

Aim Formulation of Education: An Analysis of the Book *Ta'lim al Muta' Allim*

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Abstract

Essentially, it is requisite that each activity is necessary to have a clear purpose as it was designed to be a well applicable plan. Similarly, in the field of education, the process of transfer of knowledge and value has been the central notion in the order for performing 'person with noble character'. This idea has been outlined and pointed out by some Muslim scholars (*ulama*), and one of them is the concept of al-Zarnuji in his kitab (book) *Ta'lim al Muta'allim*, the monumental work containing fundamental principles in education, which has been used in the Muslim world in the context of education. The method employed to investigate in this article used a descriptive analysis. The result showed that al-Zarnuji proposed three categories in the formulation of objectives in education. Those are firstly, God's pleasure; secondly, individual development; and thirdly, social orientation. This study is highly expected to enrich the concept of education, particularly in designing the intention as the basic element for educational process.

Keywords: al-Zarnuji, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, aim-formulation, God pleasure, individual development, social orientation

1. Introduction

The purpose of education is a basic element in the education and thus its determination is necessary. It is because, without formulating the clear and true goal, its implementation will become difficult to achieve. In addition, the aim of education itself functions as: first, an applicable way; second, a plan designed to be achieved in the process of education (Tirtaraharja and La Sula, 1999:37). From this perspective, its aim can be reached essentially through various process with the accurately clear aim to create the person with noble character. However, these aims cannot be easily achieved as planned without the obstacle.

One of many issues in accordance with the aim of education is that the output of education was not compatible with the designed goal. As for some indicators, as Lickona expressed (1992 : 13-19), can be seen from phenomena worrying the community, such as increasing violence and vandalism; stealing (unsupported dishonesty); cheating (unsupported fraud); disrespect for authority (the lack of respect for parents and teachers); peer Cruelty (peer influence is strong in violence); bigotry (declining work ethic); bad language (use of language and words on deteriorating); sexual procsity and abuse (increasing self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse, alcohol and sex); increasing self-centredness and declining civic responsibility (increased individuality and a low sense of responsibility of individuals and citizens); self destructive behavior (their mutual mistrust and hatred among fellow).

Subsequently, these issues can be assumed and identified as the weakness of the understanding in the reality of the education in the human personality as a basic ways. Furthermore, if these problems happen, then the knowledge achieved from the process of education can not give the useful effect, and moreover can impact the peril. As Nawawi al Bantani (n.d.) argued, the useful knowledge is one which can give the good and true understanding on the belief to God, can limit the worldly passion and can squeeze the the hereafter passion as well as make far away from the needless action (p.33).

Therefore, it emerged a question, what is the reality of aim formulation in Islamic education? This is important, due to necessity for the discussion in the order for resolving the formulation used to the main way in the implementation of education nowadays. Indication for gaining the useful knowledge is one of which should perform to create individuals with noble character values. As Al-Zarnuji argued in his kitab *Ta'lim al Muta'allim*, the decline of the learners in acquisition of knowledge is due to their ignorance for the true rules and neglecting

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some requirements (2008 : 3). One of the fundamental requirements in Islam is derived from the purpose well formulated, as in al-Zarnuji's *Ta'lim al Muta'allim*.

2. A Glance of Ta'lim al Muta'allim's Portrayal

This book was written by shaikh al-Zarnuji in 13th century during the last Abbasite caliph. Concerning the significance of the content of this book (*kitab*), as Syamsuddin (2012) outlined, this book (*kitab*) is widely recognized as the monumental work, a very regarded existence (p.5). In addition, this kitab is also much used as reference and research material in writing of scientific works, especially in the field of education. This kitab is not only used to some Muslim scientists, but also by Western scientists and orientalist. In Indonesia, this kitab has been studied and scrutinized and is popular among almost all Islamic education institutions, particularly in both pesantren in Islamic traditional boarding, Salafiyah, due to that this kitab has been as a main reference for the students 'santri' in acquisition of the knowledge, and modern institution, such as pesantren Gontor (Nata, 2003 : 107). The distinctive feature of this kitab is about the matter contained. Furthermore, it is actually that this kitab, while containing the principle of pursuit of knowledge, is also more about the ethical foundation for teaching-learning process in the base of *religious shade* (Syamsuddin, 2012 : 6).

