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# The Characteristics of Islamic Education Teachers and Its Influences On Student's Development

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## Abstract

This article is based on case study using qualitative approach which aims to explore the characteristics of Islamic Education Teachers and its influences on student's development. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and non-participant observations method involving seven participants of Islamic Education teachers from several schools using purposive sampling technique. The result of the data analysis found that Islamic Education teachers practice a superior characteristics that gives impact on student development. Characteristics of such practices includes an exemplary qualities such as piety, truth, honesty and trust; showing high religious appreciation; polite manners; a neat and attractive appearance; a parenting love; and good work skills. Such eminent characteristics gives a positive influence on student's development, in terms of moral development, creating a positive 'student-teacher' relationship and to increase student's motivation and interest in learning. Thus, this study help to give an insight as well the implication to empowered teachers from several aspects; such as personality, knowledge and skills for them to be more outstanding, competitive, as well the strong quality traits.

Keywords: *Islamic Education Teachers, Characters, Personality, Influences, Role Model.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an on going process in developing the individual potential collectively and ultimately contributes to the civilization and progress of the nation. The concept of education in Islam is not just a process of knowledge transfer only; but rather to educate, transform and train the mind, spiritual and physical to think and act according to their duties as a servant and caliphs of Allah [1] This concept has been said through Islamic Education Philosophy:

*Islamic education is an on going effort to convey knowledge, skills and experience based on the Quran and al-Sunnah in order to shape attitudes, skills, personalities and views of life as the servant of Allah who has the responsibility to develop oneself, society, environment, and country towards achieving goodness in this world and the hereafter*

The implication of the Islamic Education Philosophy (IEP), the educational process can shape the personality of a true, intelligent Muslim but at the same time capable in sustaining life based on values of faith and morals. Thus, in this case, the goal of high quality education cannot be achieved unless the teacher; who is the crucial factor in the effectiveness of an education system is able to function effectively. Islamic Education Teachers should have a number of characteristics and qualities as an effective teacher that covers the aspects of personality, knowledge and personal appearance in order to succeed in educational process as pictured in IEP [2]. Effective teachers not only capitalize on a wide range of knowledge in the subject or the field taught, but more importantly it requires a set of values and principles to maintain their competence to stand firm and strong with the current of educational challenges.

## II. ROLE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHER

Islamic Education Teachers (IET) has always played a vital role in producing a *rabbani* generation who believe and fear in God and practice ethical values in line with Islamic law [3]. Human capital that is to be born is shaped by the upbringing, education, guidance and manners by teachers, which will developed a good human values in their students. Teachers stigma as a role model remains relevant till today as education requires teachers example and intelligibility to facilitate the delivery of knowledge. What's more, in facing with the challenges of globalization, students need strong connection with teachers as their mentor, guide and to show the right directions to them in order to avoid lost oneself in the modern world that distorts the divine values of life [4]). Furthermore, teachers influence is seen to be very important in student personal development; especially in the areas of religious education and morale development. This is such an inevitable situation, given the fact that the time spent with teachers at school is longer than the time spent with parents at home [5],[6]. In this context, good relationships that exist between teachers and students can have a direct impact on the development of the students.

Thus, teachers role are now increasingly challenging and difficult because the human capital to be developed is not only have to be brilliant in terms of cognitive or academic achievement, but also should excel in terms of spiritual aspect. Various definition used by scholars to describe the role of IET such as *muallim*, *muaddib*, *mudarris*, *murabbi* & *mursyid* [7], *walid* [8] and *daie* [9]. However, it cannot be denied for the fact that IET's role revolves around the excellence of faith and morality as it is the essence to the main goal of Islamic Education in forming a generation of piety Muslims to Allah [10]. In relation to this, IET is a moral code engages students and the community in all aspects including lifestyle, the talk, the action as well the appearance [11]. Character and personality displayed by teachers is the benchmark of their professionalism and competence as role models for students.

However, IET's credibility and integrity is often adressed as a problem due to issue of moral dilemma, social problems and the diminishing moral values in a life of a teenager, indicated that the appreciation of Islamic education through teaching and learning of Islamic education has not been fully achieved. Moral values applied in Islamic education in schools do not seem able to refrain them from involving with bad environment. Thus, the social issue and problems happening today are said to be linked with a number of Islamic Education teachers, who have failed to act as role model to their students

resulting in the loss of knowledge to be passed on to fulfil their spiritual needs [12]

Derived from these factors, Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazali in Yussof [13], Al-Syaibani [14] and al-Nai'my [15] have agreed that teachers character and personality are the main prerequisites to build and develop a good quality student through an effective education process. Teachers characteristic and personality can determine the level of student ready-ness from their behaviour and personality. Therefore, teachers need to have a good and praiseworthy qualities; such as sincerity, fair judgement, trustworthy, loving, caring and have a respectful attitude in order to get their attention. These students are the results of how the teachers mold them into. If such teaching is correctly and beautifully done, the result of it will shows on the students.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTION

This study is conducted to explore the characteristics of Islamic education teachers and it's influence on student development. The results of this study will answer the research questions: What are the characteristic of Islamic Education teachers and its influence on students' development?

