

The Role of Islamic Education Teachers as Role Models for Students in the Digital Age

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the role of PAI teachers as role models in shaping student behavior in the digital era, as well as identifying the urgency of role models as a foundation for moral formation. The research method uses a convergent parallel mixed methods design, where quantitative data through questionnaires and qualitative data through interviews are collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and then converged to obtain a comprehensive picture of student perceptions of PAI teacher exemplary behavior. The research participants consisted of eighth-grade students of MTsN 1 Sumedang. The results showed that teacher role models were in the high category, indicating positive student perceptions of teacher attitudes, integrity, and behavior. Qualitative findings supported these results by showing that Islamic Religious Education teachers are seen as having an irreplaceable role by digital technology and artificial intelligence because only teachers are able to provide inspiration, internalize values, and directly exemplify morals. This study confirms that Islamic Religious Education teachers' role models are a strategic factor in shaping student behavior in the digital era, while also contributing to strengthening Islamic education through the development of personality competencies and concrete examples of behavior that can be internalized by students.

Keywords: Teacher Exemplary; Islamic Religious Education; Role Model; Learners; Digital Era

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INTRODUCTION

National education in Indonesia recognizes teachers as the authority in education. Teachers have various roles in building systematic and massive work schemes in our national education system. Our national education can be organized with all the dynamics that exist certainly cannot be separated from the important role of teachers in Indonesia. They have become one of the most determining components of the success of a series of educational processes themselves. So that teachers have adequate position and authority within the national scope (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Indonesia, 2005). Philosophically, Indonesia with all its diversity includes various cultures that have produced scientific products related to the figure of a teacher. For example, in Indonesian cultural philosophy, the teacher is seen as a figure who must be able to “digugu” and “ditiru” or in a rough understanding is a figure who is qualified with a role model. In the Islamic context, this relates to the figure of the Islamic religious education (PAI) teacher. This is in line with research (Muhajir et al., 2024) which states that Islamic Education teachers are spiritual and moral leaders.

When viewed from the aspect of the national goals of education in Indonesia, education itself has a meaning and purpose that is oriented towards the development of faith, piety and noble character, as well as how to optimize the process in order to explore their potential to become a whole human being who is capable, creative, independent and characterized. Referring to the national education goals above, it can be understood that education is how we can change the behavior of students from “bad” to good and commendable actions in the midst of the transformation from teachers to students. Teachers must understand that schools are formal educational institutions that can influence the behavior of students. (Ruslan, 2020). Therefore, this scheme is in line with the Indonesian cultural paradigm that a teacher should be “digugu” and “ditiru”.

The concept of teachers must be able to be digugu and ditiru or can be followed, exemplified and used as a role model is not just building an obedience without meaning, more than that this concept is an important foothold of life norms in educational units where a teacher and learners can interact and build positive relationships between the two. The dynamics of this relationship can arise from a deep heart, the relationship between a teacher and a learner can establish a fundamental-emotional relationship. Thus, this example becomes a key instrument in opening the horizons of life and true personality. Teachers are role models for students, of course, must have a view and a complete personality that can be used as a role model in aspects of life. A teacher must also always strive to have and do good deeds in order to provide an example for his students. (Saputri et al., 2024).

The effort in building good deeds as described above, for a teacher, is certainly not an easy thing. A teacher is required to be a good role model in the midst of a rigid workload, which often has an unfavorable impact on the aspect of channeling this good example. This good example in the effort and optimization of its application is often neglected by the administrative duties of the teacher, therefore the idealism that is theoretically contained for teachers is sometimes, even often experiencing gaps in the practical order. Especially if you look at their challenges today, where the era of digitalization, the development of information technology and artificial intelligence or AI has become an urgent need. On this basis, a teacher must take a proactive role as a figure who can provide filters and guidance that not only teaches theoretical religious values, but also helps students respond to and filter the information they get in this digital era. Thus, technology can be utilized properly to strengthen aspects of religious understanding, as well as prevent the negative impact of information that is not in line with religious teachings (Fathanah et al., 2025). Of course not, the digital era has a huge influence on student development (Muhdi et al., 2024). Consideration of the religious aspect is deemed necessary to be integrated in this presentation because today's digitalization has a lot to do with problems that in certain contexts can be prevented and resolved through one's religious conception.

