

Analysis of the Concept of Educators and Students in the Book Ta'Lim Al-Muta'allim by Sheikh Burhanuddin Al-Zarnuji

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the concepts of educator and learner in the book Ta'lim al-Muta'allim by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji. This book provides profound guidance regarding the ethics and roles of educators and learners in the educational process from an Islamic perspective. The research employs a qualitative approach using content analysis, where data are collected through library studies from Ta'lim al-Muta'allim and other relevant literature. The primary focus of the analysis is to explore the educational values embedded in this work, particularly concerning the relationship between educator and learner, as well as the ethics and etiquette of learning. This study shows that the concept of educators and learners in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim is highly relevant to the context of contemporary education. Al-Zarnuji provides clear guidance on how the relationship between educators and learners should be in Islamic education, emphasizing ethics, manners, and moral responsibility in every aspect of learning. These concepts can be adapted and applied in various educational contexts, whether in schools, Islamic boarding schools, or other educational institutions.

Keywords: Analysis, Educator, Learner, Education, Zarnuji

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Introduction

Education in Islam does not only focus on the transfer of knowledge, but also includes character building and spiritual development of individuals. One of the classic works that has made a significant contribution to Islamic education is the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji. This book provides practical guidance for educators and students on the importance of methods and ethics in the learning process. Written in the 13th century, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* is still relevant today, both in the context of formal and non-formal education in the Muslim world (Wiguna, 2021).

As a scholar and educator, al-Zarnuji viewed education not merely as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a spiritual journey that must be undertaken with sincerity and perseverance. This book provides deep insights into the concept of education, which involves two main elements, namely the educator (*mu'allim*) and the student (*muta'allim*). These two elements play a very important role in the success of education. The approach used in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* emphasizes ethics, manners, and moral responsibility in the learning process (Nasihin, 2018).

In the first part of this book, al-Zarnuji outlines various criteria that an educator must possess, including the ability to teach knowledge effectively and guide students towards a deeper understanding. An educator must not only master the material being taught, but also have the ability to instill moral and religious values in students. This shows that education in Islam is not limited to the cognitive process, but also involves affective and spiritual aspects.

Students also have a very vital role in achieving educational goals. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, al-Zarnuji emphasizes the importance of humility, sincerity, and discipline in learning. Students are expected to have good learning ethics and to be able to use the learning process as a means to get closer to Allah SWT. This confirms that education in Islam is not only aimed at intellectual development, but also at shaping individuals with noble character (Bafadhol, 2017).

Through these concepts, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* provides clear guidance on how the relationship between educators and students should be in the context of Islamic education. This book is important because it underlines the importance of ethics and manners in the teaching and learning process, which are often overlooked in modern educational practices. Thus, an analysis of the concepts of educators and students in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* provides valuable insights for the development of education based on Islamic values.

Education in Islam not only requires mastery of subject matter, but also demands the development of good attitudes and behavior in accordance with religious teachings. Therefore, an analysis of the concepts of educators and students in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji can make a significant contribution to improving the quality of education in the Muslim world. In addition, the concepts contained in this book can be adapted and applied in various contemporary educational contexts, whether in schools, Islamic boarding schools, or other educational institutions (Sartika & Erni Munastiwi, 2019).

In the history of Islamic educational thought, there are a number of figures who have played an important role in shaping educational theory and practice. One of the most famous works is *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji. This book was written in the 13th century AD, in a society that was still heavily influenced by classical Islamic thought, with a focus on religious teaching and moral development.

Although written centuries ago, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* remains an important reference in Islamic education studies to this day. Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji was a scholar known for his profound thoughts on education. He realized that the teaching and learning process involves not only the transfer of knowledge, but also the development of character, manners, and ethics. Therefore, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* provides clear guidance on how the relationship between educators and students should be established, as well as how education can be a means to increase closeness to God (Ari Khairurrijal Fahmi, 1975).

This book consists of several chapters that discuss various important aspects of education, ranging from the role of educators, learning ethics, to the methods used in learning.

