BEYOND INFORMATION: CONSCIOUSNESS, CARE, AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AS THE FOUNDATIONS OF TEACHING IN THE AGE OF AI

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Abstract

This study supports the thesis that artificial intelligence cannot replace teachers because education, in principle, requires consciousness, care, and moral responsibility, qualities artificial systems do not and cannot possess. The current education system will diminish, becoming a system that only transmits knowledge in a mechanical way due to AI-driven frameworks or perspectives, thereby ignoring the core elements of teaching in the ethical, relational, and formative dimensions.

Through the lens of a Muslim educator, teaching is constructed not as a mechanical function but as a moral purpose rooted in trust, edification, moralization, altruism, spirituality, thriving, and preservation. Data analysis, personalisation, and automation of educational processes can be assisted by AI. A hybrid system of education can be accepted, but not a total replacement of teachers; otherwise, the system endures as non-conscious and non-moral. This restriction more than technical is ontological, as such technological advancements are not expected to reduce them.

Through a normative moral analysis of contemporary research on essential values teachers must possess, it is argued that substituting teachers with artificial intelligence will convert students into data entities and education will be reduced to technical output. The information the students will get will be Shannon information. In addition to philosophical analysis, this study includes a qualitative, small-scale survey of teachers that highlights the importance of care and moral responsibility in the teaching process. It concludes that teachers must remain the central agents with ethical accountability to the extent that machines cannot emulate consciousness, care and moral responsibility.

Keywords: Education, Teacher, Artificial Intelligence, Consciousness, Care, Moral Responsibility

1. Introduction

The pillar of an educational system is the answer to a very simple question that usually remains unspoken: What is a student? If we were to metaphorically describe the student as an empty vessel, teaching would be the sophisticated system composed of several elements that provides content for the student, and the best teacher would be the one who delivers this content more quickly and at a lower cost. This idea was rejected by Socrates a long time ago. For him, education is not putting knowledge into a soul that lacks it, as one might put sight into blind eyes, but turning the whole person toward what is real[2].

Although this question is an old one, it has now become highly relevant and timely, as well as urgent. Today, artificial intelligence can answer almost any question in any field, personalise its responses according to the specific needs of students, explain complicated topics in very simple terms, and provide feedback on students' completed assignments within seconds. With these and many other similar developments, we have reached a point at which both schools and policymakers are asking the question: Is the teacher still necessary, or can a machine do the same job, and in some contexts do it even more efficiently?

Since the answer to this question determines not only what students learn but also what they will become, this question, although justified, requires a very serious answer. This paper defends the argument that teachers cannot be replaced, and not merely because of the nostalgia we may feel for the figure of the teacher and their invaluable contribution to the formation of

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[2] Plato, *Republic* 7.518b–d, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992). Classical and scriptural texts are cited by their standard divisions, since pagination differs between editions.

new generations, nor because of a fear of new technological developments. Neither nostalgia for the teacher nor fear of technology can be considered a valid argument in itself, as both are inadequate grounds for addressing the question.

The essence of this paper lies in an element of an entirely different nature: What is education really? Since teaching is a process or relationship in which one person assumes the very serious responsibility of shaping many aspects of another person, this relationship requires consciousness, care, and moral responsibility.

Currently, artificial intelligence systems are so sophisticated that they process enormous amounts of information at extraordinary speeds, something impossible for a human being to accomplish. They are also capable of comparing, classifying, and filtering this information and retrieving it in an appropriately organized form whenever needed. Even the language of concern can be imitated by these systems, which can produce comforting and encouraging words or expressions of understanding that appear to have been articulated by a highly caring teacher.

However, the fact that you speak like a caring person does not mean that you are truly caring. When a teacher tells a student, "I know you are going through a difficult time," the teacher has genuinely noticed and felt that something is wrong because the student's circumstances and well-being matter deeply to them. An artificial system, by contrast, does not genuinely notice or feel anything. The failure of a student does not cause distress, and the student's success does not bring it joy, even though it may skillfully express concern or happiness, depending on the circumstances. At the same time, any responsibility underlying the words it produces is entirely absent.

