



TEACHER EXEMPLARITY AS USWAH HASANAH IN FORMING STUDENT ADAB: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY AT MA ISLAMIYYAH BANDAR SURABAYA

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Article History:

Received: 01/08/2026

Revised: 20/08/2026

Accepted: 21/08/2026

Keywords:

Teacher Exemplarity;

Islamic Education;

Moral Formation;

Abstract: This study examines teacher exemplarity and the formation of student adab toward teachers at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya. The study was motivated by the importance of adab as an ethical dimension of Islamic education and the need to understand how respectful conduct toward teachers is cultivated through everyday educational practices. A qualitative case study design was employed. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving Islamic Education teachers and students of Class X.1 at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya. Data were analyzed descriptively and interpretively by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and supporting documentation. The findings indicate that teacher exemplarity constitutes a central element in the formation of student adab. Teachers function not only as transmitters of Islamic knowledge but also as role models, mentors, motivators, and evaluators. The formation of adab is reinforced through habituation, moral advice, motivation, corrective guidance, and the integration of ethical values into classroom learning. Students demonstrated several positive forms of adab, including greeting teachers, shaking hands, speaking politely, listening attentively, asking permission, maintaining discipline, and respecting teachers during learning activities. However, the process remains influenced by external social environments, parental attention, social-media use, individual differences, and family circumstances. The study contributes to Islamic education scholarship by demonstrating that student adab develops through the interaction of teacher exemplarity, repeated practice, moral guidance, and supportive school culture.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is fundamentally concerned not only with the transmission of religious knowledge but also with the formation of ethical dispositions that guide students in their relationships with God, knowledge, teachers, peers, and society. Within this tradition, *adab* occupies a central position because it connects the acquisition of knowledge with the appropriate moral conduct of the learner (A'la & Makhshun, 2022). *Adab* therefore cannot be reduced to politeness or observable manners; rather, it represents an ethical orientation that shapes how knowledge is pursued, respected, practiced, and transmitted. In the intellectual tradition of Islamic education, the relationship between teacher and student is consequently understood as a moral relationship in which respect, humility, discipline, and responsibility are integral to the

learning process. Contemporary studies of Islamic educational thought likewise emphasize that *adab* provides an ethical foundation for learning and establishes appropriate relationships between educators and learners (Alfiyanto et al., 2024).

The importance of *adab* has become increasingly relevant amid contemporary changes in students' social and educational environments. Digital communication, changing patterns of social interaction, peer influence, family dynamics, and the growing exposure of young people to diverse behavioral models may influence how students communicate and interact with teachers. In such circumstances, moral education cannot depend exclusively on the delivery of normative knowledge. Students need opportunities to observe, experience, practice, and repeatedly enact the values that schools seek to cultivate. Moral formation is therefore closely connected to the social environment in which learning takes place and to the people who embody the values being taught. Recent research in Indonesian educational settings demonstrates that teacher role modelling and daily habituation can become important mechanisms for developing students' religious and moral character (Abdullah et al., 2025). This suggests that the effectiveness of moral education is closely associated with what teachers do in everyday educational interactions, rather than only with what teachers explain in the classroom.

Within this context, teacher exemplarity becomes a particularly important concept for Islamic education. Teacher exemplarity refers to the embodiment of educational and moral values through teachers' observable conduct, interpersonal behavior, discipline, communication, and responses to students. Teachers become moral exemplars when the values they communicate are reflected consistently in their own practices. Such a process is particularly significant in Islamic education because the teacher is traditionally expected to function not merely as a transmitter of knowledge but also as an *uswah hasanah*—a good example whose conduct provides students with a concrete representation of Islamic ethical values. Research on Islamic education has emphasized that teachers' moral and ethical competence is inseparable from their educational responsibility (Ruswandi et al., 2022). In the thought of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, for example, the moral quality of educators constitutes an essential component of the educational process, while the relationship between teachers and students should be grounded in ethical responsibility and respect (Bahri et al., 2024). Thus, teacher exemplarity provides a bridge between normative Islamic values and their practical expression in everyday schooling.

