

HOLISTIC EDUCATION IN KH. IMAM ZARKASYI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY: IMPLEMENTATION AT PONDOK MODERN DARUSSALAM GONTOR

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Abstract

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Relevance,
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Although numerous studies have examined KH. Imam Zarkasyi's educational philosophy, few have explored it from the perspective of holistic education. Zarkasyi developed an integrative educational model that combines religious values with intellectual advancement while fostering students' intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and kinesthetic development. The novelty of this study lies in examining PMD Gontor as an institution that systematically implements an integrative curriculum based on holistic educational principles. This study aims to analyze the relevance of holistic education to KH. Imam Zarkasyi's educational thought. It employs qualitative library research using books, journal articles, personal writings, online sources, and other relevant documents. The findings show that holistic education is systematically implemented in PMD Gontor through educational goals, vision, mission, and institutional values that emphasize the balanced development of human potential. Its autonomous *Kulliyatul Mu'allimin al-Islamiyah* curriculum integrates religious and general sciences through the Direct Method, deep learning, and project-based learning, enabling students to develop intellectual competence, practical skills, and moral character simultaneously. Teacher quality is strengthened through continuous professional development, while student assessment is conducted periodically to evaluate academic achievement alongside character, mental, and spiritual growth. Holistic education is further reinforced through collaboration among teachers, administrators, students, parents, alumni, and the wider community, creating an integrated educational ecosystem. These findings demonstrate that Zarkasyi's educational philosophy remains highly relevant as a holistic model of Islamic education that balances intellectual, spiritual, moral, and practical development in preparing students to contribute positively to society.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a topic of enduring importance because the progress of a nation's civilization is reflected in the quality of its educational system; conversely, national decline is closely related to the condition of education. For this reason, the government has established a nine-year compulsory education program. This initiative is intended to benefit individuals and communities while ultimately contributing to national development (Suprihatin, 2015). Furthermore, in today's era, the rapid pace of globalization demands that individuals prepare themselves for these changes, as education is one of the key pillars of a person's life (Garis, 2018). Consequently, without education, it is extremely difficult for someone to keep pace with the rapid advancements of the times (Djaelani, 2013).

A major problem facing Indonesia today is the shift in students' values and attitudes, a deeply concerning phenomenon that affects various aspects of national life, including education (Mulyana, 2015). What is even more distressing is that in our current educational system, there are prevailing social norms and values are sometimes regarded as normal and acceptable, while conversely, those who steadfastly uphold positive values are labeled as pretentious or abnormal. This situation reflects a lack of proper guidance they receive from the education system itself regarding religious education, ethics, and morality an education that is limited to theoretical concepts alone resulting in them absorbing information as-is without undergoing a healthy maturation process (Akhwan, 2014; El-Yunusi et al., 2022).

According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), juvenile delinquency is a complex social phenomenon and a matter of global concern. Deviant behaviors among adolescents, such as gang violence, drug abuse, bullying, and sexual misconduct, threaten both individual development and social stability. Their consequences are far-reaching, ranging from declining academic performance and mental health problems to involvement in criminal activity. In Indonesia, this issue has become increasingly concerning, as reflected in reports from the Central Statistics Agency (Statistik, 2022)

The juvenile delinquency rate in West Java is reported at 30%, higher than approximately 25% recorded in East Java, which stands at around 25%; The Sukabumi Police Department also reported an increase in juvenile delinquency in 2024, representing a 1.79% rise compared with 2023. Reported incidents included an attack by

a motorcycle gang on a vendor at Cibadak Market, disturbances and vandalism at a resident's home in Citarik, Palabuhanratu, the fatal stabbing of a junior high school student, a murder case at Citepus Beach in Palabuhanratu, and the deaths of two victims in Caringin, Sukabumi Regency. The Sukabumi Regency Police Department noted that gang fights accounted for the largest proportion of juvenile delinquency cases, at 60% compared with other forms of delinquency. Such behavior is associated with adolescents' search for identity and social recognition among peers. Therefore, education should not be oriented solely toward cognitive development but should also address the affective and psychomotor domains (Statistik, 2022). These data indicate shortcomings in the education received by children and young people.

Therefore, educational orientation should not focus solely on the cognitive domain or on standards that emphasize intellectual ability alone; it must also be balanced by attention to the affective and psychomotor domains. These dimensions form an integrated educational whole that is not fragmented but unified and comprehensive (holistic), while continuing to uphold the values and ethics inherent in Islamic education (D. E. Wulandari, 2018). Previous findings suggest that IQ contributes only about 20% to a person's success in life, while the remaining 80% is largely influenced by other factors, including EQ and SQ (Alwi, 2019).

