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The Philosophical Construction of Educators in Islamic Education: An Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Analysis

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Abstract. This article examines the philosophical construction of educators in Islamic education through ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. Ontologically, educators are understood not merely as professional instructors but as moral, intellectual, and spiritual agents responsible for guiding the holistic development of learners. Within the Islamic educational tradition, educational authority is associated with Allah as the ultimate source of knowledge, Prophet Muhammad as the exemplary educator, parents as the primary educators, and teachers as professional actors within educational institutions. Epistemologically, the authority and responsibilities of educators derive from the integration of revealed knowledge, rational inquiry, ethical reflection, and educational experience. This integrated foundation distinguishes Islamic educational philosophy from secular approaches that tend to separate professional teaching practices from divine and moral authority. Axiologically, educators are entrusted with transmitting knowledge, cultivating virtuous character, strengthening religious consciousness, and preparing learners to contribute responsibly to society. Therefore, the ideal educator in Islamic education must possess personal-religious, socio-religious, and professional-religious competencies. These competencies integrate pedagogical expertise, spiritual integrity, social responsibility, and ethical conduct. The article argues that educators occupy a central position in Islamic education because their professional responsibilities are inseparable from moral accountability and spiritual commitment. This philosophical framework offers a comprehensive foundation for reconstructing educator professionalism in response to contemporary educational challenges.

Keywords: Islamic Education; Educator Philosophy; Ontology of Education; Epistemology of Education; Axiology of Education; Teacher Competence

1. Introduction

Education within Islamic thought constitutes a purposeful and continuous process that develops human potential throughout the different stages and contexts of life (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Memon et al., 2021). This process aims to cultivate intellectual capacity, moral character, spiritual consciousness, social responsibility, and the ability to act meaningfully within society (Saada, 2023; Zaman, 2018). Education therefore extends beyond formal schooling because families, educational institutions, religious communities, and wider social environments collectively shape learners' knowledge, identities, values, and conduct (Abdalla et al., 2018; Memon et al., 2021). This broad conception positions education as a lifelong process that connects individual development with moral commitment and social participation (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Saada, 2023).

Educators occupy a central position in this process because they translate educational aims, religious principles, and philosophical values into pedagogical practices (Abdalla et al., 2018; Succarie, 2024). Their responsibilities extend beyond transmitting subject knowledge because they also guide learners' intellectual development, cultivate ethical conduct, strengthen spiritual awareness, and model socially responsible behaviour (Abdalla et al., 2022; Succarie, 2024). Islamic educational thought expresses these multidimensional responsibilities through such concepts as *mu'allim*, *murabbi*, *mu'addib*, *mudarris*, and *mursyid*, which respectively emphasize knowledge transmission, holistic nurturing, ethical formation, systematic instruction, and spiritual guidance (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2018). These interconnected roles construct educators as intellectual facilitators, moral exemplars, spiritual guides, and agents of human development rather than as technical instructors alone (Abdalla et al., 2018; Zaman, 2021).

Recent studies, however, show that educators in Islamic educational institutions often perform their roles within fragmented curricula, unclear institutional visions, limited teaching resources, and inadequate professional recognition (Abdalla et al., 2022). The quality of their professional practice also depends on access to continuous learning, collaborative reflection, institutional support, and opportunities to improve pedagogical competence (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021). Professionalisation processes may become procedural when institutional policies emphasize measurable performance without adequately addressing the religious, ethical, and spiritual purposes of teaching (Succarie, 2024; Tuna, 2022). These conditions demonstrate the need for a philosophical framework that explains not only what educators do but also who they are, how their educational authority is established, and what values should direct their professional responsibilities (Memon et al., 2021; Zaman, 2021).

Ontologically, Islamic education understands human beings as integrated physical, intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual entities whose development remains connected to their relationship with God, other human beings, and the created world (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2021). Within this perspective, educators constitute entrusted agents who guide learners toward intellectual maturity, ethical integrity, spiritual awareness, and responsible participation in society (Succarie, 2024; Zaman, 2018). Educational authority operates within a theocentric order that connects divine guidance, Prophetic exemplarity, family responsibility, scholarly tradition, and institutional teaching (Abdalla et al., 2018; Zaman, 2021). The educator's position therefore cannot be defined exclusively by employment status, academic qualifications, or institutional authority because it also involves moral accountability and spiritual commitment (Succarie, 2024; Tuna, 2022).

