

## Understanding Divine Pedagogy in Teacher Education: Insights from Al-zarnuji's Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the divine pedagogy in teacher education which refers to the concept of the perspective of one of the Moslem Philosophers, al-Zarnuji in his concept of Ta'lim al-Muta'allim. This concept refers to the fundamental principles in education which has been used among the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) in the context of character education. Literature review was conducted from peer review journals, books and conferences. The finding reveals that there are several ethical foundations in teacher education, namely professional skills, critical thinking with godliness awareness, commanding with commitment, friendly interaction in teaching, emotional commitment in teaching, senior with more experience. Such forms refer to strengthening divine pedagogy through professional, ethical and spiritual basis. This study is expected to contribute in supplying the moral engagement in teacher education to transmit character values into the teaching process.

**Key words:** Al-Zarnuji, Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, divine pedagogy, professional, ethical and spiritual basis  
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### INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers as the main pillar in developing and strengthening the educational activities play a significant role. Teacher's performance in behaviour and attitude as incorporated within daily life and schooling duty can give valuable insights with most righteous example in going through religious and high morality way of life (Tamuri and Ajuhary, 2010; Jaafar *et al.*, 2012a-f; Osguthorpe, 2008). In this regard, social and personal values they transmitted into teaching techniques, strategies, models and skills may give a feedback amongst students to be affected (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a). Since the era of globalisation has been a borderless world, the role of teachers becomes more challenging and thus the heavy burden of teachers requires such skills with duty and responsibility. Some criminal case reported is a variety including violence, vandalism and adolescent mischief involved amongst teachers. To carry out this responsibility, every teacher should possess ethical foundation with a personal belief in the abilities and the capability to carry out teaching and educating students.

In addition, the effort to retrieve character values teacher should perform from some Muslim scholars (ulama) who have made significant contributions to the society (Ummah) is urgently required. There are many

Muslim scholars being modelled due to their profound attentions and contributions to education. In the classical Muslim era, during the golden age of Islam, there were al-Ghozali, al-Qabisi, al-Zarnuji, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Sahnun and many others with their monumental works as their sincere efforts to carry out education in general and morality in particular (Nata, 2003). Meanwhile in the context of Indonesia, being part of the Malay world there were some such as Hasyim Asy'ari, Ahmad Dahlan, Ki Hajar Dewantara, Mahmud Yunus, Hamka, M. Nasir and others who have contributed to the effort to build student's and teacher's character values (Nata, 2003). This urgency demands an integrated approach using a modelling role and thus we shall attempt to reflect on how to construct a model to contribute using an approach of al-Zarnuji.

**Brief of al-zarnuji and ta'lim al-muta'allim:** Al-Zarnuji was born in a well-known town around the Oxus River in the eastern part of the presentday Turkistan, called Zarnuj (Yahya, 2005), al-Zarnuji lived between the 12th and the 13th century CE and his theology was based on the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence. As biographers associate believe, his original name, Tajuddin Nu'man ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Khalil al-Zarnuji becomes well familiar with al-Zarnuji (Muizzuddin, 2014). Widely known to the

learning framework in his monumental work he was given the honorific name, Burhan al-Din or Burhan al-Islam which means “the proof of the religion (i.e., Islam).” The nisbah (nickname) of al-Zarnuji indicates his native origin (Huda *et al.*, 2016a-c). Although, not much recognised about his private life, it is believed that he was known as one of the classical Islamic educational philosophers who lived during the Abbasid caliphate and he died in 1243 CE (Gilliot, 2012). Considering al-Zarnuji’s masterpiece, the Ta’lim al-Muta’allim is because its classical content, seen in many quarters has set the principle for the dispensation of knowledge in both traditional and conventional educational institutions. Al-Zarnuji wrote his book in the 13th century during the reign of the last Abbasid Caliph (Grunebaum and Abel, 1947). The book contains thirteen chapters with each chapter having specific instructions for mitigating the student’s learning problem. Its conceptual framework is mostly devoted to the issues relating to the development of the soul as well as the rational mind in the learning process.

