

THE CONSTRUCTION OF TARBIYYAH RUHIYYAH IN AL-ZINTANI'S ASASU AL-TARBIYATU AL-ISLAMIYATU: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the construction of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in *Asasu al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati* by Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani within the fields of religious literature and Islamic educational thought. While recent scholarship has addressed spirituality, Islamic education, and character formation, limited attention has been given to how Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is discursively constructed within a religious book as a textual object of analysis. This study aims to analyze the textual construction of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah, identify its main discursive elements, and explain the relationships among religion, faith, fitrah, morality, and personality formation. Using a qualitative design and discourse analysis, the study focuses on the chapter on spiritual education, treating definitional passages, Qur'anic verses, hadith citations, and normative arguments as its primary units of analysis. The study finds that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is constructed as a core component of integrated Islamic education, grounded in a theology of human nature derived from Islamic revelation that links innate religiosity, faith, morality, and holistic human development, and that its authority is rooted in the Sunnah and operationalized through Prophetic methods including exemplarity, worship habituation, gentleness, environmental guidance, and gradual instruction directed toward forming a balanced human personality. The article contributes to religious literature studies by demonstrating that an Islamic educational text can be analyzed as a religiously authorized discourse in which spiritual formation is constructed through definitional strategies, scriptural sequencing, and moral argumentation.

Keywords: discourse analysis, Islamic religious literature, prophetic education, religious text, tarbiyyah ruhiyyah.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji konstruksi Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah dalam Asasu al-Tarbiyatu al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati karya Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani dalam bidang studi literatur keagamaan dan pemikiran pendidikan Islam. Meskipun kajian mutakhir telah membahas spiritualitas, pendidikan Islam, dan pembentukan karakter, perhatian terhadap bagaimana Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah dikonstruksikan secara wacana dalam sebuah buku keagamaan sebagai objek analisis teks masih sangat terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konstruksi tekstual Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah, mengidentifikasi unsur-unsur wacana utamanya, serta menjelaskan hubungan antara agama, iman, fitrah, akhlak, dan pembentukan kepribadian. Dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif dan analisis wacana, penelitian ini berfokus pada bab tentang pendidikan rohani, dengan bagian definisional, ayat Al-Qur'an, kutipan hadis, dan argumentasi normatif sebagai unit analisis utama. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah dikonstruksikan sebagai komponen inti pendidikan Islam yang integral, yang bertumpu pada antropologi kewahyuan yang menghubungkan religiusitas bawaan, iman, akhlak, dan perkembangan manusia secara holistik. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa wacana tersebut memperoleh otoritasnya dari Sunnah dan dioperasionalkan melalui metode kenabian, termasuk keteladanan, pembiasaan ibadah, kelembutan, pengarahan lingkungan, dan pengajaran bertahap yang diarahkan pada pembentukan kepribadian manusia yang seimbang. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada studi literatur keagamaan dengan menunjukkan bahwa teks pendidikan Islam dapat dibaca sebagai wacana yang diotorisasi secara keagamaan yang membangun pendidikan spiritual melalui otoritas skriptural, organisasi tekstual, dan argumentasi moral.

Kata kunci: analisis wacana, literatur keagamaan Islam, pendidikan kenabian, Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah, teks keagamaan

INTRODUCTION

Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah has increasingly appeared in recent Islamic education scholarship as a key concept for explaining how spiritual formation, moral discipline, and faith-based self-regulation are cultivated in Muslim learners. Yet most contemporary studies still approach it as an educational model, a moral intervention, or a framework for character development, rather than as a discursive construction embedded in religious texts.¹ This distinction matters because the study of Islamic

¹M C Brooks, "Islamic School Leadership: Advancing a Framework for Critical Spirituality," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 35, no. 3 (2022): 319–336, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2021.1930265>; N

educational thought requires attention to texts as sites of concept construction, not merely as repositories of doctrine. Recent studies on spirituality-based Islamic education, spiritual emptiness in Islamic learning, Islamic school leadership, and the future of religious education all confirm that spiritual formation remains central in contemporary Muslim educational thought, but they mostly treat spirituality as a pedagogical resource or institutional value rather than as a textual object of analysis. At the same time, digital religion and Islamic knowledge studies show that religious authority and educational meaning are increasingly mediated through texts, platforms, and discursive formations, which strengthens the case for returning to religious books themselves as sites of concept formation.² In that context, examining Tarbiyyah

Chanifah, "Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities," *Higher Education Pedagogies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 195–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1960879>; I Felsenthal, "Justice before God: Critical Islamic Education Based on the Work of Tariq Ramadan," *British Journal of Religious Education* 48, no. 1 (2026): 118–130, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2025.2480655>; Jenuri, "Overcoming the Spiritual Emptiness of Students in the Modern Era through the Integration of Al-Ghazali's Human Concepts in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Model," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025): 2497147, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2497147>; M Talib, "Does Religious Education Have a Future in 21th Century? An Anthropologist on the Continued Relevance of Islamic Education," *Maarif Global Education Series*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9640-4_6.

²Askar Askar et al., "Online Islamic Knowledge Sources and Their Authority in Islamic Learning: A Case Study of Indonesian Muslim Universities," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (December 31, 2025): 2504236, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2504236>; Heidi A Campbell, "Looking Backwards and Forwards at the Study of Digital Religion," *Religious Studies Review* 50, no. 1 (March 30, 2024): 83–87, <https://doi.org/10.1111/rsr.17062>; Giulia Evolvi, "Religion and the Internet: Digital Religion, (Hyper)Mediated Spaces, and Materiality," *Zeitschrift Für Religion, Gesellschaft Und Politik* 6, no. 1 (May 19, 2022): 9–25, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41682-021-00087-9>; D.I. Ansusa Putra and Mohammad Hidayaturrehman, "The Roles of Technology in Al-Quran Exegesis in Indonesia," *Technology in Society* 63 (2020): 101418, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2020.101418>; R Rusli, "A New Islamic Knowledge Production and Fatwa Rulings: How Indonesia's Young Muslim Scholars Interact with Online Sources," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 2

Ruhiyyah as a textual construction, rather than merely a pedagogical slogan, is both timely and academically significant.

