

The Prophetic Model of Teacher Character: A Thematic Analysis of Hadith and Its Implications for Islamic Education

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Abstract

In Teacher character is a critical component of Islamic education because teachers are expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to embody moral and relational values in their interactions with learners. Although previous studies have examined Prophetic teaching methods and educator characteristics, less attention has been given to reconstructing teacher character from the Prophet's educational interactions in Hadith. This study therefore aims to identify the dimensions of teacher character represented in Prophetic Hadith, examine how these dimensions are manifested through educational interactions, and explore their implications for contemporary Islamic education. The study employed a qualitative research design using thematic analysis of selected Hadith from major canonical collections, particularly Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, supplemented by relevant narrations from other major Hadith collections. Hadith were purposively selected based on their relevance to educational interactions, including instruction, correction, explanation, learner response, and interpersonal conduct. Data were analyzed through familiarization, initial coding, theme development, thematic review, and interpretation. The analysis identified six interconnected dimensions of Prophetic teacher character: compassion (raḥmah), gentleness (rifq), patience and attentiveness to learner understanding, wise and non-humiliating correction, dialogical engagement, and exemplary conduct (uswah). The findings indicate that these dimensions constitute an integrated ethical-relational model rather than a list of isolated virtues or teaching techniques. The study concludes that Prophetic teacher character integrates knowledge, authority, compassion, communication, correction, and moral example. This model has implications for Islamic teacher education by emphasizing that professional competence should be accompanied by ethical responsibility, learner dignity, responsive communication, and exemplary conduct. Thus, in the Prophetic model, how teachers teach is inseparable from who teachers are.

Keywords: Prophetic teacher character; teacher character; Hadith; Islamic education; Prophetic pedagogy;

INTRODUCTION

Education in Islam is not limited to the transmission of knowledge but is fundamentally concerned with the formation of morally responsible human beings¹. Within this framework, the teacher occupies a position that extends beyond the delivery of instructional content. The teacher is expected to guide learners intellectually, morally, and spiritually through both instruction and personal example. This understanding is consistent with the broader Islamic conception of education, in which *ta'lim* (instruction), *tarbiyah* (cultivation), and *ta'dīb* (ethical formation) are interconnected processes. The Qur'an describes the Prophet Muhammad as one who recites God's revelations, purifies people, and teaches them the Book and wisdom (Qur'an 62:2). Thus, the Prophetic model provides not only a theological foundation for Islamic education but also an important reference for understanding the character and conduct expected of educators. In the Indonesian Islamic educational context, the integration of Islamic educational values with culturally grounded values has also been highlighted in educational practice. Pamessangi identified Islamic educational values related to faith, worship, and morality alongside local wisdom values in Arabic language learning at IAIN Palopo². This illustrates the broader relevance of value-oriented education in Islamic higher education and provides a contextual basis for considering how moral values are embodied through educational relationships and practices.

The significance of the teacher's character is particularly evident in the Prophetic tradition. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was himself recognized as an exemplary educator. In Sahih Muslim, Mu'awiyah ibn al-Ḥakam al-Sulamī recounts an incident in which he made a mistake during prayer because he was still unfamiliar with Islamic practice. After the prayer, rather than humiliating, striking, or verbally abusing him, the Prophet explained the appropriate rule calmly. Mu'awiyah consequently stated, "I have never seen a teacher before him or after him better in teaching than he" (*mā ra'aytu mu'alliman qablahu wa-lā ba'dahu aḥsana ta'līman minhu*) (Sahih Muslim 537). This narration is particularly significant because the narrator himself explicitly evaluates the Prophet in the category of a *mu'allim* (teacher). More importantly, the evaluation is connected to observable conduct: the Prophet did not reprimand, strike, or insult the learner. The hadith therefore provides an important entry point for examining teacher character not merely as an abstract set of virtues, but as character manifested through educational interaction.

Prophetic teachings also demonstrate that effective education is closely associated with gentleness, accessibility, and consideration for learners³. The

¹ Anifah, N., & Salik, Y. (2022). Ta'dīb education in character development of students in the time of COVID-19. *JIEBAR: Journal of Islamic Education: Basic and Applied Research*, 2(2), 89–106.

² Pamessangi, A. A. (2021). Nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam berbasis kearifan lokal pada pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Palopo. *IQRO: Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(2), 117–128

³ Zulqarnain, M., & Al-Azhari, D. M. A. (2020). Addressing essential dimensions of an ideal teacher's

Prophet instructed educators and religious teachers to “facilitate and do not make things difficult, give glad tidings and do not repel” (*yassirū wa-lā tu‘assirū, wa-bashshirū wa-lā tunaffirū*) (Sahih al-Bukhari 69). In another narration, he instructed his companions to make matters easy for people, avoid making them difficult, and promote a reassuring rather than alienating relationship with those being taught (Sahih al-Bukhari 6124). These narrations suggest that the character of an educator is inseparable from the manner in which knowledge is communicated. Knowledge may be correct in content, yet its educational effectiveness can be undermined when delivered without compassion, wisdom, or sensitivity toward learners.

The Prophetic model also demonstrates pedagogical attentiveness to learners' capacity and understanding. Anas ibn Malik reported that when the Prophet spoke, he sometimes repeated his words three times so that they could be properly understood by his audience (Sahih al-Bukhari 95). This practice indicates more than a teaching technique; it reflects patience, attentiveness, and responsibility for learners' comprehension. Similarly, the well-known ḥadīth of Jibrīl presents a dialogical pattern in which questions are used to elicit and organize knowledge concerning Islam, faith, excellence, and the signs of the Last Hour (Sahih Muslim 8e). Taken together, these narrations portray teaching as a relational and ethical practice in which the educator pays attention to learners, responds appropriately to their circumstances, and assumes responsibility for making knowledge understandable.

