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## PERSONAL QUALITIES IN TEACHERS THROUGH CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

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### Abstract:

This study aims to explore teachers' personal qualities in facing challenges in today's education using the Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) design. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with 26 study participants selected through purposive sampling. Research analysis, including initial and focused coding, was conducted according to Charmaz's recommendations. Findings of this study indicate that personal qualities of teachers consist of the *mahmudah* and *mazmumah* personalities. This study reveals that teachers face various challenges in the current education system, including personal challenges, teachers' workload, and students' attitudes, as well as how teachers implement strategies to address these challenges. In terms of substantive theory, the researcher identified four main themes: teacher personality, aspects of influence, strategies, and the role of teachers in addressing educational challenges. The overall relationship between these main themes forms a theoretical model. This model demonstrates that teachers always face various challenges in education and need to overcome them through strategies and roles involving multiple parties, which, in turn, influence the personal qualities of teachers. In conclusion, teachers' experience and strategies for facing challenges are the key to addressing educational challenges and identifying the personal qualities of teachers. The implication is that the substantive theories and theoretical models developed for the study can benefit educational psychology and school education by enabling the implementation of intervention programs for teachers to address current educational challenges.

#### Keyword:

Challenge, Grounded Theory, Personal Quality, Strategy, Teacher



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## Introduction

Researchers conducted this study to explore teachers' personal qualities in facing the challenges of being educators today using the Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) method. The CGT method was selected as the study design since it aligns with the study's objective of exploring the personal qualities of teachers, focusing on how they address challenges as educators. Furthermore, due to the challenges of today's education, teachers are likely to consider strategies to address them. With this, the teacher's personality can be identified as a good personality (*mahmudah*) or the opposite (*mazmumah*). This study focuses on educators serving in secondary schools to develop substantive theories and build theoretical models grounded in them.

Education is a necessity to develop an individual's potential. The main purpose of national educational institutions is to disseminate knowledge, educate students to be knowledgeable and self-aware, and help them succeed while also providing service to religion, race, and country. However, adults are often confronted with various controversial issues involving educational institutions, teachers and school students. Various incidents occur due to various factors, leading educational institutions to be viewed negatively and labeled as no longer a safe place to learn. Consequently, this has a significant impact on school institutions and even on teachers.

Among the issues that often occur in schools are bullying, sexual harassment, depression, promiscuity, truancy, aggressive behavior of students towards friends and teachers, and many more (Mohd Erfino, Norazmi, Muahmmad Ghazi Faris & Madihatun, 2025). This proves that there are still shortcomings caused by various factors that affect school management and relationships between students, teachers, and parents, which have been seen to date as having no end in sight. Such issues involve students and teachers who experience difficulties in performing their duties as educators. Unlike students, teachers face more serious problems, especially in relation to work administration management and the teaching-learning process (Validiner, Mohd Razimi & Tajul Rosli, 2025).

As time passes, the researcher, who is also an educator, has not escaped the various challenges of today's education. Researchers often hear teachers complain about their desire for early retirement, as they feel tired and exhausted from the workload, in addition to other current challenges. According to Berita Harian (2025), the Ministry of Education of Malaysia (MOE) reported that more than 19,179 teachers have retired early since 2022. The current world of education is also increasingly challenging, driven by technological developments to meet the needs of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Ismail, 2025). Therefore, various problems arise, especially regarding senior teachers' handling and application of technology in education. They feel they are no longer in step with the rapid pace of technology compared to young teachers

who have just started working. As a result, all technology-related tasks are assigned to young teachers, which also makes them feel stressed and depressed.

Moreover, teachers feel bullied when given tasks without regard for the burden they entail. Likewise, there are issues linking the leadership of the school administration with teachers, such as dissatisfaction, which can make the relationship between teachers colder. In line with this, teachers have complained about the attitude of some administrators, who are selfish and do not care about the teachers under them. This certainly affects their work performance (Rosni, 2025), and even the relationship between teachers is affected, like a tree with rotten roots, causing the fruit to be of poor quality, bitter and sour. Correspondingly, the author reflects on what may have caused the problems and to what extent they can be blamed on various stakeholders. The recurrent nature of such issues also raises concerns about whether they will persist in the absence of satisfactory, sustainable solutions. As a result, the researcher intends to explore the personal qualities of teachers to overcome the problems in education today. The researcher seeks to elicit educators' expressions, opinions, and suggestions regarding the personal qualities and the problems they have encountered throughout their careers. Therefore, the researcher is called upon to conduct an in-depth study of teachers to identify the best personal qualities in teachers and ways to address education challenges.