A study revealed that the development of communication and information technology has become a tremendous challenge, given that every teacher is required to continue to adapt to technology and seek various innovations to the learning process. A teacher must certainly move fast, learn even harder, so as not to be left behind, this is important because technological developments develop so quickly and always produce novelty (Kinas & Nilawati, 2024). Of course we realize, in certain contexts this is a breath of fresh air for teachers, but if we look further, on the other hand, the negative influence of information technology is also increasingly prominent and has implications for more challenges for teachers in solving these problems. For example, the influence of hoax news, bad shows such as pornography and the like, or even today we know that there is a lot of interesting content that seems to provide education but there is a massive bad propaganda and other crucial problems.

The dilemma indicates that today a teacher is responsible for guiding and directing students to be free from the bad influences of existing information technology. However, if you think more deeply, the main problem that causes these dilemmas stems from the degradation of noble morals. Noble morals can be realized through education and example. The example can be obtained through the figure of a teacher. Ironically, today we know that the next problem that arises is the crisis of role models. For example, there are many news reports that inform the existence of unscrupulous teachers who are involved in physical,

mental and emotional violence, even more extreme, indications of sexual violence and the like. Of course this is very concerning for all parties, especially the figure of a teacher who should be a pioneer in providing good examples, especially for students. But now, they are the subject of ridicule, reproach and insults, which is the result of the behavior of the person who has an impact on the image of a teacher. In addition, there are indicators of gratuity consisting of components such as a teacher receiving gifts from students in order to pay more attention to them (27.9%), then the culture of parents giving gifts to teachers at certain moments, such as during class promotion (68.57%). Even more recent information is the perception of teachers that gratuities are normal (67.6%) (Anonim, 2025). These phenomena add to the sense of anxiety and anxiety about the degradation of the authority of a teacher in providing a good example or in other words the loss of public trust in a teacher, especially his reliability in providing a good example for students. Furthermore, the existence of religious figures involved in similar matters can also contribute simultaneously to adding to the bad image of educators and character in general.

Based on this description, we can know that the status and position of a teacher is indeed very important. He has a recognized authority in the state system which is the national scope. However, the concerned side is that the dignity and spirit of a teacher has been degraded by the existence of unscrupulous teachers who are involved in behaviors that are not commendable. Therefore, it is mandatory for teachers to reflect on this related issue. The role of the teacher as a role model in demonstrating noble morals is a teacher who can appear to be a role model who is sincere, patient, honest and full of manners (Prihatini, 2024). All of these aspects must be practiced in reality with optimal effort. This aims solely to maintain and restore the authority and dignity of a teacher as the main component in the world of education that can realize a good role model. Thus, the writing of this article is oriented towards the main objective of revealing the important role of teachers as good role models and presenting a simple survey of the attractiveness of teachers as a basis for behavior for students, as well as a solution analysis as the author's effort to improve the image of a teacher in Indonesia so that it still exists as an academic person who is always expected to be a servant and the front guard in advancing education. Thus, the primary purpose of this article is to analyze the important role of teachers as good role models theoretically and empirically. This research examines the attractiveness of teachers as a guide to behavior for students and others, as well as solutions to improve the image of Indonesian teachers in this digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research used a mixed method approach with a convergent parallel mixed methods design, namely an approach that collects quantitative and

qualitative data simultaneously, analyzes them separately, and then integrates them to obtain a comprehensive picture (Hakim Nasution et al., 2024) of the exemplary behavior of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in the digital era. The quantitative approach was used to measure students' perceptions of the exemplary behavior of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers through the distribution of closed-ended questionnaires. The qualitative approach was used to explore the hidden meaning behind students' responses, especially in interpreting the figure of a teacher as a role model in everyday life, through observation and documentation.

The research was conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Sumedang, which was chosen because this school has a strong religious development character and shows the need to strengthen teacher role models based on the school's internal findings, making it relevant as a research location. The population in this study were all students of class VIII B totaling 24 people. The sampling technique was carried out using total sampling, namely the entire population was used as a research sample (D. Amelia et al., 2024), given that they are relatively small in number and easy to reach across the board.

