



# Spiritual Motivation from Az-Zarnuji's View as a Management Strategy for Enhancing Students' Aqidah Akhlaq Learning Achievement

Siti Nurkhanah\*, Ach. Syaikh, Dhevin Puspita MQ., Akhmad Rudi Masrukhin

Al-Falah Assunniah University, Kencong, Jember

Email : [sitnurkhana91@gmail.com](mailto:sitnurkhana91@gmail.com)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i3.2116>

## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Spiritual Motivation;  
Educational  
Management;  
Aqidah Akhlaq.

### \*Corresponding Author

This study aims to examine the influence of spiritual motivation based on Al-Zarnuji's perspective on students' Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement, while integrating the educational management dimension of instructional supervision as a mediating context. A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 88 Grade X students selected through total sampling. Data were collected using a spiritual motivation questionnaire (initially 40 items, reduced to 13 after validity testing) and documentation of semester scores. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and simple linear regression. The results showed a positive relationship between spiritual motivation and learning achievement ( $r = 0.386$ ), indicating a low to moderate correlation. Regression analysis revealed a positive effect of spiritual motivation on achievement ( $Y = 69.99 + 0.27X$ ). These findings imply that spiritual motivation contributes meaningfully to academic performance, though its influence remains moderate. From an educational management perspective, the results underscore the importance of integrating instructional supervision and curriculum planning to systematically embed Al-Zarnuji's spiritual motivation values into the teaching of Aqidah Akhlaq. This study offers practical implications for Islamic school administrators in designing motivation-based academic policies.

### Article History:

Received: January 2026; Revised: February 2026; Accepted: March 2026

### Please cite this article in APA style as:

Nurkhanah, S., Syaikh, A., Puspita, D., Masrukhin, A. R. (2026). Spiritual Motivation from Az-Zarnuji's View as a Management Strategy for Enhancing Students' Aqidah Akhlaq Learning Achievement. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 5(3), 2703-2717.

## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, education is increasingly viewed through a narrow lens of cognitive achievement and standardized testing, often neglecting the deeper moral and spiritual purposes of learning (Tan, 2020; Konstantinidis, 2025). This reductionist perspective has contributed to a crisis of meaning among students, where academic success is pursued without internal conviction or

ethical commitment. Evidence from global educational trends shows rising rates of student disengagement, academic dishonesty, and mental health struggles, suggesting that purely cognitive or behavioristic approaches are insufficient (Teymoori & Trappes, 2026; Mehrad et al., 2024). In Islamic societies, this issue is particularly pressing because education is traditionally understood as a means of worship and character formation. When spiritual motivation is absent, students may complete assignments and pass examinations without internalizing the values that underlie subjects like Aqidah Akhlaq (Lateh et al., 2025). Therefore, this research is important for society because it reconnects education with its spiritual foundations, offering a framework that fosters meaningful learning. From an educational management perspective, addressing this issue requires integrating spiritual motivation into curriculum planning and instructional supervision (Kotten et al., 2025; Effendi & Sahertian2023). The conclusion is that without spiritual motivation, educational outcomes remain superficial, and society fails to develop individuals who are both knowledgeable and morally grounded.

This study employs two primary theoretical frameworks to examine the relationship between spiritual motivation and Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement. First, spiritual motivation is conceptualized based on Al-Zarnuji's classical Islamic pedagogy as articulated in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*. This framework identifies five core dimensions: sincerity of intention (*ikhlaṣ*), respect for knowledge and teachers (*ta'ẓīm*), perseverance (*jiddiyyah*), reliance on God (*tawakkul*), and seeking divine pleasure as the ultimate goal of learning (Firmansyah, 2025). These dimensions collectively form an internal, value-driven motivational system that distinguishes spiritual motivation from secular constructs. Second, learning achievement in Aqidah Akhlaq is examined using mastery learning theory, which emphasizes deep understanding and internalization of moral and theological concepts rather than surface-level memorization (Amirudin, Muzaki & nurhayati, 2025; Moser & Abramovich, 2023). From an educational management perspective, these theoretical frameworks are embedded within the dimensions of instructional supervision (ensuring teachers foster spiritual motivation) and quality assurance (evaluating achievement beyond test scores). By integrating Al-Zarnuji's framework with mastery learning, this study provides a theoretically grounded model that links spiritual motivation directly to measurable academic outcomes in Islamic education.

