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Murobbi As An Exemplary Teacher: Reconstructing The Educator's Role In Islamic Education Perspektive And Its Relevance In The Digital Disruption Era

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Abstract: *Islamic education positions the teacher not merely as a mu'allim (knowledge transmitter), but fundamentally as a murobbi a holistic educator who nurtures, guides, and models character for students. This study aims to: analyze the concept of murobbi from Qur'anic, hadith, and classical Islamic scholarly perspectives; examine the relationship between the murobbi role and teacher exemplariness (uswah hasanah); and critically assess the relevance and urgency of this concept in the contemporary era of digital disruption. A qualitative library research method is employed, using primary sources (Qur'an, hadith, classical Islamic texts) and secondary sources comprising peer-reviewed national and international journals. The theoretical framework integrates Al-Attas's concept of ta'dib and adab with Bandura's social learning theory, offering a cross-paradigmatic analysis of teacher exemplariness. Findings reveal: the murobbi concept, rooted in the Arabic rabb, entails a holistic educational mission transcending mere instruction to encompass spiritual, moral, and character formation; uswah hasanah is not merely a pedagogical method but the ontological foundation of the murobbi's identity affirmed by Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and classical Islamic scholars; in an era of digital disruption, the murobbi as an authentic role model constitutes an irreplaceable anchor for character formation that cannot be substituted by artificial intelligence or digital tools. This study concludes that reconstructing teacher identity as murobbi is a historical and educational imperative for producing intellectually capable and morally grounded students (insan kamil).*

Keywords: *Murobbi, Teacher Exemplariness, Digital Disruption, Insan Kamil, Islamic Education, Character Education*

Abstrak: Pendidikan Islam tidak sekadar menempatkan guru sebagai mu'allim (penyampai ilmu), tetapi secara fundamental sebagai murobbi pendidik holistik yang memelihara, membimbing, dan meneladani karakter peserta didik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep murobbi dari perspektif Al-Qur'an, hadis, dan ulama Islam klasik; mengkaji relasi peran murobbi dengan keteladanan guru (uswah hasanah), serta mengevaluasi secara kritis relevansi dan urgensi konsep ini di era disrupsi digital. Metode yang digunakan adalah library research kualitatif dengan sumber primer (Al-Qur'an, hadis, kitab klasik) dan sumber sekunder berupa jurnal nasional dan internasional bereputasi. Kerangka teoretis mengintegrasikan konsep ta'dib dan adab Al-Attas dengan teori belajar sosial Bandura, menghasilkan analisis lintas paradigma tentang keteladanan guru. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa konsep murobbi berakar pada kata rabb, mencakup misi pendidikan holistik melampaui instruksi menuju pembentukan spiritual, moral, dan karakter, uswah hasanah bukan sekadar metode pedagogis melainkan fondasi ontologis identitas murobbi, ditegaskan Al-Qur'an, hadis, dan konsensus ulama salaf, di era disrupsi digital, figur murobbi sebagai teladan otentik merupakan jangkar pembentukan karakter yang tak tergantikan oleh kecerdasan buatan maupun teknologi digital. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa rekonstruksi identitas guru sebagai murobbi adalah keniscayaan historis dan edukatif untuk mencetak peserta didik yang cerdas sekaligus bermoral (insan kamil).

Kata Kunci: Murobbi, Keteladanan Guru, Disrupsi Digital, Insan Kamil, Pendidikan Islam, Pendidikan Karakter

INTRODUCTION

The character crisis affecting the younger generation today is the result of accumulated systemic shortcomings within the education system, particularly its inability to produce educators who not only transmit knowledge but also cultivate character through exemplary conduct. Numerous surveys and empirical studies indicate that juvenile delinquency, bullying, and various forms of moral decline continue to rise, even as students' academic achievements improve quantitatively. This phenomenon reveals a structural gap between intellectual accomplishment and character formation. In fact, this fundamental issue has long been anticipated within the Islamic educational tradition through the concept of the murobbi, an educator who guides, nurtures, and shapes students' moral and spiritual development holistically(Fuad, Maziyah, Firmansyah, & Bakar, 2025; Yudistira, Andriya, & Afandi, 2025).

In the treasures of Islamic education, the terminology referring to educators is not singular. There are at least five terms: mudarris (teacher), mu'allim (educator of knowledge), murobbi (coach), mursyid (spiritual guide), and muaddib (educator of adab). Among the five, murobbi is seen as the most comprehensive because it goes beyond the transmission of knowledge towards the formation of a whole human being (Ade Abdul Muqit & Abu Maskur, 2022; Aisyah, 2021). Javeed and Othman (2023, as cited in Syadzali et al., 2025) in their international research identified a strong correlation between teacher training as murobbi and the character development and self-efficacy of educators(Muzaki et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the IIUM Journal of Educational Studies (2023) found that the tarbiyah islamiyah program oriented towards the formation of murobbi has been proven to significantly improve students' character formation abilities.