### ***Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) Approach***

In unraveling the controversial issues in the field of education, the researcher uses the Grounded Theory (GT) research design. GT research is used to study a phenomenon or situation in a real or natural context (Siregar, 2025). GT involves collecting data, such as interview transcripts, which are then analyzed to produce codes and categories. Data collection is obtained from study participants or study areas and through systematic data analysis (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019).

The researcher chose a GT research approach grounded in Constructivism to identify personal qualities among teachers, and the study was conducted inductively. Grounded research is unique in that data collection and analysis occur simultaneously (Noviar, Jayanti, & Badli, 2019). The production of a substantive theory in GT is based on data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2001), which are conducted simultaneously in a cyclical, continuous manner until a theory is developed (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022).

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The main purpose of this study is to collect qualitative data that can provide further explanation of how teachers define, interpret, and respond to the personal qualities they must possess as educators to face today's challenges. The findings aim to explore teachers' experiences of educational challenges, the strategies they use to address them, and the personal qualities they identify in themselves. This study involves teachers in secondary schools with a single school session. After the study's findings are obtained, the researcher develops a substantive theory and a related theoretical model.

### ***Research Questions***

The research questions of this study are :

- i. What are the identifiable personal qualities found in teachers?

- ii. What are the challenges faced by teachers in education today?
- iii. How do teachers face educational challenges through strategies that can be adopted?
- iv. What are the substantive theories and theoretical models that are formed as a result of educational challenges and teachers' strategies in facing those challenges?

## **Definition of Terms and Operational**

### ***Personal Quality***

According to Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (2014), quality refers to the degree of excellence and quality of something, while the meaning of personal is the nature, behavior or attitude that is already integrated with oneself. Therefore, personal qualities are attributes or characteristics demonstrated by an individual, such as the ability to get along with or socialize with people, as well as responsibility and sensitivity that contribute to the individual's success. In addition, the personal quality of a teacher is defined as the overall attribute that exists in an individual and can be explained by existing noble values (Lim, Nurul Shahidah, Abdull Sukor, Tang & Mastora, 2022).

In this study, the operational definition of personal quality refers to the characteristics of an individual teacher serving in secondary schools. An individual is deemed to have personal qualities when they exhibit good behavior or personality and stand out or perform well in a given task. The personal qualities of a teacher consist of both good and bad qualities consistently practiced in the task of educating students. This quality is also a yardstick for how teachers face challenges in today's education field, which is increasingly advanced and rapid, like mushrooms that grow after the rain.

### ***Substantive Theory***

According to the Language and Library Council (2014), a theory is an opinion or principle put forward as the basis for the formation of a body of knowledge. Substantive theory is a theory that results from data discovery through research (Karuntu, Saerang & Maramis, 2022). This theory is widely used in the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, where it serves substantive and empirical purposes within a body of knowledge.

In this study, substantive theory, in terms of operational definition, is a theory that results from systematic research procedures, especially the CGT research approach used by the researcher. Substantive theory is derived from research findings, such as current educational challenges, strategies teachers use to address them, and personal qualities identified in teachers. Accordingly, the researcher develops a relevant theory after identifying the study's categories and themes.

### ***Educational Challenges***

According to Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (2014), a challenge refers to something that tests a person's ability and perseverance. According to Nurhidayah (2020), a challenge is a competitive situation faced by a person that requires hard work to achieve a goal. Challenges in education are catalysts that affect educational institutions, especially educators and students. Every day, challenges are getting bigger, in line with current developments that demand the use of information technology, effective pedagogical skills, and efficient student management to

ensure that schools are in good condition and under control. Various challenges arise in the use of technology, such as a few teachers who are less skilled with computers and software, especially senior teachers. They consider using these gadgets to be more complex and require more time to prepare.

In the context of this study, various challenges emerge from interviews with study participants. Challenges such as teacher self-challenges, student challenges, administrative and management challenges, and challenges in implementing teaching and learning are synonymous with the teaching profession. All these challenges are a test for teachers in performing their duties as educators. Once these educational challenges are identified, researchers can develop strategies to address them and, subsequently, identify the personal qualities within teachers.

