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Islamic education narratives from the Turkistan Plain: Discovering the heritage of al-Zarnuji's thoughts on Islamic professional teachers

Dian Namora*, Amril, Zamsiswaya, Abdelaziz Ibrahim Mounadil, Muhammad Dhiya'ul Hafidh bin Fatah Yasin, Hamzah, Andi Nurhaliza

*Corresponding author:
Dian Namora
Department of Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia

E-mail:
diannamora@fis.uir.ac.id

Abstract: This research aims to what al-Zarnuji thought about professional madrasa teachers on the development of contemporary Islamic education. This research uses concept analysis research, with data sources a book by al-Zarnuji entitled "*ta'lim al-muta'allim*", and analyzed using content analysis. The result show that Islamic professional teachers according to al-Zarnuji are teachers who have *al-a'lam* competence (having extensive knowledge), *al-awra'* (having a careful attitude in avoiding anything that is doubtful), and *al-asann* competence (more mature). These three competencies are very relevant for the professional development of today's Islamic and madrasah teachers so that they are professional in carrying out their profession in the future. Professional Islamic teachers must have extensive knowledge, or in other words, teachers must have extensive knowledge so that students can be used as scientific references. These requirements are an elaboration of personal competence/personality, where personal competence is a requirement given by the government to teachers in Indonesia.

Keywords: al-Zarnuji, Islamic professional teacher, teacher competence, teaching and learning, teacher professionalism.

About Author
Dian Namora, Department of Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia; Amril, Department of Islamic Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia; Zamsiswaya, Department of Islamic Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia; Abdelaziz Ibrahim Mounadil, Department of Modern Literature, Communication and Discourse Analysis, Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Kingdom of Morocco. Muhammad Dhiya'ul Hafidh bin Fatah Yasin, Department of Islamic Studies, Universiti Islam Antarbangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia. Hamzah, Department of Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia. Andi Nurhaliza, Department of Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia.

1. Introduction

Research on Islamic professional madrasa teachers is very urgent to be carried out because it is the key to success in developing future professions (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Asterhan, & Lefstein, 2024). Islamic professional madrasa teachers are seen as executors of divine responsibilities and important role models in the educational process (Sali & Ancho, 2021; Tambak et al. 2023; Ostinelli, & Crescentini, 2024; Richter, & Richter, 2024). They are expected to be good role models for their students and contribute to the

formation of a moral and virtuous generation and must be able to filter all existing influences so that the honor and authority of teachers remain intact and perfect in the eyes of society (Koniaieva, 2021; Mumtaazah & Qamariah, 2024). The literature building shows that professional Islamic madrasa teachers have a very important role in the Islamic education system (Tambak et al. 2022; Maryani et al. 2025), especially in forming students who are not only intellectually intelligent (Whitty, 2024), but also have noble morals, strong faith, and commitment to Islamic values (Misana, Njiku, & Mwaihola, 2024; Maryani et al. 2025; Tambak et al. 2023). As educators in religious-based educational institutions, madrasa teachers are required to be professional figures, both in mastering knowledge and in applying Islamic values in learning (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Maryani et al. 2025; Faiza, Supriyanto, & Sunandar, 2024). The professionalism of madrasa teachers is increasingly felt in this modern era, where educational challenges are increasingly complex (Tambak et al. 2021; Segal, 2024; Gong, & Gao, 2024). The phenomenon of moral degradation, the increasing influence of foreign cultures that conflict with Islamic values, as well as technological advances and globalization require madrasa teachers to have higher competence (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2020; Hasanah, Nonitasari, & Habibah, 2020; Tambak et al. 2023). Professional Islamic madrasa teachers are expected to be able to integrate general knowledge with Islamic values, so that they can give birth to a generation that is able to compete in the global world without losing its Islamic identity (Tambak et al. 2023; Posangi, 2024; Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2021).

So far, there have been several studies examining professional Islamic teachers highlighting various aspects that play a role in improving the quality of Islamic religious education (Tambak et al. 2023; Posangi, 2024; Hasanah, Nonitasari, & Habibah, 2020). Research into the professional competence of Islamic religious education teachers has a significant impact on improving students' critical thinking abilities (Maryani et al. 2025; Faiza, Supriyanto, & Sunandar, 2024; Setiawati & Tambak, 2024). However, it was found that some Islamic education teachers had not fully mastered the material (Tambak et al. 2021; Hasanah, Nonitasari, & Habibah, 2020), were less creative in developing learning materials (Faiza, Supriyanto, & Sunandar, 2024), and rarely related Islamic regilious education material to other sciences (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Maryani et al. 2025). Limitations in the use of learning media are also an obstacle that needs to be overcome (Asterhan, & Lefstein, 2024; Tambak et al. 2023).

