




A Tawhidic Epistemological Framework for Dealing with Non-physical Violence against Teachers in Islamic Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The increasing prevalence of non-physical violence against teachers, including verbal abuse, psychological intimidation, relational aggression, and cyberbullying, presents a growing concern for educational institutions worldwide, particularly those grounded in Islamic values. Most existing interventions are shaped by secular psychosocial and criminological theories that emphasize behavioural control and punishment, often neglecting the spiritual and moral dimensions necessary for a lasting solution in Muslim contexts. Methodologically, this article adopts a conceptual design based on an integrative literature review of classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship to address this gap. It proposes a Tawhidic epistemological framework that situates the principle of divine unity as the foundational remedy. The framework redefines the teacher-student relationship by conceptualizing knowledge as a divine trust and education as an act of worship. Its core elements encompass the ontology of knowledge as divine light, the axiology of ethical conduct as *adab*, the teleology of learning for communal benefit, and the methodology of soul purification. As a principal theoretical contribution to Islamic educational reform, this study demonstrates that integrating Tawhidic epistemology with social science insights offers a spiritually grounded, holistic paradigm capable of restoring the sacred covenant of respect between teachers and students.

Keywords: Tawhidic Epistemology; Islamic Education; Non-physical Violence; Teacher Dignity; Ethical Comportment (*Adab*).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Cases of non-physical violence against teachers are becoming increasingly worrying. Many educators suffer emotional distress from verbal abuse, ridicule and online harassment [1], [2]. In the past, teachers were regarded as highly respected figures and central to students' moral development [3], [4], but today their guidance is often rejected or misunderstood as an unnecessary restriction. This paradox raises the critical question of what has happened in the relationship between students and teachers. Importantly, such patterns are not limited to Western societies [5], [6], [7] but are increasingly observed in Muslim-majority contexts [8], [9], [10], including Islamic schools [11]. This situation calls for an investigation into the causes of such behaviour, an exploration of how Tawhidic epistemology can provide meaningful

guidance, and the formulation of a practical framework for Islamic education to protect the dignity of teachers.

Verbal threats and verbal abuse are consistently reported as the most common forms of non-physical violence against teachers. During the pandemic, 43.7% of teachers in the United States reported experiencing verbal threats, physical assaults, and property damage, with verbal abuse being the most common [12]. Empirical evidence suggests that up to 37% of teachers in certain Muslim majority regions such as the United Arab Emirates have reported verbal bullying [8]. This global concern is also evident in Indonesia, where a survey of cases documented by the national online newspaper *Detiknews* between 2016-2020 identified 112 distinct incidents of school related violence. Strikingly, 42.85% of all reported victims of psychological violence were teachers, underscoring that educators are disproportionately targeted within this wider national crisis [13]. Other studies confirm that non-physical violence, particularly in the form of verbal harassment, threats, and intimidation, remains widespread across diverse contexts [14], [15], [16].

The existing documentation probably only captures a fraction of the actual prevalence of non-physical violence against teachers, as many incidents go unreported due to professional pressures and systematic restrictions. If not intervened in a timely manner, such covert aggression can escalate to overt physical assault or alternatively undermine teachers' psychological well-being and professional morale [17], [18]. Beyond these immediate harms, persistent non-physical violence weakens teachers' authority, disrupts the Islamic educational mission and promotes moral decay in the school environment. Despite these far-reaching consequences, scientific investigation into the underlying causes and culturally based solutions remains limited, emphasising the need for targeted research in this area.

Approaches from sociology, psychology and criminology have presented various strategies for dealing with student misconduct, such as behaviourist interventions that use rewards, punishments or token systems to regulate behaviour [19], and restorative justice practises that emphasise dialogue, apology and reparation to restore the relationship [20]. While these approaches have been shown to be effective in addressing immediate behavioural problems and promoting reconciliation [21], [22], they remain limited by their secular focus. Their primary focus is on treating observable symptoms rather than addressing the deeper spiritual and moral underpinnings of behaviour. Consequently, they provide only partial remediation and are unable to cultivate the inner change necessary to maintain respect and dignity in teacher-student relationships.

For Muslim educators and students, any effective response to the challenge of non-physical violence against teachers must be grounded in their own worldview if it is to be meaningfully internalised. This necessity highlights the importance of an Islamic paradigm that is consistent with the spiritual and moral foundations of education in Muslim societies. In this context, epistemology, understood as a systematic enquiry into the nature, sources and scope of knowledge, is of crucial importance. Tawhidic epistemology, which emphasises the unity of God as the foundation of all knowledge and the principle of *adab* as the appropriate order of human behaviour, provides a comprehensive framework that integrates intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions [23], [24], [25]. Despite its potential to enrich contemporary educational discourse, scholarly engagement with this paradigm remains limited. This emphasises the urgency of further exploring its application to combat the erosion of respect and dignity in teacher-student relationships.

