

Characteristics Of the Ideal Teacher From Imam Al-Ghazali's Perspective: An Islamic Education Study of *Minhāj Al-Muta'allim*

Muhammad Zakaria, Bahtiar Siregar, Danny Abrianto

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the characteristics of the ideal teacher from Imam al-Ghazali's perspective through an examination of Minhāj al-Muta'allim and to explain its relevance to contemporary Islamic education. This study employs a qualitative approach using library research, with Minhāj al-Muta'allim by Imam Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazali as the primary source, supported by various relevant scholarly works. Data were analyzed using content analysis through the stages of identification, categorization, interpretation, and formulation of research findings. The findings indicate that, according to al-Ghazali, an ideal teacher does not merely function as a transmitter of knowledge, but also serves as a moral and spiritual guide and as a facilitator in shaping students' character and personality. The main characteristics of an ideal teacher include scholarly competence (al-'ilm), the practice and embodiment of knowledge, moral integrity, compassion toward students, patience, exemplary conduct, and spiritual responsibility. These concepts remain highly relevant to contemporary Islamic education, as they correspond with the need for educators who are able to integrate professionalism, pedagogical competence, and moral values into the learning process. Al-Ghazali's thought in Minhāj al-Muta'allim makes an important contribution to the development of an educational model that is not solely oriented toward the transfer of knowledge, but also toward the formation of individuals who are knowledgeable, morally grounded, and spiritually conscious.

Keywords: Ideal Teacher; al-Ghazali; Minhāj al-Muta'allim; Islamic Education; Teacher Character

Muhammad Zakaria

Pascasarjana Magister Pendidikan Agama Islam, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

Email: zakyzakaria310927237@gmail.com

Bahtiar Siregar, Danny Abrianto

Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

Email: bahtiarsiregar@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id, dannyabrianto@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id

2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)

Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era <https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICIE>

Introduction

Teachers constitute a fundamental element in the success of the educational process, as they play a strategic role in knowledge transmission while simultaneously contributing to the formation of students' character. From the perspective of Islamic education, teachers are not merely understood as individuals who convey knowledge (*transfer of knowledge*), but also as moral and spiritual guides as well as role models for students. Scholarly competence and exemplary conduct are two inseparable dimensions within the concept of the Islamic educator. Therefore, discussions concerning the characteristics of the ideal teacher remain highly significant, particularly as modern education faces various challenges related to educators' professionalism, integrity, and exemplary behavior [1].

The concept of the teacher in the classical Islamic educational tradition is firmly grounded in the integration of knowledge, practice, and moral character. An educator is not only expected to possess intellectual competence but is also required to demonstrate a personality that reflects Islamic values. Imam al-Ghazali is one of the prominent Muslim scholars who devoted considerable attention to educational issues, particularly the relationship among knowledge, educators, and learners. According to his thought, the educational process aims to guide human beings toward self-perfection through the development of intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions [2].

One of Imam al-Ghazali's works that gives significant attention to educational issues is *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*. This work discusses fundamental principles related to the pursuit of knowledge, including the status of knowledge, the ethics of learned individuals, the role of teachers, and the proper conduct of students. Based on the structure of the text, the discussion of the teacher (*al-mu'allim*) is placed after the discussion of knowledge, indicating that the teacher holds a close relationship with the transmission and beneficial application of knowledge [3].

Studies on Imam al-Ghazali's thought concerning teachers have been widely conducted by scholars in the field of Islamic education. Previous studies have generally examined al-Ghazali's concept of the ideal teacher through *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, highlighting aspects such as scholarly competence, sincerity in teaching, compassion toward students, the ability to understand learners' characteristics, and the teacher's exemplary conduct in the educational process. Indriyanti et al [4] explain that, according to al-Ghazali, teachers' ethics include showing compassion toward students, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad in carrying out educational responsibilities, and regarding teaching activities as a form of devotion to Allah. In addition, the study by Jannah and Mustofa shows that al-Ghazali's concept of the ideal teacher encompasses knowledge, skills, attitudes, exemplary conduct, and ethics, all of which remain relevant to the competencies required of contemporary Islamic education teachers [5].