Data collection was conducted through two main techniques, namely: (1) a five-level Likert scale-based closed-ended questionnaire, which was used to measure perceptions of (Abd.Mukhid, 2021); (2) observation which is used to obtain qualitative information about the behavior of students and their interactions with teachers in the school environment (Abdussamad, 2021). Observations were conducted in a passive participatory manner, while documentation techniques in the form of archives, photos of activities, and relevant school documents were used as supporting data.

This questionnaire instrument consists of 10 statements, structured based on teacher role model indicators, encompassing the dimensions of attitude, speech, actions, and emotional relationships between teachers and students. The instrument was validated through content validity testing by two Islamic Religious Education experts and its reliability tested across different groups, with a Cronbach's Alpha result above 0.60, thus declaring the instrument suitable for use.

Quantitative data obtained in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of software tools SPSS version 26. The analysis includes the calculation of the mean, standard deviation, score range, and the preparation of total score categories to determine the extent to which exemplary teachers become a reference for student behavior. The categorization of the total score is arranged systematically based on the maximum score range of the instrument and follows the approach suggested by Sugiyono in the classification of descriptive data (Sugiyono, 2017). Guidelines for categorizing total scores are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Total Score Range Category

Score	Category
41 – 50	Very High
31 – 40	High
21 – 30	Fair
11 – 20	Rendah
0-10	Very Low

Meanwhile, related qualitative data was obtained through observation and documentation techniques that were systematically conducted on students' activities at school, especially in their interactions with teachers. Qualitative data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three main stages, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 1992). The analysis process was done thematically by identifying patterns of meaning that might emerge from observation and documentation, then linked to the quantitative findings to enrich the holistic interpretation of the data.

Data integration was conducted through method triangulation, merging quantitative and qualitative findings to identify pattern consistency, differences in meaning, and complementary findings. This approach ensures more valid interpretations and provides a holistic picture of Islamic Religious Education teacher exemplars in the digital era.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

Teacher Concept, Qualifications and Competencies

Teachers are the main carriers in devoting the educational process to learners (Sulistiani & Nursiwi Nugraheni, 2023). How great and great is their main task and function for their students, so that it can give birth to a record, the results of thinking, the boundaries of the norm and the various qualifications of professional teacher competence according to education experts (Marsela Yulianti et al., 2022). In the laws and regulations governing teachers and lecturers, the term teacher is understood as a professional educator who has the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing and evaluating students in early childhood education through formal education, primary education and secondary education (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Indonesia, 2005). What is stated in this provision is that the definition of teacher is still general, not focusing on specific aspects of competence and expertise. But in this case we can understand that the law outlines the notion of teacher as leading is nothing but to accommodate all educators in Indonesia without limiting one expertise in their field and also to harmonize the similarity of the

main tasks of the teacher itself, as it is known that PAI teachers, Indonesian language teachers refer to certain expertise. However, in this article, of course, the author will provide limitations or contextualization of teacher expertise in the field of Islamic Education or Islamic Religious Education.

PAI teachers have a role as mentors, encouragers, and good role models for their students, apart from the role of spreading the knowledge of religion-based education. Islamic religious education instructors in this context must have sufficient competence, including in cognitive, psychomotor and affective aspects. These competencies must be realized in a learning approach that is filled with creativity, innovation and effective interaction (Judrah et al., 2024). In addition, it also has an important role in printing the character of learners. As a professional educator, PAI teachers must be able to be a reference in behaving well for learners (Mu'amalah et al., 2024). Aspects that are included in the qualifications and competencies have been regulated in detail in the provisions of the regulations in Indonesia. This is stated in the law governing teachers and lecturers which, among other things, regulates that a teacher, both PAI teachers and General teachers are equal, must have academic qualifications at least at the undergraduate level. As for the competence of teachers, at least four teacher competencies must be pedagogical, professional, social and personality competencies. In contrast to the competence of PAI teacher competence, he added two competencies, namely spiritual and leadership.

