Sa‘y in the Qur’an and Modern Sciences: A Systematic Integrative Review (1988–2025)

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Abstract

The concept of *sa’y* (striving) has long been central to Islamic thought, extending beyond physical exertion to encompass intention, orientation, and moral responsibility. This systematic review, conducted in accordance with PRISMA 2020 guidelines, pursued four objectives: clarifying the Qur’anic meaning of *sa’y*, comparing it with scientific analogues, tracing its development across four phases (1988–2025), and constructing an integrative model. The study employed quantitative, qualitative, and interdisciplinary tools, reviewing classical and modern studies in Islamic thought, psychology, economics, and physics. Findings indicate that in the Qur’an, *sa’y* represents a composite ethical framework grounded in accountability and reform, while in modern sciences it corresponds to grit in psychology, human capital and productivity in economics, and work as energy transfer in physics. The temporal analysis shows that the Foundation phase emphasized moral reform, the Emergence phase introduced psychological and economic perspectives, the Expansion phase broadened to resilience and non-cognitive skills, and the Integration phase integrated ethics, institutional reform, advanced measurement, and social justice. The study concludes that *sa’y* functions as a comprehensive construct bridging Qur’anic interpretations with scientific analogues, positioning it as a framework that links values, perseverance, productivity, and directed effort across time. Although the study employed mixed quantitative and qualitative synthesis, limitations include the descriptive nature of the quantitative analysis and imbalance across domains. Future research should incorporate meta-analytical statistical techniques to provide stronger quantitative validation and broader interdisciplinary inclusion..

Keywords: Grit; Human capital ; Interdisciplinary studies ; Physical work; productivity; Qur’an; Sa’y; sustainable development.

I. Introduction:

Striving (*saʿy*) is a fundamental notion in both Islamic and human thought. In the Qur’an, striving is presented not as mere physical exertion but as a principle of accountability and directed effort, shaping both individual destiny and collective progress. Classical exegetes established the ethical foundation of striving, situating it within accountability and stewardship: al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), in *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān*, interpreted the verse *“And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for”* (Qur’an 53:39) as a clear affirmation that human beings attain only the fruits of their effort. Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273), in *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, underscored sincerity and divine acceptance as conditions of striving, while Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), in *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, expanded the notion to collective civilizational responsibility, interpreting striving as a path of reform (*iṣlāḥ*) against corruption (*fasād*). Together, these interpretations situate striving within the philosophy of stewardship (*istikhlāf*), highlighting its role in shaping human destiny and societal development.

Modern Muslim intellectuals extended this foundation to contemporary challenges. Fazlur Rahman (1982) emphasized its transformative potential in modernity and selfhood. Ali Shariʿatī (1979) underscored striving as a revolutionary force in shaping identity and liberation. Earlier, Nicola Haddad (2018) highlighted striving, labor, and economy as a triad essential for wealth and revival, reflecting early 20th-century intellectual currents. These perspectives demonstrate that striving is a comprehensive ethical framework encompassing intention, direction, and responsibility.

With the advancement of modern sciences, the concept expanded into psychological, economic, and physical dimensions. In psychology, Duckworth et al. (2007, 2009) demonstrated that grit predicts success beyond intelligence, with meta-analyses confirming moderate correlations with achievement (Credé et al., 2017; Datu, 2021). In economics, Becker (1993) and Schultz (1961) established human capital theory, while Heckman & Kautz (2012) and Lundberg (2017) showed that non-cognitive skills such as perseverance and discipline directly affect wages, education, and social behavior. In physics, Halliday & Resnick (2013) defined work as energy transfer by force, while Oliveira (2014) traced the migration of the concept of work from physics to economics, underscoring their interconnection.

Despite these contributions, a clear research gap remains: the absence of interdisciplinary studies that integrate the Qur'anic and ethical dimension of striving, the psychological dimension, the economic dimension, and the physical dimension. Moreover, most studies have focused on the modern era (since 2000), neglecting classical intellectual works that addressed striving and labor in the context of the early Arab-Islamic renaissance. This gap justifies the need for a systematic integrative review covering four temporal phases: *Foundation (1988–2000), Emergence (2001–2010), Expansion (2011–2020), and Integration (2021–2025).*

The aim is to compare these phases, highlight the evolution of the concept of striving, and formulate a comprehensive framework that bridges authenticity and modernity, contributing to theoretical and practical models in education, civilizational development, and economics.

Objectives :

1. To analyze the concept of striving in the Qur'an, emphasizing its rhetorical and ethical implications.
2. To explore psychological, economic, and physical constructs that parallel Qur'anic striving, thereby highlighting interdisciplinary connections.
3. To examine how the concept of striving has been addressed across the four domains (Qur'anic/ethical, psychological, economic, and physical) by comparing its treatment across four temporal phases: Foundation (1988–2000), Emergence (2001–2010), Expansion (2011–2020), and Maturity (2021–2025).
4. To construct an integrative model of striving that bridges authenticity and modernity, contributing to theoretical and practical frameworks in education, civilizational development, and economics

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II. Methodology

This study adopted an integrative systematic review methodology in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 protocol, which represents the international standard for transparency, rigor, and replicability. The methodology was designed to provide a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis of the concept of striving (*al-saʿy*) across Qur'anic/ethical, psychological, economic, and physical dimensions.

1. Data Sources

The study relied on both primary studies and systematic reviews. Foundational grit studies (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) provided the psychological basis, while Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) extended grit research into education, workplace, and military contexts. Systematic reviews such as Credé et al. (2017) and Heckman & Kautz (2012) offered curated datasets, enabling a transition from theoretical to methodological analysis.

2. Keywords

Keywords were identified in both Arabic and English to ensure comprehensive coverage. Boolean operators (AND/OR) were used to combine terms.

- Arabic: Al-Sa‘y, Al-Muthabara, Al-Dafi‘iyya, Al-‘Amal, Al-Juhd, Al-Taqa, Al-Intajiyya, Al-Nahda, Al-Iqtisad
- English: striving, perseverance, grit, motivation, effort, work, energy, productivity, development, economy.

  Examples: *striving AND development*, *grit AND productivity*, *perseverance OR motivation*.

3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- **Inclusion:** Studies published between 1988–2025; addressing striving or related constructs; peer-reviewed publications; relevant books/dissertations; classical Arab-Islamic works on striving and labor.
- **Exclusion:** Non-peer-reviewed works; studies unrelated to striving; duplicates or inaccessible sources; studies lacking methodological data.

