CURRICULUM CONCEPTION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOK TA'LIM AL-MUTA'ALLIM

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Abstract

Education from the Islamic perspective, as a long life process and the function of Islamic religious education, should endeavor to teach and help students acquire different aspects of knowledge within the parameters of Islam through the use of a well designed curriculum. Through this scrutiny, the ultimate aim of this study is to highlight the model of curriculum in the light of al-Zarnuji in the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, the monumental significant book containning basic principles in education, which has been used among the Moslem world in the context of character education. For gathering information, this study is conducted through qualitative research using descriptive analysis. The result shows that there are several sigfinificant kinds of knowledge united to *ilmu hâl* comprising the science of belief as *Tawhid*, Islamic juriprudence as *Fiqh* and moral as *akhlak*. Finally, this research is highly expected to contribute the recommendation of conception in curricula in the process of education.

Keywords: *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, curricula, *ilmu hâl*, belief (*Tawhid*), Islamic Juriprudence (*Figh*) and Moral (*akhlak*)

1. Introduction

It is basically in the process of acquisition of knowledge it is not easy to achieve. There should be necessary to complete such steps to be employed. Accordingly, it needs to perform a clear means with the obvious method in order to prove its accurate information in learning process. Moreover, one component being an essential role in accordance with some ways applicable in the order for transferring both knowledge and value is curriculum. Generally, it is one means to achieve the aim of education and at once is as the basic guideline for the process of education. It reflects the philosophy and worldview for a nation in determining the life's decision.

From this perspective, the curriculum has the significant position as the centre of values to be transformed into the learners. It is in accordance with the values as the content and

matterial subject of curriculum that there are some needs along with community's demands. The curriculum is the totality of experiences that the child gains through the multifarious activities in the school.

Thus, it is necessary for the curriculum well designed to achieve such transformation or changing of social community. It is because in the process of education, curriculum has the strategic position, since the vision, mision and aim of educational process are considered to be the most strategic means to balance the advancement of science and technology and moral values.

Education, one of the main primary needs for social community earlier, is necessary to possess by each person (*insan*) to make existence for life. Moreover, in regard to aim of education, it is often formulated to prepare and provide the young generation to be productive and creative mature and adult individual. In the midst of society, education has three fundamental features. Firstly, it contains values and gives students these for being such outcomes as hoped and designed from the curriculum itself; scond, education is designed and guided to the social life; third, its implementation is affected by well organised component of school.

The development in the field of education is certainly not sparated by the Moslem Scholars' contribution through their ideas in monumental works, sufficiently devoting all the attention in this education. There are many sources from classical book outlinning this issue. Many of them has the uniqe side of rules as the foundation in the process of acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore, the content has much more to discuss the conception of curriculum as the requirement for seeking knowledge and as the core means for implementing such matters; one of them is Burhan al-Din al-Zarnuji with his book, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*.

2. The Portrail of Ta'lim al-Muta'allim

One of the Islamic intellectual works embracing the treatise is the kitab *Ta'lim al Muta'allim* written by Syech Burhanul Islam al Zarnuji. This kitab is widely recognised as the monumental work, a very regarded existence (Syamsuddin, 2012:5). According to Haji Khalifah in his book *Kasyf al Zunun' an Asami' al kitab al funuun* as cited by Yahya, it is argued that between fiveteen thousands of literature titles laede in 17 century it is noted an elucidation that *Ta'lim al Muta'allim* is one treatise of al Zarnuji (2005:2).

In addition, this kitab is also much used as reference and research material in writing of scientific works, especially in the field of education. This kitab is not only used to some Muslim scientists, but also by Western scientists and orientalists (Syamsuddin, 2012: 6). In Indonesia, this kitab has been studied and scrutinized and is popular among almost all Islamic education institution, particularly in both pesantren in Islamic traditional boarding, Salafiyah. It is because this kitab has been as the main reference for the students 'santri' in acquisiton of the knowledge, and modern instituion, such as pesantren Gontor (Nata, 2003:107). The distinctive feature of this kitab is about the matter containned. Furthermore, it is actually that this kitab, while containing the principle of pursuit of knowledge, is also more about the ethical foundation for teaching- learning process in the base of *religious shade* (Syamsuddin, 2012:6).