In the light of these concerns, the objective of this study is to formulate a Tawhidic epistemological framework for addressing non-physical violence against teachers. This article argues that such violence constitutes more than a mere violation of institutional rules or social norms; rather, it represents a fundamental disruption of the sacred educational covenant that

binds students, teachers, parents, and God. To systematically address this issue, the specific objectives of this research are threefold:

1. To construct a conceptual framework based on the principle of Tawhid that redefines the relationship between teacher and student as a spiritual bond.
2. To diagnose the root causes of non-physical aggression by analyzing them through the lens of spiritual disconnection rather than solely behavioral deviation.
3. To offer spiritually grounded guidance and practical strategies for restoring respect, dignity, and harmony within the educational environment.

By fulfilling these objectives, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on Islamic educational reform, providing a model that integrates classical wisdom with modern social science perspectives.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employs conceptual analysis and an integrative literature review methodology to synthesize principles from two distinct bodies of knowledge. The first involves a critical examination of Islamic educational philosophy, deliberately selecting both classical scholars (al-Ghazali, al-Zarnuji) and contemporary thinkers (Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Said Nursi, Muhammad Fethullah Gulen). This temporal selection serves to trace the historical trajectory and development of scholarly opinion, highlighting the enduring centrality of *adab* and sanctity of education across different eras. The second body of knowledge critically assesses criminological and sociological theories, such as those by Hirschi, Sutherland, and Sykes and Matza, to understand secular paradigms of deviant behaviour. To ensure a rigorous selection process, the literature was chosen based on specific inclusion criteria: thematic relevance to moral education and social control, scholarly significance in defining core theoretical constructs, and the capacity to illustrate the continuity of thought regarding the relationship between teacher and student. The primary output is the construction of a theoretical framework demonstrating that a Tawhidic approach offers a comprehensive explanation and a spiritually grounded solution to non-physical violence against teachers. As this research utilizes public texts and does not involve human subjects, ethical approval is not required.

3.0 CONCEPTUAL FINDINGS AND PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

Derived from a rigorous integrative literature synthesis and conceptual analysis, this section presents the key theoretical findings of the study. The discussion begins with the Qur'an and Hadith as the scriptural basis of education, followed by an examination of insights from classical scholars and contemporary studies on student behaviour. It further integrates psychological and criminological perspectives to identify contributing factors to non-physical violence. Building on these synthesized analysis, the study develops a Tawhidic epistemological framework and proposes a practical model for restoring respect and harmony in Islamic educational settings.

3.1 Islamic Scriptural Foundations: Qur'an and Hadith

The Qur'an establishes the foundation of knowledge and the high status of those who impart it. Allah declares, "Allah will gradually elevate those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge" by degrees" (Surah Al Mujadalah:11). This verse affirms the divinely ordained dignity of scholars and teachers and emphasises their crucial role in the moral and intellectual growth of the community. Similarly, Allah commands, "Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know" (Surah Al-Nahl:43), which portrays the search for knowledge as an act of humility and submission to the truth. To underscore the requisite etiquette in this relationship, the Qur'an presents the archetype of the student through Prophet Musa's request to Khidr: "May I follow you, provided that you teach me some of the right guidance you have been taught?" (Surah Al-Khaf: 66). This verse explicitly demonstrates that the acquisition of

knowledge is conditional upon the student's humility, permission-seeking, and respectful adherence to the teacher's guidance.

The Qur'an also condemns the roots of disrespect, namely arrogance and presumption. Allah warns, "And do not walk upon the earth arrogantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth apart, nor reach the mountains in height" (Surah Al-Isra':37). Such arrogance manifests itself in acts of rudeness, deviation or verbal aggression that contradict the spirit of humility required of learners.

The hadith corpus supplements this Qur'anic foundation. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young and respect to our elders" (al-Tirmidhi, 1920/2007), thus emphasising the ethics of reverence for authority figures, including teachers. Another narration reports, "The scholars are the heirs of the prophets" (Abu Dawud, 3641/2008), which elevates the teaching profession to a sacred trust. This prophetic teaching makes the teacher not only a transmitter of information, but also a spiritual guide who has the task of moulding the moral character of the students.

