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Reconstructing Teacher Professionalism in Indonesia: The Prophetic Isnad Model as a Framework for Spiritual and Pedagogical Excellence

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Abstract

Indonesia's National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 mandates the cultivation of learners who are both competent and devout (bertaqwa). Yet the systemic mechanisms required to produce teachers possessing the spiritual and moral qualities prerequisite to this goal remain structurally underdeveloped. This paper argues that the crisis of teacher character in Indonesian Islamic education is fundamentally epistemological: teachers frequently transmit knowledge severed from its authenticated chain of transmission (isnad), resulting in an absence of the exemplary moral influence (uswah ḥasanah) that is the cornerstone of transformative Islamic pedagogy. Drawing on Islamic prophetic leadership theory, the ḥadīth narrator tradition (ʿilm al-rijāl), and contemporary educational management scholarship, this study develops the Prophetic Isnad Model of Teacher Professionalism (PIMT-P). The model integrates five prophetic attributes—Ṣiddīq (truthfulness), Amānah (trustworthiness), Faṭānah (wisdom), Tablīgh (communicative clarity), and Maʿṣūm (moral integrity)—into a systemic framework encompassing pre-service formation, recruitment, in-service development, and institutional governance. As a conceptual paper, the study develops a theoretical model rather than reporting empirical findings: drawing on a framework-synthesis approach, it integrates evidence across Islamic educational philosophy, comparative teacher education policy, and prophetic leadership research. The framework proposes that reforming teacher professionalism requires structural integration of ulama mentorship (kyai networks) within teacher education institutions (LPTK), an isnad-informed character portfolio in recruitment, and the embedding of ṣalāḥiyyah competencies within national teacher evaluation standards. The PIMT-P framework offers a theoretically grounded, policy-applicable model for aligning Indonesian teacher formation with both Islamic epistemological tradition and national educational imperatives.

1. Introduction

The transformation of a society through education is contingent upon the moral and intellectual calibre of its teachers. This foundational axiom—long recognised within Western educational philosophy (Dewey 1897; Palmer 1998)—finds its most rigorous articulation in the Islamic scholarly tradition, where the teacher is understood not merely as a knowledge transmitter but as a spiritual exemplar whose personal virtue (ṣalāḥ) constitutes the primary medium of pedagogical influence (Al-Ghazālī 1998; Ibn Khaldūn 1967). In Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, this understanding is enshrined in national educational law: Article 3 of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System explicitly designates the formation of learners who are faithful, pious, and of noble character (bertaqwa dan berakhlak mulia) as the paramount goal of national education.

Yet a growing body of empirical evidence reveals a significant structural gap between this constitutional aspiration and the operational realities of teacher formation and deployment. Indonesian teachers—including those employed in Islamic educational institutions (madrasah and pesantren-affiliated schools)—are assessed, recruited, and developed predominantly through administrative, cognitive, and technical criteria that largely neglect the spiritual and character dimensions that are constitutive of Islamic pedagogical authority (Mulyasa 2013; Nata 2016; Wahid 2022). The consequence, as this paper

argues, is an epistemological severance: students receive knowledge detached from an authenticated moral lineage, creating conditions in which the formation of genuine taqwā in learners becomes structurally improbable.

This study introduces the concept of isnad—the authenticated chain of transmission that constitutes the methodological backbone of ḥadīth sciences—as an organising metaphor and structural principle for reconceptualising teacher professionalism in Islamic educational contexts. The argument proceeds as follows: just as the authenticity and reliability of a ḥadīth is determined by the moral character (ʿadālah) and precision (ḍabṭ) of each narrator in its chain of transmission, so too must the formative influence of a teacher be understood as dependent upon the authenticity of the moral lineage through which knowledge and character were transmitted to that teacher. A teacher trained outside this verified chain of exemplarship is, in the lexicon of ḥadīth criticism, analogous to a munqaṭiʿ (broken chain) narrator—structurally incapable of transmitting the full epistemic and moral content of the tradition.

The Prophetic Isnad Model of Teacher Professionalism (PIMT-P), developed in this paper, integrates five attributes of prophetic exemplarship (Ṣiddīq, Amānah, Faṭānah, Tablīgh, and Maʿṣūm) with the institutional mechanisms of teacher formation, recruitment, and evaluation. It does so in explicit dialogue with contemporary scholarship in educational leadership, Islamic management theory, and Indonesian education policy, offering a theoretically coherent and practically implementable framework for systemic reform.

The contribution of this paper is threefold and, in each respect, distinct from the existing prophetic-leadership literature in Islamic educational management. First, whereas prior studies (e.g. Tobroni 2005; Baharuddin and Umiarso 2012) treat the five prophetic attributes primarily as an individual-level leadership or competency profile, this paper reconceptualises them as design principles for an entire institutional system of teacher formation—spanning pre-service curriculum, recruitment, in-service development, and evaluation. Second, and to the authors' knowledge for the first time, it translates the technical apparatus of ḥadīth-narrator criticism (ʿilm al-rijāl)—specifically isnad continuity, ʿadālah, and the graduated Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl taxonomy—into an operational quality-assurance and competency-grading framework for teachers, rather than invoking isnad merely as a rhetorical metaphor. Third, it offers a concrete, policy-translatable architecture (PIMT-P) that links this Islamic epistemological tradition to Indonesia's existing legal and regulatory instruments, yielding specific and testable reform proposals rather than general exhortation. The model is advanced here as a theoretically grounded framework whose empirical validation is set out as an explicit agenda for future research.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews relevant literature across Islamic educational philosophy, prophetic leadership, and Indonesian teacher education reform. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Section 4 develops the PIMT-P conceptual framework. Section 5 presents the model's components and conceptual analysis. Section 6 discusses policy implications. Section 7 concludes with recommendations and directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Islamic Epistemological Tradition and Teacher Formation

The Islamic scholarly tradition has produced a rich and internally coherent body of thought on the nature of the teacher-student relationship and its constitutive conditions. Al-Ghazālī's (1998) Iḥyā ʿUlūm al-Dīn, arguably the most influential text in Islamic educational philosophy, posits that the efficacy of pedagogical transmission is inseparable from the spiritual state (ḥāl) of the teacher. Knowledge divorced from the moral formation of its transmitter risks becoming, in Al-Ghazālī's formulation, a mere ḥujjah (proof against oneself) rather than an instrument of spiritual elevation. Ibn Khaldūn (1967) similarly foregrounds the social and relational dimensions of knowledge transmission, arguing in the Muqaddimah that genuine learning requires not only formal instruction but habitual, sustained contact with a learned and virtuous master.