**Significance of al-zarnuji’s ta’lim al-muta’allim:** With regard to significance of al-Zarnuji’s Ta’lim al-Muta’allim, this consequently necessitates a deeper study of the significant concept for reasons as follows: the concept of al-Zarnuji’s Ta’lim al-Muta’allim has been operationalised in the midst of pesantren; its model of teaching and learning has been developed suitably as a concept of Islamic education; the basic foundation of the content is sufficiently applicable in the context of current Islamic educational system in the midst of Indonesian Islamic heterogeneous community (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a-f).

In particular, it contains the Islamic educational values which offers the precedent of learning and teaching performed among those involved in Islamic education milieu, mainly pesantren (Hafidzah, 2014). Among its salient principles are the efficient ways for facilitating systematic and comprehensive grasp of wisdom, nature and the merit of knowledge, the way to conduct oneself during the learning process (the attitude towards and respect for knowledge and those who possess it, i.e., respect for the teacher). According to Huda *et al.* (2016a-c), personal choices in the learning process in strengthening the way to learn with devotion and perseverance should be efficiently and accurately guided into the divine engagement through understanding such guidance. Moreover how to start the lesson and organize the learning process should do with the tawakkul (reliance on God for guidance. Compassion combined with time management in learning would give a feedback with merits of integrating the training of the

mind. It may affect them to raise their rational thinking skills integrated into the moral engagement. It can be seen for instance values (i.e., paying attention to the development of the soul in the learning process) in the effort to guiding one’s memory and curbing forgetfulness in learning and how to survive in terms of livelihood in the period of learning (Zarnuji, 2008; Grunebaum and Abel, 1947).

#### **AL-ZARNUJI ON DIVINE PEDAGOGY FORETHICAL FOUNDATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

Al-Zarnuji is a philosopher of Islamic education who highlighted on more about the ethics and its spiritual dimension of education in Islam. Based on his concept in Ta’lim al-Muta’allim he stressed the ethics of learning process and its element of educational pattern. In addition he also beckoned on the educational value and character constructional pattern on learning where this is certainly emphasised as the educational central purpose (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a-f). Generally, basic element in educational process is the teacher who has the significant responsibility for making the student to achieve the main goal of the future. In this regard, the teacher’s responsibility and duty comprise three main tasks, namely the educator, the guider or supervisor and the administrator or manager in class as (Daradjat, 2008). In order to gain that goal, the teacher has to fulfil and complete the student need, mainly on the spiritual, intellectual and social as the basic elements for preparedness of challenging in life (Zarnuji, 2008). In further, the teacher works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. As a result, the role of teacher has the obligation as “purification” which means that the teacher should purify his soul and keep away from bad deed (Nahlawi, 1995). In addition, this pedagogy has an outstanding empowerment to serve in transmitting knowledge to make sure in applying it in everyday life.

In case, teachers have such good examples of virtue to display certain character traits and qualities, students will in turn, pick them up and acquire them (Osguthorpe, 2008). With this regard, the teacher has the responsibility to the student’s success in the character development employed at class. Teachers should increase the insight, knowledge and further analysis (Zarnuji, 2008). Not only required does he transform the knowledge to the student’s ability both also cognitive domain and psychomotor one but also expected to manifest the regards in relation to the affective domain. Teaching morality becomes a core point in delivering moral

development amongst the students in order to access moral ways with good teaching to supply for being a good teacher. Hence, Zarnuji (2008) designed the ethical foundations qualified into divine pedagogy. Those are professional skills (alim), critical thinking with godliness awareness (war'a), commanding with commitment (waqur), friendly interaction in teaching (hilm), emotional commitment in teaching (sabr) and senior with more experience (asan). All these refer to empower teaching performance in terms of professional, ethical and spiritual basis.

### **STRENGTHENING DIVINE PEDAGOGY THROUGH PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL BASIS**

Zarnuji (2008) pointed out that some of core values in teaching should be concerned mainly to engage with ethical foundation. Those are several ethical foundations in teacher education, namely professional skills, critical thinking with godliness awareness, commanding with commitment, friendly interaction in teaching, senior with more experience. It can be seen that keeping away from the bad deed is also the main concern to strengthen the moral engagement.