Technological improvement will not eliminate this difference because these are unique elements that only a human being can possess. Without them, teaching is no longer what the educational system is intended to achieve.

The arguments presented in this paper are analysed and developed from the perspective of a Muslim female professor who views teaching as a moral purpose through which a student's character is purified, while the student develops and grows academically, morally, and spiritually at the same time. Teaching also involves preserving, processing, and using the information transmitted to students so that it can be used later for the benefit of the students themselves or society, as the only path toward reaching the truth. Hannah Arendt expresses a similar idea in secular terms: education is where we decide whether we love the world enough to take responsibility for it[3]

Everything stated above does not mean that artificial intelligence systems have no place in the classroom. AI can be an excellent assistant for certain types of tasks that require considerable time. For example, it can prepare exercises at different levels, thereby enabling each student to work at their own pace; correct multiple-choice tests; and prepare an initial draft of worksheets, saving teachers considerable time. Teachers can then use this time to help a student who has fallen behind, provide a second explanation of concepts with which the student is struggling, or guide another student who is conducting laboratory work.

This makes a hybrid model of education not only possible but also welcome to all parties involved.

It is important to remember that, even within this model, the final decision must remain with the teacher. AI may accurately indicate, in percentage terms, the proportion of students whose performance has declined, but only the teacher can understand why this has happened and take the appropriate measures to improve the situation.

Such a decline may be related to factors that artificial intelligence systems do not understand. For example, a student may not have understood the lesson during the explanation; may be

[3] Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Education," in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 193

experiencing a difficult family situation because of a poor relationship between their parents; or may have lost confidence in themselves because of bullying that occurred inside or outside the classroom. These and many other obstacles cannot be addressed without first understanding them. Only a conscious human being can properly understand such circumstances and, consequently, take the appropriate measures to achieve the necessary and adequate recovery.
This paper rejects the theory of teacher replacement because a school operating on this principle would still transmit information but would no longer be able to educate generations as it is supposed to do. The student would no longer be regarded as a person, and no one would remain responsible for what that student would become in the future.

2. Education as Moral Purpose: The Muslim Educator's Perspective

In Islam, teaching is not merely a profession; it is a sacred duty of profound moral significance. When Al-Ghazālī described the duties of a teacher, he began by emphasising that anyone who undertakes this task assumes a great mission and a profound responsibility, one that extends beyond the classroom and transcends the boundaries of the lesson itself. He said that whoever takes up teaching assumes "a great mission and a grave responsibility."[4] This responsibility encompasses seven pillars, without which the title of "teacher" remains an empty label, devoid of its proper substance. These pillars clearly demonstrate why a machine cannot replace a teacher.

Trust (*amāna*). The Qur'an speaks of the trust that the heavens, the earth, people, and mountains declined to bear and that the human being accepted.[5] Al-Ghazālī locates this trust in the heart, which he describes not as a lump of flesh but as a spiritual substance proceeding from the Lord's command.[6] The teacher is therefore a trustee of persons, not a supplier of content. The Prophet's saying that each person is a shepherd answerable for his flock states the same idea in the vocabulary of accountability.[7]

Edification (*tazkiya*). The Qur'an describes the Prophet's task as reciting the verses, purifying those who hear them, and teaching the Book and wisdom.[8] Purification is not an add-on to instruction. Al-Ghazālī makes it the student's first duty, because knowledge is the worship of the heart and the heart must first be cleansed.[9]

Moralization (*taʾdīb*). Al-Attas gives this unity a name. Education in Islam, he argues, is *taʾdīb*, the instilling of *adab*, and not merely *tarbiyah* (nurture), a term that applies equally to plants and animals.[10] Skills and sciences taught and learned, however scientific, do not by themselves constitute education; something must be inculcated, namely knowledge of the purpose of seeking knowledge.[11] Its end is a good human being rather than a good citizen of the state.[12] The Prophetic saying that he was sent to perfect noble character expresses the same aim.[13]

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[4] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *The Book of Knowledge*, trans. Nabih Amin Faris (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1962), 137.

[5] Qur'an 33:72. Qur'anic references are by sūra and verse; for an English translation see M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[6] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 134–35.