This kitab is Al-Zarnuji's treatise as yet existed. According to Haji Khalifah in his book *Kasyf al Zunun 'an Asami' al kitab al funun* as cited by Affandi, it is argued that between fifteen thousands of literature titles laede in 17 century it is noted an elucidation that *Ta'lim al Muta'allim* is one treatise of Al-Zarnuji (1995 : 67). In addition, it is sufficiently measured among the world scientists. As Affandi outlined, the translation of the book, *Ta'lim*, has been first published in Mursidabad (1265), in Tunis (1286 and 1873), in Cairo (1281, 1307, 1318), in Istanbul (1292), and in Kasan (1898). Moreover, this kitab has been given some commentaries into seven publications : first, on behalf of Nau'i (n.d.) ; scond, Ibrahim ibn Nu'man (996H/1588M) ; third, Sa'rani (710-711 H) ; fourth, Ishaq ibn Ibnu Rumi al Qili (720) with the title *Mir'ah al Thalibiin* ; fifth, Qadi ibn Zakariya al Anshari A'ashaf ; sixth, Otman Pazari, 1986 with the title *Tafhim al Mutafahhim* ; seventh, H.B. AL Faqir, without date and notification (Affandi, 1995:67). The popularity of *Ta'lim al Muta'allim* is recognised by both Western and Eastern scientist. In addition, according to Muhammad Abdul Qadir Ahmad, this kitab is the monumental work, in which the pious person, like Al-Zarnuji, was preoccupied with the educational sphere, and thus in his life only did he write one book (1986 : 24).

Nowdays, this kitab has been given comments by some scholars, like Syech Ibrahim ibn Ismail with the entitled work named *Syarh Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, and Syech Yahya ibn Nashuh (d. 1007 H/1598 M), who is the poet from Turkey, Imam Abd al Wahab al Sya'rani, a sufician, as well as al Qadhi Zakaria al Anshari (Yunus, 1990 :15). In this kitab, there has been concluded some views from the experts of Islamic education and been strengthened in particular al Ghazali's idea. Accordingly, it is, in particular, that this kitab characterises the educational science, and gives such an impact in Islamic value for the sake of seeking knowledge, even more as the manual for the teacher to educate and aim (Yunus, 1990 : 155). Moreover, as Bisri (1992) argued that to form the future generations, trained as well as fearful to God (good spirituality), in other words to form a civilised generation, there are no particular guidelines apart from the book *Ta'limul Muta'alim*.

2.1. A Brief of Al-Zarnuji's Bakground

As far as the information of the author name, there are two names referred to him, namely Al-Zarnuji who is Burhanuddin Al-Zarnuji, who lived in 6th century or 13 century and Tajuddin Al-Zarnuji who is Nu'man Ibrahim who passed away in 6th century (Athiyatullah,1970 : 58-59). Regarding his career, according to Plessner cited by Yahya, he was one religious scholar of Hanafith Madhab around 13th century, and thus he could be recognised as in year 593 H with his treatise, *Ta'lim al Muta'allim* (2005 : 2).

In regard to the place where he lived in, it is referred that he lived in Zarnuq or Zarnuj (Athiyullah, 1970 : 58). Moreover, there has been an assumption that the place for his birth was the famous state located at around Tigris river, namely Eastern Turkistan. When assumming implicitly about the date of his life, he did not mention it in his kitab. It is in general that he lived in the last period of Abbasite chaliph, where its last caliphate was al Mu'tashim (1258M/656H).