But empirical reality presents an alarming paradox. Faqih (2025) found that most PAI teachers in Indonesia experience serious obstacles in carrying out the role of murobbi in the digital era, while students are missing out on moral role models in navigating increasingly complex lives. Irwandi et al. (2025) added that although teachers are normatively recognized as murobbi and uswah hasanah, practice in the field shows that this role is often reduced to a purely instructional function. This condition is exacerbated by Rabbani & Darmiyanti (2025) who found that teachers' emotional management significantly affects the classroom climate, suggesting that the dimension of murobbi exemplary has a much broader impact than just the delivery of material.

Previous studies have consistently recognized the importance of the murabbi in Islamic education from various perspectives. Several studies have examined the murabbi as a character educator and moral guide, while others have highlighted its theological foundations in the Qur'an and Hadith or its contribution to teacher professionalism and Islamic educational practice. More recent research has also addressed the challenges faced by murabbi in responding to digital transformation and the emergence of artificial intelligence in education. Despite these valuable contributions, the existing body of literature remains fragmented, with each study focusing on a particular dimension of the murabbi concept rather than providing a comprehensive theoretical synthesis.

Three major limitations can therefore be identified. First, most previous studies discuss the murabbi concept from a descriptive and normative perspective without critically integrating its theological, philosophical, and pedagogical dimensions. Second, although Al-Attas's philosophy of ta'dib and Bandura's Social Learning Theory have each been widely discussed in educational scholarship, they have rarely been brought together as complementary frameworks for explaining teacher exemplariness within Islamic education. Third, studies concerning digital disruption

predominantly emphasize technological adaptation, whereas the reconstruction of the murabbi identity as a normative response to the contemporary moral crisis has received limited scholarly attention.

Positioning itself within these gaps, this study proposes a comprehensive reconstruction of the murabbi concept by integrating Qur'anic foundations, Prophetic traditions, classical Islamic scholarship, Al-Attas's philosophy of ta'dib, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory into a unified conceptual framework. Rather than examining these perspectives separately, this study demonstrates their theoretical convergence in explaining why teacher exemplariness constitutes the central pillar of Islamic education and argues that the murabbi paradigm remains highly relevant for addressing the educational and moral challenges of the digital disruption era.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative library research design to reconstruct the concept of *murabbi* as an exemplary educator within Islamic education. Unlike conventional literature reviews that primarily summarize previous findings, this study adopted a conceptual synthesis approach to critically integrate classical Islamic scholarship, Qur'anic and Prophetic sources, and contemporary educational theories into a coherent analytical framework. To achieve this objective, the study employed pedagogical hermeneutic analysis to interpret educational meanings embedded in Islamic primary sources and critical comparative analysis to examine conceptual convergence and divergence across different theoretical traditions.

The literature consisted of three categories of sources. Primary sources included the Qur'an, authentic Hadith collections, and classical Islamic educational works such as *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, *Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim*, and *Tarbiyat al-Aulad fi al-Islam*. Secondary sources comprised peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and SINTA published primarily between 2020 and 2025. The inclusion criteria required that publications explicitly discuss the concepts of *murabbi*, teacher exemplariness, Islamic educational philosophy, character education, or digital transformation in education. Editorials, opinion papers, duplicate publications, and studies lacking direct relevance to the research focus were excluded from the analysis.

Literature selection followed four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. Relevant publications were first identified through database searches using keywords such as "murabbi," "Islamic education," "teacher exemplariness," "ta'dib," "social learning theory," and "digital disruption." The collected literature was then screened to eliminate duplicate and irrelevant studies. Eligible publications were subsequently organized according to major analytical themes, while data reduction was conducted by extracting concepts directly related to the research objectives.

The pedagogical hermeneutic analysis was conducted in three stages. First, relevant Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and classical texts were interpreted within their educational context to identify their pedagogical meanings concerning the role of the *murabbi*. Second, these meanings were synthesized into broader conceptual categories, including teacher identity, exemplariness, moral development, and educational responsibility. Third, the resulting concepts were critically compared with Al-Attas's philosophy of *ta'dib* and Bandura's Social Learning Theory through critical comparative analysis. Rather than merely identifying similarities and differences, this comparative process aimed to construct an integrated conceptual framework explaining the theoretical relevance of the *murabbi* paradigm in addressing the educational challenges of the digital disruption era. To

enhance analytical trustworthiness, interpretations were continuously cross-checked across primary Islamic sources and contemporary scholarly literature through source triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Essence of Murobbi: Etymological, Terminological, and Comparative Analysis

Etymologically, the word murobbi is isim fa'il which comes from the verb rabba-yurabbi-tarbiyatan. In Arabic literature, the root has several interrelated clusters of meanings, namely nasyya'a wa rabba (to grow and educate), aṣlaḥa wa walla amrahu (to improve and manage affairs), and zada wa nama (to develop and improve) (Mahadhir, 2018; Miranda, 2024). These meanings show that tarbiyah activities do not stop at the process of knowledge transfer, but include a coaching process that is oriented towards the growth, improvement, and development of human potential in a sustainable manner. Therefore, a murobbi not only performs his function as a teacher, but also as a developer, transformation agent, and educational leader who directs students towards intellectual, moral, and spiritual maturity.

