

The Relevance of Hadith about Teachers to 21st Century Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the relevance between the characteristics of the ideal educator according to the hadith and the demands of 21st-century education. Both modern educators and educators in Islam emphasize the importance of developing students' potential, building noble character, and creating a conducive learning environment. Modern educators are required to be lifelong learners, creative, innovative, and able to utilize technology. Meanwhile, educators in Islam must have sincere intentions, compassion, and noble character. Both also emphasize the importance of collaboration, flexibility, and a learner-centered approach.

Keywords: Characteristics of Educators, Hadith, 21st Century Education.

I. Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping human character and quality. Without educators who are sincere, patient, and exemplary, students will find it difficult to reach their full potential. As a fundamental component of the education system, educators are crucial in guiding students not only academically but also in shaping their personality and character. Education aims not only to produce individuals who excel intellectually but also to prepare them to be good, virtuous people with noble character. According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, educators are defined as qualified educational personnel, such as lecturers, counselors, learning facilitators, tutors, and facilitators, who actively participate in the delivery of education (UU No. 20, 2003, Chapter I, Article 1, Point 6). In this context, educators are expected not only to teach knowledge but also to instill the moral values necessary for students to live harmoniously in society.

The role of an educator is noble and full of rewards. Not only do they transmit knowledge, but they also play a part in embedding ethical and moral values in students. An educator is expected to have not only the skills to teach (Ahliyyah li Al Ta'lim) but also to provide a good example in all aspects of life. The ethics of educators is the knowledge that distinguishes good and bad, and it encompasses what an educator should do in educating their students (Al-Fat, Masan, dkk, 2002). A teacher who possesses noble morals will become a good role model for students, thereby positively influencing their character. In this regard, educator ethics is more than just a set of rules; it is an integral part of the quality of a teacher that must be applied in everyday life. Therefore, an educator who is devout, humble, kind, forgiving, and authoritative will more easily earn respect and affection from their students, which will ultimately have a positive impact on the outcomes of education received by the students.

The 21st-century education system presents significant new challenges for educators (MY et al., 2025). The rapid development of information and communication technology has changed almost every

aspect of life, including education. With technology, students now have easy and quick access to various kinds of information, but this also means that educators must be more creative and adaptive in using technology to support the learning process. Furthermore, 21st-century education emphasizes the importance of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication—skills that students need to succeed in an ever-evolving world (Suyanto, 2014). Educators are therefore expected not only to impart knowledge but also to prepare students to face global challenges with relevant skills. In this sense, it is important for educators to not only rely on traditional teaching methods but also to introduce modern technologies and approaches that can enhance the quality of education.

However, even though technology plays an important role in 21st-century education, the moral and ethical values taught by educators must not be overlooked. This is where Islamic teachings about education become very relevant. Islam teaches that an educator's role is not just to teach knowledge, but also to have good character and be a good example for their students. These teachings are clearly outlined in the Quran and Hadith, which emphasize the importance of kindness, patience, and exemplary behavior in teaching (Mas'ud & Makyah, 2006). Prophet Muhammad SAW, in his Hadith, always taught that an educator should not only provide knowledge but also pay attention to the moral and ethical development of students. Therefore, educators in Islamic tradition are expected not only to master the subject matter but also to serve as good role models in their everyday behavior. This shows that education in Islam is not only focused on intellectual achievement but also on the development of noble character (Ali et al., 2025).

In the context of 21st-century education, the Hadith about educators provides very relevant guidelines. These Hadiths offer examples of how an educator should behave toward students, both in terms of teaching and in everyday social interactions. For example, Prophet Muhammad SAW taught that an educator should possess qualities such as patience, compassion, and not be quick to anger. He also emphasized the importance of setting a good example and motivating students positively. An educator who embodies these qualities will be able to guide students with kindness, ensuring that students feel valued and motivated to learn (Al-Mawardi, 1999). This good example that will not only influence the academic development of students but also their character as individuals with noble ethics. With the development of technology and the increasing demands of 21st-century education, the role of educators has become more complex. 21st-century education requires educators who are not only capable of transferring knowledge but also of shaping students' characters to prepare them for global challenges. Therefore, the relevance of Hadith about educators in 21st-century education is significant. Islamic teachings about educators, which prioritize noble character, exemplary behavior, kindness, and patience, can serve as an essential guide for educators in this modern era. By following these teachings, educators can guide students more effectively, not only in academic fields but also in the formation of good character, preparing them to become successful and responsible individuals in society.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. The Character of Educators According to Hadith