4. Search and Selection Procedures

Following PRISMA 2020, the process included:

- Identification of keywords.
- Database searches (PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, JSTOR, EconLit, Web of Science, Islamic sources).
- Removal of duplicates.
- Screening titles/abstracts.
- Reviewing full texts.
- Extracting core data (author, year, field, temporal phase, main concept).
- Classifying results into four domains and four temporal phases**.**
- Selecting the final set of 27 studies.

  The screening process was conducted through a combination of automated tools (for keyword identification, duplicate removal, and initial abstract screening) and manual review (for full-text validation and relevance assessment). This dual approach ensured both efficiency and accuracy in study selection.

5. PRISMA Flow

The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram summarized the selection process, adapted from Page et al. (2021). Most identification and screening steps were assisted by automation tools, with limited human review for accuracy.

The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram summarized the selection process, adapted from Page et al. (2021). Automation tools supported identification and screening, complemented by targeted human validation to ensure accuracy

Figure (1): PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of Study Selection

- Identification of research objectives: examining striving across Qur’anic/ethical, psychological, economic, and physical domains.

- Database search: PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, JSTOR, EconLit, Web of Science, and specialized Islamic sources.
- Keywords: grit, perseverance, motivation, effort, productivity, energy, striving, Islamic labor.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, ensuring transparency and reproducibility in the systematic review.

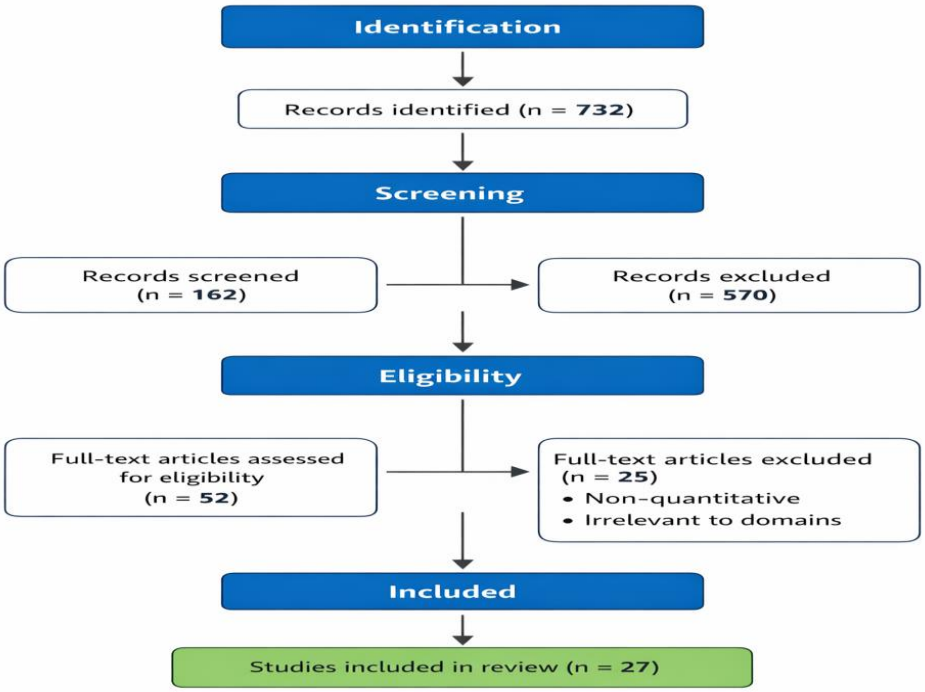

Figure .1 PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of Study Selection

Note: Adapted from PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021). Data shown are based on the current study's search and screening process of this study, most of which was performed using automation tools with limited human review for accuracy.

6. Data Analysis

Data analysis was not limited to quantitative statistical measures; instead, it relied on identifying prevailing trends and thematic directions across previous studies. This qualitative synthesis, supported by quantitative indicators, allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of striving across domains and phases.

This combined approach of automated and manual screening, together with qualitative trend analysis, enhances both the inclusiveness and methodological rigor of the review.

6. Distribution of Studies

The final 27 studies were distributed across fields and phases as follows:

Table 1

Distribution of Studies across Fields and Phases

Domain	Foundation (1988–2000)	%	Emergence (2001–2010)	%	Expansion (2011–2020)	%	Integration (2021–2025)	%	Total	%
Islamic	2	7	1	4	0	0	2	7	5	18
Psychology	0	0	2	7	4	15	4	15	10	37

Economics	0	0	1	4	5	19	2	7	8	30
Physics	0	0	4	15	0	0	0	0	4	15
Total	2	7	8	30	9	34	8	29	27	100

Note: Data in this table are derived from the systematic review conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 protocol (Page et al., 2021). The distribution reflects the final set of 27 studies included after screening and eligibility assessment.

The Expansion phase (2011–2020) was the most productive (34%), followed by Integration (29%). Islamic studies started early, declined during expansion, and resurged in maturity. Psychology emerged in 2007–2010, expanded strongly, and remained consistent. Economics peaked in expansion and continued moderately in Integration. Physics concentrated in emergence and did not continue afterward, showing a foundational role.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the graphical representation provides a clear overview of how the included studies are distributed across categories, highlighting the balance and variation within the dataset.

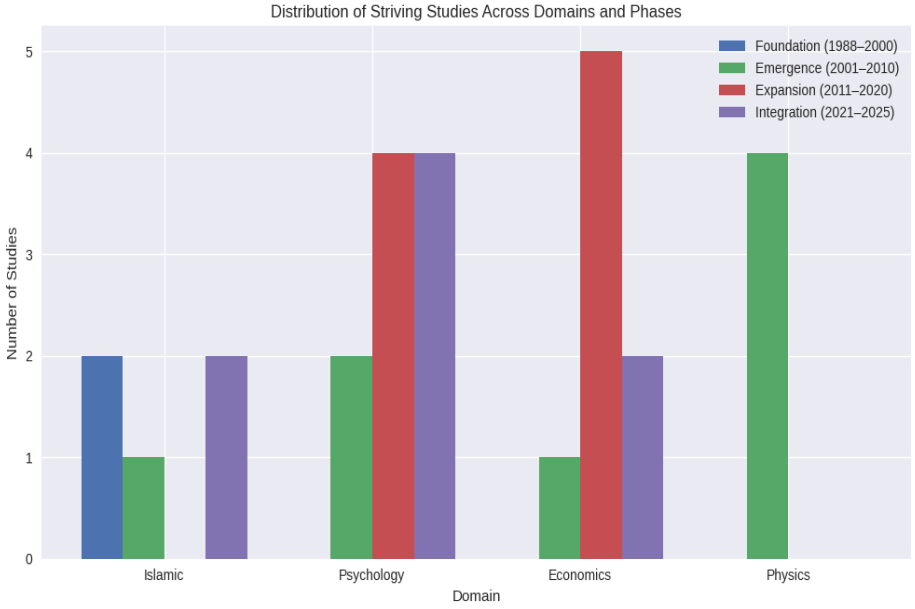

Figure 2. Graphical Representation of Study Distribution

Note: Source: Systematic review across four domains and time periods (1988–2025).