[7] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 893; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1829. Hadith are cited by the standard numbering of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (Bukhārī) and of Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Muslim).

[8] Qur'an 3:164; cf. 62:2.

[9] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 119.

[10] Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1999), 25, 28–29.

[11] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 16.

[12] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 22.

[13] al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, no. 273; also Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, no. 8952.

Altruism (*īthār*). The Qur'an praises those who prefer others to themselves even in their own need.[14] Al-Ghazālī's teacher embodies this. His first duty is to be sympathetic to students and to treat them as his own children; his second is to seek neither pay nor thanks, recognising that his own gain from teaching exceeds the student's.[15]

Spirituality. Teaching aims at nearness to God, and al-Ghazālī warns that teaching for worldly success is destruction for both teacher and student.[16] Al-Attas likewise grounds education in the human being's spiritual reality, not only in the body and the animal aspect.[17]

Thriving (*falāḥ*). The Qur'an says that whoever purifies the self has succeeded and whoever corrupts it has failed.[18] Thriving in this sense is moral and spiritual flourishing, not performance on a metric. Aristotle, from outside the tradition, holds similarly that argument and teaching do not prevail on everyone and that the soul must first be cultivated by habit.[19]

Preservation (*ḥifẓ*). Al-Ghazālī defines the objectives of the law as the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.[20] Education serves preservation in two senses: it preserves the learner's intellect, and it hands the world on. Hannah Arendt states the second sense in secular terms: education is where we decide "whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it."[21]

The mere transmission of content does not, in any way, fulfil these seven objectives. An accurate explanation does not purify character, a quick answer does not build trust, just as a properly tailored exercise does not cultivate altruism. Within this relationship, structured around these objectives, one party assumes responsibility for the formation of the other, while the latter accepts this as genuine care. The teacher is present in the student's life, knows the student, and responds according to their needs, rather than limiting themselves to simply giving the student something: information. It is precisely here that the question arises: Can a machine engage in such a relationship? In other words, does it possess consciousness, care, and moral responsibility?

3. Consciousness: What the Machine Lacks

The first condition a teacher must fulfil to be considered a true teacher, and precisely the first that a machine fails to meet, is consciousness, an argument whose roots can be traced back to the modern beginnings of philosophy. Descartes finds that the one thing he cannot doubt while doubting is that he is a thing that thinks, a subject to whom his own states are present.[22] Proceeding to Thomas Nagel, who gives the modern formulation: an organism has conscious states if and only if there is something it is like to be that organism.[23] Furthermore, David Chalmers adds that explaining how a system performs its functions, however impressive, leaves open why that performance is accompanied by experience at all; this is the hard problem.[24]

The answer to this question cannot be found in the design of artificial intelligence systems. The purpose for which these systems are built is to produce certain types of outputs: to predict the

[14] Qur'an 59:9.

[15] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 138–39.

[16] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 138.

[17] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 14.

[18] Qur'an 91:9–10.

[19] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.9.1179b23–31, trans. Terence Irwin, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999).

[20] al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salām ʿAbd al-Shāfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1993), 1:174.

[21] Arendt, "Crisis in Education," 193.

[22] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, II, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 2, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 18 (AT VII 27).

[23] Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?," *Philosophical Review* 83, no. 4 (1974): 436.

[24] David J. Chalmers, "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2, no. 3 (1995): 200–201.

next word, recognise patterns in data, and then optimise them according to a specified objective. These systems are performing such tasks increasingly well; however, we have no conclusive evidence that these outputs are accompanied by experience. In other words, performance is present, but it is not necessarily accompanied by subjective experience, as it is in human beings. Improving these systems by making them larger and faster may solve a technical engineering problem, but it does not answer the fundamental question posed by David Chalmers. John Searle's Chinese Room argument makes the point at the level of meaning: a person who manipulates Chinese symbols by rule, without understanding Chinese, can produce outputs indistinguishable from a speaker's, yet understands nothing, and running a program is never by itself sufficient for intentionality.[25] Alan Turing anticipated the challenge and answered by changing the question: instead of asking whether machines think, ask whether they can succeed in the imitation game.[26] Yet he conceded that there is some mystery about consciousness, and denied only that it must be solved before his question can be answered.[27] Therefore, this disagreement does not need to be resolved by education, because what matters to the educational system is not whether machines possess consciousness, but what the system itself, and its students, as its most important and vulnerable component, lose in the absence of such consciousness, particularly when things are judged solely by external behaviour.