## **Research Method**

### ***Study Participants***

The study participants were teachers from secondary schools in the urban areas of Shah Alam district, Selangor. The selection strategy was simple sampling followed by purposive sampling. Other conditions for selecting study participants were that they must be teachers who teach morning sessions at the school and have served for at least 3 years. This is important to ensure data consistency obtained from teachers, as they are in the same school session and under the same school administration and atmosphere.

### ***Data Collection***

Interview data were collected from study participants by adhering to research procedures established for the study, given that the participants were school teachers. Data collection at schools must adhere to proper procedures to avoid problems later, in addition to complying with research ethics. The researcher submitted an application to conduct the study online to the Education Policy Planning and Research Division (eRas) of the Ministry of Education (MOE). After receiving approval from eRas, the researcher continued the application to the State Education Department (JPN) division in Selangor, where the data collection was to be conducted. Following this, the researcher had to wait for approval from the JPN before proceeding to the District Education Office (PPD) to obtain permission to collect data at the school level. Finally, the researcher himself visited the schools involved to submit the approval letters from the divisions above and obtain permission from the schools so that the teacher interview process could proceed.

The CGT method outlines flexible, systematic, and transparent data collection guidelines, allowing the researcher to review and rearrange the data collection method to improve the information collected (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022). In this way, data that is dense with information and meaningful can be obtained to build appropriate and relevant substantive theories. The researcher has implemented semi-structured in-depth (Foley et al., 2021) and intensive (Charmaz, 2014) interview techniques with study participants, which are suitable for GT studies (Cunningham & Carmichael, 2017).

The data collection process used the interview method, so the interview session was conducted in multiple sessions. After developing a theoretical model, the researcher conducted focus group interviews to refine the model and as a triangulation process in the study (Nor Junainah,

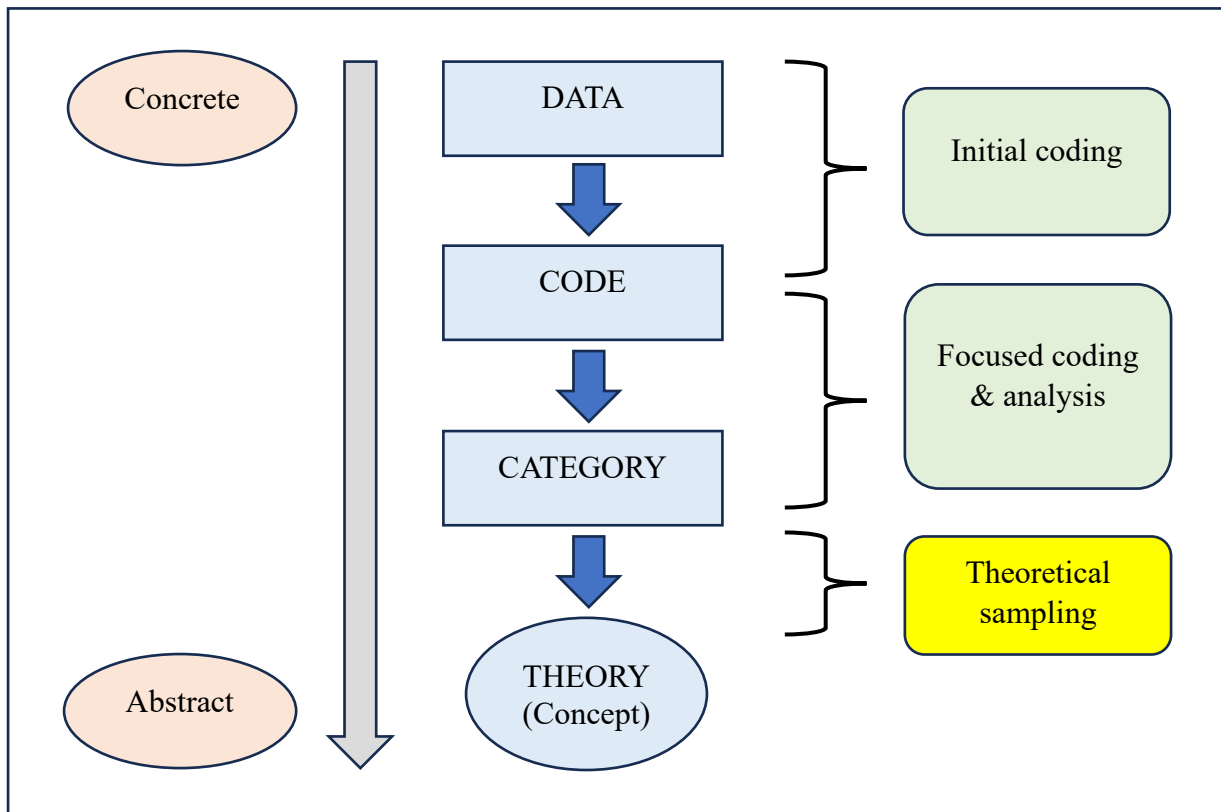
2019). The main purpose of this interview is to achieve theoretical saturation (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). Suppose there is less certain information or there is new information. In that case, the researcher must conduct new theoretical sampling.

