

Analysis of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji's Thoughts on the Ethics of Learning and Teaching in Islamic Education

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Abstract

This study analyzes Syekh Az-Zarnuji's ideas on learning and teaching ethics in Islamic education and examines their relevance to contemporary character education based on ASWAJA, Islamic moderation, and national values. The study uses library research with philosophical, conceptual, and descriptive-analytical approaches. Data were collected through documentation of primary and secondary literature and analyzed using content and conceptual analysis. The findings show that learning ethics include sincere intention, respect for teachers, choosing a good peer environment, perseverance, and discipline. Teaching ethics emphasizes teachers as moral exemplars, teaching with compassion, and practicing the knowledge taught. These principles are relevant to contemporary character education because they integrate intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. The study concludes that Az-Zarnuji's thought remains a useful philosophical foundation for developing Islamic education that strengthens character, moderation, social responsibility, and national values.

Keywords

Az-Zarnuji; Character Education; Islamic Education; Learning Ethics; Teaching Ethics



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INTRODUCTION

Character education is a crucial aspect of national education development in Indonesia. Various issues emerging in education, such as moral degradation, declining student ethics, weakening respect for teachers, and the development of a culture of instant gratification, demonstrate that education cannot be solely focused on achieving cognitive abilities. Education needs to provide balanced attention to moral, spiritual, and social development so that students not only acquire knowledge but also are able to use it responsibly. Values and character education are essential for developing individuals who are knowledgeable, moral, possess integrity, and are able to carry out their responsibilities in social and religious life. This orientation aligns with the nation's character development policy, which places character education as one of the foundations for building the quality of Indonesian human resources.

In the Islamic educational tradition, character building is closely linked to ethics in the teaching and learning process. Educational success is not only seen from the mastery of knowledge, but also from the formation of attitudes and behaviors that reflect good manners. This thinking can be found, among other things, in the work of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariq at-Ta'allum*, which remains an important reference in the tradition of Islamic boarding schools and Islamic educational institutions. The book discusses various principles related to good manners, morality, spirituality, and the relationship between students, educators, knowledge, and the learning process. Az-Zarnuji believes that success in acquiring knowledge is not solely determined by intellectual ability, but also by the quality of good manners that accompany the process of seeking knowledge. Respect for teachers, appreciation for knowledge, sincerity in learning, and good behavior towards others are essential elements that determine the blessings and benefits of knowledge.

The emphasis on educator character is also a crucial element in Az-Zarnuji's thinking. Educators are not only required to possess adequate knowledge, but also to demonstrate moral integrity, honesty, experience, and exemplary behavior in their daily lives. Teachers are positioned as figures with broader responsibilities than simply delivering learning materials. Educators act as moral and spiritual guides, helping students develop attitudes, habits, and life orientations consistent with good values. The integration of knowledge, exemplary behavior, and ethics makes the educational process more profound in shaping students' personalities.

Az-Zarnuji's thoughts are strongly relevant to the challenges of contemporary education. The development of digital technology and the currents of globalization provide various conveniences in obtaining information, but at the same time can bring changes to interaction patterns, learning methods, and students' life orientations. Education that overemphasizes academic achievement and technological mastery has the potential to neglect ethical and spiritual dimensions if not accompanied by adequate character formation. In this context, Az-Zarnuji's thoughts on the ethics of learning and teaching can serve as an important foundation for developing an education that places manners, moral integrity, spirituality, and social responsibility as an integral part of the educational process.

This study aims to understand the concepts of learning ethics and teaching ethics in the thoughts of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji and to examine their relevance to character education in the context of contemporary life. The discussion is also placed within the perspective of Aswaja values, Islamic moderation, and national values so that Az-Zarnuji's classical thoughts can be understood contextually according to the needs of today's education. The study of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* is not only important for understanding the legacy of Islamic educational thought, but also for discovering the principles of character education that can be applied in developing students who possess knowledge, manners, spiritual maturity, moral integrity, and concern for social life. Thus, education is understood not merely as a process of transferring knowledge, but as a process of forming human beings who are able to integrate knowledge, morals, and responsibility in everyday life.

METHODS

This study uses a library research method by systematically reviewing various literature relevant to the focus of the study. This method was chosen because the object of the study is related to the thoughts, concepts, values, and principles of character education contained in the works of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji, especially *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariq at-Ta'allum*, and its relevance to the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (ASWAJA), moderate Islam (wasathiyyah), and national values. The literature reviewed includes sources of Islamic education, scientific works, previous research results, and educational policy documents related to character education.