One of the salient points in this work is the emphasis on the importance of sincere intentions in learning, both on the part of the educator and the student. According to al-Zarnuji, good and sincere intentions are the main key to achieving the true goal of education, which is to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT. Not only that, al-Zarnuji also reminds us that educators must have the ability to guide students wisely, set a good example, and maintain good manners in every interaction. As educators, they are expected not only to teach knowledge, but also to instill moral values that can shape the character of students. This shows that education in Islam pays close attention to the ethical and moral dimensions of the teaching process.

Likewise, al-Zarnuji emphasizes that students must have a good attitude towards learning. This includes sincerity, discipline, and respect for teachers and the learning process itself. In Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, students are taught not only to pursue knowledge diligently, but also to maintain good manners in seeking knowledge, such as being humble and patient in facing learning difficulties.

This study aims to examine and analyze the educational concepts contained in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, particularly regarding the roles of educators and students. By studying this classic work, we can explore educational values that can be adapted and applied in modern education systems. In addition, a deeper understanding of educational concepts in Islam can provide new perspectives on improving the quality of education in the Muslim world (Al Faruq, Umar; Noviani, 2021).

In the modern era, the world of education faces many challenges, such as a crisis of morality, educational inequality, and a decline in ethics in the learning process. Therefore, the lessons from Ta'lim al-Muta'allim are highly relevant. This book offers practical solutions by emphasizing the importance of morality and ethics in education, which demands not only academic achievement but also the formation of good character.

Through this analysis, it is hoped that readers can understand how the roles of educators and students in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim can make a positive contribution to improving the quality of education that is more sustainable, holistic, and oriented towards the formation of noble character. By understanding the core teachings in this work, education in Islam can be more directed towards producing individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have high moral qualities.

Literature Review

The theoretical study in the context of analyzing Ta'lim al-Muta'allim by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji focuses on the main concepts put forward by al-Zarnuji regarding education, particularly the roles of educators and students. Understanding the educational theory in this work is very important for exploring Islamic educational values that can be implemented in the contemporary world of education. In this study, there are several relevant theories, both from the perspective of Islamic educational theory and the philosophical approach that underlies education in this work.

1. Islamic Education Theory: Education as a Character-Building Process

Education in Islam does not only focus on achieving intellectual intelligence, but also on character or moral formation. Al-Zarnuji, through Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, argues that true knowledge is knowledge that is not only intellectually useful, but also plays a role in shaping individuals who are morally and spiritually good. This concept is closely related to the theory of Islamic education, which states that the main goal of education is to produce individuals with good intellectual and moral qualities, which, in al-Zarnuji's perspective, is "useful knowledge" ('ilm naf'i) ('ilm naf'i) (Ismail, 2021).

This theory can be linked to the thinking of earlier Islamic philosophers, such as al-Ghazali, who also emphasized that knowledge must be balanced with the formation of character. In Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, the educational process is not limited to learning material, but also includes teaching religious values and morality that can shape the character of good students.

Therefore, education in al-Zarnuji's view is a means to guide individuals towards progress not only in intellectual aspects, but also in spiritual and moral dimensions (Mufidah, 2022).

In al-Zarnuji's theory, educators or *mu'allim* have a very important role in determining the quality of education. Educators are not only teachers but also mentors and role models for students. This concept reflects the Islamic view that sees educators as people who not only teach with knowledge but also teach with good morals and character. Educators in al-Zarnuji's view are expected to have high moral and spiritual qualifications, because students will emulate not only the knowledge imparted, but also the morals displayed by educators (Asbari et al., 2024). Al-Zarnuji teaches that educators must have the ability to educate the hearts of students. Therefore, in addition to mastering knowledge, an educator must be able to set an example in terms of manners, attitude, and behavior. In this context, al-Zarnuji's educational theory leads to the view that an educator must position themselves as an ideal model for students in all aspects of life, both in teaching knowledge and in daily life.

2. The Theory of the Role of Students (Muta'allim)

As opposed to the role of educators, students or *muta'allim* also have an important role in the educational process. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, al-Zarnuji emphasizes that learners must have good manners and attitudes in seeking knowledge. This is in line with Islamic educational theory, which states that learners must strive diligently and earnestly in seeking knowledge, with the aim that the knowledge gained is truly useful (Darmalaksana, 2021).

