respond to today's issues, builds character and translates into action. In this context, the basic building blocks that DSP offers to the field of religious education are as follows:

### 3.1. From Chronology to Thematic Analysis

DSP goes beyond the classical linear narration of the type “Uḥud came after Badr” and places at its focus moments of crisis, leadership attitudes, diplomatic intelligence and moral choices. The student enters the process not to memorize dates but to find the universal Prophetic principle (the theme) within the event. Indeed, the Criterion Concepts instructional design, one of DSP's pioneers in the field, has divided the sīra—instead of a linear historical strip—into 4 main axes (faith, personality/self, family and society) and 40 distinct analytical themes. The system's founder, Assad Koshul, summarizes this pedagogical transformation with the philosophy: “Small minds discuss people, average minds discuss events, and great minds discuss ideas.” According to Koshul, the sīra can be made functional in the modern world only by abandoning the practice of presenting events merely as an emotional epic of heroism. In-depth sociological analysis is of course possible in classical teaching as well; a competent educator can draw these inferences with students from traditional texts too. DSP, however, aims to make such analytical readings independent of the teacher's personal initiative or rhetorical skill and to turn them into a systematic curriculum with the support of digital visuals as a ‘cognitive scaffold.’ In this process, the key function is for the teacher, using the visual material as a ground for discussion, to guide students by asking the right questions. For example, whereas in classical narration Ḥaḍrat Bilāl (may God be pleased with him) is usually presented as a resistant figure who was tortured and

who called the *adhān*, in DSP's thematic analysis an inquiry process initiated by the teacher comes into play after a short scene is watched. In this way the act of the *adhān* is examined in a much deeper sociological dimension—as an enslaved person's strategic 'public relations (PR) move and challenge' directed at the social hierarchy constructed by the Meccan aristocracy.[29]

### 3.2. Scene-Based and Multimodal Context

The plain-text readings of the classical sīra are replaced by scene analyses in which place, emotions, sounds and facial expressions come together. The student does not merely hear; he or she experiences the tension of the crisis through multisensory means. The digital scenes selected in the DSP model are not merely material to be watched; they function as contemporary "visual proverbs" to be engraved in the student's mind as moral and strategic templates. For example, through a scene in which Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar works as a shepherd before becoming Muslim, not only historical information but also universal leadership principles—such as group dynamics, the role of solitude in character formation and organizational development—are taught.[30] Would it not be appropriate to support these ideas from pedagogy books, for the sake of corroborating them? *[TN: This sentence appears verbatim in the published Turkish text and reads like an editorial or reviewer comment that was left in the article by mistake. It has been translated as it stands.]*

### 3.3. From Transmission to Inquiry and Reflection

In DSP, the teacher does not dictate knowledge. In Koshul's words, the pedagogical aim of this model is not to dictate to the student what to think, but to teach the student how to think by positioning the sīra as an analytical tool.[31] In this context, after a digital scene is watched, the teacher directs questions to the student at two different cognitive levels. First, "deepening/probing questions" are asked that allow the historical case to be understood within its own conditions (e.g., Why was this decision taken? What were the constraints of that day?). Then the teacher moves to "reflective questions" in order to turn this historical experience into action (e.g., If you faced the same moral challenge today, what would you do? How has this event changed your way of thinking?).[32] This two-directional inquiry process allows the sīra to move out of dry information and into the student's daily life. In this respect, DSP also bears strong traces of the "Problem-Centered Design" approach in the educational sciences.[33] For the ultimate goal is for the student to be able to use the universal Prophetic principle derived from a historical crisis, together with critical-thinking skills, to produce solutions to his or her own current and social problems.

All in all, Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP) emerges not so much as a new philosophy built from scratch in the educational sciences, but as a modern 'instructional design' that integrates contemporary methods of constructivist education (case study, brainstorming, inquiry-based learning) into the field of sīra through digital possibilities. This design moves the student from the position of passive listener of historical data to that of active analyst of moral and strategic decisions. Within the theoretical framework of the Criterion Concepts curriculum, this is formulated as a

constructive analytical process in which the student goes beyond thinking about a historical fact and carries the universal principles within that fact into his or her own character and current issues. Ultimately, this model promises a holistic cognitive transformation, built respectively on the three pillars of spiritual renewal, moral values and intellectual clarity, and aimed at the building of society.