This epistemological orientation gave rise to what Makdisi (1981) terms the 'isnad pedagogy': a system in which knowledge is authenticated not only through textual verification but through the moral reliability of the human chain through which it is transmitted. The institution of the ijāzah—a formal authorisation granted by a master to a student certifying the authenticity of transmission—embodies this principle and represents, in effect, a pre-modern quality assurance mechanism for educational formation (Meri 2005; Berkey 1992).

Contemporary scholarship has begun to articulate the implications of this tradition for modern educational management. Wan Daud (1989) and Al-Attas (1980) have argued influentially that the Islamisation of knowledge requires the Islamisation of the knower—that is, the moral and spiritual formation of the educator—as a prior condition for authentic Islamic education. More recently, Hussin (2020) and Mohd Yusof et al. (2021) have applied this principle to contemporary Malaysian and Indonesian teacher education, identifying structural deficits in the spiritual formation of teacher candidates as a primary impediment to the realisation of Islamic educational goals.

2.2 Prophetic Leadership Theory in Educational Management

Prophetic leadership (al-qiyādah al-nabawiyyah) has emerged as a significant theoretical framework in Islamic management and organisational studies over the past two decades. Anchored in the Qur'anic designation of the Prophet Muḥammad as uswah ḥasanah (Q. 33:21)—the excellent model of conduct—prophetic leadership theory identifies five core attributes as constitutive of authentic Islamic leadership: Ṣiddīq (absolute truthfulness), Amānah (fiduciary trustworthiness), Faṭānah (situational wisdom and intelligence), Tablīgh (transparent and inclusive communication), and Maṣūm (moral protection and ethical integrity) (Baharuddin and Umiarso 2012; Tobroni 2005).

Applied to educational leadership, this framework has been employed to analyse school principal effectiveness in Indonesian Islamic schools (Wahid 2022; Muhaimin 2015), the ethical dimensions of Islamic university governance (Nata 2016), and the spiritual leadership dimensions of pesantren management (Ziemek 1986; Dhofier 1999). Tobroni's (2005) foundational study in East Java found that principals who embodied prophetic leadership attributes—particularly Amānah and Ṣiddīq—generated significantly stronger trust climates and higher student moral formation outcomes than those who did not.

What remains underdeveloped in this literature, however, is a systematic application of prophetic leadership theory to the full institutional architecture of teacher formation: from pre-service curriculum design and recruitment criteria through in-service development and formal evaluation. The present paper addresses this gap by operationalising prophetic leadership attributes as a multi-level institutional framework rather than an individual competency profile.

2.3 Teacher Professionalism and Character Formation in Indonesian Policy

Indonesia's regulatory architecture for teacher professionalism is extensive. Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers defines four core teacher competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. The personality competency domain, which includes dimensions of moral character and religious practice, is formally recognised within national standards but remains systematically under-operationalised in teacher education curricula and evaluation instruments (Mulyasa 2013; Darling-Hammond 2017).

The Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008, subsequently revised as Government Regulation No. 19 of 2017, further delineates teacher professional standards but retains a predominantly technocratic orientation. Empirical studies conducted within Indonesian LPTK (Teacher Education Institutions) have consistently found that programme designs privilege content knowledge and pedagogical technique over dispositional and spiritual formation (Suminto 2021; Raharjo 2020). In the context of Islamic teacher education, this structural bias is particularly consequential given the tradition's insistence on the ontological priority of the teacher's moral character.

The critical gap between policy aspiration and institutional practice is further compounded by recruitment processes that prioritise administrative credentials (academic transcripts, formal qualifications) over character-based assessment. Mulyasa (2013) notes that Indonesian teacher recruitment has, since the post-Soeharto reforms, become increasingly systematised around formal credentialing while simultaneously losing the informal community-based character vetting mechanisms that historically served as safeguards of moral quality in Islamic educational institutions.

2.4 The Ḥadīth Narrator Tradition as an Educational Quality Framework

The sciences of ḥadīth criticism (muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth) constitute one of the most sophisticated pre-modern systems of human reliability assessment ever developed. The discipline of ʿilm al-rijāl (the science of narrator evaluation) established a comprehensive multi-criterion framework for assessing the trustworthiness of knowledge transmitters across dimensions of religious practice (dīn), moral character (khuluq), cognitive precision (ḍabṭ), and biographical context (tārīkh) (Al-ʿAsqalānī 2002; Al-Nawawī 1994). Crucially, the architecture of ḥadīth criticism rests upon five cumulative conditions for authenticity: continuity of the isnad (ittiṣāl al-sanad), moral rectitude of each narrator (ʿadālat al-rāwī), cognitive precision of each narrator (ḍabṭ al-rāwī), freedom from anomaly (salāmah min al-shudhdh), and—most demanding of all—freedom from hidden defect (salāmah min al-ʿillah). The fifth condition, the detection of ʿillal (hidden defects), represents what classical scholars unanimously regarded as the summit of ḥadīth scholarship, accessible only to a small number of specialists whose mastery combined encyclopaedic memory, comparative chain analysis, and spiritual acuity (Al-Nawawī 1994; Ibn Ṣalāḥ 1986).

