

Designing a Professional Competency Model for Qur'an Teachers: A Qualitative Study Emphasizing Mahdist Teachings

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to design a comprehensive model of the professional competencies required by successful Qur'an teachers, with particular emphasis on Mahdist teachings and the educational principles associated with preparing learners for a Qur'anic and Mahdist society.

Methods and Materials: This qualitative study was conducted using conventional content analysis. The study population consisted of relevant religious and educational documents and faculty members specializing in Qur'an education, education, and psychology. Documents and participants were selected through purposive sampling. Religious sources were retrieved using the Noor Institute's software, while national policy documents concerning education and curriculum were also examined. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts possessing extensive knowledge of the professional competencies of Qur'an teachers within the framework of Mahdist teachings. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded, compared, and organized into subcategories and main categories through conventional content analysis.

Findings: The analysis generated 98 concepts, 18 subcategories, and seven main competency categories. These categories were physical and psychological health, individual foundations, administrative and professional foundations, educational competence, fundamental preparedness, spiritual preparedness, and specialized competence. The proposed model indicated that effective Qur'an teachers require physical well-being, psychological self-regulation, communication skills, professional commitment, administrative discipline, pedagogical knowledge, classroom-management abilities, and competence in contemporary teaching methods. They must also possess Qur'anic and Mahdist knowledge, spiritual commitment, a Qur'anic lifestyle, the ability to communicate religious concepts in age-appropriate language, and the capacity to cultivate justice, hope, responsibility, critical thinking, social participation, and readiness for the promised appearance among students.

Conclusion: Educational authorities should assess these competencies during teacher selection and strengthen areas of deficiency through targeted training programs, professional workshops, counseling, and developmental interventions.

Keywords: Professional competencies; Qur'an teachers; Qur'an education; Mahdist teachings; qualitative content analysis

1. Introduction

Teachers constitute one of the most influential human resources in any educational system because the quality of their knowledge, values, professional judgment, and classroom practices directly shapes students' cognitive, emotional, moral, and social development. Contemporary educational systems therefore increasingly define teacher effectiveness not merely in terms of subject-matter knowledge, but through a multidimensional set of competencies encompassing pedagogical expertise, communication skills, ethical commitment, reflective capacity, technological literacy, classroom management, assessment competence, and continuous professional development. Teacher competency refers to the integrated combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, personal characteristics, and behavioral capacities that enables teachers to perform their professional responsibilities effectively in specific educational contexts. Accordingly, competent teachers are expected to understand learners' developmental characteristics, select appropriate instructional strategies, create supportive learning environments, evaluate learning outcomes, engage in professional collaboration, and adapt their practices to changing social and technological conditions (Abdollahi et al., 2014; Selvi, 2010; Shah Mohammadi, 2014).

Professional competency models provide systematic frameworks for identifying the characteristics required for effective performance and for aligning recruitment, teacher education, evaluation, promotion, and professional development. Such models are particularly valuable because teacher effectiveness is not reducible to a single ability; rather, it emerges from the interaction of personal dispositions, professional knowledge, instructional skills, organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, and the institutional culture in which teaching occurs. Research in different professional domains has similarly shown that competence is multidimensional and should be conceptualized through coherent domains rather than isolated technical skills. For example, systematic evidence regarding educators' competence has highlighted the importance of pedagogical, research, communication, leadership, ethical, cultural, and professional development capabilities (Mikkonen, 2018). Moreover, empowerment and supportive organizational cultures can enhance

employees' motivation, engagement, sense of responsibility, and willingness to perform beyond minimum role expectations (Pradhan et al., 2017; Sandhya & Sulphrey, 2019). In educational settings, these findings imply that professional competency should include both observable teaching abilities and the psychological, ethical, and organizational foundations that sustain effective performance.

The rapid transformation of educational environments has further expanded the scope of competencies expected of teachers. Digital technologies, multimedia resources, online learning environments, educational applications, and new forms of information access have changed the ways in which students learn and interact with educational content. Teachers must therefore be capable of selecting, evaluating, and integrating technological tools in ways that improve learning rather than merely replacing traditional instructional media. The UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers emphasizes the integration of technology with pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, professional learning, and school organization, demonstrating that technological competence is inseparable from broader instructional competence (Unesco, 2011). Studies of student teachers have nevertheless indicated that technological competencies may not always reach the level required for effective technology-supported instruction, thereby highlighting the need for systematic training and competency-based evaluation (Ahmadi et al., 2016). For Qur'an teachers, this issue is especially important because digital applications, recitation software, instructional videos, online religious resources, and interactive platforms can increase learners' access to Qur'anic education, provided that teachers possess the pedagogical judgment required to use them appropriately.

Although the general literature on teacher competency offers valuable conceptual foundations, the competencies required for Qur'an teachers have distinctive intellectual, moral, spiritual, and instructional dimensions. Qur'an education is not limited to teaching reading accuracy or memorization; it is intended to foster understanding, reflection, ethical development, spiritual orientation, and the practical application of Qur'anic teachings in personal and social life. Consequently, Qur'an teachers are expected to combine mastery of recitation, tajwid, Qur'anic concepts, and Islamic teachings with child-centered pedagogy, moral

credibility, effective communication, and the capacity to serve as behavioral role models. The teacher's role from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an is multifaceted and includes instruction, purification, guidance, cultivation of wisdom, moral development, and preparation of learners for responsible participation in society (Abedi et al., 2025). Likewise, descriptions of the superior teacher from a Qur'anic perspective emphasize knowledge, ethical conduct, justice, compassion, patience, responsibility, and consistency between words and actions (Asadi, 2024). Thus, the professional identity of a Qur'an teacher must be understood as an integration of educational professionalism and religious-moral leadership.

The importance of the teacher's personality is particularly pronounced in elementary Qur'an education. Elementary school children learn not only through verbal instruction but also through observation, imitation, emotional attachment, and repeated interaction with significant adults. Teachers' patience, fairness, warmth, assertiveness, enthusiasm, appearance, communication style, and respect for children can influence students' motivation, classroom security, and willingness to engage with learning. The reciprocal influence between elementary teachers and students indicates that teachers' personal characteristics and interactional patterns affect students' academic, behavioral, and emotional responses (Atabak et al., 2016). In Qur'an education, the teacher may additionally shape students' early perceptions of religion, spirituality, prayer, moral obligation, and the Qur'an itself. A teacher who presents Qur'anic instruction through coercion, monotony, or inappropriate expectations may weaken students' interest, whereas a knowledgeable, compassionate, and engaging teacher can establish a lasting positive relationship between the child and the Qur'an. Therefore, professional competency in this field necessarily includes emotional regulation, child-friendly communication, fairness, patience, and the ability to create a psychologically safe learning environment.