Holistic education offers an approach to developing human beings in their entirety. It begins with the establishment of a holistic educational paradigm through the reconstruction of the philosophical foundations of education, continues through methodological improvement, and ultimately seeks to produce individuals of strong character (Primarni, n.d.). The goals of holistic education can be achieved when the curriculum is designed to foster the development of the whole person. Individuals who recognize learning as a lifelong process and understand the interconnectedness of all aspects of life demonstrate characteristics of holistic development (Ashari, 2011). A holistically developed person is more likely to approach problems from a comprehensive perspective, thereby facilitating the identification of appropriate solutions. Holistic education is therefore essential as an alternative response to contemporary educational challenges.

Within the context of Islamic education, one prominent figure whose educational philosophy reflects holistic principles is KH Imam Zarkasyi. As the founder of *Pondok*

Modern Darussalam (next Written by PMD), he introduced a new paradigm in the world of Islamic education that integrates religious values with intellectual advancement. Through his visionary educational thought and practice, KH. Imam Zarkasyi promoted a spirit of modernity that does not conflict with religion but instead develops from the foundations of Islamic values (Suhaimi et al., 2025).

Through education, people are guided to develop their full potential to achieve well-being and a meaningful life. This aligns with the philosophy of KH. Imam Zarkasyi, who emphasized that education is an essential aspect of life as well as a strategic means to improve the quality of life and advancement of the Muslim community (Aufin, 2016). Based on this understanding, Imam Zarkasyi introduced various innovations and reforms in education, particularly within the *pesantren* environment. He observed that traditional *pesantren* still faced several fundamental weaknesses, including the absence of clearly defined educational objectives and the lack of a planned and directed learning system. Educational processes often proceeded conventionally and depended largely on the individual abilities and expertise of the kyai, without the guidance of a systematic curriculum. Therefore, Imam Zarkasyi recognized the need to reconstruct *pesantren* education so that it would be guided by measurable objectives, a rational system, and a vision aligned with the demands of the times (Adawiyah et al., 2021).

In the context of modern Islamic education, KH. Imam Zarkasyi sought to integrate traditional Islamic values with the demands of the modern era. His thought reflects a harmonious synthesis between the *pesantren* tradition, which is rich in spiritual and moral values, and a modern educational approach that is rational, systematic, and structured. Through this integration, he presented a model of Islamic education that not only preserves the legacy of classical scholarship but also responds to changing social conditions. According to Imam Zarkasyi, education is not merely intended to make students intelligent or knowledgeable; it should also nurture their ability to apply knowledge within society. Education must therefore produce individuals who are prepared to live and contribute meaningfully within their social environment. This principle demonstrates the relevance of holistic education to Imam Zarkasyi's perspective on Islamic education, in which the educational process is designed to develop students' potential comprehensively across intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions (Abu Bakar, 2024). Holistic education serves to help develop and optimize

existing potential both physical and spiritual with the aim of shaping creative and innovative individuals, well-rounded (holistic) individuals, and individuals of good character and noble ethics (Maghfiroh & Akhyak, 2024).

Education at PMD Gontor employs a comprehensive and integrative approach that extends beyond academic competence to encompass students' intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development (Faj, 2011). All the experiences that students are expected to encounter in society are practiced and cultivated within the boarding school environment, preparing them to engage with and contribute meaningfully to society (A. H. Zarkasyi et al., 2021). The development of emotional and spiritual intelligence through this holistic educational approach plays a crucial role in preparing the next generation to possess noble character, a mature personality, and the readiness to face life's challenges in the future; therefore, this research was formulated on *"Holistic Education In KH. Imam Zarkasyi's Educational Philosophy: Implementation at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor"*. It should be noted that a key contribution of this research is that the concept of holistic education has been formulated in the thought of KH Imam Zarkasyi and has been comprehensively applied in PMD Gontor and its branches.

METHODS

This study is a literature review that employs a qualitative approach as the basis for the data review and analysis process. The literature review was conducted by identifying, collecting and analyzing various written sources relevant to the study of the concept of holistic education and its relevance to the concept of Islamic education from the perspective of KH. Imam Zarkasyi, without involving any direct observation or data collection in the field (Magdalena et al., 2021). A qualitative approach was adopted because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the concepts of holistic education and Islamic education from the perspective of KH. Imam Zarkasyi.

The data sources used in this study consist of primary and secondary data relevant to the focus of the study. Primary data were obtained from academic journal articles that specifically discuss the concept of holistic education and Islamic educational thought from the perspective of KH. Imam Zarkasyi. Meanwhile, secondary data were sourced

from various supporting literature, such as books, e-books, undergraduate dissertations, postgraduate these and other academic documents.