This theory is also related to the teachings mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith, which encourage Muslims to always seek knowledge and increase their knowledge. However, al-Zarnuji underlines that the pursuit of knowledge must be done with a humble attitude, full of respect for teachers, and with a sincere intention to get closer to Allah SWT. In al-Zarnuji's view, good students are not only diligent in their studies, but also have respect for the knowledge they are learning and the teachers who teach it.

Furthermore, al-Zarnuji emphasizes the importance of patience and discipline in learning. This is the foundation of Islamic educational theory, which teaches that in order to obtain truly useful knowledge, one must go through a process that is not easy and full of challenges. Good students must be prepared to face difficulties, overcome obstacles, and remain enthusiastic about achieving their educational goals, namely acquiring useful knowledge and perfecting their character (Nasihin, 2018).

One important element that al-Zarnuji also emphasizes is sincere intention in learning. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, al-Zarnuji reminds us that the knowledge we seek must be based on sincere intentions for Allah SWT, not for worldly purposes such as wealth, honor, or fame. This concept reminds us of the main principle in Islamic education, which emphasizes that all activities, including learning and teaching, must be intended to obtain Allah's pleasure (Wiguna, 2021).

This theory is closely related to Islamic teachings that prioritize intention in every action. As stated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW: "Indeed, deeds depend on intentions" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). This sincere intention not only guarantees the blessings of the knowledge gained, but also encourages students to apply that knowledge in their daily lives in a manner consistent with religious teachings.

3. The Theory of Islamic Educational Ethics

In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, al-Zarnuji emphasizes ethics and manners in the learning process. These ethics apply not only to the relationship between educators and students, but also to the relationship between students and knowledge itself. Al-Zarnuji teaches that students must have good manners in learning, from respecting teachers to maintaining good character in the learning process itself. This learning ethic is very important to create an atmosphere conducive to the development of knowledge and character (Fahdurrosi & El-Yunusi, 2024).

This theory of educational ethics is in line with the principles of education in Islam, which emphasize that knowledge must be sought in a good and proper manner and applied with full responsibility. A student is not only valued for their intellectual abilities, but also for the moral integrity and ethics they demonstrate in their life.

The theory of education in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* can also be categorized as transformative learning. Al-Zarnuji suggests that the educational process should not only be a transfer of knowledge, but also a transformation of the self. Learning should not only influence the mind, but also the heart and behavior of students. Education in Islam, according to al-Zarnuji, is a means to transform individuals into better people, who are closer to Allah and able to contribute positively to society (Nasihin, 2018). In a broader context, al-Zarnuji's theory regarding the relationship between educators and students also shows that there is significant social involvement in education. Al-Zarnuji reminds us that education must foster a sense of social responsibility in students. Education should not only focus on personal development, but also on how individuals can benefit society and religion. This is reflected in Islamic teachings, which view knowledge as a tool for improving the quality of social life and humanity as a whole (Fahdurrosi & El-Yunusi, 2024).

The theoretical study in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji reveals various important dimensions of Islamic education, which not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also on the formation of character, ethics, and spirituality. Through an understanding of the theories contained in this book, we can see how education in Islam has a broader purpose, namely the formation of individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have noble character and a commitment to religious values.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis, which aims to explore the concepts of education in the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meaning contained in the text of the book in depth, with a focus on understanding the Islamic education theory applied by al-Zarnuji. This method also allows the researcher to analyze the relationship between the concept of educator (*mu'allim*) and learner (*muta'allim*) in the context of holistic Islamic education (Swendra, 2018).

The main source of data in this study is *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* itself, which is a classical text that discusses Islamic education, particularly the roles of educators and learners. To enrich the analysis, this study will also examine related literature, including interpretations of the book and secondary sources that discuss Islamic education from a contemporary perspective. These secondary data sources include textbooks, scientific journals, and articles relevant to the concept of education in Islam as well as studies of other Islamic educational thoughts (Kadir, 2003).

The data collection process was carried out using a literature study technique, namely reading and studying *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* and other supporting literature. The collected data was then analyzed using a content analysis approach, in which the researcher identified the main themes in this book related to the roles of educators and students, as well as how these concepts are applied in the context of Islamic education. This analysis aims to understand the deeper meaning of the text and relate it to current educational practices. The results of this analysis are expected to provide new insights into the development of Islamic education that is relevant to the challenges of the times (Moeleong, 2006).