Taken together, the Qur'an and hadith demonstrate that disrespect or non-physical violence towards teachers is not simply a social or institutional offence, but a spiritual violation that undermines the divine principle of gratitude, humility and reverence for knowledge. These revelatory sources reinforce the epistemological framework of Tawhidism by anchoring it directly in revelation and ensuring that pedagogical practices are centred on worship, character building and the well-being of the community.

3.2 Scholarly Perspectives on Respect for Teachers

From the earliest generations, respect for teachers was established as a divine and prophetic principle. The companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ showed deep reverence in his presence, lowered their voices and avoided excessive questioning out of *adab*, as stated in Surah Al Hujurat: 2, which instructs them not to raise their voices above that of the Prophet. This verse became a fundamental ethic of reverence for teachers and scholars in later Islamic thought. The Companions also transmitted sayings such as "I am the servant of anyone who teaches me a single letter", a maxim that is often quoted in the tradition to express the seriousness of reverence towards one's teacher [26]. Their practice established a model in which the pursuit of knowledge was inseparable from humility, gratitude and respect for the source of guidance.

The classical Islamic scholars continued this legacy by affirming that the pursuit of knowledge is not merely an intellectual exercise, but a spiritual journey that requires etiquette (*adab*), sincerity (*ikhlas*) and reverence for the teacher as guide. *Adab*, as emphasised by al-Ghazali, al-Zarnuji, Hasyim Asyari, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas was placed at the centre of education and required students to be humble, patient, respectful in word and deed, and grateful to their teachers, as proper etiquette was seen as a prerequisite for obtaining knowledge and an expression of moral refinement [23], [27], [28], [29], [30]. In addition, *ikhlas* was described by al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Jawzi and al-Isfahani as the foundation of learning, where knowledge must be pursued solely for the pleasure of God and not for status, wealth or debate, because without sincerity, learning was considered unfruitful and spiritually harmful, leading to arrogance rather than guidance [28], [31], [32]. Moreover, the teacher was seen not only as a conveyor of information, but as an inheritor of the prophets and a guide of the soul. Thinkers such as Said Nursi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi emphasised that teachers embody and transmit spiritual and moral values, while al-Isfahani likened the teacher to a physician of the soul and al-Ghazali described the teacher as a proxy of the Prophet, entrusted with shaping the character of the student and guiding him towards God [27], [33], [34], [35].

3.3 Contemporary Studies on Incivility

Research on student violence against teachers has made it increasingly clear that violence is not limited to physical attacks but also includes non-physical forms that can be just as, if not more, harmful. Non-physical violence is often subtle, pervasive and can have serious psychological consequences for teachers [36], [37]. There are overlapping but complementary definitions of non-physical violence in the literature, which are generally understood as intentional behaviours aimed at causing emotional, psychological or social harm to teachers. Verbal aggression is the most prevalent form, characterised by insults, swearing, name-calling or threats, and is consistently reported as the most common form of aggression in school [38]. This category ranges from overt acts such as shouting or derogatory language to covert strategies such as spreading rumours and sarcastic remarks [39], [40]. Teachers themselves often define such violence based on subjective experiences and emphasise discomfort and irritation as central to its effects [39].

In addition to verbal violence, non-verbal forms such as insulting gestures, mockery or intimidating looks also constitute non-physical violence [37]. Psychological violence extends this area and includes attempts to cause social harm (e.g. marginalisation, questioning a teacher's worldview) or to undermine professional credibility (e.g. criticism of teaching style) [39]. A more detailed concept, symbolic violence, refers to subtle but powerful mechanisms of domination exercised through communication that reinforce inequality and weaken teachers' authority [41]. In contemporary times, these behaviours have extended to cyberspace and manifest as online aggression through cyberbullying, trolling, the spread of misinformation and the dissemination of humiliating content [40], [42]. Taken together, these categories illustrate the complex and multi-layered nature of non-physical violence against teachers.

Teachers are often at risk of burnout because the extensive curricula, rapid educational reforms and inadequate institutional support undermine their classroom management and authority [43], [44], [45]. Weak co-operation between schools and parents, coupled with parental incivility, further undermines respect for teachers [46], [47]. At the same time, student mental health issues stemming from trauma, family conflict and emotional immaturity have been consistently linked to aggressive behaviour towards teachers [9], [10], [48], [49]. Furthermore, cyberbullying has emerged as a new form of hostility towards teachers, extending aggression beyond the classroom and into the online realm [47], [50]. The gap in the current literature is that while classical Islamic texts emphasise *adab* and spiritual values, they do not address modern challenges such as cyberbullying and empirical studies on workplace violence rarely include a spiritual dimension. This study attempts to bridge this gap by providing a Tawhidi framework that integrates both perspectives.