Nowdays, this kitab has been given comments by some scholars, like Syech Ibrahim ibn Ismail with the entitled work named *Syarh Ta'lim al Muta'allim*, and Syech Yahya ibn Nashuh (d. 1007 H/1598 M), who is the poet from Turkey, Imam Abd al Wahab al Sya'rani, a sufician, as well as al Qadhi Zakaria al Anshari (Yunus, 1990 :15). The translation of this book, *Ta'lim*, has been first published in Mursidabad (1265), in Tunis (1286 and 1873), in Cairo (1281, 1307, 1318), in Istanbul (1292), and in Kasan (1898). Morever, this kitab has been given some commentaries into seven publications: first, on behalf of Nau'i (n.d.); scond, Ibrahim ibn Nu'man (996H/1588M); third, Sa'rani (710-711 H); fourth, Ishaq ibn Ibnu Rumi al Qili (720) with the title Mir'ah al Thalibiin; fifth, Qadi ibn Zakariya al Anshari A'ashaf; sixth, Otman Pazari, 1986 with the title Tafhim al Mutafahhim; seventh, H.B. AL Faqir, without date and notification (Affandi, 1995: 67).

As Yunus (1990) argued, in this kitab, there has been concluded some views from the experts of Islamic education and been strengthened in particular al Ghazali's idea. Accordingly, it is, in particular, that this kitab characterises the educational science, and gives such an impact in Islamic value for the sake of seeking knowledge, moreover as the manual for the teacher to educate and aim (p.155). Moreover, as Bisri (1992) argued that to form the future generations, trained as well as fearful to God (good spirituality), in other words to form a civilised generation, there are no particular guidelines apart from the book *Ta'limul Muta'alim*.

The main reason to assum the discussion by choosing this book is that 1) this kitab has been performing the world's educational society, particularly in the midst of pesantren; 2) Its model of teaching and learning has been suitability united to the soul of Islamic education; 3) the basic foundation of the content sufficiently applicable to practice in the context of current Islamic educational system in the midst of Indonesian Islamic heterogeneous community. In other words, it contains the Islamic educational values; the precedent of learning and teaching having been performed among those involved in Islamic education milieu, mainly Islamic boarding (pesantren). There are some opinions regarding this merit in performing the classical instance into the moral conduct to be practiced among those being involved in educational process, like teacher, student as well as the parents.

2.1. About the Author

As far as the information to be attachable regarding the author name of Ta'lim, there are two names referred to him, namely al Zarnuji who is Burhanuddin al Zarnuji, who lived in 6th century or 13 century and Tajuddin al Zarnuji who is Nu'man Ibrahim who passed away in 6th century (Athiyatullah, 1970 : 58-59). Al Zarnūjī was among the pioneers in the field of education. Furthermore, he was also one religious scholar of Hanafith Madhab around 13th century, and thus he could be recognised as in year 593 H with his treatise, *Ta'lim al Muta'allim* (Athiyatullah, 1970 : 58). In addition, he was a poet from Bukhara (Ma'luf : 1975).

In regard to the place where he lived in, it is referred that he lived in Zarnuq or Zarnuj (Athiyullah, 1970: 58). Moreover, there has been an assumption that the place for his birth was the famous state located at around Tigris river, namely Eastern Turkistan. When assumming implicitly about the date of his life, he did not mention it in his kitab. However, it is

in general that he lived in the last period of Abbasite chaliph, where its last caliphate was al Mu'tashim (1258M/656H). Some of the information regarding the period of scholars' life which is regarded as al Zarnuji'teacher or with whom al Zarnuji had at least corresponded will shed the light on this problem. Among them, there are (1) Fakhr al Islam al Hasan Ibn Mansur al Farghani Khadikan who died in 592/1196; (2) Zahir al- Din al Hasan Ibn 'Ali al Marghinani, who died circa 600/1204; (3) Fakhr al Din al Kashani who died in 587/1191; (4) Imam Burhan al-Din Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Farghinani al-Marghinani who died in 593/1195; (5) Imam Rukn al-Din

Muhammad bin Abi Bakr Imam Khwarzade who died in 491-576 H (Ahmad, 1986: 14).

