



Teachers' Personality Competence in Strengthening Character Education at Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study analyzes teachers' understanding, practices, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the influence of teachers' personality competence on character education at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan, using a multi-site qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that teachers' understanding of personality competence is generally good, reflected in their discipline, responsibility, honesty, politeness, and noble character consistently applied in the learning process. Character values are integrated through exemplary speech and actions, including responsibility, discipline, empathy, and cooperation, reinforced by school culture and regular religious activities. Supporting factors include teacher training, regular religious gatherings, and peer support, while obstacles involve limited funding, heavy workloads, suboptimal teacher-parent communication, and diverse student backgrounds. Nevertheless, teachers demonstrate high dedication as role models. Overall, teachers' personality competence has a significant influence on shaping students' character, positioning teachers not only as educators but also as strategic agents in personality development at the primary education level.

Introduction

Education holds a strategic role in determining the progress and future of a nation. Without quality education, a country can't develop (Schiff et al., 2022). The success of education greatly depends on the role of teachers as central figures in the development and progress of students (Sodikin, 2019). Therefore, teachers are required to carry out their duties optimally. The quality of education is not solely determined by an excellent curriculum, adequate facilities, or a large, allocated budget, but also by the quality of the teachers themselves (Sutrisna & Artajaya, 2022). A quality teacher is not only intellectually capable but also possesses a personality worthy of being emulated. As the saying goes, "When a teacher urinates standing, the student urinates running," a teacher must set a good example for students to follow.

A teacher is a figure who is trusted and emulated, meaning they are expected to be a role model through the personality reflected in their attitudes and behavior. Such personality is expected to inspire, guide, and shape students' character so that they become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God, of noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, as well as democratic and responsible citizens, following the national education goals stated in the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. A teacher with good personality will produce students with good character; thus, it is essential for teachers to consistently display attitudes that are worthy of emulation. This

aligns with Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards and Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Article 10 Paragraph (1), which stipulates that teachers must possess four competencies pedagogical, personal, social, and professional—acquired through professional education.

Among the various competencies, personal competence has a particularly significant influence on mastering other competencies, such as pedagogical, social, and professional, as it serves as the foundation for teachers to demonstrate exemplary attitudes, behavior, and actions in daily life. Without good personal competence, other competencies are difficult to convey effectively. Based on Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, personal competence is defined as the ability to be steady, of noble character, wise, dignified, and capable of becoming a role model for students. The application of this competence plays a crucial role in shaping students' character, as whatever a teacher does will be observed, heard, and imitated by their students. Teachers who focus solely on delivering material without realizing their role as role models risk failing to achieve the goals of education, which emphasize not only knowledge but also changes in attitudes and improvement in everyday behavior.

Various cases in the field, such as physical violence by a teacher against a student at SMKN 12 Malang on December 6, 2024 (Kompasiana.com), cases of discrimination in the form of bullying and intolerance at SDN Jomin Barat II reported by Setara Institute on July 9, 2023, as well as immoral acts involving the sexual exploitation of dozens of students in Buton Selatan by a teacher in Kendari on January 31, 2024 (Kompas) demonstrate that there are still educators with poor personality traits. Such behavior, which deviates from moral norms, negatively impacts students' character development, turning the teacher who should protect and guide into a figure that misleads children. Teachers with personalities that do not align with moral values will only serve as bad examples and tarnish the image of the teaching profession as a builder of virtuous generations (Hosaini et al., 2024; Forsyth, 2023). Given the strategic role of teachers in producing human resources with strong character and potential, strengthening personal competence is necessary so that they can serve as positive role models for students. This aligns with the national education goals outlined in Law Number 20 of 2003, Article 3, namely, to shape faithful individuals, devoted to God, of noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible. To achieve this, teachers must have strong commitment and consistent determination in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, because without genuine commitment, educational goals cannot be achieved optimally and are at risk of failure.

The teaching profession is unique compared to other professions (Baidi et al., 2021), as its duties are not limited to mastering knowledge but also include shaping students' character and values. Prospective teachers are prepared not merely for their benefit, but to devote themselves to the development of students, both as instructors and as educators who instill values (Hansen, 2008; Nizariah et al., 2025; Ghaleb, 2024). In fulfilling this role, teachers serve as benchmarks and mirrors for students and society, making it appropriate to regard a teacher as someone to be trusted and emulated, meaning their words, thoughts, and actions are followed. A teacher's commitment to success is reflected in a clear vision, determination in educating, good character and noble morals, self-control, dedication to developing students' potential, and wholehearted service. Teachers are not only responsible for transferring knowledge (cognitive domain) and skills (psychomotor domain) but also for fostering attitudes and behaviors (affective domain) aligned with noble values. This reality underscores the need to re-strengthen the values of teacher personality so that they can shape generations who are scientifically competent and socially virtuous within the framework of religious teachings. As role models, teachers must have a complete personality reflected in their daily behavior so that they can enhance their

image as good educators, provide guidance with relevant knowledge, and demonstrate commendable behavior worthy of emulation by students.

Field evidence shows that not all teachers in Indonesia possess adequate personal competence. Various cases reflecting the lack of teacher personality are still common, including physical and psychological violence against students, sexual harassment committed by teachers toward their pupils, and even falsification of academic work. This phenomenon proves that the personal competence of some teachers is still far from expectations, although, on the other hand, there are teachers who can serve as positive role models by demonstrating commendable personalities worthy of imitation. The lack of personal competence has a direct impact on the process of character building in students, considering that teachers should serve as figures who provide moral, spiritual, and social guidance through their daily behavior.

Role modeling in education is one of the most effective methods for shaping the moral, spiritual, and social aspects of students (Saka, 2008). Children will imitate the words, behavior, and attitudes of their educators, whether consciously or not, making the teacher a deeply ingrained model in a child's character. If a teacher demonstrates honesty, trustworthiness, noble character, courage, and avoidance of actions contrary to religious values, students are more likely to develop similar traits. Conversely, if a teacher exhibits dishonesty, betrayal, stinginess, cowardice, or disgraceful conduct, students may easily internalize those negative traits, regardless of any formal education efforts. Therefore, teachers are required to have good personalities to serve as genuine role models for their students, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 21.