From a terminological perspective, Islamic education scholars interpret murobbi as an educator who is responsible for the process of forming students' personality as a whole (holistic development). The duties of a murobbi are not limited to the delivery of subject matter, but also include moral development, strengthening spirituality, developing intellectual potential, and psychological assistance for students. Thus, the relationship between murobbi and students is not just a formal academic relationship, but an educational relationship built on the basis of example, compassion, coaching, and moral responsibility(Yudistira et al., 2025). Within this framework, educational success is not only measured through cognitive achievement, but also through the formation of students' character, integrity, and personality qualities.

Furthermore, the concept of murobbi has a very strong theological foundation because it is rooted in the word Rabb, one of the names of Allah Swt. that is often mentioned in the Qur'an. The word Rabb contains the meaning of the maintainer, regulator, educator, and developer of all His creatures. The linguistic relationship between Rabb and murobbi shows that educational activities in Islam are essentially a reflection of divine attributes in the context of human development. A murobbi performs the role of an intermediary of divine values with the task of maintaining the nature of the learner, developing their potential, and directing the entire growth process towards goals in accordance with Islamic values (Akh Syaiful Rijal & Hakim, 2021; Warsiah, 2021). Therefore, the murobbi profession is not only understood as a technical job, but also as a mandate and mission of civilization that has a spiritual as well as a social dimension.

When compared to other terms used in the Islamic educational tradition, the concept of murobbi has a wider scope of meaning. The term mu'allim emphasizes more on the function of teaching and the transfer of knowledge, while mu'addib is oriented towards the formation of adab and ethics. The mudarris refers more to the instructional role in formal learning activities (Aisyah, 2021). Meanwhile, murobbi covers all of these functions simultaneously because he is in charge of teaching, guiding, instilling values, forming character, and developing all aspects of students' potential. In other words, murobbi is the most comprehensive concept of educator in the treasure trove of Islamic education because it integrates the intellectual, moral, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions in one whole unit.

In the context of contemporary education, the relevance of the concept of murobbi is increasingly strengthened along with the emergence of various modern educational problems

characterized by character crises, moral degradation, and the dominance of academic orientation that often ignores aspects of personality formation. The modern education system tends to place teachers as knowledge transmitters, while the dimensions of exemplary and character building are often marginalized. In fact, various studies show that the success of education is not only determined by the quality of the curriculum and learning methods, but also by the quality of the relationship between educators and students. In this case, the concept of murobbi offers a more humanistic and holistic educational paradigm because it places educators as exemplary figures who are able to integrate knowledge, values, and exemplary in the educational process (Munzirin, 2025). Therefore, the revitalization of the murobbi concept is very important as an effort to answer the challenges of 21st century education, especially in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has strong character, integrity, and spiritual awareness.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis

Aspects	Mu'allim	Muaddib	Murobbi
word root	*'Allama-yu'allimu*	*Addaba-yu'addibu*	*Rabba-yurabbi*
Basic Meaning	Teaching and transmitting knowledge	Instilling manners, ethics, and values	Growing, fostering, developing, and maintaining the potential of students
Key focus	Mastery of knowledge and cognitive aspects	Formation of manners and character	Holistic development of learners (intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual)
The Role of Educators	Knowledge sources and presenters	Shaping behavior and manners	Mentors, caregivers, role models, facilitators, and potential developers
Educational Orientation	Transfer of knowledge	Internalization of values and manners	Self-transformation and development of human nature
Learning Approach	Instructional and academic	Habituation of values and example	Continuous coaching through education, mentoring, and example
Developed Dimensions	Cognitive	Affective and moral	Cognitive, affective, psychomotor, spiritual, and social
Relationships with Students	Teachers-studient in an academic context	Moral and ethical mentor	Educational relationships that are coaching, nurturing, and exemplary
Final Destination	Mastery of knowledge	The formation of civilized man	The realization of people who are knowledgeable, civilized, characterful, and have spiritual maturity
Relationship with the Concept of Islamic Education	Representing aspects of ta'lim	Representing aspects of ta'dib	Integrating ta'lim, ta'dib, and tarbiyah in its entirety

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the three educational concepts are not mutually exclusive but represent different levels of educational responsibility within the Islamic tradition. While *mu'allim* primarily emphasizes cognitive transmission and *muaddib* focuses on moral cultivation, the *murabbi* encompasses both functions within a broader framework of holistic human development. This finding suggests that contemporary Islamic education should move beyond viewing teachers merely as knowledge transmitters or classroom instructors. Instead, teacher

preparation programs need to cultivate educators capable of integrating intellectual competence, moral integrity, emotional guidance, and spiritual leadership. In the context of digital disruption, where knowledge is increasingly accessible through artificial intelligence, the distinctive value of the *murabbi* lies precisely in these irreplaceable human dimensions. Therefore, the comparative framework presented in Table 1 provides not only a conceptual classification but also a practical direction for reconstructing teacher education in contemporary Islamic institutions.