This ontological construction distinguishes Islamic educational professionalism from approaches that reduce teachers to curriculum implementers or providers of measurable academic outcomes (Memon et al., 2021; Succarie, 2024). Islamic education recognizes Allah as the ultimate source of truth and knowledge, while the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad provide a principal model of wisdom, moral exemplarity, compassionate guidance, and effective instruction (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2021). Parents assume fundamental educational responsibilities within the family, while teachers provide systematic intellectual, pedagogical, ethical, and spiritual guidance within formal and non-formal educational institutions (Abdalla et al., 2018; Memon et al., 2021). This distribution of responsibility confirms that education represents a collective obligation that cannot be assigned exclusively to classroom teachers (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Memon et al., 2021).

Epistemologically, Islamic education constructs knowledge through the integration of revelation, reason, empirical observation, scholarly interpretation, educational experience, and critical reflection (Memon et al., 2021; Zaman, 2018). This integrated epistemology rejects a rigid separation between religious knowledge and rational or empirical inquiry because each source contributes to a comprehensive understanding of reality and human

responsibility (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2021). Educators must therefore help learners understand religious teachings while also developing their ability to question, interpret, reason, examine evidence, and reflect critically on educational and social realities (Altinyelken, 2021; Memon et al., 2021). Such an approach requires dialogical pedagogies

contemporary contexts (Altinyelken, 2021; Abdalla et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence indicates that Islamic educational settings may provide limited opportunities for learners to ask questions, engage in debate, challenge interpretations, or develop independent critical reasoning (Altinyelken, 2021). Excessive reliance on memorisation and unilateral instruction may restrict learners' capacity to connect religious knowledge with their lived experiences and emerging social challenges (Altinyelken, 2021; Memon et al., 2021). Educators consequently need epistemological competence that enables them to preserve the normative foundations of Islamic teachings while facilitating rational inquiry, reflective dialogue, and contextual interpretation (Saada, 2023; Zaman, 2021). This competence allows educators to mediate between the Islamic intellectual tradition and contemporary educational demands without reducing either dimension to a secondary position (Abdalla et al., 2022; Succarie, 2024).

Axiologically, Islamic education directs knowledge and pedagogical practice toward faith, virtuous character, justice, human dignity, social welfare, and responsible engagement with diverse communities (Saada, 2023; Zaman, 2021). Knowledge gains educational value when it guides ethical action, strengthens responsibility, and contributes to individual and collective well-being (Memon et al., 2021; Saada, 2023). Educators must therefore demonstrate consistency between what they know, what they teach, how they interact with learners, and how they fulfil their professional responsibilities (Masuwai et al., 2024; Succarie, 2024). Their professional development should include continuous self-assessment, reflective practice, moral discipline, and the willingness to improve their pedagogical decisions (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Masuwai et al., 2024).

Based on these axiological principles, educator competence in Islamic education can be organized into personal-religious, socio-religious, and professional-religious dimensions (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Succarie, 2024; Tuna, 2022). Personal-religious competence concerns spiritual awareness, ethical integrity, emotional maturity, self-discipline, and the ability to serve as a credible moral example for learners (Masuwai et al., 2024; Succarie, 2024). Socio-religious competence concerns respect for human dignity, sensitivity to social diversity, commitment to justice, and the capacity to cultivate constructive relationships within schools and communities (Saada, 2023; Tuna, 2022). Professional-religious competence integrates subject knowledge, pedagogical expertise, reflective practice, professional learning, and the ability to connect instructional decisions with Islamic educational purposes (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Masuwai et al., 2024). These dimensions broaden teacher professionalism by connecting technical competence with ethical accountability, social responsibility, and spiritual purpose (Succarie, 2024; Tuna, 2022).

Existing scholarship has made substantial contributions to the renewal of Islamic curricula, pedagogical practices, teacher professional learning, and educator identity (Abdalla et al., 2022; Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Memon et al., 2021). Other studies have examined critical thinking, dialogical learning, global citizenship, spiritual formation, self-assessment, and the professionalisation of Islamic religious education teachers (Altinyelken, 2021; Masuwai et al., 2024; Saada, 2023; Tuna, 2022). Nevertheless, these strands of research often discuss educators through separate pedagogical, professional, ethical, or institutional perspectives rather than through an integrated philosophical framework (Abdalla et al., 2022; Succarie, 2024; Zaman, 2021). The reviewed literature gives limited explicit attention to how ontology, epistemology, and axiology interact in constructing the identity, authority, competence, and responsibilities of educators in Islamic education (Memon et al., 2021; Zaman, 2018, 2021).

Drawing on these scholarly discussions, this article examines the philosophical construction of educators in Islamic education through ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives (Memon et al., 2021; Zaman, 2018). It addresses three central questions concerning the ontological identity of educators, the epistemological foundations of their educational authority, and the axiological principles that guide their professional responsibilities (Succarie, 2024; Zaman, 2021). The article argues that Islamic education constructs educators as integrated intellectual, moral, social, professional, and spiritual agents rather than as technical transmitters of curriculum content (Abdalla et al., 2018; Succarie, 2024). This integrated framework contributes to contemporary discussions of teacher professionalism by connecting pedagogical competence, ethical integrity, reflective practice, social responsibility, and spiritual commitment within a coherent philosophy of Islamic education (Masuwai et al., 2024; Tuna, 2022; Zaman, 2021).