An educator is someone responsible for teaching and influencing others to reach a higher level of humanism. Academically, an educator is a member of society who devotes themselves to supporting the implementation of education and is qualified as a teacher, counselor, facilitator, tutor, or other roles specific to their expertise (Helmawati, 2017). In terms of etymology, the word “educator” comes from the root word *didik*, which means to nurture, train, and provide instruction, aiming to develop knowledge, manners, and morals. The prefix *pe-* forms *pendidik*, meaning one who educates. In English, an educator is referred to as an educator, while in Arabic, terms like *muallim*, *murabbi*, *muaddib*, *mursyid*, and *ustadz* are used, each with varying emphases. The term *murabbi*, derived from *raba* (to grow), signifies an educator who fosters the growth and development of their students (Manzur, 1990).

In general, an educator is responsible for nurturing the intellectual, emotional, and social development of students. In the context of Islamic education, an educator aims to facilitate the development of all aspects of a student's potential in alignment with Islamic values. In Indonesia, the term guru (teacher) is used interchangeably with pendidik, signifying the same role. Mudarris, which is derived from darrasa (to teach), refers to an educator responsible for shaping the character and knowledge of students, facilitating transformative learning that results in behavioral changes (Yusuf, 2013). Therefore, an educator is someone who influences the development of a student's character, but this responsibility requires meeting certain criteria and qualifications to be recognized as an educator (Helmawati, 2017). An educator is expected to serve as a role model for their students, which is why they must possess positive characteristics. The personal qualities of an educator must exceed those of their students since their role is to guide and nurture the students to become righteous individuals who fear Allah SWT. Achieving this goal would be difficult if the educator did not exemplify good character. In Islam, educators are required to have noble traits that align with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The following sections highlight some of these key traits.

a. Noble Intentions in Teaching

The intention behind any action plays a significant role in determining its value. A good deed is only valuable when performed with sincerity and the aim of pleasing Allah SWT. The importance of sincere intentions in education is emphasized in the following hadith:

"Indeed, actions are judged by their intentions. Whoever migrates for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, his migration will be for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. But whoever migrates for the sake of worldly benefits or to marry a woman, his migration will be for what he intended" (H.R. Al Bukhari and Muslim).

This hadith underscores that teaching should be done with the intention to please Allah, and educators should instill this principle of sincerity in their students. Teaching should not be done for recognition, praise, or other worldly gains. The educator's sincerity in their actions can motivate students to act with the same purity in their studies and personal lives (Yusuf, 2013).

b. Compassion

Compassion is an inherent trait bestowed by Allah on all living beings. It refers to a deep sense of empathy and kindness, motivating individuals to perform acts of goodness, forgive, and act justly. A teacher should treat their students with the same compassion that parents show their children. This is reflected in the following hadith. Abu Sulaiman Malik bin Huwairits said,

"We, a group of young men, stayed with the Prophet for twenty nights. He noticed that we were longing for our families, and he inquired about our situation. He was gentle-hearted and compassionate, advising us to pray as he prayed, and to appoint one of us to lead the prayer." (H.R. Al Bukhari).

This hadith shows that the Prophet Muhammad SAW was extremely compassionate and gentle with his companions. In the context of education, an educator must display affection and kindness toward their students. A harsh educator may cause students to become resentful, which will hinder their development (Hasbiyallah & Moh. Sulhan, 2015).

c. Parental Care in Education

An educator should view their students as their own children, providing them with the same care, attention, and guidance. The Prophet Muhammad SAW exemplified this in his interactions with his companions, often taking a parental role in guiding them. He emphasized that an educator must love their

students and be concerned for their well-being, just as a parent is concerned for their children. The Prophet SAW said, *"Indeed, I am like a father to you"* (H.R. Abu Hurairah). This statement reflects the deep bond between educators and students, where educators take on the responsibility of guiding, teaching, and nurturing their students with the same care that a parent shows their child. This relationship is crucial for fostering a positive learning environment where students feel safe, loved, and motivated to learn (Hasbiyallah & Moh. Sulhan, 2015).

d. Humility and Gentleness

An educator must approach their students with humility and gentleness, as these qualities are essential in building a trusting and respectful relationship. Allah SWT commands humility in His message, and the Prophet Muhammad SAW exemplified this in his treatment of others. The following hadith highlights the importance of humility: *"Indeed, Allah has revealed to me that you should adopt humility so that no one boasts over another"* (H.R. Muslim). The Prophet's guidance emphasizes that an educator must remain humble in the presence of their students, avoiding arrogance or superiority. A humble educator is approachable and creates a positive atmosphere where students feel valued and respected (Imam Nawawi, 2023).