In addition, his reason in compiling this kitab is with a very real purpose in writing the book. In 1203, al Zarnuji begin with compiling such the chapter on the kitab, namely 13 chapters. Based on this, he saw and observed that many students struggling for education and for the attainment of knowledge, but falling short of their aim, wether this aim was 'modest or splendid'. In addition, these students, according to him, did not succeed in their goal because they were not cognizant of the right methods of learning, or if they were, they did not abide by them but floundered around and wasted time. Therefore, al Zarnuji decided to explain to the student a method of study which he had read about and head from his own teachers (Grunebaum and Abel, 1947 : 2).

3. Significance of Curriculum

Simply, curriculum is meant a collection of subject matter taught in the school as the aim in the process of acuisition of knowledge. While, in the wider meaning, curriculum comprises how to enhance learners in their moral or soul, spritual as well as social or physical side by viewing previous experiences oberved from the process of teaching and learning both in class and out class (Dakir and Sardimi, 2011: 129).

Curriculum, according to the terminology, has many definitions which are appropriate with the development of theory and educational practice itself which is also appropriate with adopted theory. The old view which is recently still adopted by some people formulates that curriculum is a set of subjects which must be taken by students. In this case, curriculum is only limited in learning activity based on the materials which previously have been designed. The purpose of curiculum in this term is restricted to master 'materials' which are usually evaluated after being taught and assessed in the form of ranking or achievement.

With the actualisation and realisation on the basic goal equally for guidance of Islamic teaching, it is indeed that Islamic education will be meaningful. A very essential device determining Islamic education is through the curriculum, which is a number of educational experiences, cultural, social, sports, and arts provided by the school and educational institution for their students both inside and outside the school in order to help students grow up in gainning the the whole aspects of life and to change their behavior into the goals of education (Daulay, 2004: 94).

Curriculum in the perspective of Islamic education is recognised with the word *manhaj* which means clear way used to the process of education by educator together with learner to develop knowledge, skill and attitude (al Shaibani, 1984: 478). In addition, it is also

considered as one program of education designed and implemented to achieve aim of education (Daradjat, et. al. 1996 : 122). In other words, it is the range of experiences, both indirect and direct, concerned to unfold the abilities consciously directed by training experiences through the school use for completing and perfecting the individual.

Moreover, if implemented within curriculum of Islamic Education, this curriculum functions as the role used by teacher to guide and direct learners into highest extent of aim in education, through transforming knowledge, skill and attitude. In this process, it is undertaken to the conception for performing perfect man 'insan kamil' which is useful for the social community. In addition, similar to al-Zarnuji's view pertainning to curriculum conception, there is generally different with common curriculum. Accordingly, as Nata suggested, it is required to those five characteristics in Islamic education. First, there is profounded to the purpose of religious and character discourse on various aims, contents, methods and means. Scond, there is spreading its content and its guidance, and developing effort towards all the aspects of learning, intelectual, psycological, social and spiritual. Third, it should make a balance between all the sciences and curriculum exerted. Fourth, there should be the effort to arrange through placing these three, tawhid, akhlak and fiqh as the underlying content to all the subject matter studied. Fifth, there should be suitable with the learners' ability and skill (2005:179).

3.1. Material of Curriculum

One of the significant operational components of Islamic education is curriculum. It means that subject matter to be taught sistematically must be suitable with the aim planned. In the reality, both matter and curriculum contain same meaning, which is derived from sources of lesson prepared within the educational process in institution. Person who will make 'lesson plan' is not sufficient only with having ability to perform formulation of learning purpose, but is also necessary to master such matters of learning due to being inspired by the teaching matters.

The term of teaching matter means organising some fields of sciences from one another is sparated, but is actually one whole unity integrated. Moreover, lessons of subject matter have to refer to the aim of education and are not vice verse. One unclear factor of curriculum in the system of modern education in almost all the Muslim countries is disappearance of hierarchical vision of knwoledge as seen in the system of traditional education. It is pertaining to how this factor can be performed in some compulsory subjects easily applicable and transmitted to the learners within the lesson of subjet matters. Some of the most important matters in transforming learners for defending negative influences and strengthenning a good potention, as al-Zarnuji proposed in the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, are such matter in accordance with belieft (*tawhid*), Islamic juriprudence (*fiqh*) and moral discourse (*akhlak*). It is true that three fundamental lessons as the material in transforming learners to provide Moslem learners to become perfect man.