Contemporary research indicates that preventive and coping strategies can mitigate the adverse effects of incivility in schools. Perceptions of procedural justice, defined as fair and transparent handling of incidents by administrators, have been found to buffer against teacher stress and reduce the negative consequences of student aggression. Moon and McCluskey (2023), in their study *Aggression toward Teachers and Negative Consequences: The Moderating Effects of Procedural Justice*, demonstrate that when educators believe school authorities manage aggression fairly, the detrimental impact on their psychological well-being and professional performance is significantly diminished [51]. Building positive teacher-student relationships is equally important, as a strong relational climate reduces the likelihood of bullying, even in subjects such as physical education where peer dynamics play a central role [52]. Despite these findings, there are still gaps. Much of the research has been conducted in the Anglo-Saxon context, which emphasises the need for further research in other cultural and educational settings [53]. There is also a lack of longitudinal studies examining the lasting effects of teacher victimisation and assessing the sustainability of intervention programmes [50], [54].

3.4 Psychosocial and Criminological Perspectives on Student Non-Physical Violence

To understand why students commit non-physical violence against teachers, several psychosocial and criminological theories offer useful explanations. Social bond theory emphasises that students who lack attachment, commitment, involvement and belief in school norms are more prone to deviant behaviour [55], [56]. Differential Association Theory explains that such vulnerabilities are reinforced by peer groups that teach definitions favourable to deviance and teach disrespectful behaviour such as name-calling or online shaming [57], [58]. Neutralisation theory also shows how students justify these actions by denying responsibility, minimising harm or condemning teachers, thus removing internal barriers to misbehaviour [59].

Taken together, these theories offer an explanation that builds on and links to one another. Weakened social bonds create vulnerability, peer influence provides deviant content, and neutralisation techniques legitimise misbehaviour. This framework clarifies the psychosocial and criminological mechanisms underlying student violence and points to potential variables such as social bonds, peer association and neutralisation techniques that can be investigated in future empirical studies.

3.5 Contributing Factors to Student Non-Physical Violence

The causes of non-physical violence by students against teachers are multifactorial and include individual, relational and contextual dimensions. At the individual level, lower emotional maturity and weaker religiosity are strongly associated with aggressive tendencies, as both traits undermine self-control and moral guidance [60]. Other predictors at the individual level include arrogance, lack of social awareness and previous victimisation through bullying [10], [49], [61].

The characteristics of teachers influence their susceptibility to violence. Female teachers and those with less experience are more likely to report verbal harassment and stress [14], [62], while young, male, single and inexperienced teachers working in boys' public schools also have higher levels of violence [63]. The unsafe or overly friendly approach of teachers can further increase the risk of victimisation [50].

The quality of the student-teacher relationship is a decisive relationship factor. Studies repeatedly show that disrespect towards teachers correlates with a higher incidence of violence, while supportive relationships act as a protective buffer [11], [37]. Contextual factors such as the family and school climate also play a decisive role. Family disharmony and inadequate parental upbringing are associated with a higher risk of delinquency and violence [9], [64]. In school, disciplinary measures, peer dynamics and the general learning environment have a strong influence on the likelihood of teachers becoming victims of violence [65]. The influence of peers is particularly critical, and in *pesantren* environments, hierarchical living conditions can exacerbate the entrenchment of bullying behaviours [11].

Finally, societal factors such as the portrayal of violence in the media and the cultural acceptance of certain aggressive behaviours reinforce these patterns [36]. The school climate has a significant impact on the victimisation of teachers. Factors such as instructional modality, urbanicity and socioeconomic status of students predict higher rates of violence [66]. In addition, a lack of support from school leadership undermines teacher well-being and trust in the school system [67].

3.6 Diagnose Root Causes from Spiritual Perspective

In addition to the general psychosocial and systemic factors identified in contemporary research, the classical Islamic tradition offers an understanding of the internal spiritual factors that contribute to non-physical student-teacher violence. This perspective goes beyond the observable behaviours and examines the moral and spiritual conditions of the student, the family and the teacher to identify the causes of disrespect and aggression in the school environment.

The disrespectful behaviour of a student is often symptomatic of inner character weaknesses. Among the most cited are pride, arrogance, vanity and envy, described by classical scholars as spiritual diseases of the heart [28], [34]. These passions reflect a fundamental lack of *adab*, understood as the humility, reverence and moral discipline required to recognise one's place in the moral and social order [23]. Al-Ghazali further notes that aggression can arise when a student's personal will or desire is in conflict, illustrating the interplay between psychological predispositions and mental immaturity [28].