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question, qualitative research methods is used for this study which aims to conduct in-depth exploration of detailed information related to a real-life background phenomenon [16]. The design of the study is focused on case studies, or precisely multisite cases because the study is performed in several schools locations which is believed to increase the reliability of the data obtained [17]. This study involves seven Islamic Education teachers as the participants selected through purposive sampling technique; which all of them meet the criteria set by reseachers including experienced Islamic Education Teachers who have been teach at least eight years, has a bachelor's degree in education or a diploma in education, besides having a friendly attitude, approachable traits and willingly share information

Data were collected through in-depth interviews involving seven Islamic Education teachers, seven colleagues, seven administrators and 14 students and a non participant observations. Data were analyzed inductively, starting with open coding, followed by axial coding using constant comparative techniques until the process of classification of categories and themes was carried out [18]. To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, researcher has conducted triangulation, peer review, members check, long term field and

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theme validation through expert evaluation and cohen kappa assessment. Three experts have been selected to review and validate the themes

## V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis found that the Islamic education teachers (IET) exerted a positive influence on student personal development through the practice of good characters in line and befits with their role as the good model to students. All these characteristics is shown by practicing a good manners in every aspect of their lives including their action, speech and appearances while making Islam as a perfect way of life. The IET believe that personal dignity and high moral values have a direct and indirect effect on students' personal development, especially in their moral development and ethical aspects;

*"In all aspects such as our actions, our behavior, our speech. They will pay attention to all the things actually and they will follow all we say" [IET5 /IV]*

Examples of good values practiced by IET include the aspect of their relationship with Allah and also with other human beings. Religiousness and piety are the keys attribute of IET. Among the features of IET's devotion to Allah by keeping the religious worship daily basis, practice good deeds for *sunnah*, practicing *amar ma'ruf, nahi mungkar* and keeping the boundaries in society while avoiding oneself of the useless practice. In addition, the IET always prioritizes the pleasure of Allah in every action and everything is done purely for His sake;

*"Whenever we do something we do our best, then sincerely for Allah, we should never seek the credit of people" [IET 1/ IV]*

Religiousness inside of the IET is not just for their own good and happiness, but also to encourage and guides the lives of their students towards achieving the will of Allah. They always implement the value of faith and piety in students by giving them warnings, advice and counsel so that they will obey Allah commandments and abandon His prohibition. In regard to this, they have always been concerned about student worship such as prayer so that the students are guided towards goodness;

developed by the researcher with a coefficient of cohen kappa value of 0.92. It indicated that the study has a very high reliability value [19].

*"I emphasize about prayer. Besides prayer, read the Quran. For me that was the only thing that softened the hearts of these students" [IET 6/ IV]*

All those things provides a positive effect on nourishing and strengthening the student's inner spiritual life, so they are easily guided and educated by the teachers. It was mentioned by Ustaz Rauf; *'Maybe because of the zikrullah or maybe the Yasin that we read on Friday, student can hear you. Not too aggressive'* [IET 5/ IV1]. In addition, IET always practiced genuine personality, trustworthy and honesty. Their action and practices are in accordance with the knowledge been taught to the students. They also have set an example of good deeds and behaviour in line with the knowledge given to the student.

Islamic Education Teacher (IET) believes students will put more trust and respect their teachers who are not only good in talking but at the same time practicing their knowledge as well. In support for this, one student interviewed stated that she feels very confident to learn about religion from the teachers who practice the Islamic law in his daily life such as *sunnah* of prophet Muhammad SAW,

*"If we want to learn something especially about the religion, we need the teacher who practiced the Islam properly, like ustaz Abrar, I like him because he always practice sunnah" [IET 7 (S)/ IV]*

So that, in teaching, teachers should not tell the student about do's and don'ts, but has to give good examples for them by practicing the good manners and deeds. In fact, it becomes a hidden curriculum that students learn the good values more effectively through the real demonstrator in front of them. Trustworthy and honesty are also shown by IET by performing their tasks well, delivering lesson based on planned syllabus, adding on extra classes due to time constraint while monitoring the student progress from time to time and also punctuality while teaching (IET 1/ IV).