3.2. Principles of Curriculum Implementation

The principles which will be exerted in the curriculum implementation is basically some principles which will inspire the curriculum itself. It is significantly that AI- Zarnuji is more seemed to assume some principles necessary to consider in acquisition of knowledge. As for the basic principles to be performed as al-Zarnuji's foundation of curriculum affected by his ideas seemingly emphasising the matters of religious discourse to sustain the performing the soul, *ilm hal*, here are some basic principles, as follows:

3.2.1. Well integrated continuity (istigâma)

Curriculum points out that instruction, method as well as subject matter should be planned well as with the time and means designed to transmit such values and knowledge comprehensively and continuously. It is one model for the significant ways to make learners with their ability achieve what is presented by teacher within the curriculum. Through continuously undertaken model of curriculum, by availability of time from one matter and other matter, it should be no long time due to being able to lower their understanding to that subject matter. As al-Zarnuji emphasised, it should for learners to accomplish and continue their effor to achieve the knowledge without any long distance and separate thing until gainning obvious views in the midts of learning process (2008). Moreover, according to him, otherwise, this can make unclear understanding to pursue the subject matter (2008). In addition, in the process of education at present, as outlinned by some experts of educational practionarists, this is almost sufficiently fit in in accordance with al-Zarnuji's recommendation. Moreover, the concept of continuity (istigama) is currently outlinned by some experts such as Benninga, J. S., & Tracz, S. M. (2010); Sukmadinata (1997). It is urgent to ensure that the experiences available within curriculum should be also continuously and interrelated with each class level to one another or one extent to one another.

3.2.2. Concern to learners' ability (istita'a)

Deciding such matters and basic discussion is necessary to suit the learners' ability and development. In addition, it is pointed out the task and learning implementation employed by learners in the relation with subject matters. It is in case that in analysing curriculum currently in any school, we will achieve some illustrations comprehensively containing such steps and levels appropriate with the extent of learners. In addition, from this perspective, it is summary to impact the learners through attitude and activity in the order for performing the aim of education. For various aspects, as al-Nahlawi outlined, these have been underlined in order to perpare gradually as suitably with the learners' extent of development and ability, by determining the real condition of the milieu (1989 : 269-270).

3.3.3. From simple to complex (*sigharah mabṣūṭah*)

In the curriculum principle, the concern to the process of education is urgent in accordance with accomplishing both level of learners' ability and subject matter. As one of many experts suggested, it should be from simple subject to complex one (Halmar, 2008 : 36). From this perspective, each lesson is necessarily to fit from the simpler level to more complicated. It is important to note that level from each matter is necessary to consider carefully on the subject

matters. The role of deciding this level has the important role in determining the sucessful implementation of lesson with conforming degree of each matter itself. From this perspective, al- Zarnuji presents the points seemingly concentrating on the memorization part of learning. Moroever, he advises acknowledging his great teachers that the student, in case of a beginner, must start with a particular amount of portion that is comfortable for a two time repetition. It must be some simple lessons and should increase the portion of study day by day, asserting that he could repeat it twice every day (al-Zarnuji, 2008: 74). In addition, the student should start with something more familiar and comfortable to his cognition level (p.75). It is obvious that in accordance with al-Zarnuji's emphasis through his book, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, each matter in the learning process should be for learners to choose the lesson being part of subject matters from simple to more complex.

4. Al-Zarnuji's Ideas of Curriculum

Regarding to the term of curriculum used by al-Zarnuji in directing some of the subject matters, it is not found in his book, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*. It is true however that there is not mentioned explicitly, but is implicitly containned to his first chapter saying that "it is compulsory for each Moslem to study '*ilm hal*' which means the lessons pertainning to the issues in accordance with belief, moral and Islamic Jurisprudence." (al-Zarnuji, 2008:3). It is more emphasising such matter sufficiently exerted for learners earlier to prepare them in order to be ready for being the perfect Moslem both spiritual and physical aspect.