Compassion constitutes another important dimension of the Prophetic character relevant to educational relationships. In Sahih Muslim, the Prophet responded to a man who questioned his practice of kissing children by emphasizing the importance of mercy, stating that one who does not show mercy will not receive mercy (Sahih Muslim 2317–2318a). Although these narrations concern family interaction rather than formal classroom teaching, they are relevant to the broader ethical disposition that characterizes Prophetic relationships with others, particularly those who are vulnerable or dependent. For Islamic education, such a disposition raises an important question concerning whether teacher character should be understood solely in terms of professional competence or also in terms of *rahmah*, patience, gentleness, and humane treatment of learners.

The importance of character in Islamic education has received sustained scholarly attention. Previous studies have examined educator character and etiquette from the Qur'an and Hadith, the role of Islamic education teachers in students' character formation, and the integration of Islamic values into teacher professionalism⁴⁵⁶. Other work has examined Prophetic educational values in

relationship with students in the light of Islamic educational philosophy. *Pakistan Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(1), 84–93.

⁴ Maulana, M. A., & Rodiya, Y. (2022). Karakter dan adab pendidik perspektif al-Qur'an dan Hadis. *Al-Mufasssir: Jurnal Ilmu Alquran, Tafsir dan Studi Islam*, 4(1), 29–47.

⁵ Hamdan, Nuzli, M., Rahma, S., Chaniago, F., & Sampoerna, M. N. (2021). Profesionalitas guru Pendidikan Agama Islam: Upaya membangun karakter religious peserta didik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah*, 6(2), 244–261.

⁶ Tambak, S., Ahmad, M., Sukenti, D., & Ghani, A. R. B. A. (2020). Profesionalisme guru

relation to positive politeness and character education⁷. These studies demonstrate the relevance of hadith and teacher character to Islamic education; however, they predominantly approach character from the perspective of student formation, educator professionalism, or general educator characteristics, rather than systematically reconstructing a model of teacher character from Prophetic educational interactions themselves.

Scholarship on Prophetic pedagogy has also tended to emphasize teaching methods, instructional techniques, and pedagogical practices. For example, Fatima and Tasgheer examine Prophetic instructional strategies as a pedagogical framework for contemporary academics⁸. Such research is important, but an emphasis on methods may leave insufficient attention to the characterological foundation underlying those methods. A teacher may employ questioning, repetition, demonstration, or encouragement, but the educational meaning of these practices is also shaped by the teacher's moral and relational disposition⁹. Consequently, there remains a need to examine how the Prophet's educational conduct represented in hadith can be systematically interpreted in terms of the character qualities that underpin effective and ethical teaching.

This gap is particularly important in the contemporary context, where teacher professionalism is frequently discussed in terms of competence, performance, instructional effectiveness, and technological adaptation. While these dimensions are essential, Islamic education requires a broader conception of the educator in which professional competence is integrated with moral integrity and exemplary conduct. Studies of Islamic teacher professionalism have emphasized teachers' personal, social, and spiritual-pedagogical qualities, as well as their role as moral exemplars (Rozak, 2020; Sutarto & Sari, 2020). A Prophetic perspective can contribute to this discussion by grounding teacher character not merely in contemporary professional standards but in the ethical and educational practices represented in authoritative Prophetic traditions.

Accordingly, this study examines the Prophetic model of teacher character through a thematic analysis of selected hadith. Rather than treating the hadith merely as sources of general moral advice, this study examines narrations in which the Prophet's conduct, communication, responses, and interactions reveal particular qualities relevant to the educator's character. The study addresses three questions: (1) What dimensions of teacher character are represented in Prophetic hadith? (2)

madrasah: Internalisasi nilai Islam dalam mengembangkan akhlak aktual siswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah*, 5(2), 79–96.

⁷ Prayitno, H. J., Markhamah, M., Nasucha, Y., Huda, M., Ratih, K., Ubaidullah, U., Rohmadi, M., Boeriswati, E., & Thambu, N. (2022). Prophetic educational values in the Indonesian language textbook: Pillars of positive politeness and character education. *Heliyon*, 8(8), e10016.

⁸ Fatima, T., & Tasgheer, A. (2022). Prophetic instructional strategies: A pedagogical framework for the contemporary academics. *Journal of Islamic and Religious Studies*, 7(1), 17–34.

⁹ Sutarto, S., & Sari, D. P. (2020). Characteristics of professional teacher: A psychological review of the personality of Prophet Muhammad saw. *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami*, 6(2), 164–177

How are these character dimensions manifested through the Prophet's educational interactions and practices? and (3) What implications do these dimensions have for contemporary Islamic education? By addressing these questions, the study seeks to develop a hadith-based conceptual understanding of teacher character that connects Prophetic ethics with contemporary Islamic educational practice.

The study contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it shifts the analytical focus from the use of hadith primarily for shaping students' character toward the reconstruction of the educator's character as represented in Prophetic traditions. Second, it connects hadith-based interpretation with contemporary discussions of Islamic education by demonstrating how moral and relational qualities embedded in Prophetic conduct can inform the formation of teachers who are not only knowledgeable and professionally competent but also compassionate, gentle, patient, attentive, dialogical, and exemplary. In this sense, the Prophetic model is positioned not as a historical ideal detached from contemporary education, but as an ethical framework that can inform how teachers understand their responsibilities, relationships, and educational practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using thematic analysis to examine the character of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as an educator as represented in Prophetic hadith. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to identify, interpret, and organize character dimensions embedded in the Prophet's educational interactions, rather than to measure the frequency of particular character traits quantitatively. The analysis focused on the meanings, contexts, and patterns of conduct represented in selected hadith and subsequently examined their implications for contemporary Islamic education.