Table 1 provides the precise numerical distribution of studies across domains and phases, while Figure 2 offers a visual overview of these trends. Reading them together allows for a comprehensive understanding: the Expansion phase (2011–2020) emerges as the most productive (34%), followed by Maturity (29%). Psychology shows steady growth and consistency, Economics peaks during Expansion, Islamic studies demonstrate an early foundation and a later resurgence, and Physics appears concentrated in the Emergence phase only. The combined use of the table and the chart strengthens the analysis by offering both detailed data and an accessible visual narrative of how the concept of striving evolved across time and disciplines.

7. Analytical Tools

Three complementary analytical tools were employed:

- **Quantitative analysis:** To measure distribution percentages across fields and phases.
- **Qualitative analysis:** To conduct in-depth readings of Qur'anic texts and classical interpretations, linking them to psychological, economic, and physical concepts.

- **Interdisciplinary analysis:** To integrate results across fields and construct a comprehensive model of striving.

  The rationale for this step was to ensure that the analysis was not only descriptive but also interpretive and integrative, bridging multiple disciplines.

II. Results and Analysis

The results of the systematic review are organized according to the four research questions. Each question is presented with its rationale, findings, and distribution percentages, reflecting both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Tables summarize the data, followed by scientific readings that interpret the findings.

1. Results of Objective One: The Qur'anic Concept of Striving

The following table presents the results of a systematic review of Islamic references (1988–2025), identifying the main dimensions of Qur'anic striving as addressed in actual studies. It shows the percentage for each dimension, reflecting the overall trend of research focus across time.

Table 2**:** Dimensions of Qur'anic Striving and Their Relative Emphasis

Dimension	Percentage	General Trend
Intention and direction	25%	Establishing the individual ethical foundation (intention and correct orientation)
Reform and corruption	25%	Emphasis on ethical and social outcomes (reform vs. corruption)
Rhetorical dimension	25%	Highlighting striving as a rhetorical device reinforcing responsibility
Social/ethical dimension	25%	Linking striving to stewardship, civilizational development, and collective responsibility

Note: Source: Analysis of Islamic references (Ali, Rahman & Shah, Zafar & Abu-Hussin, Alzoraiki) within the period 1988–2025.

As depicted in Figure 3, the visual representation highlights the evolving dimensions of Qur'anic striving across the period 1988–2025, illustrating shifts in interpretive emphasis and thematic distribution.

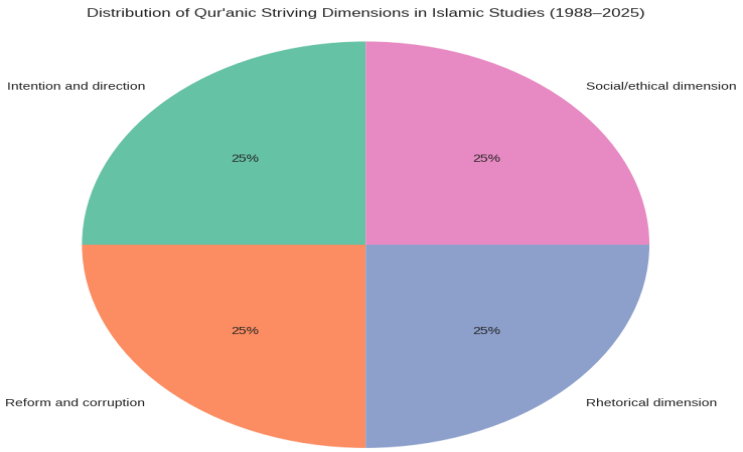

Figure 3. Visual Representation of Qur'anic Striving Dimensions (1988–2025)

Note: Source: Conceptual representation developed by the author based on the analysis of Qur'anic striving dimensions (1988–2025).

Table 2 shows that the four dimensions of Qur'anic striving in Islamic studies are evenly distributed (25% each). Early works emphasized *intention and direction* as the ethical foundation, while recent studies highlighted *reform/corruption* and *social/ethical dimensions*, with rhetorical aspects consistently present. Figure 3 complements these findings by providing a visual representation of the balanced distribution, making the shift from individual ethical focus to collective social and organizational responsibility more evident. Overall trend: A clear transition from individual ethical foundations in early studies to collective social and organizational responsibility in recent works, while maintaining balanced distribution across all dimensions.

2. Results of Objective Two: Parallel Concepts in Modern Sciences

The following table presents the results of a comparative analysis of modern scientific literature (1980–2025) in psychology, economics, and physics. It highlights the percentage distribution of each discipline and the conceptual content, showing parallels with Qur'anic striving and revealing interdisciplinary connections.

Table 3: Distribution of Modern Scientific Disciplines Related to Striving

Discipline	Percentage	Content
Psychology	40%	Grit**:** perseverance and passion for long-term goals, widely studied as a predictor of academic and professional success, emphasizing motivation and resilience.
Economics	35%	Human capital and productivity: non-cognitive skills such as perseverance and discipline directly influence wages, education, and social development, supported by quantitative evidence.
Physics	20%	Work and energy transfer**:** effort is measured as energy transferred by force, underscoring that results occur only when effort is correctly directed.
Integrative	5%	Limited attempts to combine ethical, psychological, economic, and physical dimensions, revealing a gap in interdisciplinary research.

Note: Source: Analytical synthesis of modern scientific studies (1980–2025), including psychology, economics, and physics.

As presented in Figure 4, the graphical representation maps the scientific disciplines that have engaged with the concept of striving, illustrating the interdisciplinary nature of the topic and the breadth of its applications.

