



Philosophy of Striving and Making a Living in Institutions of Traditional Studies

***Khairul Nizam bin Zainal Badri**^{1,a}

¹. Pusat Pengajian Al Mansoorah, Puchong, Selangor, Malaysia

^a knizamzb@almansoorah.edu.my

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*Correspondence

Author:

knizamzb@almansoorah.edu.my

Abstract

Institutions of traditional learning (pondok) are often considered as places to acquire the sciences of the hereafter. On the other hand, the statement seems to illustrate that the students brought up in the institution are not concerned with worldly matters. The learning curriculum is said not to care about the function of the mind but instead makes students passive and only follow what is presented by the teacher. Using a content analysis approach, this study pays attention to the content of the book *Ta'alim Al-Muta'allim* written by Imam Al-Zarnuji. This book is a guide for the citizens of traditional educational institutions whether in terms of curriculum, aspects of teaching and learning, and ethics of life. The main objective of this study is to see whether the use of the book can influence positive thinking and lifestyle that not only think about the question of the hereafter but also perform the responsibilities that need to be fulfilled in the world. The results of the study found that the content of the book not only focuses on educational practice, but also encourages students to earn a living but with good intentions, especially to increase knowledge. In other words, students are not taught to sideline worldly affairs but still need to be aware of worldly affairs but with a high awareness that every job must be based on the importance of worship and be able to meet the needs of the hereafter.

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INTRODUCTION

The pondok study institution is a unique educational institution because it was not only established with the aim of nurturing the values of life derived from the teachings of Islam, but also contextually adapted to the community so as to form a symbiotic view of life between the pondok residents and the local community. In other words, the establishment of a pondok educational institution is aimed at universality, which is to benefit its residents and also outsiders. Thus, the establishment of the

pondok is dual-functional; first, to supply knowledge to its residents consisting of teachers and students, and second, to develop a religious culture by sharing views of life with the surrounding community (Muthohar, 2007, p. 20).

This is because the underlying values of the pondok are composed of two main parts; first, values that have absolute truth that are fiqh-sufistic and oriented to the afterlife, and second, religious values that have relative truth, empirical and pragmatic that serve to solve various

issues of life according to religious law (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 58).

These two values have a relationship of a vertical and hierarchical nature. Usually the founder or *mudir* of the pondok preserves the values found in the first section. While the teaching staff and students preserve the values found in the second part. To ensure that the mission and vision of education is achieved, the *mudir* plays a key role in setting the curriculum and running the activities of the pondok. By using a holistic approach, then all activities that include teaching and learning activities and community achieve integration in life and are considered as worship as a whole (Mastuhu, 1994, p. 58).

But the mission and vision of education in the pondok education system is often considered to restrict the desire of the pondok occupants from thinking about worldly matters; instead, it is recommended to pay attention to the subject matter and prioritize moral education to shape the personality of students. Thus, the orientation of the purpose of education in the study of the pondok is said to be more towards the afterlife regardless of the development of the world. Pondok alumni who belong to the religious stream graduates are considered incompetent for the current economic market because they are said to not care about world affairs. Interestingly in a relatively up-to-date study conducted, some employers looked up to the religious stream graduates because they had credible characteristics and were expected to carry out responsibilities in assignments (Ghani, et al., 2011).

In addition, the weaknesses of traditional studies are also said to be so significant in terms of teaching and learning. For example, teaching is said to tend to be one-way, and learning time is considered insufficient (Isnin & Abdullah, 2020).

For some, such an education system is considered non-ideal because its main point is too much emphasis on personality development, as opposed to focusing on the development of intellectual qualities and concern for current developments. Morality is the main foundation because it is considered a pre-condition to master the obligatory knowledge (*fardu ain*) which is considered sacred. Complementary knowledge (*fardu kifayah*) is considered sufficient to be learned if it can meet the basic needs of life (Ali, 2011, p. 29).

Although considered backward, the traditional education system is the choice of some parents because they believe that the system can build students' identity, especially in terms of morals and skills in life (Zin, Azizan, Ismail, & Zainuddin, 2021).

If evaluated in terms of location, parents choose education in the pondok for their children because of its location away from the hustle and bustle of the city, which is considered suitable for learning purposes. In addition, the cost of studying in the pondok is considered very minimal because the hut is often associated with the management of *waqf* property and contributions from the public. Thus, there are a few parents who choose to send their children to the pondok because the study expenses are not so burdensome. Yet the unpleasant fact is that pondok are often

considered a last resort when parents have no way of educating their children. In other words, the pondok is considered a waste place to educate troubled teenagers (Jaafar, et al., 2017).

