Journal of Islamic Education Research | Vol. 7 No. 3 (2026)
Available online at: https://jier.uinkhas.ac.id/index.php/jier
e-ISSN: 2716-0998
p-ISSN: 2716-1005

Reconstructing Teacher–Student Relations in Islamic Adab Education: A Critical Analysis of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah

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Article History:
Received: 24-4-2026
Revised: 27-5-2026
Accepted: 11-6-2026
Published: 24-6-2026

Keywords:
Islamic Adab Education; Teacher Authority; Student Agency; Dialogical Pedagogy; Islamic Education Curriculum

Abstract: This study aims to reconstruct teacher–student relations in Islamic adab education by critically examining the construction of authority, obedience, and student positioning within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum of Madrasah Aliyah. The study employed a qualitative library research design integrating thematic synthesis, critical textual analysis, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, and Michel Foucault's theory of power relations. Data were collected from PAI curriculum documents, adab-related learning materials, classical Islamic educational texts, and relevant Scopus-indexed literature. The findings reveal three interconnected themes: teacher authority remains a fundamental element of Islamic adab education, student agency is increasingly recognized as an essential dimension of meaningful learning, and safe learning environments require a balance between ethical authority, learner participation, and educational accountability. The study further demonstrates that hierarchical interpretations of authority and obedience can be reinterpreted through a dialogical-adab framework that promotes mutual respect, learner dignity, and educational responsibility. The novelty of this study lies in integrating Islamic adab traditions, student agency theory, educational safeguarding, and critical perspectives on power relations into a unified framework for curriculum reconstruction. The study contributes to Islamic educational theory and curriculum development by offering a dialogical-adab model that supports ethical leadership, student empowerment, and safe learning environments in contemporary Islamic education.

***Abstrak**: Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi relasi guru–murid dalam pendidikan adab Islam melalui kajian kritis terhadap konstruksi otoritas, kepatuhan, dan posisi peserta didik dalam kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) Madrasah Aliyah. Penelitian menggunakan desain library research kualitatif yang mengintegrasikan sintesis tematik, analisis teks kritis, dekonstruksi Jacques Derrida, dan teori relasi kuasa Michel Foucault. Data diperoleh dari dokumen kurikulum PAI, materi pembelajaran adab, teks klasik pendidikan Islam, dan literatur bereputasi yang terindeks Scopus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga tema utama, yaitu otoritas guru tetap menjadi elemen fundamental dalam pendidikan adab Islam, agensi peserta didik semakin dipandang sebagai dimensi penting pembelajaran, dan lingkungan belajar yang aman memerlukan keseimbangan antara otoritas yang etis, partisipasi peserta didik, dan akuntabilitas pendidikan. Temuan juga menunjukkan bahwa interpretasi hierarkis terhadap otoritas dan kepatuhan dapat direkonstruksi melalui kerangka dialogical-adab yang mendorong penghormatan timbal balik, martabat peserta didik, dan tanggung jawab pendidikan. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi tradisi adab Islam, teori agensi peserta didik, educational safeguarding, dan perspektif kritis relasi kuasa dalam satu kerangka rekonstruksi kurikulum. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan teori pendidikan Islam dan kurikulum PAI melalui model dialogical-adab yang mendukung kepemimpinan etis, pemberdayaan peserta didik, dan lingkungan belajar yang aman.*

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Please cite this article in APA style as:
Hamda, L.L., Yusuf, A.A., & Aziz, A., (2026). Reconstructing Teacher–Student Relations in Islamic Adab Education: A Critical Analysis of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah. *Journal of Islamic Education Research, 7(3)*, 439-454; https://doi.org/10.35719/jier.v7i3.579

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has historically positioned adab as one of its foundational concepts for cultivating moral character, intellectual discipline, and ethical relationships within the learning process. Unlike the modern tendency to separate cognitive achievement from moral development, the Islamic educational tradition views knowledge acquisition and ethical formation as inseparable dimensions of human development. Classical Muslim scholars such as Al-Zarnuji emphasized that the success of learning depends not only on intellectual effort but also on the cultivation of proper adab toward teachers, knowledge, and fellow learners (Huda et al., 2016). Similarly, Al-Attas conceptualized adab as the recognition and acknowledgment of the proper place of things within the order of creation, making ethical conduct a central objective of education rather than a supplementary outcome (Noaparast, 2012; In'Ami et al., 2025). Consequently, adab occupies a strategic position within Islamic Religious Education curricula, particularly in Madrasah Aliyah, where moral formation constitutes a major educational objective.