Imam Ibn Kathir's interpretation of Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21 affirms that this verse is a strong foundation for humankind to emulate the Prophet Muhammad in speech, actions, and daily conduct, as he demonstrated during the Battle of Khandaq through his patience, steadfastness, and courage in facing trials without faltering (Ar-Rifa'i, 1990). This *uswah* (exemplary conduct) is not only relevant in the context of warfare but also serves as a universal principle applicable in all aspects of life, including education. The Prophet Muhammad was an educator who provided clarity through concrete behavior, making himself a moral and spiritual reference for his people. Therefore, modern teachers must be able to reflect this example by becoming positive role models for their students, as the success of education largely depends on the teacher's personal integrity and exemplary conduct. When teachers neglect this role, the direction of education can deviate from its true purpose, ultimately triggering moral decay among the younger generation.

In today's educational reality, shifts in values and ethics between teachers and students are increasingly evident. Courtesy is fading, the social standing of teachers is declining, and students' respect for their teachers is diminishing. Interactions that should be imbued with dignity are now often equated with casual friendships (Icka & Kochoska, 2024). In such a situation, the teacher's competence becomes crucial as a role model, reflected in both physical appearance and everyday behavior. Teachers who understand their position as examples for students will maintain appropriate manners, speech, social interactions, and attire, keeping them neat, modest, and in accordance with norms. Moreover, teachers should display gentleness as well as firmness and be guided by the religious values they adhere to, ensuring that every action they take not only supports the learning process but also shapes a positive perception and guides students toward noble character.

Several distressing incidents related to teacher personality have drawn serious attention, given that teachers are supposed to serve as protectors and role models for both students and the community. Field evidence reveals teacher behavior far from exemplary, such as the case in

Watang Sawitto District, Pinrang Regency, South Sulawesi, on December 14, 2020, where an honorary teacher with the initials MY (43) was reported for molesting his female student. Another case occurred at SDN 2 Patoman, Blimbingsari District, where a physical education teacher forcibly shaved the hair of 22 students, causing injuries to their ears and heads. Even abroad, similar incidents have been recorded: in Japan, a student filmed himself kicking and hitting his teacher in class, which went viral in October 2017; in Sabah, Malaysia, a fourth-grade student suffered ear bleeding after his teacher used a stapler to pinch him for not doing homework. Such incidents raise questions about the extent to which teachers understand and fulfill their role in line with the Javanese educational philosophy, *ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani*.

In the city of Medan, there are 29 Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools, including Muhammadiyah Private Elementary School 02 and Muhammadiyah Elementary School 11, both known for their strict selection process in recruiting new teachers. This process is expected to filter for teachers with personal competencies in accordance with statutory requirements. However, the question remains are these provisions and prerequisites truly effective in ensuring that accepted teachers can implement the components of personal competence and avoid behaviors that violate these values? This uncertainty prompted the author to conduct further research, which ultimately resulted in a study entitled *Teacher Personal Competence Based on Character Education in Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools throughout the City of Medan*.

The author is interested in exploring how teachers apply their competence in the schools under study, to understand how such competence serves as a reinforcement in implementing and carrying out character education for students. This research aims to examine in depth the practice of teachers' competence in integrating character education values in schools, as well as to analyze the influence of such competence on instilling character values in students. By focusing on the teacher's personality as a strengthening factor in the character education process, this study contributes to both theoretical and practical understanding of how personality dimensions can serve as a foundation for shaping students' character. The findings of this research are expected to provide insights for the development of educational policies, the improvement of teacher training programs, and the design of more effective learning strategies for the sustainable cultivation of character values in the school environment.

Methods

This study on teachers' competence in reinforcing character education at Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Medan employs a qualitative research method. According to Bogdan and Taylor, as cited by Moleong (2017), qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from participants observed in their natural environment. The research uses a phenomenological approach with a multisite design and an inductive strategy, aiming to describe and interpret experiences, relationships, activities, attitudes, and ongoing processes, as well as their interrelated influences (Sanapiah, 1990). Conducted as field research, the study requires the researcher's active presence and engagement to accurately capture the realities of teachers' competence in promoting character education (Nasution, 2006). The multisite design focuses on two schools intensively, allowing for in-depth analysis at multiple locations, which strengthens the validity and comprehensiveness of the findings (Sukardi, 2004). This approach ensures that the research captures nuanced variations across different settings while maintaining a cohesive understanding of the phenomenon. By using this design, the study can generate rich, contextually grounded insights into how teachers exemplify personal competence and act as role models in their educational environments.

The data for this study were collected from two Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Medan: SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 in Medan Timur and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 in Medan Barat. The research was conducted from early February to the end of June 2025. The primary subjects of this study were the teachers at these schools, as they embody the object of the research, which focuses on their competence in reinforcing character education. To obtain detailed and relevant information, the researcher selected informants using purposive sampling, a technique that chooses individuals considered most knowledgeable or influential regarding the research topic (Sugiyono, 2015). A total of 16 in-depth interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes and were recorded with participants' consent. Informants were categorized into key informants, primarily selected 6 teachers deemed to have extensive knowledge about the issues under study, and supporting informants, which included 2 principals, 2 vice principals, and 6 students who could provide additional perspectives and insights on the implementation of personal competence and character education (Kuswarno, 2008). Interviews were conducted with these informants to gather rich, descriptive data about behaviors, attitudes, and practices related to teachers' roles as role models in the school environment.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Informants

Category	SD Muhammadiyah 02	SDS Muhammadiyah 11
School Principals	1	1
Vice Principals	1	1
Teachers	3	3
Students	3	3
Total	8	8

In this study, data collection was conducted using several complementary techniques to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the findings. The first technique employed was participant observation systematically over 12 weeks (February–June 2025), totaling approximately 60 hours of classroom observation across both schools (30 hours per school), which involves systematic observation and recording of all phenomena visible in the research setting (Margono, 2005). The researcher directly engaged in the activities of the subjects at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan, observing both physical and social environments, including Islamic education, Bahasa Indonesia, Mathematics, Science, and Civics, as well as non-instructional activities such as morning Qur'an recitation, congregational prayers, recess interactions, extracurricular programs, and school cleaning activities as well as interactions among teachers, principals, and students. The purpose of participant observation was to capture natural occurrences in the field, enabling the researcher to systematically document behaviors, work processes, and the support provided by stakeholders in the implementation of character education.

In addition to observation, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain comprehensive information regarding the leadership and personal competence of teachers in enhancing educational quality (Creswell, 2018). Structured interview guides were used to maintain consistency, while allowing flexibility for the interviewer to probe further and gather richer data (Arikunto, 2019). Key informants included principals, vice-principals, teachers, and students from both schools, providing insights into their roles and behaviors in supporting character education. Furthermore, documentation studies were employed as a supporting data source, involving the collection and analysis of school archives, books, transcripts, photographs, and records related to school management, community engagement, and educational programs. This combination of observation, in-depth interviews, and

documentation ensured the comprehensiveness, validity, and reliability of the data collected for the study.