Some of the information regarding the period of scholars' life which is regarded as Al-Zarnuji'teacher or with whom Al-Zarnuji had at least corresponded will shed the light on this problem. Among them, there are (1) Fakhr al Islam al Hasan Ibn Mansur al Farghani Khadikan who died in 592/ 1196 ; (2) Zahir al- Din al Hasan Ibn 'Ali al

Marghinani, who died circa 600/ 1204 ; (3) Fakhr al Din al Kashani who died in 587/1191; (4) Imam Burhan al-Din Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Farghinani al-Marghinani who died in 593 /1195; (5) Imam Rukn al-Din Muhammad bin Abi Bakr Imam Khwarzade who died in 491-576 H (Ahmad, 1986 : 14).

In accordance with the reason for his completion through treatise, it can be outlined with a very real purpose at that time. Furthermore, in 1203, such the chapter on the book has been compiled by al Zarnuji, namely 13 chapters. Because, at that time, many students had much passion to struggle both for education and for the attainment of knowledge; unfortunately falling short of their aim, in which this purpose was considered as modest or splendid. These students, according to him, did not find the success for their goal because almost of them were not mindful of the right methods of learning. In other words, they did not abide what was the right for them and floundered it with wasted time. Therefore, according to Grunebaum & Abel (1947), al-Zarnuji decided to explain to the student a method of study which he had read about and heard from his own teachers (p.2).

3. The Significance of Aim Formulation in Education

Prior to further discussion of significance of aim formulation in education, it is necessary to understand what is education originating from Arabic roots. As Halstead (2004) expounded, there are in fact three words in Arabic that are normally translated as 'education'; one emphasizing knowledge, one growth to maturity and one the development of good manners (p. 519). Moreover, there is a significant area of overlap between the three words. The core of the Muslim concept of education is the aim of producing good Muslims with an understanding of Islamic rules of behaviour and a strong knowledge of and commitment to the faith.

Meanwhile, the aim formulation of education is all the effort determined to achieve through the educational implementation (Abdullah, 1999 ; Ramayulis, 2008). In the principle of *Ushuliyah*, it is asserted that '*al umuuru bi maqashidiha*' (Al Ahdal, n.d., p.5) which means that each activity is necessary to be oriented to the purpose, 'a plan having been designed'. Accordingly, it indicates that in the field of education there should be oriented to the goal planned and achieved, not solely oriented to such matters. Subsequently, the aim of education, particularly in Islam, becomes one component of education necessary to be formulated earlier, before designing other educational elements. Notwithstanding, regarding the significance of the purpose, it is necessary for the implementation of the true learning, while before further discussion into the main study, it is worthwhile to recognise the meaning of the aim. As Marimba (1989) argued, the significance of aim is the qualified effort which can be decided in order to aim it into the challenges and prospects, in which this appertains the basic foundation to achieve other goals (p. 46).

Moreover, the aim in this case is highly important, to function as the termination of all the activity and to direct all involved to the education, particularly as the fundamental measurement of the success of a learning-teaching process and confer the worth nature. The quality of aim, itself, characterises a dynamic nature and evolves to the standardised development of human life. Both way and result willing to achieve shall be designed in the goal determined. Therefore, this goal (Bahri) will guide and aim each process and action, in order to be always on the right way, in which besides as the way decision, the aim also has the role to control such implementation in education (2011 : 28).

Similarly, this aim can focus on the true effort into the purpose designed to give the measurement and evaluation for these endeavors in education. As for the aim formulation of Islamic education, according to Marimba, it should be oriented to the reality of education which comprises as follows : 1) the purpose and the task for human; 2) considering the human essential; 3) the demand for society; 4) the ideal life dimension of Islam (1989 : 46). Through four kinds in approach to this purpose, an analytical study of Al-Zarnuji's ideas was investigated, in order to be properly understandable and thus applicable in nowadays education system.

It is therefore expected that each action is necessary to have a clear purpose as it was planned to be a well applicable aim. Thus, it is necessary for both the learner and the educator to recognise each other pertaining to the right and responsibility. It is known that education, one of the human ways to solve the problems, is an effort to study in cooperation with other human to achieve the purpose (Arifin, 1987). It means a standardised condition was made as a quality to decide the success of education. In other words, the aim of education, in tiny meaning, is the qualified condition required as a result of the study indicated to the transformation of person mentally. From this, the significance of aim, itself, can be defined as a plan of what is designed by the human being, placed on the concerned centre for the sake of implementing it through self arrangement.