Foundations of the Qur'an: Exemplary Theology as an Education Mandate

The Qur'an does not simply command example as a pedagogical method; The Qur'an makes it a way of existence for a believer, especially those who carry out the mandate of education. The following is an analysis of four key verses that build the theology of murobbi example.

QS. Al-Ahzab: 21 Uswah Hasanah as the Main Paradigm

"Indeed, the Messenger of Allah has been a good example for you, for those who hope for Allah and the Day of Resurrection and who remember Allah much." (QS. Al-Ahzab: 21)

The word uswah means an example worthy of being followed in all aspects of life. Ruswandi et al. (2022) in TARBAWY: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education analyze that uswah hasanah in Islam refers to exemplary behavior that is rooted in the guidance of the Prophet and becomes meaningful when expressed through observable and internalized behavior not just verbal instruction (Ruswandi, Junaedi, & Rahmatullah, 2022). This means that the example of murobbi is the consistency of character that is comprehensive and continuous, far beyond the mere performativity of class. Analytically, this verse emphasizes that exemplification is not a methodological choice but an ontological requirement to be a Muslim educator

QS. Ali Imran: 79 Mandate to be Rabbaniyyun

"... but (Allah said), Be ye rabbani, because you always teach the book and because you continue to study it." (QS. Ali Imran: 79)

Analytically, this verse reveals a pedagogical paradox: Allah does not command be a good teacher (kunu mu'allimin), but rather be a rabbani. The word rabbaniyyun has its roots in the same root rabb as murobbi which indicates that the process of teaching and studying the book must transform the educator into a rabbani man: whose behavior reflects divine values. Ibn Abbas RA interprets rabbaniyyun as 'the one who educates people with the small before the big' which is a graduality-based character development theory (tadarruj) that is relevant to the scaffolding theory in modern education (Muhaimin & Munawaroh, 2021).

QS. At-Taubah: 122 Tafaqquh as a Transformative Provision of Murobbi

"Why not go some people from each of them to deepen their knowledge of religion and to warn his people when they have returned to him, so that they can take care of themselves." (QS. At-Taubah: 122)

A critical analysis of this verse reveals two complete phases of murobbi: tafaqquh (deepening and internalizing values) and yunziru (imparting by example). Haslina (2025) found that tafaqquh is not just an academic activity, but a process of appreciation that transforms knowledge into character-exactly what distinguishes murobbi from ordinary mu'allim. Murobbi doesn't just 'know' about kindness; it 'becomes' that goodness (Haslina, Putri Vaneza, & Handayani Sinambela, 2025).

QS. Al-Baqarah: 44 A Warning to Murobbi Dysfunction

"Why do you tell others to do good, when you forget yourself, when you read the book? Don't you think?" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 44)

This verse serves as the 'anti-thesis' of the ideal murobbi. The use of afalaa ta'qiluun (are you not reasonable?) indicates that the inconsistency between teaching and practice is not just a moral violation, but a fundamental failure of reason. The teacher who teaches honesty while he is dishonest in the Qur'an has done counter-education that educates in the opposite way from what is taught. Aziz (2016) emphasized that the istiqamah of a murobbi is an absolute requirement for the birth of meaningful examples (Aziz, 2016).

Foundation of Hadith: The Prophet Muhammad SAW as the Great Murobbi

The Prophet Muhammd SAW is the most perfect murobbi in history. He educates not only through words, but through all aspects of his life an unparalleled life curriculum (Baskoro, 2017). The following is an analysis of four key hadiths that build the normative foundation of the role of murobbi.

Prophetic Mission or Educational Mission

"Actually, I was sent only as an educator.: (HR. Ibn Majah, no. 229, from Ibn Umar RA)

This hadith uses the word mu'allim to define prophetic missions but the way the Prophet PBUH educated goes far beyond the conventional definition of mu'allim. He educates through total example, compassion, and deep character building. Thus, the Prophet PBUH is a mu'allim who is at the same time murobbi, mursyid, and muaddib in one persona of a perfect model of Islamic educator.

