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PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPTH OF POETIC PEDAGOGY IN AL-ZARNUJI'S TA'LIM AL-MUTA'ALLIM: BANDURA-BASED SOCIAL LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: This article presents an in-depth study of the pedagogical methodology employed by Imam Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji in his seminal work, *Ta'līm al-Mutā'allim*, with a particular focus on his strategic integration of poetic counsel. The analysis is conducted through the analytical framework of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The findings indicate a profound and intuitive alignment between al-Zarnuji's classical Islamic pedagogical approach and modern psychological principles. Specifically, the poetic verses within *Ta'līm al-Mutā'allim* effectively embody principles of modeling, vicarious reinforcement, and self-efficacy. This demonstrates that al-Zarnuji's methods, formulated centuries ago, possess a psychological depth that resonates with contemporary learning theories, positioning Arabic poetry as a strategic instrument for shaping the character and intellect of the learner. The article further discusses the contemporary relevance of these findings for character education and holistic Islamic education, while also acknowledging the necessity for critical engagement and future empirical research to fully operationalize these insights in modern educational contexts.



Keywords: Arabic poetry, character education, Islamic pedagogy, self-efficacy, social learning theory

ABSTRAK: Artikel ini menyajikan kajian mendalam terhadap metodologi pedagogis yang digunakan oleh Imam Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji dalam karya monumentalnya, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, dengan fokus khusus pada integrasi strategis nasihat-nasihat puitis berbahasa Arab. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan kerangka Teori Pembelajaran Sosial dari Albert Bandura. Temuan menunjukkan adanya keselarasan yang mendalam dan intuitif antara pendekatan pedagogis Islam klasik ala al-Zarnuji dan prinsip-prinsip psikologi modern. Secara khusus, bait-bait syair Arab dalam *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* merepresentasikan prinsip modeling, penguatan vikarius, dan self-efficacy secara efektif. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa metode al-Zarnuji, meskipun dirumuskan berabad-abad lalu, memiliki kedalaman psikologis yang tetap relevan dengan teori belajar kontemporer, menjadikan syair sebagai instrumen strategis dalam pembentukan karakter dan intelektual peserta didik. Artikel ini juga membahas relevansi kontemporer temuan tersebut bagi pendidikan karakter dan pendidikan Islam holistik, serta mendorong adanya keterlibatan kritis dan penelitian empiris lanjutan untuk mengimplementasikan wawasan ini dalam konteks pendidikan modern.

Kata Kunci: karakter; pedagogi Islam; self-efficacy; syair Arab; teori pembelajaran sosial

INTRODUCTION

Imam Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji's *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* *Tariq at-Ta'allum* (Guiding the Learner on the Path of Learning), penned in the 12th century, stands as a cornerstone within the vast treasury of Islamic educational thought. This foundational text has exerted immense influence, particularly within the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) tradition prevalent across Southeast Asia, where it has served as a primary guide for students for centuries. Its transmission across both coastal and inland Muslim educational settings—from maritime trade-based communities to agrarian heartlands—illustrates the adaptability of al-Zarnuji's pedagogical principles to diverse sociocultural environments, showing how Islamic educational values remained responsive to varied regional contexts.¹ The book's profound guidance extends beyond mere intellectual development, aiming comprehensively to shape the intellect ('aql), the soul (nafs), and the character (akhlâq) of the learner.² Its enduring status as a fundamental reference in pesantren for centuries signifies a continuous, cross-cultural recognition of the value of holistic education. This suggests that educational systems that overlook the affective and moral dimensions of learning may be inherently incomplete, potentially contributing to contemporary issues such as "moral crises and

¹ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), pp. 65–67. ISBN 978-0824828110; M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Pesantren dan Transformasi Sosial," *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. 2, no. 5 (1991): 15–25.

² Burhan al-Islam al-Zarnuji, 1981. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. Edited by Marwan Qabbani., ed. Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islami. (Beirut, 1981).p. 8,30



character degradation"³⁴. This historical continuity underscores a universal human need for integrated moral and character development alongside intellectual growth, implying that educational models focusing solely on intellectual or professional competencies may ultimately fail to produce well-rounded individuals and harmonious societies. Consequently, classical texts like *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* offer valuable insights for contemporary educational reforms aimed at fostering holistic development. A distinctive feature of al-Zarnuji's pedagogical approach is his deliberate and extensive incorporation of poetry.⁵ These poetic verses are far from mere literary embellishments; they are strategically woven into the prose to distill complex ethical advice, reinforce key educational principles, and evoke a deeper emotional response in the learner⁶. Functioning as memorable summaries, these verses encapsulate virtues such as sincerity (*ikhlâṣ*), perseverance (*ṣabr*), profound respect for teachers (*iḥtirâm al-mu'allim*), and the paramount importance of seeking knowledge for noble purposes⁷.