External factors, particularly those emanating from the family and peer group, also play a decisive role in shaping pupils' behaviour. A primary external influence is the behaviour of parents. When parents make negative comments about teachers in the presence of their children or openly criticise them, the teacher's authority is undermined and the child's ability to benefit from their guidance is reduced [68]. Similarly, exposure to negative or destructive peers is a significant risk factor, as such social interactions can reinforce poor character traits and normalise misbehaviour [30], [35].

Finally, the behaviour of the teacher himself is a decisive factor for the quality of the student-teacher relationship. The classical Islamic texts emphasise that respect for the teacher depends on the teacher's moral integrity, sincerity and embodiment of *adab* [28]. A teacher who lacks ethical discipline, displays arrogance or fails to be a worthy role model may inadvertently undermine the legitimacy of his authority and thus contribute to the breakdown of the respectful pedagogical relationship. In such cases, students perceive the teacher as unqualified or insincere, which may increase the tendency towards verbal or non-verbal aggression [33], [69].

In summary, modern research and Islamic scholarship offer distinct yet complementary vantage points on non-physical violence against teachers. While contemporary studies characterize this phenomenon as a critical workplace issue with psychological and professional consequences, Islamic sources deepen this understanding by framing it as a spiritual transgression rooted in arrogance and deficiency in *adab*. This synthesis is evident in the analysis of external factors: empirical findings regarding negative parental behaviour and destructive group contexts [44], [70], [71] strongly resonate with classical Islamic warnings about the impact of the social environment on moral character. Furthermore, the emphasis of classical scholars on the social integrity of the teacher reinforces modern observations that teacher credibility influences classroom civility; however, the Islamic perspective elevates this by positioning sincerity not merely as a professional competency but as a spiritual safeguard. Therefore, rather than presenting a dichotomy, these bodies of literature inform one another: secular insight into psychological dynamics provides the descriptive framework of the problem, while the Tawhidic perspective supplies the normative foundation for a holistic solution.

3.7 Constructing The Tawhidic Epistemological Framework

The centrepiece of this article is the construction of an epistemological framework based on *Tawhid* (oneness of God) to understand and deal with non-physical violence against teachers. The *Tawhidic* framework provides an epistemological, ethical and teleological foundation that links classical Islamic thought to contemporary educational challenges. This framework is based on four interrelated principles: the ontology of knowledge, the axiology of education, the teleology of learning and the methodology of reform.

3.7.1 The Ontology of Knowledge: Knowledge as a Divine Light (*Nur*)

Classical scholars did not regard knowledge as a neutral commodity, but as a sacred trust. The Qur'an states: "Allah will raise those who believe among you and those who have been given knowledge by degrees" (Qur'an 58:11), elevating teachers and scholars to positions of divine honour. Al-Ghazali describes knowledge as a divine light that is placed in the heart and guides insight and action [28]. Said Nursi expands on this by portraying teachers as interpreters of divine wisdom who translate revelation into the realities of daily life [72]. Syed

Muhammad Naquib al-Attas warns that confusion arises when the sacred origin of knowledge is disregarded, leading to moral and intellectual disorientation [23]. Similarly, Fethullah Gülen insists that authentic knowledge cultivates humility and responsibility before both God and humanity [69]. From this perspective, non-physical violence against teachers is more than a disciplinary problem; it represents a profound epistemological failure. Acts such as mockery, verbal abuse or digital harassment disregard the teacher's status as a custodian of wisdom. By eroding the reverence due to the educator, such as aggression ruptures the spiritual bond essential for the transmission of meaning and values, regardless of the specific subject matter being taught.

3.7.2 The Axiology of Education: *Adab* as the Core Value

The ethical foundation of Islamic education is rooted in *adab*, the recognition and prescription of the right place and behaviour. The Qur'an commands, "Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet... lest your deeds be rendered worthless while you perceive not" (Qur'an 49:2) Tafsir scholars such as Ibn Kathir state that this verse establishes the paradigm of reverence for all bearers of knowledge and authority [73]. Al-Attas emphasises that *adab* requires both a metaphysical awareness of God's sovereignty and a social awareness of communal responsibility [33]. Ismail al-Faruqi adds that the Islamisation of knowledge must be guided by *adab* to ensure that intellectual pursuit is inseparable from moral discipline [27]. Gülen further argues that respect, empathy and service should be cultivated as practical expressions of *adab* in students [69]. The Prophet ﷺ emphasised this ethic in his statement, "He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young and respect to our elders" (Al-Tirmidhī, 1975, no. 1920). When disrespect or verbal aggression occurs, it is a sign of the breakdown of this ethical order. Restoring *adab* requires more than just disciplining students. It requires a holistic commitment from teachers, parents and institutions to create a culture of mutual respect.