The concept of ʿillah (hidden defect) is particularly instructive for educational theory. An ʿillah is a latent flaw in a ḥadīth's chain or text that is imperceptible to the ordinary examiner but becomes apparent to the expert upon deep investigation (Ibn Ṣalāḥ 1986). Common forms of ʿillah include: a chain that appears connected but contains a narrator who never actually met his purported teacher (inqiṭāʿ khafī); a trustworthy narrator who has inadvertently confused the name of his source; a statement originally made by a Companion (mawqūf) that has been mistakenly elevated to prophetic status (marfūʿ); and a reliable narrator who reports something that, while not intrinsically implausible, contradicts the consensus of stronger narrators. The pedagogical analogy is illuminating: a teacher whose formation is apparently complete—who possesses academic qualifications, institutional recognition, and surface-level religious observance—may nonetheless carry latent 'defects' of character formation that, like an ʿillah, render their transmission of moral and spiritual values structurally unreliable. The PIMT-P framework argues that identifying and addressing such latent deficiencies is as important for teacher quality assurance as credential verification.

Brown (2009) observes that the isnad system, at its most refined, constituted an epistemological infrastructure for knowledge authentication that had no parallel in the pre-modern world. The parallel with contemporary evidence-based education practice is striking: just as a ḥadīth's reliability is a function of the cumulative trustworthiness of the chain of narrators through which it was transmitted, the moral formation capacity of an educational institution is a function of the moral quality of the chain of educators who constitute it.

Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, one of the greatest critics of the second Islamic century, stated that the ability to detect ʿillal in ḥadīth was not merely a product of learning but of divinely granted discernment—a form of deep understanding (fiqh) that comes only to those whose scholarly formation is itself morally and spiritually grounded (cited in Al-Dhahabī 1985). This epistemological claim—that reliable transmission requires not merely cognitive precision but integrated moral formation—has direct implications for the question of how teacher competency should be conceptualised and assessed.

This paper proposes that the conceptual architecture of ʿilm al-rijāl provides a productive analogical framework for developing a character-centred approach to teacher recruitment, evaluation, and professional development—one that is epistemologically coherent within the Islamic tradition and practically translatable into institutional policy.

2.5 ʿAdālah, Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl, and the Moral Calibration of Knowledge Transmitters

The concept of ʿadālah (moral rectitude) constitutes the foundational criterion of narrator reliability in classical ḥadīth scholarship. A narrator is considered ʿādil—and thereby qualified to transmit prophetic reports—only if he satisfies a multi-dimensional character profile: Muslim, legally responsible (mukallaf), free from persistent major sin (fisq), possessed of personal dignity (murūʾah), and known by his community to be consistently truthful in word and conduct (Al-ʿAsqalānī 2002; Al-Nawawī 1994). The criterion of murūʾah is particularly instructive: it refers not to extraordinary moral heroism but to the consistent maintenance of the decorum and social behaviour expected of a person of learning and religious authority. A narrator whose daily conduct—in commerce, speech, family relations, and community interaction—does not conform to this standard was disqualified from transmission regardless of the strength of his memory.

The most celebrated illustration of this principle in the ḥadīth literature is the reported practice of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, who is said to have declined to transmit from a narrator he observed deceiving his horse by feigning to offer grain in order to catch it (Al-Dhahabī 1985; Ibn Ḥajar 2002). Al-Bukhārī's reasoning—that a person capable of deceiving an animal may not be trusted to transmit the words of the Prophet without distortion—crystallises the classical position that epistemic reliability and moral character are not separable dimensions of scholarly identity. For the purposes of the PIMT-P framework, this anecdote functions as a paradigm case for character-based teacher evaluation: the small, unguarded behaviours of a candidate in informal contexts may be more diagnostically significant than their formal performance in credentialing assessments.

The institutional expression of ʿadālah evaluation was the science of Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl (critique and commendation), which developed as the formal mechanism by which the scholarly community regulated access to the role of knowledge transmitter. This science established a graduated taxonomy of narrator reliability, ranging from the ṣaḥābī (companion of the Prophet) at the summit—whose collective ʿadālah is affirmed by Qur'anic testimony (Q. 9:100)—through levels of full trustworthiness (tsiqah, tsiqah tsiqah), acceptable reliability (ṣadūq, lā baʾs bih), and varying degrees of weakness (layyin, ḍaʿīf, matrūk), to the outright rejected (muttaham, kadhdhāb) at the base (Ibn Ṣalāḥ 1986; Al-Dhahabī 1985). Critically, a narrator's ranking was not static: it could be revised upward through demonstrated improvement in character and precision, or downward following evidence of moral lapse or cognitive deterioration. The system thus incorporated both a summative assessment function—determining current trustworthiness—and a formative development function—monitoring change over time.

The scholars who occupied the highest rank in this system—the masters of ʿilm al-ʿilal capable of detecting the most subtle hidden defects—numbered extraordinarily few. Classical sources identify ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn, and Al-Dāraquṭnī as among the very small number who achieved this level (Al-Dhahabī 1985). Their rarity underscores a point of significance for teacher education: the production of educators who can reliably transmit not only knowledge but moral formation at the highest level is not an outcome that can be achieved through ordinary institutional processes. It requires sustained mentorship within an authenticated chain of scholarship, extended observation over time, and community validation by recognised authorities—precisely the conditions that the PIMT-P framework proposes to reinstate within the formal architecture of Indonesian teacher formation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is a conceptual paper that employs a structured framework-synthesis approach, integrating theoretical, empirical, and policy-analytical literature across three intersecting domains: Islamic educational philosophy and epistemology, prophetic leadership theory in educational management, and Indonesian teacher education policy and practice. A framework-synthesis design—rather than a full PRISMA-type systematic review with formal quality appraisal—was selected because the study's objective is to develop an integrative conceptual framework rather than to generate, or statistically aggregate, new primary empirical data (Tranfield et al. 2003; Grant and Booth 2009).