## 4. TRANSFORMING THE TEACHER: BUILDING A NEW PEDAGOGICAL STANCE WITHIN THE CLASSICAL SYSTEM

The success of an innovative model such as Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP) depends not only on the integration of technological materials into the educational environment, but also on a transformation in the mindset of the educators who will use these tools. As a basic pedagogical principle, ‘teaching the teacher’ is the most critical stage of this building process. For the academic staff who teach sīra today were largely trained in a traditional system based on text-centered, one-way transmission. An educator who built his or her own cognitive learning processes solely through reading texts will inevitably face some difficulties in adopting a new scene-based model. Of course, current research and educational experience in religious education show that a qualified educator can reach high-level analytical learning outcomes through classical texts, using methods such as Socratic questioning and case study, without using digital/visual materials. However, the DSP model does not claim that the scene-based approach is the only analytical method. The model's real promise is to turn this analytical depth—which otherwise depends on the teacher's individual talent or rhetorical power—into a standardized pedagogical ‘curriculum scaffold’ that is compatible with the visual learning habits of the digital age (especially Generations Z and Alpha) and lightens cognitive load.

Chief among these difficulties is epistemological resistance on the part of the educator. Indeed, current field research on religious education and the integration of educational technologies shows that pronounced techno-skepticism can develop among educators trained in the classical paradigm. According to this literature, digitalization and visuality are often perceived as elements that damage the seriousness of content, reduce depth or oversimplify the sacred. The pedagogical stance DSP calls for, however, requires seeing technology not as mere visual spectacle or a tool that waters down content, but as a new language that must be learned in order to penetrate the new generation's world of meaning, and as an analytical cognitive scaffold.

This new stance also radically changes power dynamics in the classroom. The educator who, in the traditional system, is the sole authority and transmitter of knowledge moves in the digital-pedagogy model into the position of guide and facilitator of knowledge. In this transition, fully in keeping with the philosophy of ‘Learner-Centered Design’ in the educational sciences, the teacher's real task is not to dictate knowledge but to create an interactive learning environment in which students can direct their own learning and discover new meanings.[34] When a

dramatic sīra scene is used in class, the teacher's role is to dig out, with the right analytical questions, the moral and strategic depth behind the scene.

## 5. FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: THE IMPLEMENTATION MODEL OF DIGITAL SĪRA PEDAGOGY

Once the educator's new role and the conceptual boundaries of DSP have been clarified, the question arises of how this theoretical model is to be implemented in practice in the classroom. From this point on, therefore, the article treats DSP not merely as an abstract philosophy or a conceptual discussion but as a holistic 'instructional design' that can be implemented step by step in the classroom. At its core, DSP rests on the assumption that pedagogy cannot be separated from epistemology. This approach is grounded in a basic premise of the Islamic educational tradition—in Hardaker and Sabki's words, the principle that knowledge and the sacred form an inseparable whole. For in the Islamic conception of education, the way knowledge is structured directly affects how it is internalized.

### 5.1. Scene-Based Learning: The Shift from "What Happened?" to "What Does It Tell Us?"

In classical sīra literature, narrative has served to preserve historical continuity, and meaning has formed through "accumulation." Digital sīra narrative, by contrast, offers a modular structure that prioritizes 'analytical and problem-centered' thematic interest over chronology. If a qualification is needed here: it is known that in today's basic-education (primary/middle school) curricula, sīra topics are largely treated through basic moral themes such as 'the Prophet's compassion, justice and cleanliness.' However, the 'classical sīra teaching' criticized and sought to be overcome in this study covers the traditional narrative culture and the chronology/history-heavy curricula at the high-school and higher-education (faculties of theology) levels. Moreover, the thematic structure offered by DSP is quite different from the mere transmission of values in basic education. This model shifts the focus of the sīra narrative away from the question 'What happened next?' toward the question 'What universal strategy/principle does this moment/scene tell us?', which centers higher-order cognitive skills such as leadership, crisis management and sociological analysis.