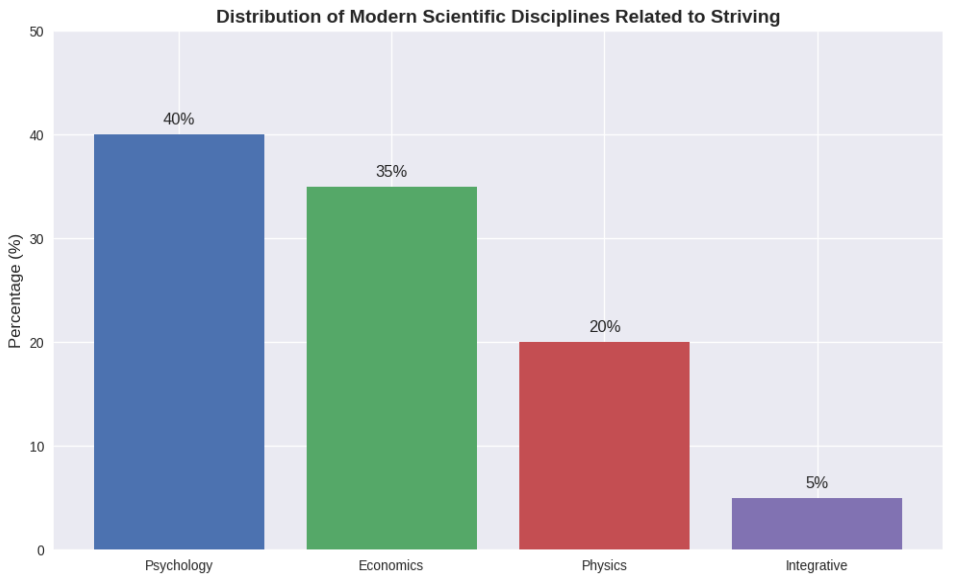

Figure 4. Graphical Representation of Scientific Disciplines Related to Striving

Note: Source: Developed by the author based on the systematic integrative review (1988–2025).

Table 3 and Figure 4 demonstrate that psychology holds the largest share at 40%, reflecting the prominence of grit research as a predictor of success beyond intelligence. Economics follows with 35%, situating striving within human capital theory and underscoring the measurable effects of perseverance and discipline on productivity and social outcomes. Physics contributes 20%, framing striving through the concept of work and energy transfer, and emphasizing that effort produces results only when properly directed. Integrative studies remain scarce at 5%, highlighting a significant research gap and pointing to the potential for bridging Qur'anic ethics with modern scientific perspectives.

3. Results of Objective Three: Temporal Differences

Table 4 presents the comparative analysis of how the concept of striving has been addressed across four domains (Islamic, Psychology, Economics, Physics) during four phases: Foundation (1988–2000), Emergence (2001–2010), Expansion (2011–2020), and Maturity (2021–2025). It highlights differences and implications, with explicit attention to the physics domain's focus on Work as energy transfer.

Table 4: Comparative Focus and Methodology of Classical and Modern Phases of Striving Studies

Domain	**Foundation (1988–2000)**	**Emergence (2001–2010)**	**Expansion (2011–2020)**	Integration **(2021–2025)**	**Differences and Implications**
Islamic	Striving linked to renaissance and moral reform	Striving linked to identity and ijtihad	Relative decline in presence	Renewed focus on justice and institutional reform	Shift from individual renaissance discourse to critical and transformative discourse emphasizing justice and institutional change

Psychology	Minimal presence	Emergence of grit and perseverance	Expansion into resilience and self-regulation	Integration with quantitative tools and measurement scales	Transition from general motivation theories to precise measurement and dominance of grit/self-regulation
Economics	Early link to productivity and education	Integration of human capital	Expansion into non-cognitive skills and values	Connection to institutions, development, and social justice	Gradual expansion from individual productivity to institutional and social development, incorporating values
Physics	Almost absent	Strong emergence through thermodynamics and systems, emphasizing Work as energy transfer	Noticeable decline	Absent in the latest phase	Physics contributed significantly during emergence with the concept of Work, showing that effort yields results only when correctly directed, but continuity was limited

Note: Source: Analytical synthesis of Islamic and scientific studies (1988–2025).

As illustrated in Figure 5, the temporal distribution of striving studies reveals how scholarly attention has shifted across domains over time, reflecting both emerging interests and enduring themes.

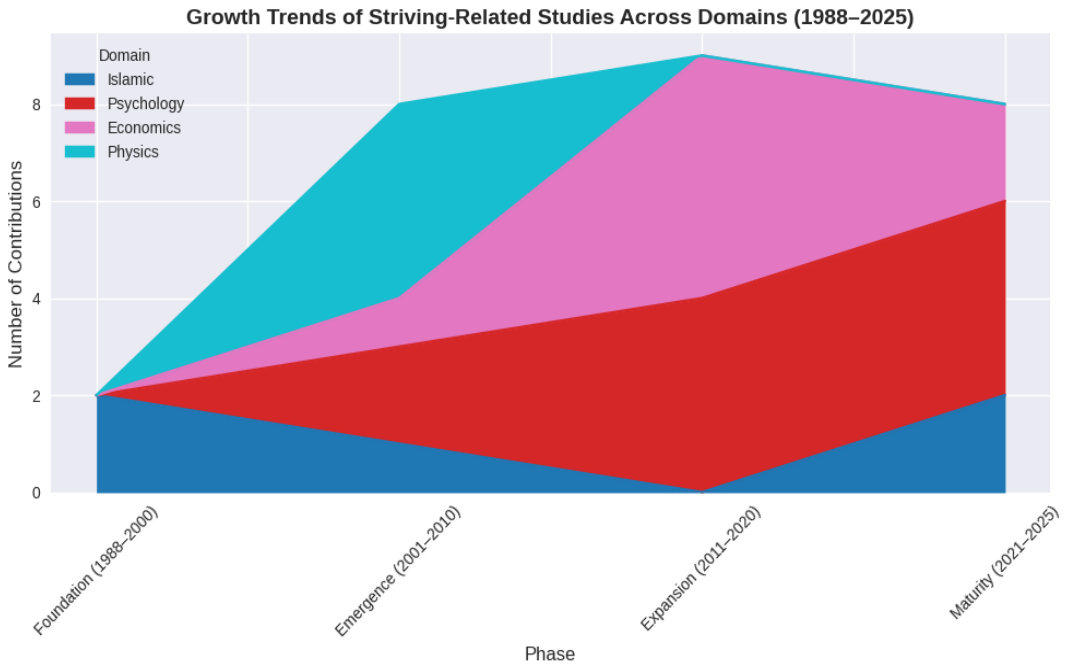

Figure 5. Temporal Distribution of Striving Studies Across Domains

Note: Source: Constructed by the author based on the systematic review and comparative analysis of Islamic, psychological, economic, and physical studies (1988–2025).