3.2 Literature Search and Selection

A systematic search of the Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar databases was conducted, supplemented by searches of the Indonesian national scholarly database SINTA and targeted hand-searching of key journals including the Journal of Islamic Education, Islamic Education Science Journal (EDUKASI), and the International Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology. Search terms included: 'Islamic teacher education', 'prophetic leadership education', 'isnad pedagogy', 'teacher character formation Indonesia', 'pesantren teacher training', 'ṣalāḥiyyah teacher competency', 'ʿilm al-rijāl', 'uswah ḥasanah', and combinations thereof. The search was limited to publications in English, Arabic, and Indonesian published between 1967 and 2024.

The structured search returned approximately 847 items; following title and abstract screening against the relevance criteria above (theoretical, empirical, or policy relevance to Islamic teacher formation, prophetic leadership, or Indonesian education policy), 312 items were retained for full-text reading, from which a working corpus of 89 sources was selected to inform the synthesis. Consistent with a framework-synthesis rather than a systematic-review design, sources were selected for their conceptual relevance to model development and were not subjected to a formal risk-of-bias or quality-appraisal protocol; this reliance on interpretive rather than systematic appraisal is acknowledged as a limitation of

the approach adopted here. Classical Islamic scholarly texts (Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Khaldūn, Al-ʿAsqalānī) were incorporated given their foundational status within the Islamic epistemological tradition under analysis.

3.3 Analytical Framework

Analysis followed the framework synthesis approach recommended by Carroll et al. (2011), which involves the a priori identification of a theoretical framework—in this case, prophetic leadership theory—as a lens through which to interpret and integrate literature, while remaining open to emergent themes that challenge or extend the initial framework. Thematic analysis was conducted iteratively across three rounds of reading, with themes coded against the five prophetic attributes and the institutional domains of teacher formation, recruitment, and evaluation.

4. The Prophetic Isnad Model of Teacher Professionalism (PIMT-P)

4.1 Theoretical Architecture

The PIMT-P framework rests upon three interlocking theoretical pillars: (1) the Islamic epistemology of authenticated transmission (isnad), which asserts that knowledge is most fully and authentically transmitted through verified chains of morally reliable persons; (2) prophetic leadership theory, which identifies five attributes of the Prophet's exemplarship as constitutive of legitimate and effective Islamic leadership; and (3) educational management theory, which provides the institutional design principles for translating these theoretical commitments into operational policy and practice.

The framework conceptualises the teacher formation system as an isnad chain in which each institutional link—pre-service education, mentorship by ulama, recruitment, in-service development, and evaluation—must meet criteria of moral reliability analogous to those applied to ḥadīth narrators. A teacher whose formation has passed through an authenticated, morally verified chain is designated ṣaḥīḥ al-sanad (sound of chain) and is considered institutionally equipped for the full scope of Islamic pedagogical authority. A teacher whose formation has bypassed this chain is designated munqaṭiʿ (broken chain) and is considered structurally limited in their formative moral influence, regardless of academic qualification. The overall conceptual architecture of the PIMT-P framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

4.2 The Isnad Chain of Teacher Formation

Figure 2 illustrates the isnad chain logic applied to teacher formation. Just as the most reliable ḥadīth transmissions trace an unbroken chain from the Prophet through successive generations of verified narrators to the final recipient, the most effective Islamic teacher formation traces an unbroken chain of moral exemplarship from the prophetic tradition through ulama networks, to teacher educators, to pre-service candidates, and ultimately to students.

5. Components of the Model

5.1 The Five Prophetic Attributes as Teacher Competency Dimensions

The conceptual synthesis confirmed the theoretical salience and operational relevance of each of the five prophetic attributes as a dimension of teacher competency within Islamic educational management. Table 1 presents a structured mapping of each attribute to its educational implication and managerial correlate.

Table 1
Prophetic Attributes as Teacher Competency Dimensions: Educational and Managerial Implications

Prophetic Trait	Arabic Term	Educational Implication	Managerial Dimension
Truthfulness	Ṣiddīq (□□□□□□□)	Curriculum and pedagogy grounded in verified knowledge ('ilm ṣaḥīḥ)	Academic integrity policies; evidence-based decision-making
Trustworthiness	Amānah (□□□□□□□□)	Fiduciary responsibility toward students' holistic development	Transparent governance; professional accountability mechanisms
Intelligence / Wisdom	Faṭānah (□□□□□□□□)	Adaptive instructional strategies; critical and reflective practice	Strategic planning; evidence-informed policymaking
Communicative Clarity	Tablīgh (□□□□□□□□)	Clear, accessible, and inclusive communication with learners	Stakeholder engagement; transparent institutional communication
Moral Integrity / Sinlessness	Ma□ṣūm (□□□□□□)	Ethical exemplarship; modeling virtuous conduct in daily life	Ethics codes; safeguarding policies; character-based evaluation

Note: Attribute definitions derived from Baharuddin and Umiarso (2012**)**, Tobroni (2005**), and** Al-Ghazālī (1998**). Managerial dimensions informed by** Nata (2016**) and** Wahid (2022**).**

The synthesis reveals that each prophetic attribute corresponds to a distinct but interdependent dimension of teacher professional identity. Ṣiddīq (truthfulness) undergirds the epistemological integrity of knowledge transmission—it prohibits the dissemination of unverified or misattributed knowledge and aligns with contemporary standards of evidence-based practice. Amānah (trustworthiness) constitutes the fiduciary basis of the teacher-student relationship, establishing the moral conditions under which genuine influence and formation can occur. Faṭānah (wisdom) encompasses not only cognitive intelligence but the situational discernment required to calibrate pedagogy to the developmental needs of individual learners—a quality that Al-Ghazālī identifies as inseparable from spiritual attainment. Tablīgh (communicative clarity) demands that teachers communicate knowledge in ways that are accessible, inclusive, and free from distortion, reflecting both pastoral sensitivity and pedagogical skill.