Pedagogical competence is another essential component of effective Qur'an teaching. Elementary learners differ in cognitive development, attention span, learning pace, linguistic ability, motivation, and prior exposure to religious instruction. Qur'an teachers must therefore be familiar with educational psychology, developmental principles, individual differences, classroom management, formative assessment, and active teaching strategies. The use of storytelling, games, demonstration, repetition, group activities, visual resources, and gradual instruction can make abstract religious concepts more understandable and

meaningful for children. Formal guidance for elementary Qur'an education has emphasized structured, age-appropriate methods and the alignment of instructional activities with learners' developmental capacities (Anousheh-Pour et al., 2018). Listening and auditory modeling are also regarded as important mechanisms through which elementary students learn accurate Qur'anic recitation, particularly when teachers provide clear, repeated, and technically correct examples (Alamkhah, 2018). Accordingly, mastery of content alone is insufficient unless the teacher can transform that content into developmentally suitable learning experiences.

The curriculum of elementary Qur'an education also requires coherence among objectives, content, teaching methods, and evaluation. Effective instruction depends on the teacher's ability to understand curricular goals, organize content progressively, select appropriate learning activities, and assess whether students have achieved the expected competencies. Research examining elementary Qur'an curriculum models has highlighted the interdependence of objectives, content, instructional methods, and evaluation and has demonstrated that teachers' interpretations of these dimensions influence curriculum implementation (Ghasemi, 2022). Earlier evaluations of elementary Qur'an education outcomes also revealed the importance of examining whether formal programs actually produce the intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes among students (Mirzamohammadi et al., 2012). Historical examination of Qur'an education in elementary schools has further shown that institutional reforms, specialized schools, and curricular changes have altered the organization and implementation of Qur'anic instruction over time (Arghavani, 2012). These developments reinforce the need to define clearly what Qur'an teachers should know and be able to do within contemporary educational systems.

Despite sustained attention to Qur'an education, studies have identified multiple weaknesses in the design and implementation of elementary Qur'an programs. These weaknesses may include inadequate teacher preparation, insufficient instructional time, limited use of active methods, inconsistency between curricular objectives and classroom practices, weak assessment mechanisms, and insufficient adaptation to students' needs. Pathological analyses of elementary Qur'an education programs have documented structural, curricular, instructional, and human-resource challenges that reduce program effectiveness (Khosravi Morad et al., 2020). Research mapping existing studies in Qur'an education has likewise revealed gaps in conceptual

coherence, methodological depth, practical applicability, and attention to neglected dimensions of teaching and learning (Jafari Far & Naghizadeh, 2017). Such findings indicate that improving Qur'an education requires more than revising textbooks or increasing instructional hours; it also requires a comprehensive understanding of the professional competencies that teachers must possess to implement curricula effectively.

Recent studies have continued to demonstrate the central role of teacher strategy in overcoming practical problems in Qur'an learning. Teachers may encounter students with varying levels of reading fluency, limited motivation, pronunciation difficulties, inadequate family support, or insufficient exposure to Qur'anic practices outside school. Analyses of teachers' problems in Qur'an instruction have identified pedagogical, learner-related, resource-related, and contextual barriers that require flexible and professionally informed responses (Guslianto et al., 2024). Effective strategies for improving students' Qur'an-reading ability include appropriate modeling, repetition, individualized guidance, gradual correction, motivational support, and the selection of methods suited to students' levels (Jaafar et al., 2025). In the digital age, Qur'an and Hadith teachers must also stimulate learners' interest amid competition from diverse media and rapidly changing patterns of attention. The purposeful use of digital resources, engaging communication, and adaptive instruction can strengthen students' interest in Qur'an reading when these practices are grounded in sound educational principles (Afriani et al., 2023). These findings support the development of competency frameworks that incorporate instructional adaptability, technological literacy, motivational skills, and responsiveness to learners' needs.

Teacher competency must also be considered in relation to productivity and the broader effectiveness of public Qur'an education. Productivity in this context involves the efficient and meaningful achievement of learning outcomes in reading, memorization, comprehension, familiarity with Qur'anic teachings, and their application in life. Strategies proposed for improving public Qur'an education have emphasized teacher development, curricular coordination, appropriate use of resources, needs-based instruction, evaluation reform, institutional support, and stronger connections among families, schools, and cultural organizations (Khosravi Morad et al., 2019, 2021). These strategies implicitly demonstrate that teacher quality is a decisive factor in translating policy objectives into actual student learning. Even well-designed programs may fail

when teachers lack the required professional, communicative, pedagogical, or spiritual competencies. A competency model can therefore serve as a bridge between the intended goals of Qur'an education and the practical capacities required for their implementation.

The validation of competency constructs in different educational fields also shows that competencies should be defined in relation to the specific subject, learners, and social expectations involved. For instance, work on the professional competencies of teachers responsible for thinking and media literacy has indicated that subject-specific competency frameworks require empirical validation rather than simple adoption from general teaching standards (Kavousi et al., 2023). Similarly, professional competencies identified for effective teachers include dimensions such as subject knowledge, teaching skills, student assessment, communication, professional ethics, classroom management, and continuous learning, but the relative importance and manifestation of these dimensions vary across educational contexts (Abdollahi et al., 2014). Qur'an teachers require these general competencies, yet their responsibilities additionally involve spiritual credibility, familiarity with Islamic sources, correct recitation, interpretation based on authoritative texts, and the ability to connect Qur'anic teachings with students' moral and social lives. Therefore, a context-specific model is necessary to capture the full scope of their professional role.

Within Islamic education, the concept of competence cannot be separated from the foundational aims of human development. Education is understood not merely as the transmission of information but as the cultivation of the whole person in accordance with innate capacities, moral virtues, intellectual growth, social responsibility, and orientation toward divine guidance. The foundations and principles of education in the Islamic tradition emphasize the purposeful development of human beings, the actualization of innate dispositions, moderation, responsibility, moral refinement, and the relationship between knowledge and action (Mahdavian, 2010). From this perspective, a Qur'an teacher should not only convey religious knowledge but should also create the conditions for learners to develop justice, trustworthiness, self-control, critical reflection, compassion, and commitment to the common good. The teacher's own conduct acquires educational significance because moral instruction becomes credible when the teacher embodies the values being taught.