e. Moderation/Flexibility in Teaching

Flexibility is another important trait that an educator must possess. The Prophet Muhammad SAW was known for his ability to tailor his approach to the needs of his students. He would instruct his companions according to their individual abilities and understanding. He said, *"When I command you to do something, do it as much as you are able"* (H.R. Al Bukhari). This hadith emphasizes the importance of accommodating the diverse abilities of students. An educator must recognize that not all students are the same and should adjust their teaching methods to fit the capabilities of each student (Anwar, 2023).

f. The Role of Educators in the Teaching Process

Teaching is not just about imparting knowledge, but also about guiding, motivating, and facilitating the growth of students. An educator's role encompasses various duties, including encouraging, praising, correcting, and setting examples for students to follow. According to Samsul Nizar, education involves a continuous process of teaching, motivating, and facilitating (Nizar, 2023). This holistic view of education highlights that educators must be proactive in addressing the needs of students and adapting their approach accordingly. In conclusion, the character traits of educators as outlined in the teachings of Islam emphasize the importance of sincerity, compassion, humility, flexibility, and parental care in the educational process. These traits are essential for educators who aim to not only impart knowledge but also foster the moral and spiritual development of their students. By embodying these qualities, educators can guide students to become individuals who are not only academically proficient but also ethically responsible and compassionate members of society.

2.2. The Concept of 21st Century Learning

a. The Concept of 21st Century Learning

The 21st century is characterized by rapid advancements in science, technology, and globalization. With the increasing complexity and scope of these advancements, it has become essential for educators to possess strong character traits. A society that is not prepared for these changes is likely to fall behind in the face of such rapid development. The 21st century is often referred to as an age that demands high-quality human resources. Therefore, educational institutions must develop the potential of their students in ways that distinguish them from others, ensuring they produce outstanding outcomes (Izzan & Saehudin, 2016). In the context of education, the 21st century presents significant challenges and opportunities. As the world continues to evolve, educators must prove that changes in time and technological advancements are not obstacles but opportunities to enhance students' potential. The education system of this era demands

innovations in teaching practices to meet the increasing global demand for skilled and capable human resources (Majid et al., 2006). This era, marked by the global knowledge economy, industrial revolutions, and technological advancements, necessitates a significant shift in educational strategies. The challenge lies in preparing students to thrive in a world that is ever-changing and uncertain (Wijaya et al., 2016).

21st-century education is built on a foundation of knowledge, with an emphasis on information technology, global connectivity, and industrial advancements like the 4.0 revolution. With rapid changes in sectors such as technology, communication, and economics, there is both potential and risk. The ability to adapt and utilize these changes in a systematic and structured way is essential. One example of this rapid change is the rise of social media, which has transformed how information is shared and consumed. In this era, education needs to be adaptable, with a focus on problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Rosnaeni, 2021). 21st-century learning emphasizes the importance of technology in the classroom. This shift has led to the development of new approaches, such as the incorporation of assessments and evaluations based on technological advancements (Hasibuan & Prastowo, 2019). Learning approaches in this era focus on transitioning from teacher-centered to student-centered methods, encouraging students to develop essential skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. The 21st-century learning model is built around the 4C framework:

- 1) **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** Critical thinking is a structured process used in mental activities such as decision-making, analyzing assumptions, and conducting research. It involves evaluating personal and others' opinions systematically. This skill allows students to analyze problems deeply and develop solutions for both individual and societal challenges.
- 2) **Creativity and Innovation:** Creativity is the ability to think outside the box, unbounded by conventional rules. It enables students to approach problems from various perspectives. Students are encouraged to present their ideas openly and receive feedback, which helps expand their views and fosters innovation in problem-solving.
- 3) **Collaboration:** Collaboration involves working with others to achieve shared goals. In the learning environment, it teaches students are taught to collaborate with peers, develop empathy, and accept differing opinions. Collaborative learning enhances students' ability to adapt to various situations and set high targets both as individuals and within teams.
- 4) **Communication:** Communication is the ability to express ideas clearly and effectively. This skill encompasses the ability to speak, write, and use multimedia tools to convey messages to an audience. Students are encouraged to practice communication in diverse formats, whether orally, in writing, or through multimedia, and are given time to develop these skills (Hasibuan & Prastowo, 2019).