The focus of this study is the book *Asasu al-Tarbiyatu al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati* by Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani, specifically its chapter on *pendidikan rohani* or Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah. This chapter is not a marginal appendix but a central component in a broader architecture of Islamic education that also encompasses physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and integrated personality formation. The chapter explicitly frames spiritual education through a structured sequence of themes, including religion and its effects, innate religiosity, the need for faith and belief, the concept and dimensions of spiritual education, its pillars in Prophetic teaching, and its aims in the Sunnah tradition. It further defines spiritual education as the strengthening of spiritual power, the cultivation of faith, the fulfilment of human religious disposition, the purification of instinct, and the moral direction of conduct. These features make the chapter a particularly suitable unit of analysis because it presents Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah not merely as devotional advice but as a discursively organized concept supported by Qur'anic citations, hadith, definitional passages, and normative arguments about human formation. The object under study is therefore a religious book chapter that systematically constructs a spiritual-educational discourse, with direct relevance to scholarly inquiry into religious books and textual analysis.

Recent studies relevant to this article can be grouped into four broad tendencies. The first consists of studies that explicitly discuss Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah or Islamic spirituality as a moral and educational force.³ Indonesian work on the concept of Tarbiyyah

(2020): 499–518, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2020.14.2.499-518>; M Slama, "Practising Islam through Social Media in Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416798>; S H Wahid, "Exploring the Intersection of Islam and Digital Technology: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 10 (2024): 101085, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101085>.

³H Basri et al., "Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah and Deviant Behavior in Islamic Schools: An Empirical Sem-Based Study," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 14, no. 1 (2026): 371–92, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v14i1.2549>; I Kamil, "Konsep Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah Abu Al-Hasan Ali Al-Nadwi," *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan*

Ruhiyyah in Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Nadwi and the recent *Peuradeun* article on Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah and deviant behavior both show that the concept is strongly associated with internal spiritual strengthening, Qur'anic engagement, and moral mentoring. A second tendency focuses on spirituality and Islamic education more broadly, arguing that spirituality-based models can address student moral crisis, strengthen character, and reshape educational design.⁴ Beyond these spirituality-focused works, a third body of literature concerns Islamic education transformation in institutional and curricular terms, including digital transformation in madrasah, curriculum management in pesantren-based schools, epistemological reconstruction, and shifts from sorogan to digital learning.⁵ A fourth tendency, more directly aligned with the

Islam 10, no. 2 (2021): 272–289,
<https://doi.org/10.32832/tadibuna.v10i2.4317>.

⁴Chanifah, "Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities"; Jenuri, "Overcoming the Spiritual Emptiness of Students in the Modern Era through the Integration of Al-Ghazali's Human Concepts in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Model"; R B Padzil, "Correlation of Islamic Spirituality in Reducing Student's Delinquency Problems," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 8, no. 1 (2020): 53–62, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v8i1.519>; M M Muhamad, "The Theocentric Worldview: Sustainability Education for Religion and Spiritual," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 9, no. 2 (2021): 275–292, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v9i2.587>.

⁵M Mahsusi, "Achieving Excellence: The Role of Digital Transformation in Madrasah Management and Islamic Culture," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 11, no. 1 (2024): 2304407, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2304407>; F Mardatillah et al., "Epistemological Reconstruction of Islamic Education: Developing a Transformative Pedagogical Model to Foster Creativity," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 13, no. 2 (2025): 1071–94, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i2.2200>; M Nasir, "Revolutionizing Teungku Dayah Learning Model: Exploring the Transformative Impact of Technological Advancements on Islamic Education in Aceh," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024): 2335720, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2335720>; St. Rodliyah et al., "Optimizing the Quality of Islamic Senior High School Graduates through Curriculum Management of Vocational Programs Based on Pesantrens in East Java, Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2423437>; E Suresman, "From Sorogan to Digital Learning: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis of

analytical concerns of this article, encompasses studies of religious books, intellectual genealogy, textbook discourse, and digital religious mediation, including work on Islamic religious literature⁶ in universities, digital cultural-religious literacy, the transformation of *kitab kuning* to digital platforms, Hadrami intellectual traces, anti-madhab discourse in textbooks, and moderate interpretation in Islamic religious education texts. Together, these four bodies of scholarship confirm strong interest in spirituality, Islamic education, and religious texts, yet they do not converge on the specific problem of how Tarbiyyah Ruhyyah is discursively constructed inside a religious book.

This is where the main research gap becomes visible. Existing studies tend to follow one of three orientations: they examine Tarbiyyah Ruhyyah as a concept of spiritual coaching, they evaluate spirituality as a variable in educational behavior, or they analyze religious texts in relation to moderation, digital mediation, or intellectual history. What remains underexplored is the textual mechanism through which Tarbiyyah Ruhyyah is itself constructed inside a religious book. That is a specific gap, not a generic one. The problem is not that there are too few studies on spirituality, but that the available scholarship rarely asks how a religious text organizes the semantic relationships among religion,

Pesantren Learning Models,” *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025): 2580776, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2580776>.

⁶Alfan Firmanto, “Peta Lektur Agama Islam Di Universitas Brawijaya Malang,” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 15, no. 1 (2017): 21–58, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v15i1.514>; Moh. Ashif Fuadi et al., “Traces of Hadramaut’s Intellectualism in the 20th Century in Nusantara and the Role of Its Pesantren Alumni,” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 20, no. 1 (2022): 227–58, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v20i1.1036>; A Iswanto, “Keraton Yogyakarta Dan Praktik Literasi Budaya Keagamaan Melalui Media Digital,” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, 17(2), 321–348., 2019; Muqoffi Muqoffi et al., “No Title,” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 22, no. 1 (2024): 123–58, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v22i1.1193>; A Risdiana Ramadhan, R. B. and I Nawawi, “Transformasi Dakwah Berbasis ‘Kitab Kuning’ Ke Platform Digital,” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, 18(1), 1–28, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v18i1.682>; Rosidin Rosidin et al., “Moderate Interpretation in Islamic Religious Education Textbooks: A Case Study in An Indonesian Islamic Senior High School,” *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 22, no. 2 (2024): 383–420, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v22i2.1273>.

fitrah, faith, morality, Prophetic method, and integrated personality formation. Even text-based studies often privilege reception, ideology, or historical circulation over internal discourse formation. This leaves unresolved how a work such as al-Zintani's book frames spiritual education as a structured religious discourse and what that framing contributes to Islamic educational thought. This gap is analytically significant because it shifts the focus from Islamic education as institution or policy to Islamic educational thought as textual construction, and it bridges empirical studies on spirituality with broader theoretical inquiries by returning to the formative role of the text itself.