Furthermore, studies on teacher–student relationships from al-Ghazali's perspective indicate that educational success is strongly influenced by the quality of the ethical relationship established between educators and learners. Teachers are expected to transmit knowledge while simultaneously guiding students' moral and personal development. This perspective reinforces the relevance of al-Ghazali's educational thought to contemporary Islamic education, particularly in relation to the personal, moral, and professional dimensions of teacher competence [4].

Although studies on teachers from al-Ghazali's perspective have continued to develop, some previous research still tends to discuss the concept of the teacher in general terms or to combine several of al-Ghazali's works without giving sufficient attention to the construction of teacher characteristics based on a specific educational text. This study offers a more focused approach by positioning *Minhāj al-Muta'allim* as the primary source for analyzing the characteristics of the ideal teacher. Accordingly, this study is expected to contribute to the

enrichment of Islamic education scholarship, particularly in formulating the characteristics of educators grounded in scholarly values and Islamic moral principles [6].

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the characteristics of the ideal teacher from Imam al-Ghazali's perspective through an examination of *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*. More specifically, the study seeks to identify the key values that a teacher should possess according to al-Ghazali and to explain their relevance to the development of teacher competence in contemporary Islamic education. Through a library research approach, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of the ideal teacher within the intellectual tradition of classical Islamic education and its contribution to contemporary educational practice.

Literature Review

The Concept of Teachers in Islamic Education

From the perspective of Islamic education, teachers occupy a highly important position because their role extends beyond knowledge transmission to include the guidance of students' moral development. The concept of the educator in Islam places teachers as figures who bear both moral and spiritual responsibilities within the educational process. An ideal teacher is not merely expected to master subject matter, but also to possess personal integrity, exemplary conduct, and the ability to guide students toward intellectual and moral development. Therefore, Islamic education views teacher competence not only in terms of professional qualifications but also in relation to the quality of moral character and spiritual values embodied by the teacher [2].

Within the classical Islamic educational tradition, the relationship between teachers and students is grounded in respect for knowledge and the process of character formation. Teachers are positioned as figures who possess scholarly authority while simultaneously serving as role models in the embodiment of Islamic values [7]. Al-Ghazali regards teaching as a noble profession because of its role in guiding human beings toward self-perfection. Teachers are viewed as central figures who not only facilitate cognitive development but also contribute to the purification of the soul in order to bring students closer to Allah (SWT) [8]. Studies on al-Ghazali's concept of the educator indicate that teachers are not merely responsible for transferring knowledge, but also for nurturing students' hearts, moral character, and personality through exemplary conduct and the practice of knowledge. Furthermore, Abudin Nata emphasizes that the essence of Islamic education lies in the integration of mastery of knowledge with the cultivation of noble character; therefore, ideal educators are expected to guide the human dimensions of students with wisdom [9].

Pemikiran Imam Al-Ghazali tentang Guru Ideal

Imam al-Ghazali is one of the prominent figures in Islamic education who devoted considerable attention to the position and character of educators. In his various works, al-Ghazali explains that an ideal teacher should maintain a close relationship between knowledge and practice. An educator is expected to possess broad knowledge while demonstrating the values being taught to students through personal conduct. The study by Widad and Syauqillah [10] indicates that, according to al-Ghazali, the concept of the ideal teacher encompasses several key characteristics, including showing compassion toward students, teaching sincerely, conveying knowledge comprehensively, acting wisely, understanding differences in students' abilities, and serving as a role model.

Other studies on al-Ghazali's thought demonstrate that the concept of the ideal teacher cannot be separated from ethical and spiritual dimensions, as educators do not merely transfer knowledge but also serve as moral and spiritual guides who embody virtuous values in everyday

life. Teachers are expected to have sincere intentions in teaching, put their knowledge into practice, and maintain respectful educational relationships with students. The study by Jannah and Mustofa found that al-Ghazali's concept of the ideal teacher encompasses scholarly competence, skills, compassion, exemplary conduct, and ethics, most of which remain relevant to the competencies required of contemporary Islamic education teachers [11].