4.1. Ilm al-Hal as the Core Curriculum Matter

Some of the curriculum which al-Zarnuji pointed out, meanwhile other sciences also, are more concerned to supply the learners earlier by *ilm al-Hal*, being a fundamental subject matter for performing the learners need, particularly in the need for soul perfection. It is one science pertaining to human issues in relation to God (*ibadah*) other human and nature (*mu'amalah*). It is with providing some compulsory subject matters, even through implementing and cultivating these by staying to keep its principles both continuity (*istiqama*) and considering learners ability (*istiţa'an*), this is sufficiently able to instill them comprehensively in the order for one effort to perform '*insan kamil*'. Similarly, as Hashim (1999 : 39-40) profoundly suggested, the curriculum should reinforce the following Islamic concepts:

- 1. The Islamic view of the Creator (*Tawhid, iman* and God's attributes);
- 2. The creation of man and his purpose, namely to worship Allah, to be His khilafiyah, to promote good and forbid evil and to spread the message of Islam;
- 3. Man's relationship with the Creator, that is his consciousness of Allah, accountability to Allah, to do good deeds, to worship and supplicate;
- 4. Man's relationship with others, which is to establish justice, to have respect for life, property and dignity, to develop sound *akhlak* (character) and to show religious tolerance;

- 5. Man's relationship with the environment which emphasises his role as God's vicegerent, to work with harmony with all of Allah's creations, and to recognise or discover Allah through his creation;
- 6. Self-development, which provides room for self-reformation and learning from past mistakes;
- 7. Man's destination, that is, to promote accountability by evaluating our role, understanding the Last Day and the Hereafter and their implications; and
- 8. Development of an Islamic ethos so as to create an environment conducive to Islamic practice.

Therefore, by deeply inculcating these elements above, it is the effort to inculcate religious matters within the curriculum as al-Zarnuji significantly recommended.

4.1.1. Science of Belief (Tawhid)

One of the most important thing in the subject matter to be inculcated into the learners in order to make carefully how to be a perfect man is that the role of Tauhid science in which this kind of knowledge is one compulsory subject to be taught earlier. It is the reason why the science of *Tawhid* is the first lesson to instill the learners earlier. Similarly, according to al-Zarnuji, the most important lesson to be taught for person both adult and youth is science of oneness where this is placed as the center for (*shahadah*) (2008: 3-5).

Regarding the Tawhid science to be used in the subject matter as the compulsory lesson, here is characteristic clearly explainned to make decision for gainning the Truth, as in the following:

Tawhid, also spelled Tauhid, Arabic Tawhīd, ("making one," "asserting oneness"), in Islām, the oneness of God, in the sense that he is one and there is no god but he, as stated in the shahādah ("witness") formula: "There is no god but God and Muḥammad is His prophet." Tawhid further refers to the nature of that God—that he is a unity, not composed, not made up of parts, but simple and uncompounded. The doctrine of the unity of God and the issues that it raises, such as the question of the relation between the essence and the attributes of God, reappear throughout most of Islāmic history (Encyclopedi Britanica Online accessed in 26/1/15).

As for in the terminology of Muslim mystics (Ṣūfīs), however, tawhid has a pantheistic sense;

all essences are divine, and there is no absolute existence besides that of God. To most Muslim scholars, the science of tawhid is the systematic theology through which a better knowledge of God may be reached, but to the Ṣūfīs, knowledge of God can be reached only through religious experience and direct vision (Encyclopedi Britanica Online accessed in 26/1/15).

Accordingly, there are three types of *Tawhid* necessary to include within the curriculum of subject matters. *Tawhid al-ibada* refers to our actions, while *tawhid ar-rububiyya* and *tawhid al-asma wa as-sifat* refer to our knowledge and understanding, and the *inner tawhid al-ibada* refers to our motivations. In addition, *tawhid*, a complete way of being, must feature each extent where human beings relate to God. If a person falls short on any of these levels, it is not truly *tawhid*. Therefore, it is obvious that this should be the first lesson as the main priority underlying other subject matters as al-Zarnuji outlined in his book.