While conducting the observation session in the classroom, researcher have noticed the above issue discussed. IET are very concerned on student time management; such as students who late coming to class, ensure they complete their homework on time and allocating ample time for them when carrying out activities (IET 1/OB1; IET 2/OB1; IET 7/OB1)

The effective time management discipline demonstrated by IET indirectly has taught students to respect and value such time and practice punctuality on themselves.

Next, another good characteristics of IET is to having a high appreciation of religion. Such trait is being said and seen through devotion to Allah in doing good deeds, *'no matter how little we do, make sure it is consistent. That's important. Allah will provide the solution'* [IET 7/ IV]. For example, when IET conducting a prayer program at school, they showed a high appreciation to Allah until all students were glued to with the outmost devotion, prayer, *munajat* and *zikir*. Such beautiful melody and soft spoken language by the IET touched the hearts of students till they shed tears of greatness of Allah (IET 5/OB1]. Here, researcher can see that students are captivated with the knowledge, sincerity and dignity of their teachers.

Furthermore, polite manners also another good characteristic of IET. A teacher should and always maintained their modesty while talking with others. They do not reprimand, insult others or using abusive words when scolding or lecturing students for their mistakes. And, it has been stressed that teachers have to be very careful with their choice of words because teacher's word can be considered as a *du'a* for students. It was stated by IET interviewed;

*"We are angry, loud but we are not screaming. We should be careful on language used and carefully avoiding the bad language"* (IET 4/ IV]

Besides, IET shows the good communication skills such as greetings, calling students with a good calling or nickname, give advice and guidance, encourage and praise them every time they do something good, talk in a simple, clear and not too fast so student easy to understand. IET should avoid from talking useless things, *'don't say the bad things'* [IET 5/IV1]. Instead, it is better for teachers to always recite the *zikrullah* as saying *Allah, Allahuakbar, alhamdulillah* and other *zikrullah*. Indirectly students are educated to always keep themselves from speaking dirty and useless words, instead they are encouraged to practice *zikrullah*, *'Ustazah always told us to remember Allah. Sometimes when we forget something she told us to say Lailahaillallah, Allahuakbar or Allah'* [IET1 (S)/ IV

Having a neat, attractive and *shariah* compliant dress code is one of good characteristics of IET. For example, IET has to maintain an ethical code of such as loose clothes and cover them according to Islamic dress code and make sure such clothes are

neatly ironed, beautiful and do not have any body odor;

*" I always dress beautiful. When going to school, it's probably not necessary for people to dress up. But for me, it is necessary from hair to the toes"* [IET 4/ IV]

Islamic education teachers are emphasized in having elegance and sophisticated appearances because it creates and attractive personality and as a symbol of their dignity. For them, a good image and personality will affect how students will look at them, as someone highly regarded, respected and loved by all. This helps for students to be comfortable, calm and confident in receiving the knowledge taught, as stated by a student interviewed, *'When we want to learn, we want our teacher to look presentable'* [IET 7 (S) / IV]

The next characteristic of IET is called parenting love. Parenting love practices include attributes such as caring, fairness, compassion, encouragement, caring and being helpful to students in any situation. IET always show humility, warmth, love and support students wherever and is willing to help students who are struggling. IET practice fairness, no favouritism and always show warmth and tenderness that he liked by anyone who was with him. One of the students interviewed said;

*"Ustaz Rauf likes to socialize. He likes to be friends with everyone. Regardless of whether a Muslim student or not, he does like lectured but the way he is saying it is like joking. It does not sound serious at all. Ustaz will make people believe him"* [IET 5 (S)/ IV]

From another perspective, parenting love can be translated through being friendly, cheerful, sporting, supportive and understanding. This can be seen during the teaching session in the class. Throughout the session, students are enjoying the learning process and happy and they are paying attention in the class. IET treats students with patience and guide them without fail. While student seemed more confident and do not worry about making mistake because IET shows a high tolerance and accept the student as it is. With such saying from IET; *'I will accept whatever you do'* and always praise and accept student hardwork while saying, *'Woww! That's great. Good job!'* with a smile and showing a thumbs up to students [IET 1/ OB1]

Apart from that, in the area of work and leadership, IET demonstrates a range of personal characteristics including responsible, efficient, dedicated, committed and aware to current issues while having a good knowledge and management skills. IET's leadership and good skills in public

speaking, lectures, and advice reflect their credibility and integrity as a respected scholar. This statement is illustrated through the following interview with the friends of IET;