Contemporary scholarship continues to affirm the significance of adab and Islamic pedagogy in shaping holistic educational experiences. Islamic education is expected to nurture not only knowledgeable individuals but also morally responsible and socially conscious citizens (Waghid, 2009; Abdalla, 2025). Recent studies further demonstrate that Islamic educational practices rooted in adab, tarbiyah, and ta'dib contribute to students' emotional, moral, and spiritual development (Ismail et al., 2024; Abdalla, 2025). Within this framework, teachers are traditionally regarded as moral exemplars and educational guides whose authority facilitates character formation and intellectual growth. However, contemporary educational discourse increasingly emphasizes that educational authority should not merely reproduce hierarchical obedience but should also support learner participation, autonomy, and agency (Kim, 2022; Klemenčič, 2023).

The growing dialogue between Islamic educational thought and contemporary educational theory has generated renewed attention to teacher–student relationships. While traditional Islamic education emphasizes respect for teachers, modern educational perspectives advocate dialogical, participatory, and learner-centered pedagogies that empower students as active subjects in the educational process (Malik & Jumani, 2022; Suhayib & Ansyari, 2023). Research on student agency highlights the importance of creating learning environments in which students can think critically, express their perspectives, participate in decision-making, and exercise autonomy in ethical ways (Leo et al., 2020; Hooshyar et al., 2023; Adhikari, 2024). Similarly, dialogical pedagogy promotes reciprocal relationships between teachers and students, grounded in mutual respect, communication, and shared responsibility for learning (Ferrada et al., 2023; D'Olimpio, 2024).

Despite these developments, tensions remain between traditional constructions of teacher authority and contemporary understandings of student

agency within many educational contexts, including Islamic educational institutions. Studies on teacher authority indicate that educational relationships can become problematic when authority is interpreted as unquestionable power rather than ethical leadership and guidance (Kim, 2022; Mitkees & El Odessy, 2025). In some contexts, rigid hierarchical structures may reduce opportunities for student participation and critical engagement, potentially normalizing power imbalances. Educational scholars have therefore increasingly emphasized the importance of balancing legitimate teacher authority with students' rights, dignity, and agency within safe learning environments (Scanlon & Connolly, 2021; Succarie, 2024).

Within Islamic educational settings, discussions of adab have largely focused on moral formation, respect for teachers, and character development. Existing studies commonly examine the implementation of classical educational texts, particularly *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, as a framework for strengthening students' discipline, respect, and learning ethics (Huda et al., 2016; In'Ami et al., 2025). Other studies have explored Islamic teacher identity, pedagogical professionalism, and educational leadership (Al-Attas, 1980; Daud, 2018; Succarie, 2024; Tamuri et al., 2012). While these contributions enrich understanding of Islamic educational traditions, they generally approach adab from normative, theological, or pedagogical perspectives. Limited attention has been paid to examining how specific constructions of teacher authority in adab materials may influence power relations between teachers and students in contemporary educational contexts.

Furthermore, although research on student agency, dialogical pedagogy, and safe learning environments has expanded significantly within mainstream educational scholarship (Klemenčič, 2023; Ferrada et al., 2023; Adhikari, 2024), these discussions have rarely been integrated into analyses of Islamic adab education. Existing scholarship has not sufficiently explored how classical concepts of respect, obedience, and teacher authority may be reinterpreted in ways that remain faithful to Islamic educational values while simultaneously supporting student agency, educational justice, and child protection. Consequently, a significant theoretical gap exists regarding how adab education can be reconstructed to address contemporary educational challenges without abandoning its foundational ethical principles.