Ma□ṣūm (moral integrity), while denoting literal sinlessness in the context of prophethood, is reinterpreted within the PIMT-P framework as a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and the proactive avoidance of moral transgression.

5.2 The Isnad-Based Model for Institutional Teacher Development

The second key finding concerns the institutional architecture required to produce teachers who embody these prophetic attributes. The literature synthesis strongly supports a four-stage isnad-based formation model, summarised in Table 2.

Table 2
Isnad-Based Stages of Teacher Formation: Institutional Architecture

Stage	Actor	Isnad Analogy	Institutional Role
Stage 1	Kyai / Ulama	Primary transmitter (first-generation narrator)	Spiritual mentor; character formation guide
Stage 2	Master Teacher (Guru Inti)	Second-generation narrator; verified chain	Pedagogical coach; curriculum integrator
Stage 3	Pre-Service Teacher Candidate	Recipient of authenticated knowledge chain	Reflective practitioner; ethics learner
Stage 4	Students (Peserta Didik)	End beneficiary of the ṣaḥīḥ knowledge tradition	Holistic learner; character and competence development

Note: Model adapted from the ḥadīth transmission tradition as analysed by Brown (2009**)**, Al-□Asqalānī (2002**), and** Berkey (1992**), and applied to teacher formation by analogy.**

Central to this model is the structural integration of kyai/ulama mentorship within LPTK programmes. The literature consistently identifies the absence of institutionalised ulama engagement in teacher education as a primary structural deficit (Mulyasa 2013; Dhofier 1999; Hussin 2020). In traditional Islamic education, the tābi□īn—the generation that succeeded the Prophet's companions—were formed through sustained, direct contact with the companions themselves. Analogously, teacher candidates in the PIMT-P model are formed not primarily through textbook study but through structured mentorship relationships with verified spiritual authorities whose own formation can be traced through an authenticated chain.

5.3 Isnad-Informed Teacher Recruitment Criteria

The third major finding concerns the redesign of teacher recruitment criteria to incorporate character-based assessment within an isnad framework. Table 3 presents the proposed recruitment criteria model.

Table 3
Proposed Isnad-Informed Teacher Recruitment Criteria for Islamic Educational Institutions

Criterion	Observable Indicator	Assessment Method	Islamic Reference
Religious Practice	Regular ṣalāh, fasting, Qur'anic recitation	Portfolio + peer testimony + observation	Q. 29:45; Q. 2:177
Community Standing	Recognition by ulama/kyai in candidate's locality	Letters of attestation from recognized religious figures	Hadith: 'Ask the people of knowledge' (Q. 16:43)
Knowledge Authenticity	Learning sourced from certified teachers with isnad	Documented learning lineage; curriculum audit	'Ilm with sanad tradition
Ethical Conduct	Absence of moral violations; honest dealings	Character reference; behavioral observation log	Prophetic hadith on amanah
Institutional Culture Fit	Alignment with school's Islamic ethos	Structured interview; micro-teaching observation	Maqaṣid al-Sharī□ah framework

Note: Assessment methods are proposed as supplements to, not replacements for, existing academic qualification requirements. Q. = Qur'an surah and verse. Character portfolio modelled on ijāzah documentation practice.

A critical finding of the literature synthesis is the inadequacy of purely administrative recruitment criteria. Mulyasa (2013) and Suminto (2021) both document the displacement of informal community-based character vetting by formal credentialing processes, arguing that this transition has removed historically effective safeguards against the appointment of teachers whose moral formation is inadequate for the task of Islamic character education. The PIMT-P framework reinstates character as a primary recruitment criterion through the mechanism of the character portfolio—a documented record of the candidate's spiritual practice, community recognition by ulama, and learning lineage.

This approach parallels the methodology of □ilm al-rijāl, in which a narrator's reliability was assessed through a structured investigation of their biographical circumstances, community reputation, and learning chain rather than through examination of credentials alone. The innovation lies in translating this traditional evaluative methodology into a contemporary institutional process that is both systematically applicable and legally compliant with Indonesian labour and education law.

5.4 The Jarh wa Ta□dil Framework as a Teacher Quality Taxonomy

A fourth and novel finding concerns the direct applicability of the classical Jarḥ wa Ta□dīl taxonomy as a graduated teacher reliability and competency framework within the PIMT-P model. The literature synthesis demonstrates that the multi-tiered system developed by classical scholars for evaluating narrator trustworthiness maps coherently onto the differentiated needs of teacher quality assurance in Islamic educational institutions. Table 4 presents this correspondence systematically.

Table 4
Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl Reliability Taxonomy Mapped to the PIMT-P Teacher Competency Levels

Classical Rank	Arabic Term	Classical Meaning	PIMT-P Teacher Equivalent	Institutional Response
Tier I (Highest)	Tsiqah tsiqah / Hafiz	Supremely reliable; profound integrity and precision	Kyai / Master Teacher with verified isnad lineage	Authorised to mentor and certify other teachers
Tier II	Tsiqah / Saduq	Reliable and truthful; minor lapses not disqualifying	Certified teacher with sound character portfolio	Full appointment; eligible for promotion and mentoring roles
Tier III	La ba's bih / Salih	Acceptable; no major defects; some weakness noted	Probationary teacher; character under active development	Supervised posting; assigned kyai mentor; annual review
Tier IV	Layyin / Mahall nazar	Weak; reliability questionable; transmitted with caution	Candidate with identified character or formation deficits	Not appointed; referred for intensive spiritual formation
Tier V (Rejected)	Matruk / Kadhdhab	Abandoned or exposed as fabricator; no transmission accepted	Candidate whose conduct fundamentally contradicts Islamic pedagogical authority	Permanently disqualified; safeguarding referral if required

Note: Classical taxonomy derived from Ibn Ṣalāḥ (1986), Al-Dhahabī (1985), and Al-ʿAsqalānī (2002). PIMT-P teacher equivalents and institutional responses are original interpretive contributions of this paper. Colour coding: green = appointment-ready, yellow = conditional, red = disqualified.