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative library research design using philosophical inquiry and conceptual analysis. The design was selected because the study sought to examine the meaning, position, authority, and responsibilities of educators within the philosophical framework of Islamic education rather than to measure empirical relationships among variables. Philosophical inquiry provided the analytical basis for examining the assumptions underlying the concept of the educator, while conceptual analysis enabled the study to clarify the defining characteristics, functions, and relationships associated with this concept (Marley-Payne, 2021; Matta, 2022; Smith & Mörelius, 2021).

The study adopted an interpretive and descriptive-analytical orientation. The descriptive stage identified and organized the principal ideas concerning educators in Islamic educational thought. The analytical stage critically examined the philosophical foundations of these ideas and reconstructed them into an integrated conceptual framework. The research did not merely summarize previous publications. It compared arguments, identified conceptual relationships, evaluated points of convergence and divergence, and formulated a coherent account of educators in Islamic education.

The philosophical analysis focused on three interconnected dimensions. First, ontological analysis examined the identity, status, nature, and position of educators within the Islamic conception of human beings, education, and reality. Second, epistemological analysis investigated the sources of educators' knowledge and authority, including revelation, reason, scholarly interpretation, educational experience, and reflective practice. Third, axiological analysis examined the values, purposes, ethical principles, and forms of responsibility that should guide educators' professional conduct.

2.1. Data Sources

The study used primary and secondary documentary sources. Primary sources included the Qur'an, relevant Prophetic traditions, and major classical works on Islamic education, knowledge, ethics, and teacher–student relationships. These sources were used to identify the normative and philosophical foundations of the educator's position in Islamic education.

The primary scholarly literature also included academic books and peer-reviewed articles that directly addressed Islamic educational philosophy, the concept of educators, teacher competence, educational ethics, knowledge, and Islamic pedagogy. Foundational

classical texts were not restricted by publication date because their historical and normative significance constituted an essential part of the analysis.

Secondary sources consisted of recent academic books, handbook chapters, and peer-reviewed international journal articles related to philosophy of education, teacher professionalism, educator identity, Islamic pedagogy, ontology, epistemology, and axiology. These sources provided contemporary interpretations, conceptual comparisons, and critical discussions that supported the reconstruction of the educator concept.

The literature search covered major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The search used combinations of the following terms: "educator in Islamic education," "Islamic philosophy of education," "teacher in Islam," "Islamic teacher identity," "Islamic pedagogy," "ontology of education," "epistemology of Islamic education," "axiology of Islamic education," "teacher ethics," and "teacher competence in Islamic education." Equivalent terms such as *mu'allim*, *murabbi*, *mu'addib*, *mudarris*, and *mursyid* were also included to broaden the conceptual scope of the search.

Sources were included when they met three criteria. First, the publication directly discussed educators, teachers, educational authority, professional identity, knowledge, values, or pedagogical responsibility. Second, the publication provided a clear connection to Islamic education or relevant philosophical debates. Third, the publication contained arguments or concepts that could be analyzed through ontological, epistemological, or axiological categories. Publications were excluded when they addressed classroom techniques without discussing the philosophical or ethical position of educators, lacked sufficient scholarly documentation, or duplicated arguments already represented by more authoritative sources.

2.2. Data Collection

Data collection followed a structured document-review process. The first stage involved identifying relevant publications through database searches and reference tracking. The second stage involved screening titles, abstracts, keywords, and publication information to determine their relevance to the research questions. The third stage involved reading the selected texts in full and extracting statements related to the identity, authority, knowledge, competence, values, functions, and responsibilities of educators.

The extracted data were recorded in a literature-analysis matrix. The matrix contained the author and year of publication, type of source, educational context, principal concept of the educator, philosophical assumptions, key argument, relevant evidence, and analytical category. The use of an organized extraction matrix supported consistency and transparency during the interpretation of diverse textual sources.

2.3. Data Analysis

The study combined philosophical analysis, qualitative content analysis, and thematic conceptualization. The analysis began with repeated reading and familiarization with the selected texts. Relevant statements and arguments were then identified and assigned initial codes. These codes included divine authority, Prophetic exemplarity, educational trust, human nature, sources of knowledge, integration of revelation and reason, moral responsibility, spiritual guidance, professional competence, social responsibility, and ethical conduct.