This study addresses this gap by critically examining teacher–student relations embedded within adab materials in the PAI curriculum of Madrasah Aliyah. Drawing upon Jacques Derrida's deconstruction and Michel Foucault's theory of power relations, the study seeks to identify dominant assumptions concerning authority, obedience, and student positioning within educational discourse. More importantly, the study aims to reconstruct these relationships through dialogue with Islamic intellectual traditions and contemporary educational theories. Rather than rejecting the concept of teacher authority, this study proposes a reinterpretation of authority as ethical, dialogical, and educationally responsible leadership that supports student agency and human dignity.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating Islamic adab traditions, contemporary theories of student agency, dialogical pedagogy, and educational safeguarding into a unified analytical framework for curriculum reconstruction. By bridging Islamic intellectual traditions with global educational discourse, this research contributes to the development of a contemporary model of adab

education that promotes ethical teacher authority, student empowerment, and safe learning environments within Islamic educational institutions. In doing so, the study advances current discussions on curriculum reform, Islamic pedagogy, and the future direction of Islamic education in increasingly complex and diverse educational contexts.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative library research design to critically examine the construction of teacher–student relations in Islamic adab education and to formulate a conceptual framework for reconstructing adab materials within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at the Madrasah Aliyah level. Library research was considered appropriate because the investigation's primary focus was educational texts, curriculum documents, and scholarly discourse rather than empirical data from human participants. The study sought to understand how authority, obedience, student agency, and educational safeguarding are represented within Islamic educational discourse and how these representations may be reinterpreted in response to contemporary educational challenges.

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consisted of official PAI curriculum documents for Madrasah Aliyah issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, PAI textbooks and adab-related learning materials used in Madrasah Aliyah, and classical Islamic educational texts that have historically shaped teacher–student ethics, particularly *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Al-Zarnuji. They selected works on *adab*, *ta'dib*, and Islamic pedagogy. Secondary sources consisted of Scopus-indexed journal articles, scholarly books, and book chapters discussing Islamic education, teacher authority, student agency, dialogical pedagogy, educational ethics, child protection, and educational safeguarding. The literature was limited to publications published between 2012 and 2026 to capture contemporary developments in educational theory while maintaining connections with relevant Islamic educational scholarship.

Document selection followed purposive criteria. Sources were included when they explicitly addressed teacher–student relationships, educational authority, learner participation, Islamic pedagogy, curriculum reform, educational justice, or safe learning environments. Publications lacking direct relevance to educational relationships or curriculum issues were excluded. The literature search was conducted using combinations of keywords such as *teacher authority*, *teacher–student relationship*, *student agency*, *dialogical pedagogy*, *educational safeguarding*, *safe learning environment*, *Islamic education*, *Islamic pedagogy*, and *adab education*.

Data collection was conducted through systematic document analysis. Relevant documents were identified, screened, categorized, and organized according to conceptual relevance. During this process, particular attention was given to recurring discussions concerning educational authority, obedience, autonomy, participation, dialogue, dignity, student rights, and educational protection. The selected literature was subsequently synthesized into three major analytical themes that constitute the conceptual foundation of this study.

Table 1. Analytical Themes and Conceptual Focus

Theme	Conceptual Focus	Representative Concepts
Teacher Authority in Adab Education	Construction of authority, legitimacy, obedience, and educational leadership	Teacher authority, obedience, hierarchy, legitimacy, ethical leadership
Student Agency and Educational Participation	Student autonomy and active participation in learning processes	Student agency, student voice, learner autonomy, participation, empowerment
Safe Learning Environment and Educational Safeguarding	Educational protection and student well-being	Child protection, safeguarding, school safety, educational justice, inclusive learning environment

The analysis followed a thematic synthesis procedure adapted from qualitative document analysis and thematic analysis approaches (Bowen, 2009; Braun & Clarke, 2022). The first stage involved open coding, whereby key concepts and arguments were extracted from curriculum documents, classical Islamic texts, and contemporary scholarly literature. Initial codes included authority, obedience, hierarchy, agency, participation, dialogue, safeguarding, dignity, and educational ethics. The second stage involved axial coding, in which related codes were grouped into broader conceptual categories. For example, authority, obedience, legitimacy, and hierarchy were clustered under teacher authority, whereas participation, autonomy, student voice, and empowerment were categorized under student agency. The third stage consisted of thematic synthesis, through which the categories were consolidated into the three overarching themes presented above.