Sources were selected on a selective basis, considering the relevance of their content to the focus of the study. Research data were collected through a literature review of various sources relevant to the research focus. The information obtained was then selected, categorized and organized in accordance with the requirements of the study. The analysis stage was carried out using content analysis techniques to interpret the data, examine the various perspectives found in the literature, and draw conclusions systematically (Nilamsari, 2014). Through these methods, the study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of holistic education and its relevance to Islamic educational thought from the perspective of KH. Imam Zarkasyi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Holistic Education

Historically, holistic education is not a new concept. Several classical figures such as Jean Rousseau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, Johann Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, and Francisco Ferrer were among the pioneers of holistic education. Ron Miller (1992), founder of Holistic Education magazine, believes that holistic education enables everyone to discover the meaning and purpose of their lives through their relationships with the community, nature, and human values such as empathy and a sense of identity (R. Miller, 1992). Philosophically, holistic education is an approach based on the idea that every person can discover their true self, the meaning, and purpose of life through their relationships with society, nature, and human values such as compassion and peace.

The definition of Holistic Education according to experts: according to Rousseau as cited in Noddings (2018), is that “man was born free and good and could remain that way in some ideal state of nature.” The central idea of this philosophy is that since God created humans with inherent goodness, humans must strive with all their might to preserve that quality (Curren, 2025). Whereas Ibn Sina definition, Holistic Education emphasizes the importance of developing all aspects of the human being physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Education, in his view, is not merely the transfer of knowledge but also the cultivation of noble character (Maulida & Bakar, 2025). Next Henzell-Thomas

(2004) as cited by Syaifuddin Sabda, means striving to develop a holistic and balanced path for every learner in all aspects of learning. This encompasses spiritual, moral, imaginative, intellectual, cultural, aesthetic, emotional, and physical dimensions. The goal of holistic education is to foster an awareness of one's relationship with God, which is the ultimate purpose of all life (Sabda, 2018). Holistic education is therefore an educational philosophy based on the idea that every individual can discover their true self, the meaning of life and their purpose through their relationship with society, the natural environment and spiritual principles (Rianawaty et al., 2021).

Herry Widyastono explained that there are several principles in holistic education, namely: 1) centering on God, who creates and sustains life; 2) education for transformation; 3) the holistic development of the individual within the community; 4) mutual respect among individuals and society regarding unique characteristics and creativity; 5) community participation; 6) strengthening spirituality as the axis of life and the center of education; 7) proposing a praxis of knowing, teaching, and learning; 8) engaging and interacting with diverse perspectives (Widyastono, 2012).

A person capable of realizing their full potential is a holistic individual—a true learner who is always aware that they are part of a vast living system and thus constantly seeks to make a positive contribution to their environment. The goal of education in Indonesia, as outlined in Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003, is to foster holistic individuals of strong character. Holistic and principled individuals constitute the social capital for the development of a nation (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2003). In practice, holistic education is grounded in three principles, namely: a) Connectedness is a concept of interconnection rooted in the philosophy of holism, which later evolved into concepts in ecology, quantum physics, and systems theory; b) Wholeness is not merely the sum of its parts. A system of wholeness is dynamic and therefore cannot be fully understood simply by studying its individual components; Being is about fully experiencing the present moment. This relates to the depth of the soul, wisdom, insight, honesty, and authenticity (F. Wulandari et al., 2021).

Based on the previous definition of a paradigm and the definition of holistic above, it can be concluded that the holistic education paradigm is a comprehensive way of viewing education, not as partial, limited, and rigid parts.

Although the concept of holistic education offers many benefits, its implementation in educational practice often faces various challenges. One of the main criticisms is that integrating the mind, heart, and body into the educational curriculum can be difficult to implement effectively, especially within established educational systems that focus solely on academic outcomes (Smith, 2015). Additionally, there are challenges in ensuring that all aspects of holistic education: a) Criticisms and Challenges in the Implementation of Holistic Education; One of the main criticisms is that integrating the mind, heart, and body into the educational curriculum can be difficult to implement effectively, especially within established educational systems that focus solely on academic outcomes (Smith, 2015); b) Curriculum and Implementation Challenges, Adapting the existing curriculum to encompass all dimensions of human development. Research by Williams (2016) indicates that existing curricula are often difficult to modify significantly, particularly within highly structured educational systems. Therefore, a flexible and innovative approach is necessary to effectively integrate intellectual, emotional, and physical education; c) Assessment and Evaluation of holistic education, The assessment and evaluation of holistic education also pose a challenge, underscores the need for more holistic assessment methods to evaluate the success of education that encompasses various dimensions of human development.