In this study, qualitative data analysis was employed to systematically organize, process, and interpret data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to address the research focus (Sudjana, 1989). The analysis followed the framework of Miles et al. (2014), which consists of three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, abstracting, simplifying, and transforming data to highlight relevant patterns and insights. Selected data from field notes, interviews, and documentation were focused on the research questions, summarized, and categorized to facilitate interpretation. Data display was conducted using narrative descriptions, tables, and charts to provide a clear overview of findings, while the conclusion-drawing stage involved verifying and synthesizing the data into meaningful interpretations aligned with the research objectives.

Given the multisite design of this study, data analysis was carried out both at individual sites (single-site analysis) and across sites (cross-site analysis) to capture differences and similarities in teacher personality competence across SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan (Audet & d'Amboise, 2001). Initially, findings from each site were organized into categories and themes, analyzed inductively, and developed into site-specific substantive propositions. Subsequently, cross-case analysis compared these propositions to identify convergent and divergent patterns, considering contextual factors such as school location (Medan Timur vs. Medan Barat), student demographics, and institutional approaches to character education. This systematic comparison aimed to understand how contextual differences shape the enactment of teacher personality competence in character education, culminating in a comprehensive conceptual framework that integrates insights from both schools.

Theory Description

The theory of character education in this study provides the main conceptual foundation. Character is broadly understood as the attitudes and behaviors of an individual, encompassing aspects such as morals, ethics, values, and good conduct, all of which guide humans toward virtuous actions in daily life. While concepts like morals emphasize actions that benefit human life, ethics focus on discerning right from wrong, and values serve as a reference for decision-making, the core principle remains consistent: fostering commendable behavior that contributes to a better life. Scholars such as Samani and Hariyanto describe character education as a process guiding students to become well-rounded individuals with integrated moral, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Salsabilah et al., 2022). Similarly, Salahudin and Alkrienciehie define it as moral education aimed at developing one's ability to act properly in everyday life, while Muhaimin Azzet emphasizes a systemic approach in schools to instill positive character values, ensuring that knowledge and behavior align with moral goodness (Azzet, 2014).

Building on these foundations, Zubaedi highlights that character education involves deliberate planning and actions by teachers to influence the formation of students' character, nurturing ethical, understanding, and behavior holistically (Zubaedi, 2012). Wibowo further emphasizes that character education aims to instill noble character traits in students so that they can apply these traits in family, community, and national contexts (Wibowo, 2012). From these perspectives, character education in this research is conceptualized as the systematic implementation of moral and ethical teaching aimed at developing students' knowledge and practice of virtuous behaviors. This framework is essential for understanding how teachers'

personality competencies can reinforce character education, shaping students to internalize and practice noble values in various aspects of their lives.

Results and Discussion

Integration of Character Education Values in the Practice of Teacher Personality Competence at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan

Education is not only aimed at enhancing the intellectual capabilities of students, but it also plays a crucial role in shaping a noble character. In this context, character education becomes an inseparable element of the learning process in schools. Teachers hold a strategic role as central figures who can instill character values through examples of daily attitudes and behavior. A teacher's personality competence reflects a mature, stable, wise, and authoritative quality, while also serving as a role model for students. At SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan, character formation aligns with Islamic teachings and national values, making the integration of character education into teachers' personality competence a highly relevant area of study.

Character education is a deliberate and planned effort to instill moral values in students. The key values emphasized include religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, love for the homeland, appreciation of achievement, friendliness, peace-loving attitudes, reading habits, environmental awareness, social concern, and responsibility. Teachers' personality competence encompasses the ability to demonstrate a firm, stable, mature, wise, and authoritative character, alongside high moral integrity and the capability to foster positive social relationships. The integration of these character values occurs when teachers consciously internalize them into their daily behaviors, both in the classroom and in the broader school environment, through role modeling, effective communication, and the establishment of a school culture that supports character learning.

Interviews with the principal, vice principal, teachers, and students indicate that character education is integrated comprehensively across all subjects, not limited to religious studies or Civics. For instance, in Science and Bahasa Indonesia, teachers connect the material to values such as responsibility, trustworthiness, and honesty. Students are also habituated to praying, greeting others, maintaining polite communication, and practicing discipline and responsibility through daily tasks and classroom management. Teachers employ various strategies, including storytelling, reinforcement through daily activities, brief reflection sessions, and recognition for positive behavior, to promote character development. This integrated approach was further articulated by the school leadership during interviews, particularly by the principal and vice principal, who emphasized the philosophical foundation and practical implementation of character education in the school.

The Principal: "At SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan, we view education not only as developing students' intellectual abilities but also as shaping noble character. Character formation is grounded in Islamic teachings and national values. Teachers play a strategic role as key figures in instilling character values through their daily attitudes and behavior. Their personality competence, being mature, stable, wise, and authoritative, enables them to function as role models for students."

The Vice Principal: "We emphasize values such as religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, care for others and the environment, and responsibility. These values are integrated through teachers' daily behavior as role models, supported by effective communication and a positive school culture."

In practice, teachers at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan implement character education through various approaches. Teachers' role modeling is reflected in their polite, courteous, disciplined, and responsible behavior. Religious habituation activities, such as congregational prayers and reading the Qur'an before lessons, serve as means to instill religiosity. Contextual learning is also employed to cultivate cooperation, honesty, and responsibility through group tasks and inspirational stories. Additionally, extracurricular activities, including community service, school cleaning programs, and social guidance, help students internalize social values and responsibility. These practices were further elaborated by teachers during interviews, highlighting how character education is embedded in both instructional and non-instructional activities.

Teacher: "In Bahasa Indonesia, I connect the material to values such as responsibility and honesty. Students are habituated to praying, greeting others, maintaining polite communication, and practicing discipline through daily tasks and classroom management."

Another Teacher: "I implement character education through various approaches. My role modeling is reflected in polite, courteous, disciplined, and responsible behavior. I connect Science material to values such as responsibility, trustworthiness, and honesty. I employ contextual learning to cultivate cooperation, honesty, and responsibility through group tasks and inspirational stories. I also use strategies such as storytelling, reinforcement through daily activities, brief reflection sessions, and recognition for positive behavior."

Teacher 3: "We implement religious habituation activities such as congregational prayers and reading the Qur'an before lessons as a means to instill religiosity. In addition, extracurricular activities, including community service, school cleaning programs, and social guidance, help students internalize social values and responsibility."