By treating Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah as a discursive construction rather than a pedagogical variable, this study opens a new analytical angle that the existing literature has not yet pursued. It examines how the concept is built through definitional strategies, scriptural citation, Prophetic exemplarity, and moral argumentation in a specific textual corpus. This approach allows the article to contribute in three interrelated ways. First, it contributes empirically by bringing al-Zintani's chapter on spiritual education into focused scholarly discussion as a religious text in its own right. Second, it contributes interpretively by demonstrating how a religious book arranges the relationship between *iman*, *fitrah*, *akhlak*, and holistic personality formation. Third, it contributes methodologically by showing that a pedagogical-religious text can be analyzed as religious literature rather than being treated only as a source of educational doctrine. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to analyze how Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is constructed in *Asasu al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*, to identify the discursive elements through which that construction is carried out, and to explain how religion, faith, innate disposition, morality, and personality are linked within the text's spiritual-educational framework. These objectives are pursued through a qualitative discourse analysis of the selected chapter, the design and procedures of which are explained in the following section.

The discussion proceeds in a focused sequence. After the methodological account, the article analyzes the textual construction of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah across several stages: the positioning of spiritual education within the wider structure of Islamic education; the role of religion, *fitrah*, and faith as

foundational concepts; the textual definition and dimensions of spiritual education; the Prophetic methods used to authorize and transmit it; and the final orientation toward the formation of a balanced and integrated Muslim personality. Through that structure, the article argues that al-Zintani's text does more than explain spiritual education. It constructs Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah as a religiously authorized discourse on human formation, offering a significant case for the study of Islamic religious books in contemporary scholarship.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using discourse analysis to examine a religious text. Because the study does not measure the effectiveness of spiritual education as a pedagogical variable but instead analyzes how Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is constructed as a discourse within a religious book, a qualitative textual approach is the most appropriate design. Discourse analysis is particularly suited to this objective because the selected chapter does not merely present doctrinal definitions; it organizes concepts, Qur'anic verses, hadith citations, normative claims, and pedagogical arguments into a coherent structure of meaning.

Through this approach, the study identifies how the text frames spiritual education, foregrounds key concepts, establishes religious authority, and links Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah to the broader framework of Islamic education. As the study relied exclusively on published textual materials and did not involve human participants, interviews, or personal data, formal ethical clearance was not required. Ethical care was maintained throughout by accurately representing the author's arguments, preserving the integrity of the text, avoiding selective quotation, and grounding every interpretation in the analyzed corpus.

The textual analysis was conducted in 2026. The primary corpus consists of the chapter on Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani's *Asasu al-Tarbiyatu al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*. The researcher selected this chapter because it occupies a central position within the book's educational architecture, which integrates spiritual, intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and physical development. The chapter presents a structured discussion of religion and its effects, *fitrah*,

faith, the concept and dimensions of spiritual education, Prophetic educational principles, and the aims of spiritual formation in the Sunnah tradition. These features make the chapter suitable for analyzing spiritual education as a religious discourse rather than merely as educational doctrine.

The unit of analysis consisted of textual segments, including sentences, paragraphs, definitional passages, Qur'anic quotations, hadith-based arguments, and thematic subsections related to Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah. The analysis focused on the chapter on spiritual education and relevant introductory sections that explain the book's overall educational framework. The researcher selected the corpus purposively based on three criteria. First, each passage had to discuss spiritual education or related concepts such as religion, *fitrah*, *iman*, *akhlaq*, and personality formation. Second, it had to demonstrate how the author defines, justifies, develops, or legitimizes Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah as an educational concept. Third, it had to support the article's objective of examining discourse construction rather than merely reporting doctrinal content.

Data was collected through documentation and close reading. The selected chapter was read repeatedly to identify recurring concepts, lexical choices, scriptural references, argumentative patterns, thematic transitions, and discursive relationships. The researcher then prepared a documentation matrix to record the source segment, selected quotation, preliminary code, thematic category, and analytical note for each relevant passage. The main research instrument was an analytical coding sheet developed from the research questions, which classified the data into initial categories including definitions of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah, the roles of religion and *fitrah*, the relationship between *iman* and *aqidah*, Prophetic educational methods, the moral effects of spiritual education, and the relation between spiritual formation and holistic human development.

The researcher analyzed the data using qualitative discourse analysis supported by thematic coding, following five stages. In the first stage, the researcher conducted an overall reading of the corpus to identify the macro-structure of the chapter and its relation to the book's wider educational framework. In the second stage, relevant textual units were segmented and coded according to recurring concepts and discursive functions. In the third stage,

the researcher grouped similar codes into broader themes, including the position of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in Islamic education, religion and *fitrah* as discursive foundations, the conceptual structure of spiritual education, Prophetic methods of formation, and the orientation toward a balanced human personality. In the fourth stage, the relationships among these themes were examined through Qur'anic verses, hadith citations, definitional statements, and normative arguments. In the fifth stage, the themes were interpreted in relation to the research objectives to explain how Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is constructed as a religious discourse.

Trustworthiness was maintained through several procedures. The researcher conducted source comparison within the book by relating the spiritual education chapter to the introductory sections that explain the author's broader educational framework, verifying that interpretations of key concepts were consistent across the text as a whole. An audit trail was maintained through documentation matrices, coding sheets, and analytical memos, ensuring that each interpretation could be traced to specific textual evidence. To reduce overlap and interpretive bias, the researcher reviewed all thematic categories across three successive reading rounds, revising code definitions after each round and checking that no single passage was classified under conflicting categories. The analysis also examined whether conceptual claims were consistently supported by scriptural references, argumentative structures, and the internal organization of the text, thereby ensuring that the findings reflected the discourse of the corpus rather than the researcher's prior assumptions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

This section presents the findings based on a thematic reading of the chapter on Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani's *Asasu al-Tarbiyatu al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*. The analysis shows five connected patterns: the position of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in Islamic education, the foundational role of religion, *fitrah*, and faith, the concept and dimensions of spiritual education, the Prophetic methods of

formation, and the orientation toward a balanced human personality.