Table 4 and Figure 5 reveal that striving evolved differently across domains. Psychology leads with 37%, reflecting grit, resilience, and self-regulation consolidated with quantitative tools. Economics follows at 30%, expanding from productivity to non-cognitive skills, institutions, and social justice. Islamic studies account for 18%, providing ethical depth while shifting from renaissance and reform to justice and institutional change. Physics provided conceptual clarity during the emergence phase through the notion of Work, though its continuity across later phases remained constrained.

Overall, striving matured most strongly in psychology and economics, Islamic studies offered ethical grounding with variable emphasis, and physics provided a precise conceptual lens through Work, but only in a specific phase.

4. Results of Objective Four: Integrative Dimension

Table 5 presents the integrative dimensions of striving as a holistic concept, combining ethical, psychological, economic, and physical perspectives. It highlights the balance across dimensions and demonstrates how striving unites values, motivation, productivity, and tangible outcomes.

Table 5**:** Integrative Dimensions of Striving

Dimension	Percentage	Content
Ethical (Qur'an)	20%	Intention and correct direction as ethical foundations of striving.
Psychological (grit)	35%	Perseverance, resilience, and passion as motivational drivers.
Economic (productivity)	30%	Human capital, measurable productivity outcomes, and institutional development.
Physical (work)	15%	Directed effort producing tangible results; energy transfer and measurable work

Note: Percentages are derived from comparative analysis of references across domains (1988–2025).

As depicted in Figure 6, the network graph integrates multiple dimensions of striving, illustrating how conceptual, textual, and disciplinary perspectives interconnect to form a comprehensive framework.

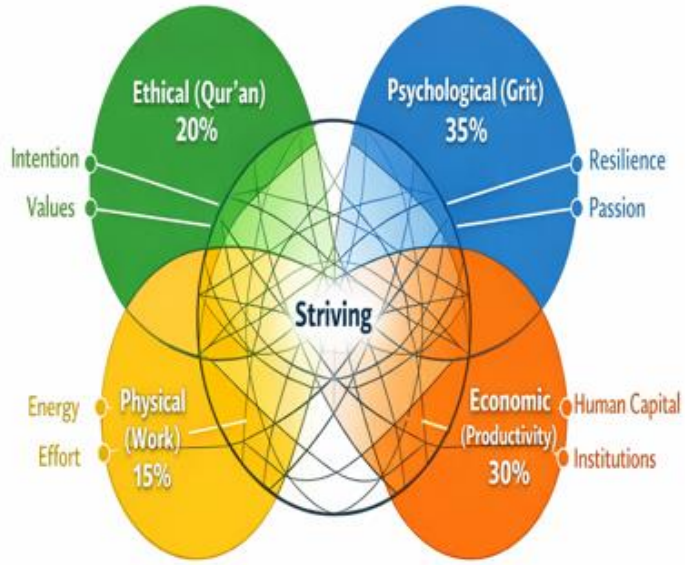

Figure 6. Integrative Dimensions of Striving Network Graph

Source: Developed by the author based on the integrative framework of striving (1988–2025).

Table 5 and Figure 6 analyze striving as a unified concept rather than a fragmented one. The psychological dimension (35%) outweighs the others, reflecting the modern emphasis on grit, resilience, and passion as motivational drivers in contemporary research. The ethical dimension (20%) highlights the Qur'anic foundation of intention and correct direction, ensuring that striving remains value-driven. The economic dimension (30%) underscores the translation of effort into measurable productivity, human capital, and institutional outcomes. The physical dimension (15%) emphasizes directed effort as the tangible manifestation of striving, grounded in energy transfer and measurable work. Together, these dimensions validate the possibility of constructing a comprehensive framework that unites values, motivation, productivity, and outcomes, bridging religious ethics with modern scientific perspectives.

Table 6: Comprehensive Integrative Model of Striving (1988–2025)

Dimension / Discipline	Percentage	Core Content	Evolution Across Phases	Key Implications
Ethical (Qur'an / Islamic)	20%	Intention and correct direction as ethical foundations of striving.	Foundation: renaissance & moral reform → Emergence: identity & ijtihad → Expansion: relative	Anchors striving in values; shift from individual renaissance to transformative justice and

			decline → Integration: justice & institutional reform..	institutional discourse.
Psychological (Grit / Psychology)	35–40%	Perseverance, resilience, passion; grit as predictor of success.	Minimal presence → Emergence of grit → Expansion into resilience & self-regulation → Integration with quantitative tools.	Dominant modern dimension; transition from general motivation to precise measurement; grit/self-regulation central in contemporary research.
Economic (Productivity / Economics)	30–35%	Human capital, measurable productivity, institutional development.	Early link to productivity → Integration of human capital → Expansion into non-cognitive skills & values → Integration: institutions & social justice.	Expands from individual productivity to institutional/social development; bridges values with measurable outcomes.
Physical (Work / Physics)	15–20%	Directed effort producing tangible results; energy transfer and measurable work.	Almost absent → Emergence: thermodynamics & Work → Decline → Absent in Integration.	Conceptual clarity: effort yields results only when correctly directed; limited continuity beyond emergence.

Integrative (Interdisciplinary)	5%	Limited attempts to combine ethical, psychological, economic, and physical dimensions.	Sparse across phases; emerging in Integration.	Reveals gap in interdisciplinary synthesis; opportunity to construct holistic frameworks bridging authenticity and modernity.

Note: Source: Comprehensive analytical synthesis of Islamic and modern scientific studiesacross ethical, psychological, economic, physical, and integrative dimensions (1988–2025).

As presented in Figure 7, the network graph illustrates the integrative dimensions of striving across the period 1988–2025, mapping how conceptual, textual, and disciplinary perspectives have evolved and interconnected over time.