Pedagogical competence is the ability for teachers to manage learning for the benefit of learners (Syarifuddin, 2020; Sele & Sila, 2022). These competencies are skills that must be mastered in the context of a teacher in paying attention to the characteristics of learners from various aspects of life, whether it includes moral, emotional, or intellectual aspects (Abrar, 2020). The next teacher competence is professional competence. Suharsimi Arikunto argues that, professional competence is mastery of the material and learning methods, which must be owned by a teacher who in the end a teacher is able to apply it to the learning process (Utami & Hasanah, 2019). Professional teachers are a decisive factor in realizing quality educational practice (Amelia et al., 2022; Yulmasita Bagou & Sukung, 2020). The teacher must also have social competence. Social competence is the ability of a teacher to communicate and also get along appropriately with learners, education personnel, parents/guardians and the surrounding community (Purwanti & Rizik, 2022). The other competency is personality, which is a personal ability that reflects that a person has a personality like a teacher (Indaya & Roifah, 2021).

The four competencies mentioned above are the main provisions with a minimum scale for a teacher before they can go directly to the field in order to teach and dedicate themselves to school. The plus of PAI teacher competence is spiritual competence and leadership. The meaning of the teacher's spiritual

competence in the perspective of Islamic education is highlighted by the existence of personal-spiritual and professional-spiritual competence. The competency of leadership is a term of leadership of PAI teachers in relation to organizing, directing, fostering and giving a positive influence to students during the learning process and the cultivation of practice of Islamic teachings in schools so that their responsibilities as a teacher can be carried out properly and planned (Khair, 2024). PAI learning itself actually gives full attention to the course of a process without prejudice to the learning outcomes (Hidayat & Nizar, 2021). Therefore, planning before practice, it is important to consider.

Teacher competence is one of the factors that have an impact on student achievement. The quality of the teacher's competence has an important role in learning interactions. This means that the quality and whether or not the learning outcomes of students, other aspects related to teacher competence also contribute to it (Ahmad, 2019). The competence of the teacher is a major component in professional standards, apart from the code of ethics as a rule of professional conduct that has been established procedurally and a certain supervision system (Fatmawati, 2020). Thus, continuous optimization of teacher competence development is very important for teachers in general, especially for PAI teachers.

Teachers as Inspiring in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The dynamics of life will always change and experience a paradigm shift regarding human life in general. Today we have entered an era where times have changed from various aspects of the pattern of progress. This is a sign that humans have entered the 21st century that has degraded the establishment of the previous era. The 21st century is an era where young people are crowned as millennials. Millennials prefer modern ways of learning such as using the efficiency and flexibility of Information Technology and so on (Setyawan & Ahsan, 2020). No exception this has an impact on the education sector. Education today is different from education in the past. Education today has undergone all the changes, developments and dynamics that never stop. Especially if it is associated with the rapid and rapid utilization of information technology based on artificial intelligence or AI. If in previous times the learning process experienced such a problem of limited information and the like, now it can be very easy to do. This is solely due to the breakthrough and innovation of the development of artificial intelligence-based technology that certainly has contributed to the efficiency of human life.

Even many scientists are called to conduct a variety of research related to artificial intelligence such as research in the article (Chanthiran et al., 2022) which provides an analysis of the efficiency of artificial intelligence utilization as well as current trends. Similarly, other research results reveal that integrating aspects

of current technology into the educational process certainly allows instructors to be more creative when designing lessons. Therefore, learners in this generation, whose attention span is very limited of all modern generations, will be able to participate appropriately in learning, the impact of interesting teaching materials (Mukul & Büyüközkan, 2023). AI can not only be used for adults, but for early childhood it makes an important contribution in the development of AI learning interventions that involve them actively (Solichah & Shofiah, 2024). Thus, AI has become a necessity in the international arena.

Abimanto and Iwan in Ranni et al., revealed that artificial intelligence (AI) is the latest technology in the field of technology, information and communication. The use of AI can actually make it easier for humans to do something, including helping the learning process. Experts have recognized the opportunities of AI in education and suggested that it can provide effective feedback, supporting learners' learning processes. AI has a chance at transforming teachers' teaching methods, making them accessible and efficient for learners (Ranni et al., 2025). The academics believe that there is a need for extensive research on the social and pedagogical impact of the use of AI, primarily an educational tool, both for face-to-face and distance learning at all levels of Education (Spiliopoulou & Koustourakis, 2024). This implies the demands of a teacher who must be able to master this artificial intelligence in order to answer the challenges of the times, especially utilization in the context of learning (Zulkhi et al., 2024).