The Position of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in Islamic Education

The first finding shows that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is constructed as a core element in al-Zintani's integrated model of Islamic education. The book does not place spiritual education as a marginal or supplementary topic. It appears alongside physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, and social education, and is connected to the final aim of forming a balanced personality. Al-Zintani defines Islamic education as "an integrated process and way of life" that addresses "the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and physical dimensions of human development." This framing indicates that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah functions as one of the central pathways through which the whole human being is shaped. This structural position is summarized in Table 1, which shows how Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is embedded within the general principles, integrated structure, spiritual dimension, and ultimate aim of Islamic education in al-Zintani's work.

Table 1

The Position of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in the Structure of Islamic Education

Structural Element	Textual Evidence	Analytical Implication
General principles	"Educational foundations, principles, and rules from the Prophetic Sunnah"	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is grounded in a unified Sunnah-based educational system.
Integrated education	"An integrated process and way of life"	Spiritual education is a structural component of Islamic education.
Spiritual education	Religion, fitrah, faith, spiritual dimensions, and aims in the Sunnah	Spiritual education is treated as a major chapter, not an addition.
Balanced personality	"A sound human personality and a virtuous society"	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah contributes to personal and social formation.

Source: Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani, *Asasu al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*.

As shown in Table 1, Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah is not presented as a separate devotional theme outside the structure of Islamic education. It is positioned within the general principles of education derived from the Prophetic Sunnah, the integrated nature of Islamic education, the spiritual dimension of human development, and the aim of forming a balanced personality. This indicates that Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah functions as a structural component of Islamic education rather than an additional moral topic.

The centrality of Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah is reinforced by the book's stated purpose, namely to derive "educational foundations, principles, and rules from the Prophetic Sunnah" for "the formation of a sound human personality and a virtuous society." Spiritual education is therefore not treated as devotional advice alone. It links belief, inner cultivation, morality, and social virtue within a Sunnah-based educational framework.

Religion, Fitrah, and Faith as Discursive Foundations

The second finding shows that Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah rests on three foundations: religion, fitrah, and faith. The chapter begins with religion, not with educational technique. This order matters because it shows that spiritual education begins from a theological and anthropological view of the human being. Al-Zintani defines religion as belief in "a transcendent being who governs creation and directs all affairs." He also describes religion as "religious feeling or inclination toward religiosity" and as a system of "teachings, commandments, rules, and rituals." Religion is therefore constructed both as inner disposition and normative order.

The text then develops the concept of fitrah. Al-Zintani uses the hadith that "every child is born upon fitrah" to show that religiosity belongs to human nature. Fitrah is not passive. It must be preserved, directed, and nurtured by parents and educators. Spiritual education protects the child from "deviation, unbelief, and moral decline." This makes Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah necessary because the human being already carries a religious disposition that requires proper guidance.

Faith becomes the third foundation. Al-Zintani describes the need for religion and faith as "natural and cannot be ignored."

Without faith, human beings lack “inner peace, psychological security, life direction, and the capacity to confront suffering.” Faith provides “hope, tranquility, optimism, and inner strength.” It is also tied to action because “faith and action are inseparable pillars.” Thus, faith is not merely doctrinal belief. It becomes the inner basis of moral stability and life orientation. These three foundations and their analytical implications are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Religion, Fitrah, and Faith as the Foundations of Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah

Foundation	Textual Evidence	Analytical Implication
Religion	Belief in “a transcendent being”	Spiritual education starts from theology, not technique.
Fitrah	“Every child is born upon fitrah”	Religiosity is part of human nature and must be guided.
Faith	Faith gives “hope, tranquility, optimism, and inner strength”	Faith becomes the motor of moral and psychological stability.
Faith and action	“Faith and action are inseparable pillars”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah connects belief with conduct.

Source: Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani, *Asasu al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*.

As shown in Table 2, Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah is built on a connected structure of religion, fitrah, and faith. Religion provides the theological foundation, fitrah explains the natural religious disposition of the human being, and faith becomes the inner force that shapes morality and action. This structure shows that spiritual education in al-Zintani’s thought begins from human nature and ends in moral conduct.

The Concept and Dimensions of Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah

The third finding concerns the definition and structure of Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah. Al-Zintani describes spiritual education as “the strengthening of spiritual power in the young,” “the planting of faith in their hearts,” and “the fulfilment of their innate inclination toward religion.” It also includes “the purification of instinct,” “the elevation of aspiration,” and “the guidance of conduct” based on faith in God, angels, books, messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree. This definition shows that Tarbiyyah

Ruhiyyah is multilayered. It includes belief, psychological formation, moral purification, and behavioral direction.

The text organizes Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah into three dimensions: preventive, constructive, and corrective. The preventive dimension protects the younger generation from “misguidance, unbelief, and deviation.” The constructive dimension strengthens spiritual values. The corrective dimension restores those who have deviated to “the path of guidance and faith.” This structure shows that spiritual education operates before, during, and after deviation. It protects, forms, and restores the human person.

The text also contrasts spiritual formation with spiritual emptiness. The spiritually educated person is “inclined toward goodness,” “calm,” “optimistic,” “helpful,” and “steadfast in facing life’s challenges.” Spiritual emptiness causes “imbalance in personality,” “psychological suffering,” “pessimism,” and “existential confusion.” Through this contrast, the text frames Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah as a vital human need. The concept, dimensions, and expected effects of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

The Concept of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah and Its Dimensions

Analytical aspect	Direct textual evidence	Analytical implication
Definition of spiritual education	“The strengthening of spiritual power in the young” and “the planting of faith in their hearts”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is constructed as inner spiritual strengthening rooted in faith.
Relation to human nature	“The fulfilment of their innate inclination toward religion”	Spiritual education is linked to fitrah and is treated as part of human formation.
Moral purification	“The purification of instinct” and “the elevation of aspiration”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is not only doctrinal. It also refines desire, aspiration, and moral orientation.
Behavioral guidance	“The guidance of conduct” based on spiritual values and moral ideals	Spiritual education connects belief with action and daily conduct.
Preventive dimension	“A preventive dimension” that protects from “misguidance, unbelief, and deviation”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah functions as protection against spiritual and moral decline.
Constructive dimension	“A constructive or strengthening dimension”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah builds and reinforces spiritual values within the human person.
Corrective dimension	“A corrective dimension” that returns the person to “the path of guidance and faith”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah also works as restoration after deviation occurs.
Expected spiritual effects	The spiritually educated person is “inclined toward goodness,” “calm,” “optimistic,” and “steadfast in facing life’s challenges”	Spiritual education produces moral stability and psychological resilience.
Effects of spiritual emptiness	Spiritual emptiness causes “imbalance in personality,” “psychological suffering,” “pessimism,” and “existential confusion”	The text constructs spiritual education as a vital human necessity, not an optional supplement.