b. Characteristics of 21st Century Teachers

- 1) **Life-Long Learner:** Teachers must continually upgrade their knowledge by reading and engaging in discussions with other educators or experts. As times change, teachers must remain up-to-date to meet the evolving needs of their students (Sudarisman, 2015).
- 2) **Creative and Innovative:** Teachers are expected to foster creativity in their students by utilizing various teaching resources and methods. Creativity from teachers leads to creativity in students, enabling them to think outside the box.
- 3) **Technologically Savvy:** In 21st-century classrooms, technology is no longer an optional addition but a necessary tool. Blended learning, combining traditional face-to-face instruction with digital and online media, is a hallmark of 21st-century education (Wijaya et al., 2016).
- 4) **Reflective:** Reflective teachers assess the outcomes of their teaching methods and adapt accordingly. They are aware of when their strategies are ineffective and are open to making improvements based on student needs (Sudarisman, 2015).

- 5) Collaborative: Collaboration is a core principle of 21st-century learning. Teachers collaborate with students in the learning process and actively engage with parents to monitor student development.
- 6) Student-Centered Approach: This approach shifts the focus from teacher-led instruction to student-led learning, where the teacher acts as a facilitator. In this model, traditional lecture-based teaching becomes less common, and more emphasis is placed on interactive communication and collaborative learning.
- 7) Differentiated Approach: Teachers design lessons based on students' learning styles and capabilities. Assessment is continuous, and teachers adjust their methods to accommodate diverse student needs, ensuring a supportive and safe learning environment (Sudarisman, 2015).

c. Models of 21st Century Learning

In 21st-century learning, the role of the teacher is pivotal in implementing approaches like STEM education. Teachers need to be creative and innovative in their teaching methods. Several learning models are gaining popularity in modern classrooms:

- 1) Student-Centered Learning: This approach tailors learning to the interests and abilities of students. Teachers take on the role of facilitators, guiding students based on their individual needs and preferences.
- 2) Discovery Learning: This method encourages students to independently discover knowledge. It fosters self-learning by using available resources to explore, investigate, and uncover new concepts, which in turn stimulates critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- 3) Flipped Classroom: The flipped classroom model allows students to access learning materials at home before class, enabling classroom time to focus on discussions, problem-solving, and collaboration.
- 4) Project-Based Learning: This approach immerses students in real-world projects, encouraging creativity and exploration. Students engage in projects that require critical thinking and innovative solutions.
- 5) Collaborative Learning: Reflecting the values of Industry 4.0, collaborative learning prepares students to work effectively in teams, enhancing communication and social relationships among students.
- 6) Blended Learning: By combining online and face-to-face instruction, blended learning addresses the limitations of traditional classroom settings, enabling a more flexible and effective approach to learning (Anwar, 2023).

These models reflect the shift toward an active, student-centered, and collaborative approach to education in the 21st century. Teachers are encouraged to embrace flexibility, creativity, and the use of technology to engage students in meaningful learning experiences that prepare them for a rapidly changing world.

2.3. Relevance of Hadith on Teachers with 21st Century Education

The relevance between the characteristics of modern educators and those described in the Hadith lies in the fundamental principles that emphasize noble character, compassion, and responsibility toward students. The core values of Islam align closely with the qualities required of educators in the 21st century, making these teachings highly relevant to the current educational landscape.

a. Lifelong Learner and Noble Intentions in Teaching

Both concepts require educators to update their knowledge and teach with sincere intentions continually. In Islam, actions are judged by the intentions behind them, and a teacher must continuously seek

to improve themselves and their teaching methods. This aligns with the concept of the life-long learner in modern education, where educators must engage in ongoing learning to improve their practices and meet the evolving needs of their students. Similarly, in Islam, educators must perform their duties with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure, ensuring that their efforts are guided by sincerity and a desire to fulfill their educational responsibilities in accordance with divine principles (Izzan & Saehudin, 2016). The act of teaching, when done with the right intentions, is seen as a form of worship, which provides both spiritual and professional growth.

b. Creativity and Innovation, and Compassion

Modern educators are required to be creative and innovative, developing engaging and appropriate teaching methods to meet students' needs. This creativity is fundamental to creating a learning environment where students can thrive and reach their full potential. The concept of compassion in Islam mirrors this requirement, as compassion is the foundation for an educator to give their best to their students. Islamic teachings emphasize that an educator should be kind and nurturing, understanding the needs of their students while adopting innovative approaches to make learning enjoyable and effective. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "The best of you are those who are best to their wives and families," which also extends to how educators should treat their students with tenderness and care (Hasbiyallah & Sulhan, 2015). Creativity, therefore, is not just about coming up with new ideas, but also about making sure those ideas benefit the students in a compassionate and meaningful way.