This research uses a philosophical, conceptual, and descriptive-analytical approach. The philosophical approach is used to deeply understand the foundations of thought and educational values contained in the works of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji, especially regarding the ethics of students in seeking knowledge and the ethics of educators in implementing the learning process. The conceptual approach is used to identify and analyze the concepts of character education, etiquette, morality, spirituality, and the relationship between educators and students developed in Islamic education literature and linked to the principles of ASWAJA, moderate Islam, and national values. The descriptive-analytical approach is used to describe the concepts found in various sources, then analyze their relationship and relevance to the needs of character education in the contemporary context.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary sources. The main primary source is the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariq at-Ta'allum* by Sheikh Az-Zarnuji as the main source for identifying thoughts on the ethics of learning and teaching. Secondary sources include books, scientific journal articles, previous research results, and policy documents discussing Islamic education, character education, teacher professionalism, ASWAJA, religious moderation, and national values. One relevant study is the study by Faizin, Rahma, and Khildan (2025) regarding Islamic educators according to Sheikh Burhanuddin Az-Zarnuji and their implications for teacher professionalism. The use of primary and secondary sources allows the research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Az-Zarnuji's thoughts while placing them within the current discourse of character education.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques. The data collection process included an inventory of sources, critical reading, recording relevant information, and classifying data based on the research theme. The collected literature was then selected based on its relevance to the focus of the study, source credibility, academic validity, and suitability for the research objectives. Information obtained from these sources was grouped into several main themes, namely learning ethics, teaching ethics, etiquette towards knowledge and teachers, educator role models, character building, ASWAJA values, Islamic moderation, and national values. Data analysis was conducted through content analysis combined with conceptual analysis. Content analysis was used to identify ideas, values, principles, and educational messages contained in the sources studied, particularly in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*.

Conceptual analysis was used to understand the relationships between concepts and formulate the relevance of Az-Zarnuji's thoughts to character education in a contemporary context. The analysis stages were carried out through data reduction by selecting information according to the research focus, categorizing it based on main themes, interpreting the meaning of each concept, synthesizing between concepts, and drawing conclusions.

The synthesis process is aimed at identifying the relationship between Az-Zarnuji's teaching and learning ethics and the development of student character. Learning ethics are understood through the values of sincerity, respect for teachers and knowledge, good intentions, discipline, and responsibility in seeking knowledge. Teaching ethics are analyzed through the aspects of exemplary behavior, competence, moral integrity, responsibility, and the role of educators as intellectual, moral, and spiritual guides. These values are then examined for their relevance to the principles of ASWAJA, moderate Islam, and national values to achieve an integrative understanding of character education. The conceptual framework of the research analysis places the thoughts of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji as the main foundation, which is then analyzed through two dimensions: learning ethics and teaching ethics. These two dimensions are understood as interrelated parts of character formation. Learning ethics shapes students' attitudes and habits in acquiring knowledge, while teaching ethics shapes the quality of exemplary behavior and the responsibility of educators. The integration of the two is then linked to the values of ASWAJA, Islamic moderation, and nationalism as the basis for developing character education appropriate to the context of Indonesia's diverse society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biographical and Intellectual Context of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji

Sheikh Az-Zarnuji was a classical scholar whose thoughts had a significant influence on the development of Islamic educational traditions, particularly within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). His full name is known as Burhanuddin Az-Zarnuji. Information regarding his biography, birthplace, and intellectual journey is relatively limited, so various studies provide different accounts of his background. Az-Zarnuji is estimated to have lived in the late 12th century or around the 13th century AD, namely during the development of the Islamic scientific tradition that gave birth to many thinkers in the fields of education, fiqh, Sufism, and other Islamic sciences. Although his biographical information is not widely known, his educational ideas through the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariq at-Ta'allum* demonstrate a deep attention to the relationship between knowledge, etiquette, and the formation of students' personalities.

Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariq at-Ta'allum is Az-Zarnuji's most well-known work and an important reference in the Islamic educational tradition. The book does not merely provide technical guidance on how to learn, but also establishes the view that the activity of seeking knowledge is a process of human development that involves intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects. Knowledge is seen as having value when acquired through a correct

process, based on good intentions, accompanied by respect for teachers, and manifested in behavior that reflects the benefits of knowledge. This view shows that education according to Az-Zarnuji has a broader orientation than academic achievement because learning success is also measured by changes in a person's attitude and moral quality.