Following thematic synthesis, the findings were subjected to critical interpretation using Jacques Derrida's deconstruction and Michel Foucault's theory of power relations. Derrida's deconstructive framework was employed to identify binary oppositions embedded within adab discourse, such as teacher/student, authority/obedience, knowledge/ignorance, and subject/object. The analysis subsequently examined how these binaries produce hierarchical assumptions, privilege particular positions, and marginalize alternative understandings of educational relationships. Particular attention was devoted to uncovering tensions, ambiguities, and silenced meanings within the texts, thereby opening possibilities for alternative interpretations that are more dialogical and educationally balanced.

Foucault's theory of power relations complemented the deconstructive analysis by examining how authority is produced, legitimized, and maintained through educational discourse. Rather than treating authority merely as an individual characteristic of teachers, the analysis explored how pedagogical knowledge, institutional norms, and ethical expectations function as mechanisms through which power circulates within educational settings. This perspective enabled a critical examination of how teacher authority and student obedience are constructed within adab education and how these constructions influence student agency and educational participation.

The integration of thematic synthesis, deconstructive analysis, and power-relations theory enabled the study to move beyond descriptive interpretations toward a critical reconstruction of teacher–student relations in Islamic education.

Rather than rejecting the concept of authority, the analysis sought to reinterpret authority as an ethical, dialogical, and educationally responsible form of leadership that supports both Islamic educational values and contemporary expectations regarding student agency and safe learning environments.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study adopted principles of document criticism proposed by Scott (2014), including authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. Interpretations derived from curriculum documents were continuously compared with classical Islamic educational texts and contemporary scholarly literature through cross-document analysis. Analytical consistency was maintained through iterative reading, repeated coding, and continuous comparison across multiple sources. This process enhanced the transparency, credibility, and interpretive rigor of the study.

The study was guided by four research questions: (1) How is teacher authority constructed within Islamic adab education in the PAI curriculum of Madrasah Aliyah? (2) How are student agency and educational participation positioned within contemporary discussions of Islamic education? (3) How can teacher–student relations be reconstructed to support both Islamic educational values and safe learning environments? Moreover, (4) How do deconstruction and power-relations perspectives contribute to the reinterpretation of authority and agency in Islamic adab education?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Theme 1. Teacher Authority in Islamic Adab Education

The first theme emerging from the literature concerns the construction of teacher authority within Islamic educational traditions. Across classical and contemporary Islamic educational scholarship, teachers are consistently positioned as moral guides, intellectual mentors, and custodians of ethical formation. Rather than merely transmitting knowledge, teachers are expected to cultivate students' intellectual, spiritual, and moral development through exemplary conduct and educational leadership (Al-Attas, 1980; Daud, 2018; Tamuri et al., 2012).

Classical Islamic educational texts place significant emphasis on respect (*ta'zim*) and proper conduct toward teachers. Al-Zarnuji's educational philosophy highlights obedience, discipline, and reverence for teachers as important conditions for acquiring beneficial knowledge (Huda et al., 2016). Similarly, Al-Attas conceptualizes educational authority as a moral responsibility grounded in *adab*, in which teachers guide students to recognize the proper order of knowledge and ethical conduct (Noaparast, 2012; In'Ami et al., 2025). Within this perspective, authority is not merely institutional power but a form of ethical stewardship.

Contemporary studies, however, suggest that educational authority is increasingly interpreted through more relational and dialogical perspectives. Succarie (2024) argues that Islamic teacher professionalism requires balancing instructional authority with responsiveness to learners' needs and experiences. Likewise, Mitkees and El Odessy (2025) demonstrate that effective teacher–student relationships within Islamic higher education are characterized not only by guidance and discipline but also by mentorship, care, and mutual respect.

The broader educational literature similarly distinguishes between legitimate educational authority and authoritarian control. Kim (2022) emphasizes that teacher authority remains necessary for organizing learning processes but becomes pedagogically productive only when it supports students' participation and intellectual growth. Therefore, contemporary discussions increasingly portray teacher authority as ethical leadership rather than unquestionable dominance.

These findings indicate that authority remains a central component of Islamic adab education. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly challenges rigid hierarchical interpretations and encourages more relational understandings of educational authority.

