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QUR'AN-HADITH TEACHER PERSONALITY COMPETENCE IN DEVELOPING EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS' CHARACTER

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Abstract

This empirical study examined the personality competence of a Qur'an-Hadith teacher and its contribution to the character development of Grade VIII students at MTs Tarbiyah Islamiyah in Jambi City. A qualitative case study involved ten purposively selected participants: one Qur'an-Hadith teacher, one madrasah principal, and eight students representing variations in participation, academic achievement, discipline, and closeness to the teacher. Data were collected through 12 in-depth interview sessions, nine classroom observations, two observations of madrasah activities, and document analysis. Verbatim transcripts were analysed thematically through inductive-deductive coding, category development, theme review, triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, negative-case analysis, and an audit trail. The findings indicate that consistency, fairness, emotional stability, responsibility, and willingness to correct mistakes strengthened the teacher's moral credibility and educational relationships. However, the teacher's influence varied: some students changed gradually, some complied only under supervision, and others reported limited influence because of family circumstances, peer pressure, previous disciplinary experiences, and individual characteristics. Discrepancies among interviews, observations, and documents show that teacher role modelling contributes to character development but is not its sole cause. The study underscores the importance of consistent institutional practices, moral reflection, habituation, and family support.

Keywords: *Character Education; Personality Competence; Qualitative Case Study; Qur'an-Hadith Teacher; Thematic Analysis.*



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Abstrak

Penelitian empiris ini menganalisis kompetensi kepribadian guru Al-Qur'an Hadis dan kontribusinya terhadap pengembangan karakter siswa kelas VIII di MTs Tarbiyah Islamiyah Kota Jambi. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif dan dilaksanakan pada Juni–Juli 2026. Informan berjumlah 10 orang, terdiri atas satu guru Al-Qur'an Hadis, satu kepala madrasah, dan delapan siswa yang dipilih secara purposif untuk merepresentasikan variasi partisipasi, prestasi, kedisiplinan, dan kedekatan dengan guru. Data diperoleh melalui 12 sesi wawancara mendalam, sembilan observasi pembelajaran, dua observasi kegiatan madrasah, serta analisis dokumen berupa rekap tugas, catatan kedisiplinan, dan program pembiasaan. Wawancara berlangsung 25–60 menit, direkam dengan persetujuan partisipan, ditranskripsikan secara verbatim, dan dianalisis secara tematik melalui pengodean induktif-deduktif, pengembangan kategori, peninjauan tema, triangulasi, member checking, peer debriefing, analisis kasus negatif, dan audit trail. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa konsistensi, keadilan, kestabilan emosi, tanggung jawab, dan kesediaan guru mengoreksi diri membangun kredibilitas moral dan relasi edukatif. Namun, pengaruh guru tidak seragam. Sebagian siswa mengalami perubahan bertahap, sebagian hanya patuh ketika diawasi, dan sebagian lain tidak merasakan pengaruh yang kuat karena faktor keluarga, teman sebaya, pengalaman disiplin, dan karakter individual. Perbedaan antara wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi menunjukkan bahwa keteladanan guru berkontribusi terhadap perkembangan karakter, tetapi tidak menjadi penyebab tunggal.

Kata Kunci: *Analisis Tematik; Guru Al-Qur'an Hadis; Kompetensi Kepribadian; Pendidikan Karakter; Studi Kasus Kualitatif.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is expected to develop intellectual competence together with moral judgment, social responsibility, and spiritual strength. In Indonesian policy, these outcomes are inseparable from the professional competence of teachers, including integrity, maturity, emotional stability, fairness, and responsibility (Republik Indonesia, 2003, 2005, 2021; Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2007). In Qur'an–Hadith learning, these qualities are especially important because teachers are expected to connect normative religious texts with observable conduct in everyday school life.

Islamic moral education places role modelling, habituation, reflection, and value-oriented relationships at the centre of character formation (Halstead, 2007; Alkouatli, 2018; Sahin, 2018). Recent studies further show that teacher mediation, ethical reflection, school culture, and repeated behavioural reinforcement support the internalisation of Islamic values (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Suhayib & Ansyari,

2023; Pewangi & Ferdinan, 2025; Nashir et al., 2026). Positive teacher–student relationships can strengthen engagement and belonging, although adolescents interpret teacher influence through their own identities, prior experiences, peer networks, and family circumstances (Quin, 2017; Roorda et al., 2017; García-Moya et al., 2020; Branje et al., 2021).