Ethics is one of the main foundations of Az-Zarnuji's educational thinking. Students are guided to have the right intention in seeking knowledge, to be serious in their studies, to respect teachers, to value knowledge, and to maintain good relationships with fellow students. Intention plays a crucial role because it determines one's orientation in acquiring knowledge. Learning should not be directed solely toward attaining status, popularity, or material gain, but also toward gaining God's approval, eliminating ignorance, developing self-benefit, and contributing to society. This orientation demonstrates that the educational process, from Az-Zarnuji's perspective, has a strong spiritual dimension.

Respect for teachers is also an important part of learning ethics. Teachers are not merely transmitters of information, but rather sources of knowledge and figures with moral standing in the educational process. The relationship between teachers and students is built on respect, courtesy, and trust in the transmission of knowledge. This respect is not intended to create a rigid relationship, but rather to foster an educational atmosphere that allows for the acceptance of knowledge with an open and responsible attitude. Within this framework, the quality of the relationship between educators and students is one of the elements supporting successful learning.

Seriousness in learning is another principle emphasized by Az-Zarnuji. Seeking knowledge requires perseverance, patience, discipline, and a willingness to face various difficulties. The educational process is not understood as an instant activity that produces knowledge quickly, but as a long process that requires consistency. This attitude is relevant to contemporary educational issues, where an instant culture and easy access to information often encourage students to achieve results without undergoing a deep learning process. Az-Zarnuji's thinking reminds us that easy access to information does not automatically result in deep knowledge or maturity of character.

Learning ethics also encompass relationships between students. Az-Zarnuji emphasized the importance of mutual respect, maintaining good relationships, and avoiding behavior that could disrupt the learning process. A healthy learning environment is built not only through the relationship between teacher and students, but also through positive interactions among fellow learners. The values of respect, patience, cooperation, and concern for others are part of the character-building process that occurs throughout one's education. Az-Zarnuji's thinking demonstrates the close relationship between mastery of knowledge and the formation of morals. Acquired knowledge does not stop at understanding the material but must be implemented in real life. The application of knowledge is a crucial indicator of educational success, as knowledge that fails to change behavior and provide benefits for life has not fully achieved its educational goals. This view positions education as

a process that connects knowledge with action, enabling students to internalize the values they learn and apply them in their daily lives.

The influence of Az-Zarnuji's thought in the Islamic boarding school tradition demonstrates that the concept of Islamic education, which places *adab* as an integral part of the learning process, has had a strong resilience in the history of education. *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* is not only studied as a classical text, but is also used as a guideline in building a learning culture that emphasizes respect for teachers, sincerity in seeking knowledge, discipline, politeness, and the practice of knowledge. This makes Az-Zarnuji's thought relevant to be re-examined in the context of modern education, especially as education faces challenges in the form of social change, technological developments, and the increasingly strong tendency towards an orientation towards academic achievement.

The relevance of this thinking becomes increasingly apparent when character education is positioned as a key part of educational goals. The principles of right intentions, respect for teachers, sincerity in learning, good social relationships, and the practice of knowledge can be understood as values that support the formation of students' character. These values also have room for dialogue with the principles of ASWAJA, moderate Islam, and national values because they both emphasize the importance of balance between knowledge, morality, social life, and responsibility for the environment. Thus, Az-Zarnuji's thinking can be positioned as a relevant intellectual source for developing character education that is not only oriented towards intelligence, but also towards the formation of civilized individuals with integrity, spiritual depth, and the ability to benefit society.

Learning Ethics According to Sheikh Az-Zarnuji

Sheikh Az-Zarnuji's thoughts in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariq at-Ta'allum* place ethics as an inseparable part of the process of acquiring knowledge. Learning is not only understood as an intellectual activity to acquire knowledge, but also as a process of personality formation. A student's success is not only measured by the ability to understand and master learning materials, but also by the quality of intentions, attitudes, behavior, social relationships, and the ability to apply knowledge in life. Learning ethics from Az-Zarnuji's perspective can be understood through several main principles, namely sincerity of intention, respect for teachers, choosing a good social environment, and sincerity and discipline in learning.