The relationship between teacher exemplarity and student moral formation has also received growing empirical attention. Recent research has shown that teacher role modelling, particularly when combined with daily habituation, can contribute to the development of students' religious character (Adiyono et al., 2022). Similarly, research on exemplar-based moral education indicates that consistent teacher modelling, emotional engagement, and repeated

moral practices can support the internalization of values such as discipline, responsibility, empathy, and respectful conduct (Gyanwali, 2006). These findings strengthen the argument that students' moral development is not produced by isolated moral instruction but through repeated encounters with behavioral examples within the educational environment.

Nevertheless, an important conceptual and empirical gap remains. Much of the existing discussion addresses teacher modelling in relation to students' general character formation, including religious character, discipline, responsibility, social empathy, and moral awareness. Comparatively less attention has been given to the specific formation of student *adab* toward teachers as a distinct dimension of Islamic educational ethics. This distinction is important because *adab* toward teachers involves a particular relational orientation that may be expressed through greeting teachers, using respectful language, listening attentively, asking permission appropriately, maintaining classroom discipline, accepting guidance, and demonstrating humility in the process of learning. Classical and contemporary studies of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's educational thought confirm that students' respect for teachers constitutes a significant dimension of Islamic educational ethics (Adawiyah et al., 2024). However, much of this literature is conceptual or library-based rather than focused on how such values are enacted and cultivated through everyday teacher-student interaction in contemporary madrasahs.

This gap is particularly significant because the formation of *adab* cannot be adequately understood solely through formal curriculum or theoretical instruction. It requires attention to the processes through which students encounter ethical expectations, observe teachers' conduct, receive reinforcement, and repeatedly practice appropriate behavior. The present study therefore shifts the analytical focus from the general question of whether teachers influence student character to a more specific question: how does teacher exemplarity become part of the everyday process through which students develop *adab* toward their teachers? This question enables the study to examine moral formation as a relational and situated process rather than as an abstract educational outcome.

MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya provides a meaningful context for examining this process. The school integrates Islamic values into learning and students' everyday activities and emphasizes religious commitment, academic achievement, polite behavior, and sincere service as part of its educational orientation. Field observations conducted in April 2026 indicate that students demonstrated several forms of *adab* toward teachers, including greeting teachers, shaking hands, speaking politely, sitting appropriately during lessons, following school regulations, and requesting permission before leaving the classroom. These practices suggest that the formation of *adab* takes place through everyday school experiences and is not restricted to explicit instruction in Islamic ethics.

The empirical findings further reveal that teachers cultivate students' *adab* through a combination of interconnected practices. The Islamic Education teacher demonstrates punctuality, appropriate appearance, respectful communication, and appreciation toward students. These examples are reinforced through habituation, such as greeting teachers, praying before learning, asking permission, and communicating politely. Teachers also employ advice, corrective guidance, and motivation by explaining the importance of respecting teachers and connecting appropriate conduct with the meaningful acquisition of knowledge. Importantly, the process is supported by cooperation among teachers, school leadership, school regulations, and a religious school environment. At the same time, the process faces challenges associated with students' external social environments, parental attention, excessive social-media use, differences in individual characteristics, and family circumstances.

These findings provide the basis for understanding teacher exemplarity not as an isolated act of moral demonstration but as a continuous pedagogical process. Exemplary conduct becomes meaningful when it is reinforced through habituation, advice, motivation, correction, and supervision. In other words, the formation of *adab* emerges through the interaction between what teachers model and what students repeatedly practice. This perspective extends existing discussions of teacher role modelling by placing *adab* toward teachers at the center of analysis and by examining the mechanisms through which exemplary conduct is transformed into students' everyday behavior.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the role of teacher exemplarity in the formation of student *adab* toward teachers at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya. More specifically, it explores (1) the forms of exemplary conduct demonstrated by Islamic Education teachers, (2) the pedagogical practices used to reinforce students' *adab*, and (3) the implications and challenges of these practices in students' everyday school behavior. The study contributes to Islamic education scholarship by connecting the normative concept of *adab* with empirical evidence of teacher-student interaction. Rather than treating *adab* merely as a prescribed moral ideal, this study conceptualizes its formation as an ongoing process of modelling, habituation, guidance, and moral reinforcement within the lived environment of the madrasah. Through this perspective, the study offers a more context-sensitive understanding of how Islamic educational values are embodied and reproduced through everyday pedagogical relationships.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how Islamic Education teachers demonstrate exemplary conduct and contribute to the formation of students' *adab*