Table 2. Representative Studies on Teacher Authority in Education

Author(s)	Main Focus	Key Contribution
Huda et al. (2016)	Al-Zarnuji's educational thought	Emphasizes respect and obedience as foundations of learning
Noaparast (2012)	Al-Attas' philosophy of education	Authority grounded in adab and ethical responsibility
Daud (2018)	Islamic teacher as al-muaddib	Teacher as moral educator and guide
Succarie (2024)	Islamic teacher professionalism	Authority linked to professional identity and ethical leadership
Kim (2022)	Teacher authority and student agency	Authority should facilitate participation and learning

Theme 2. Student Agency and Educational Participation

The second theme concerns student agency and educational participation. Recent educational scholarship increasingly recognizes students as active participants in knowledge construction rather than passive recipients of instruction. Student agency refers to learners' capacity to make decisions, express perspectives, engage critically with knowledge, and influence their educational experiences (Klemenčič, 2023).

Studies consistently demonstrate that meaningful learning occurs when students are positioned as active subjects within educational processes. Leo et al. (2020) found that reciprocal agency between teachers and students contributes significantly to educational success. Similarly, Hooshyar et al. (2023) emphasize that educational environments promoting autonomy and participation strengthen learners' engagement and self-regulation.

Dialogical pedagogical approaches further reinforce the importance of student agency. Ferrada et al. (2023) argue that educational relationships should be based on dialogue, collaboration, and mutual recognition rather than unilateral transmission of knowledge. D'Olimpio (2024) similarly highlights dialogue as an essential condition for educational development because it enables learners to participate actively in ethical and intellectual inquiry.

In Islamic educational contexts, student agency does not necessarily conflict with respect for teachers. Malik and Jumani (2022) demonstrate that student-centered approaches can coexist with Islamic educational principles when authority is exercised through guidance rather than domination. Contemporary Islamic educational discourse therefore increasingly advocates balancing respect for

teachers with opportunities for critical thinking, participation, and personal responsibility.

These findings suggest that student agency should be understood not as resistance to authority but as an essential component of meaningful educational engagement.

Table 3. Representative Studies on Student Agency and Educational Participation

Author(s)	Main Focus	Key Contribution
Klemenčič (2023)	Theory of student agency	Students as active educational actors
Leo et al. (2020)	Reciprocal agency	Teacher and student agency are mutually reinforcing
Hooshyar et al. (2023)	Learning analytics and agency	Participation enhances learner engagement
Ferrada et al. (2023)	Dialogical pedagogy	Dialogue strengthens educational participation
Malik & Jumani (2022)	Student-centered Islamic instruction	Student agency compatible with Islamic pedagogy

Theme 3. Safe Learning Environment and Educational Safeguarding

The third theme concerns the creation of safe learning environments and educational safeguarding. Contemporary educational research increasingly recognizes that effective learning cannot occur without physical, psychological, and emotional safety. Educational institutions are therefore expected to provide environments that protect students' dignity, well-being, and rights while fostering trust and participation.

Research on educational safeguarding highlights the importance of institutional mechanisms that prevent harm, support student welfare, and encourage open communication between learners and educators. Educational safety is not limited to physical protection but also includes the development of environments where students feel respected, valued, and able to express concerns without fear (Adhikari, 2024).

Within the context of Islamic education, recent scholarship has similarly emphasized educational care, ethical responsibility, and holistic student development. Ismail et al. (2024) demonstrate that Islamic educational practices are most effective when they promote emotional security, moral development, and supportive learning relationships. Succarie (2024) further argues that contemporary Islamic educational institutions must align traditional ethical values with emerging concerns regarding student well-being and educational inclusion.

The safeguarding literature also emphasizes that educational authority should be accompanied by accountability and ethical responsibility. Educational relationships characterized by transparency, dialogue, and mutual respect contribute significantly to the creation of safe learning environments (Scanlon & Connolly, 2021; Adhikari, 2024). Consequently, contemporary educational discourse increasingly advocates integrating safeguarding principles into curriculum design, pedagogical practices, and institutional culture.

Overall, the literature suggests that safe learning environments emerge when ethical authority, student participation, and institutional responsibility operate in a balanced and mutually reinforcing manner.