The study was designed as a hadith-based qualitative inquiry. Accordingly, hadith served as the primary source of data, while relevant scholarship in hadith studies, Islamic education, and teacher character was used to contextualize and interpret the findings. The study did not assume a predetermined list of teacher virtues as its final analytical categories. Instead, an initial set of sensitizing concepts was used to guide the reading of the corpus, while the final thematic categories were developed through an iterative analysis of the selected narrations.

Hadith Corpus and Data Sources

The primary corpus consisted of selected Prophetic hadith, particularly from Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. Other major Hadith collections were consulted where relevant for contextual and supporting evidence.

Hadith were selected purposively according to their direct or contextual relevance to the Prophet's conduct as an educator. A narration was included when it met at least one of the following criteria: (1) it explicitly referred to the Prophet as a teacher or described an educational interaction; (2) it portrayed the Prophet

instructing, correcting, advising, questioning, explaining, or responding to a learner; (3) it demonstrated a recurrent interpersonal or moral disposition relevant to teacher-learner relationships; or (4) its educational significance could be established through its textual and contextual relationship to Prophetic teaching practice.

Hadith that merely described general virtues without an identifiable relationship to educational interaction were excluded from the primary corpus. This criterion was applied to prevent the study from becoming a general analysis of the Prophet's moral character. The focus remained specifically on character as manifested in or relevant to educational relationships and practices.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through systematic identification and documentation of relevant hadith from the selected collections. Searches were conducted using Arabic terms and their semantic equivalents associated with teaching, learning, instruction, guidance, correction, mercy, gentleness, patience, wisdom, justice, and exemplary conduct. Relevant narrations were recorded together with their collection, hadith number, Arabic text, translation, narrator, and available contextual information.

Particular attention was given to narrations in which the Prophet's character could be inferred from observable interaction rather than from isolated statements about moral virtues. For example, a narration describing how the Prophet responded to a learner's mistake was treated as evidence of character-in-action, while a general statement concerning the value of mercy was considered supporting evidence unless its relevance to educational relationships could be established.

The collected data were organized in a corpus matrix containing the following analytical fields: hadith identification, textual content, interactional context, Prophetic action or response, initial character code, educational interpretation, and emerging thematic category.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a six-phase thematic analysis procedure adapted from Braun and Clarke's framework: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

During the first phase, the selected hadith were read repeatedly in Arabic and in translation to establish familiarity with their wording, context, and educational interaction. In the second phase, meaningful segments describing the Prophet's conduct were coded. Initial codes included, for example, compassionate correction, gentle communication, patience in explanation, attention to learner comprehension, dialogical engagement, respectful interaction, and exemplary conduct.

In the third phase, related codes were grouped into broader candidate themes. These themes were subsequently reviewed against the original hadith to determine

whether they were internally coherent and adequately supported by the textual evidence. Themes were then defined according to the character dimension they represented and the way that dimension was manifested in the Prophet's educational interaction.

The analysis distinguished between character traits and pedagogical practices. A particular practice, such as repeating an explanation, was not automatically classified as a character trait. Instead, the underlying disposition reflected in that practice was examined. For instance, repeated explanation could indicate patience and concern for learner comprehension. Similarly, avoiding harshness when correcting a learner was interpreted not merely as a teaching technique but as a possible manifestation of compassion, gentleness, and respect for learner dignity.

The final stage involved interpreting the identified character dimensions in relation to contemporary Islamic education. The analysis therefore moved from hadith text → Prophetic conduct → character dimension → educational meaning → contemporary implication. This analytical sequence was used to ensure that educational implications remained grounded in the textual evidence rather than being imposed independently of the hadith.

RESULT

The thematic analysis of the selected Prophetic traditions revealed six interconnected dimensions of teacher character: compassion, gentleness, patience and attentiveness, wise and non-humiliating correction, dialogical engagement, and exemplary conduct. These dimensions were identified through a close examination of the Prophet's words, actions, and interactions with individuals who sought guidance, asked questions, made mistakes, or participated in learning encounters. Rather than treating teacher character as a predetermined list of moral virtues, the analysis examined how particular character qualities became visible through the Prophet's educational conduct.

The findings also indicate that Prophetic teacher character cannot be separated from the relational dimension of education. The Prophet's approach to teaching was consistently concerned with the dignity, understanding, emotional condition, and circumstances of those receiving instruction. In this sense, character was not presented as an abstract personal quality but as something enacted through communication, correction, explanation, encouragement, and interpersonal engagement.

The following subsections present the six themes identified through the thematic analysis. Each theme is illustrated by relevant Prophetic traditions, followed by an interpretation of the character dimension represented in the narration and its significance for understanding the Prophetic model of teacher character.

Compassion as the Foundation of Teacher-Learner Relationships

Compassion emerged as one of the fundamental dimensions underlying the

Prophet's interaction with learners and other members of the community. In the Prophetic model, compassion is not merely an emotional response but an ethical disposition that influences how people are approached, guided, corrected, and treated. This dimension becomes particularly important in educational relationships because learners may differ in age, knowledge, experience, emotional maturity, and ability to understand religious instruction.

One relevant narration concerns the Prophet's interaction with children. Al-Aqra' ibn Hābis observed the Prophet ﷺ kissing al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī and expressed surprise because he had never kissed his own children. The Prophet responded:

مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ لَا يُرْحَمُ

Translation:

"Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 2317–2318a).

The central concept in this narration is الرَّحْمَةُ (al-rahmah), or mercy and compassion. Although the immediate context does not describe a formal classroom situation, the narration demonstrates an important dimension of the Prophet's interpersonal character. The Prophet's treatment of children reflects an educational disposition grounded in affection, care, and humane interaction.

For the purposes of this study, the narration is therefore treated as supporting evidence for compassionate teacher character, rather than as direct evidence of a specific teaching method. This distinction is important because not every narration concerning the Prophet's moral conduct can automatically be classified as evidence of pedagogical practice. Its relevance to teacher character lies in the relational disposition that educators bring into their interactions with learners.