4. Al-Zarnuji's Ideas on the Aim Formulation of Education

Assuming the other scholar in order to make clear understanding in regard to the real purpose of education in Islam, it is sure that Islamic education is not solely covering the cases regarding the character (attitude), as well as the belief (spirituality), but also more hoping to make worthwhile into the purpose (vision), curriculum and its practical implication. However, some Muslim educators have observed that human perfection can not achieve without integrating the religious knowledge and the science, and thus have taken an essence on the extent of its spirituality, character and its benefits.

As al Abrasy outlined, designing the purpose is to prepare the learner's ability, encompassing 'competence and technics' or even the effort to master both these two, in order to achieve the worldly life as to sustain the spirituality and religious activity (1975 :22-25). In addition, the aim of education in Islam, Al Attas argued that the education in which both two models of human are involved in the relationship has the priority in performing the person into 'perfect man', as being part of the social elements (1979: 2-4). It means that education should cater the growth of man comprising spiritual, intellectual, and physical aspect, both individually and collectively. Similarly as from the formulation of objectives in Islamic education resulted on the aim of education in Islam as stipulated in the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Jedda-Mecca, here is "Education aims at the ballanced growth of total personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, the rasional self, feeling and bodile sense"(Arifin, 1991 : 4).

In addition, the purpose of acquisition of knowledge, as Al-Zarnuji argued, is in accordance with his statement in his kitab, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, that a learner who has the endeavor to pursuit the knowlegde must behave the true intention. In addition, he argued that one's intention in learning should be oriented on the following matters: 1)to reach the pleasure of Allah; 2)to achieve the happiness in hereafter; 3)to eliminate the foolishness to him and others; 4)to revive the religious matters; 5)to maintain Islamic religion; 6)to praise the grateful blessing form *aql* (cognitive) bestowed by God and; 7) grateful to health body (Al-Zarnuji, 2008 : 16). Furthermore, in detailed exposition regarding both social and individual development, there was presented such discussion in order to comprehend and investigate its content, and thus will exert the impact to the education nowadays.

4.1.Worhipping God (*Ibadah*) as the Ultimate Aim of Education

More productive learning outcome can be achieved when the teachers and students work hard and create a good relation. In further, teachers and students have to understand that learning is an activity to worship Allah. Apart from the teaching strategies, the teaching and learning process should be inspired by the spirits to worship Allah. It lies the central position of the obligation for all the Moslems, as the Qur'an verse (al-Dzariyat: 56) states:

"And I (Allah) don't create human being and genie, except for worshipping to Me (Allah)."

It means that all the effort in the process of education, solely in sincere essence from God, is basically an observance. As the observant value, all assigned as the leader in this world through the process of education contains the observant meaning to God. The submission of the education has to be oriented to develop the quite commitment emerging from the love (*mahabba*), in which all the human potential should be as optimal as possible to make the person worship and able to the responsibility as the leader of this world (*khalifa fi al-ard*). In addition, as Azim ilustrated, the significant base of aim in pursuit of knowledge, in Islam, is that the learner can perform to worship into God, due to the main point into the righteousness, the benevolence as well as the exquisite goal (1973 :276). As in Al-Zarnuji's statement (2008 : 16), it is the core of education for the sake of God's pleasure (*Lillah Ta'ala*). This regard is appropriate to his 'syair 'poetry as follows : "that this world is more little than negligible thing, and a person occupying it is more contemptible than despicable thing. It, with its its glamorous essence, ignores and deafens whoever, and thus he/she is confused without the direction as the sign (*hujjah*) "(p.19).

From above statements, it is obvious that the emphasis of al-Zarnuji's ideas on the education is centered on the God's pleasure widely understood as the center for all the effort through worldly regards, both social orientation and individual development. The ultimate aim of education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of individual, community as well as humanity at large.

