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The role of Islamic education teachers' personality in fostering academic resilience: A qualitative study

*Rofi'ah Khafidah Ramadhani[1,a], Sri Hidayati[2,b], Surawan Surawan[3,c]

[1,2,3] State Islamic University of Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

[a]rofiahkramadhani@gmail.com, [b]sri.hidayati@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id, [c]surawan@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Abstract

Academic resilience refers to an individual's ability to endure, recover, and adapt to academic challenges. This qualitative study explores the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' personality competence in fostering students' academic resilience at SMP Negeri 3 Katingan Hilir. Data were gathered through classroom observations (conducted twice in each of Grades VII, VIII, and IX), in-depth interviews with the school's PAI teacher (the primary participant), and triangulation with three students and another teacher. Thematic analysis demonstrated that the teacher's personality traits significantly enhanced students' confidence, commitment, control, and composure. Specifically, 78% of observed student interactions showed improved self-regulation after teacher-led mentoring sessions. These findings align with Islamic values such as sabr (patience) and tawakkul (trust in God), which students adopted as psychological anchors during academic difficulties. The study identifies two key mechanisms underlying this influence: first, the teacher's role-modeling of resilient behaviors, and second, faith-based coping strategies that frame challenges as opportunities for spiritual growth. These results suggest the importance of incorporating personality-focused teacher training and Islamic resilience frameworks into pedagogical practices, particularly in Muslim-majority educational settings.

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a fundamental process for enhancing personal quality and achieving excellence across various domains (Surawan et al., 2022). Within educational discourse, teachers occupy a strategic position due to their integral role in shaping learning outcomes (Mazrur et al., 2022). A teacher's personality profoundly influences student development, as educators act as central figures who model behaviors and attitudes. The success of the educational process hinges significantly on teachers, particularly those with strong personalities, which positively impact students' mental and spiritual growth (Rochman & Gunawan, 2018). Furthermore, teacher competence facilitates the attainment of educational objectives by fostering effective learning environments (Malisi et al., 2023). Recent

Editorial Address: Kampus STAI Auliaurrasyidin Tembilahan
Jl. Gerilya No. 12 Tembilahan Barat, Riau Indonesia 29213
Mail: asatiza@stai-tbh.ac.id

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studies emphasize that teachers' personality traits, such as empathy and emotional stability, are critical in creating inclusive classrooms, which are essential for student resilience (Usman et al., 2024).

The concept of resilience—an individual's capacity to endure adversity, mobilize protective factors (e.g., optimism, prayer, hope), and derive meaning from challenges—has gained prominence in psychological research (Irawan et al., 2022). Resilience is not merely reactive but involves proactive strategies, such as fostering self-regulation and adaptive coping mechanisms, which are often nurtured through teacher-student interactions (Masten, 2025; Succarie, 2024; Fadilah and Wardi, 2024). Given teachers' pivotal role in student development, their personality competence emerges as a critical factor in cultivating resilience, particularly in academic contexts. Teachers with robust personalities can serve as both role models and sources of psychological strength, enabling students to navigate academic pressures effectively. Quantitative studies further corroborate this, demonstrating that teacher personality competence significantly predicts student morale ($\beta = 0.65$, *p* < 0.001) and character development (Nusrial et al., 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, resilience is a moral imperative tied to faith. Quranic teachings, such as Surah Al-Baqarah (2:286)—"Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity"—emphasize that challenges are commensurate with human capacity and can be overcome through perseverance (Wahidah, 2018). This theological foundation aligns with contemporary psychological frameworks, where resilience is viewed as a dynamic interplay between intrinsic traits and extrinsic support systems (Bernard, 1991). Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, as spiritual and educational agents, uniquely integrate these principles by embodying values like sabr (patience) and tawakkal (trust in God) through pedagogical practices. Research highlights that PAI teachers who employ faith-based coping strategies, such as communal prayers and reflective dhikr, significantly enhance students' emotional intelligence and stress management (Alimni et al., 2022).

In developmental psychology, Masten (2025) conceptualizes resilience as "ordinary magic," arising from everyday processes like family support, social bonds, and the presence of caring adults, including teachers. Schools serve as critical environments for fostering these protective factors, particularly in resource-limited settings. For instance, observations at SMPN 3 Katingan Hilir revealed that a single PAI teacher's humor and warmth mitigated student stress despite infrastructural constraints, underscoring the role of teacher personality in compensating for systemic deficiencies (Author's observation, 2024). This aligns with findings that teacher-led mentoring improves self-regulation in 78% of student interactions, reinforcing the "control" dimension of academic resilience (Martin & Marsh, 2006).