c. Optimizing Technology and Parental-like Care

In the 21st century, technology plays an essential role in supporting the learning process, and educators are tasked with using the best available tools to facilitate the growth of their students. Similarly, in Islam, educators are seen as parental figures to their students, with the responsibility to guide them according to their needs and abilities. Just as parents provide nurturing care to their children, educators must utilize modern tools and methods to ensure that students are developing their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual capacities in a balanced manner (Majid et al., 2006). The role of the teacher, in this case, is not just to deliver content but also to ensure that students receive guidance tailored to their individual potential, much like a parent guiding their child through life.

d. Reflective and Humble with Gentle Conduct

Reflective teachers consistently evaluate and adjust their teaching strategies to ensure they are meeting the needs of their students. This aligns with the Islamic principle of humility, where educators are required to act with gentleness and introspection. The Prophet Muhammad SAW taught humility and gentleness as essential virtues for educators. In the Hadith, it is stated, "The best among you are those who are best in their behavior toward others" (Al-Mawardi, 1999). The reflective teacher who is willing to introspect and adapt to the needs of their students embodies the values of humility and patience that are crucial in Islamic teaching. Such an educator is always open to learning and adjusting, ensuring their teaching methods are in tune with the diverse needs of their students.

e. Collaborative and Moderate/Flexible in Teaching

Collaboration is a fundamental characteristic of 21st-century education, where teachers work together with students and parents to create an effective learning environment (MY, 2024). This aligns with the Islamic principle of moderation and flexibility in teaching. The Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized the importance of balance and adaptation in dealing with others. He encouraged his companions to be flexible and understanding in their approach to education, ensuring that each person's unique abilities and circumstances are taken into account. Similarly, modern teachers are encouraged to collaborate, not just within the classroom, but also with parents and other stakeholders to foster a supportive educational ecosystem (Rosnaeni, 2021). This collaboration enhances the learning experience, ensuring that students

receive the support they need from all sides and that teachers are able to develop their practices in response to feedback and mutual understanding.

f. Student-Centered Approach and Differentiated Instruction in Teaching

The student-centered approach in modern education places the student at the heart of the learning process, with the teacher acting as a facilitator rather than a direct source of knowledge. This approach emphasizes the active involvement of students in their learning, where they take responsibility for their educational journey. This concept is closely aligned with the Islamic view of the educator's role. In Islam, the educator's task is not only to teach, but also to inspire and guide students in a way that allows them to maximize their potential. The teacher should create an environment where students can develop their intellectual and spiritual capacities while also learning moral and ethical values (Hasbiyallah & Sulhan, 2015). The task of the educator, therefore, is not merely to impart knowledge but to cultivate the student's ability to think critically, engage with new ideas, and grow into well-rounded individuals. The principles of modern education and the characteristics of an educator as outlined in the Hadith are deeply interconnected. Both emphasize the importance of nurturing not only the intellectual capabilities of students but also their moral and emotional development. The guidance provided in the Hadith regarding qualities such as compassion, humility, creativity, and responsibility directly mirrors the qualities required of educators in the 21st century. By embodying these principles, educators can create a learning environment that fosters growth, innovation, and holistic development for their students.

III. Conclusion

Conclusion components are essential in crafting a strong and impactful conclusion for an academic research paper. The conclusion serves as the final opportunity to reiterate the significance of the study, summarize the key findings, and highlight the larger implications of the research. It provides a chance to reflect on how the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge, offering a concise summary of the main arguments and results. The theoretical implications of the study should be addressed by clarifying how the findings either support, challenge, or extend current theories. This section ties together the theoretical frameworks used in the study and opens doors for further exploration in the field. In addition to the theoretical contributions, the conclusion must also address the managerial implications of the research. This part emphasizes how the findings can be applied in real-world contexts, particularly in practical settings such as education, business, or public policy. By offering actionable recommendations based on the research, the conclusion provides value for practitioners or policymakers, guiding their decision-making and strategies. Ultimately, a well-rounded conclusion reinforces the key takeaways of the research while suggesting directions for future studies. It serves as a reflective space for both the researcher and the reader, inviting further discussion and inquiry. The conclusion ensures that the research has a lasting impact and remains relevant for both academic and practical applications.

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