Minhāj al-Muta'allim as a Source for the Study of Islamic Education

Minhāj al-Muta'allim is one of Imam al-Ghazali's works that addresses educational issues through discussions of knowledge, teachers, and students. Unlike several of al-Ghazali's more extensively studied works, such as *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, this text is characterized by its explicit educational orientation, particularly its direct attention to the learning process and the relationships among those involved in it. In the structure of the text used as the primary source of this study, the discussion of the teacher (*al-mu'allim*) appears after the discussion of knowledge, indicating the important position of the teacher in the transmission of knowledge and in ensuring that such knowledge becomes beneficial (Al-Ghazali, 2010).

This strategic position affirms that educators constitute a fundamental element in ensuring that knowledge is transformed into meaningful moral values for students. Beyond merely conveying subject matter, educators are regarded as exemplary figures who must harmonize intellectual integrity with spiritual and moral excellence [12]. Thus, the role of the teacher is not limited to the transmission of information but also encompasses the purification of the soul and the moral guidance of students so that they may attain closeness to Allah (SWT). *Minhāj al-Muta'allim* emphasizes the importance of a pragmatic approach to curriculum selection, in which educators play a crucial role in determining the priority of knowledge to be studied in order to foster spiritual maturity and practical competence (Al-Ghazali, 2010). In addition, al-Ghazali stresses that the success of the educational process depends greatly on the proper conduct and ethical relationship between educators and students, which serve as essential foundations for character formation and the acquisition of blessed knowledge. Accordingly, the internalization of moral values requires teachers to continually purify their intentions and demonstrate humility (*tawāḍu'*) as an expression of spirituality in educational interactions.

This approach is consistent with the view that educators are responsible for cultivating virtuous dispositions so that they become firmly rooted in the students' character, enabling good conduct to arise naturally without requiring complicated deliberation. The integration of cognitive and spiritual dimensions is intended to develop a holistic personality in which students not only acquire technical skills but also possess profound ethical maturity [13]. Within this pedagogical framework, teachers are encouraged to show compassion and gentleness toward students as they would toward their own children, thereby creating a learning environment grounded in the spirit of worship. In addition, educators bear the responsibility of continuously monitoring their own conduct in order to maintain consistency between their words and actions, thereby serving as exemplary models for students.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research. Library research was selected because the object of the study concerns Islamic educational thought derived from written sources, particularly classical works by Imam al-Ghazali. Through this method, the researcher collected, selected, and analyzed various sources related to the concept of the ideal teacher from the perspective of Islamic education. Library research is characterized by the systematic examination of documents, books, scholarly articles, and other written sources in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of a particular concept or body of thought.

The primary data source in this study is Imam Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazali's *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, in the critical edition prepared by Ahmad 'Inayah. This text serves as the main source for identifying the concept and characteristics of the ideal teacher as reflected in al-Ghazali's educational thought. In addition to the primary source, this study also employs secondary sources, including books, scholarly journal articles, and previous studies relevant to Islamic education, al-Ghazali's thought, and the concept of educators within the Islamic intellectual tradition. The use of these supporting sources is intended to strengthen the analysis and situate al-Ghazali's thought within the broader context of Islamic education.

Data were collected through documentation, which involved examining the text, identifying sections related to the concept of the teacher (*al-mu'allim*), and classifying the major ideas identified in the text. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis through several stages: critical reading, thematic categorization, interpretation of textual meaning, and systematic organization of the research findings. Content analysis was employed to uncover the meanings, values, and educational concepts embedded in the written sources, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the ideal teacher according to Imam al-Ghazali.

Results

The Position of Teachers in Imam al-Ghazali's Perspective

1. Teachers as Mediators in the Transmission of Knowledge and the Formation of Students' Character

From Imam al-Ghazali's perspective [3], teachers occupy a highly respected position because they are responsible not only for transmitting knowledge to students but also for guiding the development of their character and personality. Al-Ghazali [3] places knowledge in a noble position within Islam; therefore, those who transmit knowledge are expected to possess qualities that correspond to the dignity of knowledge itself. In *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, the discussion of teachers appears after the discussion of knowledge. This structure indicates that the role of the teacher is inseparable from the process of acquiring knowledge, as teachers serve as mediators who connect students with the understanding, practice, and beneficial application of knowledge.