From the perspective of modern psychology, the efficacy of al-Zarnuji's methods can be fruitfully analyzed through various theoretical lenses. One of the most fitting is Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which later evolved into Social Cognitive Theory⁸. Bandura posits that learning is a complex cognitive process that unfolds within a social context, asserting that individuals can learn significantly through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of immediate motor reproduction or direct reinforcement.⁹ The theory is built upon several core concepts, including observational learning (often referred to as modeling), vicarious reinforcement (learning by observing the consequences of others' actions), and self-efficacy (an individual's belief in their capacity to successfully perform a task or achieve a goal)¹⁰. Bandura's theory emerged as a critical response to radical behaviorism, which was perceived as overly emphasizing environmental influences and direct reinforcement while neglecting internal cognitive processes. Social Learning Theory, conversely, highlights the importance of internal mental states and the dynamic, reciprocal interaction among personal factors, behavior, and the external environment, a concept known as reciprocal determinism¹¹. Unlike earlier behaviorist models, Bandura's theory

³ Zulkipli Lessy et al, 'Moral Degradation in an Educational Milieu : Roles of Guardian in Fixing Morality of Students', 16 (2024), pp. 273-83, doi:10.35445/alishlah.v16i1.4418. p.273

⁴ Sain, Zohaib Hassan, Astrifidha Rahma Amalia, Muhammad Furqan, and Rizqah Qurrata A'yun. 2024. "Impact of Quality Education on Poverty Reduction Across Different Economic Contexts." *Jurnal Al-Ijtimaiyyah* 10(2): 293-298. doi:10.22373/al-ijtimaiyyah.v10i2.26108.

⁵ al-Zarnuji, 1981. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. Edited by Marwan Qabbani.p.46

⁶ al-Zarnuji. p. 46

⁷ al-Zarnuji. p.46

⁸ Albert. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. (New York City: General Learning Corporation, 1971). P. 1-3

⁹ Bandura. p.2-3

¹⁰ Bandura. P. 5-7

¹¹ Dina Amsari, Etri Wahyuni, and Fadhilaturrahmi Fadhilaturrahmi, "Jurnal Basicedu" 8, no. 2 (2024): 1654-62.



explicitly acknowledges the role of internal cognitive processes in learning¹². Al-Zarnuji's pedagogical approach, particularly his strategic use of poetry to evoke emotional responses and facilitate the internalization of values¹³, demonstrates an intuitive grasp of these very internal cognitive and affective mechanisms. The remarkable alignment between a 12th-century text and a 20th-century cognitive theory suggests a shared, perhaps fundamental, understanding of how humans learn that transcends mere stimulus-response conditioning. This alignment implies that effective pedagogical practices, regardless of their historical or cultural origin, often tap into universal human cognitive and social learning mechanisms. It serves to validate the psychological depth inherent in classical Islamic pedagogy and encourages a critical re-evaluation of traditional educational methods through a modern scientific lens, thereby moving beyond a simplistic "traditional versus modern" dichotomy in educational discourse.

While the present study primarily engages Bandura's Social Learning Theory as the main analytical framework, the discussion could be further enriched by a brief theoretical contrast with key Islamic educational thinkers such as al-Nahlawi and Ibn Khaldun. Such a comparison would illuminate how classical Islamic perspectives on *tarbiyah* and *ta'lim* resonate with or diverge from Bandura's social-cognitive approach, thereby situating this inquiry within a broader epistemological dialogue between Islamic and modern pedagogical paradigms.¹⁴

This article is designed to bridge the intellectual domains of classical Islamic knowledge and modern psychology. It aims to achieve this by meticulously analyzing the poetic counsel embedded within *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* through the analytical framework of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory¹⁵. The central research question guiding this inquiry is: How do the poetic verses in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* specifically function as effective pedagogical tools for modeling desired behavior, providing vicarious reinforcement, and fostering self-efficacy in the learner?.

Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative approach, primarily relying on library research. The analytical methods include content analysis, used to systematically identify, categorize, and interpret themes within the poetic verses, and comparative analysis, applied to map these pedagogical themes and methods onto the core concepts of Bandura's theory.

¹² Amsari, Wahyuni, and Fadhilaturrahmi.

¹³ al-Zarnuji, 1981. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. Edited by Marwan Qabbani. P. 46

¹⁴ Abdurrahman al-Nahlawi, *Ushûl al-Tarbiyyah al-Islâmiyyah wa Asâlibuhâ fî al-Bayt wa al-Madrasah wa al-Mujtama'* (Damascus: Dâr al-Fikr, 1983), ISBN 978-9953450170; Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddimah* (Cairo: Dâr al-Fikr, 2005), ISBN 978-2745141487.

¹⁵ al-Zarnuji, 1981. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. Edited by Marwan Qabbani.; Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*.



METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design in the form of a systematic literature review, focusing on textual analysis of classical Islamic pedagogical literature. The primary text analyzed is *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Tariq at-Ta'allum* by Imam Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji, a seminal pedagogical manual within the Islamic intellectual tradition. The research is situated within the interpretive paradigm, emphasizing meaning-making through textual hermeneutics and theoretical integration. To enhance methodological transparency, the coding and categorization process used in identifying the poetic themes was conducted through iterative content analysis. Each verse was first classified according to its dominant pedagogical motif—such as ethical disposition, motivation, or teacher-student relation—before being cross-referenced with Bandura's constructs of observational learning, modeling, and reinforcement. This systematic procedure ensures interpretive consistency and allows the study to be replicable in similar textual analyses.¹⁶

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the Arabic edition of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*¹⁷, which includes poetic elements embedded within prose. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, classical commentaries, and contemporary interpretations that discuss al-Zarnuji's educational philosophy. In addition, foundational texts of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory were consulted, including *Social Learning Theory* (1971), *Social Foundations of Thought and Action* (1986), and *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (1997).

Literature was gathered through academic databases (Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Moraref), classical Islamic repositories, and institutional libraries to ensure comprehensive and credible data sources.