The purpose of the test, therefore, is not to determine whether an answer was given by a student while having a person in front of them. The test asks only whether the answer provided is the same. Here, we must not overlook an essential difference. The value of a teacher is not measured by the accuracy and fluency of an answer, a task that machines genuinely perform very well. Their true value lies in their ability, through consciousness, to read a student's emotional state: whether the student is sad, worried, confused, frightened, or ready to benefit fully from the explanation being provided.

There are certain signs that no questionnaire is capable of adequately capturing and interpreting; a teacher, however, can recognise them and then decide what to do in response. These may include a student who repeatedly raises and lowers their hand; another whose voice trembles when speaking; another who speaks very quietly; another who withdraws into a corner of the classroom; another who cannot stop talking; another who responds with immense enthusiasm to the teacher's smile; or another who speaks with great pomposity despite saying nothing of substance, among many other examples.

The same conclusion is reached in the Islamic tradition through a different path. Al-Attas accepts the classical definition of the human being as the rational animal but insists that *nāṭiq* names an inner faculty that formulates meaning; the articulation of words in meaningful patterns is only the outward expression of an inner, unseen reality, the intellect (*ʿaql*), which he calls a spiritual substance by which the rational soul distinguishes truth from falsehood.[28] Education, he concludes, must pertain to this reality and not merely to the body and animal aspect.[29] External speech is an insufficient sign of what is happening within a human being. Eloquence, in fact, originates from thought, meaning, and the intention behind words. These are manifested together in human beings, but not necessarily in automated systems. If an automated system exhibits this external sign, it does not indicate that there is something within it corresponding to that expression.

Therefore, words that appear to be the product of understanding do not guarantee the presence of meaning. The existence of meaning must be established through independent evidence

[25] John R. Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3, no. 3 (1980): 417–18.

[26] A. M. Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," *Mind* 59, no. 236 (1950): 433–34.

[27] Turing, "Computing Machinery," 447.

[28] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 13–14.

[29] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 14.

concerning its nature, rather than inferred solely from the apparent performance of a system's language.
The practical weight of this appears in al-Ghazālī's sixth duty of the teacher, to address each student according to his capacity to understand, so that he does not come to dislike the subject.[30] That duty is directed to a specific person as an exercise of perception.
The Platonic image of education highlights this point. If the aim is to turn the whole soul toward what is real, the educator must see where a given soul is currently facing, and that seeing is an act of one conscious being toward another.[31] An intelligent system can identify and classify a student's errors and organise the resulting data in ways that may be useful. However, only a teacher can truly understand why those errors have occurred and whether there may be something deeper affecting the student who made them. Such understanding requires a conscious human being who stands face to face with another human being.

4. Care: The Relational Core of Teaching

Care is the second condition. By care, we do not mean merely a gentle tone of voice or comforting words. In the Islamic tradition, care also involves a relationship in which one person notices the condition of another and makes a sincere effort to act for their well-being, while the other person experiences this care as genuine. One example of an attempt to establish such a relationship is a teacher who looks a student in the eyes, asks whether they are doing well, and waits for an answer. The same words, spoken without looking the student in the eyes, are merely a tone of voice and nothing more.
Martin Buber states the principle in a sentence: all real living is meeting.[32] Nel Noddings gives it an educational analysis. Caring, on her account, is rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness; the one-caring is marked by engrossment, a receptive attention to the cared-for, and by motivational displacement, in which her own energy serves the other's projects; and the relation is complete only when the cared-for recognizes that care has been given.[33]
To answer the question of whether a teacher can be replaced by an artificial intelligence system, we need to consider three characteristics of this relationship.

First, putting the other person's needs before one's own is of great importance. A person who genuinely cares inevitably sacrifices something: time, personal comfort, and perhaps even their own position. A system, by contrast, loses nothing and suffers no emotional harm, as it neither becomes frustrated by a student's failure nor experiences happiness at their success.