toward teachers at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore educational practices, interpersonal interactions, and students' behavioral experiences within their natural school context rather than measure relationships among variables statistically. The case study design allowed the researchers to investigate the phenomenon in depth by considering the specific institutional, cultural, and social conditions of the research setting (Creswell, 2013).

The research was conducted at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya, Lampung Tengah, Indonesia, an Islamic secondary school that integrates Islamic values into classroom instruction and students' daily activities. The data collection process was conducted from 21 to 24 April 2026. The research participants consisted of Islamic Education teachers and students of Class X.1, which consisted of 27 students. The participants were selected because they were directly involved in the process of teaching, learning, and the implementation of students' *adab* formation within the school environment.

The primary informant in this study was the Islamic Education teacher responsible for teaching the *Adab* Islami subject, as this teacher played a central role in implementing Islamic moral values, providing guidance, and modelling exemplary behavior for students. In addition, six students from Class X.1 were selected as supporting informants to obtain students' perspectives regarding the implementation and experience of *adab* formation in daily school interactions.

The informants were selected using purposive sampling. This technique was applied because qualitative research requires participants who possess relevant knowledge and direct experience related to the phenomenon being investigated. The criteria for selecting the teacher informant included: (1) actively teaching Islamic Education and *Adab* Islami subjects, (2) having direct responsibility for guiding students' moral and behavioral development, and (3) having experience in applying strategies related to students' *adab* formation. Meanwhile, student informants were selected based on several criteria: (1) being registered as students of Class X.1 during the research period, (2) actively participating in classroom and school activities involving teacher–student interactions, and (3) having experienced the school's programs and practices related to Islamic manners and behavioral development. The selection of both teacher and student informants enabled the researchers to obtain complementary perspectives regarding teacher exemplarity and students' experiences of *adab* formation.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine students' actual behaviors and teacher–student interactions during classroom learning and school activities. The observations focused on observable manifestations of *adab*, including students' ways of greeting teachers,

communicating respectfully, listening attentively during lessons, asking permission appropriately, maintaining classroom discipline, and complying with school regulations. In addition, the researchers observed teachers' exemplary practices, including how teachers demonstrated politeness, discipline, responsibility, patience, and consistency in guiding students' behavior (Mahbubi, 2025).

The observation process was conducted directly at the research site during the data collection period from 21 to 24 April 2026. Field observations enabled researchers to understand how *adab* formation occurred naturally through daily interactions between teachers and students. The observational data were recorded in field notes to document relevant behaviors, interactions, and contextual situations related to the research focus.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Islamic Education teacher and selected students to obtain deeper information regarding teachers' roles, strategies, experiences, and students' perceptions of *adab* formation. The interview with the Islamic Education teacher explored several aspects, including the importance of student *adab*, the role of teacher exemplarity, habituation practices, moral advice, motivation, reinforcement strategies, and challenges encountered in developing students' manners. Meanwhile, student interviews were conducted to understand their experiences, perceptions, and responses toward teachers' exemplary behavior and the practices implemented to cultivate *adab* in the school environment.

Documentation was also utilized as supporting evidence to complement observation and interview data. The collected documents included relevant school records, photographs of learning activities, documentation of the school environment, and evidence of teacher-student activities related to Islamic values implementation. These documents provided contextual information regarding the institutional environment and supported the interpretation of how students' *adab* was cultivated through school practices.