The analysis followed a two-tiered approach: Textual-Thematic Analysis. The text of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* was systematically examined to extract recurring educational themes (niyyah, adab, teacher-student relationship, poetic advice, etc.), with special attention to poetic elements. The functions of these poetic elements were categorized under mnemonic, affective, motivational, summarizing, and moral-internalization roles. And theoretical Mapping using Bandura's Social Learning Theory: The extracted data were then mapped and interpreted using key concepts from Albert Bandura's theory: modeling, reinforcement (direct, vicarious, self), self-efficacy, and reciprocal determinism. This allowed for cross-comparison between traditional Islamic educational constructs and contemporary psychological insights. This interpretive-theoretical method aims to unveil deep pedagogical alignments and possible pedagogical innovations by revisiting classical Islamic wisdom in modern educational light.

By employing this methodological strategy, the study offers both a historically grounded and psychologically informed evaluation of al-Zarnuji's

¹⁶ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London: Sage Publications, 2021), pp. 66–70.

¹⁷ al-Zarnuji, 1981. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. Edited by Marwan Qabbani.



pedagogical model, especially in terms of poetic integration and value formation in learners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, derived from a content analysis of the poetic counsel in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, and subsequently discusses these findings through the analytical framework of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The poetic verses are categorized by their primary pedagogical function, demonstrating how al-Zarnuji's methodology intuitively aligns with modern psychological principles.

Identification and Categorization of Poetic Counsel in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*

The book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* is rich with poetic verses containing profound advice. These verses originate from various sources, including al-Zarnuji's own teachers, earlier scholars, or his personal compositions. Here are some well-known examples of poetic advice from the book, along with their meanings and implications:

a) Poetry on Behavior Formation Through Exemplars and Environment

رَأَيْتُ أَحَقَ الْحُقُّ حَقَ الْمُعَلِّمِ وَأَوْجَبَهُ حَفْظًا عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ
لَقَدْ حَقٌّ أَنْ يُهَدَى إِلَيْهِ كَرَامَةً لِتَعْلِيمِ حَرْفٍ وَاحِدٍ أَلْفُ دِرْهَمٍ¹⁸

(I saw that the most rightful right is the right of the teacher, and the most obligatory to be guarded by every Muslim. Indeed, it is fitting to give him a thousand dirhams as an honor for teaching just one letter.)

Implication: This verse emphasizes the teacher's important position. The emphasis on honoring the teacher indicates that the teacher is a primary role model whose teachings and behavior should be valued and imitated by the student

إِنَّ الْمُعَلِّمَ وَالطَّبِيبَ كَلِيمَهَا لَا يَنْصَحَانِ إِذَا هُنَّ مَمْ يُنْكِرُهُمَا
فَاصْبِرْ لِدَائِكَ إِنْ جَفَوْتَ طَبِيبَةً وَاقْنَعْ بِجَهَلِكَ إِنْ جَفَوْتَ مُعَلِّمًا¹⁹

(Indeed, the teacher and the physician, both will not advise if they are not honored. So be patient with your illness if you neglect its physician, and accept your ignorance if you neglect your teacher.)

Implication: Highlights the necessity of respect for guidance and advice from the instructor to be received and beneficial. A good relationship between student and teacher is a prerequisite for successful transmission of knowledge and ethics.

¹⁸ al-Zarnuji. P.50

¹⁹ al-Zarnuji. P.51



أَقَدْمُ أُسْتَادِي عَلَى نَفْسِي وَالدِّي وَإِنْ نَالَنِي مِنْ وَالدِّي الْفَضْلَ وَالشَّرَفُ
 فَذَكَرْ مُرِيَّ الرُّوْحُ وَالرُّوْحُ جَوْهَرٌ وَهَذَا مُرِيَّ الْجِسْمُ وَالْجِسْمُ كَالصَّدَفُ²⁰

(I prioritize my teacher over myself and my father, even if I gain virtue and honor from my father. For he (the teacher) is the educator of the soul, and the soul is a jewel. While this (father) is the educator of the body, and the body is like a shell.)

Implication: Portrays the teacher as a shaper of character and spirituality. This very high role of the teacher implies that they are ideal role models in holistic self-development.

عَنِ الْمَرْءِ لَا تَسْأَلْ وَأَبْصِرْ قَرِينَهُ فَإِنَّ الْقَرِينَ بِالْمُقَارَنِ يَقْتَدِي²¹

Translation: (Do not ask about a person, but look at their companion. For the companion will follow their companion.)

Implication: Strongly emphasizes the influence of peers. A person's behavior, habits, and traits tend to imitate those closest to them

لَا تَصْحِبِ الْكَسَلَانَ فِي حَالَاتِهِ كَمْ صَالِحٍ بِفَسَادِ آخَرِ يَفْسُدُ
 عَذْوَى الْبَلِيلِ إِلَى الْجَلِيلِ سَرِيعَةٌ كَالْجَمْرِ يُوضَعُ فِي الرَّمَادِ فَيَخْمُدُ²²

(Do not befriend a lazy person in any of their states. How many righteous people are corrupted by the corruption of others. The contagion of dullness to the sharp-witted is fast, like an ember placed in ashes then extinguishes.)

Implication: A warning about the negative impact of bad company. This message indicates that bad habits can "infect" and damage one's character and good potential²³.

b) Belief in Self-Ability and Diligence

بِقَدْرِ الْكَدِّ ثُكْنَسِبُ الْمَعَالِيِ وَمَنْ طَلَبَ الْعُلَا سَهَرَ اللَّيَالِي²⁴

(With the measure of diligence, high achievements will be gained. And whoever seeks glory, will stay up at night.)

Implication: Instills the belief that great achievements require persistent and tireless effort. Success is the result of hard work and dedication.