Other research examines the concept of professional teachers from the perspective of the Qur'an and its relevance to Law no. 14 of 2005. It is emphasized that professional teachers must be able to integrate mastery of technology with the instillation of Islamic moral and ethical values in students, so that they can develop critical and innovative thinking skills while still adhering to Islamic principles (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Maryani et al. 2025; Coppe et al. 2024). Other research compares the views of Imam Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka regarding the concept of professional teachers. These two figures emphasized the importance of teachers who have competence in their field, have noble character, and are able to be role models for students. They also highlighted the role of teachers in shaping students' character and morals in accordance with Islamic values (Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025; Rosidah, Nurhakim, & Khozin, 2024; Sukenti & Tambak, 2023). Teachers in Islam hold a professional role with a dual mission, namely religious and scientific missions (Tambak et al. 2023; Maryani et al. 2025). Requirements for teacher professionalism as educators in Islam include physical and spiritual health, piety, extensive knowledge, justice, authority, sincerity, *rabbani* goals, the ability to plan and carry out educational evaluations, as well as mastery of the field in which they are engaged (Tambak et al. 2023; Ahadi et al. 2024; Hasanah, Nonitasari, & Habibah, 2020). Subsequent research proved that there is a significant influence between teacher professional competence on student learning achievement (Maryani et al. 2025; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025). Professional teachers are able to increase student motivation and learning outcomes, especially in Islamic religious education subjects (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Coppe et al. 2024).

The research emphasizes the importance of increasing the professional competence of Islamic religious education teachers in various aspects, including mastery of material, creativity in learning, technology integration, and instilling Islamic values (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Maryani et al. 2025; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025. This aims to improve the quality of Islamic education and form a generation with noble character and broad knowledge (Tambak et al. 2023; Ahadi et al. 2024; Hasanah, Nonitasari, & Habibah, 2020). However, in the empirical context there are various problems that surround professional madrasa teachers. One factor in the low quality of education in Indonesia is the weakness of teachers in exploring students' potential. Educators often

impose their will without ever paying attention to the needs, interests and talents of their students. Education should pay attention to children's needs, not force something that makes children less comfortable in studying. A good educational process is to provide opportunities for children to be creative (Tambak et al. 2023; Ahadi et al. 2024; Hasanah, Nonitasari, & Habibah, 2020; Asterhan, & Lefstein, 2024). This must be done because basically children's thinking styles cannot be directed. Apart from the lack of creativity of educators in guiding students, a centralized curriculum makes the portrait of education increasingly blurry. The curriculum is only based on government knowledge without paying attention to community needs. Moreover, education is unable to produce creative graduates (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Maryani et al. 2025; Faiza, Supriyanto, & Sunandar, 2024).

Apart from that, government policies regarding teacher certification and professional competency standards also require Islamic teachers to continue to improve their abilities. Islamic professional teachers must fulfill various competencies, namely pedagogical, professional, social and personality competencies, while remaining based on Islamic principles (Tambak et al. 2023; Ahadi et al. 2024; Maryani et al. 2025). However, in reality, there are still many teachers who face obstacles in meeting these standards, both in terms of mastery of teaching materials, learning methods based on Islamic values, and the integration of technology in learning. The situation of teachers in Indonesia is also very worrying, most teachers do not have sufficient professionalism to carry out their duties as stated in Article 39 of Law No. 20 of 2003, namely planning learning, implementing learning, assessing learning outcomes, providing guidance, conducting training, conducting research and providing service (Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2023). Currently, the teaching profession is still widely questioned by the general public, both among education experts and the public, even parents and guardians of students always ridicule and accuse teachers of being incompetent, unqualified, etc. when their sons and daughters cannot solve the problems, they face themselves or their abilities. not according to parents' expectations (Tambak et al. 2023; Ahadi et al. 2024; Ding et al. 2024; Tambak et al. 2021).