Furthermore, al-Ghazali [3] views the function of teachers as extending beyond the mere transmission of information or knowledge to encompass the holistic development of the human person. Teachers bear the responsibility of guiding students so that the knowledge they acquire can bring about meaningful changes in their behavior and personal qualities. Thus, the position of teachers in al-Ghazali's thought is integrative in nature, encompassing intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Teachers play a role in developing students' intellectual capacities while guiding them toward a life orientation that aligns with Islamic values.

Al-Ghazali's conception of the teacher as a mediator of knowledge indicates that Islamic education is grounded in a paradigm that differs from educational approaches that primarily emphasize the transfer of knowledge. Teachers are regarded as figures who possess scholarly authority while simultaneously bearing moral responsibility. This perspective is consistent with the concept of the *murabbi* in Islamic education, namely, an educator who is responsible for developing the full range of human potential, including physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. According to al-Syaibany [14], Islamic education is not merely aimed at producing knowledgeable individuals, but at forming human beings who achieve a balanced integration of knowledge, faith, and righteous action.

The teacher's role in shaping students' character also indicates that the educational relationship in Islam is personal and transformative in nature. Teachers are evaluated based on both their academic competence and the quality of their character as role models. Saomi and Muzfirah [1] explain that, from al-Ghazali's perspective, educators play an important role in nurturing students' hearts, moral character, and personality. Accordingly, educational success

is measured not only by students' mastery of subject matter but also by the transformation of their character. This perspective reinforces the view that teachers in Islamic education occupy a strategic position as guides who direct human beings toward moral excellence.

2. Teachers as Bearers of a Religious Trust and Spiritual Guides for Students

From Imam al-Ghazali's perspective, the position of the teacher cannot be understood merely as a professional occupation within the academic sphere; rather, it constitutes a religious trust that carries substantial responsibility for guiding human beings toward goodness. Teachers are entrusted with helping students acquire beneficial knowledge and directing them to apply such knowledge in ways that positively influence their behavior and spiritual lives. In *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, knowledge and the teacher are closely interconnected, because noble knowledge requires a transmitter who bears moral responsibility for preserving the purity of educational aims.

Furthermore, al-Ghazali views the act of teaching as possessing a dimension of worship, since teachers play a role in guiding students toward self-perfection. A teacher is responsible for developing students' intellectual horizons while guiding the purification of their souls and the cultivation of spiritual awareness through the knowledge imparted. Therefore, a teacher's success should not be assessed solely on the basis of the ability to deliver subject matter, but also on the capacity to bring about moral transformation in students. This perspective demonstrates that education, according to al-Ghazali, is oriented toward the holistic formation of the human person through the integration of knowledge, practice, and moral character.

The concept of teaching as a religious trust indicates that al-Ghazali places the teaching profession within a framework of spiritual responsibility. Teachers occupy a position that resembles the continuation of the prophetic mission insofar as they guide human beings toward truth and goodness. This idea is consistent with the Islamic educational conception of the teacher as a *murabbi*, namely, an educator who is responsible for the development of the full range of students' potential [15]. Islamic education is not merely intended to develop intellectual intelligence, but also to cultivate the intellect, soul, and body in a balanced manner, foster good moral character, and instill spiritual values so that students are able to fulfill their responsibilities as faithful, knowledgeable, and morally upright human beings in pursuit of well-being in both this world and the hereafter [16,17].

The spiritual dimension of al-Ghazali's concept of the teacher also demonstrates that the relationship between teachers and students is not merely pedagogical, but also constitutes a relationship of value formation. Teachers exert influence through both their knowledge and their personal character, thereby enabling the educational process to become transformative. Studies on al-Ghazali's educational thought indicate that educators bear responsibility for guiding students' inner development rather than merely transmitting theoretical knowledge. This reinforces the idea that the ideal teacher in Islamic education must recognize teaching as a moral trust oriented toward the formation of morally upright human beings [18].