3.7.3 The Teleology of Learning: *Khalifah* and Community Well-Being

Education in Islam is teleological and designed to prepare learners to fulfil their role as vicegerent (*khalifah*) in promoting justice and the welfare of the community. The Qur'an describes this responsibility: "It is He who has made you vicegerents on earth" (Qur'an 35:39), emphasising the duty of human beings to serve as stewards of creation. Al-Faruqi emphasises that the real purpose of education is to harmonise intellectual, moral and spiritual abilities to achieve social balance [24]. Gülen picks up on this by envisioning education as the cultivation of a "golden generation" committed to altruism, self-discipline and service [74].

The Prophet ﷺ associated knowledge with usefulness and said, "The best of people are those who benefit others the most," as narrated in *al-Mu'jam al Awsat* by al-Ṭabarānī. From this perspective, violence by students against teachers is not just disruptive behaviour, but an obstacle to educating them to become responsible citizens. Restorative interventions such as guided reflection, community service or structured dialogue can redirect students and teachers to the higher purpose of education and strengthen their sense of responsibility for the *khalifah*.

3.7.4 The Methodology of Reform: Inner Purification (*Tazkiyat al-Nafs*) for Teachers and Students

The reform of education begins with inner purification. The Qur'an declares: "He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who corrupts it" (Qur'an 91:9-10), thus referring to inner purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) as the basis for moral success. Al-Ghazali emphasised that ethical knowledge requires self-discipline and purification of the heart [28]. Nursi also argued that moral and spiritual renewal is a prerequisite for true social progress [35]. Gülen's writings on sincerity and humility reinforce this principle by presenting education as a transformative process for both teachers and students [69]. The Prophet ﷺ provided practical strategies for dealing with anger. "If one of you becomes angry while standing, let him sit down; if anger leaves him, well and good; otherwise, let him lie down" (Abū Dāwūd, 2008, no. 4782). Just as students must learn to govern their reactive impulses through such spiritual discipline,

educators must guard against the internal erosion of their motivation. Consequently, teachers facing burnout require not only institutional support but also spiritual renewal to reconnect their professional duties with the higher purpose of worship and service.

3.8 Practical Implementation: A Multi-Tiered Model

To operationalise the Tawhidic epistemological framework, a multi-tiered model can be implemented in different educational contexts. This model goes beyond punitive responses to non-physical violence and instead promotes a culture of respect, responsibility and spiritual growth. Critical to its effectiveness is a dynamic cycle of teacher religiosity and student engagement that ensures all stakeholders support each other in cultivating *adab* and sincerity.

Tier 1: Prevention through a Culture of *Adab*

At the preventive level, schools should embed the *adab* in the entire educational process. This means that lessons on modesty, respect and the Islamic ethic of knowledge must be included in the curriculum, following al-Attas' conceptualisation of *adab* as recognising the right order of being and existence [23]. Teachers reinforce prevention by embodying religiosity and sincerity and modelling humility in their behaviour. Students are engaged through representative councils and peer-led initiatives that normalise respect as a shared value. Gülen's emphasis on cultivating mutual respect, compassion and dialogue between teachers and students underscores the need to create a school charter of rights and responsibilities based on shared values [69]. Empirical studies show that teacher victimisation is strongly influenced by school climate and the presence of clear, supportive policies [37], [75], [76].

Tier 2: Early Intervention through Restorative Circles

When minor disrespect occurs, restorative circles can be used to promote reconciliation and moral responsibility. This is in line with Nursi's call in the *Risale-i Nur* for sincerity and humility as the basis for learning relationships [35]. Within this process, teachers guide with religious and moral authority and students themselves encourage reflection among peers to ensure that the dynamic cycle works cooperatively. In such practices, disrespect is seen not just as breaking the rules, but as breaking community trust and divine principles, reconnecting the student to the spiritual purpose of knowledge. Current research shows that early dialogue and restorative practices reduce escalation and improve teacher-student relationships, especially in the context of verbal aggression and cyberbullying [42], [50], [70].