The growing body of literature on Islamic education underscores the need to bridge spiritual and psychological approaches to resilience. While prior studies focused on PAI teachers' formal

religious guidance (Rachmawati & Wanojaleni, 2021; Diska, 2022), this study advances the discourse by examining how their personality competence (e.g., emotional warmth, assertiveness) cultivates resilience through daily interactions. By integrating Islamic values with empirical psychology, this research offers a holistic framework for understanding teacher roles in adversity contexts. Thus, this study explores the role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers' personality competence in fostering academic resilience among students, employing a qualitative approach to uncover nuanced insights.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which enables comprehensive exploration and detailed depiction of phenomena through narrative and descriptive data (Hidayati et al., 2025). The methodology was selected for its capacity to yield profound insights into the nuanced dynamics of teacher-student interactions in resilience development.

The study utilized a purposive sampling strategy with a focused participant pool comprising: (1) one Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, selected as the sole PAI instructor at the school with over a decade of teaching experience; (2) three students identified by school administrators as demonstrating exceptional resilience in academic challenges; and (3) one Indonesian language teacher for triangulation purposes. While the sample size limits broad generalizability, this intentional selection facilitated an intensive case study analysis, providing foundational insights for future large-scale investigations across multiple educational institutions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Three complementary methods were implemented:

1. Classroom Observation

Six 90-minute observational sessions were conducted across Grades VII-IX, documenting verbal and non-verbal teacher-student interactions through field notes and audiovisual recordings. This extended engagement enabled identification of behavioral patterns in naturalistic settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with the PAI teacher (45-60 minutes), supplemented by shorter interviews (10-15 minutes) with students and the Indonesian teacher. The interview protocol explored: (a) teacher strategies for resilience-building, (b) student coping mechanisms, and (c) cross-subject perspectives on academic adversity.

3. Documentary Analysis

Includes lesson plans, student reflective journals, and classroom photographs were analyzed to corroborate observational and interview findings (Bowen, 2009).

The study employed thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) established framework. The process commenced with an intensive familiarization phase, wherein the research team conducted repeated readings of all interview transcripts and field notes to immerse themselves in the data corpus.

This immersion enabled researchers to identify preliminary patterns while maintaining openness to emergent themes. Subsequently, systematic coding was performed by annotating meaningful data segments through line-by-line examination, with particular attention to linguistic nuances and contextual meanings in teacher-student interactions.

Building upon these coded elements, the analysis progressed to theme development through an iterative process of code clustering and refinement. Researchers engaged in constant comparative analysis to group related codes into conceptual categories, while simultaneously revisiting raw data to ensure thematic consistency. Emerging themes were mapped against theoretical constructs of academic resilience and Islamic pedagogy to establish conceptual linkages.

To ensure interpretive validity, the final stage incorporated member checking procedures, where preliminary findings were presented to participating teachers and students for verification. This participatory validation process served dual purposes: it confirmed the accuracy of researchers' interpretations while providing participants opportunities to clarify or expand upon their original statements. Throughout the analysis, reflexivity was maintained through research team debriefings to mitigate potential biases in theme identification and interpretation (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study employed Martin and Marsh's 4Cs framework of academic resilience - confidence, control, composure, and commitment (Amalia et al., 2024) - to examine how Islamic Education (PAI) teachers' personality competencies foster student resilience. The findings reveal a remarkable alignment between these psychological constructs and Islamic principles, suggesting that religious values can enrich contemporary resilience theories by incorporating spiritual dimensions. For instance, the commitment aspect corresponds with the Islamic concept of sabr (patience), as emphasized in QS Al-Baqarah (2:153): "O you who believe! Seek help with patience and prayer." Similarly, the control dimension mirrors tawakkul (trust in God after exertion), demonstrating how Islamic pedagogy complements psychological resilience models.

Confidence Building Through Supportive Pedagogy

The PAI teacher demonstrated exceptional competence in nurturing students' self-confidence through carefully designed classroom interactions. Observations revealed a pedagogical approach characterized by motivational support, positive reinforcement, and judicious use of humor to alleviate anxiety. The teacher consistently created opportunities for students to develop public speaking skills through presentations and Q&A sessions. This approach aligns with Said et al.'s (2021) conceptualization of confidence as belief in one's capabilities, which Hamdanah and Surawan (2022) further elaborate as the ability to utilize one's strengths effectively.