However, behind the development of increasingly sophisticated AI, this gives birth to a new challenge. Today, many of the conventional tasks for a teacher, such as providing evaluations and feedback, can be done more precisely by AI. In fact, AI can now create personalized learning experiences for learners that are highly adaptive to one's needs. Of course, this has made some people question whether the figure of a teacher is still and will still be needed in the future (Septiani & Ramadani, 2025). Plus the impact of AI can also make learners less independent and think critically. Too potentially lead to dependence on such progress. AI can also make learners lazy in reading and searching for material from various sources. This if done in the long run will reduce their quality in terms of learning to think critically (Prabowo Kusumo Adi et al., 2023).

Being a teacher is certainly not just transferring knowledge to students, but also must be able to understand what their shortcomings and advantages are. In fact, a teacher must support, guide, and motivate learners in order to achieve their goals (Ramiadani, 2022). The role of the teacher is very much, not limited to the roles that have been written in the provisions of the legislation alone, and even as a teacher we could be to increase or decrease our role in accordance with existing needs. For example, during the development of AI, we can make the basis of opportunities to alleviate the role of teachers administratively, but for

things that are substance we can use the pure role of the teacher itself without the help of artificial intelligence. This effort is solely done in order to maintain the existence of the main role of a teacher itself, especially Pai teachers should not carelessly utilize AI for the benefit of religious issues, but must be used wisely with full supervision.

Ultimately, as convenience continues to grow, the use of AI in religious contexts or Islamic education has the potential to increase learning effectiveness and provide a more individualized experience for learners. Therefore, it is hoped that by adopting AI, learning can become more interactive, interesting, and motivating for learners, and can strengthen their understanding of Islamic teachings and practices (Muchlis, 2023). In other words, this artificial intelligence can be used strictly through the supervision of teachers in order to streamline the process of their understanding of religious reflection.

The learning process is a combination of various components of education that are related to each other and provide mutual benefits. In the context of education, there are various components that can make a dynamic to support the realization of a good learning process, ranging from curriculum components, learning models and methods, educators, learners, facilities and infrastructure, and other related matters. However, of all the related components, there are only two main components, namely educators and learners. We can understand that all components of education without educators and learners certainly will not be realized, but if there is a teacher or educator and learners, even without any infrastructure and so forth education and learning can still be realized. Therefore, the most important thing in the context of education is none other than issues related to the relationship between a teacher and learners.

1. Attitudes and behaviors of teachers in influencing the behavior of learners

In philosophy keindonesiaan we know the term teacher can “digugu” and “ditiru” means the behavior and attitude of a teacher is a magnet that can be the main attraction of learners in imitating the style, attitude and actions of a teacher working. In the context of psychological theory, we know that this is in line with a theoretical framework similar to Albert Bandura's social learning or social cognitive theory. This theory was designed by Bandura starting from his opinion that the learning process can involve aspects of behavior, environment and internal conditions. The process of modeling or modeling in realizing learning is a key step. This modeling process consists of 4 phases, namely attention, memory, production and reinforcement or motivation (Tullah & Amiruddin, 2020).

Reflecting on the theory that modeling can be understood as implicit efforts for a teacher in providing educational stimulus or example, so that teachers are required to maintain dignity, dignity and authority, both in behavior, behavior, speech, dress and so on when in the presence of students. Because, inevitably,

what a teacher does, it is very possible to be imitated by them. Sometimes the way they imitate a teacher's style can be in positive or negative ways. Essentially a teacher terms with the appeal or foundation to determine a learner's behavior. Research in MTsN 1 Sumedang shows and strengthens the influence of a teacher as a role model for them. The following are the results of questionnaire-based data analysis that has been tested.