Source: Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani, *Asasu al-Tarbiyatu al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*.

As shown in Table 3, Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is not limited to the transmission of religious doctrine. It includes inner strengthening, faith formation, moral purification, behavioral guidance, prevention of deviation, construction of spiritual values, and correction after deviation. This multidimensional structure

confirms that spiritual education operates as a comprehensive process of human formation.

Prophetic Methods in Ruhiyyah Formation

The fourth finding shows that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is operationalized through Prophetic methods. Al-Zintani presents the Prophet as “the best example” and states that “the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad.” The Sunnah therefore functions as both authority and method. Spiritual education gains legitimacy because it is grounded in Prophetic guidance, and it becomes practical because the Prophet’s conduct provides educational models.

Several methods appear in the text. First, spiritual education cultivates virtue and removes immoral traits. Second, it habituates children to worship, especially through prayer training. Third, it depends on exemplarity because the educator’s conduct must align with his words. Fourth, it pays attention to companionship and social environment. Fifth, it uses gentleness and rejects harshness. Sixth, it adjusts teaching to the child’s level of understanding. Seventh, it remains open to young people’s questions without excessive blame. These methods show that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah combines habituation, example, gradual instruction, environmental guidance, and emotional care. The main Prophetic methods used in the formation of ruhiyyah are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Prophetic Methods in the Formation of Ruhiyyah

Prophetic method	Direct textual evidence	Analytical implication
Prophetic authority	The Messenger is described as “the best example,” and the text states that “the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad.”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is grounded in Prophetic authority, not merely in general moral reasoning.
Following the Sunnah	The text links following the Sunnah with the perfection of “faith, worship, and morality.”	The Sunnah functions as the normative foundation of spiritual education.
Cultivation of virtue	The text connects spiritual education with noble character	Ruhiyyah formation includes moral

Prophetic method	Direct textual evidence	Analytical implication
Worship habituation	and the avoidance of immoral traits. The text refers to the instruction to train children in prayer.	purification, not only inner belief. Spiritual education begins through early habituation and repeated religious practice.
Exemplarity	The Prophet is presented as the supreme model whose actions are consistent with his words.	The educator's example becomes a central method of spiritual formation.
Social environment	The text emphasizes the influence of companionship and social surroundings.	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah requires control and guidance of the learner's moral environment.
Gentleness	The text highlights "gentleness" and rejects "harshness."	Spiritual formation should be guided by mercy and pedagogical sensitivity, not severity.
Gradual instruction	The text stresses the need to adjust teaching to the child's level of understanding.	Ruhiyyah education must follow the learner's developmental capacity.
Openness to questions	The text encourages openness toward young people's questions without excessive blame or rebuke.	Spiritual education requires dialogue, patience, and emotional care.
Hadith-based support	Hadith on fitrah, prayer, companionship, truthfulness, gentleness, and rejection of harshness are used throughout the discussion.	The methods of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah gain normative force through hadith authority.

Source: Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani, *Asasu al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyat fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*.

As shown in Table 4, the Prophetic method of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is both normative and practical. It is normative because it derives authority from the Sunnah, and practical because it provides concrete educational methods such as exemplarity, worship habituation, environmental guidance, gentleness, gradual instruction, and dialogue. This shows that spiritual formation is not only a matter of belief, but also a pedagogical process shaped through practice, relationship, and moral environment.

Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah and the Whole Human Personality

The fifth finding reveals that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah aims at the formation of a balanced human personality. Al-Zintani links spiritual development with “the purification of the soul,” “moral refinement,” “bodily discipline,” and “the cultivation of good social relations.” Spiritual education is therefore not limited to inward piety. It shapes moral conduct, bodily discipline, and social responsibility.

The ideal person formed through Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah is faithful, calm, morally upright, optimistic, helpful, and resilient. The opposite condition, spiritual emptiness, produces psychological and moral imbalance. The text therefore constructs a sequence of formation: religion nurtures faith, faith shapes morality, morality guides conduct, and conduct forms a balanced personality. This pattern shows that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah functions as a synthesizing discourse within al-Zintani’s broader vision of Islamic education. The relationship between Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah and the formation of the whole human personality is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah and the Whole Human Personality

Analytical aspect	Direct textual evidence	Analytical implication
Integrated Islamic education	Islamic education is described as “an integrated process and way of life” that addresses “the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and physical dimensions of human development.”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah is located within a comprehensive educational framework, not treated as an isolated topic.
Holistic personality formation	The text links spiritual development with “the purification of the soul,” “moral refinement,” “bodily discipline,” and “the cultivation of good social relations.”	Spiritual education integrates inner formation, moral conduct, bodily discipline, and social life.
Spiritually educated person	The spiritually educated person is “inclined toward goodness,” “adorned with noble qualities,” “calm,”	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah produces moral stability, psychological resilience,

Analytical aspect	Direct textual evidence	Analytical implication
Spiritual emptiness	“optimistic,” “helpful,” and “steadfast in facing life’s challenges.” Spiritual emptiness causes “imbalance in personality,” “psychological suffering,” “pessimism,” and “existential confusion.”	and constructive social behavior. The text frames spiritual education as a vital necessity for personal balance and existential direction.
Balanced and integrated personality	The book culminates in a discussion of “balanced and integrated personality.”	All dimensions of education, including Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah, are directed toward forming the whole human being.
Causal sequence of formation	Religion, faith, morality, and conduct are linked throughout the discussion of spiritual education.	The text constructs personality formation as a structured process: religion nurtures faith, faith shapes morality, morality orders conduct, and conduct forms balanced personality.
Overall discursive function	Tarbiyyah connects belief, inner cultivation, and refinement, and social responsibility.	Ruhiyyah inner moral and social functions as a synthesizing discourse within al-Zintani’s broader vision of Islamic education.