Morality as the Core of the Education Mission

"Indeed, I was sent only to perfect noble morals." (HR. Ahmad, no. 8952; al-Baihaqi in Shu'ab al-Iman)

The word li utammima (to perfect) has important pedagogical implications: noble morality is already in human nature, and the task of murobbi is to perfect (not create from scratch) that moral potential. This is in line with Gardner's theory of Islamic nature and multiple intelligences: every learner has a moral potential that needs to be nurtured, and the murobbi is the gardener who takes care of that potential (Muhammad Syawal Karo-Karo, Dede Khairani, & Juli Julaiha Pulungan, 2024).

Murobbi Cosmological Responsibilities

"Each of you is a shepherd and each of you will be asked about his shepherd." (HR. Bukhari, no. 893; Muslim, no. 1829)

The word ra'in (shepherd) is a rich metaphor: the shepherd ensures that every sheep gets fed, that no one goes astray, and that the flock is protected from predators. This is the perfect analogy for the role of murobbi: ensuring each pupil develops individually, is not morally lost, and the learning community is protected from negative influences. Panambaian & Bashir (2025) analyze this hadith as the cosmological foundation of teacher responsibility that transcends professional boundaries an eschatological dimension that is fundamentally absent from the concept of teachers in Western education (Bashir & Panambaian, n.d.).

Adab Ahead of Knowledge

"Learn manners (morals) first, then learn knowledge." (Atsar is famous, attributed to the Companions and tabi'in)

This atsar expressly establishes a hierarchy in Islamic education: manners precede 'ilm. This is a principle that directly emphasizes that a murobbi must first become an example of manners before effectively teaching knowledge. Al-Attas (1980) built his entire philosophy of Islamic education on this principle: ta'dib is the foundation of ta'lim. Murobbi who loses manners will

create students who are intellectually intelligent but morally poor and are the biggest failure of Islamic education (S, Muslimah, Riadi, & Mukmin, 2021; Vilianita, Maksum, & Ma'arif, 2022).

The Views of Salaf Scholars: Building on the Epistemology of the Classical Murobbi

Imam Al-Ghazali: Murobbi as a Psychiatrist

In the treasures of classical Islamic education, Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali occupies an important position as one of the figures who provides the philosophical and spiritual foundation of the essence of educators. In his monumental work Ihya' Ulumuddin, Al-Ghazali views that the main task of an educator is not only to transfer knowledge, but also to carry out the process of purifying the soul (tazkiyatun nafs) and the formation of students' morals(Sumarni & Rochbani, 2025). Therefore, he used a very famous analogy between educators and doctors. Just as a doctor is in charge of treating a patient's physical illness, a murobbi is responsible for treating various liver diseases and moral deviations that can hinder the spiritual development of students. This analogy shows that education in Al-Ghazali's perspective has a much broader orientation than just academic achievement, namely forming a human being who is intellectually and spiritually healthy.

Al-Ghazali emphasized that an educator will not be able to improve the psyche of students if he himself has not succeeded in improving his psyche(Olfah & Selatan, 2023). Therefore, the first requirement for a murobbi is to have moral integrity and spiritual maturity. In his view, example (uswah hasanah) is a more effective educational instrument than just verbal advice. Students tend to learn from what they see rather than from what they hear. Therefore, the behavior, attitude, and personality of teachers will become a hidden curriculum that indirectly shapes the character of students. This perspective shows that the success of education is not only determined by pedagogic competence, but also by the moral quality of educators as exemplary figures(Olfah & Selatan, 2023).

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali stated in his thesis Vina (2025) some of the main characteristics that a murobbi must have. First, educators must have sincerity in carrying out their duties and not make material the main goal of education. According to Al-Ghazali, an educational orientation centered on worldly interests has the potential to eliminate the blessings of knowledge and reduce the effectiveness of character formation. Second, a murobbi must treat students as a father treats his child, namely with affection, attention, and care. Third, educators should not underestimate students who have low abilities, but must guide them according to their respective levels of development and capacity. Fourth, a murobbi must be a consistent role model in all aspects of life, both inside and outside the educational environment (Athiyyah, 2025).

The concept of Al-Ghazali shows that the relationship between murobbi and students is humanistic as well as spiritual. Education is not seen as a mechanical activity that focuses on delivering material, but as a process of assisting humans towards self-perfection (insan kamil). In this context, the success of a murobbi is not only measured by the ability of students to master science, but also by behavioral changes, improvement in moral quality, and spiritual maturity formed through the educational process. Thus, according to Al-Ghazali, the role of murobbi has a transformational dimension because it is oriented towards the internal changes of students as a whole.