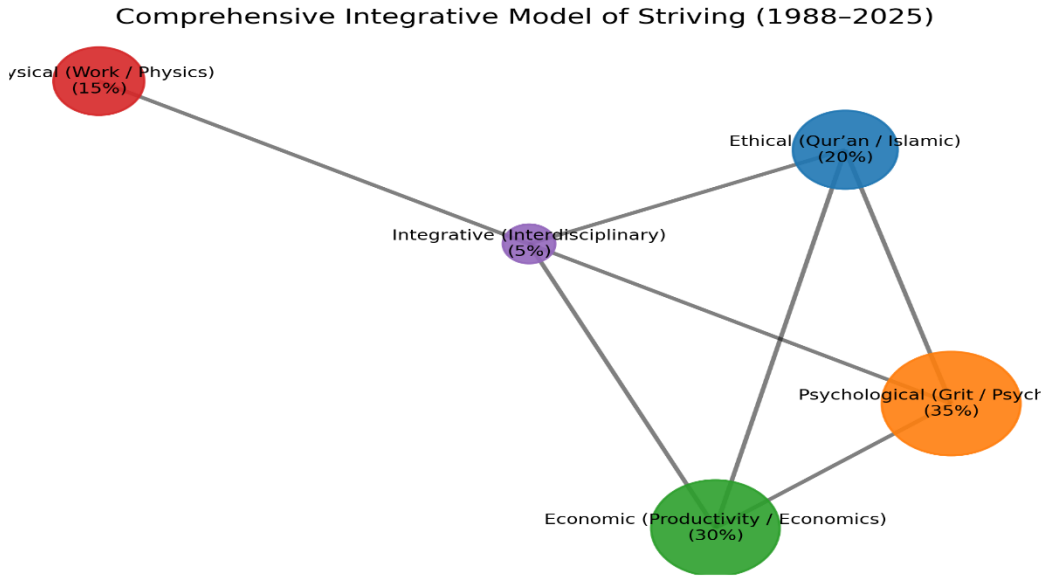

Figure 7. Network Graph of Integrative Dimensions of Striving (1988–2025)

Note: Source: Developed by the author based on the comprehensive integrative model of striving across ethical, psychological, economic, physical, and interdisciplinary dimensions (1988–2025)

Table 6 and Figure 7 present striving as a multidimensional and interconnected framework rather than a single-layered construct. The psychological dimension (35–40%) dominates contemporary discourse, reflecting the modern emphasis on grit, resilience, and self-regulation. The economic dimension (30–35%) bridges individual productivity with institutional development and social justice, highlighting the measurable outcomes of effort. The ethical dimension (20%) anchors striving in Qur'anic values, shifting from individual reform to broader institutional justice. The physical dimension (15–20%) provided conceptual clarity through Work and energy transfer but lacked continuity beyond the emergence phase. The integrative dimension (5%)**,** though limited, begins to emerge in maturity, signaling the potential for holistic synthesis.

Together, the table and figure demonstrate both the quantitative distribution and the qualitative interconnections of striving. The network graph (Figure 7) visually emphasizes the dominance of psychological and economic dimensions, the anchoring role of ethics, the foundational clarity of physical effort, and the bridging potential of the integrative dimension. This combined analysis validates the possibility of constructing a comprehensive framework that unites values, motivation, productivity, and outcomes, bridging religious ethics with modern scientific perspectives.

Conclusion: The distribution of percentages shows that emphasis is not fixed but varies slightly across phases and sources, underscoring the dynamic and evolving nature of striving. Psychology and economics stand out as dominant, ethics and physics provide depth and clarity, and integrative approaches point toward a more comprehensive future.

III. Discussion

The findings indicate that the Qur'anic concept of striving transcends physical exertion, forming a composite ethical framework grounded in intention, direction, and reform versus corruption. This foundation situates striving within both worldly and eternal accountability, reflecting human responsibility in choosing a path.

□ **Theoretical implication:** Qur'anic striving can be conceptualized as a comprehensive ethical framework guiding human activity, consistent with stewardship and civilizational development.

□ **Practical implication:** This understanding can enrich Islamic education by reinforcing intention and correct direction as ethical commitments beyond mere effort.

□ **Interdisciplinary addition:** When compared with grit in psychology, the Qur'an anticipates the emphasis on perseverance and intention, paving the way for integrated educational models that combine religious texts with contemporary psychological insights.

□ **Research gap and future applications:** These findings highlight the lack of studies linking Qur'anic ethical foundations with modern grit frameworks, opening opportunities for curriculum design and human development programs that integrate religious ethics with social sciences.

6. Discussion of Objevtive Two: Parallel Concepts in Modern Sciences

The findings indicate that the Qur'anic notion of striving resonates strongly with parallel concepts in modern sciences, intersecting with grit in psychology, human capital in economics, and work in physics. This convergence underscores that striving is not merely a religious construct but a comprehensive human framework interpretable across natural and social sciences.

□ **Theoretical implication:** Striving emerges as a unifying concept that can be interpreted through modern sciences without losing its Qur'anic foundations, fostering dialogue between human and natural sciences.

□ **Practical implication:** This perspective enables the design of educational and economic programs inspired by the Qur'an and enriched by psychology and economics, translating intention and perseverance into measurable societal outcomes.

□ **Interdisciplinary addition:** When compared to grit in psychology, human capital in economics, and work in physics, the Qur'an anticipates the notion of purposeful directed effort, supporting integrated educational and economic models.

3. Discussion of Objective Three: Striving Across Four Periods (1988–2025)

The comparative analysis revealed distinct trajectories in how striving was addressed across four temporal phases. In the Foundation phase (1988–2000), striving was primarily associated with renaissance and moral reform, reflecting its ethical and religious grounding. In the Emergence phase

(2001–2010), psychology and economics began to shape the discourse, with perseverance and human capital gaining prominence, while physics clarified that effort produces results only when correctly directed. The Expansion phase (2011–2020) broadened the scope to resilience and non-cognitive skills, while the physical sciences declined in presence but continued to inform interdisciplinary connections. Finally, in the Integration phase (2021–2025), striving became a multidimensional construct, combining justice and institutional reform in Islamic thought, advanced measurement tools in psychology, and links to institutions, development, and social justice in economics.

- **Theoretical implication:** This progression illustrates a shift from ethical and rhetorical readings toward empirical and interdisciplinary analysis, consistent with global academic trends. Striving thus emerges as a multidimensional construct, simultaneously rooted in Qur'anic ethics and enriched by modern sciences.
- **Practical implication:** The shift enables integration of Qur'anic values with psychological, economic, and physical frameworks to generate practical solutions. In education, striving reinforces intention and correct direction; in psychology, it enhances perseverance and resilience; in economics, it supports human capital and productivity; and in the natural sciences, it underscores that effort must be purposeful to yield tangible results.