Data analysis was conducted continuously during and after the fieldwork process. The researchers applied an iterative analytical process by organizing, comparing, and interpreting information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns related to teacher exemplarity, habituation, guidance, motivation, and students' behavioral manifestations of *adab*. The findings were interpreted using a descriptive-interpretive approach to explain how Islamic Education teachers contributed to students' moral formation within the specific context of MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, this study employed data triangulation by comparing information obtained from different sources and techniques, including observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, and documentation. The consistency of information across these sources was examined to strengthen the validity of the interpretation. Through this

process, the study aimed to provide a contextual understanding of how teacher exemplarity functions as an important element in shaping students' *adab* toward teachers in an Islamic educational environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Exemplarity and the Formation of Student *Adab*

The findings of this study indicate that teacher exemplarity constitutes a central dimension in the formation of students' *adab* toward teachers at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya. The role of the Islamic Education teacher extends beyond the transmission of religious knowledge to include modelling appropriate conduct, providing moral guidance, motivating students, correcting inappropriate behavior, and continuously supervising students' interpersonal practices. The findings therefore suggest that *adab* is cultivated not merely through explicit instruction but through the everyday presence and conduct of teachers within the educational environment. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that Islamic Education teachers function as important moral exemplars whose conduct can become a reference point for students' character development (Kartini & Iswandi, 2025).

The empirical evidence demonstrates that the teacher's exemplary role is manifested through relatively simple but pedagogically meaningful behaviors. The Islamic Education teacher at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya is described as punctual, appropriately dressed, polite in communication, respectful toward students, and consistent in demonstrating Islamic manners. The teacher explicitly stated that students tend to imitate behaviors that they observe directly from their teachers (Amini, 2022). This finding is important because it illustrates that teacher exemplarity operates through visible and repeated conduct. Students encounter the moral values taught by the teacher not only in verbal explanations but also through the teacher's manner of speaking, interacting, responding, and conducting everyday educational activities.

The importance of such modelling is particularly evident in Islamic education because the teacher is traditionally positioned as an *uswah hasanah*, or exemplary figure. At MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya, Islamic Education teachers demonstrate practical expressions of Islamic manners through greeting, smiling, speaking politely, respecting others, and maintaining appropriate social conduct. The research documentation indicates that teachers intentionally demonstrate these behaviors so that students can observe and imitate them in everyday interactions. This finding corresponds with contemporary research on teacher exemplarity, which emphasizes that students' moral learning can occur through observation of teachers' lifestyles, attitudes, and daily interactions (Akrim et al., 2022).

From the perspective of Islamic educational thought, this process reflects a fundamental principle: moral knowledge becomes educationally meaningful when it is embodied in the conduct of the educator. Research on the educational thought of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari similarly emphasizes the reciprocal ethical relationship between teachers and students. Students are expected to demonstrate respect, humility, seriousness, and appropriate conduct toward teachers, while teachers carry a moral responsibility to embody exemplary behavior (A'la & Makhshun, 2022). Consequently, *adab* toward teachers should not be interpreted merely as social etiquette but as part of the ethical structure of Islamic learning. The teacher's personal example therefore becomes an important medium through which students encounter the meaning of *adab* in practice.

The findings also reveal that teacher exemplarity is supported by the broader structure of Islamic learning at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya. The school does not rely on a single subject to introduce ethical values. The *Adab* Islami subject explicitly teaches students appropriate relationships with parents, teachers, and other people, while Fiqh, Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic History, and Arabic contribute complementary religious knowledge and moral understanding. This integrated arrangement is significant because it places *adab* within the wider curriculum rather than treating it as an isolated behavioral program. Similar findings have been reported in research showing that Islamic Education teachers contribute to character formation through the combination of religious instruction, role modelling, habituation, and school culture (Adib, 2021).

Another important finding concerns the relational dimension of teacher exemplarity. Student interviews portray the Islamic Education teacher as firm, patient, friendly, and caring. Students explained that the teacher frequently provides advice concerning appropriate behavior toward teachers, parents, and peers while remaining sufficiently approachable for students to ask questions and seek guidance. This suggests that the development of *adab* does not depend solely on hierarchical authority. Instead, respectful relationships may develop more effectively when authority is accompanied by care, accessibility, and consistent moral guidance. This interpretation is compatible with scholarship that connects teachers' ethical conduct with relational and care-oriented dimensions of moral education (Ayuningsih et al., 2020; Rudiansyah et al., 2025).