Results

This study aims to analyze the concepts of educators and students in the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Sheikh Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji, which provides in-depth guidance on ethics and the roles of educators and students in the learning process from an Islamic perspective. Through a qualitative approach and content analysis of this book, this study found several

important insights regarding the relationship between educators and students and ethical values in education. Among the results of this study are:

- 1) **The Concept of Educator (Mu'allim).** This study emphasizes that the role of educators in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim is not limited to teaching knowledge, but also includes guiding students and instilling moral and spiritual values in them. Educators are expected to have high moral integrity and to be role models in terms of character and manners. Educators must be able to guide students not only in terms of knowledge, but also in the formation of good character. The results of the study show that al-Zarnuji emphasizes the importance of sincere intentions from educators in teaching. Teaching that is done with good intentions, namely to obtain the pleasure of Allah SWT, is the key to creating a learning process that is spiritually and intellectually beneficial. In addition, educators must also pay attention to manners or ethics in every interaction with students, because education in Islam is not only about the transfer of knowledge, but also about instilling moral values that can shape good character.
- 2) **The Concept of Students (Muta'allim).** Students in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim also have a very important role in achieving educational goals. Al-Zarnuji emphasizes the importance of humility, discipline, and sincerity in learning. Students are expected not only to pursue knowledge diligently but also to maintain ethics and manners during the learning process. Learning must be carried out with sincere intentions to get closer to Allah SWT, and not only to achieve worldly goals. The results of this study show that al-Zarnuji teaches students to maintain good relationships with their teachers and the knowledge they learn. Students must also have the ability to be patient and overcome difficulties that arise during the learning process, because the pursuit of knowledge in Islam is not an easy journey. Thus, a good attitude in learning is very important to achieve maximum results, both intellectually and morally.
- 3) **Relationship Between Educators and Students.** One of the main findings in this study is the importance of a mutually respectful relationship between educators and students. In Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, al-Zarnuji emphasizes that this relationship must be built on good ethics and manners. Educators must act as role models and mentors, while students must respect their teachers and strive to learn sincerely and humbly. This study also reveals that the relationship between educators and students in the context of Islamic education is a continuous and responsible one. Educators not only function as teachers, but also as spiritual guides who help students develop holistically, both cognitively and morally.
- 4) **Ethical and Moral Values in Education.** The results of the study also show that al-Zarnuji strongly emphasizes the importance of ethics and morals in education. For al-Zarnuji, useful knowledge is knowledge that not only enriches one's knowledge but also shapes good character and brings one closer to Allah. Education in Islam, as explained in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, must include moral and spiritual dimensions, which are often overlooked in modern education that focuses more on academic achievement alone. The importance of ethics in education shows that Islamic education not only teaches knowledge but also shapes individuals with noble character, who are able to apply knowledge in daily life in a manner consistent with religious teachings.

Al-Zarnuji developed profound thoughts on the role of these two elements in education, with an emphasis on ethics and morality in the teaching and learning process. In this discussion, we will examine the Islamic educational theories that underlie al-Zarnuji's thinking and their relevance to the context of modern education.

Education in Islam has a broader purpose than simply transferring knowledge. The main purpose of education in Islam, as reflected in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim (Al-Zarnuji, n.d.), is to produce individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have noble character. This concept is in line with the views of al-Ghazali, a major figure in Islamic education, who emphasized that education should not only focus on cognitive learning, but also on character building or good morals. Al-Ghazali stated that useful knowledge (*ilmu nafi*) is knowledge that

not only improves a person's intellectual abilities, but also shapes a personality that can contribute positively to society (Abdi Syahril Harahap, 2022).

Al-Zarnuji's ideas in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* are also in line with Islamic educational theory, which focuses on character building. According to al-Zarnuji, educators are not only teachers of knowledge, but also shapers of morals and character. Educators must possess good character, high morals, and the ability to be role models for their students. This is in line with the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which states that "A teacher is an example to be followed by his students." Thus, Islamic education in al-Zarnuji's view is more than just academic achievement, but also an effort to shape the character of students to be civilized and have noble morals (Yunan Harahap et al., 2024).