The relevance of Al-Ghazali's thought is increasingly evident in the context of modern education that faces various character problems, such as moral crises, declining social ethics, and weakening of exemplary in the educational environment. Research conducted by Ramadhani et al. (2025) shows that the concept of Murobbi al-Ruh or soul coach developed by Al-Ghazali is still

very relevant to reconstruct the paradigm of teachers in the contemporary era. The study found that a humanist-spiritual approach that emphasizes example, empathy, character building, and strengthening spirituality can be an alternative to the trend of modern education that is too oriented towards academic achievement. These findings strengthen the argument that the concept of murobbi is not just a historical legacy of Islamic education, but an educational paradigm that remains relevant to answer the challenges of 21st century education. In the midst of the demands of global mastery of technology and competence, the presence of murobbi as a "psychiatrist" has become increasingly important to ensure that students' intellectual development goes hand in hand with their moral and spiritual growth(Ramadhani, Silmi, Puspika Sari, & Irhamsyah, 2025).

Imam Al-Nawawi: Adab as an Exemplary Curriculum

Imam Al-Nawawi's (631–676 AH) thoughts on the role of educators are widely expressed in the work Al-Tibyan fi Adab Hamalah al-Qur'an, which emphasizes that the success of education is largely determined by the quality of manners and the example of a teacher. In Al-Nawawi's perspective, it is not enough for a murobbi to have a mastery of knowledge, but also to demonstrate moral integrity which is reflected in daily behavior. The study of Basri and Subagiya (2024) shows that Al-Nawawi places several main characteristics for an educator, namely being wise and authoritative, acting fairly without discrimination, and having humility in interacting with students. Interestingly, the authority in question is not an authority born from a position or power, but a respect that arises naturally due to the science, morals, and consistency of educators' behavior. Thus, adab is not only a material that is taught, but also a life curriculum that is displayed through the example of a murobbi(Basri & Subagiya, 2023).

Furthermore, Al-Nawawi views the relationship between teacher and student as an educational process that is dialogical and reciprocal, not a power relationship that places students solely as objects of education. This view is classified as progressive because it emphasizes the importance of respect for the dignity of students and the creation of relationships built on the basis of affection, justice, and mutual respect. In the context of modern education, the concept is in line with the student-centered learning paradigm that places students as active subjects in the learning process. The findings of Yuliani et al. (2024) further strengthen the relevance of Al-Nawawi's thinking by showing that positive relationships between teachers and students contribute significantly to the creation of a meaningful, comfortable, and supportive learning environment. Therefore, the concept of murobbi according to Al-Nawawi emphasizes that the example of adab is not only a complement to education, but the main foundation that determines the success of the process of forming students' personalities (Yuliani et al., 2024).

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari: Synthesis of Salaf and Local Wisdom

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (1871–1947) through his work Adabul 'Alim wa al-Muta'allim succeeded in integrating the tradition of classical Islamic education with the socio-cultural context of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools. According to Rokhim (2024), he developed the concept of teachers as living treasures or "living heirlooms", namely educators who not only convey knowledge, but make their entire lives a real representation of the knowledge taught. This concept shows that the authority of a murobbi is not built solely through academic competence, but rather through moral integrity, spiritual depth, and consistency between speech and action. In the context of Indonesian education, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari emphasized the importance of tawadhu' values, sincerity, respect for scientific traditions, and local wisdom of pesantren as the foundation for character formation (Rokhim, 2024). Thus, the concept of murobbi that he offers is not only firmly rooted in classical Islamic treasures, but also has contextual relevance in building an

authentic, humanist educational leadership model that is in accordance with the character of Indonesian society.

Abdullah Nashih Ulwan: Exemplary as the Leading Method

Ulwan (1928-1987) in Tarbiyyah al-Aulad fi al-Islam positioned al-qudwah wa al-uswah (exemplary) as the number one educational method among the five methods he identified. Ulwan argues that children and adolescents have a much stronger ability to imitate than abstraction they learn more quickly from what they witness than they hear. This is very much in line with Bandura's (1977) finding that observational learning is the most effective character-building mechanism (Manik, Sembiring, Padang, & Manurung, 2022).

Integration of Modern Theory: Cross-Paradigm Analysis

One of the main contributions of this study is to bring together the concept of murobbi in the Islamic education tradition with two theoretical frameworks from different scientific backgrounds, namely the concept of ta'dib Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura. This integration shows that the example of educators is not only a normative value in Islam, but also a universal principle that is recognized in various scientific traditions as the main factor in the formation of students' character. Al-Attas argues that the crisis of contemporary Islamic education is rooted in the phenomenon of loss of adab or the loss of human ability to place things according to their correct position and function (Vilianita et al., 2022). In this perspective, education is not solely oriented to the transfer of knowledge, but to the formation of civilized human beings. This study found that the concept of murobbi has a strategic position as an agent of adab restoration because through example, coaching, and mentoring carried out on an ongoing basis, a murobbi helps students understand and internalize the right values in life. Thus, if ta'dib can be understood as a philosophical goal of Islamic education, then murobbi is an operational instrument that realizes this goal in daily educational practice.