The general problem that motivates this research is the growing disconnect between educational practices and the spiritual-moral values that traditionally underpinned learning in Islamic societies (Sasmita et al., 2024). In many madrasahs and Islamic schools, teaching has become increasingly

procedural, focusing on content delivery and examination performance rather than on nurturing students' internal commitment to faith and morality. This shift has been accelerated by the global emphasis on standardized testing, ranking systems, and measurable outputs, which often marginalize affective and spiritual dimensions of learning (Datnow et al., 2022). As a result, students may demonstrate satisfactory grades in Aqidah Akhlaq but fail to exhibit corresponding ethical behavior in daily life. This gap between knowledge and practice undermines the very purpose of Islamic education, which aims to produce morally upright individuals. From an educational management perspective, this problem reflects failures in curriculum planning (spiritual goals are not systematically operationalized) and instructional supervision (teachers are not trained to cultivate spiritual motivation). Consequently, there is an urgent need to revisit classical Islamic educational thought, such as Al-Zarnuji's framework, and empirically examine how spiritual motivation can be systematically developed to enhance both learning achievement and character formation.

Previous research has extensively examined the relationship between motivation and academic achievement, primarily using Western frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory, expectancy-value theory, and goal orientation theory (Yue & lu, 2022). These studies have consistently shown that intrinsic motivation, characterized by personal interest and enjoyment, predicts higher engagement, persistence, and performance across various educational contexts. However, these frameworks rarely incorporate transcendental or spiritual dimensions, treating motivation as a purely psychological construct. More recent studies have begun exploring spirituality in education, linking spiritual intelligence to well-being, resilience, and academic engagement (Ma & Wang, 2022). Nevertheless, these studies typically define spirituality in generic, decontextualized terms rather than grounding it in specific theological or classical pedagogical traditions. In the context of Islamic education, a few studies have referenced Al-Zarnuji's work, but mostly as descriptive or theoretical expositions rather than empirical investigations. Consequently, the existing literature lacks quantitative evidence on how Al-Zarnuji's specific dimensions of spiritual motivation influence measurable learning outcomes, particularly in subjects like Aqidah Akhlaq, where moral internalization is central.

The clear research gap lies in the absence of empirical studies that operationalize Al-Zarnuji's spiritual motivation framework and test its influence on learning achievement using quantitative methods. Most existing scholarship on Al-Zarnuji remains philosophical, textual, or qualitative in nature, describing his educational ethics without measuring their practical effects on student outcomes. Furthermore, no previous study has explicitly integrated Al-Zarnuji's

perspective with educational management dimensions such as instructional supervision, curriculum alignment, or institutional policy design. This lack of integration means that even when educators acknowledge the importance of spiritual motivation, they lack empirically validated models to implement it systematically. The position of this research is therefore unique: it bridges classical Islamic pedagogy with contemporary quantitative methodology and educational management theory. The contribution of this study is twofold. First, it provides empirical evidence on the influence of spiritual motivation (Al-Zarnuji's perspective) on Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement. Second, it offers practical insights for educational managers and policymakers on how to embed spiritual motivation into school systems through structured planning, supervision, and quality assurance mechanisms.

Based on the identified gap, this study addresses the following research problem: Does spiritual motivation based on Al-Zarnuji's perspective significantly influence students' Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement? The argument or preliminary answer is that spiritual motivation has a positive and meaningful influence, although its effect may be moderate rather than strong because learning achievement is also shaped by cognitive abilities, teaching quality, and family environment. This argument is grounded in Al-Zarnuji's assertion that sincere intention and perseverance transform learning into an act of worship, thereby increasing students' internal commitment to study diligently (Razali & Mamat, 2024). From an educational management perspective, the study argues that spiritual motivation should not be left to chance but must be systematically cultivated through instructional supervision (teachers modeling and reinforcing spiritual values), curriculum planning (integrating intention-setting into lessons), and institutional policy (rewarding character development alongside academic scores). The contribution of this research is both theoretical—extending motivation theory by incorporating transcendental values—and practical—providing an empirically tested model for Islamic school administrators and guidance counselors to enhance learning achievement through spiritually grounded educational management practices.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to examine the influence of spiritual motivation based on Al-Zarnuji's perspective on students' Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement. This design was selected because it is appropriate for measuring the strength and direction of relationships between variables without manipulating them, and it aligns with the non-experimental, cross-sectional nature of the study where data were collected at a single point in time (Aarsman et al., 2024). The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah

Darul Huda Bagorejo, chosen due to its institutional commitment to integrating classical Islamic pedagogy into formal curricula and its ongoing efforts in instructional supervision and curriculum planning. These educational management dimensions are essential for contextualizing spiritual motivation within a real madrasah environment. The population comprised all Grade X students in the 2025/2026 academic year, totaling 88 students. Because the population was manageable (fewer than 100 individuals), total sampling was applied, meaning all students were included as participants to ensure comprehensive representation and minimize sampling bias (Andringa & Godfroid, 2020). The operational definitions of the two main variables (spiritual motivation as the independent variable and Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement as the dependent variable) are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Operational Definitions of Variables**

Variable	Definition	Indicator	Measurement
<i>Spiritual Motivation</i>	Internal drive based on Al-Zarnuji's values	<i>ikhlaṣ, ta'zīm, jiddiyyah, tawakkul</i>	Likert scale
<i>Learning Achievement</i>	Academic performance in Aqidah Akhlaq	Semester score	Numerical

Table 1 presents the operational definitions of the two main variables in this study. Spiritual motivation is defined as an internal drive based on Al-Zarnuji's values, with four indicators: *ikhlaṣ, ta'zīm, jiddiyyah, and tawakkul*. This variable is measured using a Likert scale. Learning achievement is defined as students' academic performance in Aqidah Akhlaq, indicated by semester scores and measured numerically. These operational definitions guided the development of the research instrument and the subsequent data analysis.

Data were collected using two main techniques: a questionnaire and documentation. The spiritual motivation questionnaire, initially consisting of 40 items based on Al-Zarnuji's framework as defined in Table 1, was administered directly to students in a structured classroom setting. Following validity testing using Pearson Product-Moment correlation, 13 items were retained as valid. Table 2 presents the final instrument composition, which directly reflects the operationalization of spiritual motivation from Table 1. From an educational management perspective, this refinement process reflects principles of quality assurance in assessment instruments, ensuring that data used for policy decisions (e.g., instructional supervision or curriculum adjustments) are psychometrically sound. Learning achievement data were obtained from official school records (semester scores in Aqidah Akhlaq), which represent cumulative teacher evaluations aligned with institutional grading policies, consistent with the measurement defined in Table 1.

**Table 2. Final Instrument Composition After Validity Testing**

Dimension	Description	Number of Valid Items
<i>Ikhlaṣ</i>	Sincerity of learning intention	-
Meaning Orientation	Learning as meaningful engagement	-
<i>Ta'zīm</i>	Respect for knowledge and teachers	-
<i>Jiddiyyah</i>	Persistence in learning	-
<i>Tawakkul</i>	Reliance on God	-

Table 2 presents the final composition of the spiritual motivation questionnaire after validity testing. The table consists of five dimensions derived from Al-Zarnuji's framework: *Ikhlaṣ* (sincerity of learning intention), Meaning Orientation (learning as meaningful engagement), *Ta'zīm* (respect for knowledge and teachers), *Jiddiyyah* (persistence in learning), and *Tawakkul* (reliance on God). As indicated in the note, the column "Number of Valid Items" reflects the distribution of validated items retained after analysis. From the original 40 items, only those meeting the validity criterion ( $r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}} = 0.209$ ) were retained, resulting in a final set of 13 valid items distributed across these five dimensions.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS and proceeded in three stages. First, descriptive statistics summarized the distribution of both variables as defined in Table 1. Second, Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationship between spiritual motivation (measured using the 13 valid items from Table 2) and learning achievement (semester scores from Table 1). Third, simple linear regression ( $Y = a + bX$ ) was applied to determine the predictive effect of spiritual motivation on learning achievement, with significance set at 0.05 and model strength evaluated using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). Prior to parametric analysis, assumption tests (normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity) were conducted to ensure the appropriateness of regression (Silva-Lugo et al 2022). The inclusion of educational management dimensions is evident here as well: the regression model provides empirical evidence that can inform institutional policy, such as designing instructional supervision frameworks that explicitly cultivate the four dimensions from Table 2 (*ikhlaṣ*, *ta'zīm*, *jiddiyyah*, *tawakkul*), or integrating Al-Zarnuji's values into curriculum planning and quality assurance mechanisms for *Aqidah Akhlaq* learning as operationalized in Table 1.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### *Instrument Validity*

Item validity was assessed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation. An item was considered valid if the correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value of  $r_{\text{table}} = 0.209$  at a significance level of 0.05 ( $N = 88$ ). A total of 40 items were initially tested to determine their psychometric appropriateness for measuring spiritual motivation based on Al-Zarnuji's perspective.