1. Sincere Intention in Seeking Knowledge

Az-Zarnuji places intention as the primary foundation in the activity of seeking knowledge. Students need to have the right goals from the beginning of the learning process, especially to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT, eliminate ignorance, develop personal abilities, and provide benefits to the life of society. Knowledge acquired solely to pursue worldly interests, position, popularity, or material gain loses the spiritual dimension that is one of the main characteristics of Islamic education. Sincerity of intention makes learning activities not merely an effort to achieve academic achievement, but also part of worship and the process of character formation.[6]

This concept demonstrates that Islamic education places spirituality as one of the foundations of the learning process. Students are not only guided to develop intellectual intelligence, but also to be aware of the purpose and moral responsibility of the knowledge they acquire. Education becomes a process that connects knowledge with values and actions. This view aligns with the thinking of Omar Mohammad al-Toumy al-Syaibani, who placed the formation of faithful, knowledgeable, and noble individuals as a crucial part of the goals of Islamic education. Knowledge is expected not to stop at mastery, but to provide benefits for individuals and society. Sincerity of intention is also related to the development of a student's internal character. Someone with the correct learning orientation will more easily develop a sense of responsibility, humility, patience, and consistency throughout the educational process. This perspective aligns with the thinking of Ibn Miskawaih, who placed the development of morals as a crucial goal of education. Intellectual intelligence must be accompanied by self-control, patience, discipline, and humility so that the knowledge gained truly benefits life.

2. Respect for Teachers

Respect for teachers is one of the important principles of learning ethics according to Az-Zarnuji. Students are required to demonstrate politeness, humility, courtesy, and maintain good behavior when dealing with teachers. This respect is a form of respect for knowledge and the person who acts as a mediator in the process of imparting knowledge. Belittling or ignoring teachers is seen as diminishing the blessings of the knowledge gained. In Az-Zarnuji's thinking, the relationship between teacher and student is not merely academic, but also has moral and spiritual dimensions. Teachers serve not merely as transmitters of material but also as guides in the process of personality development. Students need to build relationships based on politeness and respect so that the transmission of knowledge takes place in an atmosphere that supports both intellectual and moral development. Respect, adherence to sound direction, and humility are part of the ethics that must be developed throughout the educational process.

In the context of modern education, respect for teachers remains relevant in building a healthy academic culture. Thomas Lickona emphasizes the importance of role models in character education because moral values are more easily understood and internalized by students when demonstrated through concrete behavior. Teachers who demonstrate integrity, discipline, responsibility, and respect for students can serve as moral models that influence character formation. Relationships built on mutual respect enable the educational process to proceed more humanely and support the development of students' character. Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts also reinforce this view. Respect for teachers can be part of moral training that fosters patience, discipline, wisdom, and the ability to respect others. Teachers also have a responsibility to exemplify morals and wisdom. Good teacher behavior provides concrete examples for students to emulate, so that respect for teachers is not only understood as a social obligation but also as part of the moral development process.[11][12]

3. Choosing Good Companions

Az-Zarnuji pays attention to students' social environments because friends and social environments can influence the development of attitudes and behavior. Students are encouraged to choose friends who are committed to learning, have good morals, and are inclined towards goodness. Positive social interactions can create a conducive learning atmosphere, strengthen motivation, and encourage the formation of good habits and character. From Az-Zarnuji's perspective, selecting friends demonstrates that character education does not occur solely through formal classroom learning. Social interaction is a crucial part of the internalization of values. Students learn through the habits, conversations, behaviors, and relationship patterns that develop within their social environment. Disciplined friends can encourage discipline, while friends who are enthusiastic about learning can increase motivation, while a less than ideal environment can negatively influence students' behavior.

This environmental role aligns with Rohmat Mulyana's view of the importance of the social and cultural environment in shaping value awareness. A person's behavior does not develop independently of their environment, but is influenced by ongoing social and cultural interactions. Character education therefore requires an environment capable of providing concrete experiences of the values it seeks to foster. This perspective has important implications for educational institutions. Schools and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) need not simply establish rules regarding student behavior; they also need to create an educational culture that allows these values to be practiced in everyday life. Teachers' exemplary behavior, student-to-student relationships, a culture of discipline, shared activities, and a positive social environment can provide a natural environment for character learning.

4. Perseverance and Learning Discipline

Az-Zarnuji believes that knowledge cannot be acquired instantly. The process of seeking knowledge requires sincerity, patience, perseverance, and the ability to maintain a spirit of learning over the long term. Students must have a strong will to face various difficulties during the learning process. Success depends not only on intellectual ability, but also on the willingness to continue trying when faced with failure or difficulty in understanding knowledge. Patience is an important characteristic in this process. Students may face fatigue, difficulty understanding the material, limited abilities, and various other obstacles. Az-Zarnuji encourages students not to give up easily when faced with these conditions. Patience allows the learning process to proceed consistently, allowing knowledge to be understood more deeply and ultimately applied in life.