**Professional skills:** The teacher in the base of new paradigm, particularly in the process of character education is not only as the educator but also as motivator and facilitator in the order for manifesting and actualising the human potency and talent in order to make balance towards the weakness on them (Zarnuji, 2008). It means that his responsibility and duty should not be considered solely as one task easy to conduct by any kind of people but should be one who has the qualified authority and competence academically, operationally and professionally. As a result, the competence of skilled professional for the teacher is one competence of individual who has the profession as the educator which underlies the basic ability of tendency possessed (Usman, 2001). In addition, the significant characteristic of professionalism lies on that first he can well master the certain field, excelling on the average; second he has the high moral commitment to the field of work reflected to the ethical code of his profession. The implication of professional and competence skilled has the significant role to transform the character development among the students. Therefore, it can be analysed that the professional which each teacher should behave and master includes three basic components as educator; supervisor and manager in which each has the particular role.

**Critical thinking with godliness awareness:** In consequence, the attitude of wara' is the critical attitude and self-anticipation to anything which can be disgrace; emphasizing the precautionary act which is out from the vague to the clear; leaving from what is doubt to the convince not for the meaningless desire but taking as needed and available; taking the case which is permitted (mubah) to strengthen the worship and increase the obedience to God. In conjunction with the character of wara' for the teacher, Zarnuji (2008) pointed out that the teacher of war'a is who can keep away both from the meaningless talks and from too much joke which dissipates time who can avoid talk about the "ghibah" which is ugliness of person and avoids to interact with who has much talk which is unavailing. It can be seen that literally word war'a means to abstain from sin, immoral and doubtful cases. Among the fundamental signs for people of war'a are their outstanding prudence from something that is forbidden and the absence of their courage to come forward to something that could lead to the unlawful.

**Commanding with commitment:** Furthermore, Zarnuji (2008) proposed the significant characteristics for the teacher, waqur which means the commanding. In accordance with the commanding (waqur), according Daradjat (1996), the teacher who has the commanding is not those who can frighten the teacher with beating the table and crying out during the noisy at class so that the condition becomes conducive. But it is who is able to master and manage his students calmly during the noisy in that it becomes conducive. Hence, its consequence is that the loss of teacher commanding will affect the students not to respect and hear his suggestion; it is true that the commanding is necessary to have each teacher, particularly in the process of character education, including respect, wondering and even adherence.

**Friendly interaction in teaching:** In addition, other characteristics proposed is friendly interaction (hilm), which means that hilm is one of the significant elements in the process of character education. Al-Zarnuji, based on his book, pointed out that it is necessarily for the teacher to have one effort through this kind of characteristic which has the depth meaning as in his book that Abu Hanifah chose Hammad ibn Abu Sulaiman to be his teacher in that his knowledge become developed because of affection from the teacher (Huda *et al.* 2016a-c). Moreover in case of relation to the character education, it can be analysed into teaching and managing the class and even process of existence in the learning (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a-f; Jaafar *et al.*, 2012). The friendly interaction can be divided into two significant

terms. The first is the “interaction” which means that the teacher should be civilised in the communication which is teaching that when advising the students who do the mistake, the teacher should admonish wisely with giving clear understanding not with reproaching in which this causes the his dignity.

The second is the “teaching” which means that the teacher should not force the student to learn the subject matter unknown before. Moreover, teaching should be felt easily to understand for the students with knowing further development to the student’s ability (Korthagen, 2004). Meanwhile, a teacher should not be careless and not hurry in completion of each case and making decision because this will impact the result of losing the expedience (manfaat). With this regard, teacher needs to keep this morality in the teaching process with transmitting amongst the students. By controlling their attitude from immoral behaviour, students may have chance to experience in order not to imitate their behavioural nature.

