

# The Position of Teachers in Contemporary Education Pedagogical Studies Q.S Al-Mujadilah Verse 11

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## Abstract

*This article examines the position of teachers in contemporary education through a pedagogical study of the content of Qur'anic Surah Al-Mujādilah (58) verse 11. The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics and challenges of contemporary education, to examine the position of teachers in both national and international contexts, and to reveal the Qur'anic pedagogical foundations concerning teachers' dignity and justice. This research employs a qualitative approach based on library research using the pedagogical exegesis method (Tafsir Tarbawi), focusing on conceptual and normative analysis of the Qur'anic text as well as scholarly literature on contemporary education and teacher professionalism. The findings indicate that contemporary education is characterized by the dominance of instrumental rationality, the standardization of educational systems, and increasing professional demands on teachers that are not always accompanied by social recognition and structural justice. This condition creates a gap between the professionalism expected of teachers and the social status they receive. Qur'anic Surah Al-Mujādilah (58) verse 11 provides a pedagogical foundation that emphasizes the elevation of rank based on faith and knowledge; therefore, dignity, moral integrity, and social justice become fundamental principles in understanding teacher professionalism. This study affirms that the Qur'anic perspective offers a relevant value framework for reaffirming the dignity of teachers within contemporary educational systems.*

**Keywords:** Status of Teachers, Contemporary Education, Pedagogical Exegesis (Tafsir Tarbawi), Qur'anic Surah Al-Mujādilah (58):11, Islamic Education

## Introduction

Contemporary education is undergoing rapid transformation in line with the development of globalization, advances in scientific knowledge, and the penetration of digital technology into nearly all aspects of human life (Jaya et al., n.d.). These changes have direct implications for the orientation, objectives, and practices of education, which are increasingly directed toward efficiency, competitiveness, and the achievement of measurable competencies. Under such conditions, education is often positioned as an instrument of economic and social development, while humanistic, ethical, and transcendental dimensions tend to be marginalized. This situation poses serious challenges to the educational sector, particularly with regard to the role and position of teachers as the primary actors in the pedagogical process (Ruslin et al., 2023).

In modern educational discourse, teachers are frequently understood as curriculum implementers and transmitters of instructional content. This paradigm (Salma et al., 2024) is influenced by the dominance of instrumental rationality that emphasizes effectiveness, performance standards, and learning outcomes that can be quantitatively measured. As a result, the role of teachers has experienced a reduction in meaning—from educators endowed with moral and intellectual authority (Puspitaningsih et al., 2025) to educational technicians constrained by administrative procedures and institutional targets (Amelia et al., n.d.). This phenomenon not only affects classroom practices but also has broader implications for the erosion of social respect and structural justice toward the teaching profession (Kamaludin et al., n.d.).

Globally, numerous educational studies indicate that teacher professionalism in many developed countries is supported by relatively fair policy systems, particularly in terms of welfare, legal protection, and social recognition (Tri Rahayu et al., 2025). Teachers are positioned as a strategic profession with significant pedagogical authority and high moral responsibility (U Shidiq n.d., 2018). However, within national educational contexts, especially in developing countries, there remains a disparity between the demands placed on teacher professionalism and the recognition they receive (Guru et al., n.d.). Teachers are required to meet increasingly complex competency standards, while their protection, welfare, and social legitimacy are not yet fully commensurate with the weight of these responsibilities (Saputry et al., n.d.).

From the perspective of Indonesian educational law, Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers (p.r indonesia, n.d.) has normatively affirmed the position of teachers as professional personnel who play a strategic role in achieving national educational goals. This law regulates teachers' rights, obligations, and professional protection as part of efforts to ensure the dignity and welfare of educators (Hukum & 2020, n.d.). Nevertheless, empirical realities indicate that such normative recognition has not been fully realized in social practice and educational policy. This tension between legal norms and social realities reinforces the urgency of a critical examination of the position of teachers in contemporary education (Edukasi, n.d.).

Previous studies on teachers have generally focused on aspects of competence, professionalism, performance, and instructional effectiveness. While these studies have made important contributions to improving educational quality (M. Nasir et al., 2024), most remain normative-technical in nature and have not sufficiently connected the issue of teachers' position with value-based foundations and religious epistemology. Research that places the Qur'an as a primary pedagogical source in understanding teachers' dignity and justice remains relatively limited, particularly studies that systematically employ a pedagogical exegesis (tafsīr tarbawī) approach.