### *Data Analysis*

The researcher conducted initial line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2014; Nor Junainah, 2019), in which codes were constructed to categorize the data. Notably, it is a very useful technique during the initial stages of data analysis (Birks & Mills, 2022). Initial codes were obtained from interview transcriptions or field notes. After that, focused coding was conducted by comparing the most significant and frequent codes derived from the initial codes. Using the categories formed, theoretical sampling continued until theoretical saturation was achieved (Charmaz, 2014).

In GT studies, memo writing is a main pillar (Birks & Mills, 2022). Memos are the researcher's personal notes and also a medium for reflecting on the study findings (Clarke, 2005). The researcher will always take memos, that is, write informal notes to ensure that the processes, assumptions, and actions grouped in a category can be described. In addition, the researcher will make constant comparisons between codes with codes, codes with categories, categories with categories, and categories with concepts to form theories inductively and abductively (Birks & Mills, 2022). Each category is carefully analyzed to deepen the researcher's understanding of the new themes emerging from this study.

New themes that emerge are labeled and compared with previous studies. The labeling, data review, and theme identification processes are repeated until a final decision is made on new themes that emerge from the study. Open coding of interview data yields two or more main themes and several subthemes (Kennedy et al., 2022). To increase the validity of the research process, the study findings are confirmed by comparing the emerging data with those from previous studies. The following **Figure 1** is a data analysis procedure adapted from Saldana (2021).



**Figure 1 : Data Analysis Procedures**

Saldana, 2021: 18

**Initial Coding**

The researcher identified initial codes from the study participants’ interviews using line-by-line coding (Birks & Mills, 2022). Based on the interview findings, the researcher identified 227 initial codes and 57 tentative categories, in accordance with the study’s purpose. **Table 1** below shows the example of initial coding and tentative category of this study.

**Table 1 : Example of Initial Coding and Tentative Category**

No.	Initial Coding	Tentative Category
1.	Consider_the_meaning_of_teacher's personal qualities: good characteristics of teachers	1. The meaning of teacher's personal qualities
2.	Consider_the_meaning_of_teacher's personal qualities: good behavior of teachers	1. Caring
3.	The meaning of teacher's personal qualities Consider_the_meaning_of_teacher's personal qualities: respectful	2. Caring

### *Focused Coding*

The researcher analyzed the initial codes and identified focused codes by examining those that stood out in the transcription data. Focused coding consists of a combination of interconnected initial codes. Table 2 shows that by using the focused codes, the researcher identified appropriate tentative categories, subcategories, subthemes, and study themes related to and in accordance with the study's purpose and questions, achieving theoretical data saturation. Based on the data analysis, the researcher developed an appropriate substantive theory and built a theoretical model that describes the relationships among the codes, categories, and study themes.

**Table 2 : Example of Focused Codes, Tentative Categories, Subcategories And Subthemes**

Bil.	Main code	Sub-category	Main Category	Subtheme	Theme
1.	Consider the teacher's personal qualities as good: polite	Caring	Caring	Mahmudah	Teacher's personal
2.	Consider the teacher's personal qualities as good: speaking well				

The researcher achieved data saturation during the 21st participant interview. However, the researcher continued the interview until the 26th study participant to ensure that the data obtained was truly saturated. **Table 3** below shows the coding phase summary of this study.