Source: Abdul Hamid al-Sayyib al-Zintani, *Asasu al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyatu fi al-Sunnati al-Nabawiyati*.

As shown in Table 5, Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah contributes to the formation of the whole human being by connecting spiritual development with moral refinement, bodily discipline, psychological resilience, and social responsibility. It does not isolate spirituality from other dimensions of education. Instead, it integrates belief, inner formation, conduct, and social life into the broader aim of forming a balanced and integrated personality.

Taken together, the findings show that al-Zintani constructs Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah as a systematic religious discourse. It is grounded in religion, fitrah, faith, and Sunnah authority. It is organized through definition, dimensions, and Prophetic methods. Its final aim is the formation of a balanced human being who is spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, and physically integrated.

Discussion

The central issue emerging from the findings is that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah in al-Zintani's book operates as a textual construction of spiritual formation rather than as a loose pedagogical slogan. The chapter does not merely recommend piety, nor does it present spirituality as an optional supplement to Islamic education. Instead, it organizes religion, *fitrah*, faith, morality, and personality formation into a structured discursive sequence supported by Qur'anic verses, hadith, and normative exposition. That pattern warrants discussion because it shifts the analytical focus from spiritual education as an educational theme to spiritual education as a religiously authorized textual formation. The textual evidence indicates that spiritual education is explicitly located within a broader architecture of Islamic education encompassing physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and integrated personality development, and it is framed as one of the highest expressions of Prophetic education. The text therefore invites reading not only as pedagogy but as a religious book that constructs a hierarchy of human formation.

Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah as Religious Text, Not Merely Pedagogical Text

The first implication of the findings is that al-Zintani's chapter should be read as a religious text that performs educational work, rather than merely as a pedagogical manual. Although the chapter employs the language of education, its deeper structure appears to be religious, textual, and normative. The text defines the human being through *fitrah*, grounds spiritual formation in *iman*, authorizes educational practice through the Sunnah, and directs the process toward the formation of a morally ordered self. In this sense, the chapter does not simply discuss Islamic education; it constructs a religious vision of education.

This reading contributes to the study of religious texts because such texts do not only preserve doctrine. They also organize concepts, authorize moral claims, define the human subject, and guide practices of formation. Al-Zintani constructs Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah through a sequence of religious meanings: religion, *fitrah*, *iman*, *akhlak*, Prophetic method, and balanced personality. This sequence turns the chapter into a site of meaning

production, where education becomes intelligible through the grammar of religious writing.

Recent scholarship supports this interpretation. Abdalla argues that *tarbiyah* in Islamic education cannot be reduced to instruction because it involves nurturing, formation, and the shaping of the human being in relation to *ta'lim*, *tadrīs*, and *ta'dīb*. Agbaria similarly argues that Islamic religious education should not be understood only as information transmission, but as a process that cultivates awareness of human limitation, responsibility before God, and moral orientation. Together, these arguments clarify why al-Zintani's chapter functions as a religious-educational text whose primary role is not technical instruction but the construction of a religious vision of human formation.

This point also distinguishes al-Zintani's chapter from contemporary discussions that treat spirituality mainly as a resource for character education, student well-being, or institutional reform. Chanifah,⁷ Mahsusi et al.,⁸ Rodliyah et al.,⁹ and Nasir et al.¹⁰ offer important discussions of spirituality, Islamic culture, curriculum, and educational transformation, but their main concern is the role of spirituality within educational practice. The present study adds another layer by showing how spiritual education is textually authorized through the Sunnah before it becomes a pedagogical program. Studies on Islamic pedagogy and Prophetic ethical formation further strengthen this claim. Memon,

⁷Chanifah, "Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities."

⁸Mahsusi et al., "Achieving Excellence: The Role of Digital Transformation in Madrasah Management and Islamic Culture," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2304407>.

⁹Rodliyah et al., "Optimizing the Quality of Islamic Senior High School Graduates through Curriculum Management of Vocational Programs Based on Pesantrens in East Java, Indonesia."

¹⁰M Nasir Rizal, S., Basri and M Pabbajah, "Revolutionizing Teungku Dayah Learning Model: Exploring the Transformative Impact of Technological Advancements on Islamic Education in Aceh," *Cogent Education*, 11(1), Article 2335720, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2335720>.

Abdalla, and Chown¹¹ argue that Islamic teacher education needs a holistic vision connecting mind, body, and soul, while Kostadinova¹² shows that the internalization of the Prophet's Sunnah can function as ethical self-cultivation and everyday religious sociality. These studies help explain why al-Zintani does not separate educational practice from spiritual and moral formation.

The chapter also constructs a model of the religious self that is consistent with recent work in Islamic psychology and Muslim educational research. The learner is presented as naturally religious through *fitrah*, dependent on faith for inner stability, vulnerable to deviation, and in need of Prophetic guidance. Khan et al.¹³ show that Islamic psychology includes a model of selfhood involving spiritual and metaphysical dimensions, while Alsuhaymi and Atallah¹⁴ demonstrate that *ṣalāh* functions as a framework for self-purification and identity formation. These studies situate the model of the religious self in al-Zintani's chapter within a broader intellectual tradition that treats inner formation, worship, and moral conduct as inseparable.

The textual evidence also suggests that al-Zintani's chapter should not be overstated as a complete model for contemporary Islamic education. Alkouatli¹⁵ argues that research on Muslim education should attend to dimensions beyond the tangible, including Islamic conceptions of knowledge, personhood, and the

¹¹Nadeem A Memon, Mohamad Abdalla, and Dylan Chown, "Laying Foundations for Islamic Teacher Education," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 10 (September 25, 2024): 1046, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14101046>.

¹²Z Kostadinova, "Edep: Ethical Imagination and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammed," *Contemporary Islam* 18, no. 1 (2024): 87–109, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-023-00548-3>.

¹³Imran Khan et al., "The Integration of Islamic Psychology with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)," *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 49 (2025): 1067–86, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-025-09924-5>.

¹⁴A O Alsuhaymi and Fouad Ahmad Atallah, "The Role of Ritual Prayer Ṣalāh in Self-Purification and Moral Development," *Religions* 16, no. 11 (2025): 1347, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16111347>.