الْجِدُّ يُدْنِي كُلَّ أَمْرٍ شَاسِعٍ وَالْجِدُّ يَفْتَحُ كُلَّ بَابٍ مُعْلَقٍ²⁵

²⁰ Al-Zarnuji, *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*, ed. Edited by Marwan Qabbani, 1981. P. 53

²¹ Al-Zarnuji. P 86

²² Al-Zarnuji.p. 87

²³ al-Zarnuji, p.88

²⁴ Al-Zarnuji, p. 38

²⁵ al-Zarnuji, P. 44



(Diligence will bring closer every distant matter, and diligence will open every closed door.)

Implication: Reinforces the view that persistence and perseverance have the power to overcome obstacles and achieve seemingly impossible goals. This encourages optimism in facing challenges.

c) Self-Control and Planning (Self-Regulation)

دَعِ الْذُنُوبَ صَغِيرَهَا وَكَبِيرَهَا ذَاكَ التُّقَىٰ وَاصْنَعْ كَمَا شِئْ فَوْقَ أَرْضِ
 الشَّوْكِ يَجْذُرُ مَا يَرَىٰ لَا تَحْقِرْنَ صَغِيرَةً إِنَّ الْجِبَالَ مِنَ الْحَصَىٰ²⁶

(Leave sins, small and large, that is piety. And act like one walking on thorny ground, being cautious of what they see. Do not underestimate a small sin, for indeed mountains are made of pebbles.)

Implication: Teaches the importance of vigilance and self-awareness against all forms of error, both large and small. This message encourages active control over one's behavior to achieve piety.

اسْتَعِنْ بِالرِّفْقِ فِي كُلِّ الْأُمُورِ لَمْ يَنْدِمْ رَافِقٌ وَلَمْ يُنْدَمْ²⁷

(Seek help with gentleness in all matters, a gentle person will not regret and will not be blamed.)

Implication: Advocates for a calm and cautious attitude in every action. This attitude prevents regret and blame, showing the importance of consideration before acting.

تَأَنَّ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ لِأَمْرٍ تُرِيدُهُ وَكُنْ رَافِقًا تُمْلِحْ بِكُلِّ جَمِيلٍ²⁸

(Be patient and do not rush in a matter you desire, and be gentle, you will be appreciated with all good.)

Implication: Encourages patience and not rushing in achieving something. This is a form of self-control that leads to better results and positive reception from the environment.

كَمْ مِنْ أَمْرٍ تَسْرَعَ فِيهِ صَاحِبُهُ قَبْلَ أَوَانِهِ فَعُوْقَبَ بِالْحِرْمَانِ²⁹

(How many matters has one rushed into before their time, only to be punished with deprivation.)

Implication: Provides a lesson on the negative consequences of rushing. Observing the bad outcomes of impatience can serve as a reminder to practice self-control.

²⁶ al-Zarnuji. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*, ed. Edited by Marwan Qabbani, 1981 p. 57

²⁷ al-Zarnuji. p. 61

²⁸ al-Zarnuji. p. 62

²⁹ al-Zarnuji. p. 64



إِذَا تَمَّ عَقْلُ الْمَرْءِ قَلَّتْ مَقَالَةُ وَأَقْبَلَتْ بِحُمْقٍ الْمَرْءُ إِنْ كَانَ مُكْثِرًا³⁰

Translation: (When a person's intellect is perfect, their speech is minimal. And be certain of a person's foolishness if they talk excessively.)

Implication: Teaches self-control in speech, where wisdom is reflected in the scarcity of unnecessary words. This is a form of verbal behavior regulation that shows intellectual maturity.

d) Learning from Consequences (Observation of Results)

تَمَنَّيْتَ أَنْ تُمْسِيَ فَقِيهًا مُنَاظِرًا بِعَيْرٍ عَنَاءِ وَاجْتَبَوْنَ فُنُونَ
 وَلَيْسَ اكْتِسَابُ الْمَالِ دُونَ مَشَقَّةٍ تَحْمِلُهَا فَالْعِلْمُ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ³¹

(You wish to become a jurist who debates without difficulty, yet madness has many forms. And wealth is not gained without hardship that you must bear, so how can it be with knowledge?)

Implication: Uses the analogy of gaining wealth to explain that knowledge also requires sacrifice. Students are encouraged to understand that valuable results always come with effort, not mere fantasy.

مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ وَمَمْ يَكْدَحُ فَفِي طَلَبِ الْمُحَالِ قَدْ جَنَحَ³²

(Whoever seeks knowledge but does not strive, then they have inclined towards seeking the impossible.)

Implication: Explains the direct consequence of lack of effort in seeking knowledge, namely that the goal will not be achieved or even becomes impossible. This is a form of warning that encourages earnest effort.

مَنْ لَمْ يَذْقُ ذُلَّ التَّعْلُمِ سَاعَةً جَرَّعَ كَأْسَ الْجَهَلِ طُولَ حَيَاةِ
 وَمَنْ فَاتَهُ التَّعْلِيمُ حَالَ شَبَابِهِ فَكَبِيرٌ عَلَيْهِ أَرْبَعًا لِوَفَاتِهِ³³

Translation: (Whoever does not taste the bitterness of learning for a moment, will swallow the cup of ignorance throughout their life. And whoever misses education in their youth, then say four takbirs over their death.)