Table 4. Representative Studies on Safe Learning Environment and Educational Safeguarding

Author(s)	Main Focus	Key Contribution
Ismail et al. (2024)	Emotional and moral development	Supportive relationships foster educational well-being
Succarie (2024)	Islamic teacher professionalism	Ethical responsibility strengthens student protection
Adhikari (2024)	Student engagement and agency	Participation contributes to educational safety
Scanlon & Connolly (2021)	Teacher and learner agency	Reciprocal relationships improve learning environments
Ferrada et al. (2023)	Dialogical pedagogy	Dialogue promotes inclusion and trust

Taken together, the findings reveal a significant transformation in contemporary educational discourse regarding teacher–student relations. While Islamic educational traditions continue to recognize the importance of teacher authority as a foundation for moral and intellectual development, recent scholarship increasingly emphasizes the need to balance authority with student agency, participation, and educational safeguarding. The literature suggests that effective educational environments are not constructed through rigid hierarchical obedience alone, nor through the elimination of educational authority, but through the development of ethical, dialogical, and accountable relationships between teachers and students. The synthesis of the three themes demonstrates that teacher authority, student agency, and safe learning environments should not be viewed as competing concepts but as complementary dimensions of a holistic educational framework. These findings provide the analytical basis for critically examining how teacher–student relations are constructed within Islamic adab materials and how such constructions may be reinterpreted through the perspectives of deconstruction and power relations to develop a more balanced and contextually relevant model of Islamic education.

Discussion

Reinterpreting Teacher Authority through Islamic Educational Traditions and Contemporary Educational Theory

The findings indicate that teacher authority remains a central component of Islamic adab education. Classical Islamic educational traditions have historically positioned teachers as moral exemplars, intellectual guides, and custodians of ethical development. The concept of adab articulated by Al-Zarnuji and later developed by Al-Attas emphasizes respect, discipline, and recognition of the proper place of knowledge and educational relationships (Huda et al., 2016; In'Ami et al., 2025). Within this framework, authority functions as a mechanism for transmitting both knowledge and moral virtues.

However, contemporary educational scholarship increasingly argues that authority should not be equated with domination or unquestionable obedience. Rather, authority becomes educationally meaningful when it facilitates students' intellectual growth, participation, and moral development (Kim, 2022; Mitkees & El Odessy, 2025). This perspective resonates with recent discussions in Islamic education emphasizing the need to reinterpret traditional concepts in response to contemporary educational realities (Zul et al., 2026).

From a deconstructive perspective, the traditional binary opposition of teacher/student, authority/obedience, and knower/learner has often been interpreted through hierarchical assumptions that privilege teachers as the sole source of legitimate knowledge. Derrida's deconstruction encourages the examination of hidden hierarchies embedded within educational discourse and opens possibilities for alternative interpretations that do not negate authority but redistribute educational agency more equitably. In this regard, authority should be understood as ethical leadership rather than absolute control.

This interpretation aligns with contemporary Islamic educational thought, which views teachers as *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, and *mu'addib*, whose authority derives from moral responsibility rather than institutional domination. Therefore, reconstructing teacher authority does not imply diminishing respect for teachers; rather, it involves repositioning authority within a framework of accountability, dialogue, and educational responsibility.

From Obedience to Student Agency: Toward Dialogical Islamic Education

A second important finding concerns the growing significance of student agency within contemporary educational discourse. The literature reviewed consistently demonstrates that effective educational environments emerge when students are recognized as active participants in learning rather than passive recipients of instruction (Klemenčič, 2023; Leo et al., 2020). Student agency encompasses learners' capacity to think critically, participate meaningfully, express perspectives, and exercise ethical autonomy within educational settings.

This perspective challenges interpretations of adab that equate educational success exclusively with compliance and submission. While respect for teachers remains an important educational value, contemporary scholarship emphasizes that respect should coexist with dialogue, participation, and mutual recognition (Ferrada et al., 2023; D'Olimpio, 2024). Democratic and participatory approaches to education similarly argue that learners develop intellectual responsibility when they are actively involved in educational decision-making and critical reflection (Riddle, 2022; Bruce, 2025).