Tier 3: Intensive Intervention through Soul-Based Rehabilitation

For severe cases, individualised plans should be developed to address the root causes of aggression. Al-Ghazali, in the *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, recommends techniques for anger management coping with aggression such as taking refuge in Allah, performing ablution and changing one's posture [28]. Students can benefit from Islamic counselling, mentorship from respected scholars and restorative projects that repair the harm within the community. Teachers suffering from burnout should not only receive professional support, but also spiritual renewal programmes that reconnect their vocation with *da'wah* and worship, as emphasised by al-Faruqi through the integration of *tawhid* into all aspects of life [24]. Students, on the other hand, should be entrusted with responsibility and guided through peer accountability structures, which is in line with the prophetic model of youth empowerment. This holistic rehabilitation is in line with Gülen's call for teachers and students to embody love and tolerance as the foundation for social harmony [69]. Empirical studies confirm that burnout, lack of administrative support and weak parental involvement increase aggression towards teachers, emphasising the need for collaborative systemic and spiritual reform [62], [77].

3.9 Visualizing the Framework: A Concentric Model for Holistic Reform

To translate the theoretical principles of Tawhidic epistemology into an actionable guide for educational practice, this study proposes a multi-tiered, concentric framework. This model, depicted in Figure 1, is designed to address non-physical violence at its root by moving beyond mere punishment and cultivating a sustainable ecosystem of respect. It is organised into three

concentric tiers of intervention; prevention, early intervention and intensive intervention, each firmly based on the epistemological foundation of Tawhid. These tiers are integrated and maintained through a dynamic cycle of collaboration between teachers and students to ensure that the framework functions holistically and is self-reinforcing.

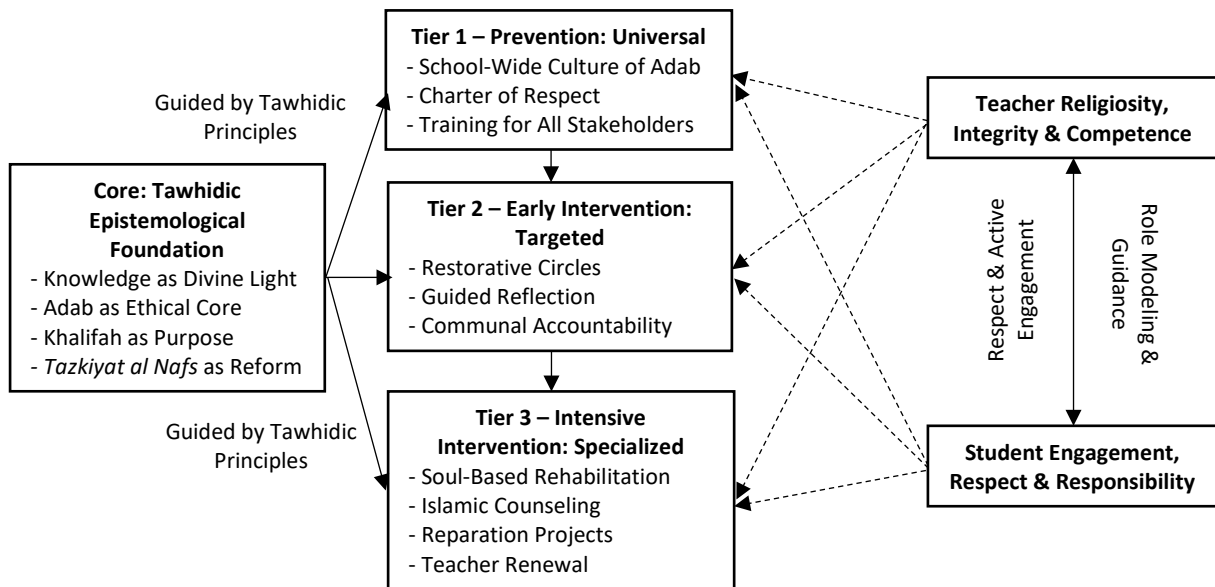


Figure 1: Tawhidic Epistemological Framework through a Teacher-Student Relationship

The framework integrates the Tawhidic foundations (Knowledge, *Adab*, Khalifah and *Tazkiyat al Nafs*) with three levels of intervention (universal prevention, targeted early intervention and specialized rehabilitation). The entire model functions through a dynamic cycle of mutual collaboration between teachers and students, underpinned by role modelling and active engagement.

3.10 Deconstructing The Model

This section outlines the inner structure of the proposed model. It begins with the Tawhidic epistemological foundation as the spiritual core, followed by three tiers of intervention translating its principles into action. The section concludes with the teacher-student relationship as the central dynamic that sustains the framework in practice.

