

Characteristics of Models Influential in Changing Ethical Behavior, with Emphasis on the Holy Qur'ān

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Abstract

For changing the behavior of moral agents, methods have been set forth in the disciplines of ethics and psychology, among which the presentation of models is the most effective, since it does not impose anything upon the one who follows the model but rather strengthens his inner inclinations. Given that the influence of models varies in intensity and weakness, this research investigates "what kinds of models exert a greater influence upon the model-follower." To answer this, a descriptive-analytical method was employed. First, the changes produced in the model-follower through observation of the model were extracted from educational and psychological works, and then it was explained which of the models presented by the Qur'ān produce these changes to a greater degree in the model-follower. The most important reason for a model's influence is that, through observing the model, reaching the goal becomes valuable to the model-follower, and attaining it appears feasible and realizable in his eyes, and consequently his motivation to perform that behavior increases. On this basis, models who are more similar to the model-follower in age, gender, and circumstances, as well as those who have achieved highly outstanding successes, and likewise models who have been able to realize their goals by overcoming numerous obstacles, exert a strong influence on the inclinations and behavior of the model-follower.

Keywords

Ethical models, model-following, Islamic ethics, Islamic education.

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10.22034/ethics.2025.52089.1803



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Quarterly Journal of Moral Studies | Vol. 9 | No. 2 | Summer 2026