4.1.2. Science of Akhlak

In the process of education with all major, while hoped to be a perfect in the achievement by high grade, one matter which has the significant role in transforming values is the science of *akhlak*, comprising character, moral and ethics. Furthermore, it is always related to the behavior and attitude for learners. Al-Zarnuji significantly proposed in his book, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, "it is obligatory for each Muslim to study more about the science pertainning to ethics, moral and character, which commonly recognised as *akhlak*, both good deed and bad one" (2008: 9).

Similarly, in regard to the anything of character values, both good and bad deeds, Battistich (2005) clearly outlined:

Character includes attitudes such as the desire to do one's best and being concerned about the welfare of others; intellectual capacities such as critical thinking and moral reasoning; behaviors such as being honest and responsible, and standing up for moral principles in the face of injustice; interpersonal and emotional skills that enable us to interact effectively with others in a variety of circumstances; and the commitment to contribute to one's community and society. Stated simply, character is the realization of one's positive development as a person—intellectually, socially, emotionally, and ethically. To be a person of good character is to be the best person that one can be (p.2).

From this regard, this is clearly observed that to recognise the content of character values is urgent. Moreover, as al-Zarnuji (2008) overviewed that it is impossible to avoid these forms of character, particularly bad one, without any effort to study comprehensively, so that it has been an obligatory for each Moslem to learn about it (p.9). It means that all the Moslem learners have to study all about the character both at school environement and family one. The consequence of that regard is that each school, particularly Islamic school, is profoundly necessary to provide both such curriculum and model of learning suitable with that needs in the form of 'character education'.

Similarly, according to Battistich (2005), this comprehensive approach to character education utilizes every aspect of schooling—the content of the curriculum, the process of instruction, the quality of relationships, the handling of discipline, the conduct of co-curricular activities and the ethos of the total school environment—to foster good character in all school members (p.3). Therefore, it is obligatory for each teacher to have more capability to teach

them through the model teaching and to have the responsibility in inculcating character values, particularly Islamic noble values, within the learning in class.

4.1.3. Science of Islamic Juriprudence (Figh)

Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) deals with the observance of rituals, morals and social legislation in Islam. Technically, it refers to the body of Islamic law extracted from detailed Islamic sources, which are studied in the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, and the process of gaining knowledge of Islam through jurisprudence. In the next significant subject matter to be included as the main supplying for learners, Islamic Juriprudence (*fiqh*), being science on how to make careful and aware to worship God, both involving *ibadah Shar'ie* and *Mu'amalah*, should be taught earlier, beside *Tawhid* and *Akhlak*. Regarding to the significance of *fiqh*, al-Zarnuji gave his profound attention as in his book that implicitly it is obligatory to study the science pertainning to *ibadah 'amaliyah*, daily worship i.e. (*sholat*) praying for each Moslim, particularly among youth (2008 : 4).

Moreover, he profoundly suggested about that due to being perfection to accomplish in worship to God comprehensively. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun describes figh as "knowledge of the rules of God which concern the actions of persons who own themselves bound to obey the law respecting what is required (wajib), sinful (haram), recommended (mandub), disapproved (makruh) or neutral (mubah)" (Levy, 1957: 150).

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

From such subject matters, which are in accordance with science for daily life need i.e. general sciences, it is sufficiently necessary to provide the subject of *tawhid*, *fiqh* and *akhlak*, particularly among the Muslim earlier both in school and other institution. As al-Zarnuji profoundly recommended in his book, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, it should be comprehensively prepared among the Muslims in the process of education to these three basic component of matters. It is with the significance of one effort to perform these into the learners earlier. Through this recommendation, it is highly expected to contribute the conception of curriculum, mainly for Muslim school in which such religious matters are necessary to teach among them, in order that they can implement these matters in their daily life as the extent of worshipping in relation to both God and their environment in the midst of both collegues and partners. From this perspective, basically it is also one effort to make the perfect man as the ultimate aim of Islamic education, so that after receiving education, it is highly expected that the Muslim learners could become more capable, adjustable, acceptable, knowledgeable and have the best understanding, application power, skills, values (particularly Islamic values).

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