**Emotional commitment in teaching:** In addition, al-Zamujj proposed the characteristic of ethical foundation significantly necessary to belong to each teacher as the fundamental element to instil his students. It is patience (sabr) in which this can be the main key to construct the character values which in later can give the foundational assumption to how the teacher should interact with at class in case of facing the obstacle. Meanwhile, the term in the matter of patience (sabr) is a solid mental state, which is stable and consistent in learning process in facing such challenges (Huda *et al.*, 2016a-c). The soul is not deterred in which stance is not changed in any kind of severe challenges facing. Accordingly in case for the relationship between moral character of a teacher and the moral development of a student, then the teacher must be “a perfect example of virtue” (Osguthorpe, 2008). It means that in this perspective, the teacher is necessary to have the moral as the obligation to present an appropriate figure of themselves to their students. In addition, because morally good teacher is the most obvious, children can catch or pick up character training from him whom they associate and interact with and thus it is necessary for the teacher to possess and exhibit desirable traits. It is clear that in conjunction with the main role of the teacher is an extremely great profession in accordance with God.

**Senior with more experience:** In this context, al-Zamujj did not explicitly explain but it can be analysed to what is meant from the senior both in thinking and in acting. It is sure that each teacher must be senior with having more

experiences due to being more knowledgeable and wider understanding. Not with standing in case in the meaning of this context, the education is one element that the teacher serves as guider to the students and thus it cannot exist on designed purpose if it is not done by one who is senior with having more knowledgeable and experience. Likewise, strengthening the personal, mental and experience amongst teachers can be transmitted to enhance the human maturity in thinking tottransform their values into the student who needs to be “self-standing”. It can be seen integration between knowledge and experience becomes an insightful essence for behaviour and attitude (Suryabrata, 2004). Meanwhile, in the context of developing the education, the role of teacher is centre for the significant holder in the process of character education.

**Recommendation into teacher education:** In terms of achieving balance in transmitting the morality amongst the students, promotion of understanding to keep in mind towards essentials of being a good personality with critical thinking needs to enhance specification in the certain field which can be an investment which is necessary for the society’s well-being (Huda *et al.*, 2016a-d). The emphasis for ethical foundation necessary to belong to each teacher is to have more experience while arguing that it needs to be older, both physically and mentally (Zarnuji, 2008). To have a profound understanding is significantly expected in the order for instilling the morally good values with the ideals of strengthening ethical foundation (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a-f). As a result, the educators should have a clear understanding to the comprehensive concept of character so that they will be ready to design the comprehensive instructional program (Lickona, 1997). Comprehensive character education asserts that effective character education must encompass the total moral life of the classroom and school. A comprehensive approach recognizes that all interactions in the school send moral messages and affect student’s developing character (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a-f). Both explicit moral instruction (such as explanation, exhortation and curriculum-based lessons in virtue) and implicit moral teaching (through processes such as a modelling, discipline and cooperative learning) are part of the moral life of the school. With achieving the education quality to expound the considerable guideline to direct in right path, ethical engagement to strengthen the moral aspect in teaching and learning is significantly central to enhance performance in the way that can be useful in transferring knowledge and values (Huda *et al.*, 2016a-c). Concerning the improvement and enhancement on driving the process

with a profound elucidation on the characteristic of teacher's ethical foundation, it is not only covering to know such terms being the principles for educating the student but also overspreading to have the ability more knowledgeable to implement into explicit design and implicit one within the school.

### CONCLUSION

This study does elaborate the divine pedagogy in teacher education in the concept of Ta'lim al-Muta'allim which can supply ethical foundation as a core point in delivering moral development amongst the students. Al-Zarnuji in his concept proposed the way in accessing moral ways for being good teaching with responsibility and duty which are not only to transform the knowledge but also to transfer the character values. Through strengthening divine pedagogy through professional, ethical and spiritual basis, addressing the ethics of learning process and its element of educational pattern becomes the main principle to supply in delivering moral development amongst the students. So, divine pedagogy with such core values in teaching should be concerned mainly to engage with ethical foundation. The divine pedagogy refers to several ethical foundations in teacher education, namely professional skills, critical thinking with godliness awareness, commanding with commitment, friendly interaction in teaching, senior with more experience. As a result, this study is expected to contribute in supplying the divine pedagogy in teacher education to transmit character values into the teaching process.

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