**Table 3 : Coding Phase Summary**

Phase	Coding	Purpose	Participants
1.	Initial	Categorize codes into tentative categories	26 individual participants
2.	Focused	Extract the most salient codes from the data set	26 individual participants

### *Interview Memo*

The researcher analyzed the initial codes and identified focused codes by examining the codes that stood out from the transcription data obtained. Focused coding consists of a combination of initial codes that are interconnected. Through the focused codes, the researcher listed appropriate tentative categories, subcategories, subthemes and research themes that are related and in accordance with the purpose and research questions that have achieved theoretical data saturation. Through the analysis of the data obtained, the researcher produced appropriate

substantive theories and built theoretical models that describe the relationships between codes, categories and research themes.

The researcher achieved data saturation during the interview of the 21st participant. However, the researcher still continued the interview until the 26th participant to ensure that the data obtained was truly saturated.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

There are four criteria for evaluating CGT studies: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). Credibility involves the extent to which the data collected is sufficient, achieved by asking interview questions, making comparisons at each stage, and analyzing. For example, the researcher's views and actions in finding space to obtain sufficient information demonstrate the researcher's credibility (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021).

Authenticity refers to the interview data obtained, which must be original and reflect the experiences and opinions of the study participants themselves, helping the researcher answer each research question posed (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). In addition, the study's findings can help develop related theories or new concepts (Dunn et al., 2023). Original data will enable a study to be more realistic, reflect the lives of the study participants, and have a greater impact on the study findings.

The next criterion is resonance, in which researchers must be adept at adapting data collection strategies to explain study participants' experiences from the participants' perspectives (Dunn et al., 2023). Researchers can also build their own concepts from the study findings and expand them to answer other questions that may arise during the study (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). The last evaluation criterion is usefulness. Usefulness in GT studies explains that a study finding obtained can help and provide new ideas for conducting future studies (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). Furthermore, it can help other researchers conduct further studies on an issue or problem, especially in this GT study. Recognizing the importance of meeting these four criteria, the researcher paid attention to the process of data collection and analysis, literature writing, substantive theory building, and interpretive writing.

### **Study Findings**

#### ***Personal Qualities in Teachers***

Teachers who face challenges in performing their duties and then seek strategies to overcome them can develop personal qualities. Personal qualities of teachers refer to the attitudes and characteristics that teachers exhibit. In this study, the personal qualities of teachers that can be identified consist of two categories: *mahmudah* and *mazmumah* attitudes. With this, a substantive theory regarding teacher personal qualities is produced.

Teachers' personal qualities refer to the attitudes or characteristics that are present in teachers, especially when carrying out their duties as teachers. Teachers' personal qualities consist of two types, the good personality known as *mahmudah* and the bad or not good personality that is practiced is known as the common attitude of *mazmumah*. The researcher will explain further in the next section about the personal qualities that are present in teachers.

### ***Mahmudah***

A good attitude is a good attitude shown and practiced by a teacher. There are many good attitudes that can be identified in the teachers of the school where this study was conducted. The researcher found that the results of the study showed that teachers are role models or role models for students. Among the good attitudes of teachers are caring, humor, empathy, trust, dedication, accountability and competence. Teachers say that to be a teacher you must have a positive or good attitude. This statement is further reinforced by the statement of one of the study participants as follows:

.. people will usually say that this teacher is good because he will be like an example, a model.. what does he say... a model to these students. Like being a model, an idol. If it were always these teachers... (C3)

Through this, it is clear that it cannot be denied that every day teachers have to deal with students to carry out the teaching and learning process. So, a good teacher is certainly more friendly and close to the students, causing the teacher to be more liked and become the students' favorite and even become a role model for them. Teachers who are close to students can certainly delve into the hearts of students and students are also not shy to share all the problems they face. However, teachers must also set a relationship boundary with their students. In addition, teachers who have a *mahmudah* attitude in their work make themselves a dedicated teacher, able to do their job well, responsible and competent.