³⁰ al-Zarnuji. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*, ed. Edited by Marwan Qabbani, 1981p. 69

³¹ al-Zarnuji. p. 39

³² al-Zarnuji.p. 43

³³ al-Zarnuji. p. 46



Implication: Provides a very serious long-term consequence of unwillingness to learn. The threat of "lifelong ignorance" and metaphorical "death" serves as a strong motivation to strive in seeking knowledge.

e) Environmental Influence in Shaping Personality

تَعَرَّبُ عَنِ الْأَوْطَانِ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلَّا وَسَافِرْ فَفِي الْأَسْفَارِ حَمْسُ فَوَائِدٍ
 تَفَرُّجُ هِمٍ، وَأَكْتِسَابُ مَعِيشَةٍ وَعِلْمٍ، وَآدَابٍ، وَصُحْبَةٍ مَاجِدٍ³⁴

(Travel away from homelands in search of glory, and travel, for in travels there are five benefits: relief from sorrow, gaining livelihood, knowledge, manners, and companionship with noble people.)

Implication: Teaches that changing environments can bring significant benefits for self-development. A new environment can provide opportunities to gain knowledge, manners, and interact with good people who can be a source of inspiration.

سَأَضْرِبُ فِي طُولِ الْبِلَادِ وَعَرْضِهَا أَتَالُ مُرَادِي أَوْ أَمُوتُ غَرِيبًا
 فَإِنْ تَلَقْتُ نَفْسِي فَلِلَّهِ دُرُّهَا وَإِنْ سَلِمْتُ كَانَ الرُّجُوعُ قَرِيبًا³⁵

Translation: (I will journey through the length and breadth of the lands, I will attain my goal or I will die as a stranger. If my soul perishes, then to Allah is its reward. And if it is safe, then the return is near.)

Implication: Shows courage in facing new environments to achieve goals. It also reflects self-adaptation to challenges outside one's comfort zone

Modeling and Observational Learning in Zarnuji's Poetic Pedagogy

Bandura's theory posits that individuals acquire new behaviors and attitudes by observing others (models)³⁶. Al-Zarnuji's poetry is replete with depictions of ideal models – the diligent scholar, the respectful student, the patient seeker of truth – which serve as aspirational targets for the learner.

a. **Live Modeling (Teacher):** Al-Zarnuji explicitly and implicitly places the teacher in a central position as the primary role model. Verses like "إِنَّ الْمُعَلِّمَ وَالطَّيِّبَ كُلَّيْهِما # لَا يَنْصَحَانَ إِذَا هُمَا لَمْ يُكَرِّمَا" (Indeed, both the teacher and the doctor will not advise if they are not honored)³⁷ and "رَأَيْتُ أَحَقَّ الْحَقَّ حَقًّا الْمُعَلِّمَ # وَأَوْجَبَهُ حُفْظًا عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ" (I saw that the most rightful right is the right of the teacher, and the most obligatory to be guarded by every Muslim)³⁸ elevate the teacher's status. From Bandura's perspective, a respected teacher attains a higher model status, making their behavior – both in scholarly conduct and ethical character – more likely to be attended to (Attention) and subsequently imitated (Reproduction) by

³⁴ al-Zarnuji. *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*, ed. Edited by Marwan Qabbani, 1981p.91

³⁵ al-Zarnuji.p. 93

³⁶ Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. p. 22

³⁷ Al-Imam Burhanuddin Al-Zarnuji, (Ta'lim المتعلم في طريق التعلم Fi Tariq Al-Ta'allum), Third (Damascus: Dar Ibn Katheer, n.d.). p.51

³⁸ Al-Zarnuji. p.50



students³⁹. This fosters a psychological receptivity essential for effective observational learning. The verse attributed to Ali bin Abi Thalib⁴⁰ further reinforces this by prioritizing the teacher as the "educator of the soul," implying their ideal role in holistic development.

b. **Peer Modeling:** Al-Zarnuji also emphasizes the significant influence of the social environment, particularly peers. The poetic advice, "عَنِ الْمُرْءِ لَا تَسْأَلْ وَأَبْصِرْ فَرِيْهَةْ # إِنَّ الْقَرِيْبَ بِالْمُقْرَبِينَ يَتَّقَدِيْ" (Do not ask about a person, but look at their companion. For the companion will follow their companion.)⁴¹, explicitly states that peer behavior is a significant model. Students observe and tend to imitate their friends' behaviors, aligning directly with Bandura's concept of peer modeling⁴². The strong warning against bad company, "لَا تَصْحِبِ الْكُسْلَانَ فِي حَالَاتِهِ # كَمْ صَالِحٍ بُشَّادْ" (Do not befriend a lazy person in any of their states. How many righteous people are corrupted by the corruption of others.)⁴³, further underscores the power of negative peer modeling.

c. **Verbal Instructional Modeling and Cognitive Processes:** The poetic verses themselves function as highly effective verbal instructional models⁴⁴. They describe and prescribe ideal behaviors, attitudes, and virtues through carefully chosen words and evocative imagery⁴⁵. The aesthetic appeal, inherent rhythm, and rhyme scheme of the poetry significantly enhance the learner's attention to the message and improve its retention in memory⁴⁶. For instance, the poem listing "Six Keys to Acquiring Knowledge" acts as a powerful mnemonic device, making complex principles easier to recall and internalize.⁴⁷ This sophisticated, intuitive pedagogical design demonstrates an advanced understanding of human learning that transcends simple information transfer, leveraging the power of literature for cognitive and emotional engagement⁴⁸.

Vicarious Reinforcement and Punishment through Poetic Narratives

Al-Zarnuji masterfully employs poetry to illustrate the positive consequences (reinforcements) associated with virtuous academic conduct and the negative consequences (punishments) that result from neglecting one's studies or ethical duties⁴⁹⁵⁰. This mechanism allows learners to understand cause-and-effect relationships without direct experience.