The most distinctive practical dimension of DSP is that it turns the 'case study' method—one of the basic approaches of the educational sciences—into a 'scene-based' learning experience by constructing it through digital visuals rather than a textual scenario on paper. In this model, a digital representation (for example, a scene from a film or documentary) is not merely dramatic visual material; it is a pedagogical case on which case analysis is built and which triggers the student's analytical and cognitive engagement. This scene-based adaptation reconstructs sīra knowledge at three basic levels:

- **Building Context:** Reading the historical, social and psychological atmosphere in which the event took place.
- **Decoding Meaning:** Analyzing the characters' strategic choices and moral stances in moments of crisis.
- **Deriving Principles:** Generating, from a single scene, a universal Prophetic principle that has relevance in modern life.

### 5.2. Designing the Learning Cycle: Integrating the Kolb and Mayer Models

DSP's implementation steps are built on two basic theories of the modern educational sciences. First, Richard E. Mayer's "Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning" comes into play. According to Mayer's "Multimedia Principle," meaningful learning occurs when visual and verbal information are actively integrated.[35] Complementing this cognitive process is Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's theory of "Multimodal Discourse." For them, meaning in contemporary communication is constructed not only through language but through the integration (orchestration) of visual, auditory and spatial data.[36] DSP puts this principle to work through digital sīra scenes as follows:

- **Visual Reading:** Analysis of the setting, body language and physical context.
- **Auditory Reading:** Analysis of dialogues, rhetoric and silences.
- **Emotional Engagement:** Feeling the tension in moments of crisis and building empathy.

Through this cycle, the sīra ceases to be passive transmission. As Assad Koshul aptly emphasizes regarding sīra teaching, scenes evolve into an experience that requires 'not passive listening but active mental engagement,' in which a new moral understanding is constructed.[37]

This multimodal data-processing process becomes a practical classroom application through David A. Kolb's "Experiential Learning Theory."[38] DSP adapts Kolb's four-stage cycle to sīra teaching as follows:

- **Concrete Experience:** The student watches the selected sīra scene and directly witnesses the emotional/historical context of the event.
- **Reflective Observation:** Under the teacher's guidance, the scene is analyzed through questions such as "Why did it happen this way?" and "What else could have been done?"
- **Abstract Conceptualization:** The universal principle (vision) behind the decision is abstracted from the event.
- **Active Experimentation:** The student plans how to apply the Prophetic principle he or she has derived to a current problem or to his or her own life practice.

Through this cycle, the sīra moves beyond passive transmission and evolves into an active process in which experience is transformed and a new moral understanding is constructed.

### 5.3. Target Outcome and Holistic Educational Vision: *Ta'dīb* and Character Building

The basic problem encountered in sīra teaching is the gap between the values in the student's mind (those he or she claims to believe) and the values in use (those he or she applies in practice). Through the inquiry and reflection practices of scene analysis, DSP confronts the student with this gap. In this respect, the model is a methodological counterpart, in the digital age, of the concept of *ta'dīb* in Islamic educational philosophy.[39] Indeed, as J. Mark Halstead notes, the ultimate aim of Islamic education is the development of the student's personality (spiritual, intellectual and social) in holistic balance.[40] This approach is fully consistent with the concepts of *adab* and *tarbiya* emphasized in the modern context by Susan Douglass and Munir Shaikh.[41] As Şaban Öz aptly notes, the real issue is to go beyond formal acts of worship and attain the good character that was the essential rationale of the Prophetic mission.[42]

This goal is also in full epistemological harmony with contemporary educational visions that go beyond mere knowledge transfer and seek to integrate cognitive competence with moral virtue:

- **The Ideal of the Competent and Virtuous Person:** Modern educational philosophy aims not only for the individual to be academically equipped but also to translate knowledge into action with moral maturity. The student profile DSP aims for rests precisely on this integrity.
- **Integrity of Knowledge–Value–Action:** Contemporary pedagogy requires that values not remain merely a mental acceptance but show themselves in practical action. 'Active Experimentation,' the final stage of DSP's Kolb cycle, aims to establish this pedagogical integrity by enabling the principle drawn from the sīra to become a modern action.
- **Conceptual Skills:** Higher-order cognitive skills such as 'inquiry,' 'critical thinking' and 'reflection,' which have been placed at the center of international constructivist educational standards and especially of the current religious-education curricula of Türkiye's Ministry of National Education (MEB),[43] are the very mental tools DSP uses in scene analysis.