The educational significance of *rahmah* becomes clearer when considered together with narrations in which the Prophet directly teaches or corrects individuals. Compassion provides the relational foundation that allows correction and instruction to occur without humiliation. Thus, in the Prophetic model, the learner is not merely an object of instruction but a person whose dignity and emotional well-being are worthy of consideration.

Gentleness Rather Than Harshness

A second major dimension identified in the analysis is gentleness (*rifq*). The Prophet's traditions repeatedly associate gentleness with desirable conduct and contrast it with unnecessary harshness. In an educational context, this characteristic concerns how teachers exercise authority, communicate knowledge, and respond to learners' difficulties or mistakes.

The Prophet ﷺ stated:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرِّفْقَ، وَيُعْطِي عَلَى الرِّفْقِ مَا لَا يُعْطِي عَلَى الْعُنفِ، وَمَا لَا يُعْطِي عَلَى مَا سِوَاهُ

Translation:

“Indeed, Allah is gentle and loves gentleness, and He grants through gentleness what He does not grant through harshness and what He does not grant through anything else.”

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 2593).

The key term in the narration is الرِّفْقُ (al-rifq), referring to gentleness, kindness, and a non-harsh manner of dealing with others. The Prophet does not merely recommend gentleness as a situational technique; rather, gentleness is presented as a valued disposition.

This principle is reinforced by another Prophetic instruction:

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا

Translation:

“Facilitate things and do not make them difficult; give glad tidings and do not repel.”

(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 69).

The paired expressions *yassirū wa-lā tu‘assirū* and *bashshirū wa-lā tunaffirū* demonstrate an orientation toward accessibility and encouragement. In the context of teacher character, this suggests that the educator's authority should not be exercised through unnecessary severity. The teacher remains responsible for conveying correct knowledge, but the manner of communication should not create avoidable fear, alienation, or rejection.

The analysis therefore identifies gentleness as a characterological disposition rather than merely a pedagogical technique. A teacher who embodies *rifq* does not abandon discipline or academic standards; instead, discipline and authority are exercised within an ethical relationship characterized by respect and humane treatment.

Patience and Attentiveness to Learner Understanding

The third theme concerns patience and attentiveness to learner comprehension. The Prophet's educational communication demonstrates an awareness that successful teaching requires more than delivering information. The educator must also consider whether the recipient has adequately understood what has been communicated.

Anas ibn Mālik reported:

أَنَّهُ كَانَ إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ بِكَلِمَةٍ أَعَادَهَا ثَلَاثًا حَتَّى تُفْهَمَ عَنْهُ، وَإِذَا أَتَى عَلَى قَوْمٍ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ ثَلَاثًا

Translation:

“Whenever the Prophet ﷺ spoke a statement, he repeated it three times so that it could be understood from him; and whenever he came upon a group of people and greeted them, he greeted them three times.”

(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 95).

The phrase *حَتَّى تُفْهَمَ عَنْهُ* (ḥattā tufham ‘anhu), meaning “so that it could be understood from him,” is particularly significant for the present analysis. It indicates that the Prophet's communicative practice was oriented toward the comprehension of his audience.

At the surface level, repetition may be understood as an instructional practice. However, the present study distinguishes the observable practice from the underlying character disposition. The repetition itself constitutes a pedagogical behavior, whereas the willingness to repeat information for the sake of learners' understanding reflects patience, attentiveness, and educational responsibility.

This finding suggests that Prophetic teacher character includes an orientation toward learner comprehension. The teacher does not assume that the delivery of information automatically constitutes successful teaching. Instead, the teacher demonstrates patience and adjusts communication to ensure that the intended meaning can be understood.

Wise and Non-Humiliating Correction

Among the findings, wise and non-humiliating correction provides some of the strongest evidence for the Prophetic model of teacher character. This dimension is particularly important because mistakes are an inevitable part of learning. The manner in which a teacher responds to mistakes can either support learning and preserve learner dignity or create fear, embarrassment, and disengagement.

The narration of Mu‘āwiyah ibn al-Ḥakam al-Sulamī in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim provides particularly direct evidence. Mu‘āwiyah described an incident in which he spoke during prayer because he did not yet understand the relevant rule. After the prayer, he reflected on the Prophet's response:

فَبِأَبِي هُوَ وَأُمِّي مَا رَأَيْتُ مُعَلِّمًا قَبْلَهُ وَلَا بَعْدَهُ أَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمًا مِنْهُ، فَوَاللَّهِ مَا كَهَرَنِي وَلَا ضَرَبَنِي وَلَا شَتَمَنِي

Translation:

“May my father and mother be sacrificed for him. I have never seen a teacher before him or after him who was better in teaching than he. By Allah, he neither rebuked me, struck me, nor insulted me.”

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 537).

This narration is particularly important for the present study for two reasons. First, the narrator explicitly describes the Prophet as *مُعَلِّمًا* (mu‘alliman), or a teacher. Second, the narrator's evaluation of the Prophet's teaching is connected to the manner in which the Prophet responded to his mistake.

The Prophet did not ignore the error. Rather, he corrected the misunderstanding and explained the appropriate practice. At the same time, he did not use humiliation, physical punishment, or verbal abuse. The narration therefore

illustrates an important balance between instructional firmness and interpersonal gentleness.

The thematic coding consequently identified this narration as evidence of wise correction and preservation of learner dignity. The character of the teacher is manifested not in the absence of correction but in the manner of correction. From the Prophetic perspective, correcting an error and respecting the person who made the error are not contradictory responsibilities.

This finding is particularly significant for contemporary Islamic education because it suggests that teacher authority should be exercised through guidance rather than humiliation. The Prophet's example demonstrates that an educator can maintain normative clarity while simultaneously protecting the dignity of the learner.