In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, al-Zarnuji describes the role of an educator (*mu'allim*) as someone who must have a deep understanding of the material being taught and be able to set a good example in all aspects of life. In this context, an educator is someone who not only masters knowledge, but also has good character, sets an example in daily behavior, and is able to motivate students to follow religious teachings well (Tumiran, Siregar et al., 2024).

This concept is highly relevant to Islamic educational theory developed by educational figures such as al-Shatibi and Ibn Khaldun. According to al-Shatibi, educators must possess high moral character because education itself is not only aimed at transferring knowledge, but also at shaping the souls of students. In this case, educators are not only teachers, but also leaders who have a moral responsibility to shape the character of students.

On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that educators must master not only theoretical knowledge, but also effective methods for transferring knowledge to students. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, al-Zarnuji also teaches that educators must be able to teach knowledge in a fun and easy-to-understand manner, and not just provide theory but also show how that knowledge is applied in real life. Thus, in al-Zarnuji's view, educators are well-rounded individuals who not only teach knowledge but also guide students in moral and spiritual aspects (Sholichah, 2025).

In addition to the role of educators, al-Zarnuji also emphasized the importance of the role of students in achieving educational goals. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, students (*muta'allim*) are expected to have humility, discipline, and sincerity in learning. This is in line with the principles of Islamic education, which teach that in order to obtain useful knowledge, one must seek knowledge diligently, respectfully, and with sincere intentions solely to draw closer to Allah SWT.

This concept is in accordance with the educational theories developed by al-Farabi and al-Razi, which state that students must be humble and willing to accept knowledge from their teachers. In al-Zarnuji's view, students must also realize that the knowledge they learn is not only for personal gain, but also for the benefit of humanity. Therefore, students are expected to study not only to obtain degrees or worldly wealth, but to acquire knowledge that can bring blessings and benefits to themselves and society (Agustia et al., 2021).

Al-Zarnuji teaches that students must have patience and perseverance in facing learning difficulties. Good students are those who do not give up easily and always strive to improve themselves through education. This reflects Al-Zarnuji's thinking, which focuses on a long and challenging learning process that requires patience and perseverance to achieve higher goals, namely to get closer to Allah and become a better person.

Al-Zarnuji emphasizes that ethics in education are very important for creating a conducive learning atmosphere. These ethics include the attitude of students towards teachers, the attitude of students towards knowledge, and the attitude of students towards each other. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, al-Zarnuji teaches that students must respect teachers, acknowledge their strengths, and maintain good manners in every interaction during the learning process. This ethics is important to create a harmonious relationship between educators and students, as well as to create a healthy and productive learning atmosphere.

This learning ethics is also in line with Islamic teachings which emphasize that knowledge must be sought in the right way and in accordance with religious teachings. As stated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, “Knowledge is a light that Allah gives to His servants whom He wills.” Thus, ethics in seeking knowledge in al-Zarnuji's view not only includes politeness and respect for teachers, but also sincerity in maintaining the intentions and goals of learning. (Syarifuddin, Mukhlis Malik, 2024). Although Ta'lim al-Muta'allim was written centuries ago, the concepts proposed by al-Zarnuji remain relevant and applicable in modern education. An approach that emphasizes character development, ethics, and moral values in education is a very important necessity in today's world of education. In a modern era that often focuses on academic achievement and instant results, al-Zarnuji's concepts provide an important reminder of the importance of character building and ethics in the teaching and learning process (Hanzalah & Harahap, 2025).

Education based on Islamic values, as taught in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, can help overcome the problems faced by modern education systems, such as the crisis of morality, educational inequality, and ethical decline. Therefore, applying the principles contained in this book can make a significant contribution to the development of a more holistic and sustainable education, which aims not only to enlighten the mind but also to shape noble character.

Conclusion

This study shows that the concepts of educators and students in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim are highly relevant to the current educational context. Al-Zarnuji provides clear guidance on how the relationship between educators and students in Islamic education should be, emphasizing ethics, manners, and moral responsibility in every aspect of learning. These concepts can be adapted and applied in various educational contexts, whether in schools, Islamic boarding schools, or other educational institutions.

Through an analysis of the concepts of educators and students in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, it is hoped that we can improve the quality of education to be more sustainable, holistic, and oriented towards the formation of good character. Islamic education aims not only to educate the mind, but also to shape individuals with noble character, who are able to make a positive contribution to society and religion.

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