### ***Mazmumah***

The attitude of *mazmumah* is a poorly demonstrated, practiced and negative attitude shown by teachers. In this study, the researcher categorized the attitude of *mazmumah* into two types, namely narcissism and civic awareness. The following are statements from several study participants regarding the attitude of *mazmumah*:

...Likes to do his own work. Thinks about himself. Self-centered. Doesn't want to work as a family. But like us senior teachers. Already working as a family. Happy-happy. He seems different. There is a gap there. Between the old senior teacher and the young teacher. The one who just posted... (C20)

...it's not okay to be self-important. He's busy. Actually, everyone is busy. I mean busy. Many people have their own areas of responsibility, right? Everyone has their own areas of responsibility. When he's not the leader. He doesn't want to take the story as an example. So he's on top of everyone else's head. That's what we don't want in a friend like this... (C8)

Meanwhile, the other participants' opinions also said :

...if in terms of teachers, the one I dislike the most is when we give assignments without having done anything, then suddenly give excuses. I don't know. I don't know. It's important for me not to do it. I don't know. I don't want to say that sometimes we get angry. But sometimes we do what we call it. That's what I'm saying is that as public teachers, we have to accept the assignments that are given. We can do it. Try to do the

best we can. If not, if we don't tell them how to ask for guidance and so on. So, if they act stupid and arrogant, we don't want to help either, right? It's like a little ego... (C26)

There are the teachers who think that some teachers have an unfair attitude towards students and like to compare students. In addition, there are also some teachers who are loud enough to argue with school administrators. While there are also those who like to label other teachers and form factions. In terms of task implementation, there are teachers who do not like or refuse when given certain tasks, assuming that they are not skilled and do not know how to do them. These people also have no enthusiasm for learning something new and feel that it is a waste of their time.

### ***Current Educational Challenges***

The researcher identified various challenges in current education from interviews with study participants. Among the current educational challenges are health, teacher workload, and student attitudes.

#### ***Health***

Health challenges are a very serious issue in the field of education. There are two categories of teachers identified by the researcher from the interview findings: those who are not healthy or have existing illnesses that affect their duties at school, and those who perform their duties continuously, which can lead to or invite health problems. This statement is supported by the following statement of the study participants:

...if we work too hard, it is actually not good for our health. So, I always stick to work as much as I can and the best if possible, the best but, not to the point of burdening our bodies, our minds always remind us that even if we are sick, who wants to back us up, maybe for a day or two... (C22)

Likewise, teachers experience health problems when they are too tired to complete an assignment or meet the deadline for submitting it, and they go to bed late at night, often skipping meals and rest time. This is due to administrators' insistence that the assignment be completed or to instructions from their State and District Education Departments.

The implication is that when teachers are unwell, they are limited in their movements and become inactive while performing their duties. This causes teachers to frequently take sick leave to rest at home, which can affect their work performance. In addition to affecting the teachers themselves, this health disorder also affects the teaching process. Teachers who are absent due to illness disrupt the teaching process and the students' teaching syllabus. The effects can be observed in the teachers themselves and the students.

#### ***Teacher's Workload***

A teacher's job extends beyond teaching students; they are also required to perform other duties. Participants in this study stated that many teachers' side tasks involve online work and courses, and their suggestions are as follows:

...reduce the burden on teachers and reduce, reduce the irrelevant things that are important to teachers. Online, online, systems and for example SPLKPM, there are too many courses... (C10)

Some teachers are also forced to take over other teachers' tasks at the instructions of administrators, as shared by the study participants below:

...so, tasks that should be done by other teachers but were rejected outright. For unreasonable reasons. But me, since I am a senior teacher, I am lazy, what do we call it? Lazy, making a lot of noise, right? (C15)

These side tasks have a huge impact on the teacher's real job. Teachers need to focus not only on classroom teaching but also on organizing programs and events, and on taking students to competitions. This is confirmed by the statement below:

...our workload is really heavy, I don't know how much it is, it's because of the programs that are being carried out... (C19)

Teachers also need to manage the collection of contributions from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). For example, when entering the classroom, teachers need to use that time to collect PTA money; therefore, the time to study is decreasing. Hence, there is no effective Management of Instructional Time application. There are various statements from teachers about this side task: it disrupts teaching and learning time, makes teachers feel more tired, and consequently disrupts teacher work performance.

### *Student Attitude*

There are various student backgrounds in school, and this is one of the challenges that leads students to behave poorly since they are surrounded by a community that does not emphasize the importance of education, respect for others, and good morals. This was stated by several study participants below, who highlighted that the student's background plays a crucial role:

...being stubborn like that because his parents drive lorries plays a role.  
So if it's like background people say he is less capable... (C25)

Another participant noted:

...students come from various backgrounds in Malaysia, right? Think of it that way, and we sometimes give examples of students who have problems or any obstacles that cause them to want to stop studying... (C10)

Teachers think that such students need guidance and more attention. Not all students are stubborn and do not listen to teachers' advice. There are also a few who can change when given guidance, especially counseling, and who receive more attention from their teachers. Some teachers take a more caring approach, often asking about students' problems, treating them like a mother, and being close to them, while still maintaining boundaries so as not to overstep and prevent other inappropriate things from occurring.