*" Mrs Amira emm..when she does a job, she will do it right. Mrs. Amira I see, she does a lot of work, but she will do all her tasks" [IET 4 (C)/IV]*

Following from the practice of these characteristics, has a positive impact in the student development in term of character development, forming a close relationship with teachers and improve student motivation in the learning process. Students that being taught by a highly respected and qualified teachers will eventually become a student with high moral character. It was mentioned by IET,

*'When they meet their teachers they greet and shake their hands and may even help teachers' [IET 5/IV].*

By being a loving parent to the students, it made them feel appreciated and loved. They will not feel shy or afraid to approach teachers and result to a friendly relationship developed. Because of the kindness and sincerity of the teacher, students will never hurt their teachers' feelings either by words or actions. Instead, they are more motivated to learn and enjoy being at school. This was stated by the student interviewed, *'I am very excited to learn subject from ustaz. I feel so interested having class with him' [IET 3 (S)/ IV]*

When the correct emotion is found with confidence, trust, joy and satisfaction; students are more likely easy to understand the lesson and guidance from a trusted and respected teachers. They give fully attention and cooperating in teaching and learning process without fail in the class. This is used for teachers' advantage in educating and developing a knowledgeable and virtuous students.

*" by taking care of their welfare, so these students grow closer to us. And they enjoy coming to school" [IET 5/ IV]*

Therefore, it can be concluded that an excellent characters of IET have a direct impact on student personal development from various aspects. They are not only respected and highly regarded by their students, but most importantly they serve as the role model for their students in following their footsteps, *'they will trust ustaz & ustazah more than their parents. that is how powerful ustaz & ustazah effect on students' [IET 3/ IV].*

Based on the findings, shows that the IET practice an excellent characteristic of personality traits that include virtuous behavior in their daily lives such as good moral values, genuine, sincerity, trustworthy, soft spoken, high religious appreciation, a loving parenting concept, presentable and professional appearance. All of these features reflect the IET's religious personality which reflects faith toward Allah while increase their level of professionalism as an educator. These findings are parallel and prove the findings from previous studies those found that the IET practice a good moral and personality fit for their position as intellectual, religionists and role model for students [20], [21], [22], [23].

From a specific point of view, this study demonstrate that the IET has establish a good relationship with Allah and also with people especially students to form a base in developing a professional muslim personality to enable them to uphold the responsibility as an islamic educator with commitment. This is consistent with the findings that stated the factors of 'hablum min Allah' and 'hablum min an-Nas' as the key requirement in becoming a professional educator [24]. IET's main characteristics of being honest, truthful, trustworthy and sincere in every practice and occupation proves that IET adheres to Islamic law [25].

If we viewed from a broad perspective, the study provide a different angle of view that IET has a distinctive character as an outstanding educator and capable to fulfil educational aspirations in producing a knowledgeable, religious, dignified and competitive student. Teachers have to willingly transform themselves as a good example to be followed by other teachers and students in schools. With a strong personality background, knowledge, empathy and love, IET influence as a role model for students is so big and great, that their behavior is demonstrated, their talk and conversation are observed and followed [26]. In fact, IET is viewed as student second parents and this special connection built a bridge of love between teachers and students, thus it built up a close relationship between them and improve the knowledge delivery [27].

As the result, the heart and soul of the student are soft and easy to shape. They practiced good manners as taught, trained and shown by teachers in their daily lives. As for the student, they become motivated and excited to attend the school there are mothers and fathers figures who are willing to give love and provide knowledge needed. This result of this study also proves that the role model strategy used by teachers with their influence and power given have improved the student development especially in the aspect of personality development. Therefore, this study demonstrated that IET remain relevant as a contributing factor to the improvement

of students behavior as previous studies which have been conducted by previous researchers [28], [29], [30]. Meanwhile, the increasing in student motivation towards the learning process is due to the close relationship between teachers and students

## VI. CONCLUSION

Researchers have concluded, teachers with high moral value and character, a great personality, knowledge and skills have been able to transform themselves as a role model for students. Teachers that posses a good characteristics able to gain the trust and respect from students as *muallim*, *muaddib* and *murabbi* who can lead and guide them towards a prosperous life in the world and in the hereafter. Therefore, teachers need to be empowered in terms of personalities, knowledge and skills to be more excellent, competitive, having a high quality character accordance with their role as caliphs that bring prosperity in Allah land. This initiative needs to start from within the teachers and supported by enhancement of teacher professionalism programs at all levels including schools, State Department of Education and the Ministry of Education Malaysia itself.

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