Students reported that their teachers consistently demonstrate gentle, patient, and polite behavior, provide guidance and recognition for good conduct, enforce discipline, and teach values such as empathy, responsibility, cooperation, and fairness through real-life actions. Daily interactions between teachers and students, including support during challenges or conflicts, serve as effective learning mediums for instilling character. Teachers' tangible role modeling, from punctuality and neat appearance to moral integrity, is directly internalized by students through observation and emotional experience.

Student: "Our teachers are kind, patient, and polite. They guide us and give appreciation when we behave well. They are fair in enforcing discipline and teach us values like responsibility, cooperation, and caring for others. When we have problems or conflicts, they help and support us. We learn a lot by watching how they come on time, dress neatly, and behave well every day."

Another Student: "We learn character from our daily interactions with teachers. They show good examples, such as being punctual, neat, and honest. Teachers not only teach lessons but also show us how to behave properly through their actions."

Overall, the integration of character education values into teachers' personality competence at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan operates effectively and consistently. Teachers not only deliver academic content but also serve as moral and social role models. The school culture, visionary leadership, and teachers' professional commitment create an ethical, transformative learning environment that supports early character development. This underscores that character education is a holistic pedagogical approach rooted in the teachers' personality and exemplary behavior as the primary agents of the learning process.

Integration of Character Education Values in the Practice of Teacher Personality Competence at SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan

The integration of character education values in the practice of teacher personality competence at SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan plays a crucial role in shaping teachers who are not only professionally competent but also moral and spiritual role models for their students. In this school, teachers serve as central figures in instilling Islamic values, ethics, and national culture, extending beyond their role as mere educators.

Character education values such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, care, and politeness are internalized through teachers' daily behavior, both inside the classroom and in social interactions at school. This is evident in how teachers communicate with students, maintain professional ethics, and demonstrate consistency between their words and actions.

In practice, teacher personality competence at SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan includes the ability to: 1) Serve as role models in everyday conduct aligned with Islamic teachings; 2) Demonstrate integrity and commitment in fulfilling responsibilities, showing honesty, fairness, and accountability; 3) Foster a culture of discipline and responsibility at both the individual and collective levels; 4) Build harmonious and empathetic relationships with students, colleagues, and parents, reflecting care and community values.

Teachers consciously and consistently integrate character education values into daily activities, both explicitly through classroom instruction and implicitly through personal interactions. Key values include: a) Religiosity: Teachers exemplify religious practices and guide students in observing Islamic teachings, such as congregational prayers and Qur'an reading; b) Discipline and Responsibility: Teachers arrive on time, perform teaching duties professionally, and adhere to ethical standards; c) Honesty and Trustworthiness: Teachers model honesty in instruction, student assessments, and communication with parents; d) Care and Empathy: Teachers attend to students' emotional and social needs and support them in overcoming challenges; e) Independence and Hard Work: Teachers demonstrate a strong learning spirit and perseverance in facing challenges; f) Communication and Democratic Values: Teachers respect student opinions, encourage open discussions, and avoid verbal or physical violence.

Interviews with school leaders, teachers, and students confirm that character education is systematically incorporated across the curriculum. According to the principal, M. Isa Ansari, teachers strive to embed character education holistically, not only through lessons but also through daily behavior and classroom interactions. Students are guided to practice honesty, responsibility, politeness, and collaboration in their routine activities.

The Principal: "At SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan, we believe that teachers are not only responsible for teaching academic subjects but also for shaping students' character. Character education is closely connected to Islamic values and national culture. Therefore, teachers are expected to show good character through their daily behavior, both in and outside the classroom, so students can learn directly from their example."

The vice principal for curriculum, Rosmija Dalimunthe, emphasized that character education is integrated throughout all subjects. Values like honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and respect are embedded in daily learning, including in subjects such as PPKn, Islamic education, Bahasa Indonesia, and Mathematics. The school also organizes programs like morning Qur'an recitation, Duha prayers, and Friday charity activities, allowing teachers to actively guide students in applying these values.

The Vice Principal: "Character education is integrated into all subjects, not taught separately. Values such as honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and respect are embedded in daily learning activities, including in PPKn, Islamic education, Bahasa Indonesia, and Mathematics. We also support this through school programs like morning Qur'an recitation, Duha prayers, and Friday charity activities."

Teachers' interview accounts suggest that character education is enacted through a deliberate and reflective pedagogical approach that combines modeling, habituation, dialogue, and personal guidance. The emphasis on consistency in teachers' behavior and the use of reflective discussions after classroom incidents indicate that character formation is treated as an ongoing process rather than a one-time intervention. By integrating character values naturally into academic tasks, classroom routines, and age-appropriate strategies, such as storytelling, rewards, and reflective activities, teachers create meaningful and contextual learning experiences for students. This approach highlights teacher personality competence as a dynamic practice, where moral values are not merely taught but lived and reinforced through daily interaction, emotional engagement, and pedagogical intentionality.

Teacher 1: "I try to instill character values through modeling and habituation. I focus on being consistent in my behavior, such as being honest, disciplined, and responsible. When problems occur in the classroom, I usually invite students to reflect together and discuss what values they can learn from the situation."

Teacher 2: "With younger students, I create a structured and enjoyable learning environment. I use storytelling, simple rewards, and daily reminders to teach values like honesty, empathy, and cooperation. I believe students learn character best when it is integrated naturally into classroom activities."

Students' interview responses indicate that character education at the school is internalized primarily through teachers' everyday practices rather than through explicit moral instruction alone. The emphasis on fairness, patience, and guidance instead of punishment suggests that teachers enact character values through relational and emotional engagement with students. By consistently modeling honesty, responsibility, politeness, cooperation, and discipline in daily classroom interactions, teachers create authentic learning experiences in which students observe, experience, and gradually adopt these values. This finding highlights the central role of teacher behavior as a living curriculum, where character education is embedded in routine practices and interpersonal relationships, enabling students to internalize moral and social values in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

Student 1: "Our teachers often remind us to be honest, responsible, polite, and cooperative. They give good examples and treat students fairly. When we make mistakes, they explain patiently and help us understand instead of punishing us."

Student 2: "From our daily classes, we learn many character values. Teachers show us how to be disciplined, work together, care for others, and be responsible through their behavior and classroom activities."

Overall, the integration of character education values into teacher personality competence at SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan is structured, culturally embedded, and consistently practiced. Teachers serve as the primary agents in promoting character through modeling, consistent behavior, emotional engagement, self-control, and collaboration with parents. This comprehensive approach ensures that teacher personality competence becomes the foundation for successful character education in the school, particularly within an Islamic values-based educational environment.