Dialogical Engagement and Learner Participation

The fifth theme concerns dialogical engagement. Several Prophetic traditions demonstrate that teaching may take place through interaction, questioning, listening, and responding rather than exclusively through one-way transmission.

The most prominent example is the Hadith of Jibrīl. In the narration recorded by Muslim, Jibrīl came to the Prophet ﷺ in human form and asked a sequence of questions concerning Islam, īmān, iḥsān, and the signs of the Last Hour. After the interaction had concluded, the Prophet explained:

فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ

Translation:

“Indeed, he was Jibrīl who came to you to teach you your religion.”

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 8).

The significance of this narration extends beyond the question-and-answer technique itself. The interaction creates an educational situation in which questions stimulate explanation and provide a structured pathway for presenting knowledge. The Prophet responds to the questions and subsequently explains the significance of the encounter to his companions.

The thematic analysis therefore identifies dialogical engagement as a dimension of Prophetic teacher character. The teacher is portrayed as someone who participates in an interactive process rather than merely transmitting information. Openness to questions, responsiveness, and willingness to engage with learners become important aspects of the educator's character.

The Hadith of Jibrīl also demonstrates that a learning encounter may have multiple audiences. Although Jibrīl asks the questions, the companions observe the interaction and learn from both the questions and the Prophet's answers. Thus, the teacher's dialogical character can facilitate learning not only for the individual who asks the question but also for the wider learning community.

Exemplary Conduct as Teacher Character

The sixth theme is exemplary conduct (*uswah*). The analysis indicates that the Prophet's educational influence cannot be separated from his personal conduct. His educational authority was manifested not only through verbal instruction but also through the way he treated people.

This dimension is particularly visible when the different narrations are considered collectively. In the narration of Mu'āwiyah, for example, the Prophet's effectiveness as a teacher is associated with his conduct toward a learner who made a mistake. In the narration of Anas, his communication reflects attentiveness to understanding. In the traditions concerning *rifq* and *rahmah*, his conduct is situated within a broader ethical orientation toward gentleness and compassion.

Thus, exemplary conduct does not function in the corpus as merely another isolated virtue. Instead, it operates as a cross-cutting dimension through which other teacher characteristics become visible. Compassion, patience, gentleness, wisdom, and respect acquire educational meaning because they are embodied in the teacher's actual behavior.

The Prophet's model consequently presents the educator as a person whose conduct itself becomes part of the educational process. Learners encounter values not only through what teachers explicitly teach but also through how teachers speak, respond, correct, encourage, and relate to others.

Synthesis of the Identified Dimensions

The thematic analysis demonstrates that the six dimensions identified above are interconnected rather than isolated characteristics. They form an integrated conception of teacher character in which moral disposition, interpersonal relationships, and educational conduct reinforce one another.

Compassion provides the relational foundation for treating learners with care. Gentleness determines how authority and instruction are exercised. Patience and attentiveness orient teaching toward learner understanding. Wise and non-humiliating correction demonstrates how errors can be addressed without undermining learner dignity. Dialogical engagement creates space for questions and participation. Finally, exemplary conduct integrates these qualities into the teacher's everyday behavior.

The resulting framework can be summarized as follows:

Table1. Dimensions of Teacher Character Identified in Prophetic Hadith

Dimension of teacher character	Prophetic evidence	Character expressed
Compassion (rahmah)	Humane interaction, particularly with children and learners	Care, empathy, and concern for learners
Gentleness (rifq)	Preference for gentleness over harshness	Non-harsh exercise of authority
Patience and attentiveness	Repetition until the audience understands	Commitment to learner comprehension
Wise correction	Correcting Mu'āwiyah without rebuke, striking, or insult	Firmness combined with dignity
Dialogical engagement	Hadith of Jibrīl and question-answer interaction	Openness, responsiveness, and participation
Exemplary conduct (uswah)	Character manifested through interpersonal behavior	Teacher as moral and relational model

Overall, the findings indicate that the Prophetic model of teacher character is best understood not as a static catalogue of virtues but as an integrated ethical-relational disposition enacted through educational interaction. The Prophet's character as an educator becomes visible in how he communicates knowledge, responds to mistakes, accommodates learner understanding, exercises authority, and maintains humane relationships. This finding provides the foundation for the subsequent discussion of how the Prophetic model can contribute to contemporary Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that teacher character in the Prophetic model is not represented as a simple collection of desirable personal virtues. Rather, it emerges through a pattern of ethical and relational conduct manifested in educational interactions. The six dimensions identified in the results; compassion, gentleness, patience and attentiveness to learner understanding, wise correction, dialogical engagement, and exemplary conduct can be understood as interconnected aspects of a teacher's moral disposition. This interpretation is consistent with earlier Islamic educational scholarship, which emphasizes that educators are expected to embody religious, ethical, and interpersonal qualities rather than merely possess pedagogical knowledge. Maulana and Rodiya, for example, identify patience, compassion, gentleness, respect, forgiveness, humility, and facilitation among the characteristics and etiquette expected of educators from the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith¹⁰.

However, the present findings move beyond the identification of isolated virtues

¹⁰ Maulana, M. A., & Rodiya, Y. (2022). Karakter dan adab pendidik perspektif al-Qur'an dan Hadis. *Al-Mufasssir: Jurnal Ilmu Alquran, Tafsir dan Studi Islam*, 4(1), 29–47

by examining how these qualities become visible through Prophetic educational interactions. The discussion therefore conceptualizes teacher character not merely as what a teacher possesses, but as what a teacher enacts in relation to learners. This distinction provides a basis for understanding the Prophetic model as an ethical-relational model of teaching.