¹⁵C Alkouatli, "Illuminating Data beyond the Tangible: Exploring a Conceptually Relevant Paradigmatic Frame for Empirical Inquiry with Muslim Educators," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 37, no. 8 (2024): 2466–2484, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2024.2318301>.

unseen, and this caution applies here as well. Saada¹⁶ further argues that Islamic religious education in plural societies also requires moral, socio-political, and reflective dimensions, including diversity awareness, contextual interpretation, and citizenship. The value of al-Zintani's chapter therefore lies less in providing a comprehensive policy model and more in clarifying the religious grammar of formation that underlies Islamic educational thought.

The Sunnah as Organizing Authority: Faith, Morality, and Human Formation

The second discussion addresses how al-Zintani binds the Sunnah, *iman*, *akhlak*, and human development into a single discursive chain, and how this arrangement functions as the primary mechanism of textual authority in the chapter. The textual evidence suggests that the chapter does not treat the Sunnah merely as legal proof or moral illustration. Rather, it presents the Sunnah as the authority through which spiritual education becomes intelligible, legitimate, and operational. Worship, moral direction, and human formation are repeatedly linked to Prophetic guidance, so that the Sunnah appears to function as the organizing center of the chapter rather than as a supplementary reference.

Al-Zintani's argument does not move from educational theory to religious justification. It moves from a theology of human nature grounded in Islamic revelation toward an educational account of formation. The text begins with religion, develops *fitrah*, grounds *fitrah* in the need for *iman*, and links *iman* to *akhlak* and disciplined conduct. The resulting sequence, in which religion grounds *fitrah*, *fitrah* requires guidance, guidance is authorized by the Sunnah, faith directs action, and moral conduct becomes the embodied result of spiritual formation, suggests that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is a religious discourse that integrates ontology, psychology, ethics, and pedagogy.

Within this structure, the Sunnah appears to function on three levels simultaneously. Epistemically, it explains religion, faith, and proper practice. Morally, it authorizes truthfulness,

¹⁶Najwan Saada, "Educating for Global Citizenship in Religious Education: Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Educational Development* 103 (2023): 102894, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102894>.

gentleness, worship, good companionship, and moral discipline. Pedagogically, it provides methods of formation, including habituation,¹⁷ exemplarity, gradual instruction, and tenderness in dealing with learners. This triple function gives the chapter its internal coherence: the Sunnah does not merely support the argument but organizes it through a movement from scriptural citation to moral claim, and from moral claim to educational method.¹⁸

Recent scholarship clarifies why this structure matters. Abdalla argues that *tarbiyah* involves nurturing and formation rather than mere instruction, while Agbaria¹⁹ argues that Islamic religious education should cultivate responsibility before God rather than function only as information transfer. Brooks²⁰ similarly argues that religious education must address ethical and existential dimensions. These studies illuminate the textual logic of al-Zintani's chapter: spiritual education is not presented first as method, curriculum, or institutional program, but as a religiously ordered account of what the human being is and how the human being should be formed.

The Sunnah-centered structure also distinguishes al-Zintani's formulation from broader contemporary discussions of holistic Islamic education. Muhsan and Haris²¹ describe Islamic religious education through a multidisciplinary approach that seeks to form a holistic and responsive Muslim community, but

¹⁷Abdalla, "Exploring Tarbiyah in Islamic Education: A Critical Review of the English- and Arabic-Language Literature."

¹⁸L M N Wathoni, "Spiritual Intelligence and the Islamic Education Worldview: Insights from Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an," *Towards Resilient Societies*, 2026, 265–272, <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003645542-43>; H Hamzah, "Quantum Learning in a Sufism Perspective: Integration of Tajalli Concepts and Holistic Learning Theory," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2026): 185–201, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v7i1.2301>.

¹⁹Agbaria, "Education for Religion: An Islamic Perspective."

²⁰Brooks, "Islamic School Leadership: Advancing a Framework for Critical Spirituality."

²¹Mohamad Muhsan and Abdul Haris, "Multidisciplinary Approach in Islamic Religious Education: The Formation of a Holistic and Responsive Muslim Community to the Dynamics of Modern Life," *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Agama* 14, no. 1 (2022): 597–612, <https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v14i1.4440>.

al-Zintani begins with a theology of human nature grounded in revelation rather than with multidisciplinary or curricular integration. The whole-person model in his text emerges from *fitrah* under the authority of revelation and Sunnah. This distinction is relevant to the observation by D'Agostino and Asadullah²² that faith-based education remains underexplored in comparative and international education, particularly beyond Christian and Jewish cases. Al-Zintani's chapter offers a case in which religious authority, educational method, and human formation are organized through a single textual source, illustrating a tradition of meaning-making that comparative education has not yet adequately examined.

This argument is further supported by studies on digital religious authority and Islamic knowledge mediation. Jinan's early argument about the shift of Islamic authority through new media has been extended by later work on religious authority, media fragmentation, and digital contestation. Askar et al.²³ show that Indonesian Muslim university students increasingly treat online Islamic knowledge sources as authoritative in learning, while Rusli et al. show that young Muslim scholars interact intensely with online sources in producing Islamic knowledge and fatwa-related reasoning. Against that background, al-Zintani's book can be read as a contrasting textual formation because it recenters educational meaning on the Sunnah as a stable source of authority. Campbell²⁴ and Evolvi²⁵ argue that digital religion studies need to examine how media environments reshape religious meaning and authority, while Risdiana et al.²⁶ and Iswanto²⁷ demonstrate how

²²D'Agostino and Asadullah, "Faith-Based Education and Development: Opportunities, Challenges, and Controversies."

²³Askar et al., "Online Islamic Knowledge Sources and Their Authority in Islamic Learning: A Case Study of Indonesian Muslim Universities."

²⁴Campbell, "Looking Backwards and Forwards at the Study of Digital Religion."

²⁵Evolvi, "Religion and the Internet: Digital Religion, (Hyper)Mediated Spaces, and Materiality."

²⁶Risdiana Ramadhan, R. B. and Nawawi, "Transformasi Dakwah Berbasis 'Kitab Kuning' Ke Platform Digital."

²⁷A Iswanto, "Keraton Yogyakarta Dan Praktik Literasi Budaya Keagamaan Melalui Media Digital," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 17, no. 2 (2020): 321–348, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v17i2.598>.

traditional religious texts and cultural practices are transformed through digital platforms. The present study enters that discussion from a different angle: rather than studying digital circulation directly, it analyzes the internal authority structure of a religious text and shows why books such as al-Zintani's retain significance in fragmented media environments precisely because they present an ordered hierarchy of meaning in which the Sunnah links faith, morality, pedagogy, and the religious self.