3. Teachers as Exemplary Figures in Islamic Educational Relationships

In Imam al-Ghazali's thought, the position of the teacher is closely related to the dimension of exemplary conduct within the educational process. Teachers do not merely transmit knowledge through verbal instruction, but also educate through their behavior and personal character. In *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, the effectiveness of knowledge transmission is closely associated with the personal qualities of the educator, since students not only receive instructional content but also observe the attitudes and character of their teachers. Therefore, teachers are expected to possess noble moral character, maintain proper conduct, and embody Islamic values in their daily lives so that the knowledge they transmit can contribute to the formation of students' character.

From al-Ghazali's perspective [3], teachers' exemplary conduct is also closely connected to the ethical relationship between educators and students. Teachers should be able

to establish educational relationships grounded in compassion, patience, and attentiveness to students' development. Such relationships are not merely academic interactions between teachers and learners, but formative relationships intended to guide students toward intellectual and moral maturity. An examination of *Minhāj al-Muta'allim* indicates that the ideal teacher is characterized by noble conduct, sincerity in transmitting knowledge, an understanding of students' circumstances, and the ability to serve as a role model in everyday life.

The concept of the teacher as an exemplary figure demonstrates that al-Ghazali understands education as a process of human formation through lived example. In Islamic education, teachers' behavior has a significant influence because students tend to imitate the attitudes and habits of figures who hold authority in the educational setting [19]. This is consistent with the concept of *uswah hasanah* in Islamic education, in which educators serve as concrete embodiments of the values they teach. According to Osman [20], exemplary conduct is one of the effective methods of education because moral values are more readily internalized by students through concrete examples than through theoretical instruction alone.

Educational relationships developed through exemplary conduct further demonstrate that, from al-Ghazali's perspective, teachers play an important role in shaping the moral culture of the educational environment. Teachers who demonstrate consistency between their words and actions can create a more meaningful learning process because students encounter educational values through direct experience. Studies of al-Ghazali's educational thought indicate that the characteristics of the ideal teacher include the ability to serve as a role model, the possession of noble moral character, and the establishment of educational relationships based on compassion and respect for students. Thus, exemplary conduct constitutes an essential element in determining the effectiveness of the teacher's role as an educator in Islam [18]

Characteristics of the Ideal Teacher in Minhāj al-Muta'allim

1. Teachers with Scholarly Competence (*al-'Ilm*)

In *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, Imam al-Ghazali places knowledge at the foundation of educational activity. The teacher's position as a transmitter of knowledge requires an adequate level of scholarly competence so that the educational process can be conducted properly. A teacher is not merely someone who is able to speak or convey information, but must possess a profound understanding of the knowledge being taught. The placement of the discussion on teachers after the discussion of knowledge within the structure of the text indicates that a teacher's legitimacy is closely related to mastery of knowledge. Thus, scholarly competence constitutes a fundamental characteristic that distinguishes a teacher from a mere conveyor of information.

Al-Ghazali maintains that the knowledge transmitted by teachers should bring meaningful benefits to students' development. Therefore, teachers are not only expected to master theoretical aspects of knowledge but also to understand how such knowledge should be delivered in accordance with students' conditions and abilities. In the context of *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, the relationship among knowledge, teachers, and students reflects an educational process oriented toward the beneficial use of knowledge. Teachers bear the responsibility of ensuring that knowledge does not remain confined to the cognitive domain, but instead guides students toward intellectual and moral development.

Scholarly competence is a fundamental characteristic that distinguishes teachers as educators from mere transmitters of information. From al-Ghazali's perspective, mastery of knowledge does not simply refer to the ability to understand subject matter theoretically, but also includes the ability to apply knowledge appropriately within the educational process. Teachers are expected to possess breadth of insight and depth of understanding so that they can deliver knowledge in accordance with students' needs and direct its application toward beneficial ends. This view is consistent with Muhammad and Muhid [21], who explain that

educators should possess comprehensive mastery of their field of knowledge in both theoretical and practical dimensions so that the process of knowledge transmission can take place effectively. Thus, the concept of *al-'ilm* in al-Ghazali's thought remains relevant to the professional competence required of teachers in modern education.