So, to solve this problem, it is very relevant to actualize al-Zarnuji's thoughts in the midst of developments in the technological era (Mufid, & Tamam, 2024). al-Zarnuji's concept of education emphasizes moral, intellectual, spiritual and social development that can be applied to the teaching of Islamic education by encouraging critical thinking and active participation of students (Razali & Mamat, 2024). This research was conducted to analyze the concept of teacher professionalism from al-Zarnuji's perspective, the challenges teachers face in implementing it, as well as efforts that can be made to improve the competence of Islamic teachers so that they can produce a superior generation who are faithful and devout. This research focuses on; what al-Zarnuji thinks about professional madrasa teachers on the development of contemporary Islamic education. Thus, it is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of Islamic teacher professionalism in accordance with the demands of the times and Islamic values.

2. Literature review

Professional teachers are teachers who have various competencies and implement them in learning and teaching activities. Teacher competency refers more to the teacher's ability to teach and educate so as to produce changes in students' learning behavior, not only in terms of knowledge but in terms of social personality and teacher professionalism (Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2023). Competence can also be defined as the ability to carry out a task, integrating knowledge, skills, attitudes and personality values based on experience and learning. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers' states that teachers are required to have academic qualifications, competencies, educational certificates, be physically and spiritually healthy, and have the ability to realize national education goals (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2023; Coppe et al. 2024). According to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers, competency is a set of knowledge, skills and behavior that must be possessed, internalized, mastered and actualized by a teacher in carrying out his professional duties (Triansyah et al. 2023; Tambak et al. 2023).

Teacher competency is mastery of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which are reflected in habits of thinking and acting in carrying out the profession as a teacher. Competence is a requirement

that teachers must have in order to be able to carry out their duties professionally so as to achieve learning goals effectively and efficiently. According to Tambak et al (2023), there are six aspects contained in the concept of competency, namely knowledge, understanding, abilities, values, attitudes and interests. Teachers as people who have the authority to teach and educate students must have good qualifications and competencies so that efforts to condition the learning environment can change student behavior for the better effectively and efficiently. Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, article 10 paragraph 1 states that "Teacher Competencies as referred to in article 8 include Pedagogical Competencies, Personal Competencies, Social Competencies and Professional Competencies obtained through professional education" (Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2023; Triansyah et al. 2023; Tambak et al. 2023; Mahfud et al., 2023).

3. Method

The research method used to analyze the objectives of this research is qualitative research with a concept analysis approach. Concept analysis research is a strategy used to research concepts based on their semantic structure. Although there are several methods for conducting concept analysis, all of them aim to determine the defining attributes or characteristics of the concept being studied (Moraes & De Lima, 2012). The research data source used was a book by al-Zarnuji entitled *ta'lim al-muta'allim* (al-Zarnūjī, 1986). Meanwhile, the data analysis used is content analysis or what is called content analysis, namely an attempt to understand the meaning in the context of the text (Zavyalova, 2022). The steps taken in analyzing the data used six stages of content analysis, namely: unitizing, sampling, recording, reducing, abductively inferring, narrating. Unitizing, the researcher identifies and determines the relevant analysis of the text relating to al-Zarnuji's thoughts on Islamic professional teachers. This process involves an in-depth study of primary and secondary texts to extract meaningful units, whether in the form of sentences, paragraphs, or specific themes related to the conception of Islamic professional teachers. At the sampling stage, researchers select representative texts that reflect the breadth and depth of al-Zarnuji's thought. This sampling process is based on predetermined criteria to ensure the inclusion of various dimensions and perspectives in al-Zarnuji's intellectual legacy. The recording stage implements a structured and systematic recording system for the data that has been identified. This recording does not only focus on textual content, but also considers the historical and social context surrounding al-Zarnuji's thought. In the reduction stage, the researcher conducts a process of simplifying and categorizing data through the identification of patterns and main themes. This process involves critical evaluation of data relevance and elimination of non-essential information, resulting in a coherent thematic structure regarding the conception of professional teachers in al-Zarnuji's thought. The abductively inferring stage applies an abductive reasoning approach to analyze and interpret the research findings. This process enabled the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the applicability of al-Zarnuji's thought in the context of contemporary Islamic education. The narrating stage produces a comprehensive synthesis that articulates al-Zarnuji's significant contribution to the development of the concept of professional teachers in Islamic education. This narrative not only describes the essence of al-Zarnuji's thought, but also explores its relevance to the challenges and needs of contemporary Islamic education. Through the implementation of this methodological framework, the research succeeded in revealing the complexity and depth of al-Zarnuji's thoughts on teacher professionalism in Islamic education. The resulting findings contribute significantly to the development of an understanding of the concept of professional teachers in the context of contemporary Islamic education, as well as offering a new perspective in efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education.