Perseverance is also related to consistent study habits. Reviewing material, discussing it, reading, recalling lessons, and utilizing time effectively are all part of strengthening understanding. Time management is a crucial aspect of learning ethics because time is viewed as a resource that must be used responsibly. Students should avoid wasting time on unproductive activities and instead focus on activities that support the development of knowledge and morals. Sincerity in learning must always be placed within the framework of

sound intentions. The desire to achieve academic success must go hand in hand with the goal of gaining the approval of Allah SWT and producing beneficial knowledge. Thus, perseverance and discipline are not only strategies for achieving academic success, but also a means of developing the character of responsible, independent, and resilient students.

The values of discipline and hard work are strongly relevant to contemporary character education. Discipline shapes students' ability to regulate behavior, adhere to responsibilities, and manage time effectively. Hard work builds resilience in the face of challenges and encourages students to persevere when faced with failure. From a character education perspective, these values contribute to the development of individuals who are independent, responsible, and possess a strong work ethic. Overall, the learning ethics developed by Az-Zarnuji demonstrate that the educational process is a unity of intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. Sincerity of intention provides direction toward learning goals, respect for teachers fosters good manners in educational relationships, the selection of friends creates a supportive social environment, and sincerity and discipline ensure the learning process is consistent. These four principles form a framework for learning ethics that is not only relevant to Islamic educational traditions but can also serve as a source of values in developing character education in the context of modern education.

Teaching Ethics According to Sheikh Az-Zarnuji

Sheikh Az-Zarnuji's thoughts on teaching ethics place teachers as a crucial part in the process of shaping students' personalities. Teachers are not only responsible for imparting knowledge, but also play a role in guiding students' moral and spiritual development. According to Az-Zarnuji, the educational process must combine knowledge with etiquette, so that the success of an educator is seen not only in the ability to convey material, but also in the quality of morals, exemplary behavior, and the relationships built with students. These teaching ethics are reflected in moral example, compassion in education, and the congruence between the knowledge taught and the teacher's behavior in everyday life.

1. Teacher as a Moral Exemplar

Az-Zarnuji views teachers as figures with moral and spiritual responsibility in the educational process. Teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge, but also mentors who provide direction to students through their behavior, words, and actions. Modeling is crucial because students learn not only through the material presented but also through what they observe and experience in their interactions with teachers. Teachers who demonstrate honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, justice, and religious attitudes indirectly create an educational environment that supports the development of positive character.

This view aligns with Maragustam's thinking, which places teachers as central figures in character education. Teachers hold a strategic position in introducing and enacting moral values through concrete behavior. Character education is not simply implemented through the delivery of theory, advice, or rules, but requires role models that can be observed and

imitated by students.[18] These role models serve as a means of internalizing values because students tend to grasp educational messages through concrete experiences in everyday life.

Consistency between a teacher's words and actions is an important part of leading by example. Teachers who teach discipline but fail to demonstrate it in carrying out their duties will face difficulties in building their students' character. The same applies to the values of honesty, responsibility, fairness, and politeness. Maragustam emphasized that teacher behavior influences the success of the character-building process because students more easily imitate concrete actions than simply accept advice. Teachers' exemplary behavior also needs to be demonstrated in various situations, not limited to classroom learning activities. The way teachers communicate, assess, resolve conflicts, treat students, carry out responsibilities, and interact with the environment are all part of the educational experience. Teachers who are able to demonstrate the integration of religious values, social morals, and national culture will provide a more comprehensive example of how these values are applied in life. This thinking strengthens the teacher's position as an agent of character formation. The moral quality of teachers is one of the factors determining the success of internalizing values in students. Role models enable abstract values to be translated into observable behavior, providing students with concrete examples of how religious and national values are realized in their lives.

2. Teaching with Compassion

According to Az-Zarnuji, teaching ethics also relate to compassion, gentleness, patience, and sincerity in educating. Teachers are not only required to master the subject matter but also to care about the development of their students. Education is essentially a process of guiding human beings, so the relationship between teacher and student must be built on mutual respect and attention to each other's needs. Compassion in teaching can be demonstrated through patience in the face of differences in ability, attention to learning difficulties, wise counseling, and appreciation for students' efforts. Teachers should avoid demeaning, humiliating, or excessive punishment, as such treatment can undermine self-confidence and motivation to learn. A gentle approach allows students to feel valued as developing individuals with potential for improvement.