The Concept of Holistic Education in Islam

The concept of holistic education in Islam encompasses the comprehensive development of an individual's intellect, heart, and physical well-being. This is rooted in Islamic teachings that emphasize balance among the various dimensions of human life. In classical Islamic literature, education is viewed to develop the full potential of the human being not only in terms of academic knowledge but also in moral-spiritual aspects and physical health.

A holistic education in Islam is based on the concept of the integration of tawhid, in which all aspects of human life are inseparable from the divine dimension (*habluminallah and habluminannas*). Meanwhile, holistic education in the West is heavily influenced by the philosophies of humanism and constructivism, as well as the theory of multiple intelligences.

Aspect	Islamic Perspective	Western Perspective
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Philosophical Foundation	Theocentric (Centered on God/Tawhid)	Anthropocentric/Humanistic (Centered on humans and self-actualization)
Sources of Truth	Revelation and reason	Empiricism, rationality, and social exploration
Goal	Happiness in this world and the hereafter (<i>falah</i>) and becoming a "Perfect Human" (<i>Insan Kamil</i>)	Emotional maturity, social character, and worldly success

Table 1. Differences Between Holistic Education from an Islamic and Western Perspective (Latifah & Hernawati, 2009)

There are three main aspects of holistic education in Islam, namely: a) Intellectual Education, the intellect is central to the educational process in Islam. Al-Ghazali, in his work *Ihya Ulumuddin*, explains that the primary goal of education is to develop the intellect and knowledge so that individuals can understand and apply religious teachings in daily life (Dodego, 2021). Intellectual education in Islam involves the study of both worldly and spiritual knowledge. The Qur'an also emphasizes the importance of thinking and using reason to understand the signs of Allah's greatness (Qur'an, 2:164). Ibn Khaldun, in *Muqaddimah*, also emphasizes that education must include the development of reason, which involves not only cognitive abilities but also social and historical understanding (Nasution, 1985); b) Education of the Heart, In the context of Islamic education, the "heart" refers to the spiritual and moral aspects of an individual. Al-Ghazali teaches that the education of the heart is essential for purifying the soul of negative traits such as envy and arrogance. According to him, education of the heart serves to develop moral and spiritual character that can guide individuals in leading a better life (Dodego, 2021). This process includes the teaching of ethics and worship aimed at drawing closer to Allah and internalizing spiritual values in daily life; c) Physical Education, Physical education in Islam is no less important, as the body is considered a trust that must be safeguarded and cared for. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated in a hadith that a strong believer is better and more beloved by Allah than a weak believer (HR. Muslim). This indicates that physical health and fitness are an integral part of Islamic education (Hendek et al., 2022). Physical education involves exercise and a healthy lifestyle that supports physical health and enhances endurance and energy, which are essential for performing religious duties and daily activities.

From the explanation above, the following infographic summarizes the key points:

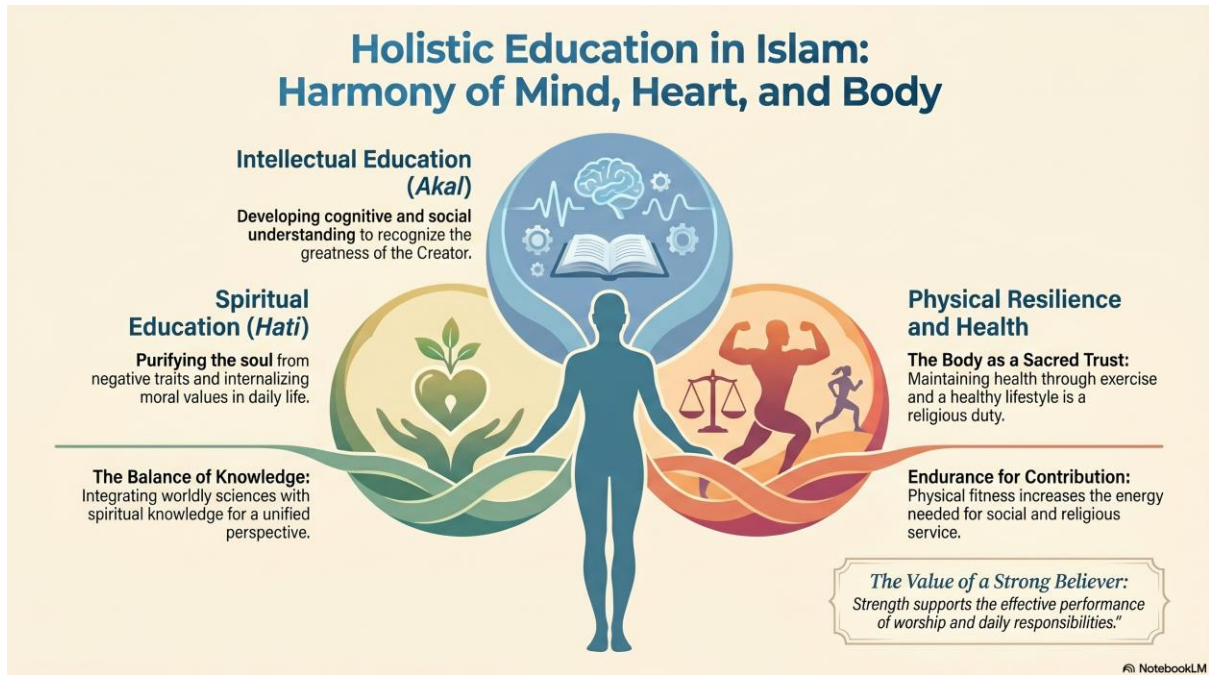


Figure 1. Infographic on the Concept of Holistic Education in Islam

The Concept of Islamic Education from the Perspective of KH. Imam Zarkasyi

Biography of KH. Imam Zarkasyi

KH. Imam Zarkasyi was born in Gontor, Ponorogo, East Java, on March 21, 1910, to a family known for its religious devotion and strong commitment to Islamic education. From a young age, he demonstrated a strong intellectual passion for seeking knowledge. At the age of 16, Imam Zarkasyi began his journey to seek knowledge at various Islamic boarding schools in the area around his birthplace, including *Pesantren* Josari, *Pesantren* Joresan, and *Pesantren* Tegalsari. His passion for learning then led him to move to Solo to study at the Jamsaren Islamic Boarding School, Mambaul Ulum School, and Arabiyah Adabiyah School under the guidance of KH. Alhasyimi, where he deeply studied the Arabic language until 1930. After four years of studying in Solo, Imam Zarkasyi continued his education at the Kweekschool in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, until 1935. After returning to Gontor in 1936, he introduced a new educational system known as *Kulliyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyah* (KMI) a modern educational program designed to produce teachers and Islamic da'wah cadres with a broad perspective with him serving as its first director until his death in 1985 (Afin, 2016). He left a legacy for the world of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly the world of *pesantren*; a model for modern Islamic

education, a model for leadership development and a model for endowments (Abu Bakar, 2024).

Islamic Educational Thought from the Perspective of KH. Imam Zarkasyi.

K.H. Imam Zarkasyi has successfully integrated the three most influential environmental dimensions the household, school, and community in the process of human development through the establishment of PMD Gontor. (Bakar, 2007). KH Imam Zarkasyi observed that traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) of the past still had structural weaknesses, particularly regarding the formulation of educational objectives. Education in *pesantren* often proceeded without a clear direction, relying on the individual capacity and expertise of a kyai. This resulted in *pesantren* operating in a traditional manner without systematic guidance capable of steering students toward measurable educational outcomes (Mukri et al., 2024).

To address these shortcomings, Imam Zarkasyi proposed the need for systemic reform in the administration of *pesantren* education. In his view, education must be at the core of all *pesantren* programs and activities, not merely an afterthought. With a clear vision, mission, and objectives, Islamic boarding schools are expected to function not only as institutions for the transmission of religious knowledge but also as centers for the holistic development of individuals who are knowledgeable, virtuous, and capable of contributing to the progress of the community (Fatihah, 2018). KH. Imam Zarkasyi initiated reforms in Islamic education encompassing four main areas, one of which focuses on educational methods and systems. He believed that the success of a *pesantren* depends not only on the content of the curriculum but also on how that knowledge is instilled and internalized by the students. In his view, the *pesantren* education system needs to be adapted to the dynamics of the times without losing its Islamic spirit. Therefore, Zarkasyi sought to reform teaching methods to make them more systematic, focused, and effective, thereby combining traditional methods of high spiritual value with modern approaches that emphasize rationality, efficiency, and life skills (Takunas, 2018).

KH. Imam Zarkasyi defined the educational objectives of his *pesantren* as a holistic and comprehensive system. He emphasized that the *pesantren* should function not merely as an institution for transmitting religious knowledge but as a center for nurturing individuals who are knowledgeable, virtuous, and capable of contributing to the welfare of society. In this perspective, education is directed toward developing students'

intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social capacities in a balanced manner, enabling them to face the challenges of life comprehensively (Munahar et al., 2024).

Within this framework, the *pesantren* is designed as an educational environment that supports the holistic development of learners. Students are encouraged to cultivate not only religious understanding but also intellectual competence and personal maturity, thereby achieving harmony between spiritual, academic, and moral dimensions (Habibah et al., 2023). Character formation occupies a central position in this educational philosophy. Through consistent habituation, exemplary conduct, and disciplined communal life, students are guided to develop honesty, integrity, responsibility, and other noble moral values, preparing them to serve society with both competence and ethical commitment.