Unitizing, namely taking data in the form of the work of al-Zarnuji, *ta'lim al-muta'allim*. Sampling is simplifying research by limiting data analysis so that data is collected that has the same theme, namely the thoughts of al-Zarnuji, a professional Islamic teacher. Recording is the recording of all data found and needed in this research, namely those relating to al-Zarnuji's thoughts about professional Islamic teachers. Reducing is simplifying data so that it can provide clarity and efficiency of the data obtained. Abductively inferring, namely analyzing the data more deeply to find meaning in the data that can connect

the meaning of the text with the research conclusions. Narrating is the interpretation of research data to answer the research formulation that has been made.

4. Result

Basically, the provisions regarding the competence of educators are not discussed explicitly by al-Zarnuji in the book *ta'lim al-muta'allim*, but to be able to understand the figure of an educator according to him, it can be understood from the advice recommended for students of science in choosing teachers. Educator competency according to al-Zarnuji (2007) can be understood from the characteristics outlined in his statement written as follows:

<div dir="rtl">وأمّا اختيار الأستاذ فينبغي أن يختار الأعلم والأوراع والأسن</div>

"And as for choosing a teacher, you should choose one who is al-a'lam (knowledgeable), al-awra' (the most pious) and the al-asann (the eldest)."

This statement became a form of confirmation for al-Zarnuji when Imam Abu Hanifah, in choosing his teacher, namely Shaikh Hammad, he chose an educator who was known for his scientific seniority and age, was mature, had a noble attitude, was dignified, kind, and had high patience (al-Zarnuji, 2007). From this sentence, it can be said that the educational competencies proposed by al-Zarnuji can be elaborated as follows:

4.1. *Al-A'lam* Competence

Al-A'lam (knowledgeable) competence has the advantage of knowledge, which means mastering knowledge, a pious educator in the current educational context can be interpreted as a requirement for intellectual (academic) intelligence (Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025; Muntachobat, 2019; Mufid, & Tamam, 2024), Sheikh Ibrahim bin Isma'il provides an explanation of the word *a'lam* which is meant by al Zarnuji, namely:

<div dir="rtl">(الأعلم) أي الأستاذ الذي له زيادة علم</div>

Al-a'lam (knowledgeable) means is someone who is more pious, namely a teacher whose knowledge is always increasing (Ismail, 2008).

The word *'alim* can also be equated with *ulul al-albab* (people who think)*, ulul an-nuha* (people who are sane, clean, have morals and spiritual values)*, al-mudzakki* (individuals who are called to purify their possessions and cleanse their souls)*,* and *al-mudzakkir* (people who give warnings). By referring to the meaning contained in these words, to be an educator you must have high intellectual intelligence so that you are able to grasp the teaching messages, wisdom and guidance from all forms of God's creation (al-Zarnuji, 2007; Razali, & Mamat, 2024). And has strong inner potential so that he can direct the results of his work and intelligence to be devoted to God. Apart from that, teachers must also be able to rid students of all despicable actions and morals by fostering, nurturing, directing and guiding, as well as providing knowledge as well as experience and skills (Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025; Muntachobat, 2019; Mufid, & Tamam, 2024).

So, the figure of educator that al-Zarnuji (2007) wants is an educator who is not only pious or clever, but also more pious and whose knowledge is always increasing. So, a teacher must always increase his knowledge. If the teacher's knowledge does not increase, then teaching will not work well. So, the teaching and learning process becomes less than optimal. Don't let the teacher's knowledge be equal to the students, let alone lower than the students. This can undermine the teacher's authority or image. When the image of an educator has fallen, students will underestimate him, as a result they will not pay attention to the educator when the teacher gives information or delivers material (Habsy et al 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025).

4.2. *Al-Awra' Competence*

Al-awra' (the most pious) competence is the ability to protect oneself from prohibited actions/behaviors. *Al-awra'* as a moral prerequisite and piety as a requirement for exemplary behavior in teachers who will be used as a mirror and imitated by their students, in the current educational context can be interpreted as a requirement for spiritual intelligence (al-Zarnuji, 2007). Regarding educators, Ismail (2008) said that a *wara'* educator means an educator who can stay away from useless conversations, joking around, and wasting his life or time, stay away from backbiting (saying bad things about other people) and associates with people who talking a lot without producing results in conversation, gossiping, and empty talk.