³⁹ Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. p. 22

⁴⁰ Al-Zarnuji, (تَعْلِيمُ الْمُتَّعَلِّمِ فِي طَرِيقِ التَّعْلِمِ) (*Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Fi Tariq Al-Ta'allum*). p. 53

⁴¹ Al-Zarnuji. p. 86

⁴² Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. p. 22

⁴³ Al-Zarnuji. p.50

⁴⁴ Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. p. 22

⁴⁵ Bandura. p. 22

⁴⁶ Bandura. p. 22

⁴⁷ Al-Zarnuji, . p.45

⁴⁸ Al-Zarnuji.

⁴⁹ Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. p.23

⁵⁰ Ultavia, A. B. 2023. "Penerapan Teori Belajar Sosial Albert Bandura dalam Proses Belajar Mengajar di Sekolah." *Jurnal Pendidikan* 2(1): 55-64.



a. **Vicarious Reinforcement (Positive Consequences):** The verse, "بَقْدَرُ الْكَدْ تُكْتَسِبُ" # "الْمَعَالِي" (With the measure of diligence, high achievements will be gained. And whoever seeks glory, will stay up at night.)⁵¹, offers a clear vicarious reward by promising eminence and success (*al-ma'âli*) as a direct outcome of diligence. Similarly, the poem on noble intentions, "مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِلْمَعَادِ" # "فَازَ بِفَضْلِ مِنَ الرَّشَادِ" (Whoever seeks knowledge for the Hereafter has triumphed with the virtue of guidance)⁵², promises the ultimate reward of divine guidance for those with pure intentions. By "witnessing" these positive outcomes through the poetic narratives, learners are motivated to imitate the behaviors that are depicted as leading to such desirable consequences⁵³

b. **Vicarious Punishment (Negative Consequences):** The consequences of laziness or disrespect are presented starkly. The verse, "مَنْ لَمْ يَذْقُ ذَلَّ التَّعْلُمَ سَاعَةً" # "تَجَرَّعَ كَلْسَ الْجَهَلِ طُولَ حَيَاتِهِ" (He who has not tasted the humility of learning for a hour, will sip from the cup of ignorance for his entire life)⁵⁴, delivers a powerful vicarious punishment, making the learner understand that short-term discomfort in study averts the long-term pain of ignorance. Likewise, being "content with your ignorance"⁵⁵ is explicitly framed as the direct punishment for disrespecting a teacher. The warning against bad company⁵⁶ also vividly describes negative consequences, serving as a vicarious punishment that deters such associations. Poetry's ability to evoke strong emotions significantly amplifies the impact of these vicarious experiences, making the anticipated consequences more salient and influential on a learner's motivation and subsequent behavior.

Fostering Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation through Poetic Guidance

Al-Zarnuji's poetry consistently works to build and strengthen the learner's internal conviction (self-efficacy) by providing clear, achievable roadmaps and directly linking effort to desired outcomes. It also promotes self-regulation by emphasizing internal control and discipline.

a. **Fostering Self-Efficacy:** The poem "الْجُدُّ يُدْنِي كُلَّ أَمْرٍ شَاسِعٍ" # "وَالْجُدُّ يَفْتَحُ كُلَّ بَابٍ مُعْقَلٍ" (Diligence will bring closer every distant matter, and diligence will open every closed door)⁵⁷, directly instills the belief that hard work can overcome various obstacles, which is central to self-efficacy⁵⁸. Similarly, "بَقْدَرُ الْكَدْ تُكْتَسِبُ الْمَعَالِي" # "مَنْ طَلَبَ" # "الْغُلَامَ سَهْرَ اللَّيَالِي" (With the measure of diligence, high achievements will be gained. And whoever seeks glory, will stay up at night.)⁵⁹, directly links effort to outcome, empowering students with the belief that success is within their control and dependent on their hard work. The verse "ثَمَّنَتْ أَنْ تُهْسِي فَقِيهَا مُنَاظِرًا" # "الْمُنَاظِرَ" (The one who appreciates the one who guides him) is a clear example of this belief.

⁵¹ Al-Zarnuji, *Ta'lîm al-Muta'allim Fi Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. p.38

⁵² al-Zarnuji, 1981. *Ta'lîm Al-Muta'allim Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. Edited by Marwan Qabbani. 103

⁵³ Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. p. 23

⁵⁴ Al-Zarnuji, *Ta'lîm al-Muta'allim Fi Tariq Al-Ta'allum*. p. 46

⁵⁵ Al-Zarnuji. p.55

⁵⁶ Al-Zarnuji. p. 88

⁵⁷ Al-Zarnuji. pp. 44

⁵⁸ Albert Bandura, "Albert Bandura Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control," *W.H Freeman and Company New York*, 1997. p. 3

⁵⁹ Al-Zarnuji, *Ta'lîm al-Muta'allim Fi Tariq Al-Ta'allum*.



"يُغَيِّرُ عَنَاءً وَالْجُنُونُ فُتُونٌ" (You wish to become a jurist who debates without difficulty, yet madness has many forms) also reinforces that valuable results require effort, not just desire.⁶⁰

b. **Promoting Self-Regulation:** The profound emphasis on having a correct and sincere *niyyah* (intention) in seeking knowledge (e.g., "مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِلْمَعَادِ # فَأَنَّ بِفَضْلِ" - Whoever seeks knowledge for the Hereafter has triumphed with the virtue of guidance)⁶¹ functions as a powerful cognitive framework for self-regulation⁶². This clear intention guides and directs all subsequent learning efforts towards noble, ultimate goals, ensuring consistency and purpose. Numerous verses serve as direct calls for self-management and discipline, such as "دَعِ الدُّنُوبَ صَغِيرَهَا # وَكَبِيرَهَا ذَكَرُ النُّقُوصِ" (Leave sins, small and large, that is piety) and "ثَانَ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ لِأَمْرٍ ثُرِيدَهُ" (Be patient and do not rush in a matter you desire)⁶³. These verses guide students in regulating their internal impulses and behaviors for higher learning objectives.