3.10.1 The Core: Tawhidic Epistemological Foundation

At the heart of the model is the ontological and axiological foundation that comes from the Islamic intellectual tradition. This foundation is not simply a philosophical abstraction, but functions as an operational foundation from which all interventions derive their purpose and method. It consists of four interrelated principles:

Knowledge as divine light (Ilm as Nur): This principle defines the role of the teacher as a mediator of divine wisdom rather than a mere provider of information, so that any act of disregard becomes an epistemological violation. **Adab as the ethical core:** this principle makes recognising one's own place in the cosmic and social order a primary value and thus makes respect a non-negotiable virtue. **Khalifah as goal:** This principle defines the ultimate teleology of education as preparing students for the task of becoming righteous stewards of the earth, thus understanding learning as a journey of service and responsibility. **Tazkiyat al Nafs as reform:** This principle provides for the purification of the self as the central method of change for students, teachers and parents and ensures that the reforms are inherent and lasting.

3.10.2 The Three Tiers of Intervention

The framework applies its principles through three escalating tiers of action, each of which encompasses and reinforces the previous tiers.

Tier One: Universal prevention. This tier aims to create a resilient culture that prevents the emergence of violence. This includes embedding the values of *Adab* in the curriculum, comprehensive training of all stakeholders in the Charter of Respect and positioning the teacher as a role model of religiosity and honesty.

Tier Two: Targeted early intervention. This tier is activated when the first signs of disrespect appear. It favours restorative rather than punitive approaches. This includes restorative circles guided by religious principles, guided reflection based on Quranic values, and community accountability processes aimed at repairing harm and reconnecting students to the ethical community.

Tier Three: Specialised, intensive intervention. This tier deals with severe or intractable cases through intensive and soul-centred rehabilitation. It includes Islamic counselling and mentorship, programmes of *tazkiyat al nafs* to address spiritual causes such as arrogance, restorative justice projects to restore communal harmony and teacher renewal programmes to support educators who have experienced trauma.

3.10.3 Teacher-Student Relationships

Teachers embody religiosity, integrity, and competence, serving as role models who guide students through sincerity, wisdom, and discipline. In turn, students cultivate engagement, respect, and responsibility, responding positively to teacher role modelling. This reciprocal process forms a cycle: teachers inspire students through example, while student respect and active participation reinforce teacher authority and morale. The dotted arrows connecting the three tiers to both teacher and students illustrate that each stage of intervention strengthens and is strengthened by this dynamic cycle. Preventive efforts empower teachers and shape student behaviour, early interventions repair breaches in the relationship, and intensive interventions restore dignity and moral order after serious violations.

In summary, this integrated framework demonstrates how spiritual principles, structured interventions, and relational dynamics can be combined to prevent and address non-physical violence against teachers. By situating interventions within a Tawhidic paradigm, the model transcends punitive approaches, fostering an environment where respect, responsibility, and communal harmony are nurtured as acts of worship and moral growth.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This study proposes a Tawhidic epistemological framework to address non-physical violence against teachers by integrating classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary psychosocial and criminological perspectives. The framework reconceptualises such violence not merely as misconduct but also as a disruption of the sacred educational covenant among the teacher, student and ultimately Allah. Its foundation rests on four principles: Knowledge as divine light, *adab* as the ethical core, khalifah as the teleology of education and *tazkiyat al nafs* as the methodology of reform.

Implemented through a concentric model, the framework offers three tiers of intervention: universal prevention, targeted early intervention and specialised intensive rehabilitation, all supported by strong teachers-students relationships. This model's novelty lies in reconciling Tawhidic epistemology with practical intervention strategies. It provides Islamic schools with a robust paradigm for policy and intervention, while offering secular schools transferable values such respect, honesty and restorative justice. The implication is clear: protecting the dignity of teachers requires more than behavioural corrections; it necessitates a renewal of the moral

and spiritual foundations that can promote humility, justice and responsibility throughout the educational community.

This study is conceptual and has not been empirically tested in real educational settings, which limits its ability to demonstrate practical effectiveness and sustainability. While the framework is tailored to Islamic and Muslim-majority contexts, it may need to be adapted for secular or multi-faith settings. Whilst it addresses emerging issues such as cyberbullying, the rapidly evolving nature of digital interactions presents challenges that require constant refinement. Structural and policy influences, including government regulations, institutional support and teacher training systems, are also beyond the scope of this study but remain critical to successful implementation.

Future research should empirically examine the framework in different educational settings, with longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact on teacher-student relationships and school climate. In addition, how institutional and policy mechanisms can embed the framework in teacher training and digital ethics education should be explored. Comparative studies could assess the fit between these Tawhidic models and secular restorative justice approaches, contributing to broader global discourses on educational reform. Finally, interdisciplinary collaboration between Islamic scholars, educators, psychologists and policy makers is recommended to refine and contextualise the model and ensure that it is responsive to both spiritual principles and contemporary educational realities.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Competing interests: No relevant disclosures.

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