This alignment with contemporary pedagogy also coincides with the global educational standards pointed to by Diana Laurillard. According to Laurillard, the real goal in modern education is not the memorization of the curriculum but the acquisition of high-level cognitive skills that will enable the individual's full participation in society. In an age in which innovation now occurs at the intersection of disciplines, sīra teaching too must cease to be mere text transmission and be reconstructed on an interdisciplinary ground where history, digital media and pedagogy intersect.[44] In conclusion, DSP does not claim to be the only method that reaches these high cognitive goals; indeed, other constructivist and innovative models of religious education in the field pursue similar goals. But DSP answers this global call as a new-generation and powerful alternative that moves the sīra beyond

an isolated historical narrative confined to the past and turns it—especially through today's visual/digital culture—into a functional field of competence capable of making sense of the modern world.

## 6. A CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE: SCENE ANALYSIS WITH THE DSP MODEL

Showing how the theoretical framework of Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP) and the targeted cognitive transformation take concrete form in the classroom is essential for the model's applicability. In this section, taking as a reference the scene-based sīra instructional design developed by Criterion Concepts, the implementation steps of DSP will be made concrete through a sample clip selected from the *Omar* series (e.g., Episode 10, Scene 13). The aim is to go beyond a classic “film-watching” activity and show step by step how the digital scene becomes, in the context of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, a tool of epistemic confrontation and character building.

At this point, it is essential to add a critical caveat regarding the research's method and limits. The *Omar* series examined as a sample in this study, and the content shaped around it by Criterion Concepts, are not the whole of Digital Sīra Pedagogy or its only ‘curriculum.’ For it is neither pedagogically possible nor a correct approach for a single dramatic production or popular media product to shoulder a multi-layered sīra education on its own. The series chosen here is positioned solely as a prototype to concretize how DSP's scene-based learning approach (its inquiry and reflection processes) will work in the classroom. The focus is not the series itself but how a moment of crisis or decision in the series can be integrated into Kolb's and Mayer's learning cycles. Consequently, DSP is a flexible instructional design, not dependent on any specific medium, that can readily be adapted to other historical documentaries, animations or interactive digital experiences produced in the future.

### 6.1. Concrete Experience (Viewing and Multimodal Contact)

The first stage of implementation is for students to encounter the selected scene without any prejudgment or didactic steering. For example, a crisis scene depicting the boycott of, or the mounting pressure on, the early Muslims is shown to the class. (What does this code signify?) *[TN: This parenthetical appears verbatim in the published Turkish text and seems to be a leftover editorial note; it has been translated as it stands.]* At this stage, going beyond reading a text, the student experiences the atmosphere in which the event took place through multisensory (multimodal) data. Visual and auditory elements—such as the helplessness in the characters' facial expressions, the domination in the opponents' tone of voice, or the narrowness or breadth of the setting—enable the student to establish “emotional and cognitive contact” with the historical event. The student is no longer an outside reader but a witness drawn into the dramatic tension of the event.

### 6.2. Reflective Observation (Inquiry and Analysis)

After the scene ends, the teacher steps out of the traditional transmitter role and takes on the role of guide. This stage is the disciplined inquiry phase that forms the heart of DSP. Instead of telling students directly, “We should draw this lesson from this,” the teacher enables the scene to be decoded through analytical questions:

- **Context Question:** What was the balance of power in this scene? What was the polytheists' argument, and what was the Muslims' stance?
- **Emotion and Intention Question:** What moral risks were involved in the decision the character made at the moment of crisis? What would have happened if they had backed down?
- **Alternative Scenario:** Under the conditions of that day, what other options did they have? Why did they choose this difficult path rather than those options?

This reflective observation process enables the student to move beyond the one-dimensional question “what happened?” and analyze the moral motivations behind the action.[45] As noted in studies on historical methodology, the historian (or, in this context, the learner) cannot be expected to be neutral like a computer evaluating the data loaded into it.[46] As Adnan Demircan puts it, objectivity should be sought not in the fact itself but in the honesty of the relationship between fact and interpretation.[47] Scene analysis provides this epistemic confrontation (honesty) by making students aware of their own judgments and partiality.

