

# The Role Of Teacher Professionalism In Shaping Students' Character

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## ABSTRACT

*The development of student character is one of the primary goals of national education. However, in practice, character education in schools is often not implemented optimally. One contributing factor is the lack of teacher professionalism in carrying out their roles as educators and role models. A professional teacher should not only master subject matter but also demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that reflect positive values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and work ethic. When teacher professionalism is lacking, it can negatively affect students' character formation, especially at the elementary and secondary school levels. Based on this issue, the purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of teacher professionalism in shaping student character. The study also aims to explore the relationship between teacher competence, professional attitudes, and instructional approaches with character development in schools. This research adopts a qualitative approach using a literature review method. Data were collected by reviewing various relevant sources, including academic journals, books, and research reports. The analysis involved identifying, examining, and synthesizing information to uncover patterns and connections between teacher professionalism and students' character formation. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for strengthening character education through improved teacher professionalism.*

**Keywords:** *Teacher Professionalism, Character, Students*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Professionalism is a fundamental requirement in every profession, including the teaching profession. A professional teacher not only masters the subject matter but also demonstrates mental attitudes and strong commitment to continuous self-improvement through ongoing competency development in accordance with the demands of the times (Sastrawan, 2016). In the field of education, teachers play an essential role not only as instructors but also as mentors and role models in shaping students' character.

The presence of teachers who are fully engaged in the learning process contributes

to shaping students' attitudes and behaviors, particularly through the example they set in daily interactions. However, in practice, many teachers have not fully carried out their roles professionally. This shortcoming affects the optimal development of students' character, such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and work ethics. Character building is not only related to moral aspects but also involves ethical values instilled through learning activities at school. Teachers who deliver instructions without contextual explanation or fail to act as role models may be ineffective in fostering strong character among students (Hidayati, 2022; Maliki et

al., 2022). Previous studies, such as those by Hamidah and Hasanah (2024) and Datunsolang et al. (2021), emphasize that teacher professionalism significantly influences students' character development.

Although many studies have explored teacher professionalism and character education, only a few have specifically examined the integration of both aspects comprehensively. Based on this background, the research problem can be formulated as follows: How does teacher professionalism contribute to shaping students' character within the school environment? To answer this question, the objective of this study is to analyze in depth the teacher's role in character formation, identify the types of character developed through the learning process, and explain the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the teacher's role as a character builder.

This study is expected to provide several benefits. Theoretically, it may enrich scientific insights regarding the relationship between teacher professionalism and character education. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for teachers, school principals, and policymakers in developing educational strategies that emphasize character formation. Furthermore, from an academic perspective, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how professional teaching practices can positively influence students' character development at school.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research design through a systematic literature review (SLR) approach. The SLR method involves a structured process of identifying, selecting, and critically analyzing both primary and secondary sources relevant to teacher professionalism and character education. By synthesizing peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings, this method ensures a comprehensive and rigorous understanding of the topic (Suryadi, 2021).

The systematic review enables researchers to uncover patterns, theoretical linkages, and practical implications between teacher competence, pedagogical attitudes, and students' character formation. In particular, the professionalism of Islamic education teachers has been shown to play a decisive role in shaping school culture and moral development, highlighting the importance of integrating values into instructional practices (Akmalludin et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies emphasize that teacher professionalism not only enhances academic outcomes but also strengthens students' moral identity and social responsibility, especially within the broader discourse of Islamic education and modernity (Sumiyati et al., 2025).

Thus, adopting a systematic literature review provides a philosophical and empirical foundation for analyzing how teacher professionalism contributes to character education. This approach also allows the integration of global perspectives on professional teaching standards with local educational realities, thereby enriching the discourse on Islamic education and its relevance in contemporary contexts

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Definition of Teacher Professionalism**

Etymologically, the word profession originates from the Latin term *professus*, which means "to declare openly" or "to demonstrate expertise in a particular field of work." In English, the term profession refers to an occupation that requires specialized skills and formal training.

Teachers are the key actors in the learning process who shape high-quality human resources and play a significant role in determining the success of education. Therefore, teachers must be able to guide students toward the desired learning objectives and possess broad knowledge as well as authority in carrying out their duties.

Teacher professionalism reflects a mental attitude and strong commitment to develop and enhance competencies in the field of education through various efforts and strategies, continuously improving oneself to meet the demands of the times. A professional teacher is not only expected to master the subject matter but also to take on an important role in shaping students' character and moral values. To perform their duties effectively, teachers must master four core competencies: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies (Nantara, 2022).

Pedagogical competence relates to the ability to design and implement learning activities that meet students' needs so that their potential can be fully developed. Personal competence refers to maturity, exemplary behavior, and good moral character.

Social competence includes the ability to build positive relationships with students and the surrounding community. Meanwhile, professional competence requires in-depth mastery of subject matter to ensure the learning process aligns with established national standards.