Character development is therefore ecological rather than linear. School climate, disciplinary norms, peers, family support, and digital environments may reinforce or weaken a teacher’s message (Wang & Degol, 2016; Berkowitz et al., 2017; Allen et al., 2018; Laursen & Veenstra, 2021; Veenstra & Lodder, 2022). Islamic education in different sociocultural settings likewise requires contextual interpretation rather than assuming that the same strategy produces identical outcomes for all learners (Lafrarchi, 2020; Lahmar, 2020; Abubakar et al., 2024).

Existing Indonesian studies have discussed Islamic Religious Education teachers’ personality competence, exemplary behaviour, and student character formation (Mulyani, 2021; Permatasari & Arianto, 2022; Rahman et al., 2024; Syah et al., 2024; Tanamal et al., 2024). However, these studies generally describe desirable teacher qualities or report broadly positive outcomes. They rarely trace how specific teacher behaviours operate through pedagogical and relational mechanisms, compare evidence across interviews, observations, and documents, or explain students who comply only under supervision and those who report little change. This constitutes the principal empirical gap addressed in the present study.

The novelty of this study lies in a three-layer analysis that links observable personality competence to moral credibility, relational security, and pedagogical habituation, while examining variation across six character values and deliberately incorporating contradictory and negative cases. Accordingly, the study aimed to describe the teacher’s personality competence in practice, analyse the mechanisms through which it contributed to character development, explain variations and contradictions in student responses, and identify contextual factors that strengthened or limited this contribution. The conceptual framework treats teacher personality competence as moral–professional capital whose educational influence depends on consistent enactment and contextual support.

Table 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Component	Primary indicators	Empirical evidence required	Disconfirming evidence/variation
Personality competence	Integrity, maturity, emotional stability, authority, work ethic, professional ethics	Observable behaviour, decisions during conflict, consistency between words and actions, attendance and assessment records	Lateness, inconsistent correction, decisions perceived as unfair, acknowledgement of mistakes
Pedagogical mechanisms	Role modelling, guidance, motivation, facilitation, evaluation, habituation	Sequence of teacher actions, student responses, follow-up, opportunities for reflection	No student response, compliance only under supervision, strategies ineffective for particular students
Student character	Religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, care, courtesy	Behavioural change over time, student accounts, observations, assignment and attendance records	Regression, inconsistency, differences among students, family and peer influence
Context	Madrasah culture, rules, family, peers, digital media	Programmes, routines, parent communication, practices across teachers	Inconsistent rules, contradictory messages, time and resource constraints

RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative case study examined character development through Grade VIII Qur'an–Hadith instruction at MTs Tarbiyah Islamiyah, Jambi City, during June–July 2026. Ten participants were selected purposively through maximum variation: one Qur'an–Hadith teacher, one madrasah principal, and eight students representing differences in gender, achievement, participation, disciplinary history, and closeness to the teacher. Student recruitment ended when the final interviews produced no substantively new codes and the sample contained contrasting and negative cases (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Vasileiou et al., 2018). The researcher was external to the madrasah and recorded assumptions and possible bias in a reflexive journal. The case-study design and reporting followed established guidance for transparent qualitative inquiry (Busetto et al., 2020; Levitt et al., 2018).

Data comprised 12 in-depth interview sessions, nine classroom observations, two observations of madrasah activities, and three document groups: assignment records, disciplinary notes, and habituation programmes. Interviews lasted 25–60

minutes, were recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and checked against the recordings. Student participation required parental consent and student assent. Identities were anonymised as GQH, KM, and S1–S8, and all quotations were translated into English while retaining their contextual meaning.

Reflexive thematic analysis combined deductive indicators of personality competence with inductive codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021, 2022). Source-by-time matrices and systematic data displays were used to compare supporting, contradictory, and complicating evidence (Miles et al., 2014), producing 84 initial codes, 21 categories, six themes, and four negative cases. Credibility and transparency were strengthened through source and method triangulation, member checking, two peer-debriefing sessions, negative-case analysis, and an audit trail (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). Audio files and transcripts were stored on password-protected devices with restricted access.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Moral Credibility Is Built through Consistency but Remains Vulnerable

The analysis showed that students perceived the teacher as having integrity when the rules he communicated were also applied to himself. Punctuality, courtesy, willingness to listen, and transparency in assessment strengthened his moral credibility. This credibility was not fixed, however; actions perceived as inconsistent reduced students' willingness to accept his advice.