Apart from that, a teacher must have special qualities in accordance with his dignity as a teacher, such as maintaining his composure when teaching. How beautiful and peaceful the society and school environment would be, if all teachers had the *wara'* characteristic, namely a careful attitude in terms of eating, dressing, speaking and acting because the consequences of this *wara'* attitude are not only for servants who relate to their God, but also towards other humans. Especially for teachers whose background is as educators and role models for students and the community (Razali, & Mamat, 2024; Sholikhuddin & Qomariyah, 2016; Habsy et al 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025). In this context, it is clear that requiring educators to be sane means how the moral dimension is prioritized for educators (Habsy et al 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025). This means that personality is important for teachers, because it is clear that educators are always related to their students. Because educators are role models who are very important in their growth, and educators are the first people after parents who influence the development of students' personalities (al-Zarnuji, 2007; Wicaksono, Mustofa, & Ali, 2024; Aziz et al. 2024).

4.3. *Al-Asann* Competence

Al-asann (the eldest): older in age means mature. More mature because they have received education for a longer time so they have more experience both theoretically and practically in the field (al-Zarnuji, 2007). By looking at the position of the educator and the conditions that must be met, of course it would be more appropriate as stated by al-Zarnuji (2007) that the educator should be someone who is older than his students. In a broader sense, the word old can be interpreted as not just being older in age, but as added, "old" can also mean someone who has a lot of experience in all things and in dealing with students (Miftahuddin, 2006). In his *syarah* (explanation), Ismail (2008), provides a little explanation regarding this, namely teachers who are getting older in age and maturity. This explanation may be appropriate, considering that the position of teachers is as educators, and they are responsible for children's development, and many other teacher duties are deferred to them (Herawati, & As'ari, 2023; Wicaksono, Mustofa, & Ali, 2024; Aziz et al. 2024; Namora, Amril & Tambak, 2023).

Al-asann is the basic reason for this is due to sufficient experience in this matter, so that educators know better about what is appropriate for students, and what is more in line with students' talents and potential abilities (Herawati, & As'ari, 2023; Manan et al. 2024). This suggests that the teacher is obliged to choose and really pay attention to the students, as when selecting applicants for their sons and daughters (al-Zarnuji, 2007). *Al-asann* also has the meaning of being more experienced because apart from maturity, teachers are also required to have a lot of experience. With a lot of experiences, he automatically has lessons in life. To create humans who have noble character and have high socialization, it is not enough to just transfer knowledge, but it is also necessary to learn about the experiences in this life (al-Zarnuji, 2007).

Another educational competency desired by al-Zarnuji (2007) is the function as a student partner in learning where the teacher is the guide and the student is the person being guided. From this function there are principles of cooperation and deliberation in learning activities. This statement about function can be understood from his advice for anyone who wants to seek knowledge, do not choose knowledge

based on his own considerations. But leave that to the teacher, because he already has experience in choosing knowledge, as well as having mastered knowledge that is good and suits their character and personality (Rozi, Sariman, & Khasanudin, 2022; Arif, 2022; Herawati, & As'ari, 2023; Habsy et al 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025).

However, the most important thing in this discussion is the statement of al-Zarnuji (2007) stated in the previous chapter, that in fact, a teacher who teaches a student even one letter in terms of religion, is punished as a father in religion. This opinion provides direction to the feelings (emotional level) and attitudes of educators in accordance with the parents' ideals for their children. This position must be realized by both parties, so that there is a balance in their rights and obligations which is reflected in their respective personal attitudes. This relationship shows closeness from a psychological perspective (Rozi, Sariman, & Khasanudin, 2022; Arif, 2022; Herawati, & As'ari, 2023; Habsy et al 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025).

In other literature, al-Zarnuji (2007) also provides advice to educators through his statement, namely:

<div dir="rtl">

وينبغي أن يكون صاحب العلم مشفقا ناصحا غري حاسد فالحسد يضر ولا ينفع

</div>

"Knowledgeable people should have compassion when giving advice, not mean evil or be jealous. Because envy is a dangerous trait and has no benefits."

al-Zarnuji (2007) prioritizes the competence of educators in terms of scientific qualifications, authority and age. A teacher must master science in the sense that he has pedagogical and professional competence. Educators must also be authoritative in the sense that a teacher must have social competence and also be experienced. al-Zarnuji (2007) places the position of educators as a special position, he even states as follows:

<div dir="rtl">

رَأَيْتُ اَحَقَّ الْحَقِّ حَقَّ الْمُعَلِّمِ # وَأَوْجَبَهُ حِفْظاً عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

</div>

I think that the truest truth is the truth of the person who teaches. And it is one that must be maintained by all Muslims.