### 6.3. Abstract Conceptualization (Producing a Universal Principle and Vision)

This stage, which follows observation and analysis, is the process of connecting the historical to the universal. Under the teacher's guidance, students start from the specific scene and abstract a general “Prophetic Principle” (vision). For example, when the boycott or torture scene is examined, the conceptual principle that was targeted in advance in the instructional design, and that the teacher tries to have students discover through guiding questions, is this: ‘Remaining passive in the face of violence and oppression is not weakness; on the contrary, it is a conscious, dignified and strategic resistance displayed in order to preserve moral superiority.’ At the end of this structured analytical process, the student constructs and internalizes this universal vision envisaged by the curriculum as his or her own conclusion. This stage is the moment at which the “Virtue–Value” framework targeted in the Türkiye Century Maarif Model is mentally constructed. The sīra ceases to be a single event that took place in the 7th century and becomes a moral law valid in every age.

### 6.4. Active Experimentation (Bringing It into Today's World and into Action)

The ultimate aim of the Kolb cycle and the DSP model is for this derived universal principle to find a counterpart in the student's own life (theory-in-use). In this final stage, the student is asked the following life question:

> *“If today at school, on social media or in your social circle you faced similar pressure (for example, peer bullying or exclusion) because of your faith, identity or what you know to be right, how would you apply to your own life the Prophetic principle we have just derived?”*

Students construct their own “active experimentation” plans through current scenarios. The knowledge has emerged from a historical text, been analyzed in a visual scene, been turned into a universal principle and, finally, been integrated into the character and competence of a modern student.

## CONCLUSION

In the age of digitalization, sīra teaching goes far beyond adding new technological tools to the classroom; it is fundamentally reshaping the nature of knowledge, its mode of transmission and its internalization. Digital Sīra Pedagogy (DSP), whose conceptual framework and implementation steps have been outlined in this study, places at its center the cognitive habits of a new generation born into visual culture. The inadequacy of traditional, one-way text transmission in reaching this generation has made it necessary to move the process to a different pedagogical footing. According to the main conclusion reached, sīra education must shed the passivity of listening to a chronological narrative and become a multidimensional ‘instructional design’ shaped under the teacher's guidance and involving the student's active participation.

Rather than using digital materials such as thematic short scenes as simple visual stimuli, the proposed model places them, in a case-study format, at the heart of an in-depth analysis. Visual and auditory data here serve as a cognitive scaffold. As a historical clip is analyzed with the moderating teacher and connected to universal principles, the student steps beyond the position of outside spectator and becomes an active subject who produces meaning personally. The sīra thus moves beyond the form of a historical reading in which successive events are listed and becomes a dynamic laboratory in which crisis management, leadership, moral stance and strategic decisions are analyzed.

The greatest promise of this pedagogical change is its potential to remedy the chronic disconnect between knowledge and moral virtue. The real crisis of current sīra teaching at the high-school and higher-education levels is not a lack of historical information but the failure of theoretically learned values to be reflected in practice. By centering the practices of “inquiry” and “reflection,” DSP aims to build a bridge between the theoretical acceptances in the student's mind and the values that turn into action (Virtue–Value construction). The historical experience drawn from the sīra thus goes beyond the limits of an academic grade or measure of achievement and evolves into a high-level cognitive and moral competence that enables one to make sense of the modern world.

Ultimately, Digital Sīra Pedagogy does not allow the Prophetic legacy to become commonplace within the popular culture of the digital age. In coordination with

other contemporary educational models, it uses the analytical tools offered by the learning sciences to translate this legacy into the language of today. Preserving the spirit and historical reliability of the classical texts while not missing current educational goals, this approach gives the sīra's presence on digital platforms a much more grounded and robust framework. Empirical research to be conducted in the future is expected to make concrete contributions to the future of sīra education by measuring the behavioral outcomes of this pedagogical design at different levels of education.