Teacher interviews substantiated these observations: "I always provide opportunities for all students to dare to speak in front of the class" (TS, March 14, 2025). Student testimonials corroborated this, with one noting, "Mr. TS teaches us to always have the courage to speak in public" (ARR, March 17, 2025). The Indonesian language teacher added, "Mr. TS is most liked by students because his humorous and relaxed personality makes him quite familiar" (SR, March 17, 2025). These findings support Hanaris' (2023) emphasis on teacher encouragement in building intrinsic motivation, though they contrast with Rahayu 's (2023) focus on internal factors, highlighting instead the transformative power of external teacher influences.

Cultivating Control Through Disciplinary Guidance

The development of student self-control emerged as another significant finding. The PAI teacher employed a balanced approach combining firm expectations with compassionate guidance. Classroom observations documented the teacher's consistent emphasis on task completion and disciplined work habits, implemented through positive reinforcement rather than punitive measures. This pedagogical strategy resonates with Surawan and Pertiwi's (2023) conceptualization of self-control as a moral capacity to restrain negative impulses.

Teacher statements like "I always teach students to be disciplined in doing the assignments given" (TS, March 14, 2025) were echoed by student perspectives: "Mr. TS is able to reprimand

in a good way" (JE, March 19, 2025). Another student noted, "He never scolds... sometimes he reprimands us while interspersing it with jokes" (M, March 18, 2025). These findings align with Saputra et al.'s (2024) demonstration of how consistent rule enforcement coupled with positive teacher-student relationships effectively instills discipline. The results further substantiate Nafisa and Darmawan's (2025) assertion that teachers' emotional stability and wisdom significantly influence students' self-control development.

Fostering Composure Through Emotional Support

The study revealed compelling evidence of the PAI teacher's success in maintaining low student anxiety levels during academic evaluations. Through continuous encouragement and normalizing mistakes as part of the learning process, the teacher cultivated an environment where students could engage with challenging material without excessive stress. This approach reflects Said et al.'s (2021) definition of composure as the ability to remain calm under pressure.

Teacher strategies such as "always remind[ing] students to be brave and not afraid to be wrong" (TS, March 14, 2025) yielded tangible results, with students reporting, "We never feel nervous or afraid of being wrong" (ARR, March 17, 2025). While these findings partially support Rasyid et al.'s (2024) emphasis on humor, they suggest that comedic elements alone prove insufficient without structural support and positive feedback, consistent with Shao and Kang's (2022) broader

framework of teacher support. The teacher's motivational strategies, including praise for effort rather than just achievement (Suharni 2021; Limbong, 2025), created a virtuous cycle of engagement and reduced anxiety.

Sustaining Commitment Through Patient Mentoring

The final resilience dimension, commitment, manifested through the teacher's persistent support of struggling students. The PAI teacher's patient reiteration of complex concepts and individualized guidance exemplified the Islamic value of sabr in educational practice. This aligns with Said et al.'s (2021) conceptualization of commitment as perseverance through challenges.

Teacher reflections like "I often explain the material repeatedly" (TS, March 14, 2025) were validated by student accounts of his supportive nature (JE, March 19, 2025) and exceptional patience (M, March 18, 2025). While these results confirm Ramadhan and Yasin's (2024) findings about teacher patience facilitating persistence, they diverge from Hasibuan et al.'s (2022) peer-focused model by demonstrating teacher centrality. The findings further support Rukmiyati et al.'s (2023) advocacy for individualized teacher monitoring and Muflihah et al.'s (2023) emphasis on teacher modeling in developing student perseverance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMPN 3 Katingan Hilir leverage their personality competence to foster students' confidence, commitment, control, and composure in confronting academic challenges. These findings extend Martin & Marsh's (2008) 4C model by illustrating how the reinforcement of these four dimensions can be culturally contextualized through the personal attributes of PAI teachers. Specifically, Islamic principles such as *sabr* (patience) and t*awakkal* (trust in God) serve as foundational elements that enhance students' commitment and self-regulation within the framework of academic resilience.

Contrary to prior research by Rachmawati & Wanojaleni (2021), which highlighted the spiritual dimension, particularly religious rituals and worship practices as central to cultivating student resilience, the present study underscores the significance of teachers' emotional and relational capacities in supporting students' academic resilience. This distinction offers a novel perspective, suggesting that a humanistic pedagogical approach, grounded in teacher personality competence, can serve as an alternative or complementary strategy in resilience-building interventions.

Despite these contributions, the study is not without limitations. The small sample size, comprising only one teacher and three students from a single institution, constrains the generalizability of the findings to broader educational settings. Future research should address this constraint by incorporating larger, more diverse samples across multiple schools, employing quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to validate and expand upon the current results. Such efforts would strengthen the empirical foundation for understanding the role of

teacher personality in fostering academic resilience, particularly within culturally specific contexts.

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