Teacher Character as an Ethical-Relational Foundation

The first major interpretation emerging from the findings is that teacher character is fundamentally relational. Compassion, gentleness, patience, and attentiveness are not presented in the selected hadith as detached moral qualities; they become meaningful through the Prophet's treatment of people in situations involving learning, misunderstanding, mistakes, and communication¹¹. This is particularly evident in the narration of Mu'awiyah ibn al-Hakam, who described the Prophet as a teacher who taught better than anyone he had encountered and emphasized that the Prophet neither rebuked, struck, nor insulted him when he made a mistake (Muslim, no. 537).

The significance of this narration lies in the relationship between authority and humane treatment. The Prophet did not abandon correction simply because the learner had made a mistake. Instead, correction was delivered without unnecessary humiliation. This suggests that compassion in the Prophetic model does not mean avoiding discipline, while authority does not require harshness. Rather, the two are integrated through an ethical relationship in which the teacher remains responsible for guiding the learner while preserving the learner's dignity.

This interpretation is compatible with the Islamic conception of the teacher as a moral figure. Rozak, for instance, argues that an ideal Islamic teacher inherits the moral qualities associated with the Prophet, including patience, justice, humility, forgiveness, and compassion¹². Sutarto and Sari similarly conceptualize the Prophet as a professional teacher whose personal, social, and spiritual-pedagogical qualities are integrated into his educational role. The present study extends these arguments by showing that such qualities are not merely attributes that can be listed in a teacher profile. They are manifested through concrete relational responses to learners¹³.

The findings on gentleness further strengthen this interpretation. The Prophet's statement that Allah loves gentleness and grants through gentleness what is not granted through harshness (Muslim, no. 2593) establishes *rifq* as an important ethical principle. When interpreted alongside the educational interactions identified in this study, gentleness can be understood as a way of exercising pedagogical

¹¹ Khon, A. M. (2021). Integrasi pendidikan dalam kitab hadis Al-Arba'in Al-Nawawiyah. *Riwayah: Jurnal Studi Hadis*, 7(2), 413–436

¹² Rozak, A. (2020). Profesionalisme guru perspektif Islam. *FIKRAH: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 4(1), 64–83

¹³ Sutarto, S., & Sari, D. P. (2020). Characteristics of professional teacher: A psychological review of the personality of Prophet Muhammad Saw. *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami*, 6(2), 164–177

authority. A teacher may possess authority while avoiding communication that intimidates or humiliates learners.

The same principle can be connected with the Prophetic instruction to “facilitate and do not make things difficult” (al-Bukhari, no. 69). In educational terms, facilitation does not mean reducing academic expectations. Rather, it concerns the teacher's responsibility to avoid creating unnecessary obstacles to understanding. This is consistent with the broader finding that the Prophet was attentive to whether his message had actually been understood. The narration of Anas states that the Prophet repeated his words until they were understood (al-Bukhari, no. 95). Thus, repetition should not be interpreted merely as a pedagogical technique. The deeper characterological dimension is the teacher's patience and concern for learner comprehension.

This distinction is important for contemporary Islamic education. A teacher may successfully deliver substantial amounts of information while failing to ensure that learners understand or can engage with that information. The Prophetic model suggests a different orientation: teaching is not completed simply because information has been transmitted. The teacher has an ethical responsibility to facilitate understanding. In this sense, patience becomes a pedagogical virtue, while attentiveness becomes an expression of respect for learners' differences in ability and pace.

This interpretation also complements research on Islamic teacher professionalism. Hamdan et al., for example, found that the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers is closely related to their role in developing students' religious character¹⁴. Tambak et al. likewise demonstrate that Islamic values such as *rahmah*, *hilm*, *sabr*, *hikmah*, and *fathanah* are relevant to the development of students' moral character through teachers' educational practices. The present study adds that these qualities should also be understood as dimensions of the teacher's own relational character¹⁵.

Wise Correction, Learner Dignity, and Educational Authority

The second major theme concerns the manner in which a teacher exercises authority when learners make mistakes. Among the findings, the *Mu'awiyah* narration provides particularly strong evidence because it explicitly identifies the Prophet as an excellent teacher while describing his response to inappropriate learner behavior. The learner was corrected, but the correction did not involve verbal humiliation, physical punishment, or aggressive confrontation (Muslim, no. 537).

The significance of this finding is that correction and compassion are not

¹⁴ Hamdan, Nuzli, M., Rahma, S., Chaniago, F., & Sampoerna, M. N. (2021). Profesionalitas guru Pendidikan Agama Islam: Upaya membangun karakter religious peserta didik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah*, 6(2), 244–261

¹⁵ Tambak, S., Ahmad, M., Sukenti, D., & Ghani, A. R. B. A. (2020). Profesionalisme guru madrasah: Internalisasi nilai Islam dalam mengembangkan akhlak aktual siswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah*, 5(2), 79–96

mutually exclusive. The teacher's responsibility to correct inappropriate behavior remains intact, but correction is transformed from an act of punishment into an opportunity for learning. The Prophet's response demonstrates that the educational purpose of correction is not simply to stop undesirable behavior but to enable the learner to understand why the behavior was inappropriate.

This interpretation contributes to previous discussions of Prophetic instructional practice. Fatima and Tasgheer, in their study of Prophetic instructional strategies, identify several approaches derived from Hadith literature and argue for their relevance to contemporary academic settings. While their focus is primarily on instructional strategies, the present findings draw attention to the character underlying those strategies. A strategy such as correction cannot be evaluated only in terms of whether the correct information is communicated. The ethical manner in which correction is delivered is equally significant¹⁶.

This distinction is particularly important because pedagogical practice can be technically effective but ethically problematic. A teacher may succeed in producing immediate compliance through fear, yet such compliance does not necessarily indicate meaningful learning or moral development¹⁷. The Prophetic model instead suggests that educational authority should be exercised through what may be described as humane firmness: the teacher remains clear about what is right and wrong but avoids unnecessary degradation of the learner.