### *Strategies for Facing Educational Challenges*

Various strategies can be undertaken to face the challenges of today's education. Teachers who face challenges are likely to consistently search for appropriate steps or alternatives, especially strategies for themselves and the school, and they also need support from colleagues. The following are the opinions of study participants regarding teachers' strategies in maintaining good relationships between colleagues to ensure that the working atmosphere is always positive:

...where we can follow, we follow. Aa, maintain relationships with colleagues and maintain relationships with administrators, God willing, God willing, our work will be easy... (C2)

...we want to maintain the relationships that the teacher said. I like harmony. I don't like people looking at me like this; it hurts like that. I want to maintain the harmony that the teacher said because we want to work long hours, right, we really want to work long hours... (C26)

Furthermore, the school, as the main machinery, must also play a role in helping teachers perform their duties, especially in facing the various challenges today. This statement is reinforced by the opinion of the following study participant, who is also a school administrator, regarding school infrastructure facilities:

...ok, for example, no files in office, buy files, make it easier, the facilities need to be provided, so how are they going to do their work if there are no things, for example, no printer, no ink. We buy the disciplinary unit, we are smart about finding money, there is money, etc., but we buy it, provide it, make it easier for them... (C26)

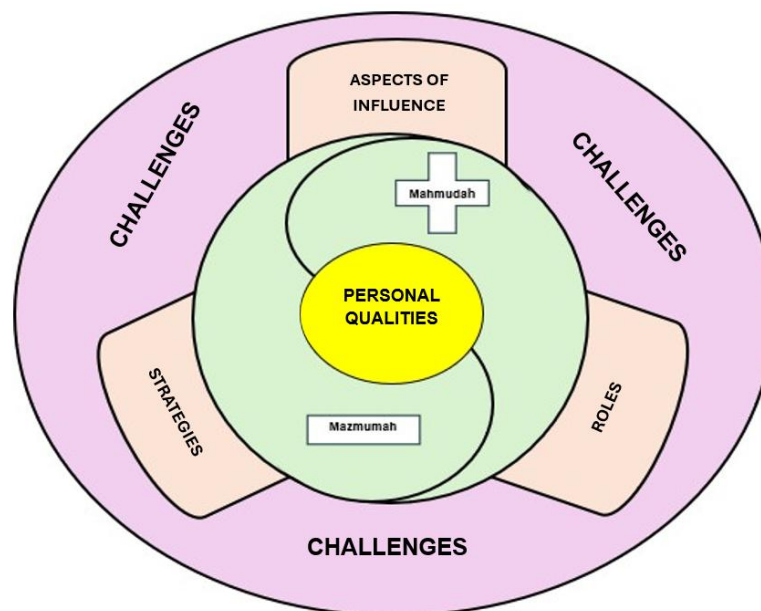
Various infrastructure facilities must be provided by the school to facilitate each unit and the school's management. A conducive school atmosphere can affect teachers' work and performance. Teachers are more likely to be enthusiastic to work since all the equipment and facilities are available. Another strategy that can be practiced involves support from colleagues around teachers, which is very important in creating a harmonious and peaceful school climate. As an educational organization, teachers must collaborate to ensure that the school's vision, mission, and goals are achieved. With this, all tasks and work that are responsible for can be performed excellently and completed in a short period of time. This statement is supported by the opinion of one of the study participants as follows:

...and if it comes to relationships in organizations, we should work together to produce something good. So if we can't work together, that's what we need to avoid. An attitude of not working together, not being tolerant, that's what we need to avoid... (C18)

Teachers who demonstrate this kind of attitude have good personal qualities and are certainly excellent teachers in terms of work management. An attitude of togetherness can make an institution more excellent and successful.