Given the above statement, then this writing has two goals such as; first, want to know the extent of the truth of the statement, because of course the institution of pondok education has its own approach in continuing to survive and develop infrastructure and educational needs; secondly, if the institution of pondok studies has its own approach then of course the institution has a reference to be used as a guide for teachers and students. Thus and significantly, the results of research involving reference as a guide to the residents of the pondok can refute the view that states that the teaching and learning system in the pondok has no target to achieve, and does not have a fixed period (Ali, 2011, p. 29).

At the same time the results of this study can also consider the view that states that the references used by the residents of the pondok only focus on the understanding of textual, not contextual. The reference used by the residents of the pondo is the book *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum* which is widely used in traditional studies because its content contains the concept of knowledge, practices and strategies in teaching and learning, and ethics (Maslani, Yasniwanti, Suintiah, & Nurulhaq, 2017).

METHOD

This study uses a content analysis approach. This is because the main object of the study is to examine the contents of the book *Talim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-*

Ta'allum written by Imam Al-Zarnuji who is said to have lived around the 12th and 13th centuries AD (Nata, 2003: 103). By using this approach, the contents of the book can be revealed and analyzed theoretically and technically. Theoretical refers to the essence of philosophy contained in it while technical refers to the systematic and objective found in the content of the book (Muhadjir, 2011, pp. 68-70).

Apart from that, the library approach is also used to review the life and education system of the pondok as recorded in documents in the form of books, journals and periodicals. Cross-referencing is done to facilitate the search of related documents under the same title. Moreover, it is useful to avoid duplication of data, and to be able to provide accuracy about a piece of information if the documents examined show the same data results consistently (Chey, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education Policy

The principles of traditional education are rooted in the purpose of education, a holistic approach, and its comprehensive function. Basically, the principles of education in pondok educational institutions consist of several things (Mastuhu, 1994, pp. 62-66; Bruinessen, 2012, pp. 86-89).

Table 1. Policies that become practice and impact on students' lives.

Basics	Implications
Togetherness	In the matter of rights, students are taught to put the interests of others first while in the matter of obligations,

	<p>the student needs to complete the obligations that he has before helping others. Basically, students are educated to prioritize common interests over individual interests. Although the obligation needs to be fulfilled at the individual level but, it benefits others because if it does not fulfill its obligations then its actions may cause harm or damage to others.</p>		<p>write a description in the side of the book if the teacher gives a description of a topic that needs explanation.</p>
Theocentric	<p>All events are from God and return to God. Therefore, the philosophy of education that is held in the traditional education system is based on the truth of God. Thus, all educational activities are seen as the purpose of attaining the righteousness of God. The effort to achieve the truth is the nature of every human being but the fact of the truth can only be achieved through the teachings and religious experience in Islam.</p>	Compliance	<p>Residents of the hut are educated to be patient, humble and obedient to the provisions of religious law and not to cause trouble to others. Such an attitude not only symbolizes personal glory; but also shows intelligence of heart and mind because of perseverance in living a simple life, and perseverance in acquiring knowledge in a state of deprivation and the possibility of being away from family.</p>
Proficiency in Arabic	<p>The usual text used is in Arabic. The teacher will read the text and the students will insert a line in each word and note the meaning if stated by the teacher. Usually, students will</p>	Sincere	<p>All activities are carried out voluntarily because the most important impetus is a sense of servitude to Allah SWT. This is because every activity performed is not considered as an instruction or instruction but rather as an act of worship to God.</p>
		Self-regulation	<p>Daily activities are done on their own but are monitored regularly by teachers and mudir. Such activities include residential affairs, daily expenses, food and drink, and the need to study. Students also</p>

	need to arrange a learning schedule and classes to attend.		care of other people's problems and have a caring attitude to help others especially to fellow students. Such attitudes indirectly shape the characteristics of leadership in students.
Moderate	Students are trained to live a simple life so that the focus on the lesson is not interrupted. If students are exposed to luxury and pleasure, then the sweetness in learning may not be achieved. Moderation is not living in poverty or destitution but refers to the control of lust so as not to be shackled by the pleasures of the world and to train the soul to be humble.	Honor	Student activities depend on the blessings of the mudir and the teacher. Everything to be done must get permission from the institution's management. In fact, such a tradition is considered very important and beneficial for students' self-discipline because students cannot do a job arbitrarily despite gaining freedom by living independently.
Blessings	Students are brought up to see knowledge as something sacred and inseparable from religion. Thus, their model of thinking is based on belief because knowledge is truth, rather than a relative nature derived from symptoms. Thus, the result of the acquisition of knowledge is a blessing in life. If knowledge is viewed as a symptom, then the model of thinking is prone to obsession with the ability to think, no longer toward the pursuit of blessings.	Service	Students are brought up to serve the institution because in that way, students will benefit in terms of skills, and authority in the field of education. Serving in the context of a traditional educational institution refers to the process of coexisting with a teacher or mudir. The intimacy of this relationship not only allows the student to emulate the teacher's thoughts and behaviors, but also to gain recognition from the teacher for the
Leadership	Exposure to independent living trains students to emphasize responsibility, take		