Importantly, student agency is not incompatible with Islamic educational principles. Malik and Jumani (2022) demonstrate that student-centered learning can be implemented within Islamic educational settings without undermining moral discipline or religious values. Instead, agency enables students to internalize ethical commitments through conscious understanding rather than external coercion.

From the perspective of Foucault's theory of power relations, educational authority becomes problematic when disciplinary mechanisms transform students into passive subjects whose participation is restricted by rigid hierarchical structures. Foucault's analysis suggests that power circulates through educational

discourses, institutional norms, and pedagogical practices rather than residing solely within individuals. Consequently, reconstructing teacher–student relations requires creating educational spaces where authority and participation operate reciprocally rather than antagonistically.

The findings therefore support a dialogical model of Islamic education in which teachers remain respected educational leaders while students are recognized as active moral and intellectual agents. Such a model reflects both contemporary educational theory and the broader Islamic principle of human dignity (*karāmah al-insān*).

Educational Safeguarding and the Maqasid-Oriented Learning Environment

The third theme highlights the increasing importance of educational safeguarding and safe learning environments within contemporary educational discourse. The literature suggests that meaningful learning can only occur when students experience physical, psychological, emotional, and social safety within educational institutions (Adhikari, 2024; Scanlon & Connolly, 2021).

Within Islamic educational traditions, safeguarding can be interpreted through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly the protection of life (*hifẓ al-nafs*), dignity (*hifẓ al-'ird*), intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*), and well-being. Studies on Islamic educational ethics increasingly emphasize that educational institutions bear responsibility not only for transmitting knowledge but also for protecting learners from harm and fostering environments conducive to holistic development (Ismail et al., 2018; Zul et al., 2026).

The findings indicate that safe learning environments are strengthened when educational authority is accompanied by accountability, transparency, and ethical responsibility. Contemporary studies on Islamic education similarly emphasize inclusivity, mutual respect, and social harmony as essential educational objectives (Saihu et al., 2022). These principles suggest that safeguarding should not be treated as an external administrative mechanism but as an integral component of Islamic educational ethics.

Consequently, curriculum development in Islamic education should incorporate explicit discussions concerning human dignity, ethical responsibility, mutual respect, and educational justice. Such an approach allows traditional adab values to remain relevant while addressing contemporary concerns about student well-being and educational inclusion.

Toward a Dialogical-Adab Framework for Contemporary Islamic Education

The integration of the three themes reveals that teacher authority, student agency, and educational safeguarding should not be viewed as competing educational priorities. Instead, they constitute complementary dimensions of a holistic Islamic educational framework. Traditional adab education has historically contributed to moral formation and educational discipline; however, contemporary educational contexts require reinterpretations that acknowledge student participation, educational justice, and learner protection.

A dialogical-adab framework therefore emerges as a viable reconstruction of teacher–student relations within the PAI curriculum. In this model, teachers continue to function as ethical leaders and educational mentors, while students are recognized as active participants in knowledge construction and moral

development. Educational authority is grounded in responsibility and exemplary conduct rather than unquestioning obedience, and safeguarding principles are embedded in everyday educational practices.

This reconstruction is consistent with current international discussions on Islamic religious education, which increasingly advocate integrating Islamic ethical traditions with contemporary educational theories, human rights principles, multicultural engagement, and inclusive pedagogical approaches (Franken & Gent, 2021; Feichtinger & Yagdi, 2020; Zul et al., 2026). By positioning adab as a dialogical rather than purely hierarchical concept, Islamic education can preserve its ethical foundations while remaining responsive to contemporary educational challenges.

Ultimately, the reconstruction of teacher–student relations proposed in this study seeks not to abandon classical Islamic educational traditions but to revitalize them through critical engagement with contemporary educational knowledge. Such a reconstruction enables Islamic education to remain faithful to its intellectual heritage while promoting dignity, participation, accountability, and safe learning environments for all learners.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of Islamic adab traditions, student agency theory, educational safeguarding, and critical analyses of power relations into a unified framework for reconstructing teacher–student relations in Islamic education. Previous studies have predominantly examined adab from normative, theological, or character-education perspectives, emphasizing respect, obedience, and moral discipline. In contrast, this study extends the discussion by critically examining how traditional constructions of authority and obedience within adab education can be reinterpreted through dialogue with contemporary educational theories. By combining Derrida's deconstruction, Foucault's theory of power relations, and Islamic educational thought, the study offers a novel conceptualization of adab that preserves its ethical foundations while promoting dialogue, accountability, student participation, and educational justice. This approach contributes a new perspective to the growing discourse on curriculum reform in Islamic education by positioning adab not merely as a mechanism of moral discipline but as a dynamic framework for fostering ethical and reciprocal educational relationships.