By mastering these four competencies, teachers are expected to instill character values such as religious attitudes, honesty, independence, tolerance, discipline, empathy, and responsibility. Through these abilities, teachers play an essential role in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process and guiding students to work collaboratively, compete fairly, and uphold moral principles. A professional teacher not only demonstrates mastery of knowledge but also exhibits commendable attitudes and behaviors and serves as a role model, enabling students to develop into individuals who uphold strong moral and character values.

Characteristics of a professional teacher include a set of traits that reflect competence, dedication, and responsibility in carrying out their duties. According to Udin Syaefuddin Saud (in B. Idris, "Kunandar, Op. Cit., p. 45"), the

characteristics of a professional teacher include:

1. Paying serious attention to the learning process of students, not only the final outcomes.
2. Demonstrating deep mastery of subject matter and instructional methods.
3. Being able to think logically and reflectively about their teaching practices, using experience as a source of learning.
4. Actively participating as a member of the learning community within the workplace, enabling continuous professional development.

### **Characteristics of Students**

Character is a fundamental aspect that determines how individuals act in their daily lives. According to Hermawan Kertajaya (as cited in Rofi'ie, A. H., 2019), character is the unique trait possessed by an individual. These inherent traits become deeply rooted, serving as a driving force behind one's actions, attitudes, and speech.

Datunsolang et al. (2021) state that character refers to patterns of thought and behavior that distinguish each individual, reflecting how they live and interact within their family, community, and nation. Based on these viewpoints, character serves as the primary foundation that shapes identity and determines how a person interacts with their surroundings, both personally and socially.

Character is an inherent and deeply rooted trait within an individual that drives them to act, behave, and speak. The essential components of character development consist of three main aspects: moral knowing (knowledge of moral values), moral feeling (emotional reinforcement), and moral action (moral application). These components play a significant role in shaping the character of learners. By understanding moral knowledge, students can recognize good values. Emotional reinforcement and the motivation to apply these values encourage

them to act accordingly in daily life (Hamidah & Hasanah, 2024; Hamid, 2020).

Approaches to character formation largely depend on the methods applied within the overall educational process. A well-designed learning process provides opportunities for students to choose and apply moral values based on awareness, understanding, and personal freedom. Habituation is the process of internalizing values through consistent reinforcement, allowing these values to become part of one's daily behavior. A meaningful learning process enables students to apply moral values based on cognitive understanding and personal autonomy (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

The expected character traits of students include:

1. Religious, obedience and commitment in understanding and practicing the teachings of their religion or belief system, including showing tolerance toward the worship practices of others and living harmoniously alongside individuals of different faiths.
2. Honest, attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate consistency between knowledge, words, and actions (knowing what is right, speaking what is right, and doing what is right), making the individual trustworthy.
3. Disciplined, consistent habits and actions that adhere to applicable rules or regulations.
4. Hardworking, behaviors that demonstrate sincere effort and perseverance in completing tasks, solving problems, or carrying out responsibilities as well as possible. However, forming students' character is not an easy task for teachers. Character development requires patience, persistence, and gradual implementation. This reality underscores that being a teacher also means serving as a role model for students.

In the modern era, it is essential for students to develop strong character that encompasses knowledge, awareness, willingness, and concrete actions. This aligns with Kiska et al. (2023), who state that in the 21st century, students are expected not only to possess good character values but also to apply them consistently in daily life.

In this context, the role of teachers becomes crucial in educating and shaping students' character. This aligns with the function of education outlined in the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Chapter 1 Article 3, which states: "National education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation. It aims to develop students' potential so that they become individuals who believe in and fear God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens."

### **The Importance of Teacher Professionalism for Students' Character**

A teacher's responsibility is not limited to teaching in the classroom and delivering knowledge; teachers must also instill character values in their students so they become individuals with strong moral character. This aligns with the view of Arsini et al. (2023), who state that a teacher's task goes beyond teaching and includes fostering and developing students' character values. This opinion is further supported by Nisa (2019), who asserts that "a teacher is a human figure who occupies an important position and plays a crucial role in education." Therefore, a teacher's responsibility includes shaping good character in addition to ensuring academic achievement.

Learning that is grounded in professional attitudes enables students to develop strong character and enhances their ability to analyze learning materials

(Naibaho & Purba, 2023). According to Hidayati (2022), teacher professionalism plays a vital role in shaping students' character because professional teachers help students learn to become responsible, honest, disciplined individuals who possess strong work ethics. A professional teacher is also able to develop students' potential holistically, including their social, emotional, and spiritual aspects, which helps them grow into high-quality individuals who contribute positively to their families, communities, and nation.

#### D. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that teacher professionalism is a decisive factor in shaping students' character. A professional teacher is not only responsible for delivering subject matter but also for serving as a role model who embodies values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and work ethic. The findings highlight that when teachers lack professionalism, character education in schools becomes less effective, leading to gaps in students' discipline, honesty, and responsibility. Conversely, when teachers demonstrate professional attitudes and practices, they foster a learning environment that supports moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, enabling students to internalize and consistently apply positive values in daily life.

Ultimately, strengthening teacher professionalism is essential for achieving the goals of national education, particularly in building a dignified generation that is knowledgeable, ethical, independent, and socially responsible.

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