Zarkasyi also emphasized that education should equip students with practical knowledge and life skills in addition to intellectual achievement. Such an orientation enables graduates to become independent individuals who can apply their knowledge in everyday life and make meaningful contributions to their communities. This reflects his belief that intellectual excellence and spiritual maturity should develop simultaneously, as both dimensions are essential for preparing future generations to respond to changing social realities.

Another distinctive feature of Zarkasyi's educational philosophy is its emphasis on community life and cooperation. Through a well-structured communal environment, students learn the importance of solidarity, mutual respect, and collective responsibility in building a harmonious, just, and civilized society. At the same time, PMD Gontor provides intensive instruction in the Qur'an, Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh, and other Islamic sciences. This comprehensive religious education is intended not only to strengthen students' theoretical understanding of Islam but also to encourage them to practice Islamic teachings consistently in their daily lives (Musthafa & Bakar, 2023).

Furthermore, Zarkasyi viewed education as a process of human development rather than standardization. He argued that education should respect human dignity, nurture freedom of thought, and create a dialogical, open, and inspiring learning environment in which every student can realize their full spiritual, intellectual, and social potential. Ultimately, Islamic education should produce a generation of reformers who can bring positive transformation to both the Muslim community and the wider society.

Graduates of the Gontor educational system are therefore expected to become not only pious individuals but also independent, critical, and visionary leaders who actively contribute to social progress. In Zarkasyi's view, this represents the true essence of Islamic education: the formation of *insan kamil* (the perfect human being), who combines devotion to Allah with a deep commitment to the welfare of humanity (Habibah et al., 2023).

From the explanation above, the following infographic summarizes the key points:

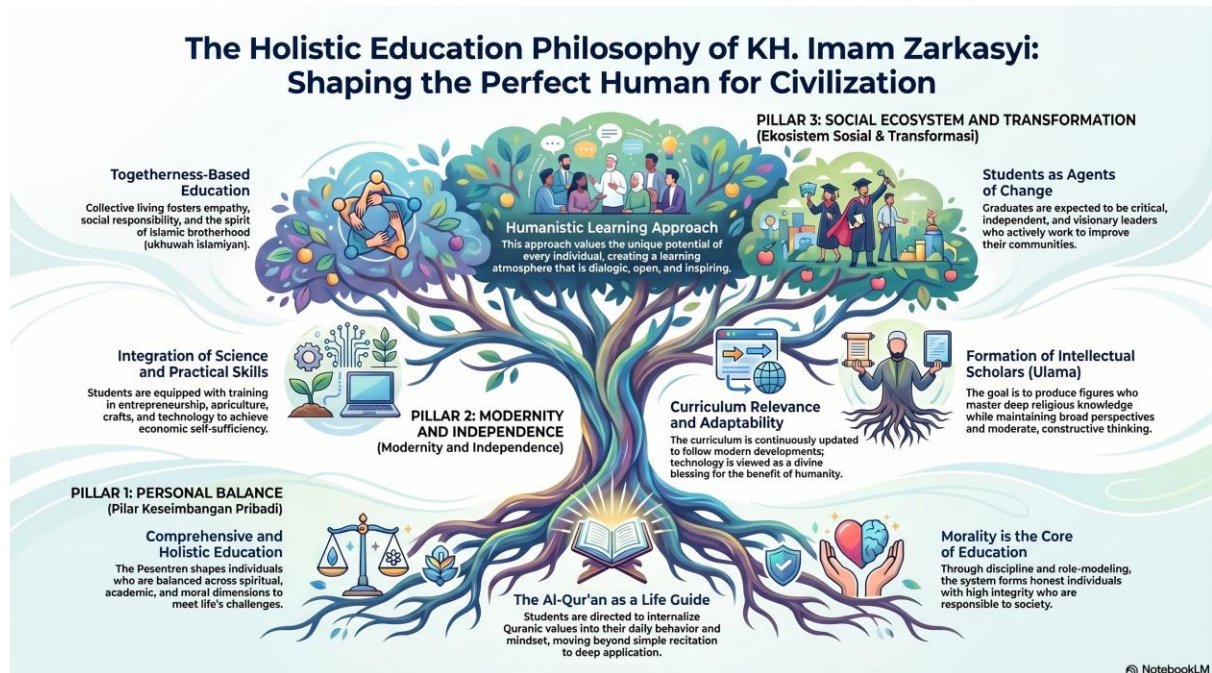


Figure 2. Infographic on the Goals of Holistic Education by KH. Imam Zarkasyi

This fundamental view KH. Imam Zarkasyi's of the essence of education as a process of shaping the whole person, not merely training for a specific profession, the goal of *pesantren* education must be directed toward shaping individuals who are spiritually, intellectually, and socially mature so that they are ready to play a role in society. This demonstrates its relevance to the concept of holistic education. This is reinforced by the findings of Riza et al., who concluded that holistic education is defined as an approach that comprehensively addresses children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual aspects. A review of the literature on this concept reveals that several studies indicate holistic education in early childhood can better shape a child's character. Aspects such as the development of social skills, emotional intelligence, moral values, and children's creativity are key focuses. In this context, educators play a crucial role as

facilitators in creating a learning environment that stimulates this holistic development (Miâ & Azizah, 2023).

A Factual Analysis of the Relevance of the Concept of Holistic Education to the Concept of Islamic Education from the Perspective of KH. Imam Zarkasyi

Non-dichotomous education

The implementation of holistic education at PMD Gontor is reflected in the formulation of the boarding school's vision, mission, motto, and five core values, which focus on the balanced and structured development of all dimensions of the human being. This implementation of holistic education demonstrates that the boarding school does not emphasize only the cognitive aspect but balances it with other dimensions of the students' lives. The education provided is not partial but is integrative and comprehensive (A. S. Zarkasyi, 2005). This aligns with Miller's view that holistic education is education that develops all of a student's potential harmoniously (in an integrated and balanced manner), encompassing intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual potential (Ika et al., 2025).

The curriculum at PMD Gontor is autonomous and independent, free from external intervention, as it was designed by the Trimurti the founders of PMD Gontor based on their independent legal reasoning and extensive institutional experience. This Islamic boarding school fully implements the *Kulliyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyah* (KMI) curriculum, which is an integrated model combining religious studies and general education without any dichotomy between the two fields of knowledge (Darda, 2018). The concept of holistic education demands integration across fields of knowledge, rather than separation between one field and another. However, integrating these fields of knowledge is essential to achieving the ultimate goal of education the enhancement of faith, knowledge, and good deeds so that students may fulfill their role as stewards on this earth (Hendrajaya et al., 2019).

This educational focus on both general and religious studies demonstrates that education at this Islamic boarding school is not merely about producing intellectually gifted individuals, but also about fostering character, social competence, and spiritual maturity, so that female students can have a positive impact on their communities (Hendrajaya et al., 2019).

This objective aligns with the primary goal of holistic education: to shape well-rounded individuals. A person capable of developing their full potential is a holistic individual a true learner who is always aware that they are part of a vast system of life and thus constantly seeks to make a positive contribution to their environment (Falistya et al., 2025).

This Islamic boarding school implements an Integrated Curriculum and Integrated Activities, which means that all the female students' activities from the moment they wake up until they go to sleep again, such as worship, studying, eating, and other activities are integrated and presented within a single curriculum. This approach demonstrates that education is not limited to the classroom but encompasses all aspects of life, enabling the female students to gain a holistic, integrated, and contextual learning experience.

The Learning Process

Language instruction at this Islamic boarding school uses the Direct Method. This system applies not only to language content but also to instructional materials that are directly applied in daily life a combination of intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. This method demonstrates that the curriculum is not merely theoretical but also practical. The boarding school also emphasizes deep learning, which involves reflection, foundational principles, and religious practices, to foster a comprehensive understanding. This approach cultivates *malakah* (deep competencies) in the female students. Teachers play a role in guiding the female students through analytical questions, so that they become accustomed to thinking reflectively and analytically. PMD Gontor Putri also implements project-based learning an approach centered on the hand, head, and heart. Learning that focuses not only on hard skills, but also on soft skills and life skills. Skills such as cooking, sewing, and gardening are referred to as hard skills or job skills. This approach can help female students become well-rounded learners who are intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually balanced (Arif, 2019).

This supports the theory that diverse learning approaches are effective in shaping individuals into well-rounded learners, including approaches that spark interest in learning, collaborative learning, and the use of an integrated curriculum. These approaches include, among others, project-based learning, theme-based learning, and genre-based learning (Megawangi et al., 2005).

All the learning methods implemented aim to achieve the stage of meaningful learning. The concept of Meaningful Learning, as applied at this Islamic boarding school, emphasizes the connection between scientific knowledge and moral values, as well as their application in daily life. Course titles such as *mahfudzot*, *hadith* and *tafsir*, *fiqh*, *nisaiyyah*, and others focus on how to conduct oneself in society. This concept emphasizes that knowledge does not stop at the purely cognitive level but must be directly linked to moral values and applicable to the students' daily lives.