Second, care is directed towards a particular, specific person with whom one shares the same environment. By caring for an individual student, a teacher responds to a particular history, a particular name, and a particular set of difficulties, all of which unfold within a shared environment. Living within the same world makes it easier to recognise difficulties because the teacher can observe, listen to, and understand the student in the moment. We must not forget that an algorithm tends to represent a student in terms of an "average" learner with typical needs and difficulties. Yet such a model does not exist in reality, because every student is different. These differences are shaped by various factors, including problems at home or at school, different learning abilities, individual character, the circumstances in which the student has grown up, their background, and many others.

[30] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 142–43.
[31] Plato, *Republic* 7.518b–d.
[32] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 62.
[33] Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 2, 15–20, 33–34, 69.

Freire holds that dialogue cannot exist without a profound love for the world and for people,[34] and Arendt that the educator stands before the young as one who assumes responsibility for the world into which they are born.[35]

Thirdly, care in Islam is not a decorative element of the teaching process, but an essential component. In the relationship between teacher and student, the transmission of knowledge, when accompanied by genuine care, transforms this relationship into something truly beautiful. In Islam, care is indispensable because teaching is not merely the transmission of information; it is also the formation of a person, a process that cannot take place without care. Teaching without care, communication, and a genuine desire for the student's well-being becomes nothing more than a task performed as a mere formality. True learning takes place when the student feels that someone genuinely cares about them, stands by their side, and takes their learning challenges seriously. Therefore, care is not something added after teaching has taken place; it is the very way in which teaching occurs.

Al-Ghazālī's first duty of the teacher is to be sympathetic to students and treat them as his own children, and he quotes the Prophet's words that he is to his followers like a father; he adds that the teacher's right exceeds the parents', since the parents are the cause of present life and the teacher of lasting life.[36] Even the teacher's firmness is a form of care: the fourth duty is to dissuade a student from wrongdoing by suggestion and with sympathy rather than open reproach, because open rebuke destroys the veil of awe and breeds stubbornness.[37] Such discernment about what to say, to whom, and when is a judgment about a particular person's dignity.

If an intelligent system were to use warm and comforting words, it might make a student feel better. However, this relationship would remain incomplete because it is one-sided. The student might believe that someone is listening to them and understands their feelings, whereas, in reality, there is nothing on the other side that genuinely understands them. When a friend tells a student, “I am here for you, my friend,” that friend has sacrificed something to be there for them. Such a sacrifice, however, is absent when the same words are spoken by an intelligent system, which gives up nothing for the sake of the friendship it claims to offer.

5. Moral Responsibility: The Teacher as Accountable Agent

The third pillar is moral responsibility: being ethically responsible for one's actions, decisions, and their consequences. Kant's formula that humanity, in oneself or in another, must never be treated merely as a means states the moral core of the teacher's relation to the student.[38] A teacher forms a person, and a person formed carelessly is wronged. Hans Jonas argues that modern technology has so enlarged human power that ethics must reach responsibility for what that power does.[39]

The Islamic tradition presses the point more severely on the teacher. Al-Ghazālī holds that a scholar's accountability exceeds that of the ignorant, because many follow his example and are misled by his faults; the eighth duty of the teacher is that his conduct not contradict his words, since knowledge is grasped by the mind but conduct by the eyes.[40] Teaching is thus exemplary: the student learns who to be from the person who stands before her. Aristotle makes a parallel

[34] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, 30th anniversary ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 89.

[35] Arendt, “Crisis in Education,” 193.

[36] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 138.

[37] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 141–42.

[38] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 38 (4:429).

[39] Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1.