The Mahdist orientation adds a further dimension to Qur'an teacher competency. Mahdist teachings are

associated with belief in Imam al-Mahdi, expectation of the promised reappearance, hope, justice, moral readiness, resistance to corruption, social responsibility, and participation in preparing society for an ideal order grounded in divine values. Classical sources concerning Imam al-Mahdi emphasize the completion of divine guidance, the continuity of the Imamate, and the spiritual and social significance of awaiting the promised Imam (Shaykh Saduq, 2003). The theological foundations of the Imamate of the Ahl al-Bayt, including arguments based on Hadith al-Thaqalayn, establish the inseparable relationship between the Qur'an and the guidance of the Prophet's household (Rabbani Golpayegani, 2013). Consequently, Qur'an education informed by Mahdist teachings should connect Qur'anic knowledge with the values of justice, ethical purification, hope, responsibility, loyalty to divine guidance, and active preparation for a righteous society.

A Mahdist-oriented Qur'an teacher is therefore expected to do more than provide information about the doctrine of Mahdism. Such a teacher should be able to translate its values into age-appropriate educational experiences that foster hope rather than passivity, responsibility rather than mere verbal belief, and justice-oriented conduct rather than abstract knowledge. The teacher must possess sufficient knowledge to distinguish authentic teachings from distortions, exaggerations, and misconceptions. At the same time, the teacher should cultivate students' emotional and moral attachment to Qur'anic and Mahdist values through compassionate interaction, credible role modeling, meaningful rituals, prayer, storytelling, and opportunities for social service. These responsibilities require an integrated competency structure that includes theological knowledge, spiritual character, pedagogical skill, psychological maturity, communication ability, and professional commitment. Without such integration, Mahdist education may become fragmented, overly theoretical, or disconnected from children's daily experiences.

The need for a comprehensive competency model is further strengthened by the diversity of expectations placed on contemporary Qur'an teachers. They must operate within formal administrative systems, comply with school regulations, document student progress, collaborate with colleagues, communicate with families, use technology, respond to children's emotional and developmental needs, and maintain professional growth. At the same time, they are expected to demonstrate Qur'anic ethics, correct recitation, religious knowledge, spiritual discipline, and commitment to the formation of a Qur'anic generation. General teacher

standards and existing studies address some of these dimensions, but they do not fully explain how personal, administrative, pedagogical, spiritual, Qur'anic, and Mahdist competencies should be integrated into a unified model. The fragmented nature of previous research makes it difficult for educational authorities to recruit suitable teachers, design specialized training programs, evaluate performance, and identify competency gaps requiring intervention.

Moreover, much of the existing literature on Qur'an education has focused on curriculum, instructional methods, program evaluation, reading performance, technological challenges, or general characteristics of effective teachers. Comparatively less attention has been paid to constructing an empirically grounded model that derives professional competencies from both expert experience and relevant religious and educational documents. Conventional qualitative content analysis offers an appropriate method for addressing this gap because it enables categories to emerge from participants' accounts and documentary evidence rather than imposing a predetermined framework. By integrating the perspectives of specialists in Qur'an education, education, and psychology with religious and upstream educational documents, a qualitative model can reflect both normative Islamic principles and practical professional requirements. Such a model may provide a more comprehensive foundation for teacher selection, preservice preparation, in-service education, competency assessment, and policy development.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to design a model of the professional competencies of Qur'an teachers with emphasis on Mahdist teachings.

2. Methods and Materials

The present study employed conventional qualitative content analysis. Through content analysis of the interviews, the researcher extracted the concepts and subsequently classified them to identify the subcategories and main categories. In the qualitative phase, the study population consisted of documents related to the research topic and faculty members specializing in Qur'an education, education, and psychology.

The sample consisted of documents and semi-structured interviews selected through purposive sampling. Some of the documents were religious sources related to the research topic, which were retrieved using software developed by the Noor Institute. Regarding upstream policy documents,

materials related to education and curriculum were examined. The interview participants were faculty members specializing in Qur'an education, education, and psychology. Sampling continued until data saturation was achieved.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The Guba and Lincoln framework was used to assess the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was established based on the criteria of transferability and confirmability. To ensure confirmability, the extracted codes, subcategories, and categories were provided to the supervisors and advisors so that they could evaluate the accuracy of the analytical

process. To ensure transferability, the research process and the decisions made throughout the study were documented in detail, and the thesis was prepared in written form, thereby enabling other researchers to trace the research process and its various stages.

3. Findings and Results

In response to the question, "In your opinion, what competencies or qualifications should a successful Qur'an teacher possess based on Mahdist teachings?" a total of 98 concepts, 18 subcategories, and 7 main categories were identified, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Concepts, Subcategories, and Main Categories Identified in Response to the Question Concerning the Competencies of a Successful Qur'an Teacher Based on Mahdist Teachings

Main category	Subcategory	Concept	No.
Physical and psychological health	Physical health	Possessing physical health (11, 14, 17)	1
		Engaging in exercise and physical activity (11, 12, 15)	2
		Maintaining a neat and well-groomed appearance (11, 12, 13, 15, 18)	3
	Psychological health	Possessing psychological health (10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17)	4
		High self-esteem and self-control (11, 12, 14, 15)	5
		Ability to identify and manage one's own emotions (2, 4, 11)	6
		Enthusiasm for and commitment to continuous learning (4, 9, 10, 11, S2)	7
		Ability to analyze issues (11, 14, 17)	8
		Cognitive flexibility (11, 13, 15)	9
Individual foundations	General knowledge	Planning, behavioral discipline, and mental organization (3, 4, 11, 13, 14)	10
		High scientific competence and broad general knowledge (3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18)	11
		Being knowledgeable and up to date (6, 10, 11, 14)	12
		Awareness of sociocultural needs (8, 11, 15, 16)	13
		Computer literacy (11, 12, 14, 17)	14
		Awareness of educational and school regulations (S1, 11, 16)	15
		Cooperation and exchange of ideas with other teachers (10, 12, 13, 18)	16
	Personality characteristics	Compassion and appropriate interpersonal conduct (6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16)	17
		Seriousness and assertiveness (6, 12, 16)	18
		Being caring and kind (N3, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17)	19
		Being tireless and hardworking (6, 8, 12, 14)	20
		Being moderate and balanced (6, 10, 11, 14, 15)	21
		Living simply and avoiding unnecessary formality (6, 11, 12, 13, 17)	22
		Possessing patience and tolerance (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12)	23
		Having pleasant and engaging speech (8, 9, 11, 14, 16)	24
		Commitment to justice and fairness (N2, N3, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15)	25
		Willingness to help others (11, 13, 16, 18)	26
		Passion for teaching and education (3, 11, 15, 16)	27
	Communication abilities	Ability to communicate effectively with students (4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18)	28
		Ability to communicate with parents (4, 10, 11, 14)	29
		Fostering students' sense of belonging and solidarity with the Mahdist community (10, 12, 13, 15)	30
		Ability to create a sense of safety and calm among students (4, 10, 11, 12, 15)	31
		Ability to identify and respond to children's needs (1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17)	32