Relevance for Contemporary Islamic Education

The relevance of al-Zintani's text for contemporary Islamic education should not be framed as a universal solution to present educational challenges. Its stronger contribution lies in showing how a religious text interprets educational crisis, positions the Sunnah as the normative foundation of educational response, and constructs the religious self as the primary object of formation. The concerns identified in the chapter, including moral decline, spiritual emptiness, imbalance between material and spiritual life, and the need for integrated human development, remain recognizable in current Islamic educational discourse.

Recent scholarship demonstrates that Muslim educational institutions continue to respond to rapid social and technological change. Suresman et al.²⁸ describe the transformation of pesantren learning from traditional sorogan to digitally mediated models, while Nasir et al.²⁹ document similar technological developments in Acehese dayah education. Likewise, studies on curriculum reform, Islamic values, character education, and religious moderation³⁰ indicate that Islamic education seeks innovation without abandoning its theological foundations.

²⁸ Edi Suresman et al., "From Sorogan to Digital Learning: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis of Pesantren Learning Models," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (December 31, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2580776>.

²⁹Nasir Rizal, S., Basri and Pabbajah, "Revolutionizing Teungku Dayah Learning Model: Exploring the Transformative Impact of Technological Advancements on Islamic Education in Aceh."

³⁰Mahsusi et al., "Achieving Excellence: The Role of Digital Transformation in Madrasah Management and Islamic Culture"; Rodliyah et al., "Optimizing the Quality of Islamic Senior High School Graduates through Curriculum Management of Vocational Programs Based on Pesantrens in East Java,

The chapter is also relevant because it constructs learners as religious selves rather than neutral educational subjects. Human beings are portrayed as possessing *fitrah*, requiring *iman*, remaining vulnerable to deviation, and needing continuous Prophetic guidance. This perspective suggests why spiritual education remains indispensable even as educational methods evolve. Digital learning, curriculum reform, and institutional innovation may transform educational practice, but they do not resolve the more fundamental question of what kind of human being Islamic education intends to cultivate. Al-Zintani's text addresses that question directly, and its answer, grounded in *fitrah*, faith, Prophetic exemplarity, and moral formation, continues to inform Islamic educational thought in ways that institutional and curricular reform alone cannot replicate.

Nevertheless, al-Zintani's framework should not be overstated as a comprehensive model for contemporary Islamic education. Current scholarship increasingly emphasizes pluralism, citizenship, moderation, and digital literacy.³¹ By contrast, al-Zintani concentrates on inward formation through *fitrah*, *iman*, worship, *akhlak*, and Prophetic exemplarity. Its principal contribution therefore lies in clarifying the religious grammar of Islamic educational formation: moral and spiritual transformation, in this textual tradition, begins with revealed guidance and is ultimately expressed through disciplined character and responsible social conduct.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah is discursively constructed within al-Zintani's religious text, and specifically how a classical Islamic educational book organizes spiritual formation through definitional strategies, scriptural authority, and Prophetic exemplarity. The analysis demonstrates that Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah in Asasu al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyyah fi al-

Indonesia"; Chanifah, "Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities."

³¹Saada, "Educating for Global Citizenship in Religious Education: Islamic Perspective"; D'Agostino and Asadullah, "Faith-Based Education and Development: Opportunities, Challenges, and Controversies."

Sunnati al-Nabawiyati is constructed as a central discourse of Islamic education rather than as a supplementary spiritual element. Al-Zintani builds this construction through a systematic textual arrangement in which religion, fitrah, faith, morality, and human development are closely and purposefully interconnected. Spiritual education is grounded in the premise that human beings are created with an innate religious disposition and a fundamental need for faith, and that this disposition must be nurtured, protected, and directed through Prophetic guidance.

This article presents Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah as a process of purifying the soul, strengthening faith, shaping akhlak, and directing conduct according to religious values, carried out through Prophetic methods that include exemplarity, habituation to worship, gentleness, careful social influence, and gradual instruction. The central conclusion is that Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah functions as a religiously authorized discourse of holistic human formation, directed toward cultivating a balanced human being in spiritual, intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and physical terms, with the Sunnah serving as the organizing authority that links all these dimensions into a coherent educational vision.

The article contributes to the study of religious literature and Islamic education in three interrelated ways. Empirically, it brings focused scholarly attention to a chapter that has not previously been examined as a religious text in its own right, demonstrating that al-Zintani's treatment of spiritual education constitutes a substantive site of discourse construction rather than a doctrinal appendix. Interpretively, it shifts the discussion of Tarbiyyah Ruhiiyyah from a purely pedagogical reading to a textual analysis, showing that the concept is produced through definitions, scriptural citations, normative sequencing, and Prophetic exemplarity, and that its authority is derived from the Sunnah before it becomes operational as educational method.

Methodologically, study findings demonstrate that discourse analysis can be productively applied to a religious-educational book to reveal how educational meaning is constructed, organized, and authorized within the text itself. More broadly, the findings suggest that Islamic educational thought should pay closer attention to books as sites of meaning production rather than treating them merely as doctrinal references or supporting literature.

The focus of this study on a single chapter within a single book enables the kind of close reading that discourse analysis requires, but it also calls for future comparative work across authors, traditions, and textual contexts. The study does not examine how this discourse is received, taught, or transformed in contemporary Islamic educational settings, which represents a distinct and equally important line of inquiry. Taken together, these limitations point toward three directions that would collectively deepen understanding of how Islamic educational thought is produced, transmitted, and adapted across different contexts and media. First, comparative studies across Arabic and Indonesian authors would clarify whether al-Zintani's discursive arrangement of fitrah, iman, akhlak, and Prophetic method represents a broader shared grammar or a distinctive formulation. Second, reception studies in pesantren, Islamic schools, and higher education would examine how such textual constructions are interpreted, applied, and contested in pedagogical practice. Third, digital-text studies would explore how concepts of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah are reformulated when they migrate into online platforms, educational modules, and contemporary Islamic public discourse. Pursuing these directions would advance not only the study of Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah but also the broader field of religious literature studies as it engages with Islamic educational thought.

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