The initial codes were subsequently classified into three deductive philosophical categories: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontological coding focused on statements

concerning the nature and identity of educators. Epistemological coding focused on the origins, justification, transmission, and application of knowledge. Axiological coding focused on educational purposes, moral values, professional ethics, social benefits, and spiritual accountability.

Inductive analysis was also applied to identify concepts that emerged from the literature but were not fully represented by the initial categories. This process enabled the analysis to remain responsive to the intellectual diversity of Islamic educational thought. The study then compared the identified themes across classical and contemporary sources to determine conceptual continuities, reinterpretations, tensions, and emerging professional demands.

The final analytical stage involved conceptual synthesis. The themes were interpreted and integrated to construct a philosophical framework that explains educators as intellectual, moral, social, professional, and spiritual agents. This synthesis also examined the interdependence of the three philosophical dimensions. The ontological identity of educators shapes the sources and limits of their epistemological authority, while ontological and epistemological assumptions together determine the axiological purposes of their professional practice.

2.4. Research Trustworthiness

The study applied several procedures to strengthen the credibility and consistency of the analysis. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing scriptural sources, classical Islamic scholarship, contemporary academic books, and peer-reviewed journal articles. Conceptual claims were accepted only when they were supported by clear textual evidence and remained consistent with the context of the original source.

An analytical audit trail was maintained through the documentation of search terms, inclusion criteria, source classifications, extracted statements, coding decisions, and thematic development. The researcher also conducted repeated comparison between the original texts, analytical codes, philosophical categories, and final interpretations. This procedure reduced the risk of decontextualization and ensured that the conclusions remained grounded in the reviewed literature.

Reflexive checking was employed to identify possible interpretive bias, particularly when comparing Islamic educational philosophy with modern or Western theories of teacher professionalism. The comparison did not treat Islamic and Western educational traditions as homogeneous or mutually exclusive categories. Instead, it focused on their distinct assumptions concerning reality, knowledge, value, professional authority, and educational purpose.

As a document-based philosophical study involving publicly available scholarly materials, the research did not involve human participants or collect personal data. Nevertheless, the study maintained research integrity by accurately representing the arguments of the reviewed authors, distinguishing textual evidence from the researcher's interpretation, and providing complete bibliographic information for all cited sources.

3. Results and Discussion

The philosophical analysis identified three interrelated dimensions that construct the identity and professional position of educators in Islamic education, namely the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Memon et al., 2021).

These dimensions show that an educator cannot be understood only as a person who transfers subject knowledge because teaching also involves moral formation, intellectual guidance, spiritual development, and social responsibility (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024). The three dimensions also establish a relationship between the educator's identity, sources of authority, educational responsibilities, and professional competencies (Memon et al., 2024b; Zaman, 2018).

3.1 The Ontological Construction of Educators in Islamic Education

The concept of an educator in Islamic education contains a broader meaning than the conventional occupational category of a teacher (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Memon et al., 2021). The English terms *teacher*, *educator*, and *tutor* generally describe individuals who facilitate instruction, learning, or personal academic assistance within particular educational settings (Memon et al., 2021; Succarie, 2024). Islamic educational discourse employs several terms, including *mu'allim*, *murabbi*, *mu'addib*, *mudarris*, and *mursyid*, to describe different but interconnected dimensions of educational responsibility (Abdalla et al., 2018; Zaman, 2018). The terms *ustadh* and *shaykh* also function as social or scholarly titles, but they do not always identify the specific pedagogical responsibilities performed by an educator (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Memon et al., 2021).

The term *mu'allim* emphasizes the educator's responsibility for facilitating knowledge and intellectual understanding, while *murabbi* emphasizes gradual, holistic, and caring human development (Memon et al., 2021; Zaman, 2018). The concept of *mu'addib* places ethical discipline, appropriate conduct, and the cultivation of *adab* at the centre of educational practice (Abdalla et al., 2018; Zaman, 2018). The term *mudarris* refers more specifically to structured teaching, lesson organization, and the systematic presentation of knowledge, while *mursyid* emphasizes intellectual, moral, and spiritual guidance (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Memon et al., 2024a). These concepts do not represent separate professions because they collectively describe the multidimensional identity of the Islamic educator (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024).

Based on this conceptual structure, an educator can be defined as a person who consciously assumes responsibility for supporting learners' physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual development (Memon et al., 2021; Memon et al., 2024b). The educator's responsibility operates within formal, non-formal, and informal educational environments because learning and character formation occur across schools, families, communities, and religious institutions (Abdalla et al., 2018; Daun & Arjmand, 2018). Educators therefore include professional teachers and other individuals who exercise sustained educational responsibility, although their authority, competence, and institutional obligations differ according to context (Memon et al., 2021; Succarie, 2024).