Such an approach is also consistent with the broader understanding of teacher professionalism in Islamic education. Islamic teacher professionalism involves qualities such as justice, patience, forgiveness, compassion, humility, and commitment. Sutarto and Sari similarly argue that the Prophet's professional identity as a teacher cannot be separated from his personal and spiritual qualities. The present study therefore suggests that teacher professionalism should not be understood solely in terms of competence and performance. It should also include the ethical management of teacher–student relationships.

This finding has particular relevance for Islamic educational institutions. Discipline is an unavoidable component of education, especially where teachers are responsible for moral and religious formation. However, the Prophetic model indicates that discipline should preserve the learner's possibility of improvement. The learner's mistake is treated as a condition requiring guidance rather than as a justification for humiliation. Consequently, wise correction represents an important point at which teacher character, pedagogical authority, and learner dignity converge.

Dialogical Engagement and Exemplary Conduct in Prophetic Teaching

¹⁶ Fatima, T., & Tasgheer, A. (2022). Prophetic instructional strategies: A pedagogical framework for the contemporary academics. *Journal of Islamic and Religious Studies*, 7(1), 17–34

¹⁷ Hardy, S. A., & Carlo, G. (2011). Moral identity: What is it, how does it develop, and is it linked to moral action? *Child Development Perspectives*, 5(3), 212–218

The third theme concerns the combination of dialogical engagement and exemplary conduct. The Hadith of Jibril provides an important illustration of dialogical educational interaction. The encounter takes the form of questions and answers concerning Islam, faith, excellence, and the Hour, and the Prophet subsequently explains that Jibril had come to teach the people their religion (Muslim, no. 8). Although the narration should not be reduced to a modern classroom “question-and-answer method,” it demonstrates the educational significance of interaction, responsiveness, and communicative participation.

The importance of this finding lies in the recognition of the learner as an active participant in the process of knowledge construction. Dialogue creates space for questioning, clarification, reflection, and response. In this sense, the Prophetic teacher is not simply a transmitter of information but an educator who responds to communicative needs within an educational encounter.

This finding is consistent with Riyadi's broader conception of Prophetic pedagogy, in which educational purposes extend beyond intellectual development to include moral development¹⁸. However, the present study deliberately shifts the analytical emphasis from method to character. The question-and-answer structure is a pedagogical practice, but the willingness to engage with questions reflects broader characterological qualities such as openness, attentiveness, responsiveness, and respect for learners.

Dialogical engagement is also connected to exemplary conduct. Islamic education has long emphasized the teacher's position as a model whose behavior communicates values beyond explicit instructional content. Fithriani et al. emphasize that teachers serve as role models for students, whose attitudes and behaviours may be observed and imitated, highlighting the importance of appropriate teacher character and conduct¹⁹. Similarly, research on character-based Prophetic education in pesantren emphasizes the importance of creating educational cultures grounded in values exemplified by the Prophet.

The concept of *uswah* therefore provides an important interpretive lens for understanding teacher character. Students do not encounter Islamic values only through textbooks, lectures, or formal instruction. They also encounter them through the teacher's everyday conduct. A teacher who teaches patience but responds impatiently to students communicates a contradictory educational message. Likewise, a teacher who teaches compassion but humiliates students when they make mistakes weakens the moral credibility of the instruction.

The exemplary dimension consequently integrates the other character dimensions identified in this study. Compassion is observed through the teacher's treatment of learners; gentleness through communication; patience through responsiveness to comprehension; wisdom through correction; and openness

¹⁸ Riyadi, A. R. (2020). Human nature and educational goals in the prophetic pedagogic. *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 165–183

¹⁹ Fithriani, F., Syabuddin, S., Gunawan, G., Zainuddin, T., & Sulaiman, S. (2021). Teacher as a role model in the 2013 curriculum development. *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura*, 21(2), 240–256.

through dialogue. The teacher becomes part of the curriculum not only through what is taught but through how the teacher lives the values being taught.

This interpretation resonates with Laila et al., who emphasize that Prophetic values can serve as a foundation for character-based Islamic education²⁰. The relevance of this perspective to teacher character is that ethical communication is not merely a linguistic matter; it forms part of the moral environment in which learners develop.

Reconstructing the Prophetic Model of Teacher Character for Islamic Education

When the six dimensions are considered together, the findings support a conceptualization of Prophetic teacher character as an integrated ethical-relational model. The model consists of compassion, gentleness, patience and attentiveness, wise correction, dialogical engagement, and exemplary conduct. These dimensions should not be understood as independent competencies. Rather, they interact to establish a particular form of educational relationship between teacher and learner.

The synthesis can be represented as follows: compassion establishes concern for the learner; gentleness regulates the exercise of authority; patience and attentiveness support understanding; wise correction guides behavior while preserving dignity; dialogue enables learner participation; and exemplary conduct embodies the values that the teacher seeks to transmit. The distinctive feature of the model therefore lies in the integration of moral disposition and educational interaction.

This synthesis partly converges with earlier studies. Faizin and Bachtiyar conceptualize Islamic Religious Education teacher professionalism through the integration of Prophetic values, emphasizing that the ethical dimension of the teaching profession is inseparable from its professional responsibilities²¹. Taja et al. similarly demonstrate how Prophetic character values can be integrated into Islamic education to foster ethical development through processes of knowing, doing, and being²². These studies support the present finding that teacher character should be understood not merely as a collection of desirable personal qualities, but as an ethical orientation that becomes meaningful through educational practice.

Nevertheless, the present study differs in its analytical orientation. Rather than producing another general list of ideal teacher characteristics, it reconstructs teacher character from Prophetic educational interactions. This distinction is important. A list of virtues tells us what an ideal teacher should be, whereas an interactional analysis helps explain how those virtues are enacted in educational

²⁰ Laila, S. N. F., Mutohar, P. M., & Mufarokah, A. (2022). Character-based Prophetic education in Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo Ponorogo Indonesia. *KnE Social Sciences*, 86–97.