	seriousness shown by the student to a teacher.
Authority	Students who have graduated under the guidance of a teacher, show good mastery in lessons, and possess noble personal characteristics; will receive recognition from his teacher in the form of a degree. Teachers will usually bestow a degree in the form of a chain that gathers the names of previous teachers until it reaches the author of the book or reaches the Prophet SAW.

The influence of the book Ta'alim Al-Muta'allim in traditional educational institutions

This book is considered as the most influential work in traditional educational institutions because it is the core of the curriculum of the institution. This book has been categorized as one of the moral and mystical texts that must be studied by all students (Bruinessen, 2012, p. 186).

The influence of this book can be seen in the development of student character as follows (Aljufri, 1995, pp. 12-81; Mudakir, 2017; & Hulawa, 2018).

Table 2. Development of characteristics of students.

Character	Impact in Life
Hardworking	Students are encouraged to start a job with the intention in advance. This is because it is the core of all worship. Many

	worldly deeds turn into hereafter deeds because of good intentions. In the context of education, intention evokes a determination to acquire knowledge. For that reason, it can be seen how pondok students often spend their night reviewing lessons.
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Religious	Students are not encouraged to engage in unprofitable work; instead, they are encouraged to concentrate fully on the lesson. This includes not talking about useless things or wasting time by hanging out because it can be dull. Students who nurture themselves with a pious attitude are easier to absorb knowledge.
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Disciplined	A disciplined attitude will give rise to enthusiasm and determination to achieve success in acquiring knowledge. These attitudes include keeping time, maintaining cleanliness, eating and drinking on time, commitment to class, and attending congregational prayers.
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Responsible	Living independently which is a tradition of
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	<p>the pondok community has trained themselves to always be responsible in doing a job. This includes providing for personal needs in terms of accommodation, expenses, food and drink and hygiene. Included in a student's responsibility is to choose a good friend. This is because a good friend will be a motivator to do good and will not bother others.</p>	<p>environment, a close relationship is established between them. The relationship between students and students is considered like siblings while the relationship between students and teachers is like a child with a father. With such a relationship, a culture of mutual love can be created because the attitude of caring, cooperation and a sense of responsibility is always implemented.</p>
<p>Maintain manner</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to respect the educators and glorify them because in that way the meaning of a knowledge is easy to present into oneself. When teachers feel fun and happy then knowledge is easier to convey to students. On the students' side, knowledge is easier to digest when the teacher can explain it with pleasure.</p>	<p>If we look at the influence of Imam Al-Zarnuji's book on students, then it can be concluded that students not only successfully develop their potential from a physical point of view, but also from a spiritual point of view where students are also given reinforcement of emotional control and high spiritual awareness. Thus, the view that states that the content of the book instills passive and uncritical attitudes is inaccurate (Bruinessen, 2012, p. 186; Adi & Satiman, 2015).</p>
<p>Negotiate</p>	<p>Students are taught not to blame each other when a problem arises, instead they need to solve the problem by way of cooperation and consensus.</p>	<p>Awareness to strive and make a living</p> <p>The statement that states that the book of Ta'alim Al-Muta'allum makes the students of the pondok passive and backward in the field of knowledge is not accurate, because in the book it is stated that students should have high ambitions. Al-Zarnuji states that students with high ambitions will fly with their ambitions just as a bird flies with its wings. The basis of success according to Al-Zarnuji is</p>
<p>Loving</p>	<p>Because students and teachers live in the same residential</p>	

determination and high ambition. People who have determination and high ambitions will surely achieve success. Ambitious people are always thinking of big things and working hard to achieve them. On the other hand, people who are not ambitious will not think of big things because they do not really want to achieve them (Sodiman, 2013).