## NOTES

1. This study focuses on the curriculum “Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection,” developed by Assad Koshul and offered in a multilingual format on the https://criterionconcept.com/ platform. This sīra teaching program has been piloted in sīra teaching at the Samsun University Faculty of Theology and is currently being implemented there.
2. [English-title footnote in the original, marked “2*”:] This study focuses on the curriculum titled “Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection,” developed by Assad Koshul and offered in a multilingual format on the https://criterionconcept.com/ platform. This sīra instructional program has been piloted and is currently being implemented in sīra courses at the Samsun University Faculty of Theology.
3. Şaban Öz, *İslam Tarihi Metodolojisi* (Istanbul: Siyer Okulu Yayınları, 2024); Adnan Demircan, *Tarih ve Tarihçi* (Istanbul: Beyan, 2016); Abdulkadir Macit, *İslam Tarihçiliğinin Yeni Siması Muhammed Hamidullah* (Istanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2022); Mehmet Şimşek, *İslâmî İlimlerde Siyer Öğretimi – Hicri İlk Beş Asır* (Kahramanmaraş: Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD dissertation, 2025).
4. Mehmet Haberli, *Sanal Din: Tarihsel, Kuramsal ve Pratik Boyutlarıyla İnternet ve Din* (Istanbul: Açılım Kitap, 2014); Bilal Yorulmaz, *Sinema ve Din Eğitimi* (Istanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2015); Metin Eken, *Çevrim İçi Dindarlık: Milenyum Neslinin İnanç Pratikleri* (Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2021); Yunus Ergen, *Dijital Minber: Kutsal Otorite Postmodern Dijital Kültürde Din* (Konya: Neu Press, 2023); Abdulaziz Kıranşal, “Siyer Araştırmalarında Yapay Zekâ Kullanım İmkânı,” *Marifetname* 12/1 (June 2025), 299–325; Abdulaziz Kıranşal, “Yapay Zekâ Tabanlı Siyer ve Hadis Araştırmalarında Etik Riskler,” *Bingöl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 30 (29 October 2025), 409–423.
5. Criterion Concept, https://criterionconcept.com/ (accessed 14 December 2025).
6. A case study is an empirical research method that examines a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context. See Ali Yıldırım – Hasan Şimşek, *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri* (Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2021), 70; Sharan B. Merriam, *Nitel Araştırma: Desen ve Uygulama İçin Bir Rehber*, trans. Selahattin Turan (Ankara: Nobel, 2015), 39–55.
7. John W. Creswell, *Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri: Beş Yaklaşıma Göre Nitel Araştırma ve Araştırma Deseni* (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 2025), 42–69.
8. “Criterion Concept.” https://criterionconcept.com/
9. *Omar ibn Khattab*, prep. Hatem Ali (series), Islam City. *Omar*, directed by Hatem Ali (Qatar–UAE: MBC/Qatar TV, 2012). This 31-episode series has also been broadcast in Turkish in Türkiye. The screenplay, editing and filming stages of the series were completed with the approval of a special “Historical and Religious Supervisory Board” made up of leading Islamic scholars, jurists and historians of the time (Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Salman al-Ouda, Ali al-Sallabi, etc.) in order to ensure fidelity to historical reality. In this respect, the production is not merely an artistic production; it is an academically supervised, message-oriented thematic visual transmission of the sīra.
10. Assad Koshul, *Seerah: Thematic Analysis, Inquiry & Reflection (Lesson 33)*, Digital Teaching Curriculum and Guidelines (Criterion Concepts, 2026). For the curriculum founder's (Koshul's) detailed analysis of the pedagogical basis and context transfer of the relevant lesson, see also, as a primary source: Criterion Concept. (2026, 13 January). *Podcast Session 4: Lesson 33 of 415*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlPj0ypdoA0
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45. It should be stressed that showing a single scene and then asking guiding questions is not by itself sufficient to reach the targeted analytical outcomes. This process becomes meaningful only when the student has “cognitive readiness” regarding what came before and after the event in question. Therefore, in the implementation of DSP, scene analysis is never carried out in a vacuum; it is always built upon the historical context and theoretical foundation previously established by the teacher.
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47. Demircan, *Tarih ve Tarihçi*, 25.

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