Administrative and professional foundations	Professional competence	Enhancement of professional competence (S2, 8, 11, 13)	33
		Professional responsibility (11, 13, 14, 15, 16)	34
		Professional commitment (11, 12, 14, 16, 17)	35
	Administrative matters	Observance of administrative discipline (11, 14, 17)	36
		Preparation and maintenance of reports (11, 15)	37
Educational competence	Educational knowledge	Familiarity with the principles and concepts of educational psychology (1, 2, 4, 8, 11, 12, 14)	38
		Familiarity with child-rearing skills (1, 2, 8, 14, 15, 16, 18)	39
		Familiarity with the characteristics of primary school children (2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18)	40
		Familiarity with children's rights and observance of those rights (11, 13)	41
	Educational skills	Mastery of modern teaching methods (1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, S1)	42
		Use of instructional aids (1, 4, 10, 11, 14, 16)	43
		Use of active teaching methods, such as drama, storytelling, and games (2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17)	44
		Use of modern educational resources, such as applications and films (2, 4, 10, 15, 16, 18)	45
		Ability to identify and utilize students' talents (N1, 1, 4, 11, 14, 16, 17, S1)	46
		Ability to identify students' psychological and emotional problems (1, 8, 11, 12, 13)	47
		Step-by-step teaching of chapters and sections (N1, 4, 11, 12, 13)	48
		Attention to students' personalities and individual differences (10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)	49
		Encouraging thinking and inquiry (4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15)	50
		Providing opportunities for practice and experimentation (N1, 3, 6, 12, 14, 15, 16)	51
		Ability to assess students' progress (11, 14, 16, 17, 18)	52
	Classroom management	Ability to manage the classroom (8, 11, 12, 14, 16)	53
		Ability to foster interest and motivation among children (2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, S1)	54
		Ability to identify and manage children's emotions (2, 10, 12)	55
		Ability to engage in teamwork (4, 9, 11)	56
		Obtaining feedback on teaching (11, 12, 14, 16)	57
		Ability to create an appropriate learning environment (4, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, S1)	58
		Monitoring students' behavior and assignments (N2, 11, 14)	59
Fundamental preparedness	Fundamental education	Teaching life skills (4, 9, 12, 13, 15)	60
		Teaching authentic monotheism and the straight divine path (N2, N3, 6, 10, 13, 15)	61
		Teaching respect for parents (2, 4, 5, 12, 14, 15, 17)	62
		Teaching philosophical thinking to children (3, 4, 14, 15)	63
		Teaching the concepts of fairness and justice (2, 6, 12, 15, 17, 18)	64
	Fundamental groundwork	Promoting children's spiritual and moral development (N2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, S1)	65
		Actualizing innate dispositions (N3, 5, 7)	66
		Developing critical thinking and creativity (4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17)	67
		Fostering trustworthiness and responsibility (2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15)	68
		Ability to solve issues, problems, and challenges (10, 11, 13, 14)	69
		Encouraging social activities and service to others (N2, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15)	70
		Supporting students' physical health (N2, 6, 14, 18)	71
Spiritual preparedness	Spiritual knowledge	Profound familiarity with the concepts of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic teachings (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, S3)	72
		Profound knowledge of Mahdism and the objectives of the Mahdist community (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16)	73
	Spiritual character	Acting in accordance with divine etiquette and commandments (N1, N3, 3, 5, 8, 12, 13)	74
		Possessing a Qur'anic and Mahdist character and conduct (1, 2, 4, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18)	75
		Self-cultivation and purification of the soul (N1, N3, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18)	76
		Maintaining a spiritual and loving relationship with God and the Imams (6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, S1)	77

		Possessing spiritual commitment and motivation to educate a Qur'anic and Mahdist generation (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17)	78
		Maintaining a heartfelt and spiritual relationship with the Holy Qur'an (1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15)	79
		Emphasizing justice, morality, and the perfect human being (1, 2, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16)	80
	Spiritual conduct	Adopting a Qur'anic lifestyle (1, 2, 4, 12, 14, 16, 17)	81
		Practicing internal and behavioral self-monitoring (3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 18)	82
		Serving as a role model in Qur'anic ethics and conduct (2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, S1, S2)	83
		Regularly reciting Qur'anic verses (2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17)	84
Specialized competence	Qur'anic and Mahdist knowledge	Relative mastery of the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences (2, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16)	85
		Mastery of tajwid and correct Qur'anic recitation (2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17)	86
		Familiarity with the history of Mahdism and prominent Islamic figures (4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17)	87
		Identifying and explaining threats, harms, and deviations related to Mahdism (5, 8, 12, 13, 15)	88
		Applying Qur'anic concepts in support of the values of the Mahdist community (2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18)	89
	Qur'anic and Mahdist preparedness	Strengthening and promoting Mahdist beliefs and values (N2, 4, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18)	90
		Organizing Islamic ceremonies and observances (4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16)	91
		Emphasizing supplication and prayer (4, 9, 14, 15)	92
		Contributing to the preparation of the conditions for the reappearance (4, 7, 11, 13, 16)	93
		Promoting the culture of awaiting the reappearance (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)	94
	Qur'anic and Mahdist competence	Ability to present Qur'anic and Mahdist concepts in simple language (N1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18)	95
		Ability to interpret Qur'anic verses based on authoritative sources (N3, 1, 4, 11, 13, 15, 16)	96
		Ability to communicate and instill Mahdist concepts and values (1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18)	97
		Teaching the concepts of awaiting, hope, and preparedness for the reappearance (2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16)	98

According to Table 1, the competencies of a successful Qur'an teacher based on Mahdist teachings comprise seven main categories: physical and psychological health, individual foundations, administrative and professional foundations, educational competence, fundamental preparedness, spiritual preparedness, and specialized competence. The first main category is physical and psychological health, which includes the subcategories of physical health and psychological health. The physical health subcategory encompasses the concepts of possessing physical health, engaging in exercise and physical activity, and maintaining a neat and well-groomed appearance. Examples of the participants' statements are presented below.

Possessing Physical Health

Participant 11 stated: "A primary school teacher should be physically healthy, energetic, and strong. Working with primary school children requires a great deal of energy, and to maintain that energy, the teacher must remain active, exercise, and generally be healthy and vigorous."