The taxonomy's most critical insight for contemporary teacher policy lies in the distinction between Tier III (La ba's bih—acceptable with monitored supervision) and Tier IV (Layyin—weak, requiring remediation before transmission is permitted). In ḥadīth scholarship, a Tier III narrator's traditions were accepted but always transmitted with a note of caution; a Tier IV narrator's reports were set aside pending further investigation. Applied to teacher formation, this distinction argues for a structured probationary system in which teachers whose character portfolios reveal incomplete formation are assigned to supervised posts with active kyai mentorship—rather than the binary hired/not-hired decision that currently characterises Indonesian teacher recruitment. The graduated model also incorporates the classical principle of dynamic re-evaluation: a narrator's rank could be revised upward following evidence of moral improvement, providing the epistemological basis for a continuous professional development system oriented toward character formation rather than merely technical skill acquisition (Al-Dhahabī 1985; Ibn Ḥajar 2002).

Perhaps most striking for contemporary educational managers is the classical tradition's treatment of hidden defects (ʿillal) in the teacher formation context. Imam al-Bukhārī's reported practice of declining to transmit from a narrator he had observed deceiving a horse—a seemingly minor and private act of

dishonesty—encapsulates a principle of profound institutional significance: the small, unobserved behaviours of a teacher candidate may be more diagnostically reliable indicators of their formation than their performance in formal assessment contexts. This principle argues for assessment methodologies that privilege sustained community observation, portfolio evidence of daily religious practice, and attestation by recognised spiritual authorities over the point-in-time examinations and credential reviews that currently dominate Indonesian teacher evaluation. The PIMT-P model proposes that these classical assessment principles be operationalised through the character portfolio mechanism described in Section 5.3, supplemented by structured observation reports from kyai mentors over a minimum one-year probationary formation period.

6. Discussion

6.1 Implications for LPTK Curriculum Reform

The PIMT-P framework has significant implications for the curriculum design of Indonesian teacher education institutions. The persistent dominance of technocratic competency frameworks in LPTK programmes—documented by Darling-Hammond (2017) internationally and Raharjo (2020) in the Indonesian context—represents a structural misalignment with the formative requirements of Islamic education. The framework proposed here does not advocate the abandonment of pedagogical and content knowledge formation; rather, it argues for the embedding of these competencies within a broader programme of spiritual and character formation supervised by credentialed ulama mentors.

Concretely, this would require LPTK institutions—particularly those under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama)—to establish formal mentorship partnerships with recognised pesantren networks, to redesign practicum experiences to include community-based character formation components, and to develop assessment instruments capable of capturing ṣalāḥiyyah competencies alongside conventional pedagogical measures. These recommendations are consistent with the spirit of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Moderate Islam (Islam Moderat) educational policy agenda, though they demand more systematic institutionalisation than current policy frameworks provide.

6.2 Ulama Networks as Institutional Quality Infrastructure and Living Isnad Repositories

A distinctive contribution of the PIMT-P framework is its reconceptualisation of kyai and ulama networks—which Dhofier (1999) and van Bruinessen (1995) identify as the most extensive informal educational infrastructure in Indonesia—as a potential quality assurance resource for the formal teacher education system. Rather than treating pesantren and LPTK as parallel but separate systems, the PIMT-P model proposes their structural integration as institutionally complementary, with ulama providing the character formation and spiritual mentorship components that formal LPTK programmes currently lack.

The classical ḥadīth tradition is instructive here. The scholars who reached the summit of ʿilm al-ʿilal—the capacity to detect the most subtle hidden defects in transmitted reports—were universally those whose own formation had occurred within unbroken mentorship chains of the highest quality. ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī is reported to have said that he did not know anyone who understood the defects of ḥadīth as Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal did; Ahmad in turn consistently deferred to his teacher Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān on the most difficult cases (Al-Dhahabī 1985). This recursive structure of mentorship—in which each master was himself formed by a master of still greater depth—is precisely what the PIMT-P framework seeks to institutionalise within Indonesian teacher education. The kyai networks that Dhofier (1999) and van Bruinessen (1995) document do not merely preserve traditional knowledge; they are living repositories of the authenticated formation chain whose structural integration into LPTK programmes would reconnect formal teacher education with its most reliable source of moral calibration.

The tradition of Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl further illuminates the institutional design requirements for effective ulama engagement. Classical critics did not operate as solitary evaluators; they constituted a distributed scholarly community in which assessments were tested through dialogue, challenged, and revised. The consensus judgment of this community—rather than any individual critic's opinion—constituted the authoritative verdict on a narrator's reliability (Ibn Ṣalāḥ 1986). Applied institutionally, this principle argues not for the appointment of a single kyai advisor to an LPTK programme but for the establishment of a structured consultative council (majlis al-taqwīm) of recognised ulama whose collective assessment of teacher candidates and formation programmes would provide the moral calibration function that no individual—however learned—can reliably provide alone.

This integration would also address a concern raised by Wahid (2022) regarding the erosion of the ulama's educational authority in the face of secular professionalisation pressures. By formally recognising the kyai's role as a verified character mentor within the teacher formation system, the framework both strengthens the institutional standing of ulama networks and grounds formal teacher education in the authenticated moral lineage that the Islamic tradition requires. The precedent of Imam al-Bukhārī—who reportedly discarded the testimony of a narrator not because of any defect in his ḥadīth transmission but because of a single act of petty deception observed in an entirely different context—should serve as an enduring reminder that the moral authority of the teacher, like the moral authority of the narrator, is a holistic and indivisible quality that cannot be compartmentalised into professional and private spheres (Al-Dhahabī 1985; Ibn Ḥajar 2002).