The personality competence of teachers influences the inculcation of character values in students at SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan

Teachers' personality competence plays a central role in shaping students' character at SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan. More than merely delivering academic content, teachers act as role models whose daily behavior is closely observed and imitated by their students. Their discipline, honesty, and responsibility become living examples that influence how students internalize values. As emphasized by the school principal,

“Teachers are the actors and actresses in the world of education; whatever they do, from the way they speak to how they dress, becomes the focus of their students.” This shows that students' character development cannot be separated from the personality competence of their teachers, which must be consistently embodied both inside and outside the school.

The findings indicate that teachers' personality competence plays a pivotal role in shaping students' character at SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan. Beyond transmitting academic knowledge, teachers function as role models whose daily conduct, such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, and professional appearance, is continuously observed and imitated by students. As expressed by the principal, who described teachers as “actors and actresses in the world of education,” teachers' words and actions become central reference points for students' behavior. This finding suggests that character development is not an independent instructional outcome but a relational process rooted in the consistent embodiment of values by teachers across both instructional and non-instructional contexts. Consequently, teacher personality competence emerges as a living curriculum through which moral values are internalized by students naturally and sustainably.

The deputy head of curriculum, Mrs. Ade Irmayani, explained that character education is not an optional addition but a fundamental duty of teachers such the following interview.

“Character education is not an additional task for teachers; it is a core responsibility. Knowledge without good character is meaningless. Teachers here are expected to balance academic teaching with moral guidance, so students grow intellectually and ethically at the same time.”

The findings reveal that character education at SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan is perceived by school leadership as a core responsibility of teachers rather than an additional instructional component. The vice principal for curriculum emphasized that academic knowledge without moral grounding is considered meaningless, as intellectual ability detached from ethical values may lead to misuse. This perspective underscores the interdependence between cognitive development and moral guidance in classroom practice. The data further indicate that teachers' strong personality competence enables them to balance academic instruction with the cultivation of students' character. In this context, personality competence functions as the foundational element that integrates intellectual learning and ethical formation, ensuring that character education is embedded within everyday teaching practices rather than treated as a separate or supplementary agenda.

Several teachers emphasized that character education must be rooted in the role models of teachers. Mrs. Afrida, with over 21 years of teaching experience, emphasized that students will only accept lessons on values such as discipline if teachers themselves demonstrate them.

“Students will only learn discipline if teachers show discipline first. If we ask students to behave well but do not practice it ourselves, they will not take the lesson seriously. Consistency in our behavior is the key.”

Similarly, Mrs. Lidya stated that honesty, responsibility, and cooperative attitudes must first be lived by teachers; otherwise, students will dismiss the lessons as hypocritical.

“Values like honesty, responsibility, and cooperation must be lived by teachers. If teachers do not practice these values, students may see the lessons as hypocritical. When teachers consistently show good behavior, students naturally follow.”

The findings indicate that teachers perceive role modeling as the central mechanism through which character education becomes meaningful and effective. Teachers emphasized that values such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, and cooperation cannot be merely taught verbally but must be consistently demonstrated in teachers’ own behavior. As reflected in the accounts of experienced teachers, students are more likely to accept and internalize character lessons when teachers’ actions align with the values they promote. This consistency prevents students from perceiving moral instruction as hypocritical and instead enables values to be absorbed naturally through daily observation. These findings highlight an inseparable relationship between teacher conduct and students’ moral development, positioning teacher personality competence as a prerequisite for authentic character education.

Moreover, teachers pointed out that negative behavior from teachers could also shape students’ attitudes in undesirable ways. Mrs. Arwinda, for instance, warned that actions such as smoking in class or speaking impolitely might be imitated by students just as easily as positive traits.

“Teachers must be very careful with their behavior. If a teacher speaks impolitely or shows bad habits, students may imitate them easily. Students today are very observant, so teachers must always be aware of their actions.”

At the same time, the data reveal that teacher behavior can influence students’ character development in both positive and negative directions. Teachers cautioned that inappropriate conduct, such as impolite speech or unprofessional habits, may be easily imitated by students, who are highly observant and critical of adult behavior. Students’ testimonies further confirm this influence, as they reported adopting self-discipline and peer regulation by following the examples set by their teachers. This indicates that the impact of teacher role modeling extends beyond direct instruction into students’ everyday interactions and self-regulation. Collectively, these findings suggest that teacher self-awareness and consistency are essential, as teachers function as constant moral references whose behavior shapes the ethical climate of the classroom and the broader school environment.

Students themselves confirmed this influence, as Salsa from class VI admitted that her classmates often discipline themselves or remind each other to stay quiet, following the example set by their teachers. Such evidence demonstrates how the teacher’s role model effect extends beyond direct instruction into the daily behavior of students.

“We often remind each other to stay quiet and behave well, just like our teachers do. When teachers are disciplined, we try to be disciplined too.”

In addition to general behavior, teachers at SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan also integrate Islamic values into character education. Students such as Nazwa explained that their teachers guided them not only in reciting and memorizing surahs but also in practicing proper prayer rituals, including wudhu and congregational prayer.

“Our teachers guide us in religious practices, such as how to perform wudhu and pray together. If we make mistakes, they correct us patiently so we can practice properly.”

Finally, the students’ reflections highlight the patience and consistency of their teachers in reinforcing positive behavior. Fikri from class IV admitted that he and his friends often

repeated the same mistakes, but teachers never tired of giving advice, combining guidance with firm but fair discipline when necessary. For instance, some were warned of punishments such as reporting to their parents or standing in the sun, yet the process remained humanistic and educational.

“Sometimes we repeat the same mistakes, but our teachers keep advising us patiently. They are firm but fair. That makes us understand and try to behave better.”

This balance between empathy, discipline, and consistency illustrates how teachers’ personality competence translates into concrete character-building practices. In short, at SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan, teacher personality competence emerges as the decisive factor in cultivating honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation, values that are sustained not only by curriculum but by the living culture of the school community.

The findings show that teachers’ role modeling has a direct and observable impact on students’ everyday behavior and peer interactions. Students reported that they often regulate their own behavior and remind one another to follow classroom norms by imitating the discipline demonstrated by their teachers. This indicates that character education extends beyond teacher–student interaction and becomes internalized within students’ social practices. Such peer-driven discipline suggests that teachers’ consistent behavior functions as a reference point that shapes collective norms, enabling students to develop self-control, responsibility, and cooperation without constant external supervision.