The second subcategory is psychological health, which includes the concepts of possessing psychological health, high self-esteem and self-control, the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, enthusiasm for and commitment to continuous learning, the ability to analyze issues, cognitive flexibility, planning, behavioral discipline, and mental organization.

High Self-Esteem and Self-Control

Participant 15 stated: "A teacher who meets the standards of a Mahdist society should possess self-esteem and value themselves. Do we not say that human beings are the vicegerents of God? Therefore, as God's representatives, they should value themselves because of their divine nature and should not commit sinful acts. Rather, they should pursue religious obligations and even recommended acts. They should also exercise control over their own desires."

The second main category of successful Qur'an teacher competencies is individual foundations, which includes the subcategories of general knowledge, personality characteristics, and communication abilities. The general

knowledge subcategory encompasses the concepts of high scientific competence and broad general knowledge, being knowledgeable and up to date, awareness of sociocultural needs, computer literacy, awareness of educational and school regulations, and cooperation and exchange of ideas with other teachers.

High Scientific Competence and Broad General Knowledge

Participant 4 stated: "One important consideration is that teachers should possess not only specialized knowledge but also substantial scientific and general knowledge. Primary school teachers should likewise have a basic understanding of a wide range of subjects. Children are curious and continually ask questions, and the teacher should be able to answer those questions at a level appropriate to the children's understanding so that no ambiguity remains."

The second subcategory is personality characteristics, which includes compassion and appropriate interpersonal conduct, seriousness and assertiveness, being caring and kind, being tireless and hardworking, being moderate and balanced, living simply and avoiding unnecessary formality, possessing patience and tolerance, having pleasant and engaging speech, commitment to justice and fairness, willingness to help others, and passion for teaching and education.

Compassion and Appropriate Interpersonal Conduct

Participant 8 stated: "The teacher should also serve as a model in the manner in which they interact with students. They should treat children with kindness and generosity. In brief, the teacher should demonstrate compassion and appropriate conduct. In this way, the teacher's relationship with the children improves, the children feel secure in the teacher's presence, and they are even more likely to listen to and follow the teacher."

The third subcategory is communication abilities, which includes the ability to communicate effectively with students, the ability to communicate with parents, fostering students' sense of belonging and solidarity with the Mahdist community, the ability to create a sense of safety and calm among students, and the ability to identify and respond to children's needs.

Ability to Communicate Effectively With Students

Participant 4 stated: "A teacher who meets the standards of a Mahdist society should be able to communicate effectively with students so that concepts can be conveyed appropriately and a positive learning environment can be created. A strong relationship with students enables them to

listen more attentively to the teacher, learn what is taught, and put it into practice."

The third main category concerning a successful Qur'an teacher is administrative and professional foundations, which includes the two subcategories of professional competence and administrative matters. Professional competence encompasses the concepts of enhancing professional competence, professional responsibility, and professional commitment.

Enhancement of Professional Competence

Participant 13 stated: "A teacher will be successful when they are able to improve their professional competencies. This also applies to primary school teachers. A teacher who works with children should be able to use newer and more effective instructional methods and should therefore continually enhance their professional competence."

The second subcategory is administrative matters, which includes observance of administrative discipline and the preparation and maintenance of reports.

Observance of Administrative Discipline

Participant 17 stated: "Teachers should consider administrative requirements and administrative discipline, and teachers should receive training in this area as well. A teacher should comply with arrival and departure times, class starting and finishing times, and many other administrative requirements. Students should be able to regard the teacher as a role model in this respect."

The fourth main category of successful teacher competencies is educational competence, which includes the subcategories of educational knowledge, educational skills, and classroom management. Educational knowledge encompasses familiarity with the principles and concepts of educational psychology, familiarity with child-rearing skills, familiarity with the characteristics of primary school children, and familiarity with and observance of children's rights.

Familiarity With the Principles and Concepts of Educational Psychology

Participant 1 stated: "For a teacher who intends to work with children, knowledge of child psychology and educational skills is essential. The teacher should know how to interact with children at each age and how to provide instruction in a manner that achieves greater efficiency and effectiveness."

The second subcategory is educational skills, which includes mastery of modern teaching methods, use of instructional aids, use of active teaching methods such as drama, storytelling, and games, use of modern educational

resources such as applications and films, the ability to identify and utilize students' talents, the ability to identify students' psychological and emotional problems, step-by-step teaching of chapters and sections, attention to students' personalities and individual differences, encouragement of thinking and inquiry, provision of opportunities for practice and experimentation, and the ability to assess students' progress.

Mastery of Modern Teaching Methods

Participant 8 stated: "Teachers and primary school educators should be familiar with modern instructional and teaching methods and should be able to use these methods to teach Qur'anic and Mahdist concepts. Contemporary methods improve teachers' productivity and performance and contribute to the development of students' talents. This issue is particularly important in the teaching of the Qur'an and Mahdism."

The third subcategory of educational competence is classroom management, which includes the ability to manage the classroom, foster interest and motivation among children, identify and manage children's emotions, engage in teamwork, obtain feedback on teaching, create an appropriate learning environment, and monitor students' behavior and assignments.

Ability to Manage the Classroom

Participant 16 stated: "To establish order and discipline in the classroom, teachers should have appropriate strategies. Primary school children are highly active and energetic, and effective strategies are required to manage them. A successful and competent teacher should be able to manage the classroom so that learning can occur in a calm environment."

The fifth main category of successful Qur'an teacher competencies is fundamental preparedness, which includes the two subcategories of fundamental education and fundamental groundwork. Fundamental education comprises teaching life skills, authentic monotheism and the straight divine path, respect for parents, philosophical thinking to children, and the concepts of fairness and justice.

Teaching Authentic Monotheism and the Straight Divine Path

Software Source 2 stated: "Grant me the ability to respond to one who insults me by declaring the accusation false, to respond to one who frightens me with security, to obey the one who guides me toward the straight path—the teacher of religious sciences—and to follow the one who leads me toward the path of truth—the religious leaders" (*Al-*

Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya: Translation and Commentary by Fayz al-Islam, p. 132).

The second subcategory is fundamental groundwork, which includes promoting children's spiritual and moral development, actualizing innate dispositions, developing critical thinking and creativity, fostering trustworthiness and responsibility, developing the ability to solve issues, problems, and challenges, encouraging social activities and service to others, and supporting students' physical health.

Promoting Children's Spiritual and Moral Development

Software Source 2 stated: "The term *mu'addib* traditionally referred to private educators entrusted with the instruction and education of children from prominent families. The work of the *mu'addib* extended beyond that of an ordinary teacher because, in addition to instructing the child, the educator was responsible for the child's spiritual and moral development. The designation was therefore derived from the concept of *adab*" (*The Political, Social, and Cultural Conditions of the Shi'a During the Minor Occultation*, p. 185).