6.3 Policy Recommendations

Table 5 synthesises the policy implications of the PIMT-P framework across the four domains most urgently requiring reform.

Table 5
Policy Reform Recommendations Derived from the PIMT-P Framework

Policy Domain	Current Gap	Proposed Reform	Responsible Actor
Teacher Education (LPTK)	Secular-technical bias; limited spiritual formation	Integrate ṣalāḥiyyah competencies into curriculum	Ministry of Education; LPTK leadership
Recruitment	Administrative criteria dominant; character overlooked	Introduce isnad-based character portfolio	School principals; regional education offices
In-Service Training	Predominantly cognitive/technical CPD	Kyai-mentored spiritual development programs	Ministry of Religious Affairs; pesantren networks
Performance Appraisal	Academic metrics only; no character dimension	Add ṣalāḥiyyah index to teacher evaluation	National Teacher Certification Board (BPGP)

Note: LPTK = Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan. BPGP = Balai Peningkatan Guru dan Pendidik. Recommendations are aligned with Law No. 20/2003, Law No. 14/2005, and the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024.

6.4 Comparative Dimensions

The PIMT-P framework has relevance beyond the Indonesian context. Malaysia's Excellent Teacher Programme (Guru Cemerlang) has increasingly incorporated spiritual competency dimensions following research by Hussin (2020) and Mohd Yusof et al. (2021). In the Arab world, renewed interest in the revival of the ijāzah system within university teacher education has been documented by Meri (2005) and Berkey (1992). The present framework's contribution is to provide a theoretically integrated and institutionally operationalised model that can serve as a template for adaptation across different national educational contexts.

7. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the crisis of teacher character in Indonesian Islamic education is not primarily a matter of individual moral failure but of systemic structural deficiency: the formal teacher education system has, over several decades, progressively severed the institutional connections to the authenticated moral lineage through which formative character transmission has historically occurred in the Islamic tradition.

The Prophetic Isnad Model of Teacher Professionalism (PIMT-P) developed in this paper offers a theoretically grounded and institutionally operationalised framework for addressing this deficit. By integrating the five prophetic attributes of Islamic leadership—Ṣiddīq, Amānah, Faṭānah, Tablīgh, and Ma□ṣūm—with the institutional logic of the ḥadīth isnad tradition, the model provides a coherent architecture for reforming teacher formation, recruitment, professional development, and evaluation in Indonesia.

The implications of this framework are systemic rather than incremental. They require a fundamental reorientation of LPTK curriculum design to embed ṣalāḥiyyah formation alongside pedagogical training; the structural integration of kyai and ulama mentorship networks as a recognised component of teacher education quality infrastructure; the development of isnad-informed character portfolios as a substantive element of teacher recruitment; and the incorporation of prophetic attribute dimensions into national teacher evaluation standards.

Future research should focus on: (1) the empirical testing of PIMT-P components through longitudinal studies in Indonesian LPTK and madrasah contexts; (2) the development and validation of ṣalāḥiyyah assessment instruments for use in teacher recruitment and evaluation; (3) comparative study of ulama mentorship integration models in Malaysia, Egypt, and Turkey; and (4) the legal and regulatory feasibility analysis of character portfolio requirements within existing Indonesian teacher certification frameworks.

The horizon implied by this framework is not merely institutional but civilisational: the recovery of the authenticated moral lineage through which the Islamic educational tradition has historically formed not only teachers, but the generations of righteous scholars and citizens who constitute its most durable legacy.

Declarations

Author Contribution

K.R. conceived the study, designed the theoretical framework, wrote the main manuscript draft, and performed the final editing and revision. R.D. conducted the literature review, conceptual analysis, and model development. S.M. designed the methodology, verified references, and provided critical review of the content. E.S. prepared the tables and figures, checked content consistency, and edited the language. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Figures