<div dir="rtl">

لَقَدْ حَقَّ أَنْ يُهْدَى إِلَيْهِ كَرَامَةٌ # لِتَعْلِيْمِ حَرْفٍ وَاحِدٍ اَلْفُ دِرْهَمٍ

</div>

Teachers should always be given the reward of glory. And a thousand dirhams for teaching one letter.

5. Discussion

This section discusses the strategies reported from the research findings based on in the context of professional learning, al-Zarnuji emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning for teachers. This is reflected in the spirit of teachers who strive to continue learning and developing independently, in line with the learning framework (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2020) which emphasizes the importance of a holistic view of knowledge, as well as promoting intellectual, emotional and spiritual balance in education for teachers' professional development (Badri, 2022; Ahmad et al., 2025; Muhajir, Tambak & Sukenti, 2024)

al-Zarnuji (2007) requires teachers to have broad knowledge (*al-a'lam*), al-Zarnuji considers knowledge as a means for the progress and perfection of individuals and society both in this world and in the hereafter. This makes his concept of knowledge inseparable from Islamic ethical values. al-Zarnuji's contribution to knowledge lies in packaging and disseminating Islamic academic heritage, in particular, teaching and learning methodologies that are relevant for all levels of education (Huda et al., 2016). And in the UUGD this requirement is called personality competency, which means that teachers must have the knowledge to educate. Teachers must have extensive knowledge or in other words teachers must be smarter than their students, which is the main requirement for teachers (Tambak et al. 2023; Ostinelli, & Crescentini, 2024; Richter, & Richter, 2024). Whenever, wherever, and whatever educational model, this requirement is the most important requirement. al-Zarnuji (2007) also provides conditions for teachers to be more caring (*al-awra'*) and more mature (*al-asanna*). These

requirements are an elaboration of personal competence/personality, where personal competence is a requirement given by the government to teachers in Indonesia (Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Asterhan, & Lefstein, 2024; Misana, Njiku, & Mwaihola, 2024; Maryani et al. 2025; Tambak et al. 2023; Robiah et al., 2024).

If al-Zarnuji provides conditions for teachers to be older, more mature and more experienced (al-asanna), then the implementation of the law of teachers and lecturers (UUGD) states that teachers must have completed academic qualifications. Because, when a teacher has taken academic qualifications, the teacher automatically has a lot of experience, especially in the field of education. And again, in terms of age, the teacher is clearly older and more mature than the students (Misana, Njiku, & Mwaihola, 2024; Maryani et al. 2025; Tambak et al. 2023; Posangi, 2024; Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2021). And when the teacher is a more mature person, the teacher will be able to carry out his responsibilities professionally, or in other words the teacher will have professional competence (Posangi, 2024; Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2021; Maryani et al. 2025). Educator competency in al-Zarnuji's view can be formed by internal and external factors, meaning that the position of the educator seems to be the main determinant for the continuity of student learning in the future. al-Zarnuji promotes a passive student learning system, because educators are the main determinant, everything returns to the educator (Arif, 2022; Herawati, & As'ari, 2023; Habsy et al 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025; Asterhan, & Lefstein, 2024; Tambak et al. 2023). So, the method used focuses on guidebooks and one-way teaching and learning activities, a monologic teaching system or more commonly known as the traditional system (Tambak, Amril, & Sukenti, 2021; Rozi, Sariman, & Khasanudin, 2022; Tamara, Hermansyah, & Marleni, 2024).