The sixth main category of successful Qur'an teacher competencies is spiritual preparedness, which includes the subcategories of spiritual knowledge, spiritual character, and spiritual conduct. Spiritual knowledge encompasses profound familiarity with the concepts of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic teachings and profound knowledge of Mahdism and the objectives of the Mahdist community.

Profound Familiarity With the Concepts of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic Teachings

Participant 8 stated: "The teacher should possess profound knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, its related concepts, and Islamic teachings in general so that these concepts can be conveyed to students. The greater and deeper the teacher's knowledge in this area, the more effectively these concepts can be communicated."

The second subcategory is spiritual character, which includes acting in accordance with divine etiquette and commandments, possessing a Qur'anic and Mahdist character and conduct, self-cultivation and purification of the soul, maintaining a spiritual and loving relationship with God and the Imams, possessing spiritual commitment and motivation to educate a Qur'anic and Mahdist generation, maintaining a heartfelt and spiritual relationship with the Holy Qur'an, and emphasizing justice, morality, and the perfect human being.

Acting in Accordance With Divine Etiquette and Commandments

Participant 3 stated: "Every Qur'an teacher should first adorn themselves with Islamic ethics by refraining from backbiting, lying, slander, and other sins, and by acting in accordance with divine commandments and etiquette. The teacher should then monitor this internal state and its influence on outward conduct. Only after doing so can the teacher teach these commandments and forms of etiquette to students."

The third subcategory is spiritual conduct, which includes adopting a Qur'anic lifestyle, practicing internal and behavioral self-monitoring, serving as a role model in Qur'anic ethics and conduct, and regularly reciting Qur'anic verses.

Adopting a Qur'anic Lifestyle

Participant 1 stated: "The teacher should strive to familiarize students with a Qur'anic lifestyle, including respect for parents, helping others, avoiding prohibited acts, performing religious obligations, trustworthiness, responsibility, and everything else emphasized in the Qur'an, so that students can apply these principles in their own lives."

The seventh main category of successful Qur'an teacher competencies is specialized competence, which includes the three subcategories of Qur'anic and Mahdist knowledge, Qur'anic and Mahdist preparedness, and Qur'anic and Mahdist competence. Qur'anic and Mahdist knowledge encompasses relative mastery of the Qur'an and Qur'anic sciences, mastery of tajwid and correct Qur'anic recitation, familiarity with the history of Mahdism and prominent Islamic figures, identification and explanation of threats, harms, and deviations related to Mahdism, and application of Qur'anic concepts in support of the values of the Mahdist community.

Relative Mastery of the Qur'an and Qur'anic Sciences

Participant 4 stated: "The teacher should understand the principal concepts of the Qur'an and be able to explain them to children in simple language. More generally, the teacher should possess knowledge of the Qur'an and the sciences related to it so that these teachings can be applied in the teacher's own life and taught to students."

The second subcategory is Qur'anic and Mahdist preparedness, which includes strengthening and promoting Mahdist beliefs and values, organizing Islamic ceremonies and observances, emphasizing supplication and prayer, contributing to the preparation of the conditions for the reappearance, and promoting the culture of awaiting the reappearance.

Strengthening and Promoting Mahdist Beliefs and Values

Software Source 2 stated: "An appropriate role model: Children usually select as their models and exemplars individuals who can bring them closer to humanity and their original innate nature, such as parents, friends, and teachers. Through careful attention to their own conduct or by introducing suitable role models, teachers and parents can prepare the conditions for strengthening children's Mahdist beliefs" (*Mahdism: Questions and Answers*, p. 107).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was conducted to design a model of the professional competencies required by successful Qur'an teachers based on Mahdist teachings. The qualitative analysis identified 98 concepts, 18 subcategories, and seven main categories: physical and psychological health, individual foundations, administrative and professional foundations, educational competence, fundamental preparedness, spiritual preparedness, and specialized competence. These findings indicate that the professional competence of a Qur'an teacher is a multidimensional and integrated construct that extends beyond mastery of Qur'anic content or recitation skills. An effective Qur'an teacher must simultaneously possess personal maturity, psychological stability, pedagogical expertise, professional responsibility, spiritual commitment, and specialized Qur'anic and Mahdist knowledge. This broad conception is consistent with competency-based approaches that define effective teaching as the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, ethical principles, communication capacities, and professional behaviors rather than the possession of a limited set of technical abilities ([Abdollahi et al., 2014](#); [Selvi, 2010](#); [Shah Mohammadi, 2014](#)).

The first category identified in the study was physical and psychological health, comprising physical well-being, exercise and physical activity, appropriate appearance, psychological health, self-esteem, self-control, emotional management, commitment to continuous learning, analytical ability, cognitive flexibility, planning, and mental discipline. This finding suggests that the professional effectiveness of Qur'an teachers depends partly on their capacity to maintain the physical energy and psychological balance required for sustained interaction with children. Elementary school teaching involves continuous attention, emotional labor, behavioral management, and repeated instructional engagement; therefore, poor physical or psychological

functioning may reduce patience, responsiveness, and instructional effectiveness. The emphasis on self-control and emotional regulation is particularly relevant because Qur'an teachers are expected to model the ethical and behavioral values they communicate to students. Existing competency frameworks similarly recognize personal well-being, self-management, adaptability, professional motivation, and reflective capacity as important foundations of effective teaching (Mikkonen, 2018; Selvi, 2010). Moreover, studies of professional empowerment and employee engagement indicate that psychological resources, motivation, and a sense of personal effectiveness can strengthen commitment and reduce withdrawal tendencies (Pradhan et al., 2017; Sandhya & Sulphrey, 2019).

The second main category, individual foundations, included general knowledge, personality characteristics, and communication abilities. The findings showed that successful Qur'an teachers should possess broad scientific and general knowledge, remain informed and up to date, understand sociocultural needs, demonstrate computer literacy, know school regulations, and collaborate with other teachers. These competencies reflect the fact that Qur'an instruction occurs within a broader educational and social environment and cannot be separated from contemporary knowledge, learners' lived experiences, and institutional expectations. A teacher who understands social and cultural changes can communicate religious concepts more meaningfully and respond to questions that emerge from children's everyday lives. Similarly, digital literacy has become necessary because students increasingly encounter religious information through online media, applications, videos, and digital platforms. UNESCO's competency framework emphasizes that technology should be integrated with pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, and professional collaboration, rather than treated as an isolated technical skill (Unesco, 2011). Research on student teachers has also demonstrated the importance of strengthening technological competence to ensure that teachers can use educational technologies effectively and responsibly (Ahmadi et al., 2016).