4.2. Individual Development

The significant aim of education, mainly in Islam, is to perform the person with noble values. This shall help him grow to become good person who will lead successful and fruitful lives and aspire to reach the reward both in the world and in hereafter. In order to to comprehend what exactly is meant by 'good person', it requires an understanding of the Islamic concept of the human being. As Halstead (2004) outlined: "the goodness of human beings on an Islamic view lies in their willingness: (a) to accept the obligations of divine stewardship; (b) to seek to take on the divine attributes such as *hikma* (wisdom) and '*adl* (justice) which have been clarified through divine revelation; (c) to strive for the balanced growth of the integrated personality, made up of the heart, the spirit, the intellect, the feelings and the bodily senses; (d) to develop their potential to become *insan kamil* (the perfect human being); (e) to allow the whole of their lives to be governed by Islamic principles, so that whatever they do, however mundane, becomes 'an act of worship' "(p. 523).

Accordingly, these can be cultivated the values as the orientation in the order for becoming 'good person'. Similarly, the orientation of the education in al-Zarnuji's view is concerned to the individual development, both in cognitive aspect ('*aql*) and in health body (*jism*). Similarly, in acquisition of knowledge, it is necessary in the base for the sake of the intention to be grateful to God as for the intellectual and physical endowment (Al-Zarnuji, 2008 : 17). The learners should have the orientation aimed at that the proces in education employed is to comprehend and master the knowledge and thus this is to limit the ignorance. Simply, the ignorance and the intelligence of the person is affected by the extent of information achievable and from the knowledge understandable. Furter, from the health body, this can impact the learning in acquisition of knowledge within the person. As suggested, there is the health mind located in the health body. It means that in health condition, the learners can make concentration and intencity for accepting the knowledge gained and organised by the intellect.

As in the Hadith, the Prophet stated "each child is born in nature, so his oral nature should explore his will, and thus his parents become him Jewish, Christian and Majusi" (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim). It means that each child has the potential essence necessary to be continuously placed exemplary habituation both in the Madrasa and in the school. Due to strategic existance of the natural tendency, Langgulung (1991 : 361) recommended that this nature be necessary to optimise its development in order to approuch the implementation of Divine attribute of 99 kinds in the Wonderful Names (*al-Asma' al-Husna*). In addition, Allah also has mandated the humans to utilise the potency to serve the leader (*khalifa*) in this world. This is to ilustrate that how big and precious the potential is endowed by Allah to the human.

One inspiration emphasised to the learners in the educational process, as al-Zarnuji suggested in *Ta'lim al Muta'allim*, is to fade the ignorant essence in theirselves. Accordingly, its consequence is that each human is necessary to study continuously in anytime and anywhere without the exception. It is because the human is born in this world without having anything and bringing something. It is said that "learn because of nobody from you born with knowledge ; it is different between the knowledgeable person and the ignorant one"(Kholiq, n.d. : 9). Through the educational process, the human being will, thus, achieve the knowlegde.

Therefore, the aim of education both formal and informal is to explore the hidden potencies through conducive learning process, because each learner is the peculiar human who has the readiness and the talents both intellectual and physical different from one another. In addition, the aim of education is sufficiently necessary to provide the guidance services appropriate to learners divergence in order to facilitate the optimalisation for individual development.

4.3. Social Orientation

In regard to education orientation, it may become a means to preserve, extend as well as transmit a society's cultural heritage and traditional values, but can also be a tool for social change and innovation (Halstead, 2004 : 523). It means that the meaning of community in Islam extends from the local level of the family to the worldwide community of believers (*umma*). Al-Zarnuji's notion of the purpose in education, i.e. to revive the religious matters, to maintain Islamic religion and to eliminate the ignorance in the society (2008 : 16), can be analysed into the category as the *social orientation*, in which these three functions above is matched to the social community at large.

Subsequently, from this description, it can be analysed that the clever and pious ability of the person, according to al-Zarnuji, is not only for personal extent, but also by having to transmit and spread to the society.