Islamic educational ontology positions Allah as the ultimate source of knowledge, truth, guidance, and human development rather than as an educator within the same ontological category as human teachers (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2018). The Qur'anic account in al-Baqarah 2:31, which describes Allah teaching Adam the names of things, establishes the theological foundation that human knowledge originates within the divine order (Zaman, 2018; Memon et al., 2021). This understanding places the educator's authority under divine authority and prevents teachers from treating their knowledge or interpretation as absolute and infallible (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024).

Prophet Muhammad occupies a foundational position as the exemplary human educator who communicated revelation, explained its meanings, cultivated moral character, and demonstrated its practical implementation (Abdalla et al., 2018; Daun & Arjmand, 2018). His educational role integrated the transmission of knowledge with purification, wisdom, compassion, dialogue, exemplarity, and attention to learners'

conditions (Memon et al., 2021; Zaman, 2018). Prophetic pedagogy therefore provides a normative model for educators without implying that teachers possess prophetic authority or freedom from error (Memon et al., 2024a; Memon et al., 2024b).

Parents function as primary educational agents because children initially develop language, beliefs, habits, emotional patterns, and moral orientations within the family environment (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Juwaini et al., 2025). Parental responsibility includes creating a protective and nurturing environment, establishing religious practices, modelling ethical conduct, and supporting children's intellectual and emotional development (Memon et al., 2021; Juwaini et al., 2025). Teachers complement rather than replace parental responsibility by providing systematic, specialized, and professionally organized educational experiences within institutions (Abdalla et al., 2022; Memon et al., 2021).

Communities also influence learners through social norms, religious practices, media, peer interactions, and public examples of acceptable conduct (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Saada, 2023). The ontological construction of educational responsibility is therefore distributed across families, schools, religious institutions, and society rather than concentrated exclusively in classroom teachers (Abdalla et al., 2018; Memon et al., 2021). Effective Islamic education requires coherence among these educational environments because contradictory values across family, school, and community settings may weaken the formation of learners' identities and character (Juwaini et al., 2025; Saada, 2023).

The elevated position of educators in Islamic education derives from the value assigned to knowledge, moral guidance, and service to human development (Abdalla et al., 2022; Zaman, 2018). This position should not be understood as an unconditional social privilege because respect for educators remains connected to their knowledge, integrity, competence, justice, and fulfilment of educational trust (Abu-Saad & Haj Ali, 2024; Succarie, 2024). Professional titles alone cannot establish legitimate educational authority when educators lack subject mastery, pedagogical competence, ethical consistency, or concern for learners (Abdalla et al., 2022; Tuna, 2022). The educator's dignity is therefore normative and responsibility-based rather than merely hierarchical or ceremonial (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024).

The original claim that Western education views teachers only as paid providers of knowledge requires substantial qualification because Western educational philosophies contain diverse ethical, humanistic, religious, critical, and professional traditions (Memon et al., 2021; Tuna, 2022). A more defensible distinction concerns the philosophical foundations through which different traditions define reality, knowledge, professional authority, and educational purpose (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024). Islamic educational philosophy explicitly connects teacher professionalism with divine accountability, while many contemporary professional frameworks formulate teachers' responsibilities through institutional standards, public ethics, learner rights, and evidence-based practice (Tuna, 2022; Succarie, 2024). These frameworks may differ in their theological foundations but can converge in their concern for competence, justice, responsibility, and learner well-being (Abu-Saad & Haj Ali, 2024; Saada, 2023).

3.2. The Epistemological Construction and Authority of Educators

The epistemological construction of educators concerns the sources, limits, justification, and application of the knowledge that underpins their authority (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2018). Islamic education recognizes revelation as its principal normative source while also acknowledging reason, observation, experience, scholarly interpretation, and reflective inquiry as means of understanding and applying knowledge

(Memon et al., 2021; Memon et al., 2024a). These sources should operate integratively because revelation establishes ethical and theological orientation, while reason and experience support interpretation, contextualization, and pedagogical decision-making (Zaman, 2018; Memon et al., 2024b).

The educator does not function as the owner of truth but as a responsible interpreter, facilitator, and mediator of knowledge (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024). This position requires intellectual humility because teachers must distinguish between established principles, scholarly interpretations, personal opinions, and context-dependent pedagogical decisions (Memon et al., 2021; Zaman, 2018). Intellectual humility also enables educators to acknowledge uncertainty, revise inadequate interpretations, and engage constructively with other scholarly perspectives (Altinyelken, 2021; Succarie, 2024).