"I find it easier to accept his advice when he also arrives on time and keeps his promise to return our assignments." (S1, interview, June 2026).

"He is usually fair, but once an active student was only warned while another student was immediately given an additional task." (S5, interview, June 2026).

Observation O-1 in June 2026 showed that the teacher arrived before the lesson began and addressed lateness without humiliating the students. In contrast, Observation O-7 in July 2026 showed that the stated consequence for lateness was not applied because instructional time had been reduced. This contrast indicates that teacher consistency must be assessed across multiple encounters rather than inferred from a single exemplary incident.

Role Modelling Facilitates Value Internalisation but Does Not Guarantee Change

Role modelling provided concrete examples of greeting others, praying, behaving courteously, demonstrating trustworthiness, acting honestly, and fulfilling responsibilities. Some students connected the teacher's conduct with changes in their own behaviour, whereas others understood the values but did not consistently enact them when facing academic difficulty or peer pressure.

"I saw him apologise after stating the wrong score. It showed me that admitting a mistake does not mean losing authority." (S2, interview, June 2026).

"I know cheating is wrong and the teacher has modelled honesty, but when an assignment is difficult I still look at a friend's answer." (S6, interview, June 2026).

Observation O-2 in June 2026 recorded the teacher returning a borrowed item and relating the act to the principle of trustworthiness. However, Observation O-8 in July 2026 identified two students exchanging answers on a subsequent assignment. This negative case demonstrates that teacher role modelling is one source of influence rather than the sole cause of character change.

Educative Discipline Is Accepted When It Is Firm, Proportionate, and Explainable

Students were more likely to accept correction when the teacher explained the moral rationale, listened to the circumstances, protected their dignity, and provided an opportunity to rectify the mistake. Nevertheless, closeness without transparent rules could generate perceptions of favouritism.

"He usually does not shout. We are first asked to explain, and the consequence is still related to the lesson." (S3, interview, June 2026).

"I feel comfortable asking questions, but students who are close to the teacher are sometimes given more opportunity to explain." (S7, interview, June 2026).

Observation O-3 in June 2026 recorded two students who disrupted a presentation being asked to summarise the material as an educative consequence. Observation O-9 in July 2026 showed that the teacher engaged in longer dialogue with active students while giving briefer instructions to quieter students. These

findings indicate that support was not always distributed equally among students with different participation profiles.

Secure Relationships Create Space for Guidance, but Some Students Remain Distant

Some students became more willing to ask questions when the teacher did not immediately judge incorrect answers and offered alternative forms of participation. However, students with negative disciplinary experiences, family difficulties, or pronounced shyness did not necessarily interpret the teacher's approach as supportive.

"After he spoke with me privately several times, I became more confident in answering. I am still afraid when I have to respond immediately in front of the class." (S4, interview, June 2026).

"I do not feel strongly influenced by the teacher because most of my problems are at home. In class, I choose to remain silent so that I am not questioned." (S8, interview, June 2026).

These differences limit any claim that all students experienced the relationship positively. Teacher support is important for school belonging, but family circumstances, peers, previous experiences, and personal characteristics must also be considered (Allen et al., 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Branje & Morris, 2021).

Character Change Is Gradual, Uneven, and Susceptible to Regression

Character change was assessed through patterns over time rather than isolated statements. During the initial observations, some students had not prepared their learning materials and waited for instructions. In later observations, several students began preparing their books in advance and submitting assignments on time. These improvements were not stable, however, when assignment loads and school activities increased.

"I now complete assignments before the deadline more often, but I am still late when there are too many tasks." (S1, follow-up interview, July 2026).

"The changes differ. Some students have become more disciplined, some behave well only when that teacher is present, and others have not changed." (KM, interview, July 2026).

Document D-1, compiled during June–July 2026, contained assignment-submission records showing improved punctuality among several students, whereas D-2 showed that three students remained late in submitting several assignments. These data indicate that change was uneven and did not persist across all situations.

Madrasah Culture Can Reinforce or Weaken the Teacher’s Message

Religious programmes, school regulations, leadership support, and alignment among teachers can extend character education beyond Qur’an–Hadith lessons. Conversely, inconsistent application of rules leads students to interpret discipline as situational rather than principled.

“When all teachers use the same rules, students understand them more easily. When the rules differ, they choose the least demanding one.” (GQH, interview, July 2026).

“The madrasah has programmes, but communication with parents is not yet routine and implementation is not consistent across classes.” (KM, interview, July 2026).

