

THE ELEMENTS OF EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOUR AMONG EXCELLENT LECTURERS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN POLYTECHNICS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the elements of exemplary behaviour among the Islamic Education Lecturers (IELs) in teaching and learning (TnL) in polytechnics. This study was fully conducted through qualitative method via case study. Six IELs were selected as participants and willing to be interviewed, and the data from the interview were supported by three Heads of Islamic Education Unit, 12 lecturers and 12 students. Then, the data were triangulated with the data obtained through observation and document analysis. This study has used N'Vivo software to generate a pattern of themes and characteristics of the exemplary behaviour in TnL in polytechnics. The result found that there were six elements of exemplary behaviour practised by the IELs in TnL. All elements formed a pattern. That five elements were; reminding people about religion, establishing good relationship, lecturers as role model, avoid slandering and contolling lust, observing words and be responsible towards parents and spouses.

Keywords: Exemplary Behaviour, Excellent Lecturers of Islamic Education, Polytechnics

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Islamic teachings place morality as one of the pillars in establishing religion (Khadijah & Tengku Norhayati, 2011; Ramli et al., 2012). Islam also outlines specific moral and etiquette characteristics that must be demonstrated by educators teaching religion, such as Islamic Education teachers or lecturers. According to Sapie et al. (2011), personality or character represents the individual's personal traits, which include tendencies to behave in a certain manner. From the perspective of Islamic Education, Hasbullah et al. (2020) state that the role of teachers is very important because Islamic Education is the foundation for character development and human construction. The duties and responsibilities of educators today extend beyond merely delivering education; they are also responsible for shaping the character of their students (Suhaili & Siti Syuhada, 2011; Noornajihan & Ab. Halim, 2012; Sarimah et al., 2012; Karso, 2019; Afifah & Muhammad, 2021) and creating a balanced

generation in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual aspects (Syahirah et al., 2022).

Generally, since stepping into the realm of schooling, students heavily depend on the guidance of teachers (Mohamad Khairi & Asmawati, 2010; Noornajihan & Ab. Halim, 2012; Alif Lukmanul Hakim, 2022). This is because a significant amount of their time is spent with teachers both in and out of school (Sarimah et al., 2012).

From the perspective of society, the tasks of religious educators are unbearable as they are responsible for bringing the community back to true religious practices (Tengku Sarina Aini & Faridah, 2008; Rizki Zamzari, 2021). This is supported by many researchers (Zaharah, 2005; Ab. Halim & Mohamad Khairul Azman, 2010; Abdull Sukor, 2010; Sapie Sabilan et al., 2011; Sarimah et al., 2012). According to Syafiqah Solehah and Tengku Sarina Aini (2018), educators in society are considered role models for workers. The good personality or character of educators will have a significant impact and bring about great change (Sapie et al., 2011; Noornajihan & Ab. Halim, 2012). This change leads to the formation of intellectuals who are skilled, dynamic, progressive, innovative, and balanced in terms of their intellectual, physical, and spiritual aspects.

Moreover, they should be able to appreciate their profession as an act of worship towards achieving success. Overall, the character and personality of Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers (IELS) in polytechnics are crucial as reference individuals, particularly in religious matters and generally in social issues for fellow lecturers and students.

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Various efforts have been undertaken to strengthen the capability and credibility of excellent academic staff in polytechnics. However, several issues still need addressing. The demands of religious teachings that urge the community to strive towards goodness, the threats of secularism, the onslaught of globalization, the turmoil of social issues, and the identity crisis among students underscore the critical need for excellent Islamic Education Lecturers (IELs). These excellent lecturers can become close role models for their peers and students in terms of attitudes and personalities.

Furthermore, the problems that arise have become burdens and challenges to the teaching profession. It is crucial for educators to resolve all occurring issues to ensure that the planned teaching and learning processes can be executed in the best possible manner. This situation requires the presence of an excellent educator, as stated by Nur Hafizoh and Rohana (2013), "quality teachers can produce quality individuals."

Following this, an educator should provide high-quality services and possess a broad and deep range of skills (Saipo 2005; Ahmad Firdaus et al. 2017; Andrew Emparan et al. 2019). This is also stated by Abdul Jalil (2007), Ishak Abdul Rahman & Ainul Afzan Ramli (2021), that the need for quality educators is crucial in producing quality students. However, Chee (2008) study contradicts these requirements. He found that the failure of trained educators to demonstrate that they are truly professional is not achieved because they cannot control the problems faced in the classroom. Common issues include difficulty in controlling students, negative student attitudes, lack of interest in learning, passivity, and failure to understand the lessons taught. This leads educators to adopt an indifferent stance. This is supported by Syed Najmuddin et al. (2009) and Norfarahi Zulkifli et al. (2021), who found that some Islamic Education Lecturers engage in misconduct such as neglecting duties, lack of commitment to work, lack of dedication, and insufficient religious leadership skills.

3.0 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This study was conducted to evaluate and determine the elements of exemplary behaviour demonstrated by Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers (EIELs) inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, the research question is:

What are the elements of exemplary behaviour demonstrated by Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers (EIELs) inside and outside the classroom?

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To meet the objectives and answer the research question, the researcher chose a case study using a qualitative approach. The researcher selected a case study design with a fully qualitative method. Many researchers have used case studies in their research designs (Kamarul Azmi, 2010; Abdul Razaq et al., 2010; Ahmad Yunus & Ab. Halim 2010; Faridah & Mohini 2012; Kamarul Azmi & Nazirah, 2012; Rozita Radhiah & Abdul Rasid, 2012; Mohamad Ziyad & Izuddin, 2012; Jennifer & Robert, 2012).