In addition, students’ accounts reveal that teachers’ personality competence also encompasses spiritual leadership and emotional guidance. Teachers not only guide students in religious practices, such as recitation, wudhu, and congregational prayer, but also patiently correct mistakes to ensure that religious values are practiced meaningfully and respectfully. Students further highlighted teachers’ persistence in providing advice and maintaining firm yet fair discipline when mistakes are repeated. This balance between empathy, consistency, and corrective guidance demonstrates how teachers translate moral and religious values into concrete character-building practices. Overall, these findings suggest that teacher personality competence operates as a lived and sustained influence, shaping students’ character through daily interactions, spiritual guidance, and a school culture grounded in ethical and Islamic values.

The personality competence of teachers influences the inculcation of character values in students at SD Muhammadiyah 11 Medan

Teacher personality competence plays a crucial role in shaping students’ character at SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan. Teachers who demonstrate positive personality traits not only transfer academic knowledge but also serve as daily role models for their students. Character education begins with the example set by teachers in both their actions and attitudes inside and outside the classroom. As highlighted by the principal, Mr. M. Isa Ansari (Interview, Feb 15, 2025),

“Technology is developing very fast, and students can access information easily. However, emotional care and moral guidance cannot be replaced by technology. That is why teachers’ personality competence is very important. Through their behavior and attitudes, teachers guide students to distinguish what is right and wrong.”

This reflects the belief that values are more effectively instilled through example rather than instruction alone.

Teachers who embody discipline and responsibility tend to instill these same qualities in their students. A disciplined teacher, such as one who arrives punctually, completes tasks properly, and respects school regulations, indirectly communicates the importance of discipline and responsibility in daily life. Students internalize these values not merely by hearing about them but by witnessing them consistently practiced. Supporting this, a student named Nabila, in the interview, explained that

“My teacher always manages time well. We study seriously, but we also have time to rest and play. This teaches us to be disciplined and manage our time, even at home.”

Such findings show that discipline modeled by teachers becomes a habitual practice for students in broader aspects of life.

Teachers with emotional maturity and patience contribute significantly to creating a conducive learning environment. By controlling their emotions, teachers model for students how to face challenges calmly and wisely. For instance, when resolving conflicts, empathetic teachers act as fair mediators, encouraging students to forgive and learn tolerance. A student named Azzam (Interview, Mar 7, 2025) described how his teacher handled fights by listening to both parties, questioning witnesses, and demanding apologies and forgiveness.

“When students fight, our teacher listens to both sides and asks witnesses. Then we are asked to apologize and forgive each other. From that, we learn to be honest, fair, and peaceful.”

Empathy and compassion also form part of teacher personality competence that significantly influences students’ social and emotional development. Teachers who show concern for students’ feelings help cultivate mutual respect and empathy among learners. According to Vice Principal Ms. Rosmija Dalimunthe, teachers must first practice values such as harmony, mutual respect, and responsibility before teaching them.

“Teachers must practice values such as harmony, respect, responsibility, and discipline before teaching them to students. If teachers live these values consistently, students will naturally follow and internalize them.”

Similarly, teacher Nur Azizah Sitanggang (Interview, Feb 28, 2025) added that attentive and caring teachers boost students’ confidence and make them feel valued. Thus, empathy not only strengthens teacher student relationships but also nurtures students’ interpersonal values.

The teacher’s role as a moral role model was also highlighted by teacher Nurafni Sartika Sitanggang, who referred to the proverb *“guru kencing berdiri, murid kencing berlari”* (when the teacher urinates standing, the student urinates running). This illustrates how students tend to imitate teachers’ actions, often more intensely than the teacher’s behavior. She also emphasized in the interview below,

“Teachers who are patient and caring help students feel valued. When students feel appreciated, they become more confident and more willing to develop positive attitudes such as responsibility, empathy, and cooperation.”

This statement underlines the great responsibility teachers bear as constant role models in and outside the school environment. Consequently, teachers must consistently monitor their behavior, knowing they are always being observed and copied by students.

Teachers’ personality competence also extends to leadership skills that help cultivate students’ ability to lead responsibly. Teachers who demonstrate positive leadership encourage students to respect others’ opinions, make fair decisions, and lead with accountability. Extracurricular

activities, student organizations, and classroom duties provide platforms where such leadership can be practiced under teacher supervision. Teacher Annisa Ul Kamila, in the interview, explained that

“Students have different personalities. Some are quiet, some are active, and others need more guidance. Teachers must adjust their strategies and learning models so that all students feel included. In this way, teachers also model leadership and fairness.”

The findings indicate that empathy and compassion constitute essential aspects of teachers' personality competence that significantly influence students' social and emotional development. Teachers who demonstrate genuine concern for students' feelings contribute to the creation of a learning environment characterized by mutual respect and empathy. As stated by the Vice Principal, Ms. Rosmija Dalimunthe, values such as harmony, respect, responsibility, and discipline must be consistently practiced by teachers before they can be effectively taught to students. This finding suggests that the internalization of character values occurs primarily through modeling rather than verbal instruction. When teachers live out these values in their daily interactions, students are more likely to observe, imitate, and gradually internalize them as part of their own behavior and attitudes.

In addition, the study reveals that teachers' personality competence is strongly reflected in their role as moral role models and adaptive leaders. The proverb cited by Nurafni Sartika Sitanggang, “guru kencing berdiri, murid kencing berlari”, illustrates the powerful tendency of students to imitate teachers' behavior, often in amplified ways. This underscores the significant responsibility borne by teachers, as both positive and negative behaviors can have far-reaching effects on students. Furthermore, teachers' leadership competence, particularly in accommodating diverse student personalities, enables inclusive and fair learning experiences. As explained by Annisa Ul Kamila, adapting strategies and learning models allows all students to feel included and supported. This view is reinforced by Nur Azizah Sitanggang, who emphasized that patient and caring teachers help students feel valued, thereby fostering confidence and positive character traits such as responsibility, empathy, and cooperation. Interpretatively, these findings highlight that teachers' moral leadership and emotional maturity serve as foundational elements in shaping students' character development.

Another important finding concerns how teachers' personality competence fosters honesty and fairness among students. By treating all students equally, regardless of their background, teachers create an environment of justice. Student, Dimas, recounted

“Our teacher always reminds us not to cheat and says that Allah knows everything. She treats all students fairly and does not choose favorites. That makes us try to be honest and fair to our friends, too.”

This consistent example encouraged students themselves not to discriminate when helping peers. Such practices reflect how fairness, modeled by teachers, naturally transfers into students' moral behavior.

In sum, the findings reveal that teacher personality competence at SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan significantly affects students' character building. Teachers' discipline, patience, empathy, fairness, and leadership become everyday lessons for students, internalized through example rather than instruction. Interviews with school leaders, teachers, and students consistently confirmed that values such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, and empathy were best learned when modeled by teachers. As modern challenges such as technology and globalization increase, the irreplaceable role of teachers lies in their ability to provide moral guidance and personal example. Character education, therefore, depends heavily on the

personality competence of teachers who serve as both educators and role models in students' lives.