These findings increasingly gain legitimacy when analyzed through the perspective of modern educational psychology. Albert Bandura (1977) explained that social learning takes place through a process of observation of the model which involves four stages, namely attention, information retention, reproduction, and motivation. Various cutting-edge studies show that learners tend to develop behaviors, attitudes, and values that they observe consistently from figures that are considered important in their learning environment(Khozin, Tobroni, & Rozza, 2024). The results of the study published in the International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary (2024) show that teachers who are able to be positive role models naturally gain the attention and respect of students, thus encouraging an effective imitation process. This study found a strong convergence between Bandura's theory and the concept of uswah hasanah in Islam, because both place example as the main mechanism of character formation (Khozin et al., 2024; Ruswandi et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between the two. In Bandura's theory, motivation to imitate is generally explained through reward mechanisms and observed behavioral consequences. On the other hand, in the concept of uswah hasanah, the encouragement to emulate a murobbi is born from a sense of love (mahabbah), respect (ta'dhim), and trust built through moral integrity and spiritual depth of the educator. Therefore, exemplification in the Islamic perspective has not only a psychological dimension, but also a deeper affective and transcendental dimension.

The relevance of the murobbi concept is also strengthened by various international empirical findings. Research published in the IIUM Journal of Educational Studies (2023) shows that Islamization-based teacher education programs that emphasize the formation of murobbi character

are able to increase teachers' self-efficacy in fostering students' character and strengthening the values of faith in the educational environment. The findings indicate that the reconstruction of the role of teachers as murobbi not only has an impact on the quality of learning in the classroom, but also has the potential to make a broader contribution to the development of civilization (Muhammad Javeed & Othman, 2023). Similar findings were reported in Indramawan et al., (2024) which states that the concept of uswah hasanah has a high compatibility with social learning theory because both emphasize the importance of observation and imitation in the process of character formation(Indramawan et al., 2024). However, the study also identified a number of contemporary challenges, such as moral degradation, the dominance of digital media influence, and the increasing administrative burden of teachers that can reduce the effectiveness of role models. Based on the overall analysis, this study emphasizes that the concept of murobbi is not only the normative legacy of Islamic education, but an educational paradigm that has a strong philosophical, psychological, and empirical foundation. In fact, this concept offers a more comprehensive model of character education because it integrates the intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously in an educator.

Murobbi in the Era of Digital Disruption: Critical Analysis and Projection

The era of digital disruption presents qualitatively different challenges for Islamic education. Today, the *murobbi* no longer competes only with conventional educational influences but also with millions of digital contents, algorithm-driven recommendations, and AI-powered learning platforms that continuously shape students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour. Faqih (2025) describes this phenomenon as a "moral vacuum" increasingly occupied by social media influencers and algorithmic content that prioritizes engagement rather than character formation (Faqih, Ma'alimin, & Mukaffan, 2025). Based on the synthesis of contemporary literature, this study identifies three interrelated dimensions that explain the continuing relevance of the *murobbi* in the digital era.

First, the counter-narrative dimension. An authentic *murobbi* functions as a moral counter-narrative to the values promoted by destructive digital content. When students consistently observe congruence between the values taught by teachers and their everyday behaviour, they are encouraged to critically evaluate the often contradictory messages encountered through social media. In this sense, teacher exemplariness strengthens students' moral reasoning by providing a credible and lived reference point that algorithmically generated content cannot offer.

Second, the dimension of irreplaceability**.** Although artificial intelligence has significantly enhanced educational practices through personalized learning, automated assessment, and rapid access to knowledge, current evidence indicates that AI primarily serves as a pedagogical assistant rather than a substitute for human educators. UNESCO's *AI Competency Framework for Teachers* emphasizes that AI should strengthen teacher agency while preserving meaningful human interactions at the centre of education, explicitly affirming that teachers should not and cannot be replaced by technology. The framework further highlights that teachers remain accountable for pedagogical decisions, ethical judgment, and students' holistic development within AI-supported learning environments. These principles resonate strongly with the Islamic concept of the *murobbi*, whose educational authority extends beyond knowledge transmission to encompass moral integrity, spiritual guidance, and authentic lived example(Miao & Cukurova, 2024). Supporting this perspective, Rabbani and Darmiyanti (2025) found that teachers' emotional management and the quality of teacher-student relationships significantly influence students' motivation and classroom climate, dimensions fundamentally rooted in human interaction

(Rabbani & Darmiyanti, 2025). Likewise, Saleh (2025) argues that the *murobbi* is distinguished not merely by cognitive expertise but by continuous moral guidance through daily example (Muhammad saleh, 2025). Therefore, while AI may effectively support the instructional function of the *mu'allim*, it cannot substitute the relational, ethical, and spiritual responsibilities that define the identity of the *murobbi*.