To support the data, observations were made on the research samples and document analysis was conducted on relevant documents. To further strengthen the data, field notes and diaries were used. The field note method has also been utilized by Kamarul Azmi (2010), Inglis and Cook (2011), Lee (2012), and Mohd. Azhar (2012) in their research. Through a qualitative approach and the methods used, the researcher will comprehensively examine all the characteristics and elements of intrapersonal skills within the Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers (IELS).

This study selected six participants for interviews. The selected participants met the following criteria: (1) over seven years of teaching experience, (2) qualifications at least at the master's level, (3) promotion received through the polytechnic lecturer excellence criteria evaluation process, (4) holding a position of at least grade DH 44, (5) selected by the Head of the Islamic and Moral Education Unit, (6) recipients of the Excellent Service Award (APC). The results of these interviews were transcribed for thematic analysis using the N'Vivo 7.0 software.

5.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following Table 1 illustrates the findings from thematic analysis.

Table 1. Exemplary Behaviour IELS1-IELS6

No.	Exemplary Behaviour	IELS1	IELS2	IELS3	IELS4	IELS5	IELS6
1.	Giving Religious Reminders	x	x	x	x	x	x
2.	Good Interactio	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.	Lecturers as Role Models	x	x	x	x	x	x
4.	Good Speech	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.	Avoiding Slander and Controlling Desires	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.	Responsibility Towards Parents and Spouses	x	x	x	x	x	x

Based on Table 1, it is shown that all these exemplary behaviours reach saturation level. The following exemplary behaviours are organised from the highest level of saturation to the lowest.

4.1 Giving Religious Reminders

The highest level of exemplary behaviour as emphasized by IELS is 'giving religious reminders'. This is acknowledged by IELS students: "She's like a religious teacher, gives a lot of religious values, gives advice" (P2IELS2: 254). According to Ariyanto (2019), among the things that Islamic Education teachers can do is to provide good guidance and advice, encourage congregational prayers, self-reflection programs, remembrance, and religious activities as a way to approach students.

4.2 Good Interaction

Followed by 'good interaction', IELS student mentioned, "we male students are quite close to ustaz. If we meet at the café, we eat together with the ustaz as usual, hehe" (P2IELS4: 125). This practice is highly appreciated by the students and can shape their behavior. This statement has been mentioned by Moskowitz et al., (2022) that positive effects on students' behavior can be formed through the friendly attitude of teachers towards students.

4.3 Lecturers as Role Models

According to Sofiah et al. (2016), to face today's challenging life, suitable role models to follow are teachers or lecturers. Indeed, lecturers are the closest individuals to students and should demonstrate exemplary personalities and characters that can be emulated by students and even fellow lecturers. This is acknowledged by IELS colleagues, stating "and he also sets an example and for me, he's a role model that can be emulated" (RP2IELS: 59).

4.4 Good Speech

This exemplary behaviour of 'good speech' as mentioned by IELS students, "Ustaz's speech is always courteous, never harsh or hurtful to the students' feelings" (P1IELS6: 210). This is in line with Nur Hidayyah's (2019) view that to develop pure values in line with Islamic teachings towards students, good communication and polite speech are needed to shape noble morals among students.

4.5 Avoiding Slander and Controlling Desires

Next is 'avoiding slander and controlling desires'. This behavior acts as a shield for IELS from falling into bad and futile matters. This simultaneously shapes an individual with noble character (Kamarul Azmi et al., 2017). This attitude is described by a IELS colleague who admires the qualities present in IELS, stating: "As far as I know, she's a polite person, and she can control herself from desires, because, as I say, for example, when we go out when the salary comes, we go out and look at scarves or something, if she buys, she doesn't buy a lot, she restrains herself from desires, can determine what is good and bad" (RP2IELS2: 71)

4.6 Responsibility Towards Parents and Spouses

The final exemplary behaviour demonstrated by IELS is 'responsible towards parents and spouses'. IELS needs to manage time wisely between work demands, family, and parents. This is stated by IELS: "Dad has passed away, only mum is left in the village, sometimes in a month, I have a Sunday that I set aside to go back, if I'm not well, I go back by bus, once a month or so" (IELS4: 523). This is in line with Zaiton & Mohd Roslan's (2019) statement, based on the family life context, the quality of life will be affected when an individual fails to manage themselves well. Allah S.W.T. has emphasized that being good to parents and family members is a primary religious demand. Allah's saying: "Serve Allah, and join not any

partners with Him; and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious." (Surah al-Nisa', 4: 36)

5.0 IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings, the researcher has developed a model called the Model of Outstanding Moral Demands (MTACIELS). This model is depicted as shown in the Figure.



Fig. 1 Model of Exemplary Behaviour for Islamic Education Lecturers

Based on Figure 1, all the elements of exemplary behaviour listed can be practiced within and outside the Teaching and Learning Process (TLP) for Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics. The understanding and practice ideally among IELS will reflect the values and dignity of religious teachers among lecturers and students in polytechnics.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Based on this study, the researcher has discussed the objectives, methodology, findings, and discussion of the case study of the excellent moral demand elements of Outstanding Islamic Education Lecturers (IELS) in polytechnics. The results of the study's findings successfully produced the Model of Exemplary Behaviour for Islamic Education Lecturers which is found within the implications of this study. Therefore, Islamic Education lecturers need to pay attention so that their personalities and commendable morals can be highlighted, thus elevating the dignity of religious teachers and setting an example for other staff members.

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