Within the Islamic educational tradition, the Qur'an views knowledge and those who possess it as entities of exalted status (Yusuf, 2021). Qur'anic Surah Al-Mujādilah verse 11 explicitly affirms the elevation of rank for those who believe and possess knowledge, carrying profound pedagogical implications concerning the authority, dignity, and moral responsibility of educators (Azizah et al., n.d.) This verse does not merely address individual virtue but also provides a value framework for social justice and scholarly legitimacy within collective life (Najib, 2015). However, the pedagogical dimensions of this verse have not been extensively examined in relation to the challenges surrounding teachers' position within modern educational systems.

Based on the foregoing discussion, a significant research gap exists in educational studies—namely, the need for an analysis that integrates contemporary educational discourse with Qur'anic epistemology through a pedagogical exegesis approach. Such a study is essential to offer an alternative perspective that is not solely oriented toward instrumental rationality, but also reaffirms moral, ethical, and justice-oriented dimensions in understanding teacher professionalism.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the characteristics and challenges of contemporary education from a pedagogical perspective, to examine the position of teachers within national and international educational contexts, and to uncover the pedagogical foundations of Qur'anic Surah Al-Mujādilah verse 11 (Najib, 2015) in affirming teachers' dignity, justice, and status. Employing a qualitative library-based approach and pedagogical exegesis, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic pedagogical discourse while offering a normative value framework for strengthening teachers' dignity within contemporary educational systems.

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a library-based research design. This approach is appropriate because the research emphasizes a conceptual and normative analysis of Qur'anic texts and scholarly literature related to contemporary education and teacher professionalism.

The data sources consist of primary and secondary materials. The principal primary source is Qur'anic Surah Al-Mujādilah (58) verse 11. Supporting primary sources include Tafsir Tarbawi literature that applies a pedagogical interpretive framework, as well as the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, which provides a normative reference for the legal status of teachers. Secondary sources comprise classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries, peer-reviewed journal articles, and academic publications addressing contemporary education, teachers' position, and Islamic education.

Data analysis is conducted using a pedagogical exegesis (tafsīr tarbawī) approach, which views Qur'anic verses as sources of educational values and principles that can be contextualized within social and pedagogical realities. The analytical procedure involves the identification of relevant literature, textual analysis of Qur'anic Surah Al-Mujādilah (58) verse 11 based on its contextual background and the interpretations of classical and contemporary exegetes, dialogical engagement between exegetical findings and contemporary pedagogical theories, and conceptual synthesis to formulate pedagogical foundations concerning the position of teachers.

## Results and Discussion

### ***Characteristics and Challenges of Contemporary Education***

Contemporary education is characterized by structural and epistemological transformations that are strongly influenced by globalization, technological advancement, and modern rationality, which places effectiveness, efficiency, and competitiveness as the primary orientations of educational systems. In the global context, education is increasingly positioned as a strategic instrument for economic development and the strengthening of human capital (Aminuddin et al., n.d.), Consequently, educational success is measured through quantitative indicators such as competency attainment, assessment scores, performance standards, and statistically measurable outputs. This paradigm has driven a shift in the meaning of education from a process of holistic human formation toward the production of skills relevant to labor market demands (Development & 2023, n.d.).

The dominance of instrumental rationality in modern education brings serious consequences for pedagogical practices. Instrumental rationality, as critiqued within the tradition of critical theory (Siswantara et al., n.d.), views knowledge and education merely as tools for achieving pragmatic objectives rather than as means for cultivating consciousness, values, and moral integrity. Within this context, curricula are tightly structured around standardized benchmarks, learning

processes are directed toward the achievement of measurable targets, and evaluation is focused on final outcomes rather than on meaningful learning processes. As a result, education tends to be reduced to technical-administrative activities that neglect reflective, ethical, and transcendental dimensions (Rahman et al., 2024).

One of the most significant impacts of this paradigm is the transformation of teachers' positions within the educational system. Teachers are no longer understood as educators in a holistic sense namely, figures who guide learners, instill values, and shape character but rather as curriculum implementers and learning managers who must comply with regulations, administrative standards, and bureaucratic demands (Masitoh et al., 2024). Teachers' pedagogical roles are increasingly constrained by technical instruments such as instructional modules, standardized syllabi, assessment rubrics, and rigid performance reporting systems. Consequently, teachers' pedagogical autonomy is narrowed, and their creativity as well as professional judgment receive insufficient space for meaningful expression (Yahya et al., n.d.).