The analysis identified several epistemological functions that educators must perform within Islamic education (Abdalla et al., 2022; Memon et al., 2024a). First, educators organize, explain, and contextualize knowledge so that learners can understand its conceptual structure and practical relevance (Memon et al., 2021; Abdalla et al., 2022). Second, educators facilitate relationships between revealed knowledge, rational inquiry, lived experience, and contemporary social realities (Altinyelken, 2021; Memon et al., 2024a). Third, educators cultivate learners' capacity to examine evidence, formulate questions, compare interpretations, and develop reasoned conclusions (Altinyelken, 2021; Saada, 2023). Fourth, educators assess learners' understanding and use assessment results to improve subsequent teaching and learning processes (Masuwai et al., 2024; Zaqiah et al., 2024).

This epistemological framework challenges instructional practices that reduce learning to memorization, repetition, and unquestioning acceptance of teachers' statements (Altinyelken, 2021; Abdalla et al., 2022). Memorization can support learning when it preserves foundational texts, concepts, and vocabulary, but it cannot independently produce deep understanding, moral reasoning, or contextual judgment (Altinyelken, 2021; Memon et al., 2021). Educators must therefore combine textual mastery with explanation, discussion, reflection, problem-solving, and practical application (Assalihee et al., 2024; Memon et al., 2024a).

Dialogical pedagogy is particularly important because learners often encounter religious, scientific, cultural, and ethical questions that cannot be addressed adequately through unilateral instruction (Altinyelken, 2021; Saada, 2023). Open but guided dialogue allows learners to articulate uncertainty, examine competing arguments, and connect Islamic principles with contemporary experience (Altinyelken, 2021; Abdalla et al., 2022). Such dialogue does not require educators to relativize all truth claims because critical inquiry can operate within clearly articulated theological and ethical commitments (Memon et al., 2021; Memon et al., 2024a).

The educator's epistemological responsibilities can be translated into the roles of organizer, instructor, facilitator, inspirer, evaluator, and reflective practitioner (Assalihee et al., 2024; Masuwai et al., 2024). As an organizer, the educator designs coherent objectives, content, learning activities, resources, and assessment procedures (Assalihee et al., 2024; Zaqiah et al., 2024). As an instructor, the educator communicates concepts accurately and selects methods that correspond to learners' developmental and contextual needs (Abdalla et al., 2022; Memon et al., 2021). As a facilitator and inspirer, the educator creates opportunities for inquiry, collaboration, intellectual curiosity, and independent learning (Altinyelken, 2021; Assalihee et al., 2024). As an evaluator and reflective practitioner, the educator assesses both learners' progress and the effectiveness of

personal teaching decisions through continuous *muhasabah* and professional reflection (Masuwai et al., 2024; Zaqiah et al., 2024).

The role previously described as a modernizer should be reformulated as an adaptive and ethically responsible educational innovator (Memon et al., 2024a; Assalihee et al., 2024). Educators need to engage with technological change, digital information, artificial intelligence, and contemporary social issues without adopting innovation uncritically (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024). Their responsibility is to evaluate whether particular technologies and pedagogies support meaningful learning, preserve human dignity, and remain consistent with educational values (Memon et al., 2024b; Masuwai et al., 2024).

3.3. The Axiological Construction of Educators

The axiological dimension concerns the values and purposes that direct educators' knowledge, authority, and professional conduct (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2018). Islamic education does not treat knowledge as morally neutral because the value of knowledge also depends on its purpose, use, and consequences for individuals and society (Memon et al., 2021; Memon et al., 2024a). Educators must therefore connect learning with faith, ethical conduct, justice, compassion, human dignity, social welfare, and responsible stewardship (Saada, 2023; Abu-Saad & Haj Ali, 2024).

Al-Ghazali's educational orientation emphasizes the integration of knowledge, action, moral purification, and spiritual development (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2018). From this perspective, the educator's task includes helping learners develop intellectual competence while directing knowledge toward virtuous action and spiritual awareness (Memon et al., 2021; Memon et al., 2024b). Academic achievement without ethical responsibility cannot represent the complete success of Islamic education because knowledge should transform both understanding and conduct (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024).

The Javanese conception of the teacher as someone who is *digugu* and *ditiru*, meaning trusted and emulated, corresponds with the axiological requirement that educators demonstrate consistency between knowledge and conduct (Memon et al., 2024b; Succarie, 2024). Learners evaluate teachers not only through instructional competence but also through fairness, reliability, emotional conduct, communication, and treatment of others (Abu-Saad & Haj Ali, 2024; Masuwai et al., 2024). Moral exemplarity should not imply that educators must appear flawless because honest self-correction, accountability, and willingness to learn can also provide powerful ethical models (Masuwai et al., 2024; Succarie, 2024).