Evaluation of Education and Teaching

Evaluation is the most important component in the learning and educational process, serving to assess the achievement of learning and educational objectives. The evaluation system at PMD Gontor is aligned with the concept of holistic education—that is, evaluation for both female students and their teachers. Evaluations are conducted on an ongoing basis: daily, weekly, monthly, semiannually, and annually. Evaluation takes place in both the learning (academic) process and the educational (non-academic) process. Daily learning evaluations are carried out by homeroom teachers, who assess their students' memorization and comprehension levels. These evaluations are tailored to the specific assessment needs identified by the homeroom teachers. Weekly evaluations of the educational and teaching processes by teachers are held on Thursdays, and evaluations of KMI staff are held on Tuesdays. Student evaluations are conducted every semester in both oral and written formats, taking place at the mid-semester (*awwalu-sanah*) and end of the semester (*akhiru-s-sanah*). This demonstrates that evaluation is viewed as a reciprocal process that drives comprehensive improvement within the *pesantren's* educational ecosystem. Evaluations are conducted for every program or activity that has been implemented to determine the program's achievements and prevent the recurrence of issues that did not meet expectations (Musthofa et al., 2019). The implementation of these evaluations aligns with the assertion that program evaluation is crucial for determining how and to what extent the system is effective in educational practices and outcomes (Rupnidah et al., 2022).

During daily evaluations, the zone supervisors prepare reports on the condition of the students in their dormitories, covering their religious practices, physical health, and spiritual well-being. If any challenges or issues related to a student are identified, the student in question is entitled to receive intensive guidance from the female teachers on

the student care staff. The student welfare staff will collaborate with zone administrators or specific departments such as the health department if the issue concerns health and with homeroom teachers and senior teachers if the issue concerns the students' psychological well-being.

Community involvement in education

Holistic education is reinforced through the involvement of the internal community of the Islamic boarding school—such as teachers, mentors, administrators, and students—who are actively engaged in the educational process. External communities, such as parents, the local community, and alumni, also play a role in supporting education, character development, and moral strengthening. In the educational process, the involvement of parents is strictly limited. Their role is focused on providing support in the form of resources, funding, and prayers, as well as monitoring the students' learning outcomes through academic and non-academic reports. This system emphasizes that the primary responsibility for the education and guidance of female students lies under the care of the Islamic boarding school, while parents and other external communities serve as supporters of the educational process (Atiyah, 2025). This demonstrates a balance of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual aspects in holistic education (F. Wulandari et al., 2021). This is evident in how students learn to manage activities (cognitive), empathize with fellow students (affective), lead meetings (psychomotor), and simultaneously uphold integrity and trust (spiritual). This approach also embodies an integral education that combines balanced learning to foster well-rounded leadership character (Hidayah et al., 2025).

This goes hand in hand with the assertion that, in the educational process, effective collaboration between teachers and parents has a significant positive impact on students' academic progress and achievement. Through this collaboration, students can experience consistent and integrated support both in the school environment and at home (Suryani, 2023). Overall, the implementation of holistic education at PMD Gontor aligns with Miller's three principles of holistic education: 1) connectedness, 2) inclusion, and 3) balance (M. D. Miller, 1984).

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the relevance of holistic education to the philosophy of KH. Imam Zarkasyi is realized in the educational practices at PMD Gontor, which reflect the systematic and comprehensive implementation of holistic education. Education begins with the formulation of the boarding school's goals, vision, mission, and values, which emphasize the balance of the whole human potential, fully integrated into boarding school life. The independent curriculum (*Kulliyatul Mu'allimin al-Islamiyah*) is integrated and comprehensive. Learning approaches such as Direct Method, Deep Learning, and Project-Based Learning combine intellectual skills (head), practical skills (hand), and moral attitudes (heart) to enable students to apply knowledge in real life, in accordance with the principles of Meaningful Learning. Teacher quality development is carried out continuously through training, evaluation, and the use of modern learning resources. The evaluation system is conducted periodically (daily, weekly, monthly, semiannually, and annually). Evaluations measure not only intellectual achievement but also the students' mental, character, and spiritual development. Holistic education is reinforced through the involvement of the boarding school's internal community (teachers, administrators, students) and external community (parents, the public, *alumni*).

The implementation of holistic education at PMD Gontor has been relatively successful in developing students' full potential, including their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual capacities, through the support of the educational system, institutional values, facilities, and teachers' commitment. This paradigm demonstrates the relevance of Imam Zarkasyi's educational thought to a holistic educational system in which spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions develop in harmony to produce an independent, well-characterized generation capable of facing contemporary challenges with wisdom.

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