Educational relationships based on compassion also create a more humane learning environment. Students will more easily communicate about the challenges they face when teachers are able to build a sense of security and trust. In this environment, teachers can fulfill their role as mentors more effectively, not only in academic aspects but also in the development of attitudes and character. Compassion doesn't mean eliminating firmness in education. Teachers still have a responsibility to enforce rules and guide students when they make mistakes. The difference lies in how those values and rules are implemented. Firmness accompanied by compassion is aimed at correcting behavior, while violence and humiliation tend to produce only temporary compliance. Humanistic education positions students as individuals who need to be guided, not simply controlled.

This thinking demonstrates that a teacher's sincerity in educating is closely linked to educational success. Teachers who teach with compassion not only transfer knowledge, but also help students develop their potential, improve their morals, and find their own direction. A positive relationship between teacher and student can ultimately create a learning environment that supports character growth. A compassionate approach also reflects respect for human dignity. Students have different backgrounds, abilities, characters, and needs, so educational approaches cannot be rigidly standardized. Teachers need to understand these differences and provide support tailored to each student's individual circumstances. A comfortable and enjoyable learning environment can increase motivation and create greater opportunities for optimal student development.

3. Practicing the Knowledge Taught

According to Az-Zarnuji, integrity between the knowledge taught and the teacher's behavior is a crucial principle in teaching ethics. Teachers are not merely knowledgeable and able to explain moral values; they must also demonstrate the application of these values in their lives. A mismatch between words and actions can diminish a teacher's authority and weaken the educational message conveyed to students. Teachers who teach honesty must demonstrate honesty in carrying out their duties. Teachers who teach discipline must be present, work, and carry out responsibilities in a disciplined manner. Teachers who teach politeness must build communication that respects students. This kind of consistency makes the learning process more authentic because students gain direct experience in applying the values they learn.

This view aligns with Ahmad Amin's thinking that morality cannot be understood simply as theoretical knowledge, but must be demonstrated through concrete behavior. Moral values acquire meaning when they become habits and are reflected in a person's actions.[26] In the context of education, teachers hold a strategic position because their behavior can serve as a direct example for students in understanding the relationship between knowledge and action. The practice of science also demonstrates that education doesn't stop at mastering concepts. Knowledge should result in positive changes in attitudes and behavior. Teachers who integrate science with morals convey the message that educational success is determined not only by the ability to answer academic questions, but also by the ability to apply values in everyday life.

The teaching ethics developed by Az-Zarnuji thus position the teacher as a figure who unites three main elements: knowledge, role modelling, and compassion. Knowledge provides the intellectual foundation for the educational process, role modelling provides concrete examples of the values to be realized, while compassion creates educational relationships that enable character formation to occur in a humane manner. These three elements complement each other in building an education oriented toward the development of the whole person.

Table 1 Synthesis of Sheikh Az-Zarnuji's Ethical Values of Learning and Teaching

Dimensions	Core Values	Implications for Character
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Learning ethics	Sincere intentions, respect for teachers, choosing good friends, sincerity and discipline	Spirituality, humility, responsibility, perseverance, and self-control
Teaching ethics	Exemplary morals, compassion, integrity, and practice of knowledge	Integrity, empathy, moral consistency, caring, and responsibility
Relationship between teachers and students	Respect, example, gentleness, and guidance	Attitudes of mutual respect, trust, politeness, and social maturity
Contemporary relevance	Integration of science, manners, spirituality, morality, and social responsibility	Holistic, humanistic, religious, and contextual character education

Source: Processed from the results of manuscript analysis and conceptual synthesis by the author.

This synthesis demonstrates that Az-Zarnuji's thoughts on the ethics of learning and teaching have an interconnected value structure. Learning ethics shape students' internal qualities through intention, sincerity, discipline, respect, and social environment. Teaching ethics provide reinforcement from the educator's perspective through role models, compassion, and consistency between knowledge and behavior. The confluence of these two dimensions creates an educational process that not only produces students with knowledge but also with character, manners, integrity, and social responsibility.