The personality-related findings emphasized compassion, kindness, assertiveness, perseverance, moderation, simplicity, patience, pleasant speech, justice, helpfulness, and love of teaching. These characteristics show that professional competence in Qur'an education has a strong ethical and relational basis. Children are likely to associate the teacher's behavior with the religious content being taught; therefore, inconsistency between Qur'anic

instruction and the teacher's conduct may weaken the credibility of the educational message. Conversely, kindness, fairness, patience, and respectful communication can create emotional security and increase children's willingness to participate in Qur'an learning. The findings correspond with Qur'an-based accounts of the teacher's role that emphasize moral exemplarity, guidance, compassion, purification, and the integration of knowledge with ethical conduct (Abedi et al., 2025; Asadi, 2024). They are also consistent with evidence showing that elementary teachers' personal characteristics and interactional styles significantly influence students' motivation, behavior, and attitudes toward learning (Atabak et al., 2016).

Communication abilities formed another important component of individual foundations. Participants emphasized effective communication with students and parents, responsiveness to children's needs, creation of safety and calm, and development of students' sense of belonging to a Mahdist community. These results demonstrate that Qur'an teaching is a relational process rather than a one-way transmission of information. Effective communication enables teachers to identify misconceptions, adapt explanations to children's levels of understanding, motivate learners, and establish cooperation with families. Communication with parents is particularly important because children's religious learning is reinforced or weakened by the consistency between school and home. In the context of Qur'an education, a supportive relationship also creates the emotional conditions required for children to develop positive attitudes toward recitation, prayer, religious values, and Mahdist concepts. Previous research has highlighted the centrality of communication, collaboration, and learner-centered interaction in professional teacher competency models (Abdollahi et al., 2014; Selvi, 2010). The finding also aligns with studies emphasizing that Qur'an teachers must use engaging and responsive strategies to increase students' reading ability and interest (Afriani et al., 2023; Jaafar et al., 2025).

The third category was administrative and professional foundations, consisting of professional development, professional responsibility, professional commitment, administrative discipline, and accurate reporting. This result indicates that successful Qur'an teaching requires adherence to organizational and professional standards in addition to religious knowledge and personal virtue. Continuous professional development allows teachers to update their instructional methods, deepen their subject knowledge, and respond to new educational challenges. Professional

responsibility and commitment ensure that teaching duties are performed consistently and that students' learning needs receive appropriate attention. Administrative discipline, punctuality, documentation, and compliance with school procedures also make teachers credible professional role models. Existing research on effective teachers similarly identifies professional commitment, responsibility, continuous learning, cooperation, and organizational compliance as essential competencies (Abdollahi et al., 2014; Shah Mohammadi, 2014). The emphasis on professional growth is also consistent with the validation of subject-specific competency frameworks, which shows that teacher competencies must be periodically assessed and developed in relation to changing curricular and social demands (Kavousi et al., 2023).

The fourth main category, educational competence, included educational knowledge, instructional skills, and classroom management. Participants emphasized familiarity with educational psychology, child development, child-rearing skills, children's rights, modern teaching methods, instructional aids, active learning, digital resources, talent identification, emotional problem recognition, individual differences, inquiry-based learning, practice, assessment, motivation, teamwork, feedback, and behavioral monitoring. These findings reveal that successful Qur'an education depends on teachers' ability to transform religious knowledge into developmentally appropriate and engaging learning experiences. Content mastery without pedagogical competence may result in mechanical instruction, excessive repetition, or methods that fail to consider children's cognitive and emotional characteristics. The identified competencies are compatible with elementary Qur'an education guidelines that emphasize gradual instruction, age-appropriate teaching, auditory modeling, repetition, and structured learning activities (Alamkhah, 2018; Anousheh-Pour et al., 2018).

The importance of modern and active teaching methods in the findings is supported by previous studies that have identified instructional weaknesses as a major challenge in Qur'an education. Teachers may face differences in students' reading levels, limited motivation, insufficient practice, and difficulty in understanding religious concepts. To address these challenges, they require flexible methods such as storytelling, games, demonstration, collaborative learning, multimedia resources, and individualized correction. Studies of Qur'an instruction have shown that teacher strategies, repeated modeling, appropriate feedback, and adaptation to learners' abilities can improve reading

performance (Jaafar et al., 2025). Research has also identified pedagogical, contextual, and resource-related problems that limit effective Qur'an learning, highlighting the need for teachers who can select alternative methods and manage diverse classroom conditions (Guslianto et al., 2024). In the digital age, the use of appropriate media and interactive resources can also increase students' interest in Qur'an reading and support sustained participation (Afriani et al., 2023).

Classroom management was identified as a distinct dimension of educational competence. The ability to create order, motivate children, manage emotions, organize teamwork, receive feedback, establish an appropriate learning environment, and supervise assignments is particularly important at the elementary level. Qur'an education may require listening, recitation, correction, repetition, and collective activities, all of which depend on effective organization of classroom behavior and attention. A calm and supportive classroom helps students practice without fear of embarrassment and enables teachers to correct errors respectfully. The finding is consistent with general teacher competency literature, which identifies classroom management, learner motivation, assessment, and creation of positive educational environments as central components of effective teaching (Abdollahi et al., 2014; Selvi, 2010). It also supports curriculum-based studies showing that the achievement of Qur'an education goals depends on alignment among content, teaching methods, learning activities, and evaluation (Ghasemi, 2022).

The fifth category, fundamental preparedness, comprised fundamental education and foundational development. It included teaching life skills, authentic monotheism, respect for parents, philosophical thinking, fairness, justice, spiritual and moral development, actualization of innate capacities, critical thinking, creativity, responsibility, problem-solving, social participation, service to others, and physical health. These findings indicate that participants viewed Qur'an education as a comprehensive educational process concerned with the formation of the whole person. From this perspective, the Qur'an teacher should not restrict instruction to correct reading but should connect Qur'anic concepts with children's intellectual, moral, social, and practical development. This interpretation is consistent with Islamic educational principles that emphasize the actualization of human nature, moral cultivation, knowledge, responsibility, moderation, and the relationship between learning and action (Mahdavian, 2010). It also corresponds with Qur'an-based models that conceptualize

the teacher as an educator, guide, purifier, and facilitator of wisdom rather than merely a transmitter of information (Abedi et al., 2025).

The emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and social responsibility is noteworthy because Mahdist education can be misunderstood as passive waiting or purely doctrinal instruction. The findings instead portray preparation for a Mahdist society as an active process involving justice, ethical responsibility, service, intellectual growth, and constructive participation in community life. Teaching children to reflect, ask questions, solve problems, and act fairly can help translate religious beliefs into meaningful social behavior. This interpretation accords with the broader aims of curriculum development and educational productivity, which require learning outcomes to include understanding, application, values, and practical competence rather than recitation alone (Khosravi Morad et al., 2019, 2021). It also addresses gaps identified in previous Qur'an education research, where excessive attention to formal reading outcomes has sometimes limited consideration of broader moral and developmental goals (Jafari Far & Naghizadeh, 2017).

The sixth category was spiritual preparedness, including spiritual knowledge, spiritual character, and spiritual conduct. Participants emphasized deep knowledge of the Qur'an and Islamic teachings, understanding of Mahdism, adherence to divine commandments, Qur'anic and Mahdist character, self-purification, spiritual connection with God and the Imams, commitment to cultivating a Qur'anic generation, a heartfelt relationship with the Qur'an, justice, morality, self-monitoring, role modeling, and regular recitation. These findings demonstrate that spiritual competence was regarded not only as knowledge but also as internal commitment and observable conduct. For Qur'an teachers, the credibility of instruction depends heavily on congruence between teaching and personal behavior. A teacher who embodies the values of honesty, self-control, justice, prayer, and responsibility is more likely to influence students than one who communicates such values only verbally. This finding strongly aligns with Qur'anic descriptions of the teacher as a moral and spiritual guide (Abedi et al., 2025; Asadi, 2024).

The Mahdist dimension of spiritual preparedness reflects the theological relationship between the Qur'an, the Imamate, and divine guidance. Knowledge of Mahdism enables teachers to present concepts such as hope, justice, expectation, responsibility, and readiness in a coherent religious framework. Classical accounts of Imam al-Mahdi

emphasize the continuity and completion of divine guidance and the significance of awaiting the promised Imam (Shaykh Saduq, 2003). Similarly, the doctrine of the Imamate based on Hadith al-Thaqalayn emphasizes the inseparability of the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt as sources of guidance (Rabbani Golpayegani, 2013). The present findings suggest that Qur'an teachers should be capable of translating these theological foundations into child-appropriate moral and educational practices. Such instruction should cultivate hope and responsibility rather than fear, speculation, or passive expectation.

The seventh category, specialized competence, included Qur'anic and Mahdist knowledge, preparedness, and instructional capability. Participants identified mastery of the Qur'an, Qur'anic sciences, tajwid, correct recitation, Mahdist history, prominent Islamic figures, recognition of distortions, promotion of Mahdist beliefs, religious ceremonies, prayer, preparation for the reappearance, the culture of awaiting, simple explanation of concepts, interpretation based on authoritative sources, and transmission of hope and readiness. This result confirms that specialized subject knowledge remains indispensable, even within a broad competency model. Teachers cannot communicate Qur'anic and Mahdist teachings accurately unless they possess adequate knowledge and the ability to distinguish reliable interpretations from weak or distorted claims. At the same time, the ability to simplify concepts for children is essential because specialized knowledge must be adapted to learners' developmental levels. Previous evaluations of elementary Qur'an education have similarly indicated that the quality of outcomes depends on both teachers' content knowledge and their ability to implement the intended curriculum effectively (Ghasemi, 2022; Mirzamohammadi et al., 2012).

The specialized findings are also compatible with studies examining the historical development, weaknesses, and productivity of Qur'an education. Historical changes in elementary Qur'an programs have shown that institutional expansion alone does not ensure effective teaching unless teachers are adequately prepared (Arghavani, 2012). Pathological analyses have identified weaknesses in teacher preparation, instructional coordination, evaluation, and adaptation to learners' needs (Khosravi Morad et al., 2020). Similarly, strategies proposed to improve public Qur'an education have emphasized specialized teacher training, curriculum alignment, appropriate assessment, institutional support, and the strengthening of connections among reading, memorization, comprehension, and practical

familiarity with Qur'anic teachings (Khosravi Morad et al., 2019, 2021). The present model responds to these challenges by integrating specialized knowledge with pedagogical, personal, spiritual, and organizational competencies.

Overall, the findings indicate that professional competence among Qur'an teachers should be understood as a coherent system rather than a collection of independent qualities. Physical and psychological health support sustained professional functioning; individual characteristics and communication abilities shape relationships with students; administrative and professional competencies ensure responsible performance; educational competence enables effective teaching; fundamental preparedness connects Qur'an education with comprehensive human development; spiritual preparedness provides moral credibility; and specialized competence ensures accuracy in Qur'anic and Mahdist instruction. The model therefore extends general teacher competency frameworks by incorporating the distinctive religious, ethical, and eschatological responsibilities of Qur'an teachers. It also addresses the fragmented nature of previous studies by presenting an integrated framework that can guide recruitment, training, evaluation, and professional development.

One limitation of the study was its reliance on purposively selected experts and documents, which may have restricted the diversity of perspectives represented in the final model. The findings were also derived from a qualitative design and therefore cannot establish the relative importance, causal relationships, or predictive power of the identified competencies. In addition, the interpretation of religious and educational documents may have been influenced by the researchers' analytical judgments, despite the procedures used to strengthen confirmability and transferability. The absence of direct observations of teachers' classroom practices and the limited inclusion of students, parents, school administrators, and practicing Qur'an teachers may also have reduced the model's sensitivity to practical implementation challenges.

Future research should quantitatively validate the proposed model using large and diverse samples of Qur'an teachers from different educational levels, regions, and institutional settings. Researchers should develop and psychometrically evaluate a competency assessment instrument based on the seven categories and examine its factor structure, reliability, convergent validity, and predictive validity. Comparative studies could investigate whether competency requirements differ according to

teachers' gender, experience, educational level, type of school, or access to professional training. Longitudinal and intervention studies should also examine whether training based on the proposed model improves teachers' instructional performance, students' Qur'an-reading proficiency, religious motivation, ethical development, and understanding of Mahdist concepts.

In practice, educational authorities should use the model as a framework for selecting, preparing, evaluating, and supporting Qur'an teachers. Recruitment procedures should assess not only recitation and content knowledge but also psychological stability, communication skills, pedagogical competence, ethical conduct, and professional commitment. Preservice and in-service programs should include child development, classroom management, active teaching methods, digital literacy, Qur'anic sciences, Mahdist education, emotional regulation, and reflective practice. Schools should also provide mentoring, peer collaboration, periodic competency assessment, and targeted workshops for teachers whose skills require strengthening. The model can further guide the development of performance standards, observation checklists, professional portfolios, and promotion criteria specifically designed for Qur'an educators.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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