Reciprocal Determinism in Al-Zarnuji's Educational Framework

Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism, which explains the continuous, dynamic, and bidirectional interaction among personal factors (P), behavior (B), and environment (E)⁶⁴, is clearly evident and implicitly guided within al-Zarnuji's pedagogical framework. Poetic advice often reflects this dynamic.

a. **Personal Factors (P):** These include the learner's internal states such as their sincere intention (*niyyah*), diligence, lofty aspirations (*himmah*), and their overall moral understanding. For example, the verse "إِذَا تَمَّ عُقْلُ الْمَرْءِ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ بِحُمْقٍ # وَأَيْقَنْ بِمَقْلَهُ" (When a person's intellect is perfect, their speech is minimal. And be certain of a person's foolishness if they talk excessively.)⁶⁵, directly links a personal cognitive attribute (perfect intellect) to an observable behavior (minimal speech), illustrating the P-B interaction.

b. **Behavior (B):** This encompasses the student's observable actions and **practices** in their learning journey, such as diligent studying, engaging in discussions, showing respect for teachers, making conscious choices about companions, and actively avoiding vices.

c. **Environment (E):** This refers to the external social and physical context of learning, including the teacher serving as a role model, the influence of peers, the general atmosphere of the learning environment, and the prevailing rules and norms. The poem "عَنِ الْمَرْءِ لَا تَسْأَلْ وَأَبْصِرْ قَرِيبَهُ # فَإِنَّ الْقَرِيبَنِ بِالْمُقَارَنِ يَقْتَدِي" (Do not ask about a person, but look at their companion. For the companion will follow

⁶⁰ Al-Zarnuji. p. 39

⁶¹ Al-Zarnuji. p. 108

⁶² A. Bandura, "Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory," *Prentice-Hall, Inc.*, 1986. p. xii

⁶³ Al-Zarnuji (Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Fi Tariq Al-Ta'allum). 62

⁶⁴ Bandura, "Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory." p. xii

⁶⁵ Al-Zarnuji (Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim Fi Tariq Al-Ta'allum). p. 69



their companion.⁶⁶ explicitly highlights the significant influence of the environmental factor of peer association.

Al-Zarnuji's teachings demonstrate this reciprocal dynamic. For instance, a student (P) with a strong and sincere *niyyah* (personal factor) to learn for divine pleasure will naturally exhibit diligent study behaviors (B). These behaviors, in turn, are likely to elicit positive responses from the environment (E), such as appreciation from teachers or support from peers, which then further reinforce the student's initial *niyyah* (P), creating a virtuous cycle. Conversely, a student with a negative personal disposition (P) who associates with negative environmental influences (E) may engage in undesirable behaviors (B), which further entrenches their negative personal factors. Al-Zarnuji's poetry, by consistently emphasizing the importance of internal states (*niyyah, himmah*), specific virtuous behaviors (diligence, respect, self-control), and judicious environmental choices (good companions), implicitly but powerfully guides the learner to initiate and sustain positive reciprocal interactions. This proactive and holistic guidance represents a sophisticated, intuitive application of the principle of reciprocal determinism⁶⁷.

Comparative Matrix: Al-Zarnuji's Pedagogical Concepts and Bandura's Social Learning Theory

This table systematically demonstrates the direct parallels and synergistic relationship between classical Islamic pedagogy and modern psychological theory. It serves as a powerful, concise summary of the article's core analytical findings, making complex interdisciplinary connections immediately clear and accessible to the reader. Crucially, it explicitly and directly illustrates how al-Zarnuji's methods, particularly through poetic counsel, align with Bandura's fundamental concepts.

Tabel I: Comparative Matrix: Al-Zarnuji's Pedagogical Concepts and Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Key Concepts of al-Zarnuji (in Poetic Advice)	Relevant Concepts of Bandura's Social Learning Theory	Analysis of Connection and Implications
The Role of the Teacher as a Model (Example verse: "رَأَيْتُ أَحَقَّ الْحَقَّ حَقًّا...الْمُعَطَّمْ")	Live Modeling	A respected and morally upright teacher becomes a behavioral model observed and imitated by students. The quality of the teacher as a model influences the effectiveness of observational learning. The implication is the importance of a teacher's moral and pedagogical competence.