To strengthen the conceptual clarity of these findings, practices at both schools are consistent with the theoretical dimensions of teacher personality competence as defined by Indonesian national teacher standards (Permendiknas No. 16/2007). This framework demonstrates how specific behaviors reported by teachers, students, and administrators operationalize the five core dimensions: (1) moral integrity and exemplarity, (2) emotional maturity and stability, (3) self-discipline and professionalism, (4) wisdom and sound judgment, and (5) authoritative yet caring presence.

This analytical mapping demonstrates that the behaviors described throughout the findings are not merely anecdotal examples but concrete manifestations of the theoretical constructs underlying teacher personality competence. Each dimension is enacted through specific, observable practices that students experience, interpret, and internalize in their own moral development. However, this framework also reveals that not all dimensions are equally developed or emphasized across contexts:

SD Muhammadiyah 02 placed stronger emphasis on self-discipline and professionalism (Dimension 3) and authoritative presence (Dimension 5), reflected in the school's structured, systematic approach and emphasis on consistent routines, clear behavioral expectations, and firm but fair discipline.

SDS Muhammadiyah 11 emphasized emotional maturity (Dimension 2) and wisdom/contextual judgment (Dimension 4) more prominently, reflected in teachers' focus on empathetic conflict resolution, adaptive teaching strategies, and personalized guidance responsive to individual student needs and diverse backgrounds.

These differences suggest that effective personality competence is not a universal template but must be contextualized to the specific institutional culture, community demographics, and educational challenges of each school. Both approaches successfully cultivated character values, but through different pathways suited to their respective environments. Furthermore, as discussed in the subsequent section on complexities, individual teachers varied in their mastery of these dimensions, with some excelling in discipline and professionalism while struggling with emotional stability under stress, or vice versa. This variability underscores that personality competence exists on a developmental continuum and requires ongoing reflection, professional growth, and institutional support rather than being a static qualification that teachers either possess or lack upon entering the profession.

The integration of character education values is evident in the practice of teachers' personality competence at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan. Teachers are not only instructors but also role models for students' moral and social development. The teacher's exemplary behavior serves as the primary strategy for transferring values such as religiosity, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, justice, and politeness. This role is not limited to verbal teaching but is demonstrated through consistent daily practices. Concrete examples include punctuality in starting and ending lessons, responsibility in grading students' work, politeness in speech and dress, and fairness in interactions. Through such practices, students learn values by observing, interacting, and experiencing them in real contexts. This is consistent with Pujianti and Nugraha (2025), who found that values of religiosity, responsibility, and discipline are integrated into daily learning activities and interactions.

Teachers also integrate character values into both learning activities and extracurricular interactions. Religious values, for example, are reinforced through acts of empathy such as collecting donations for those affected by disasters, fostering care, and social responsibility. Collaborative learning methods, such as group discussions, also become platforms to teach respect for opinions, teamwork, fairness in task distribution, and accountability for group outcomes. Character education, therefore, does not require a separate schedule but can be embedded within daily teaching and beyond classroom hours. This aligns with Zarkasyi et al. (2020), who emphasized that systems of supervision and reward–punishment strengthen the internalization of values in both teachers and students. Reward–punishment systems not only motivate students but also encourage teachers to consistently improve their professional and moral conduct.

Another significant aspect is the role of emotional closeness between teachers and students, which strongly supports the success of character education. Teachers are required to adapt their approaches based on the diverse family and economic backgrounds of students. A teacher who understands a student’s context can provide appropriate corrections, fair disciplinary actions, and differentiated learning methods that fit individual needs. Such practices build trust and strengthen students’ moral development through personalized guidance. This finding is in line with Agustini et al. (2023), who concluded that emotional bonds between teachers and students are a fundamental basis for the successful implementation of character education. Emotional connections not only improve classroom management but also make moral values more meaningful to students.

School culture also plays a crucial role in shaping students’ character through teachers’ personality competence. Routine programs such as “Clean Friday,” where students and teachers work together to clean classrooms and school facilities, foster cooperation, fairness in task distribution, and responsibility for maintaining the environment. Such school-wide practices reflect how collective activities strengthen character values beyond individual classroom teaching. Utami and Ningsih (2023) similarly found that responsibility, religiosity, and discipline are reinforced through both teacher exemplarity and the wider school culture. In this sense, school traditions and routines provide a structural framework that sustains teachers’ character education practices. Thus, cultural reinforcement is inseparable from the teachers’ competence in modeling values.

Character education through teachers’ personality competence can also occur indirectly through daily habits. Simple acts such as sharing food during recess instill empathy and care, while throwing trash in the proper place cultivates responsibility for the environment. Teachers who avoid harsh punishments or acts of injustice reinforce values of fairness and self-control. Nurkhasanah et al. (2025) reported similar findings, emphasizing that character formation happens both through direct learning models and indirectly through habitual practices. This highlights that teachers do not need to design special lessons for character education but rather embody it consistently in everyday interactions. Habitual reinforcement makes character values naturally embedded in students’ behavior.

Although SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan share a vision of developing students’ character through teachers’ personality competence, their approaches differ in focus. SD Muhammadiyah 02 emphasizes structured, managerial, and systematic methods, while SDS Muhammadiyah 11 adopts a more cultural and reflective approach centered on interpersonal relationships and religious reflection. These differences show that there is no single path to success in character education. Instead, various strategies can be effective depending on school culture and institutional context. Both approaches demonstrate

that character education thrives when teachers' exemplarity is reinforced by institutional support.

In conclusion, the success of integrating character values into teachers' personality competence depends on the synergy between teachers' role modeling, school culture, and institutional systems. Structural approaches, such as supervision and management systems, and cultural approaches, such as routine traditions and relational practices, both play vital roles. Teachers ultimately function not only as knowledge transmitters but also as moral guides, shaping students' mindsets and behavior. This confirms that personality competence is central to teachers' effectiveness in fostering students' holistic growth. Therefore, teachers' consistency in exemplifying values, supported by school structures and culture, forms the foundation of sustainable character education.

Teachers' personality competence plays a central role in instilling character values among students at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan. Teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also moral and spiritual models whose actions influence students' behavior directly. Simple practices such as arriving punctually, resolving conflicts through dialogue, encouraging student participation, and giving fair sanctions for unfinished tasks shape students' sense of responsibility, discipline, and self-confidence. Students closely observe their teachers, imitating both positive and negative behaviors, which underscores the teacher's role as a living example in character education. As Mushawir et al. (2025) found, teachers with strong personality competence serve as role models in discipline, honesty, and responsibility, with emotional bonds and school culture reinforcing the internalization of values.