The principle used by al-Zarnuji in education is that an educator should have extensive knowledge, and an educator who is experienced and mature in educating, so that the educator can be respected with an authority figure such as having broad insight and good morals and spirituality (Mahrus, 2015; Rozi, Sariman, & Khasanudin, 2022; Arif, 2022; Herawati, & As'ari, 2023; Habsy et al 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025; Tambak & Sukenti, 2024). According to al-Zarnuji (2007) in the book *ta'lim muta'allim*, the competencies that an educator needs to have include knowledge, an educator must have knowledge in educating and teaching. Then have the ability to protect yourself from prohibited actions, and have the experience to educate (Rozi, Sariman, & Khasanudin, 2022; Tamara, Hermansyah, & Marleni, 2024; Herawati, & As'ari, 2023). al-Zarnuji describes the competence of educators as placing greater emphasis on the concept of spirituality, the aim of which is to form the character of educators in accordance with the teachings of Islamic educational figures (Mufid, & Tamam, 2024; Copur-Gencturk, Cohen, & Orrill, 2024; Hendawy Al-Mahdy et al. 2024; Tambak, 2023).

al-Zarnuji has enthusiasm and goals in the process of forming good competencies for students. His work, behavior and activities are sufficient to provide concrete evidence of the dedication given to the world of education in order to produce young generations who have a better mentality, behavior and life orientation (Rozi, Sariman, & Khasanudin, 2022; Mehdizadeh, Pourhaji, & Derakhshan, 2024; Barrett, & Hordern, 2024; Tambak et al. 2022). The competence of educators conceptualized by al-Zarnuji actually has one point of agreement that the competence of educators is a characteristic inherent in humans, and humans are born into the world in a state of not knowing anything and having no knowledge (Mufid, & Tamam, 2024; Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Ahadi et al. 2024; Zhang et al. 2024; Kohnke, Foung, & Zou, 2024). However, he is equipped with the senses of hearing, sight, reason and heart which are provisions and potential as well as a means to develop and develop his personality (Tambak et al. 2022; Akram et al. 2024; Krulatz et al. 2024). Gradually through education, potential and ethics are nurtured and developed so that the desired personality form is achieved.

Madrasa teachers are an important element in the world of education, because they have a strategic role in producing a generation with noble character, knowledge and piety (Tambak et al. 2022; González-Fernández et al. 2024; Karlberg-Granlund, & Pastuhov, 2024; Mufid, & Tamam, 2024). In Islam, teachers not only serve as teachers who convey knowledge, but also as educators who shape the character and morals of students in accordance with the values of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Tambak et al. 2023; Ostinelli, & Crescentini, 2024; Dinana, & Nurhidin, 2025). Therefore, teacher professionalism in the Islamic context is not only determined by intellectual ability, but also by sincerity, morals and commitment to religious values. In this modern era, the challenges faced by the world of education are increasingly complex, especially with the rapid development of technology and globalization (Mufid, & Tamam, 2024; Tambak, & Sukenti, 2025; Rozi, Sariman, & Khasanudin, 2022;

Mehdizadeh, Pourhaji, & Derakhshan, 2024). The phenomenon of moral degradation, moral crisis, and the influence of foreign culture that is not in harmony with Islamic values is a big challenge for Islamic teachers in carrying out their duties (Tambak et al. 2023; Ostinelli, & Crescentini, 2024; Karlberg-Granlund, & Pastuhov, 2024; Haqquddin et al., 2024). Professional Islamic teachers are expected to not only be able to transfer knowledge, but also be role models in teaching morals to students.

6. Conclusion

Islamic professional teachers according to al-Zarnuji are teachers who have *al-a'lam* competence (having extensive knowledge), *al-awra'* (having a careful attitude in avoiding anything that is doubtful), and *al-asann* competence (more mature). These three competencies are very relevant for the professional development of today's Islamic and madrasah teachers so that they are professional in carrying out their profession in the future. Professional Islamic teachers must have extensive knowledge, or in other words, teachers must have extensive knowledge so that students can be used as scientific references. There competences are the main requirement for a teacher. Whenever, and whatever the educational model, this requirement is the most important requirement. These requirements are an elaboration of personal competence/personality, where personal competence is a requirement given by the government to teachers in Indonesia. The phenomenon of moral degradation, moral crisis, and the influence of foreign culture that is not in harmony with Islamic values is a big challenge for Islamic teachers in carrying out their duties. Professional Islamic teachers are expected to not only be able to transfer knowledge, but also be role models in teaching morals to students.

Author Contribution Statement

Contributions of the authors in this article: Dian Namora and Amril contributed as concepts and drafters of the article; Zamsiswaya and Abdelaziz Ibrahim Mounadil contributed as data analyzers and interpreters; Muhammad Dhiya'ul Hafidh bin Fatah Yasin as the drafter of the manuscript; Hamzah and Andi Nurhaliza contributed in collecting data and critically revising the article. All authors agree to take responsibility for all aspects of this work.

Disclosure of Interests

We have no conflict of interest to declare

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