[40] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 145.

claim when he says that it matters a great deal whether habits of one sort or another are formed from youth, which presupposes models and guides.[41]
Al-Ghazālī's image for this example is the stamp and the clay: the guide stands to the one who seeks guidance as the stamp to the clay, and a crooked cane cannot cast a straight shadow.[42] Al-Attas states the underlying principle in epistemological terms: in Islam there is no worthwhile knowledge without action accompanying it and no worthwhile action without knowledge guiding it.[43] A teacher is the place where the two meet in one life; a system holds information but has no life in which to unite it with action.
Responsibility also governs what a teacher chooses to say. Al-Ghazālī cautions that the learned man should not divulge all his knowledge to anyone indiscriminately, above all where the student cannot make use of it, and he treats the safeguarding of knowledge from those who might corrupt it as more important than imparting it.[44] A general-purpose conversational system is built to respond to whoever asks; whatever safeguards its designers add are rules fixed in advance, not a judgment made about this student at this moment by someone who will answer for it.
To bear moral responsibility is to be a moral agent, that is, a being who acts intentionally, understands that its actions affect others, is capable of feeling remorse, and is answerable to its community for what it has done. Artificial intelligence systems do not meet these conditions. They can be controlled, corrected, or withdrawn from use, but they cannot feel remorse, hold convictions of their own, or be held accountable to their community according to the standards of the ethical tradition. If an artificial teacher incorrectly assesses a student in a vulnerable position, responsibility falls on the people behind the system: those who designed it, those who administer it, and the teachers who use it. Moreover, removing the human teacher does not eliminate the need for a moral agent who bears responsibility; it merely removes the agent who is closest to the student and best able to recognise harm. For this reason, the teacher must remain the central agent of ethical responsibility.

6. Shannon Information and the Student as Data

All these conditions together highlight the disadvantages of replacing teachers. Claude Shannon's information theory, which underpins digital communication, deliberately leaves meaning outside its scope: he writes that the semantic aspects of communication are irrelevant to the engineering problem, which is reproducing a message at one point from one selected at another.[45] In fact, this abstraction is particularly well suited to engineering and constitutes the source of the theory's strength. However, when applied to education, it becomes distorted. If the analysis is conducted within a system that emphasises artificial intelligence, the student is reduced to a mere receiver and the teacher to a mere source, whose success is measured solely by the accuracy and efficiency with which the message containing the transmitted information reaches its destination. According to Shannon's theory, the information received by students is structured and transmissible, yet indifferent not only to meaning but also to the person receiving it.
Al-Attas and al-Ghazālī anticipate the distinction. Where Shannon brackets meaning, al-Attas places it at the centre: meaning is the recognition of the place of anything in a system, which occurs when its relations are clarified and understood.[46] For recognition to occur at this level,

[41] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1.1103b23–25.
[42] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 145.
[43] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 23.
[44] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 143–44.
[45] Claude E. Shannon, "A Mathematical Theory of Communication," *Bell System Technical Journal* 27, no. 3 (1948): 379–423 and no. 4 (1948): 623–56, at 379.
[46] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 15.

a subject who understands is necessarily required. Al-Ghazālī warns that a student may acquire "its words and terms" of a science and miss the science itself, and he cites the saying that knowledge is "a light which floods the heart."[47] Al-Attas adds that no true knowledge can be instilled without *adab* in the one who seeks it and the one to whom it is imparted.[48]

The pedagogical form taken by this reduction is given by Paulo Freire. In the banking concept, education becomes an act of depositing, in which students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor.[49] A system built to optimise the delivery of content is that logic made efficient. Michael Polanyi supplies a further reason it fails: we can know more than we can tell.[50] A considerable part of what is conveyed from teacher to student remains unspoken, including laboratory skills, the ability to evaluate a result, and the capacity to distinguish what is essential from what is not within a discipline. In this way, education becomes a technical process of production, and students are reduced to units of data whose trajectories have been predetermined. According to Kant, such treatment of students turns them into mere means.

Al-Ghazālī adds that real knowledge has a transforming character: even a rudimentary grasp of it would show that sin is a fatal and destructive poison, and he asks whether anyone has ever seen a person knowingly swallow poison.[51] The transformation, storage, and combination of information do not change the individual, whereas knowledge, when retained and combined, can do so. For this reason, a teacher's concern extends beyond whether a student is able to produce an answer, reaching what I would consider the ultimate purpose of teaching: what that student will become.

7. A Small-Scale Qualitative Survey of Teachers

To establish a correspondence between the philosophical arguments and teachers' own understanding of the significance of their work, this study conducted a small-scale qualitative survey. It was distributed online as an anonymous questionnaire entitled "Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Education: Can Human Teachers Be Replaced?" and addressed issues related to consciousness, care, moral responsibility, and ethical judgment in teaching. The purpose of this survey is to illustrate the arguments presented, rather than to verify them.