The challenges of contemporary education are also closely related to the acceleration of digitalization and the use of technology in learning processes. Although technology opens opportunities for pedagogical innovation and broad access to knowledge, its use without a strong value framework has the potential to reinforce the dehumanization of education. Learning processes risk becoming superficial, oriented toward speed and efficiency, and neglectful of humane relationships between teachers and students (Dasar et.al., 2024). In this situation, teachers are often positioned as technical facilitators responsible for operating instructional media and digital learning platforms, rather than as authoritative figures who provide intellectual and moral guidance.

Furthermore, contemporary education faces challenges in the form of a crisis of authority and the legitimacy of the teaching profession. In modern, pluralistic, and open societies, teachers' traditional authority as sources of knowledge and values has eroded. Teachers must contend with parental demands, educational policy pressures, and societal expectations that are often contradictory. When problems arise in educational processes, teachers are frequently held accountable, while the systems and policies that surround education are rarely subjected to in-depth critical scrutiny (Perryman et al., 2017). This phenomenon indicates that contemporary education confronts not only technical challenges but also a value crisis that directly affects the dignity of the teaching profession (Dharmawan et al., n.d.).

The findings of this study indicate that the main characteristics of contemporary education include the dominance of instrumental rationality, the standardization of educational systems, the digitalization of learning, and increasing professional pressure on teachers. These challenges contribute to the weakening of teachers' moral authority and the diminishing of social recognition for their strategic role in human formation. Such conditions call for an alternative value framework capable of restoring the meaning of education as a process of humanization and reaffirming the dignity of teachers as authentic educators.

### ***The Position of Teachers in National and International Educational Contexts***

The position of teachers within an educational system constitutes a crucial indicator of the quality and orientation of a country's education. In the international context, many developed countries position teachers as a strategic profession endowed with high social status, strong legal protection, and relatively adequate welfare. Teachers are regarded as key actors in human development and national progress. Therefore, educational policies are designed to support teachers' professionalism, autonomy, and dignity (Tri Rahayu et.al., 2025). This recognition is reflected in selective recruitment systems, continuous professional development programs, and remuneration schemes that correspond to the responsibilities and complexity of teachers' roles.

By contrast, within national contexts particularly in developing countries the position of teachers is often characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand, teachers are required to meet increasingly high professional standards, engage in certification processes, enhance their competencies, and adapt to curricular changes and technological developments (Education et.al., 2011). On the other hand, the social recognition, legal protection, and welfare they receive are frequently disproportionate to the responsibilities they bear. This disparity between professional demands and structural realities generates significant psychological and social pressures for teachers (Saputry et al., n.d.).

In the Indonesian context, educational regulations have normatively recognized teachers as professional personnel. According to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Chapter II, Article 4 paragraph (1): the position of teachers as professional personnel as referred to in Article 2 paragraph (1) functions to enhance the dignity and role of teachers as agents of learning and functions to improve the quality of national education (p.r Indonesia, n.d.). However, the findings of this study indicate that the implementation of these regulations continues to face various structural and cultural constraints. Teachers are often positioned as objects of policy rather than as subjects possessing voice and authority in educational decision-making processes.

A comparison between national and international contexts reveals fundamental differences in how the teaching profession is perceived. In many countries with advanced educational systems, teacher professionalism is not merely understood as compliance with technical standards but also as recognition of teachers' intellectual and moral authority. Teachers are trusted to make pedagogical decisions based on their expertise and professional ethics. In contrast, within national contexts, teacher professionalism tends to be reduced to the fulfillment of administrative requirements and formalistic performance indicators (Suwarno et al., n.d.).

These conditions have direct implications for social perceptions of the teaching profession. When teachers are predominantly positioned as policy implementers rather than as intellectually autonomous educators, social respect for the profession tends to decline (M. Nasir et.al.,2024). Teachers become vulnerable to delegitimization in their relationships with students, parents, and the wider community. This situation not only disadvantages teachers at the individual level but also produces systemic effects on educational quality, as effective pedagogical processes require relationships of trust and respect between teachers and learners (Rahman et al., 2024).

The discussion underscores that issues surrounding the position of teachers cannot be separated from the value framework underpinning educational systems. Educational approaches that overly emphasize technocratic and administrative aspects risk neglecting dimensions of social justice and professional dignity. Therefore, normative and philosophical foundations are required to reaffirm teachers' positions as primary subjects of education rather than mere instruments of the system. Developed countries such as Finland and Canada demonstrate that one of the positive impacts of improving educational quality is achieved through enhancing teachers' welfare (Suwarno et al., n.d.). It is evident that significant gaps remain, making it difficult for developing countries to improve educational quality (Unars et.al., 2020), However, these challenges are not easily addressed, as they stem from structural factors that developing countries often lack, including disparities in economic income and expenditure, as well as limitations in educational media, technology, and infrastructure.