In the context of ASWAJA-based character education, moderate Islam, and national values, these ideas can serve as the basis for developing an education that integrates intellectual intelligence with morality and spirituality. Courtesy of teachers, sincerity in learning, respect for others, compassion, role models, and the practice of knowledge are values that can be developed in a moderate, humanistic, and welfare-oriented educational culture. Az-Zarnuji's classical thinking thus remains relevant to addressing the needs of contemporary education, which requires not only academically capable students but also strong characters and the ability to use their knowledge responsibly.

Relevance of Az-Zarnuji's Thought to Contemporary Character Education

Character education is an educational process aimed at shaping students' personalities through the internalization of moral, spiritual, social, and cultural values. Character education is not simply about providing knowledge of right and wrong; it also encourages students to understand, feel, and practice these values in their lives. Lickona (2012) explains that character education encompasses moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These three aspects demonstrate that character is formed through the relationship between moral knowledge, inner awareness, and concrete actions. Education that emphasizes only academic intelligence without developing a moral dimension has the potential to produce individuals who possess intellectual abilities but lack adequate integrity and social responsibility.

This perspective aligns with Koesoema's (2010) thinking, which views character education as a conscious effort to help students understand, internalize, and implement ethical values in their lives. Character is not formed spontaneously, but develops through a consistent educational process. Honesty, discipline, responsibility, caring, independence, and respect for others need to be embedded in daily educational experiences so that these values develop into habits. Character education, therefore, relates not only to learning materials but also to the culture and environment in which students grow.

In Islamic education, character formation has a broader dimension because it relates to human relationships with Allah SWT, fellow human beings, and the environment. Education is aimed at developing individuals who possess a balance between intellectual intelligence, spiritual maturity, self-control, and social responsibility. Ibn Miskawaih's thinking places moral development as a crucial goal of education. Good morals relate not only to knowledge of goodness but also to the ability to control oneself and cultivate behavior consistent with moral values (Miskawaih, 1994). This view demonstrates that character education requires a continuous process. The idea of habituation is also closely related to Ahmad Amin's thinking. Morals are formed through habituated will, enabling a person to perform good deeds relatively spontaneously (Amin, 1995). Therefore, character education cannot be implemented instantly. The values taught need to be practiced through repeated and consistent activities. Students need real-life experiences in implementing honesty, discipline, responsibility, caring, and politeness. The role models of teachers, parents, and the social environment are crucial in this process because students learn not only from what is said, but also from what they see and experience.

Maragustam (2019) emphasized that character education from an Islamic perspective needs to be developed holistically by connecting spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions. Character formation cannot be achieved simply through theoretical instruction; it must be realized through habituation and role modeling. Teachers hold a strategic position because their behavior can provide direct moral experiences for students. Teachers who are disciplined, honest, responsible, fair, polite, and religious provide concrete examples of values that should be applied in life. A mismatch between the values taught and teacher behavior can actually weaken the character education process. Az-Zarnuji's thinking is strongly relevant to this perspective. In *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, Az-Zarnuji places ethics as the foundation of the process of acquiring knowledge. Seeking knowledge must begin with the right intention, be carried out sincerely, be accompanied by respect for the teacher, choose a good social environment, and be diligent in learning (Az-Zarnuji, n.d.). Knowledge is not seen merely as a means to achieve success or status, but as a path to gaining useful knowledge and shaping individuals with moral qualities.

Sincerity in pursuing knowledge is relevant to the formation of religious character and integrity. Students are encouraged not to view education solely as a means to obtain grades, degrees, or material gain. Knowledge must be oriented toward its benefit to themselves and society. This orientation fosters an awareness that knowledge is always accompanied by

moral responsibility. In the context of modern education, this principle is crucial because technological developments and academic competition often push students to focus more on outcomes than on the process and underlying values. Respect for teachers is another value of significant relevance. Az-Zarnuji places etiquette toward teachers as part of the ethics of acquiring knowledge (Az-Zarnuji, n.d.). This respect can be understood in a contemporary context as an attitude of respect for the competence, experience, and role of educators in guiding students. The relationship between teachers and students should be built on politeness, responsibility, and reciprocal respect. Lickona (2012) also emphasizes the importance of role models in character education because students more easily understand moral values through real-life experiences and examples.