The study also contributes theoretically and practically to contemporary Islamic education. Theoretically, it advances current scholarship by bridging Islamic intellectual traditions with global educational discourse on teacher authority, student agency, dialogical pedagogy, and safe learning environments. In practice, the study proposes a dialogical-adab framework to inform the development of PAI curricula, teacher education programs, and educational policies in madrasahs and other Islamic educational institutions. The framework emphasizes the balance between ethical authority and student empowerment, thereby supporting learning environments that are intellectually engaging, morally grounded, and responsive to contemporary educational challenges. Through this contribution, the study strengthens ongoing efforts to develop Islamic education that remains faithful to its intellectual heritage while simultaneously engaging with international discussions on educational inclusivity, human dignity, learner participation, and educational safeguarding.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the construction of teacher–student relations within Islamic adab education in the PAI curriculum of Madrasah Aliyah through thematic synthesis, deconstructive analysis, and power-relations perspectives. The findings reveal that teacher authority remains a fundamental component of Islamic educational traditions; however, contemporary educational scholarship increasingly emphasizes the need to balance authority with student agency, participation, and educational safeguarding. More importantly, the study found that the hierarchical interpretation of authority and obedience embedded in some traditional understandings of adab has broader implications than previously assumed, particularly in shaping students' opportunities for participation, critical engagement, and educational autonomy. These findings challenge the long-standing assumption that educational effectiveness is primarily achieved through obedience-based relationships and instead support a more dialogical and ethically accountable model of teacher–student interaction.

The study contributes to the scholarly discourse on Islamic education in several ways. First, it reinforces previous findings regarding the importance of adab, teacher authority, and moral formation in Islamic educational traditions. Second, it challenges interpretations that equate educational authority with unquestionable obedience by demonstrating the relevance of student agency, dialogical pedagogy, and educational safeguarding within contemporary Islamic education. Third, the study introduces a dialogical-adab framework that integrates Islamic intellectual traditions, student agency theory, educational safeguarding, and critical perspectives on power relations. This framework enriches current discussions on curriculum reform by positioning adab as a dynamic ethical framework that supports both educational leadership and learner participation. In doing so, the study strengthens the dialogue between Islamic educational thought and contemporary global educational discourse concerning human dignity, inclusivity, educational justice, and safe learning environments.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. As a qualitative library research study, the analysis was limited to curriculum documents, classical Islamic educational texts, and selected scholarly literature. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all Islamic educational institutions or educational contexts. Furthermore, the study focused primarily on conceptual and textual analysis rather than empirical investigations involving teachers, students, or educational administrators. Future research is therefore recommended to examine the implementation of dialogical-adab principles in madrasahs, pesantren, and other Islamic educational institutions through qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches. Comparative studies across different educational settings and socio-cultural contexts would also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teacher authority, student agency, and educational safeguarding can be integrated into contemporary Islamic education. Finally, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and policymakers are encouraged to consider the dialogical-adab framework proposed in this study as a foundation for developing PAI curricula that remain faithful to Islamic ethical traditions while promoting educational participation, accountability, and learner well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Cyber State Islamic University of Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Indonesia, for providing academic support and an intellectual environment that facilitated the completion of this study. The authors also extend their appreciation to colleagues, scholars, and reviewers whose constructive feedback and valuable insights contributed significantly to the improvement of this manuscript.

Special thanks are addressed to all researchers and educators whose scholarly works on Islamic education, adab, teacher authority, student agency, and educational safeguarding provided important theoretical foundations for this study. Their contributions have enriched the academic discourse that made this research possible.

The authors declare that no external funding was received for this research. Any errors or omissions remain the sole responsibility of the authors.

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