Character development requires alignment among rules, relationships, and students’ broader school experiences. Teacher influence may be weakened when peer norms or institutional practices communicate conflicting messages (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021; Veenstra & Lodder, 2022; Veenstra, 2026).

Table 2. Convergence, contradiction, and negative-case matrix

Issue	Interviews	Observations/docu ments	Pattern status	Analytic meaning
Fairness of correction	Most students regarded the teacher as fair; one student perceived differential treatment	One observation supported the pattern; another showed that the stated rule was not applied	Dominant pattern with contradiction	Fairness was relatively strong but context-dependent
Modelling honesty	Students cited the teacher’s acknowledgement of a mistake as an example	Observations supported the pattern; documents/observations also identified cheating	Negative case	Role modelling was not automatically internalised

Issue	Interviews	Observations/docu ments	Pattern status	Analytic meaning
Sense of safety	Some students became more confident; others remained distant	Personal support was visible, but attention was distributed unevenly	Variation among students	Relationships were shaped by student characteristics and previous experiences
Change in discipline	Some students reported gradual improvement	Assignment records improved for some students; lateness persisted among others	Uneven change	Avoid claims of comprehensive change
Madrasah culture	The teacher and principal acknowledged programme support	Documents showed variation in implementation across classes	Policy–practice tension	Institutional consistency constrained teacher influence

Table 3. Character change across time

Student code	Indicator	Initial empirical condition	Final empirical condition	Evidence across sources	Bounded interpretation
S1	Discipline and responsibility	Frequently waited for instructions and submitted several assignments late in June 2026	More often prepared books and submitted assignments on time in July 2026, although lateness recurred when workload increased	S1 interviews in June and July 2026; O-1 and O-7; D-1 and D-2	Gradual change with situational regression
S2	Honesty and moral responsibility	Understood the importance of honesty but had not linked it to the courage to admit mistakes	Interpreted the teacher's apology as evidence that self-correction does not diminish authority	S2 interview in June 2026; O-2; assessment records	Change was primarily interpretive; long-term behavioural evidence remained limited

Student code	Indicator	Initial empirical condition	Final empirical condition	Evidence across sources	Bounded interpretation
S3	Discipline and respect	Tended to follow rules because of fear of correction	Accepted consequences more readily when the rationale was explained and an opportunity to rectify the mistake was provided	S3 interview in June 2026; O-3 and O-6	Shift from fear-based compliance toward procedural understanding
Negative cases: S6 and S8	Honesty and engagement	S6 understood that cheating was prohibited but still relied on peers' answers; S8 remained distant and minimally engaged	No stable change was identified by the end of data collection	S6 and S8 interviews in June 2026; O-8 and O-9; D-2	Teacher influence was constrained by task difficulty, peers, family problems, and personal characteristics

Discussion

Moral Credibility and Consistency in Teacher Practice

The findings indicate that teacher moral credibility was constructed primarily through alignment between words and actions. Punctuality, transparency in assessment, emotional self-regulation, and willingness to correct mistakes made the teacher's advice more acceptable to students. This pattern supports Indonesian research that positions integrity, maturity, and role modelling at the core of Islamic Religious Education teachers' personality competence (Mulyani, 2021; Permatasari & Arianto, 2022; Syah et al., 2024; Tanamal et al., 2024). The teacher's apology also suggests that authority need not be maintained through an image of infallibility; rather, it may be strengthened through moral accountability and the capacity to revise an incorrect decision.

This credibility was relational, however, and could be renegotiated when students encountered inconsistency. Different consequences across two lessons weakened the moral message even though students' overall evaluations of the

teacher remained positive. This finding is consistent with research on teacher–student relationships showing that relational quality develops through repeated patterns of interaction rather than isolated acts (Quin, 2017; Roorda et al., 2017). In Islamic teacher education, personal integrity should therefore be accompanied by reflective capacity, procedural transparency, and continuous self-evaluation (Memon, 2011).

Role Modelling as a Catalyst for Reflection, Not a Singular Cause

Teacher role modelling offered students concrete illustrations of trustworthiness, honesty, courtesy, and responsibility. The teacher’s apology after announcing an incorrect score, for example, was understood not merely as an administrative correction but as a moral experience that helped students interpret the meaning of self-correction. This finding supports the view that Islamic moral education proceeds through practice, relationships, and gradual self-formation rather than through the transmission of normative concepts alone (Halstead, 2007; Alkouatli, 2018; Sahin, 2018). Research on adolescent role models similarly indicates that credible exemplars can influence social and academic orientations when adolescents have opportunities to observe and interpret their actions (Atif et al., 2022).