Third, the dimension of contextual adaptation. Rather than resisting technological innovation, the *murobbi* paradigm encourages educators to integrate digital technology within an ethical and value-oriented educational framework. Amir et al. (2025) recommend a *rabbaniyyah*-based model of digital pedagogy in which teachers exemplify digital ethics, mental resilience, and responsible technology use (Amir, Fitrian, Afifullah, Maimun, & Alrawashdeh, 2025). Similarly, Suriati et al. (2025) demonstrate that mentoring programs based on close teacher-student relationships remain significantly more effective for character formation than impersonal educational approaches (Suriati, Saiful, & Nurbayani, 2025). These findings suggest that the relevance of the *murobbi* in the age of artificial intelligence lies not in opposing technological development but in complementing it through moral leadership, authentic interpersonal relationships, and value-based educational guidance. Consequently, the *murobbi* should be understood as the ethical anchor of AI-supported Islamic education, ensuring that technological advancement remains directed toward holistic human development rather than merely cognitive efficiency.

Reconstruction of the Ideal Murobbi Characteristics: Seven Hierarchical Propositions

Based on the synthesis of all the analyses, this study formulated seven characteristics of the ideal murobbi that are hierarchical from internal foundations to external manifestations, Ontological Integrity: There is no distance between what is taught and what is done whether seen or not. This is a prerequisite of all other characteristics (Iskandar, 2017). Spiritual Depth (Ruhiyah): Educational motivation comes from the pleasure of Allah, not material calculations. Husna (2024) found that teachers who teach because Allah has a different level of exemplary experience that students feel differently (Husna, 2024). Pedagogical Compassion (Rahmah Tarbawiyyah): A sincere love that encourages the murobbi to be patient, empathetic, and not give up on difficult students the heart of the transformative murobbi-student relationship (Mohd Noor, Tengku Kasim, & (Author), 2021). Ever-Evolving Knowledge (‘Ilm Mutanami): Murobbi must never stop learning. Stopping learning is the beginning of a loss of relevance and authority (Munir, Wahab, Rahim, & Othman, 2025). Manners That Are Consistent in All Contexts: Al-Attas calls this ‘internalized manners’ not performative manners that appear only in the classroom, but manners that color all aspects of life (Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, 1999). Ability to Read and Respond to Context: Murobbi effectively reads the conditions of the times and responds with wisdom. KH. Hasyim Asy’ari is the best example: his scholarship is very salaf, but his response to the Indonesian context is very contextual (Rokhim, 2024). Eschatological Awareness (Mas’uliyyah Ukhrawi): The awareness that any influence on the disciple will be accountable before Allah a motivation that makes murobbi sincere and not half-hearted (Bashir & Panambaian, n.d.).

The seven characteristics discussed above should not be understood as isolated personal attributes. Rather, they constitute an interconnected and hierarchical framework in which each dimension strengthens and supports the others. To clarify the theoretical relationship among these characteristics, this study proposes the following conceptual model of the ideal *murobbi*.

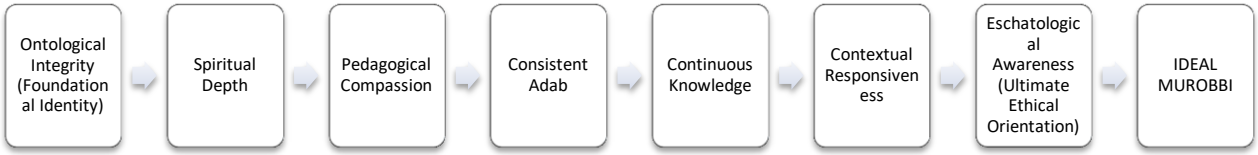

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Ideal Murobbi

CONCLUSION

The study produced three key findings. First, the concept of murobbi in Islam is a holistic, integrative, and prophetic educational paradigm. The root of the rabbi's claim is that educating is participation in God's maintenance work that places the teaching profession at a very noble and responsible level. Second, uswah hasanah is an ontological foundation and not just a method of the role of murobbi, affirmed by the four verses of the Qur'an, four hadiths, and the consensus of salaf scholars. More significantly, this study found that the convergence between uswah hasanah and social learning theory Bandura (1977) proves that the example of teachers is a universal truth that is cross-civilizational. Third, in the era of digital disruption, the role of murobbi is not increasingly irrelevant but increasingly crucial: the digital moral crisis can only be overcome by the presence of authentic murobbi. Theoretical implications: this study offers a new conceptual framework that integrates ta'dib (Al-Attas), tarbiyah (salaf scholars), and social learning (Bandura) in one operational murobbi construct. Practical implications: Islamic educational institutions need to reform teacher education programs by placing murobbi character development not just as a pedagogical competence but as the main outcome. Policy implications: teacher performance evaluation must integrate the dimensions of moral integrity and exemplary. Further research needs to empirically examine the correlation between the implementation of the murobbi concept in Islamic schools and the indicators of student character formation

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