The observation results reveal a clear trend. Approximately 85% of the teachers surveyed believe that artificial intelligence cannot fully replace teachers, while only 15% hold the opposite view; 54% perceive it as an assistant that supports teachers but does not replace them. Regarding care, 54% of respondents do not believe that artificial intelligence can recognise and appropriately respond to a student's personal suffering or emotional crisis, while all respondents (100%) consider empathy, patience, care, and compassion to be essential in teaching. Concerning moral responsibility and ethical judgement, 62% believe that an artificial intelligence system cannot be held morally responsible if a student develops harmful behaviour, whereas 85% agree that teachers should bear moral responsibility for their students' values and character. Regarding consciousness and attentiveness to individual students, 77% of respondents believe that artificial intelligence merely processes and reproduces information or rarely understands it, while an equal proportion (77%) consider it essential for teachers to be aware of their students' emotional and intellectual states.

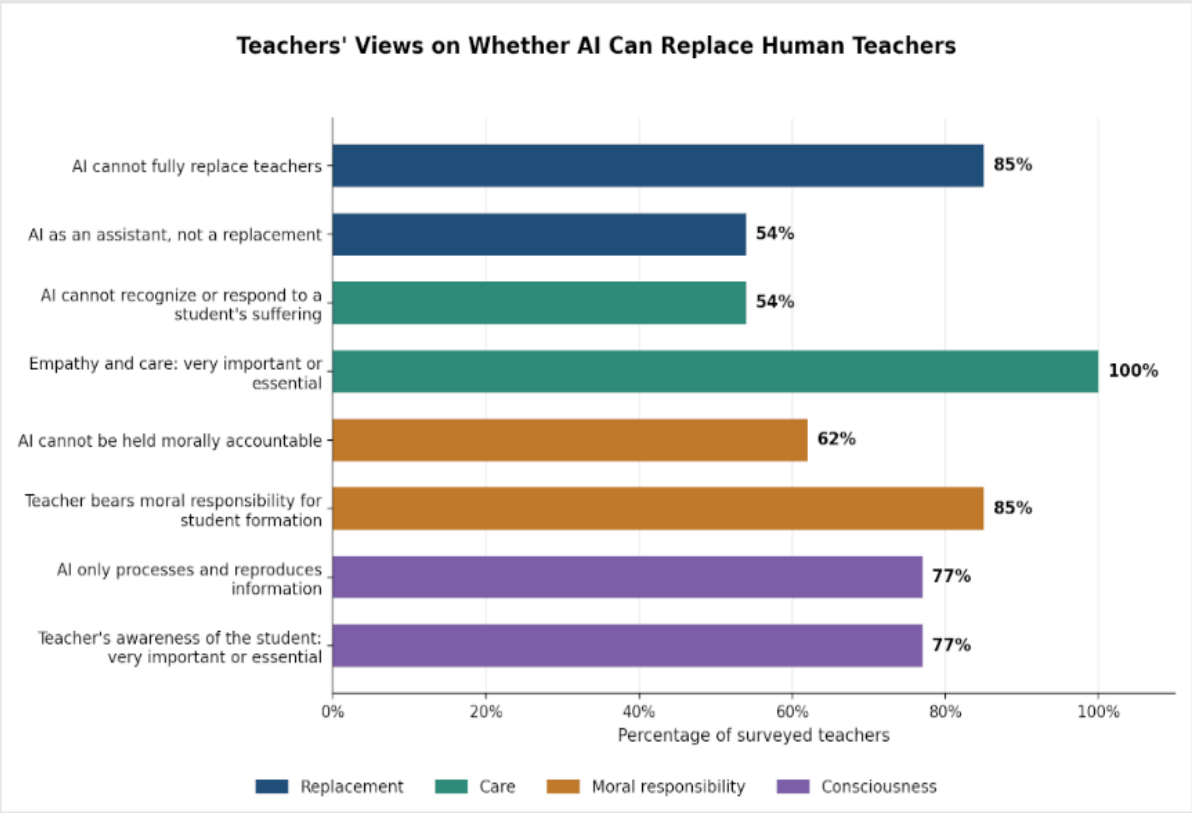
[47] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 121.