## Pedagogical Foundations of Q.S. Al-Mujādilah Verse 11

### The Meaning of Q.S. Al-Mujādilah: 11 Based on Classical Qur'anic Exegesis

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجْلِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ {المجادلة: 11}

“O you who believe, when it is said to you, "Make room in the assemblies," make room, surely Allah will make room for you. When it is said, "Stand up," (you) stand up. Allah will surely raise up those who believe among you and those who have been given a degree of knowledge. Allah is careful about what you do”.

In the field of *tafsīr tarbawī*, Asnil and Irwan explain that the phrase *الذين أوتوا العلم* (those who have been given knowledge) refers to individuals who combine faith with knowledge as an integral part of their character. The knowledge referred to in this verse is not limited to religious knowledge alone, but encompasses all forms of beneficial knowledge. Allah elevates the rank of believers who possess knowledge above those who believe without knowledge, indicating a hierarchical valuation rooted in both faith and intellectual capacity (Najib, 2015).

In *معلم التنزيل* (*Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl*), Imam al-Baghawī interprets (2008, البيهقي) Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11 as an affirmation that obedience to divine commands does not diminish a person's dignity or status. On the contrary, such obedience becomes a means through which Allah grants greater honor and elevation. This interpretation underscores the Islamic principle that dignity is not determined by social status, but by faith, knowledge, and moral conduct. From a pedagogical perspective, al-Baghawī's exegesis emphasizes that education should be oriented toward forming individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and morally grounded, while positioning knowledge as the primary foundation of honor and authority. This principle provides a normative basis for honoring educators, particularly teachers, as bearers and transmitters of knowledge within the educational process.

The interpretation of Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11 is further reinforced by a hadith narrated in *تفسير القرآن العظيم* (*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*) by Ibn Kathīr (2016, ابن كثير):

قال الإمام أحمد: حدثنا أبو كامل، حدثنا إبراهيم، حدثنا ابن شهاب، عن أبي الطفيل عامر بن واثلة، أن نافع بن عبد الحارث لقي عمر بن الخطاب بعسفان وكان عمر استعمله على مكة فقال له عمر: من استخلفت على أهل الوادي؟

قال: استخلفت عليهم ابن أبنى.

قال: وما ابن أبنى؟

قال: رجل من موالينا.

فقال عمر بن الخطاب: استخلفت عليهم مولى؟

فقال: يا أمير المؤمنين، إنه قارئ لكتاب الله، عالم بالفرائض، قاض.

فقال عمر رضي الله عنه: أما إن نبيكم ﷺ قد قال:

«إن الله يرفع بهذا الكتاب أقوامًا ويضع به آخرين».

Imam Ahmad reported: Abu Kamil narrated to us, Ibrahim narrated to us, Ibn Shihab narrated to us, from Abu al-Ṭufayl ‘Āmir ibn Wāthilah, that Nāfi‘ ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥārith met ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb at ‘Uṣfān, at a time when ‘Umar had appointed him as the governor of Mecca. ‘Umar then asked him, “Whom have you appointed as your deputy over the people of the valley?”

He replied, “I have appointed Ibn Abzā.”

‘Umar asked, “Who is Ibn Abzā?”

He replied, “He is one of our *mawālī*.”

Thereupon ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said, “Have you appointed a former slave as their leader?”

He replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, indeed he is a reciter of the Book of Allah, knowledgeable in the laws of inheritance (*farā’id*), and a judge.”

Then ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Indeed, your Prophet ﷺ has said:

‘Indeed, Allah elevates some people by means of this Book and lowers others by means of it’.

This narration illustrates that leadership and authority in Islam are grounded not in lineage or social hierarchy, but in mastery of knowledge, understanding of divine law, and moral competence. From a pedagogical standpoint, this hadith provides a strong foundation for understanding the position of educators in Islam. Teachers, as individuals who possess and transmit knowledge rooted in the Qur’an, occupy a strategic role as agents of social and moral elevation. Their authority is epistemological and ethical rather than merely administrative. Islamic education thus views teachers not simply as technical implementers of instruction, but as custodians of knowledge whose role directly contributes to the intellectual and spiritual advancement of society. Consequently, any educational system whether national or international that neglects the intellectual and moral dimensions of teachers fundamentally contradicts the pedagogical principles affirmed in this hadith.