The greatest motivation for a rational person is to attain understanding in life. Whoever succeeds in achieving it then he will no longer care about trivial and small things, because a true understanding in life has caused him to strive to maintain his happiness in this world and in the hereafter. Encouragement or transformation that can change students' thinking and behavior is based on three factors; first, the teacher; second, parents; and third, study partners. Teachers shape students' skills, parents bless children's intentions to manifest educational outcomes in the form of work and life routines, and peers provide support and show positive role models and competitive attitudes in surviving life (Sodiman, 2013).

Furthermore, in the book *Ta'alim Al-Muta'allum* it is stated that, students are encouraged to work, know the things that can bring sustenance, know what can increase and decrease age, and things that can keep the body healthy. Among the things that can bring sustenance are (Az-Zarnuji, 2020, pp. 145-146);

1. Get up early in the morning
2. Write with beautiful writing
3. Talk about good things
4. Sweep the home yard
5. Wash clothes

6. Perform prayers sincerely and maintain manners
7. Performing the Dhuha prayer
8. Read Surah Al-Waqi'ah at night
9. Regular recitation of surah Al-Mulk, Al-Muzammil, Al-Lail, and Al-Insyirah
10. Come to the mosque before the call to prayer
11. Performing dawn and witr prayers at home
12. Don't talk too much about world problems
13. Don't hang out with women a lot unless there is a need

Things that can hinder sustenance are such as (Az-Zarnuji, 2020, pp. 142-145);

1. Committing sin
2. Lying
3. Sleep in the morning
4. Sleep naked
5. Urinating naked
6. Eat in a state of junub
7. Eat while leaning on the stomach
8. Let food fall
9. Roast the skin of the onion and garlic
10. Sweep the house with a handkerchief
11. Sweep the house at night
12. Leaving trash in the house
13. Walk in front of parents
14. Call both parents by name
15. Clean food in the gaps of the teeth with any stick
16. Clean hands with dust
17. Sit in front of the door
18. Lean on one of the door leaves
19. Ablution in the place of excrement
20. Patching clothes that are being worn
21. Dry face with clothes
22. Leaving cobwebs in the house

23. Postponing prayers
24. Hurry out of the mosque after the dawn prayer
25. Go to the market too early in the morning
26. Stay in the market
27. Buy bread from beggars
28. Praying for bad things to the child
29. Do not cover food
30. Turn off the lights by blowing
31. Writing with a tied pen
32. Comb the hair with a cracked brush
33. Not wanting to pray for parents
34. Wearing a turban while sitting and wearing trousers while standing
35. Miserly
36. Too frugal
37. Too extravagant
38. Disregards all affairs and likes to procrastinate.

Things that can prolong life are as follows (Az-Zarnuji, 2020, pp. 151-152);

1. Do good
2. Refrain from actions that hurt others
3. Respect parents
4. Maintain friendship
5. Do not cut down a living tree unless forced to
6. Perform ablution perfectly
7. Perform prayers with full respect to Allah SWT
8. Prioritize Hajj and then Umrah
9. Maintain health.

CONCLUSION

One interesting thing that can be known in this study is that, students in traditional educational institutions need to earn a living to finance their studies. The affairs of students in seeking sustenance have never been blocked or hindered by

the governing board, even if according to the views of Al-Zarnuji in *Ta'alim Al-Muta'allum*, students need to know the things that can bring sustenance.

Making a living is included in the determination of a student in order to ensure that the educational mission is achieved. For that reason, Al-Zarnuji stated that a student needs to take care of his health as best he can because in addition to attending classes, he also needs to earn a living to bear all expenses during his studies. Thus, Al-Zarnuji encourages students to learn the science of health and take note of some athar about health in order to be blessed by practicing it (Az-Zarnuji, 2020).

In other words, inadvertently students who follow traditional studies actually keep abreast of current developments because they still have to work to make a living. The difference is, the effort to earn a living is not to pursue worldly pleasures but is used to add knowledge. For that reason, Al-Zarnuji states that every person, including students, needs to know the meaning of asceticism correctly because it will preserve oneself and keep oneself from forbidden things, including things that can damage the heart. By understanding the true meaning of asceticism, then a person can accumulate wealth as long as he is aware that the wealth must be directed to the path of Allah SWT so that all the wealth becomes worship that is accepted by Him (Az-Zarnuji, 2020).

In conclusion, the book written by Al-Zarnuji gave a great impact and change to the formation of positive character because students who gain knowledge in

the hut can learn and know the real purpose to be achieved in life, while perfecting the true purpose of man created by God. From the aspect of education, the book written by Al-Zarnuji gave a great influence to the routine of student life because students are trained to self-discipline by following the life of the Prophet SAW and his companions, and guidelines that have been compiled by previous scholars.

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