[48] Al-Attas, *Concept of Education*, 34.

[49] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72.

[50] Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 4.

[51] Al-Ghazālī, *Book of Knowledge*, 121.



The survey results clearly illustrate that teaching cannot be reduced to a mechanical process of information transmission, as 85% of the teachers surveyed believe that artificial intelligence cannot replace them. Since the educational mission is deeply rooted in human relationships, 100% of participants consider empathy, patience, and care essential, while the majority (54%) believe that AI is incapable of identifying or responding to students' emotional crises. Furthermore, awareness of students' psycho-emotional states (77%) and moral responsibility for shaping their character (85%) are dimensions that an algorithmic system, which merely processes data (77%), cannot assume. Consequently, AI can serve only as a supportive assistant, never as a replacement for the human and formative role of the teacher.

8. Conclusion

The main challenges facing contemporary education do not arise from machines' ability to convey information, a task they perform with ease, but from the tendency to reduce education to a simple process of knowledge transfer. In reality, education is much more than that. In both the Islamic tradition and Western academic thought, it is understood as a process of formation that takes place through interpersonal relationships grounded in trust, spiritual purification, discipline, generosity, and responsibility. These dimensions cannot be understood independently of consciousness, empathy, and moral awareness.

Although artificial intelligence cannot replace this fundamentally human dimension, it can contribute as a supportive tool in the teaching and learning process. A well-designed and integrated approach can use AI to analyse assessment results, adapt exercises to students' individual needs, and reduce administrative tasks, enabling teachers to focus more on the educational relationship. Al-Ghazālī's principle, according to which teaching should be adapted to students' abilities and capacities, can be supported by data, but only if three fundamental conditions are respected: the teacher retains final decision-making authority and ethical responsibility; AI-generated outputs serve as recommendations without replacing

human judgment; and the teacher's direct knowledge of the student remains more important than any profile generated by algorithms. Within this framework, educational institutions should regard AI as a supporting instrument, avoid assessment systems based exclusively on automated indicators, and prioritise the professional and moral development of teachers. This is consistent with the pedagogical tradition, which places the teacher's character, rather than the use of technology, at the centre of the educational process. Future research should expand the study through more representative samples and examine more closely the experiences of students who use virtual tutors.

This position remains defensible even in the face of the principal counterarguments. First, the idea that future AI systems might develop consciousness carries the risk of confusing a hypothetical empirical possibility with an ontological question. From the perspective of Searle's philosophy and Islamic anthropology, which connects human existence with the spiritual dimension and humanity's covenant with the Creator, information processing does not constitute evidence of genuine consciousness. Furthermore, current systems lack subjective experience and moral responsibility in the human sense, even when they produce responses that appear caring and empathetic. Second, the shortcomings of human teachers, including bias and exhaustion, do not undermine the importance of human relationships in education. On the contrary, they show the need to improve working conditions, provide institutional support, and ensure teachers' continuous professional development. A teacher's failure to provide care does not mean the educational relationship should be eliminated; rather, it means the conditions that make this relationship more responsible and fruitful must be strengthened. Third, if a student cannot distinguish AI from a human person, as suggested by Turing's imitation game, this does not constitute evidence that AI can fulfil the purpose of education. The value of education is determined not merely by the ability to imitate human communication, but by the formation and transformation that takes place within the student. A relationship that merely simulates care is not equivalent to one grounded in genuine care. Similarly, in the domain of ethical responsibility, the inability to distinguish a machine's behaviour from that of a human being does not resolve the fundamental question of who is actually responsible for decisions and their consequences.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence can support the educational relationship, but it cannot replace its human essence. Teachers must remain central actors in the educational process and bearers of ethical responsibility, because human formation encompasses spiritual, moral, and relational dimensions that cannot be reduced to information processing. As Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasises, education is an integral part of the structure of society. Therefore, a society that entrusts machines with an increasingly large share of the process of human formation must reflect not only on what it gains through automation, but also on the human dimensions it risks losing.

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