### *The Relevance of Q.S. Al-Mujādilah Verse 11 to the Position of Teachers in Contemporary Education*

Based on the aforementioned exegetical interpretations and prophetic narration, it can be concluded that Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11 provides a strong normative foundation for understanding the status of knowledge and knowledgeable individuals within the Qur’anic worldview (Marpi et al., 2024) affirm that this verse serves as evidence that the elevated status of teachers in Islam is a direct realization of Islamic teachings themselves. Islam honors knowledge, and such knowledge cannot be attained independently but through the process of teaching and learning, in which teachers serve as central figures. An ideal teacher is one who places the Qur’an as a guiding framework in the educational process.

The verse emphasizes that Allah elevates the ranks of those who believe and possess knowledge by several degrees, indicating a value-based hierarchy rooted in faith and intellectual merit. Pedagogically, this verse extends beyond individual virtue to encompass broader social and structural implications related to respect, justice, and responsibility toward those who fulfill scholarly roles, including teachers (Nisa et al., n.d.).

The *tafsīr tarbawī* approach views this verse as a source of educational values that remain relevant in addressing contemporary educational challenges. The elevation mentioned in the verse should not be understood solely as an eschatological reward, but also as an ethical principle that must be manifested within social and institutional structures. Accordingly, teachers as the primary agents of knowledge transmission and development occupy a noble position and deserve proportional respect and justice (Fadjar, 2020).

Within the Qur’anic pedagogical framework, knowledge is inseparable from morality and social responsibility. Teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge, but also moral exemplars who guide learners toward intellectual and spiritual maturity (Hafid et al., 2025). This stands in contrast to contemporary educational paradigms that often separate technical competence from ethical values. Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11 asserts that true knowledge must be oriented toward the formation of individuals who are faithful, and ethical (Marpi et al., 2024).

The findings of this study indicate that the pedagogical values embedded in Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11 are highly relevant for reconstructing the meaning of teacher professionalism. From the Qur’anic perspective, professionalism is not measured solely by formal qualifications and performance metrics, but also by moral integrity, commitment to justice, and social responsibility. Teachers are positioned as figures possessing both moral and intellectual authority (Rahmadini et al., 2024), therefore, honoring teachers constitutes an integral part of honoring knowledge itself.

In conclusion, the Qur’anic perspective offers an alternative value framework capable of balancing the demands of modernity with ethical and transcendental principles. Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11 provides a normative foundation for reaffirming the dignity of teachers within contemporary educational systems, both nationally and globally. This foundation challenges reductionist educational paradigms and calls for a reorientation of education as a process of humanization rooted in faith, knowledge, and justice.

## Conclusion

The findings and discussion of this study indicate that contemporary education is increasingly shaped by instrumental rationality that prioritizes effectiveness, efficiency, standardization, and measurable outcomes. While such orientations respond to the demands of globalization and technological advancement, they have also contributed to the reduction of education's meaning as a process of humanization. Education tends to be framed as a technocratic and administrative activity, whereas ethical, moral, and transcendental dimensions receive diminishing attention within pedagogical practice.

Within this context, the position of teachers has undergone a significant transformation. Teachers are no longer fully perceived as holistic educators, but are more frequently positioned as policy implementers and learning managers bound by bureaucratic regulations and administrative standards. The comparison between national and international contexts reveals that in many countries with advanced educational systems, teachers receive proportional social recognition, legal protection, and welfare, enabling stronger pedagogical autonomy and moral authority. In contrast, in many developing countries, increasing demands for teacher professionalism are not adequately supported by structural justice, resulting in weakened legitimacy and diminished professional dignity.

The Qur'anic perspective articulated in Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11, as interpreted through the tafsīr tarbawī approach and reinforced by Prophetic tradition, provides a strong normative pedagogical foundation for understanding the position of knowledge and those who possess it. The verse affirms that honor and elevation are determined by faith and knowledge, thereby positioning teachers— as bearers and transmitters of knowledge— in a noble epistemological and moral status. From this perspective, teacher professionalism cannot be reduced to administrative compliance or technical performance alone, but must encompass moral integrity, social responsibility, and a commitment to justice.

Accordingly, Q.S. Al-Mujādilah verse 11 offers a relevant value framework for reconstructing the meaning of teacher professionalism and dignity within contemporary education. The verse presents an alternative paradigm that balances the demands of modernity with ethical and transcendental principles, while reaffirming education as a process of forming individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and morally grounded. Strengthening the position of teachers as primary subjects of education is therefore essential for realizing an educational system that is just, humane, and meaningful in both national and global contexts.

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