Furthermore, scholarly competence in al-Ghazali's perspective [3] extends beyond the mere mastery of subject matter, because knowledge should serve as a foundation for character formation and the improvement of students' personal qualities. A knowledgeable teacher is not only capable of explaining concepts but also understands the educational purposes underlying the knowledge being taught. This indicates that the teacher's scholarly authority is inseparable from the moral responsibility to guide students. A strong foundation of knowledge is an essential requirement for educators, as it enables the learning process to extend beyond the mere delivery of information. Through adequate mastery of knowledge, educators can facilitate deeper student understanding while also contributing to the development of learners' character and values [22,23]. Similarly, Abdurrohman et al. [24] explain that breadth of insight and depth of knowledge provide the foundation for teachers to function as *agents of change* in internalizing character values among students. Accordingly, scholarly competence from al-Ghazali's perspective represents an integration of mastery of knowledge, pedagogical ability, and an orientation toward the holistic development of the human person.

2. Teachers Who Practice Their Knowledge and Possess Moral Integrity

From Imam al-Ghazali's perspective, an ideal teacher should integrate extensive knowledge with the ability to embody and practice that knowledge in everyday conduct. The consistency between knowledge and action constitutes an important indicator of an educator's quality, because students learn not only from the material being taught but also from the attitudes and personality of the teacher. In *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, the teacher is positioned as a figure who bears a moral responsibility to preserve the dignity of knowledge through noble character. Thus, knowledge that is not reflected in behavior does not fully represent the qualities of an ideal educator, since, according to al-Ghazali [3], the essence of education lies in transforming human beings toward goodness through the integration of knowledge and practice.

The practice of knowledge by teachers is also closely related to their ability to embody Islamic values as part of their personal character. Teachers are not merely responsible for explaining moral concepts, but must also embody those values through exemplary conduct within educational life. Honesty, patience, responsibility, and fairness represent concrete manifestations of the moral integrity that teachers are expected to possess. Therefore, the relationship between knowledge and practice in al-Ghazali's thought indicates that an educator's credibility is built not only upon intellectual capacity but also upon the quality of moral character that serves as an example for students.

Al-Ghazali's concept of the teacher's obligation to harmonize knowledge and practice remains highly relevant to the modern notion of teachers' personal competence. Educators should not be evaluated solely on the basis of their academic abilities, but also on their capacity to embody moral values through everyday conduct. Musthafa and Meliani [25] explain that consistency between words and actions constitutes an essential prerequisite for educators to become exemplary figures characterized by noble conduct, wisdom, and authority in the eyes of students. This perspective reinforces al-Ghazali's view of the teacher as an *uswah*, whose educational influence is exercised through exemplary conduct rather than merely through the delivery of instructional content.

Furthermore, teachers' moral integrity in al-Ghazali's perspective indicates that Islamic education has a broader orientation than the mere attainment of academic competence. Teachers serve both as intellectual guides and as agents of character formation through the internalization of values within the educational process. Teachers' integrity, demonstrated through values such

as honesty, discipline, and a strong sense of responsibility, plays a crucial role as a fundamental basis in shaping and strengthening students' character development [26,27]. This is consistent with the study by Rodhiah and Wardan [28], which demonstrates that the ideal educator in al-Ghazali's thought functions as both a spiritual guide and a moral educator. Thus, moral integrity constitutes an essential characteristic that enables a teacher's knowledge to exert a transformative influence on the formation of students' character.

Based on an examination of *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, educators are also expected to demonstrate compassion and concern toward students throughout the educational process. Compassion constitutes an important foundation for establishing the relationship between teachers and students, because educators are not merely responsible for transmitting knowledge but also for guiding and directing students toward goodness. Teachers should treat students with attentiveness, gentleness, and sincerity, much as they would care for their own children, so that the educational process is grounded in responsibility and concern rather than being reduced to a merely professional relationship.