**Table 3. Item Validity Results of Spiritual Motivation Instrument**

Item	r count	Decision
Item_2	0.398	Valid
Item_11	0.231	Valid
Item_14	0.227	Valid
Item_15	0.223	Valid
Item_22	0.292	Valid
Item_25	0.224	Valid
Item_27	0.364	Valid
Item_29	0.229	Valid
Item_31	0.256	Valid
Item_33	0.245	Valid
Item_34	0.340	Valid
Item_38	0.241	Valid
Item_40	0.323	Valid

Explanation of Table 3: The table presents the 13 items that met the validity criteria. Each item's correlation coefficient (r count) exceeded the critical value of 0.209. The highest correlation was found in Item\_2 ( $r = 0.398$ ), while the lowest among the valid items was Item\_15 ( $r = 0.223$ ). All 13 items were retained for further analysis, and the remaining 27 items were excluded from the final instrument.

### ***Instrument Reliability***

The reliability of the refined instrument consisting of 13 valid items was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Reliability testing was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the spiritual motivation questionnaire.

**Table 4. Reliability Test Result**

Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
0.431	<i>Moderate (acceptable for exploratory study)</i>

Explanation of Table 4: The table shows that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.431. According to conventional reliability standards, this value falls within the moderate range. Although not high, this level of internal consistency is considered acceptable for exploratory quantitative research, particularly in social and educational studies where constructs such as spiritual motivation are complex and multidimensional.

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the distribution of the two main variables: spiritual motivation and Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement. These statistics provide an overview of the central tendency and

range of the data.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

Variable	Mean	Min	Max
<i>Spiritual Motivation</i>	-	-	-
<i>Aqidah Akhlaq Score</i>	-	-	-

*(Values are derived from cleaned dataset)*

Explanation of Table 5: The table presents the mean, minimum, and maximum values for each variable. The mean score for spiritual motivation reflects the average level of internal drive based on Al-Zarnuji's values among the 88 students. The minimum and maximum values indicate the range of responses. Similarly, the Aqidah Akhlaq scores show the average academic performance and the spread of semester scores. These descriptive statistics serve as the foundation for subsequent correlation and regression analyses.

### **Correlation Analysis**

The relationship between spiritual motivation and Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement was analyzed using Pearson correlation. This analysis was conducted to determine whether a statistically significant association exists between the two variables.

**Table 6. Correlation Analysis Result**

Variable	r	Interpretation
<i>Motivation → Achievement</i>	0.386	Low to moderate

Explanation of Table 6: The table displays a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.386 between spiritual motivation and Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement. This positive value indicates that as spiritual motivation increases, learning achievement also tends to increase. The interpretation of "low to moderate" is based on conventional correlation strength guidelines, where 0.10 to 0.29 is considered weak, 0.30 to 0.49 is moderate, and above 0.50 is strong. Thus, the result suggests a positive but modest relationship between the two variables.

### **Regression Analysis**

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of spiritual motivation on learning achievement. This analysis extends the correlation findings by quantifying the predictive effect of spiritual motivation.

**Table 7. Regression Coefficients**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<i>Constant</i>	69.99	Baseline score
<i>Motivation (X)</i>	0.27	Positive effect

The regression equation is:

$$Y = 69.99 + 0.27X$$

Explanation of Table 7: The table presents the unstandardized regression coefficients. The constant (69.99) represents the predicted Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement score when spiritual motivation is zero. The coefficient for Motivation (0.27) indicates that each one-unit increase in spiritual motivation is associated with an increase of 0.27 points in learning achievement. This positive coefficient confirms that spiritual motivation has a positive predictive effect on students' academic performance.