The role of teacher exemplarity is further reinforced by habituation. The findings show that students are repeatedly encouraged to greet teachers, pray before learning, ask permission when leaving the classroom, use polite language, maintain classroom cleanliness, arrive on time, and participate appropriately in learning activities. These practices demonstrate that teacher exemplarity does not operate independently; rather, exemplary conduct becomes more meaningful when translated into repeated routines. Research on Islamic education has likewise

found that modelling and habituation work together in cultivating students' discipline and moral character (Andriani et al., 2022).

This relationship can be conceptualized as a process of modelling → observation → repetition → behavioural stabilization. First, students observe the teacher's conduct. Second, teachers provide opportunities for students to reproduce similar behaviors. Third, these behaviors are repeated through classroom routines and school expectations. Finally, repeated practices may become increasingly familiar forms of conduct. The present study does not claim that this process automatically produces internalized morality in every student; rather, the findings suggest that teacher exemplarity provides an important pedagogical condition through which *adab* can be practiced and reinforced.

The observations further demonstrate that the teacher integrates moral messages into ordinary classroom instruction. Rather than treating *adab* as an independent lesson detached from academic learning, the teacher inserts moral reminders and stories of exemplary figures into the learning process. This approach strengthens the connection between religious knowledge and ethical behavior. Similar research has shown that Islamic Education teachers can strengthen character formation when moral values are integrated into everyday learning rather than confined to specific character-building activities (Fadhilah et al., 2025).

The students' perspectives provide additional evidence concerning the practical significance of teacher exemplarity. Students reported that teachers regularly reminded them to speak politely, listen carefully, avoid interrupting, ask permission appropriately, and maintain respectful conduct. When students behaved inappropriately, teachers provided reminders and guidance rather than relying solely on punishment. Students also reported becoming more accustomed to greeting teachers, shaking hands, speaking politely, requesting permission, and taking learning more seriously after receiving continuous guidance. These findings correspond with recent research showing that teacher modelling can support students' understanding and practice of moral values in everyday school life (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Yunianto et al., 2024).

However, the findings also demonstrate that teacher exemplarity should not be interpreted as a sufficient or deterministic factor in the formation of *adab*. The teacher reported that students differ in their responsiveness to guidance and that some students require repeated intervention, particularly regarding discipline and concentration. Students' behavior is also influenced by factors outside the classroom, including peer environments, parental attention, social-media use, individual characteristics, and family circumstances. Recent research similarly identifies parental involvement, social-media exposure, and the wider school environment as

important contextual factors in sustaining students' moral development (Ubaidillah & Haryanto, 2026).

Therefore, the principal contribution of this finding is not the simple assertion that "teachers influence students," but rather the identification of how teacher exemplarity operates within the everyday formation of *adab*. At MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya, exemplary behavior becomes pedagogically meaningful because it is embedded in repeated interaction, reinforced through habituation, connected to Islamic narratives, and supported by corrective and motivational guidance. The teacher consequently functions simultaneously as a source of knowledge, behavioral model, moral guide, and relational authority (Hampel & Tracey, 2019).

Taken together, the evidence suggests that teacher exemplarity provides the experiential foundation for student *adab*. Students encounter the values of respect and appropriate conduct through the teacher's own behavior before these values are reinforced through classroom routines and moral guidance. This finding extends previous studies that have generally examined teacher role modelling in relation to broad character outcomes such as discipline, religious behavior, responsibility, and moral awareness (Qiftiyah et al., 2026). The present case instead places student *adab* toward teachers at the center of analysis, showing that the ethical relationship between teacher and student is itself an important arena of moral formation.

In this sense, teacher exemplarity at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya can be understood as a relational and continuous pedagogical practice rather than an individual personality trait. The teacher's example establishes behavioral expectations, daily interaction provides opportunities for students to enact those expectations, and repeated guidance strengthens their consistency. The formation of *adab*, therefore, emerges from the interaction between exemplary teachers and a school environment that continually reinforces ethical conduct. This interpretation is consistent with recent studies emphasizing that effective character education requires the convergence of teacher modelling, habituation, religious activities, and supportive school culture rather than reliance on moral instruction alone.