⁶⁶ Bandura, "Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory." p. 86

⁶⁷ Bandura. p. xii



The Importance of Good Companions (Example verse: "عَنِ الْمَرْءِ لَا تَسْأَنْ وَأَبْصِرْ فَرِيْنَهْ" ...")	Peer Modeling, Observational Learning from Peers, Environmental Component in Reciprocal Determinism	Peers serve as significant models. The behavior of friends (positive or negative) is observed and can influence student behavior. This highlights the importance of creating a conducive social environment for learning.
Sincere Intention (Niyyah) in Learning (Example verse: "مَنْ طَلَبَ "الْعِلْمَ لِلْمَعَادِ" ...")	Self-Regulation (cognitive component of intention), Goal Setting, Intrinsic Motivation (if intention stems from internal values)	Correct intention functions as an internal goal that directs and regulates learning behavior. This is a form of cognitive self-regulation where learners consciously choose their goals and behavioral standards.
Diligence and Noble Aspirations (Al-Jidd wa al-Himmah) (Example verse: "بَقْرُ الْكَدَ تُخَسِّبُ "الْمَعَالِي" ...")	Self-Efficacy, Goal Setting, Persistence	Emphasis on diligence and high aspirations aims to build students' belief in their ability to succeed (self-efficacy) and encourages persistence in achieving challenging goals.
Poetry on Behavioral Consequences (Reward & Sin, Success & Failure) (Example verse: "مَنْ لَمْ يَذْقُ ذَلِكَ التَّعْلُمَ "سَاعَةً" ...")	Vicarious Reinforcement, Vicarious Punishment, Outcome Expectations	Poetry describing positive outcomes of good behavior or negative outcomes of bad behavior functions as indirect reinforcement or punishment. This influences students' expectations of their actions' outcomes and motivates desired behavior.
Avoiding Laziness and Utilizing Time (Example verse: "دَعْ الْذُنُوبَ صَغِيرَهَا" ...")	Self-Regulation, Self-Control, Attentional Focus	The call to fight laziness and drowsiness is a form of self-regulation exercise, where students learn to control internal impulses for higher learning goals.
Discussion and Mudzakarah (Though not always in poetry, this is a relevant Zarnuji method)	Interaction in Reciprocal Determinism, Cognitive Elaboration,	Discussion involves interaction between individuals (cognition), behavior (arguing, listening), and environment (discussion group). This facilitates deeper



		Potential for understanding and can be a forum Modeling and for observing peers' thinking Vicarious strategies. Reinforcement in groups.
Attitude of <i>Wara'</i> (Guarding against doubtful matters)	Self-Control, Attentional Focus, Self-Regulation against temptation.	The attitude of <i>wara'</i> requires high self-control to avoid things that can disturb clarity of thought and spirituality, which is important for the learning process.
Poetic Advice as a Medium of Delivery	Verbal Instructional Modeling, Influence on Attention and Retention	The poetic form itself is a verbal instructional model designed to attract attention and be easily remembered, thus increasing the effectiveness of conveying moral and pedagogical messages.

This matrix demonstrates that many principles in al-Zarnuji's educational methodology, often conveyed through poetic advice, have strong parallels with concepts in Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. This indicates that classical Islamic pedagogical wisdom has a psychological foundation that can be explained and enriched by modern learning theories. This analysis not only validates some aspects of Zarnuji's methodology from a psychological perspective but also opens space for a more conscious integration between tradition and modernity in Islamic educational practice.

The relevance of these findings extends beyond theoretical discourse. In contemporary Islamic schooling and pesantren education, the integration of al-Zarnuji's moral-spiritual pedagogy with Bandura's social-cognitive framework can serve as a model for fostering character formation through observational learning. Teachers act not merely as transmitters of knowledge but as behavioral exemplars, whose conduct, sincerity, and discipline embody the ethical values students are expected to internalize. This synthesis underscores the continued viability of classical Islamic educational wisdom within modern pedagogical practice, especially amid current challenges of moral fragmentation and digital distraction.⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

The in-depth analysis of poetic counsel within Imam al-Zarnuji's *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* through the lens of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory reveals a profound and sophisticated pedagogical methodology. Al-Zarnuji's work, far from

⁶⁸ Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2016), pp. 241–243. ISBN 978-6024250641



being a mere historical artifact, demonstrates an intuitive understanding of human learning psychology that predates modern theories by centuries.

The strategic use of poetry in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* serves as a powerful pedagogical instrument. These verses effectively function as verbal instructional models, presenting clear depictions of ideal behaviors and virtues that learners can observe and internalize. They masterfully employ vicarious reinforcement and punishment, illustrating the positive consequences of diligence and ethical conduct, and the negative repercussions of negligence and moral lapses, thereby shaping behavior without the need for direct experience. Furthermore, the poetic counsel plays a crucial role in fostering self-efficacy by providing clear, actionable roadmaps for success and directly linking effort to achievement, empowering learners with a belief in their own capabilities. The intricate interplay between personal factors, behavior, and the environment, as described by Bandura's reciprocal determinism, is also implicitly guided by al-Zarnuji's teachings, encouraging a virtuous cycle of holistic development.

This study underscores that classical Islamic educational frameworks, such as that of al-Zarnuji, contain timeless pedagogical wisdom that resonates with and is affirmed by modern psychological theories. The findings highlight the enduring relevance of al-Zarnuji's emphasis on character formation, diligence, and the role of the learning environment for contemporary character education initiatives. The observed synergies open significant avenues for integrating classical Islamic wisdom with contemporary educational psychology, paving the way for more holistic and transformative models of Islamic education that nurture not only intellectual acumen but also emotional, spiritual, and social maturity. While acknowledging the need for careful contextualization when applying modern theories to classical texts, the profound alignment observed suggests a universal understanding of effective learning that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries.

Despite its conceptual contribution, this study remains limited by its qualitative and interpretive nature, relying primarily on textual analysis rather than empirical classroom observation. Future research could extend this framework through ethnographic or experimental approaches within modern *pesantren* or Islamic schooling contexts, to empirically assess how Bandura's social learning mechanisms interact with the moral-spiritual pedagogy of al-Zarnuji. Such interdisciplinary inquiry would offer deeper insight into the applicability of classical Islamic educational wisdom in shaping learner behavior and moral development in contemporary settings.



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