The case of a student who continued to cheat nevertheless reveals a gap between knowing a value, accepting an exemplar, and acting consistently. Role modelling supplies a framework for moral interpretation, but it does not remove academic difficulty, peer pressure, or previously established coping strategies. The present findings therefore extend research on Islamic Religious Education teachers’ role in character formation: the teacher’s contribution is more appropriately understood as creating conditions and moral experiences than as directly causing behavioural change (Rahman et al., 2024). Qur’an–Hadith instruction should connect role modelling with decision-making practice, case-based reflection, and opportunities to repair inappropriate conduct (Ritonga et al., 2025).

Educative Discipline and Procedural Fairness

Students accepted discipline more readily when the teacher explained the rationale for a rule, listened to the context, protected student dignity, and imposed consequences relevant to learning. This finding demonstrates that firmness and support are not mutually exclusive; they can coexist through clear expectations and respectful treatment. Research on school climate similarly associates supportive relationships, transparent rules, and fair disciplinary practices with stronger

academic and socio-emotional development (Wang & Degol, 2016; Berkowitz et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Perceptions of favouritism nevertheless emerged when active students received more time for dialogue than quieter students. This difference does not necessarily indicate intentional unfairness, but it shows that the distribution of attention can produce unequal experiences. Because teacher support is strongly associated with school belonging, students should have relatively equitable access to opportunities to ask questions, explain circumstances, and correct mistakes (Allen et al., 2018). Exemplary leadership and consistency across teachers are also necessary so that discipline is not interpreted as a personal rule that changes according to who is teaching (Suaidi et al., 2021).

Secure Relationships and Differentiated Support

Secure relationships enabled some students to ask questions and disclose difficulties, particularly when the teacher offered the option of speaking privately. This experience was not uniform, however. Students with pronounced shyness, negative disciplinary experiences, or family difficulties could remain distant even when they regarded the teacher as approachable. Such variation is consistent with adolescent-development research that conceptualises identity, social relationships, and contextual change as dynamic processes (Branje et al., 2021; Branje & Morris, 2021; Crone et al., 2024).

These findings point to the need for differentiated support. Rather than relying on a single form of interpersonal closeness, teachers should provide multiple avenues for participation, such as written responses, private dialogue, peer assistance, or post-lesson follow-up. In Majority World contexts, student responses should also be interpreted in relation to family conditions, local norms, and social position rather than through assumptions of uniform development (Abubakar et al., 2024). A secure educational relationship is therefore an important prerequisite, but its effectiveness depends on how well the form of support corresponds to each student's needs.

Character Change as an Ecological and Nonlinear Process

The longitudinal change matrix shows that discipline, responsibility, and engagement developed gradually, unevenly, and with occasional regression. Some students began preparing their books earlier or submitting assignments on time, but these improvements weakened when the workload increased. This finding avoids an overgeneralised claim of comprehensive change and reinforces the need to

assess character through behavioural patterns across situations rather than through isolated declarations.

Peer norms and classroom culture help explain why teacher advice was not always followed when supervision decreased. Research on peer influence shows that adolescent behaviour is shaped through processes of selection, normative adjustment, and the pursuit of social acceptance (Güroğlu & Veenstra, 2021; Laursen & Veenstra, 2021). Classroom norms may provide the microfoundations that guide everyday behavioural development (Veenstra & Lodder, 2022). Character interventions should therefore address not only individuals but also peer groups and classroom norms in constructive ways (Veenstra, 2026). This contextual interpretation is consistent with research showing that positive teacher relationships depend on dialogic, respectful interaction and that value formation is shaped by both institutional and interpersonal conditions (García-Moya et al., 2020; Aderibigbe et al., 2023).

Madrasah culture expanded or constrained the teacher's contribution. Habituation programmes, school regulations, leadership, and communication with parents could reinforce the messages of Qur'an-Hadith education when implemented consistently. Conversely, variations in rules among teachers encouraged students to choose the least demanding consequence and interpret discipline as situational. This finding strengthens the case for an institutional approach that connects teachers' personal competence, madrasah policy, and family engagement (Rahman et al., 2024; Ritonga et al., 2025). Comparable evidence from Islamic secondary education indicates that teacher example, school-family synergy, ethical reflection, and repeated routines are most effective when they operate as a coherent institutional system (Pewangi & Ferdinan, 2025; Nashir et al., 2026).

Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the study proposes a three-pathway contribution model. The first pathway is moral credibility: student receptiveness grows from teacher consistency and self-correction. The second is relational security: a dialogic space enables students to ask questions, explain circumstances, and try again. The third is pedagogical habituation: values are linked to assignments, reflection, educative consequences, and madrasah routines. These pathways operate within an ecology of family, peers, and school culture; their influence is therefore probabilistic rather than deterministic.

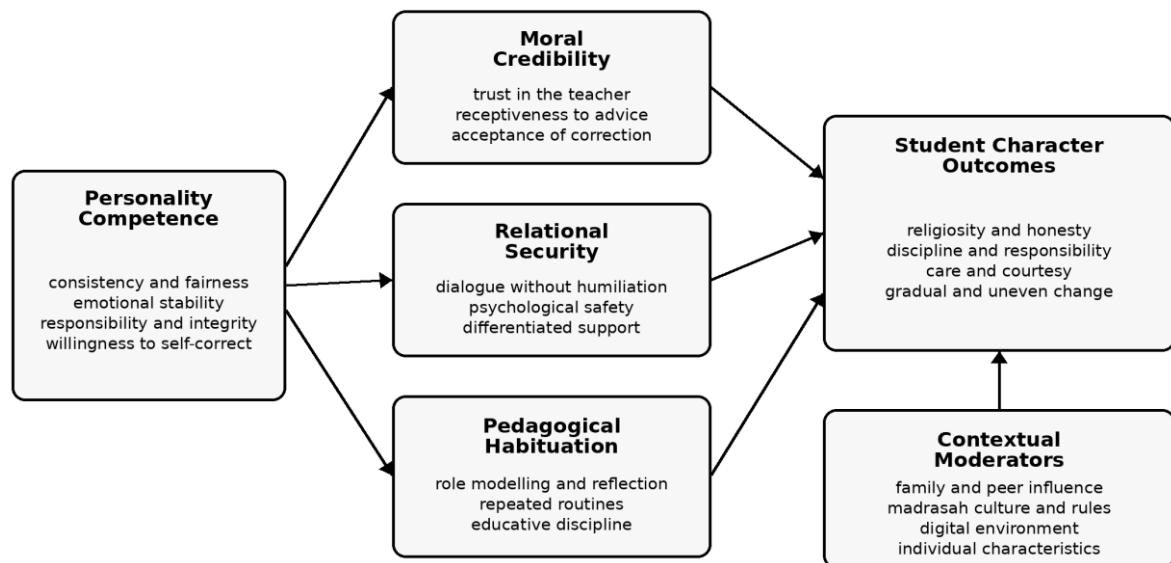


Figure 1. Three-pathway model of teacher contribution to student character

In practical terms, madrasahs should establish proportionate disciplinary protocols that apply across classrooms, provide reflective forums in which teachers can evaluate the consistency of their decisions, and integrate authentic moral cases into Qur'an-Hadith instruction. Teachers should monitor how attention is distributed between active and quiet students, offer alternative modes of participation, and follow up with students whose compliance remains situational. Character programmes should also engage peer groups and maintain regular communication with families so that students do not receive contradictory messages.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the personality competence of a Qur'an-Hadith teacher contributes to student character development through three interrelated pathways: moral credibility, relational security, and pedagogical habituation. Consistency, fairness, emotional stability, responsibility, and willingness to acknowledge mistakes increased students' receptiveness to moral guidance. Nevertheless, the contribution was gradual and uneven because students interpreted teacher behaviour through academic difficulty, prior disciplinary experiences, family circumstances, peer influence, and the consistency of madrasah culture. Character education should therefore combine credible role modelling with

proportionate discipline, reflective dialogue, differentiated support, repeated routines, coherent school-wide rules, and sustained family engagement. The findings are limited by the single-site case, the involvement of one subject teacher and eight students, the two-month observation period, the absence of parent interviews, and reliance on some self-reported accounts. Future research should use longer multi-site designs, include parents and several teachers, and examine whether the proposed three-pathway model remains applicable across different madrasah contexts.

This study was limited to one case, one subject teacher, eight students, and a two-month observation period; the findings are therefore not intended for statistical generalisation. Some evidence was based on participant accounts and may have been influenced by memory or social-desirability bias. The researcher's presence may also have affected behaviour during observations. Future research should employ multisite and longitudinal designs, involve parents and peers, and compare the practices of several teachers to examine the stability of the three-pathway model across different madrasah contexts.

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