Based on the results of data processing, a descriptive statistical summary of each indicator of perception on the example of teachers was obtained as follows:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistical Summary of Each Indicator

No.	Indicators	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1.	Teacher is a figure who deserves to be a role model.	4,46	0,509	4	5
2.	I always say good because teachers always teach good words too.	4,42	0,504	4	5
3.	I always obey my teacher. For example, the teacher told me to pray, so I rushed to the mosque.	4,63	0,495	4	5
4.	I always listen and pay attention to the teacher, when the teacher is explaining the material in class.	4,13	0,680	3	5
5.	When the teacher needs help, for example, to erase the inscription on the blackboard, then I immediately help him.	4,21	0,721	3	5
6.	When there are teachers who like to be late for class, sometimes I also deliberately like to be late for class, after all teachers also like to be late.	4,00	0,659	3	5
7.	I always dress neatly because teachers also always teach students to dress neatly.	4,58	0,504	4	5
8.	Master always taught me to be dutiful to parents.	4,79	0,415	4	5
9.	When there is any problem, I always confide in the teacher.	3,13	0,900	1	5
10.	I always assumed that the teachers at school were my second parents after mom and dad.	4,04	0,751	3	5

Based on the results of the analysis, it appears that the perception of students towards exemplary teachers of Islamic Religious Education is in the category of high to very high. Of the 24 respondents, the highest total score obtained was 49 and the lowest 35, with a total average (mean) of 42.38 from a

maximum score of 50. This shows that in general, learners view teachers as exemplary figures who have a significant influence in their lives.

The average value (mean) of each questionnaire item ranged from 3.13 to 4.79. The statement with the highest mean is the 8th Statement, which is in the term *"teacher always taught me to be devoted to my parents"* (mean = 4,79), which shows the internalization of moral values through teacher's example. Followed by the 3rd (mean = 4.63) and 7th (mean = 4.58) statements, which reflect the observance and compliance of learners with the norms exemplified by the teacher. In contrast, the lowest average value is found in the statement 9 (mean = 3.13), namely *"when there is any problem, I always confide in the teacher."* These results show that although learners consider teachers as role models, but not all learners make teachers as the main vent when experiencing a variety of personal problems. This indicates a limitation in the emotional relationship between learners and teachers outside the academic context, which may be caused by cultural factors, personal closeness, or time constraints.

In terms of standard deviation, the highest value was also found in the 9th statement (SD = 0.900), which indicates a high diversity of perceptions among learners regarding this emotional closeness. In contrast, the lowest standard deviation was found in the 8th statement (SD = 0.415), which means that there is uniformity in the answers of learners in assessing the importance of filial piety from their teachers.

In general, these results show that the teacher's example is still a very important factor and is perceived by learners, especially in terms of the formation of positive attitudes and habits. This supports the importance of the teacher's position not only as a teacher, but also as a moral and social role model. In the midst of a digital era full of value challenges today, the existence of teachers as exemplary figures remains the main support for the process of forming the character of learners.

If it refers to the assessment category, with a total value range of 42.38, then the perception of students towards exemplary teachers can be categorized in the high category, even approaching the very high category. This reinforces the assumption that Islamic religious education teachers have a central role in shaping the behavior and ethics of students, both in the school environment and outside the school.

Discussion

A teacher is required to be competent in carrying out his professional duties. One of the forms of competence of a teacher must be proven for abilities that include pedagogical, professional, social and personality aspects. Coupled with 2 other competencies, namely spiritual and leadership for Pai teachers. In previous literature reviews the author has put forward these related matters

theoretically. All of these competencies, both general teachers and Pai teachers are simultaneously related and complementary. All of these competencies should ideally be owned by someone who will become a teacher, in addition to being a theoretical provision, he also becomes a practical guide in realizing quality education. But the reality in the field there are many gaps, among others, a teacher is considered not reliable enough in the learning process. This is certainly the impact of the lack of competence of a teacher. This is confirmed by the results of research which states that the real teachers still have difficulty in managing learning, limited in the mastery of areas such as knowledge, skills and attitudes (Anggraini et al., 2021). Or a teacher who already has a certificate of educator, but has not reflected his expertise in the realm of practice as revealed in Elitasari (Chyquitita, 2024) or other problems and challenges such as limited resources from the government (Andina, 2018) and the challenge of the hustle and bustle of changes to the curriculum (Yahya & Martha, 2025).