Minhāj al-Muta'allim also emphasizes the importance of understanding students' individual circumstances when providing instruction and guidance. Patience, wisdom, and gentleness are necessary because students differ in character, ability, and levels of understanding. Educators who demonstrate compassion are better able to provide appropriate guidance, avoid harsh attitudes that may distance students from the learning process, and create an educational environment conducive to the development of both knowledge and moral character.

In *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, compassion is presented as one of the essential principles that educators should possess in fulfilling their educational role. Educators are not only responsible for transmitting knowledge but also for establishing relationships grounded in care and sincerity toward students. Treating students with the affection one would show to one's own children indicates that education should be oriented toward the cultivation and development of students' potential rather than solely toward academic achievement or material interests [18]. Through a compassionate approach, educators are better able to understand students' psychological conditions, personal characteristics, and individual needs, thereby providing more appropriate and meaningful guidance [29].

This humanistic approach requires educators to demonstrate patience, gentleness, and wisdom in addressing differences among students' characteristics. An understanding of students' dispositions can be developed through observation, communication, and sustained interaction so that the formative process can proceed effectively [30]. In addition, offering advice in courteous and respectful language is more likely to foster emotional closeness than harsh reprimands, which may provoke resistance among students [31]. Thus, the concept of compassion in *Minhāj al-Muta'allim* demonstrates that the ideal educator is not only knowledgeable but also possesses noble character, empathy, and moral responsibility in shaping students' personalities.

The Relevance of al-Ghazali's Concept of the Ideal Teacher to Contemporary Islamic Education

Al-Ghazali's concept of the ideal teacher remains highly relevant to the paradigm of contemporary Islamic education, which emphasizes the importance of integrating professional competence with educators' character. In modern educational theory, teachers are not merely responsible for delivering instructional content (*transfer of knowledge*), but also serve as agents of character formation (*character building*) and facilitators of students' development. This is consistent with previous studies indicating that teachers' exemplary conduct, sincerity, and positive interpersonal relationships exert a significant influence on students' moral development and learning motivation [32]. Al-Ghazali's conception of the teacher as a moral

role model has become increasingly important in the modern era, as students encounter various value-related challenges arising from technological developments and social change.

Moreover, al-Ghazali's educational approach, which emphasizes compassion, an understanding of students' characteristics, and the provision of guidance in a wise manner, is consistent with contemporary humanistic approaches to education. Recent studies indicate that empathetic teacher–student interactions and positive communication can create a more effective learning environment and enhance students' engagement in the learning process. Therefore, al-Ghazali's concept of the ideal teacher in *Minhāj al-Muta'allim* remains relevant to contemporary Islamic education because it offers a model of the educator who not only demonstrates strong mastery of knowledge, but also possesses moral integrity, social concern, and the capacity to guide students holistically

Conclusion

Based on an examination of *Minhāj al-Muta'allim*, it can be concluded that al-Ghazali's concept of the ideal teacher positions the educator as a central figure in the educational process, whose role extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the formation of students' moral character and personality. An ideal teacher is expected to demonstrate key qualities such as sincerity, compassion, patience, exemplary conduct, and moral responsibility in guiding students. From al-Ghazali's perspective, the relationship between teachers and students is not merely academic, but rather a formative relationship grounded in care and spiritual values.

This concept remains highly relevant to contemporary Islamic education, which requires educators who are capable of integrating professional competence with moral and spiritual values. Amid rapid technological developments and social change, the teacher's role as a role model, guide, and agent of character formation remains indispensable. Al-Ghazali's thought in *Minhāj al-Muta'allim* demonstrates that educational success should not be measured solely by students' intellectual achievement, but also by the formation of individuals who are knowledgeable, morally upright, and spiritually conscious. Therefore, al-Ghazali's concept of the ideal teacher remains relevant as a conceptual foundation for the development of contemporary Islamic education oriented toward a balanced integration of knowledge, moral character, and character formation.

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