Students are often described as excellent imitators of their teachers' behavior, reflecting the proverb that "if the teacher stands to urinate, the student runs while doing so." This highlights how even minor actions by teachers can deeply influence students' character formation. Without consistent exemplarity, it is difficult to expect students to embody values such as honesty, discipline, or responsibility. The delivery of character education also requires patience, affection, and gentleness rather than harshness or anger, as negative approaches may provoke resistance instead of acceptance. Over time, repeated behaviors become habits and eventually form part of the student's personality, which endures even without direct supervision. Ramadhani et al.'s (2024) study similarly concluded that the teacher's role as a consistent role model is crucial for ensuring that values become embedded in students' character. However, this expectation, while well-intentioned, may contribute to psychological pressure, burnout, and feelings of inadequacy among teachers who struggle to reconcile professional ideals with personal limitations (Gaeta González et al., 2023; Liang & Bautista, 2021).

The findings of this study also align with research by Wettstein et al. (2021), who showed that teachers' emotional stability, sense of responsibility, and honesty significantly influence students' character. Teachers who demonstrate self-control, fairness, and accountability create a conducive atmosphere for moral education. Conversely, teachers who are temperamental, inconsistent in grading, or unwilling to admit mistakes risk setting poor examples that students may imitate in even more extreme ways. This underscores that the teacher's credibility as a moral guide depends not only on what is taught but also on whether it is embodied in everyday conduct, meaning personality competence directly determines whether character education succeeds or fails. However, a critical gap emerged in this study: teachers themselves acknowledged that most learned character education informally through experience rather than through systematic professional development. This gap represents a critical area for

institutional improvement, as noted by Sultana et al. (2021), suggesting that schools must invest in ongoing training specifically focused on cultivating teachers' own emotional intelligence, stress management, and reflective capacities to ensure consistent and effective character education.

On the other side, Mahardika et al. (2020) found that teachers with strong personalities create supportive school cultures where values are absorbed naturally. Students learn most effectively by observing their teachers, particularly in honesty, empathy, and responsibility. A teacher's simple act of helping others in need or maintaining fairness becomes a powerful moral lesson for students. However, when teachers display contradictory behaviors, such as lying or being unjust, students also internalize these as acceptable. This reinforces the idea that cultural reinforcement of character values cannot be separated from the teacher's own personality competence. School culture thus strengthens or weakens the impact of teacher exemplarity in character education.

Sari (2021) added another dimension by stressing the teacher's role as a moral filter in the digital era. Teachers must guide students in distinguishing between beneficial and harmful technological influences while simultaneously providing emotional and spiritual support. The challenges of globalization and digital media require teachers to act as both role models and protectors of students' values. This is especially relevant at SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan, where teachers not only model behavior but also engage in personal guidance, addressing students' emotional needs and acting as confidants. In contrast, SD Muhammadiyah 02 Medan places greater emphasis on consistent role modeling and religiously infused school culture. Both approaches demonstrate complementary strategies in addressing internal and external challenges to character education.

In summary, teachers' personality competence is a determining factor in the success of character education. At both research sites, teachers are seen as role models whose exemplarity is reinforced through supervision, habituation, emotional closeness, and supportive school culture. Differences emerge in emphasis: SD Muhammadiyah 02 prioritizes consistency and cultural reinforcement, while SDS Muhammadiyah 11 highlights emotional guidance and responsiveness to digital-age challenges. The overall findings suggest that effective character education requires teachers who are not only consistent and morally upright but also adaptive to students' social and technological contexts. As such, character education can only succeed when teachers embody moral integrity, emotional sensitivity, and spiritual depth, supported by collaboration with school culture and broader community structures.

Conclusion

This study concludes that teachers' personality competence plays a decisive and multidimensional role in strengthening character education at SD Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan and SDS Muhammadiyah 11 Medan. The research findings show that teachers' personality traits such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, empathy, patience, fairness, emotional maturity, and religious commitment are consistently reflected in their daily actions and interactions. These traits serve as powerful models for students, who tend to imitate and internalize the behaviors demonstrated by their teachers.

Character education is effectively integrated through role modeling, habituation, classroom interactions, religious routines, school programs, and emotional engagement between teachers and students. School culture, leadership support, and consistent behavioral patterns strengthen the formation of values including religiosity, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, empathy, honesty, and justice. Although both schools share a similar vision, SD Muhammadiyah 02

adopts a more structured and managerial approach, while SDS Muhammadiyah 11 emphasizes emotional guidance and interpersonal closeness as the basis of value formation.

The study also identified obstacles, including limited school funding, diverse student backgrounds, workload challenges, and suboptimal communication between parents and teachers. Nevertheless, teachers' dedication and willingness to serve as role models remain the primary driving force behind the success of character education. Overall, the findings affirm that teachers' personality competence is the foundation for moral, spiritual, and social development in students. Without strong teacher exemplarity, the goals of character education cannot be achieved optimally

This study has several limitations that require consideration. First, the study was conducted only at two Muhammadiyah schools in Medan City, thus limiting its scope and not being able to reflect the conditions of all Muhammadiyah schools or other Islamic elementary schools. Second, the data obtained were qualitative and heavily dependent on the honesty of informants and the researcher's ability to observe and interpret, thus potentially subjectivizing the situation. Third, this study did not include quantitative measurements to more objectively assess the level of teacher personality competency or the effectiveness of character education on students. Fourth, the relatively short research period limited the researcher's ability to explore the dynamics of changes in teacher and student behavior in greater depth. Furthermore, the influence of external factors, such as the role of the family or the social environment outside of school, was not comprehensively examined, thus not providing a comprehensive picture of student character formation.

Based on these limitations, several recommendations can be made for future researchers. First, research should involve more schools with diverse cultural backgrounds, management styles, and student characteristics so that the findings can be more broadly generalized. Second, future researchers could use a mixed-methods approach or quantitative methods to measure teacher personality competency and its impact on student character development in a more objective and measurable manner. Third, longitudinal studies are highly recommended to observe changes in teacher role models and student character development over a longer period. Fourth, future researchers should explore the roles of families, communities, and the digital environment, which increasingly influence children's behavior, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that strengthen or hinder character education. Furthermore, research could expand the study to include principal supervision strategies, teacher training, and innovative models that can sustainably enhance teacher personality competencies.

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