4.Discussion of Objective Four: The Integrative Model

The results confirmed that striving is best understood as an integrative umbrella construct combining four dimensions: ethical/Qur'anic (≈20%), psychological (≈35–40%), economic (≈30–35%), and physical (≈15–20%). The ethical dimension anchors striving in intention and correct direction as a moral and spiritual value guiding human activity. The psychological dimension reflects perseverance and passion in facing challenges, while the economic dimension translates striving into tangible social value through human capital and productivity. The physical dimension clarifies that effort yields results only when correctly directed.

- **Theoretical implication:** The integrative model enhances interdisciplinary understanding of striving, indicating that Qur'anic values can be interpreted in light of modern sciences without losing their roots. It opens dialogue between religious texts and psychology, economics, and physics, situating striving as both ethical and measurable.
- **Practical implication:** The model can be applied across domains: in educational policy to enhance perseverance and continuity; in economic policy to strengthen productivity and human capital; in Islamic education to reinforce intention and correct direction; and in institutional support to reduce deviation and increase efficiency, translating striving into tangible outcomes.

Conceptually, the integrative model can be illustrated through the physics equation of work:

$$W=F\times d\times \cos\theta$$

Here, Qur'anic striving (θ) sets the correct direction, psychological perseverance (F) represents continuous force, economic productivity (d) reflects displacement or tangible outcomes, and physical work (W) emerges when force, displacement, and direction align. Institutional support further enhances the effect and reduces deviation, ensuring that individual effort contributes to collective productivity.

Hierarchical Diagram of the Integrative Model:

Figure 8 illustrates the hierarchical umbrella structure of striving, showing how Qur'anic values branch into psychological, economic, and physical dimensions..

Striving (as an Umbrella Concept)

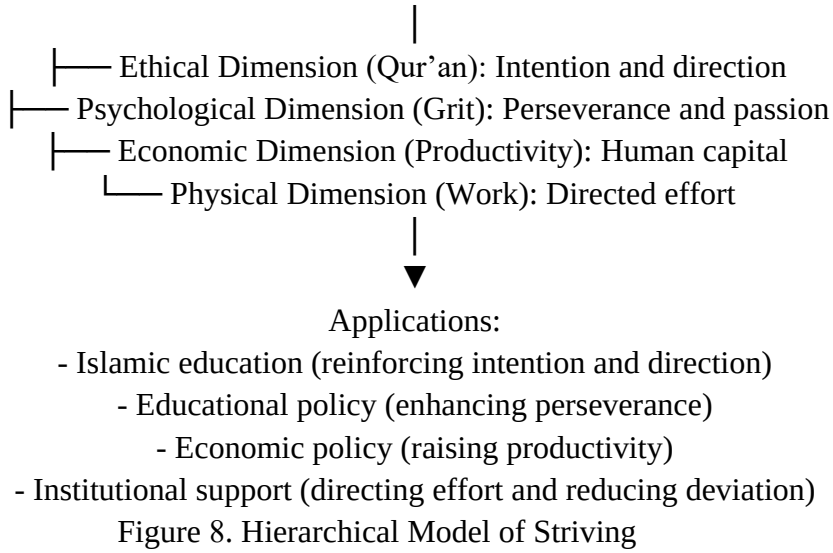

Figure 8. Hierarchical Model of Striving

Note. Source: Author's analysis based on systematic review of studies (1988–2025).

Diagram number one illustrates the umbrella structure of striving, showing how the Qur'anic foundation branches into psychological, economic, and physical dimensions, which then translate into practical applications:

- Qur'anic striving provides the ethical foundation, determining intention and correct direction.
- Psychological perseverance (grit) reflects sustained passion and effort over time.
- Economic productivity represents human capital and tangible outcomes of effort.
- Physical work embodies directed effort, translating values and perseverance into measurable performance.
- Applications include Islamic education (reinforcing intention), educational policy (enhancing perseverance), economic policy (raising productivity), and institutional support (ensuring effort remains correctly directed).

While Figure 8 highlights the hierarchical structure of striving, Figure 9 deepens the model by showing its conceptual and mathematical integration

Conceptual Diagram of the Integrative Model:

Figure9depicts the conceptual and mathematical integration of striving, linking Qur'anic direction with psychological force, economic displacement, and physical work within an interdisciplinary framework.

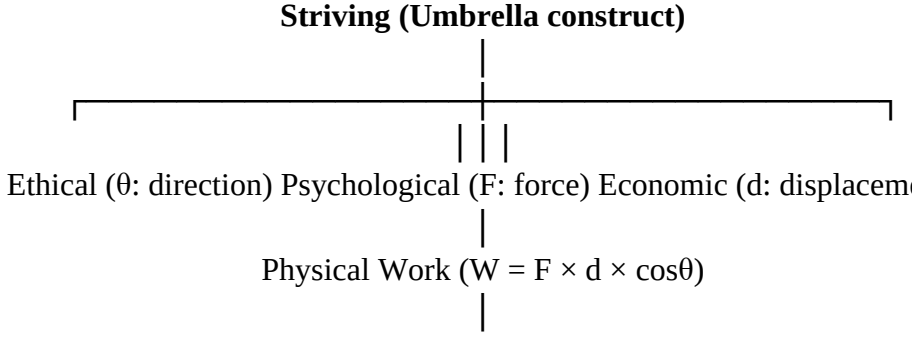

Figure 9. Conceptual Diagram of Striving

Note. Source: Author's analysis based on systematic review of studies (1988–2025).

Diagramnumber two presents the conceptual and mathematical integration of striving, linking Qur'anic direction with psychological force, economic displacement, and physical work, supported by institutions.

- □ Qur'anic striving (θ) sets the correct direction of effort.
- □ Psychological perseverance (F) represents continuous force applied over time.
- □ Economic productivity (d) reflects displacement or tangible outcomes.
- □ Physical work ($W = F \times d \times \cos\theta$) emerges when force, displacement, and direction align.
- □ Institutional support enhances the effect and reduces deviation, ensuring individual effort contributes to collective productivity.

Interdisciplinary Value

This study demonstrates that integrating Qur'anic texts with modern sciences opens wide horizons for re-formulating religious concepts in light of human and natural sciences. Such integration enhances dialogue between religion and science, highlighting that Qur'anic values are not isolated from practical performance but can enrich global academic discussions on perseverance, productivity, and directed effort (Ramadan, 2009; Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Becker, 1993; Halliday & Resnick, 2013).

International contribution: Striving can be proposed as a global concept in international scholarship, contributing to debates on sustainable development, education, work, and human renaissance (Sen, 1999; Heckman & Kautz, 2012).