Habituation, Moral Guidance, and the Implications for Student–Teacher Relations

The findings demonstrate that the formation of students' *adab* toward teachers at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya is sustained through a combination of habituation, moral advice, motivation, corrective guidance, and the integration of Islamic values into everyday learning. If teacher exemplarity provides students with a visible model of appropriate conduct, habituation provides the repetitive context through which that model is practiced. The formation of *adab* therefore does not occur through a single instructional intervention but

through continuous interactions in which students repeatedly encounter, practice, and receive reinforcement for appropriate conduct (Qiftiyah et al., 2026). The field data show that the teacher employs exemplary conduct, habituation, advice, motivation, and integrative learning as interconnected strategies for cultivating students' manners toward teachers.

The most visible manifestation of this process is found in students' everyday routines. Students are accustomed to greeting teachers, praying before learning, asking permission before leaving the classroom, speaking politely, listening to teachers, maintaining classroom cleanliness, arriving on time, and participating appropriately during lessons. These practices demonstrate that *adab* is transformed from an abstract Islamic value into concrete forms of behavior. The teacher does not merely communicate that students should respect educators; instead, students are placed in repeated situations in which respect can be practiced (Sari et al., 2024). This distinction is important because moral education becomes more meaningful when values are incorporated into students' daily experiences rather than confined to theoretical explanations.

The relationship between exemplary conduct and habituation is particularly important in understanding the findings. The teacher's behavior provides students with a behavioral reference, while daily routines provide opportunities for students to reproduce that reference. Consequently, habituation can be understood as the operational dimension of teacher exemplarity (Khumaidi & Wibowo, 2024). The repeated practice of greeting, polite communication, attentive listening, permission-seeking, and classroom discipline creates continuity between what teachers demonstrate and what students actually do. This finding is consistent with research emphasizing that character formation is strengthened when role modelling is accompanied by repeated behavioral practices and supportive educational environments (Andini & Cahyaningsih, 2024). The principal practices identified from the field data can be summarized as follows:

Table 1 Formation Of Adab Is Multidimensional

Teacher Practice	Forms of Implementation	Observable Student Response
Exemplary conduct	Polite communication, punctuality, appropriate appearance, respect for students	Students imitate respectful and disciplined behavior

Habituation	Greeting, prayer, asking permission, polite speech, cleanliness	Increasing familiarity with respectful conduct
Moral advice	Reminders and explanations regarding appropriate behavior	Greater awareness of expected <i>adab</i>
Motivation	Islamic values and stories of prophets and scholars	Stronger motivation to respect teachers
Corrective guidance	Constructive reprimands and repeated reminders	Correction of inappropriate conduct
Integrative learning	Moral messages incorporated into classroom instruction	Connection between religious knowledge and ethical behavior

The table illustrates that the formation of *adab* is multidimensional. No single method is presented in the field data as sufficient on its own. Instead, the methods operate in combination. Teacher exemplarity establishes a behavioral standard, habituation creates repetition, advice provides cognitive and moral clarification, motivation strengthens students' willingness to practice the values, and corrective guidance responds when behavior deviates from the expected standard. This interconnected process is one of the important findings that emerges from the empirical data (Budi et al., 2023).

The role of moral advice becomes particularly visible when students demonstrate behavior that does not correspond with the expected norms. The teacher does not simply identify inappropriate conduct but provides direction concerning how students should behave toward teachers. The interview data show that the teacher uses advice and reminders when students display less respectful behavior, while also explaining the importance of respecting teachers as part of the process of seeking knowledge (Abusharif, 2024). Students likewise reported that teachers remind them to speak politely, listen carefully, avoid interrupting, and ask permission when leaving the classroom. When inappropriate behavior occurs, teachers provide educational reprimands and guidance rather than relying solely on punitive responses.