Ibn Miskawayh's ethical philosophy strengthens this axiological analysis by defining character as a relatively stable disposition that directs action without requiring prolonged deliberation on every occasion (Candra et al., 2021; Juwaini et al., 2025). Moral character develops through repeated practice, rational discipline, environmental support, self-control, and the gradual harmonization of human faculties (Candra et al., 2021; Juwaini et al., 2025). Educators must therefore create consistent opportunities for learners to practise honesty, justice, responsibility, compassion, discipline, and cooperation rather than merely define these virtues verbally (Candra et al., 2021; Saada, 2023).

Ibn Miskawayh's position should not be equated directly with John Locke's theory of *tabula rasa* because the two approaches emerge from different anthropological, epistemological, and teleological assumptions (Candra et al., 2021; Juwaini et al., 2025). Both perspectives recognize the influence of education and environment, but Ibn Miskawayh connects moral formation with the discipline of the soul, rational balance, virtue, and the attainment of human perfection and happiness (Candra et al., 2021; Juwaini

et al., 2025). Removing the direct equivalence avoids reducing Islamic moral philosophy to a derivative version of a modern European theory (Daun & Arjmand, 2018; Zaman, 2018).

3.4. The Competencies of Educators in Islamic Education

The philosophical synthesis produced three overarching domains of educator competence: personal-religious competence, socio-religious competence, and professional-religious competence (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024). The word *religious* in these domains does not indicate the addition of ceremonial practices to conventional teacher competence because it refers to the ethical and theological orientation that directs professional action (Memon et al., 2024b; Tuna, 2022). These domains remain interconnected because personal integrity influences social relationships, while both dimensions affect the quality of professional practice (Abu-Saad & Haj Ali, 2024; Succarie, 2024).

Personal-religious competence includes sincerity, honesty, trustworthiness, justice, patience, emotional maturity, self-discipline, humility, and commitment to continuous self-improvement (Masuwai et al., 2024; Memon et al., 2024b). This competence enables educators to regulate their emotions, recognize personal limitations, accept constructive criticism, and act consistently with the values they teach (Masuwai et al., 2024; Succarie, 2024). Continuous *muhasabah* functions as a professional practice because self-assessment helps educators identify weaknesses, establish improvement goals, and adapt their teaching responsibly (Masuwai et al., 2024; Zaqiah et al., 2024).

Socio-religious competence concerns the ability to establish respectful, compassionate, equitable, and constructive relationships with learners, colleagues, parents, and communities (Saada, 2023; Abu-Saad & Haj Ali, 2024). It includes cooperation, mutual assistance, tolerance, sensitivity to diversity, commitment to social justice, and the ability to resolve differences through ethical dialogue (Saada, 2023; Tuna, 2022). This competence also requires educators to protect learners from discrimination, humiliation, violence, and exclusion because educational authority must serve human dignity rather than personal domination (Saada, 2023; Succarie, 2024).

Professional-religious competence integrates subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum design, classroom management, assessment literacy, digital competence, and reflective professional development (Assalihee et al., 2024; Zaqiah et al., 2024). Educators must understand what they teach, why the knowledge matters, how learners develop understanding, and which methods produce meaningful educational outcomes (Abdalla et al., 2022; Memon et al., 2021). They must also connect professional decisions with the ethical and spiritual purposes of Islamic education rather than treating competence as a purely technical capacity (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024).

Recent evidence indicates that Islamic educators benefit from professional learning models that combine collaborative lesson planning, classroom observation, reflective dialogue, self-assessment, and contextual pedagogical development (Assalihee et al., 2024; Masuwai et al., 2024). Professional development becomes more meaningful when it strengthens subject knowledge and teaching skills while also enabling educators to examine their identity, purpose, values, and relationship with learners (Memon et al., 2024b; Succarie, 2024). This finding supports a model of professionalism in which technical expertise and spiritual-ethical responsibility reinforce rather than replace one another (Tuna, 2022; Memon et al., 2024a).

3.5. An Integrated Philosophical Framework

Table 1. The relationship among the three philosophical dimensions can be summarized as follows.

Philosophical dimension	Central question	Construction of the educator	Principal responsibilities	Competence orientation
Ontology	Who is the educator?	A human agent entrusted with supporting learners' holistic development under divine authority	Nurturing, guiding, modelling, and assuming educational responsibility	Personal integrity and consciousness of educational trust
Epistemology	How does the educator know and teach?	A mediator of revelation, reason, scholarship, experience, and reflective inquiry	Explaining, contextualizing, facilitating dialogue, assessing, and reflecting	Subject knowledge, pedagogy, inquiry, assessment, and professional learning
Axiology	What values and purposes guide the educator?	A moral, spiritual, and socially responsible professional	Cultivating faith, virtue, justice, dignity, responsibility, and social welfare	Personal-religious, socio-religious, and professional-religious competence

Sources: Daun and Arjmand (2018), Memon et al. (2021), Memon et al. (2024a), Memon et al. (2024b), and Succarie (2024).