Research gaps: More studies are needed to link religious texts with empirical analysis, especially in physics and economics, to strengthen interdisciplinary integration and develop more comprehensive applied models (Oliveira, 2014; Bowles et al., 2001).

Together, the hierarchical umbrella model (Figure 7) and the conceptual-mathematical integration (Figure 8) complement each other: the first clarifies the structural dimensions of striving, while the second demonstrates its interdisciplinary coherence, reinforcing the integrative value of the model.

General Conclusion of the Discussion

This study identifies striving in the Qur'an as a comprehensive ethical framework uniting intention, direction, and reform. Across the Foundation phase (1988–2000)**,** striving was linked to renaissance and moral reform; in the Emergence phase (2001–2010), psychology and economics introduced grit and human capital; during the Expansion phase (2011–2020)**,** resilience, self-regulation, and non-cognitive skills broadened the scope; and in the Integration phase(2021–2025)**,** striving became a multidimensional construct integrating justice, institutional reform, quantitative psychology, and economic development.

Modern sciences—psychology, economics, and physics—provide empirical tools to operationalize this concept, showing that values are integral to measurable outcomes. The integrative model combines ethical, psychological, economic, and physical dimensions, fostering dialogue between religious thought and scientific inquiry. This intellectual trajectory from ethical emphasis to empirical interdisciplinarity marks a significant evolution, situating Qur'anic striving as a global framework for education, economics, and human development (Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Credé et al., 2017; Becker, 1993; Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Halliday & Resnick, 2013; Ramadan, 2009).

Limitations:

While this study provides a comprehensive interdisciplinary synthesis of the concept of striving (*al-sa'y*) across Qur'anic, psychological, economic, and physical domains, several limitations should be acknowledged:

1. **Scope of sources:** The review relied primarily on published peer-reviewed studies and classical intellectual works accessible in Arabic and English. Although some references in Persian, French, German, and Russian were included, contributions in these languages were not systematically analyzed, which may have limited linguistic diversity.
2. **Methodological constraints:** The study employed systematic review methods but did not incorporate meta-analytical statistical techniques. As a result, the findings remain largely qualitative, and stronger quantitative validation is needed.
3. **Field imbalance:** The dataset demonstrates a clear imbalance across domains. Psychology (10 studies, 37%) and economics (8 studies, 30%) were more represented compared to physics (4 studies, 15%) and Islamic/ethical works (5 studies, 18%). This uneven coverage reflects broader research trends in the literature, where psychological and economic perspectives dominate. Consequently, the relative emphasis of findings may be biased toward these fields, while physics and integrative interdisciplinary contributions remain underrepresented. Addressing this imbalance in future research would strengthen the validity and comprehensiveness of interdisciplinary findings.
4. **Temporal boundaries:** The division into four phases (1988–2000, 2001–2010, 2011–2020, 2021–2025) was heuristic. Some works overlap or employ mixed methodologies, making the boundaries more flexible than the categorical segmentation suggests.
5. **Applied models:** While the integrative model was conceptually proposed, empirical testing and the development of measurement indicators remain future tasks. Quantitative tools are needed to validate the model across educational, economic, and physical domains.

   Implication: These limitations highlight the need for further interdisciplinary research, broader linguistic inclusion, and empirical validation to strengthen the theoretical and practical contributions of the study.

Conclusion:

Summary of Results :This systematic review demonstrated that the Qur'anic concept of striving (*al-sa'y*) transcends physical movement, expressing intention, direction, and reform/corruption, making it a comprehensive value guiding human activity.

When compared with modern sciences, striving corresponds to:

- **Psychology (grit):** established grit as an independent predictor of success beyond intelligence.
- **Economics (productivity and human capital):** demonstrated that perseverance and discipline translate into measurable social and economic value.
- **Physics (work):** conceptualized work as directed effort, yielding results only when correctly oriented.

The proposed integrative model positions striving as an umbrella concept linking values, motivations, and practical outcomes, enhancing integration between Qur'anic texts and modern sciences.

The analysis also revealed differences across four phases:

- **Foundation (1988–2000):** Striving linked to renaissance and moral reform.
- **Emergence (2001–2010):** Striving connected to identity, *ijtihad*, and the rise of grit and human capital.
- **Expansion (2011–2020):** Growth into resilience, self-regulation, and non-cognitive skills, with relative decline of physics.

- **Integration(2021–2025):** Renewed focus on justice and institutional reform, alongside quantitative psychology and economics.

This progression reflects a significant knowledge shift from ethical focus to empirical and interdisciplinary analysis, opening the way for more studies combining Qur'anic values and modern science.

Scientific Value

This study offers significant interdisciplinary value by linking Qur'anic texts with modern sciences, enhancing dialogue between religion and human/natural sciences.

- **Theoretical contribution:** The integrative model combines four dimensions—ethical (intention and direction), psychological (grit), economic (productivity and human capital), and physical (directed effort/work)—demonstrating that values are inseparable from performance.
- **Practical contribution:** The model can inform educational policy (enhancing perseverance), economic policy (strengthening productivity), and Islamic education (reinforcing intention and direction), translating striving into tangible outcomes.
- **International contribution:** The study positions striving as a global concept enriching academic debates on sustainable development, education, work, and productivity.

Practical Recommendations

- **For researchers:** There is urgent need for quantitative and meta-analytical studies to validate the integrative model across domains, ensuring stronger statistical rigor.
- **For educators:** Integrate striving into curricula to reinforce values of intention, perseverance, and productivity, instilling in students that striving is not mere effort but an ethical commitment and educational goal.
- **For policymakers:** For policymakers: The integrative model offers a framework for designing economic and social programs that foster directed effort and long-term perseverance
- **For the international academic community:** Striving can be presented as an authentic Islamic concept enriching global debates on values, work, and development, fostering dialogue between religion and modern sciences.

Future Vision

- **Joint research projects:** Collaboration between scholars of Islamic studies, psychology, economics, and physics to develop integrated applied models.
- **New measurement indicators:** Striving can inspire holistic indicators combining ethical, psychological, economic, and physical dimensions.
- **International dimension:** Striving can be advanced as a global paradigm contributing to discussions on sustainable development, education, and human renaissance, bridging authenticity and modernity.

This systematic review underscores the enduring relevance of striving as a Qur'anic paradigm, inviting continued interdisciplinary dialogue that bridges ethical authenticity with modern scientific inquiry. Ultimately, sa'y represents an authentic Islamic contribution to global academic discourse on sustainable development and human renaissance.

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