Of the problems mentioned above there are also other problems that are seen as much more concerning and very closely related to the topic of this study, namely the low personality of teachers. Teacher personality competence is the forerunner in building exemplary-based education. How not, a teacher as stated by education experts, is unlikely to be able to teach a good deed if his personality is bad. Good behavior that can be done by the teacher must arise from a good personality as well. For Pai teachers, one form of personality that is difficult to instill in students is Islamic character. This character is one form of various characters that must exist in humans. (Dini Fitriani et al., 2024). So that the degradation of personality competence becomes a big problem that may rarely be noticed by policy makers. As we know today that the government seems to prioritize administrative aspects related to the status of teachers in Indonesia. However, we cannot expect more from the government. This is because the problem lies in the teacher himself. Therefore, the main hope is awareness and improvement of the quality of competence like a teacher.

Teachers who are important role models for learners, not only from the aspect of teaching, but the attitudes and behaviors that they show at all times. In the teaching-learning process, students learn more often from what they see and feel, not merely from what they know. In this case it is important for a teacher to maintain his attitude and behavior to always be in accordance with the rules of good behavior so that students can learn to imitate the commendable attitude of his teacher figure (Karnia et al., 2023). Teachers as role models should behave and have a whole personality in order to become role models and idols in all aspects of life. Teachers should always try to choose and do positive things in order to raise their good image and authority, especially in front of students (Salsabilah et al., 2021).

In the era of digitization and artificial intelligence or AI, as the author previously revealed that many elements or the role of teachers can be replaced by the ease of technology and AI, so it needs to be strengthened for teachers to develop pure competencies in the educational process that cannot possibly be replaced by artificial intelligence. One form is a good role model who is a source of inspiration for learners. However, to be able to do this, teachers are required to have adequate digital competencies in the digital era (Muhajir et al., 2024). For Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, these competencies form the basis of new demands, as research (Tao et al., 2025) suggests that we have entered a period of changing roles for teachers in the digital era.

The results of research conducted on students at MTsN 1 Sumedang shows how influential the actions, attitudes and authority of a teacher in shaping or underlying their behavior. In this case the learners will make the teacher as an example of everyday behavior. Good and bad deeds can sometimes be used as a kind of justification for bad behavior that may at any time be done by students. Thus in this case a teacher is required to keep free from bad behavior such as saying rude, smoking and other kinds in their presence. Negative attitudes and behaviors carried out by a teacher are very likely to have a negative impact on the learning process and the formation of their character. A negative attitude towards a teacher will very likely be able to reduce the motivation to learn students, damage friendship relationships and bring up their cynical-apathetic attitude towards the learning process (Sari, 2023). Remember that a teacher is an unsung hero who teaches and gives knowledge tirelessly (Yulianda et al., 2025), so let us stand before them and honor them. Of course, cooperation between teachers and parents as part of teacher competence must also be established.

In the Islamic perspective and psychological aspects, the core of character education is exemplary. The figure is shown in Q.S. Al-Ahzab: 21 as a form of *uswah hasanah*, the main role model in the Prophet who became a teacher for the people, especially his companions at that time. This concept is raised in Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes that children learn through observation of important figures in their lives. When children consistently witness honest, patient, responsible, and other positive behaviors from parents at home and from teachers at school, they will naturally imitate them. Therefore, a strong collaboration between the home and school environment will form a total child character through continuous concrete examples and create an environment conducive to the development of positive behavior of learners.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

Teachers are professional educators whose duty is not only to teach, but also to provide good role models for students in line with the academic

qualifications and competencies they must possess. In the midst of digitalization and artificial intelligence, teachers have a crucial role that cannot be replaced by anything, because only teachers can provide true inspiration and role models for students. This confirms that a teacher, despite his role being replaced in the digital era, remains the main foundation in determining the good and bad behavior of students. This research implies that teacher competency must be continuously improved to realize a quality educational process based on role models in the digital era to maintain the existence of the role of teachers in the midst of the flow of artificial intelligence that has sometimes threatened the role of teachers themselves.

Implication

This study implies that the competence of teachers, especially PAI teachers, must be improved continuously for the realization of a quality education process based on exemplary in the digital era in order to maintain the existence of the role of teachers amid the flow of artificial intelligence which sometimes has threatened the role of the teacher itself. This study also reveals that a teacher must maintain his authority in front of students, especially in terms of behavior because according to research in the field a teacher significantly gives an appeal to be a role model for them.

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