The framework demonstrates that ontology, epistemology, and axiology cannot operate independently within Islamic teacher professionalism (Memon et al., 2024a; Zaman, 2018). The educator's ontological identity as an entrusted human agent determines the limits and responsibilities of epistemological authority (Memon et al., 2021; Succarie, 2024). Epistemological authority then supports the educator's ability to pursue axiological purposes through informed and ethically responsible educational practice (Memon et al., 2024b; Tuna, 2022).

The philosophical construction developed in this study consequently defines educators as intellectual facilitators, moral exemplars, spiritual guides, reflective practitioners, and agents of social responsibility (Memon et al., 2024a; Succarie, 2024). These roles should not be interpreted as an unrealistic demand for individual teachers to solve every educational and social problem because institutions, families, communities, and policymakers also share responsibility for educational quality (Abdalla et al., 2022; Juwaini et al., 2025). Islamic educational institutions must support educators through coherent curricula, appropriate resources, professional recognition, collaborative learning, and sustained development opportunities (Abdalla et al., 2022; Assalihee et al., 2024).

The principal contribution of this framework lies in its integration of philosophical identity and professional practice (Memon et al., 2024a; Memon et al., 2024b). It shows that the Islamic educator's professionalism cannot be measured only through qualifications, instructional performance, or learners' academic scores because it also involves ethical integrity, reflective development, social responsibility, and spiritual purpose (Masuwai et al., 2024; Succarie, 2024). This integrated model offers a conceptual foundation for designing teacher education, competency standards, professional development, and

educator evaluation within contemporary Islamic educational institutions (Assalihee et al., 2024; Tuna, 2022).

4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the philosophical construction of educators in Islamic education rests on the integration of ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations. Ontologically, educators are not merely instructional workers but entrusted human agents who support learners' intellectual, moral, social, physical, and spiritual development. Their authority operates within a broader educational structure that includes divine guidance, Prophetic exemplarity, parental responsibility, institutional teaching, and community participation. This position gives educators an honourable status, but it also places substantial ethical and professional responsibilities upon them.

Epistemologically, educators function as mediators of knowledge who connect revelation, reason, scholarly interpretation, experience, and reflective inquiry. Their role therefore extends beyond transmitting established information. They must explain, contextualize, evaluate, and facilitate meaningful dialogue between Islamic teachings and contemporary educational realities. This function requires educators to demonstrate intellectual humility, critical awareness, pedagogical competence, and openness to continuous professional learning. It also requires them to distinguish clearly between normative religious principles, scholarly interpretations, personal opinions, and context-dependent educational decisions.

Axiologically, the value of educators lies in their ability to direct knowledge toward faith, ethical conduct, justice, human dignity, social responsibility, and collective well-being. The study therefore identifies three interrelated domains of educator competence: personal-religious competence, socio-religious competence, and professional-religious competence. Personal-religious competence reflects integrity, sincerity, trustworthiness, discipline, and self-reflection. Socio-religious competence concerns respect, compassion, tolerance, justice, and constructive engagement with learners and communities. Professional-religious competence integrates subject mastery, pedagogical expertise, assessment, digital literacy, reflective practice, and commitment to Islamic educational purposes.

The main contribution of this study lies in its integrated philosophical framework. This framework shows that the identity, authority, responsibilities, and competencies of educators cannot be examined separately. The educator's ontological identity shapes the basis of epistemological authority, while both dimensions determine the axiological direction of professional practice. Islamic teacher professionalism should therefore be evaluated not only through academic qualifications, instructional performance, or learners' achievement, but also through ethical integrity, spiritual commitment, reflective competence, and social responsibility.

This framework has practical implications for teacher education, curriculum development, professional standards, and educator evaluation in Islamic educational institutions. Teacher preparation programs should integrate philosophical understanding, pedagogical competence, moral formation, spiritual development, and reflective professional practice. Educational institutions should also provide coherent curricula, supportive leadership, collaborative learning opportunities, and continuous professional development that strengthen both technical expertise and ethical responsibility.

As a philosophical and library-based study, this article does not test the proposed framework in specific institutional or cultural settings. Future research should examine its applicability through empirical studies involving Islamic school teachers, lecturers, parents, educational leaders, and learners. Comparative studies across countries and educational systems may also clarify how ontological, epistemological, and axiological principles shape educator identity and professional practice in diverse contexts. Such research may contribute to the development of a more contextually relevant, philosophically coherent, and professionally sustainable model of Islamic teacher education.

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