This pattern suggests that corrective guidance in the school functions not merely as behavioral control but as a process of moral clarification. The teacher attempts to help students understand why a particular behavior is considered inappropriate and what form of conduct should replace it. In this sense, the formation of *adab* involves both external behavioral regulation and the gradual development of moral understanding. Such a finding is significant

because it indicates that the teacher's role is not limited to enforcing school rules (Khumaidi, 2020). The teacher also functions as a moral interpreter who connects everyday behavior with Islamic ethical principles.

The use of motivation further strengthens this process. The teacher incorporates Islamic values and stories concerning prophets, scholars, and exemplary figures into classroom learning. Students reported that such narratives helped them understand the importance of respecting teachers and encouraged them to apply the values in their everyday lives. The use of exemplary narratives is particularly relevant in Islamic education because it provides students with moral references that extend beyond the immediate classroom. Students therefore encounter ethical exemplarity through two interconnected sources: the living example of the teacher and the religious narratives presented during learning (Amirudin et al., 2025; Khumaidi & Singgih, 2021).

This process also contributes to a movement from external compliance toward greater moral awareness. Students reported that they became more accustomed to greeting teachers, shaking hands, speaking politely, asking permission, and taking lessons more seriously. Some students also expressed a stronger awareness of the importance of respecting teachers because teachers are regarded as individuals who provide knowledge. The original findings similarly identify increased moral awareness as one of the implications of *adab* formation, suggesting a movement beyond merely following rules toward understanding the meaning of respectful conduct (Achmadin et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2024).

Another important characteristic of the process is the integration of *adab* into ordinary classroom learning. The teacher does not separate moral education completely from academic instruction but inserts moral messages into the delivery of subject matter. During classroom observation, the teacher also incorporated stories about righteous predecessors to encourage students to remain enthusiastic about learning. This approach creates a connection between knowledge and ethical conduct. Students are not only expected to acquire information but are also encouraged to demonstrate appropriate behavior toward the person through whom that knowledge is transmitted (Fikri et al., 2025).

The implications of this approach are visible in students' interactions with teachers. Observational and interview data indicate that students increasingly demonstrate respect through greetings, handshakes, polite language, attentive listening, permission-seeking, punctuality, and compliance with school regulations (Khumaidi, 2026). These practices are

important indicators of *adab* because they represent the translation of Islamic ethical principles into everyday interpersonal behavior. Rather than remaining at the level of abstract understanding, *adab* becomes visible in the ways students communicate and behave within the school (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

The development of respectful interaction also appears to contribute to a more harmonious teacher–student relationship. Students describe teachers as approachable and supportive while continuing to recognize their authority and maintain respect. This finding is particularly important because it demonstrates that *adab* does not necessarily require excessive social distance between teachers and students. Respect can coexist with openness, communication, and pedagogical closeness. Students can feel comfortable asking questions and seeking guidance without abandoning the ethical boundaries expected within the teacher–student relationship (Annur et al., 2022).

At the same time, the findings reveal that the formation of *adab* remains an ongoing process rather than a completed achievement. The teacher identifies several factors that may inhibit consistency in students' behavior, including peer influence outside school, limited parental attention, excessive social-media use, differences in students' individual characteristics, and family economic circumstances. Students also acknowledge that some peers remain less disciplined, are influenced by external environments, or spend excessive time using digital devices. These findings demonstrate that school-based moral education operates within a wider social environment. The school can establish routines and provide guidance, but students' behavior is also shaped by experiences beyond the classroom (Putra & Yanto, 2025).

This finding is particularly relevant for understanding the sustainability of *adab* formation. If students encounter contradictory behavioral models outside school, the values reinforced in the classroom may require continuous repetition and reinforcement (Munawaroh & Khoiri, 2025). Consequently, the teacher's role remains important not because teachers independently determine students' behavior, but because teachers provide a stable moral reference within an otherwise changing social environment. The school's religious atmosphere further supports this process. Documentation indicates that the environment of MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya is clean, orderly, and religiously oriented, with students demonstrating polite interaction and respect toward teachers. The school environment therefore functions as an additional layer of reinforcement for the practices introduced by teachers.