It means that this transmission of knowledge has the intent in the surrounding people being out of ignorance, and thus it is hoped that theirs can be kept away from chasms of the ignorance. It indicates the learners in the process of education is necessary to have the intent that the knowledge must be spread out to the milieu of people for the sake of observant essence. As in the Qur'an, "so whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom or a small ant shall see it and whoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom or a small ant shall it"(Q.S. 99 : 7-8).

In further, this can also be further analysed that the social orientation of the aim in education contains the professional purpose, in which this is intended to make a benefit for the qualified person through such perfection in the order for being to spread into the social community. Furthermore, in regard to the professional purpose, this is in accordance with the aim for the person to achieve the knowledge in the order for gaining the position in an institution. However, the attainment of that position is to make a benefit for the social community. It is obvious that to achieve the place among the society is through the knowledge.

Similarly, the aim of education in Al-Zarnuji's view, actually, is not only covering the hereafter life, but also embracing this worldly life, if exerted as a bridge or facility in gaining the religious aim. As Al-Zarnuji argued, "a person is allowed to gather the knowledge in order to gain the position, if its usage on 'amr ma'ruf nahi munkar' for the sake of implementing the righteousness, reviving the religion and preventing the disavowal, evenmore not for seeking the benefit for himself and passion referring to the bad. Accordingly, it is necessary for learners to contemplate what is intended in the process of learning, for their knowledge gained hard is on the beneficial values" (2008 : 19).

Moreover, from this statement, it is known that the purpose regarding the pursuit of knowledge encompasses the values of Islamic ideal, that is *first*, the aspect containing the value for increasing the worldly prosperity. In further, this supports a person to work hard and professionally, so that the worldly benefit can achieve maximum. The *second* one is containing the soul and hereafter values. This dimension demands the learner not to concern the worldly materialistic, while there are overviews more elevated, namely the life in hereafter. Therefore, the reflection on this value should perform the learner to be more handled from the worldly temptation. The *third* is the dimension including the meaning which can integrate between the practical side (worldly life) and the ideal one (hereafter life). It means the balanced and compatible dimension of the purpose becomes the power against the negative impact from the flaming life tempting the peacefulness of human life, both in spiritual, social, cultural, economic, and ideological aspect in human being.

According to Halstead (2004), it is true that in Islam, social existence has exactly the same goal as individual existence: the realization on earth of divinely ordained moral imperatives and the sense of community in Islam extends from the local level of the family to the worldwide community of believers (*umma*) (p.523). It is meant that there are no differences between individual and social orientation. In addition, al- Attas highlighted, it is more significant in Islam to produce a good man than a good citizen due to that the good person will be surely a good citizen, but the good citizen will not necessarily become a good person (al-Attas, 1979, p. 32). Similarly, Halstead (2004) outlined, "social and moral dimension of education in Islam is therefore eventually a matter of coming to understand and learning to follow the divine law, which contains not only universal moral principles (such as equality among people, justice and charity), but also detailed instructions relating to every aspect of human life" (p.524). It is clear that there are similarities of expositions in some perspectives of education in accordance with al-Zarnuji's ideas.

5. Conclusion

In the last discussion, it can be concluded that the true purpose in education, as Al-Zarnuji argued in his kitab, is not solely for gaining the cognitive aspect, but also for transforming the value in education. All the effort transmitted by Al-Zarnuji, also, indicates that the role in overcoming such problems in the midst of learners is derived from the purpose decision in which there was a wrong way in intention as the fundamental base during acquisition of knowledge. In otherwords, this can be classified into the three categories, namely religious duty for God's pleasure, individual development and social orientation. Accordingly, these three purposes should be based on for the sake of achieving God's pleasure in order to be happiness in hereafterlife. Therefore, it is obvious that Al-Zarnuji placed gaining God's pleasure as a primary and main priority for all the purposes. Notwithstanding, such the orientation from its categorization is apparently sparated, while its principle of their category is mutually related.

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