²¹ Faizin, M., & Bachtiyar, M. (2021). Penguatan profesionalisme guru Pendidikan Agama Islam berbasis nilai-nilai profetik. *EL-BANAT: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam*, 11(1), 109–129

²² Taja, N., Nurdin, E. S., Kosasih, A., Suresman, E., & Supriyadi, T. (2021). Character education in the pandemic era: A religious ethical learning model through Islamic education. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 20(11), 132–153.

situations. The present study therefore contributes an interpretive bridge between Hadith studies and Islamic educational practice.

The findings also provide a useful distinction between teacher character and teaching method. Repetition, questioning, explanation, facilitation, and correction may be understood as observable pedagogical practices. However, the analysis indicates that the more fundamental issue is the character disposition underlying these practices. Repetition reflects patience and attentiveness when it is oriented toward learner comprehension. Correction reflects wisdom and compassion when it preserves learner dignity. Dialogue reflects openness and respect when learners are treated as participants rather than merely recipients. Thus, the Prophetic model is not primarily a catalogue of teaching techniques; it is a model of ethical conduct through which teaching practices acquire educational meaning.

This distinction has important implications for contemporary Islamic education. Teacher education programs should not limit professional preparation to instructional planning, assessment, classroom management, or mastery of subject matter. These competencies remain important, but they need to be accompanied by deliberate cultivation of ethical-relational capacities. Teachers should be prepared to communicate without unnecessary harshness, respond patiently to different levels of comprehension, correct mistakes constructively, create opportunities for meaningful dialogue, and demonstrate the values they expect students to develop.

The findings also have implications for character education. Character formation should not be conceptualized solely as something that teachers do to students. The teacher's own character is part of the educational process. This point is particularly important in Islamic education, where moral formation is inseparable from modeling and habituation. Research on Islamic teacher professionalism has similarly emphasized the contribution of teachers' values and practices to students' character development.

More broadly, the Prophetic model provides a way of connecting classical Islamic educational values with contemporary concerns about humane and learner-responsive education. The purpose is not to reproduce historical educational practices mechanically in contemporary classrooms. Instead, the enduring ethical principles identified in the Hadith can be interpreted within present educational contexts. Compassion, dignity, dialogue, attentiveness, and exemplary conduct remain relevant regardless of changes in educational technology, institutional structures, or classroom environments.

Accordingly, the principal contribution of this study is the reconstruction of teacher character as an ethical-relational dimension of Prophetic pedagogy. The Prophet is not presented merely as a source of teaching techniques or as an abstract moral exemplar. Through the selected Hadith, he can be understood as a teacher whose authority, knowledge, compassion, communication, correction, and personal example operate together. This perspective offers a more integrated understanding of what it means to become an Islamic educator: to teach effectively while

embodying the ethical character that makes teaching itself educationally meaningful.

CONCLUSION

Adapun This study examined the Prophetic model of teacher character through a thematic analysis of selected Hadith and explored its implications for contemporary Islamic education. The findings demonstrate that teacher character in the Prophetic model is constituted by six interconnected dimensions: compassion (*rahmah*), gentleness (*rifq*), patience and attentiveness to learner understanding, wise and non-humiliating correction, dialogical engagement, and exemplary conduct (*uswah*). These dimensions indicate that the Prophet's character as an educator was manifested not only through the knowledge he conveyed but also through the ethical manner in which he interacted with learners.

The study further shows that these dimensions should not be understood as isolated virtues or as a collection of teaching techniques. Rather, they form an integrated ethical-relational model of educational practice. Compassion provides the foundation for caring relationships, gentleness shapes the exercise of authority, patience and attentiveness prioritize learner comprehension, wise correction protects learner dignity, dialogue creates opportunities for participation, and exemplary conduct allows the teacher to embody the values being taught. The Prophetic model therefore integrates moral character with pedagogical responsibility.

This perspective contributes to Islamic education by shifting attention from teacher character as a list of desirable attributes toward teacher character as enacted ethical conduct within educational relationships. The distinction is important because teaching practices such as repetition, questioning, explanation, and correction acquire their educational significance from the character and intention underlying them. In this sense, the Prophet's educational model demonstrates that effective teaching is inseparable from humane treatment, moral responsibility, and respect for learners.

The findings have practical implications for Islamic teacher education and professional development. Teacher preparation should not focus exclusively on subject-matter knowledge, instructional competence, and classroom management but should also cultivate ethical-relational capacities. Teachers should be prepared to exercise authority without unnecessary harshness, respond patiently to differences in learner comprehension, correct mistakes without humiliation, encourage meaningful dialogue, and consistently demonstrate the values they seek to cultivate in students. Consequently, teacher character should be considered an integral component of Islamic educational quality rather than an additional moral attribute.

This study is limited by its reliance on a purposively selected corpus of Hadith

and a qualitative thematic interpretation. Although the use of major canonical collections strengthens the textual basis of the analysis, other Hadith collections, commentarial traditions, and classical works on Prophetic pedagogy may reveal additional dimensions of teacher character. Future research could therefore expand the corpus, incorporate comparative analysis of classical *sharḥ* literature, and examine how the identified Prophetic character dimensions can be operationalized and evaluated in contemporary Islamic educational settings.

Overall, the study concludes that the Prophetic teacher is best understood as an educator whose knowledge, authority, compassion, communication, correction, and personal example are ethically integrated. The enduring relevance of the Prophetic model lies not in reproducing historical teaching practices mechanically, but in translating its underlying ethical principles into contemporary educational contexts. Thus, the Prophetic model offers Islamic education a framework in which how teachers teach is inseparable from who teachers are.

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