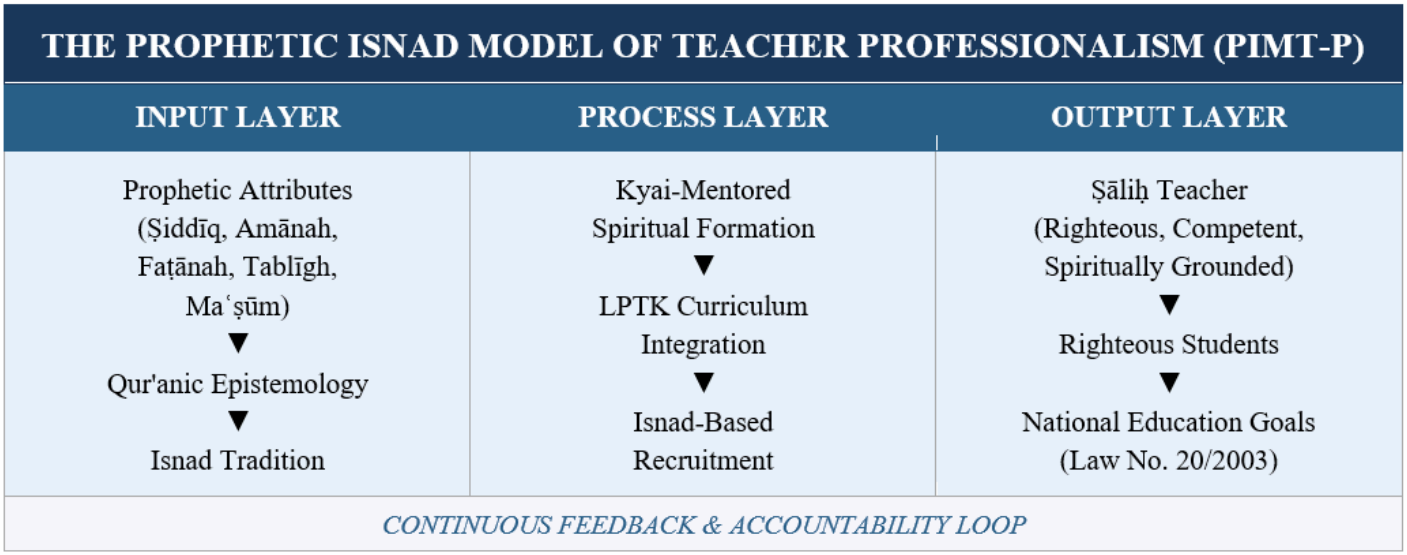


Figure 1

The Prophetic Isnad Model of Teacher Professionalism (PIMT-P): Conceptual Framework *(Adapted from Baharuddin & Umiarso, 2012; Brown, 2009; Al-'Asqalani, 2002)*

Source: Developed by the authors, adapted from Baharuddin & Umiarso (2012), Brown (2009), and Al-'Asqalani (2002). Note: PIMT-P = Prophetic Isnad Model of Teacher Professionalism. LPTK = Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan (Teacher Education Institution). Arrows indicate direction of formative influence and accountability.

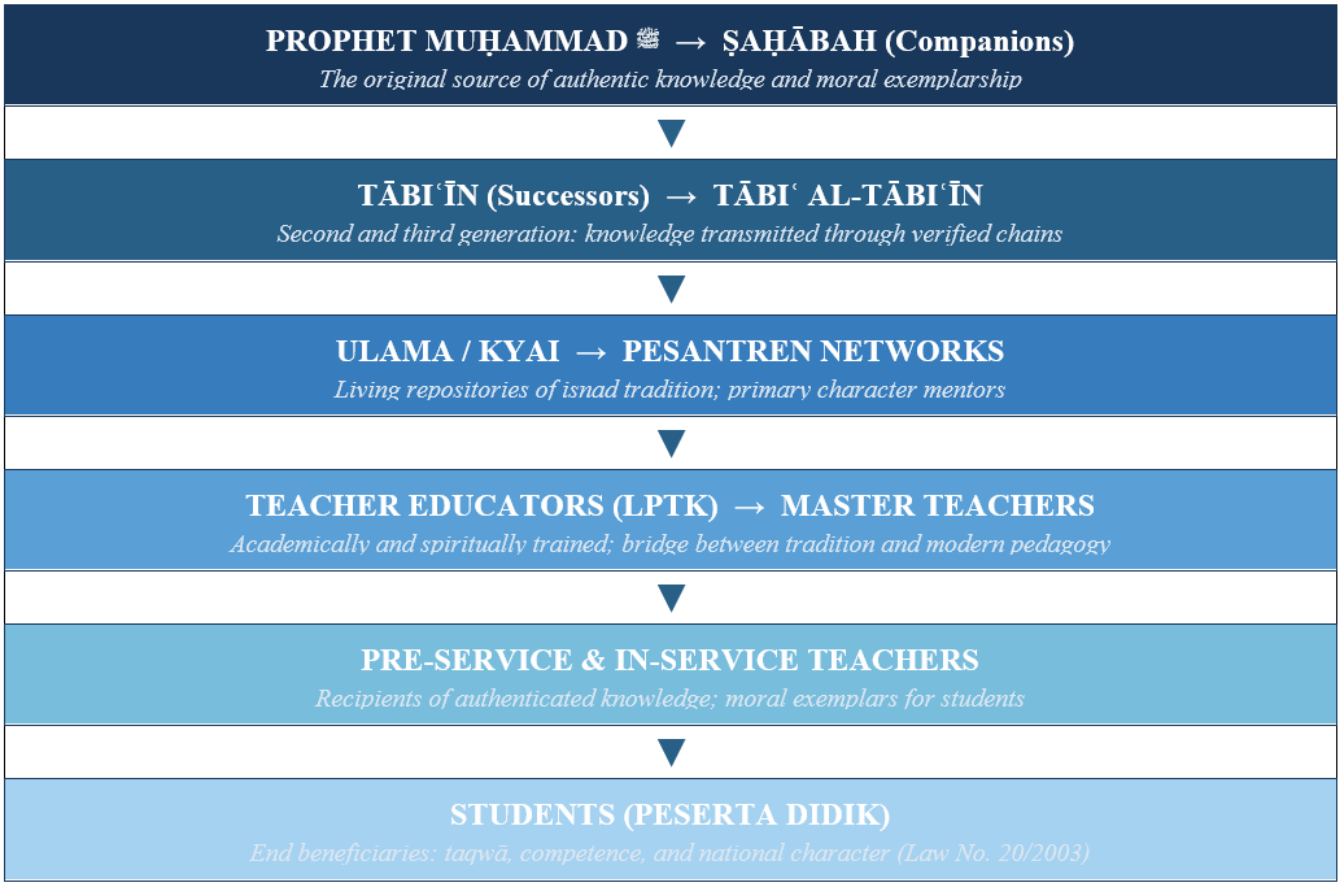


Figure 2

The Isnad Chain of Authenticated Teacher Formation *(Adapted from Brown, 2009; Al-'Asqalani, 2002)*

Source:Developed by the authors based on a synthesis of prophetic leadership theory, the science of ḥadīth transmission, and educational management (Baharuddin & Umiarso 2012; Brown 2009; Al-Asqalānī 2002). Note: The chain follows the logic of ḥadīth isnad verification. Each link must satisfy criteria of adālah (moral rectitude) and ḍabṭ (cognitive reliability) for the transmission to be classified as ṣaḥīḥ.