Az-Zarnuji also emphasized the importance of choosing a positive social environment. Friends and social environments can influence students' habits and character. An environment that supports learning activities, discipline, and positive behavior will strengthen the internalization of values. Conversely, an unsupportive environment can hinder the process of character formation. This view aligns with Mulyana (2015), who explains that students' awareness of values develops through interaction with their social and cultural environment. Character education therefore requires a supportive ecosystem, not just classroom learning. Sincerity, patience, and discipline in learning are also important parts of Az-Zarnuji's thinking. Knowledge is not acquired instantly, but requires process, repetition, perseverance, and good time management (Az-Zarnuji, n.d.). These values are increasingly relevant in the digital age, where information can be obtained quickly. Easy access to information does not always result in deep understanding. Students still need the ability to read, study, repeat, discuss, and reflect. Sincerity in learning fosters a fighting spirit, while discipline fosters responsibility for the educational process.

The relevance of Az-Zarnuji's thinking is also evident in the concept of exemplary educators. Teachers not only convey values but also need to practice those values in their lives. Teachers who teach honesty must demonstrate honesty; teachers who teach discipline must demonstrate discipline; and teachers who teach responsibility must carry out their responsibilities consistently. This exemplary role model makes character education more concrete and easier for students to internalize (Maragustam, 2019). Education becomes a process that connects moral knowledge with real-life experiences and actions. In the context of ASWAJA-based character education, moderate Islam, and national values, Az-Zarnuji's thoughts can be developed contextually. The value of sincerity strengthens religiosity, respect for teachers fosters politeness, sincerity and discipline strengthen independence, choosing good friends encourages social awareness, and practicing knowledge strengthens integrity and responsibility. These values can be combined with principles of moderation such as balance, tolerance, respect for differences, and the common good.

Thus, Az-Zarnuji's thought remains relevant as a conceptual source for the development of contemporary character education. Ta'lim al-Muta'allim offers the view that education must integrate knowledge, manners, spirituality, and action. This idea aligns with

character education, which places moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions as one (Lickona, 2012). This relevance demonstrates that the legacy of classical Islamic educational thought can still be developed to address today's educational needs, particularly in shaping students who are knowledgeable, moral, disciplined, possess integrity, respect others, and are able to use knowledge to benefit society.

CONCLUSION

Sheikh Az-Zarnuji's thoughts on the ethics of learning and teaching in Islamic education place etiquette and morals as the primary foundations of human development. Learning is not understood merely as the activity of acquiring knowledge, but as a process of personality development involving intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. The learning ethics developed by Az-Zarnuji encompass sincere intentions, respect for teachers, choosing a good social environment, and sincerity, patience, and discipline in pursuing knowledge. These values demonstrate that educational success is determined not only by mastery of knowledge, but also by the quality of students' attitudes and behavior. The ethics of teaching in Az-Zarnuji's thinking also demonstrate the crucial role of teachers in the educational process. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge, but also as moral and spiritual guides and role models for students. Teachers are required to possess integrity, teach with compassion, treat students humanely, and practice the values taught in everyday life. Role modeling is a crucial element in character education because values are more easily internalized when students see their practical application in the teacher's behavior. The relationship between knowledge and practice is a principle that emphasizes that knowledge acquires meaning when it is put into action.

The relevance of Az-Zarnuji's thinking is increasingly apparent in the context of contemporary education, which faces various moral, social, and technological challenges. Education that is overly oriented toward academic achievement requires strengthening the character dimension so that students possess not only intellectual abilities but also integrity, responsibility, discipline, caring, and self-control. The principles developed by Az-Zarnuji can serve as a basis for connecting knowledge with the formation of attitudes and actions, in line with the concept of character education that emphasizes the relationship between moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 2012). This thinking also has relevance to ASWAJA-based character education, moderate Islam, and national values. Sincerity strengthens the religious dimension, respect for teachers fosters politeness, sincerity and discipline foster independence, compassion fosters caring, and the practice of knowledge strengthens integrity and social responsibility. These values can be developed through learning, role models, habituation, and the culture of educational institutions, so that character education does not stop at theoretical understanding.

Thus, Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariq at-Ta'allum remains relevant as a philosophical source in the development of Islamic education in the contemporary era. Az-Zarnuji's thought provides the basis that ideal education must integrate knowledge, manners, morals,

spirituality, and social responsibility. Contextualizing these values with ASWAJA, moderate Islam, and nationalism can strengthen an educational model that is humanistic, religious, with integrity, and responsive to changing times. Ultimately, education is not only directed at producing knowledgeable individuals, but also individuals who are able to use their knowledge wisely, have morals, and provide benefits for the community.

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