### *Themes, Substantive Theory and Theoretical Model of the Study*

After analyzing the data and conducting focused coding, the researcher identified 57 main categories and subcategories. After that, the researcher identified 17 subthemes, which formed several themes: teacher personality, influence aspects, strategies, and roles. The analysis of the study's findings highlighted that, from their own perspective, school teachers view teacher personal qualities as indicating good qualities and behavior, or, otherwise, as indicating poor qualities and behavior, in performing their duties as educators. For the teacher's personal theme, there are two sub-themes: the teacher's *mahmudah* attitude and the teacher's *mazmumah* attitude. The influence aspect concerns how teachers display their personal qualities while performing their duties. Therefore, the substantive theory for this study is that teachers exhibit a *mahmudah* or *mazmumah* attitude when influenced by various parties through strategies that affect them. The strategies adopted by teachers tend to encourage them to think critically and address the challenges they face in performing their duties in education. **Figure 2** presents the theoretical model of the study, derived from the findings obtained.



**Figure 2: Theoretical Model of the Study**

### **Discussion**

The personal qualities of teachers are a very important aspect and it not only shows that the teachers are excellent in their duties but can also influence the development of students in school in terms of their learning performance and personality (Siti Fatimah, Mohd Farhan, Shamsiah & Wan Hasni, 2024). In this study, there are various personal qualities of teachers that can be identified as existing in teachers, and there are also teachers who are not aware that they have a good personality (*mahmudah*) and vice versa (*mazmumah*). Therefore, this study would like to state that teachers actually show their personal qualities by showing their attitude or behavior towards themselves, family, society and also their students. With this, teachers will be able to identify the influencing aspects of why they behave in this way, especially in facing various challenges in education today.

In this study, educational challenges such as health, workload and student attitudes are critical challenges faced by teachers. Health aspects are the most important aspects of a prosperous life (Mohd Tashdiq et al., 2024). It is the main pillar for an individual to be able to carry out daily activities smoothly. In addition, there are also teachers who experience stress problems with too much work and programs that are carried out too often at school (Azizah, 2022). Teachers' duties are not limited to teaching duties only, but there are also administrative tasks that must be done, causing teachers to experience high work pressure and this is known as teacher workload (Nur Aishah & Shahlan, 2025).

Not only that, among the main challenges in the field of education is the attitude of school students. The attitude of students who lack respect for teachers and there are a few who ignore teachers when reprimanded for mistakes they have made. This may be due to students who have family problems such as their parents having separated (Nur Faeiz & Noremy, 2024) and also their socio-economic background. In addition, the cause of students being rude in the classroom may also be due to students being less interested in learning (Balanadam & Khairul, 2021).

With these educational challenges, teachers must find ways or strategies to face all the challenges ahead. Therefore, the strategies that can be identified consist of the teacher's own strategies, the school organization, and also family and colleagues. Based on the findings of the study data, teachers will improve their teaching skills by gaining knowledge and increasing expertise, especially in mastering educational technology in line with the development of the 4.0 industrial revolution. They also strive to create an interesting and interactive learning environment by applying 21st century learning skills in the classroom.

In addition, the school's organizational strategy can be seen in terms of their administrative and leadership styles in leading the school institution. This is very important because good organizational leadership not only affects teachers but also in terms of student learning to improve academic achievement (Nurul Shuhada & Bity Salwa (2025). Not only that, social relationships between teachers and family, friends and other community groups are considered the closest and most important social support. This is proven by a study from Florynah and Salleh (2022) which shows that social support from parents, family members and friends is very important for teachers in carrying out their duties and can increase their level of job satisfaction. Good social support has an impact on teachers, causing them to feel safer and not alone.

The personal qualities of teachers can be identified through this study through the challenges faced by teachers in today's education. Therefore, teachers need to take the initiative to find ways or strategies to face these various challenges. This is to ensure that they can carry out the teaching and learning process well and produce students who are excellent in terms of academics and their personalities, even making the teacher a person of quality and have a superior personality.

## **Conclusion**

The theoretical model of the study identifies educational challenges as the main catalysts in shaping a teacher's personal qualities and in shaping how teachers behave and take action. Challenges will always exist in the context of education, regardless of direction and aspect. In

the model, they are depicted as ovals with no corners to indicate that educational challenges cycle endlessly.

Based on the study findings, various educational challenges need to be addressed, including health issues, teacher workload, and student attitudes. All of these challenges determine aspects of teacher influence, strategies for how teachers face challenges, and the roles of various stakeholders, and encourage teachers to demonstrate personal qualities of *mahmudah* or *mazmumah*. These personal qualities of teachers are very important in creating teachers who are truly of high quality and demonstrate quality in performing their duties in line with the wishes of the National Education Philosophy.

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