Taken together, the findings allow the formation of student *adab* to be understood as an interconnected process in which teacher exemplarity provides the model, habituation provides repetition, moral advice provides interpretation, motivation strengthens commitment, and corrective guidance maintains behavioral consistency. This conceptual sequence should not be interpreted as a causal model in the statistical sense. Rather, it represents an interpretive pattern derived from the qualitative evidence (Affandi et al., 2024). The findings show how different pedagogical practices interact within the everyday educational environment to cultivate students' respectful conduct.

The contribution of this finding lies in moving the discussion of teacher role modelling beyond the general claim that teachers influence students' character. The present study shows that student *adab toward teachers* is cultivated through a sustained combination of modelling, habituation, guidance, motivation, and institutional reinforcement. This is particularly relevant to Islamic education because *adab* is not simply a behavioral category but an ethical relationship connecting learners, educators, and knowledge (Anam et al., 2025; Khoiri et al., 2024). The case of MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya demonstrates that the practical realization of this principle depends on the consistency between what teachers teach, what teachers model, what students repeatedly practice, and what the school environment reinforces.

Thus, the formation of *adab* at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya can be understood as a continuous relational and pedagogical process rather than a discrete character-building program. The observed improvements in politeness, respect, discipline, attentiveness, and teacher–student interaction indicate that the combined practices have meaningful educational implications. Nevertheless, the persistence of external social influences and individual differences confirms that *adab* formation requires sustained intervention and collaboration. The teacher's central contribution is therefore not simply to tell students how to respect teachers, but to create an educational environment in which students can observe, practice, understand, and repeatedly reinforce respectful conduct in their everyday relationships with teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teacher exemplarity plays a central role in the formation of students' *adab* toward teachers at MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya. The role of the Islamic Education teacher extends beyond the transmission of religious knowledge to encompass moral guidance, behavioural modelling, motivation, correction, and continuous supervision. The

findings indicate that students encounter *adab* not only as a set of Islamic norms communicated through instruction but also as a lived value embodied in teachers' everyday conduct. Teacher punctuality, polite communication, appropriate appearance, respect for students, and consistency in interpersonal behaviour provide concrete examples that students can observe and emulate.

The formation of *adab* is further strengthened through habituation, moral advice, motivation, corrective guidance, and the integration of ethical values into everyday learning. Students are repeatedly encouraged to greet teachers, speak politely, listen attentively, ask permission, maintain discipline, and participate appropriately in learning activities. These practices indicate that *adab* develops through continuous repetition and reinforcement rather than through one-time moral instruction. The students' reported changes including greater familiarity with greeting teachers, shaking hands, speaking politely, asking permission, and taking lessons more seriously further demonstrate the practical implications of the process.

The study also finds that the formation of *adab* contributes to more respectful and harmonious teacher-student relationships, while simultaneously strengthening students' discipline and moral awareness. However, this process remains dynamic and is influenced by factors beyond the classroom, including peer environments, parental attention, social-media use, individual student characteristics, and family circumstances. Therefore, the cultivation of *adab* cannot depend exclusively on individual teachers but requires sustained support from the school environment, families, and the wider educational community.

The principal contribution of this study is its emphasis on *adab* toward teachers as a specific dimension of Islamic moral formation. Rather than viewing teacher role modelling merely as a general strategy for character education, the findings demonstrate that teacher exemplarity becomes meaningful when translated into repeated practices, reinforced through moral guidance, and supported by an institutional culture that consistently values respectful educational relationships. The case of MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya consequently illustrates that the formation of *adab* is a continuous relational process in which students observe, practice, understand, and progressively reinforce appropriate conduct toward their teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the completion of this research. Special appreciation is extended to the leadership and academic community of MA Islamiyyah Bandar Surabaya for granting permission and providing support during the research process. The authors are also grateful to the Islamic Education teachers and students who generously participated in the observations and interviews and provided valuable

information for this study. Their openness and cooperation were essential to understanding the formation of students' *adab* toward teachers in the school context.

The authors also extend their appreciation to the academic community and colleagues who provided constructive support, encouragement, and valuable insights throughout the preparation of this article. Finally, the authors acknowledge all individuals whose contributions, directly or indirectly, supported the completion of this research. Any remaining limitations in this article are solely the responsibility of the authors.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

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