**Table 8. Model Summary**

<b>R</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
0.386	<i>Moderate relationship</i>

Explanation of Table 8: The table shows the multiple correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.386$ ), which is identical to the Pearson correlation coefficient from Table 6. This value indicates a moderate relationship between spiritual motivation and learning achievement. The regression results as a whole confirm that spiritual motivation has a positive and meaningful influence on students' learning achievement, although the strength of the relationship is moderate. This finding suggests that while spiritual motivation contributes to academic success, other factors such as teaching quality, cognitive ability, and family environment also play important roles.

## **Discussion**

The finding that spiritual motivation based on Al-Zarnuji's perspective has a positive yet moderate influence ( $r = 0.386$ ) on Aqidah Akhlaq learning achievement aligns with several previous studies that have reported positive associations between spirituality and academic outcomes (Aziz et al., 2025). However, the moderate strength of this relationship is notably lower than what some contemporary motivation studies have reported for intrinsic motivation in secular contexts, where correlations with achievement often exceed 0.50 (Chai et al., 2021). This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that spiritual motivation, as conceptualized by Al-Zarnuji, prioritizes internal spiritual growth and moral responsibility over measurable academic performance. Unlike purely

psychological constructs that directly target learning outcomes, spiritual motivation operates as a foundational value system that influences behavior indirectly through intention and character formation. From an educational management perspective, this finding suggests that instructional supervision and curriculum planning should not expect immediate or dramatic improvements in test scores solely from fostering spiritual motivation. Instead, school administrators should integrate spiritual motivation as a long-term investment in student character, complementing other academic interventions. Theoretically, this finding extends Self-Determination Theory by adding a transcendental dimension—autonomy, competence, and relatedness are important, but in Islamic educational contexts, relatedness to the divine and accountability to God provide an additional layer of motivational depth that SDT does not explicitly address (Fakhruddin & Jamal, 2025).

The moderate correlation also highlights the multidimensional nature of learning achievement, which is influenced by cognitive abilities, instructional quality, family background, and peer environment (Zynuddin et al., 2023). In this study, spiritual motivation explained only a portion of the variance in Aqidah Akhlaq scores, indicating that other variables play significant roles. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that no single motivational factor dominates academic outcomes (Islam & Chakrabarty, 2020). However, what distinguishes this study is that spiritual motivation, despite its moderate predictive power, provides a unique explanatory mechanism grounded in classical Islamic pedagogy. Unlike extrinsic motivation, which diminishes when rewards are removed, or even intrinsic motivation, which fluctuates with personal interest, spiritual motivation rooted in *ikhlaṣ* and *tawakkul* offers a more stable and enduring basis for learning because it is anchored in transcendent values. Theoretically, this finding challenges the assumption that motivation research developed in Western secular contexts can be directly applied to Islamic educational settings without modification. Practically, it implies that educational managers and policymakers should design institutional policies that systematically cultivate spiritual motivation alongside cognitive and pedagogical strategies, rather than treating it as an optional or supplementary element.

From the perspective of educational management, the findings carry significant implications for instructional supervision and quality assurance. The fact that spiritual motivation contributes meaningfully—though moderately—to learning achievement suggests that school leaders should incorporate spiritual motivation into teacher evaluation frameworks and professional development programs. Instructional supervisors can guide teachers to integrate Al-Zarnuji's principles into daily classroom practices, such as beginning lessons with intention-setting (*ikhlaṣ*), modeling respect for knowledge (*ta'zīm*), encouraging perseverance (*jiddiyyah*), and fostering reliance on God (*tawakkul*) when facing academic challenges. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the

role of school leadership in shaping motivational climates (Akgöz et al., 2024). However, this study goes further by specifying a classical Islamic framework that can be operationalized through contemporary management practices. Theoretically, this integration contributes to the development of culturally responsive educational management models that respect local religious traditions while maintaining empirical rigor. Practically, it provides school administrators with a clear, actionable framework for embedding spiritual values into curriculum planning, classroom observation protocols, and student support systems.

Another important theoretical contribution of this study is the refinement of Al-Zarnuji's framework through empirical testing. While Al-Zarnuji's *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* has been extensively cited in descriptive and philosophical studies, few investigations have quantitatively tested its core propositions (Mufid & Tamam, 2024). The finding that the four dimensions—*ikhlas*, *ta'zim*, *jiddiyah*, and *tawakkul*—collectively influence learning achievement provides empirical support for the classical scholar's assertions. However, the moderate reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.431) suggests that the operationalization of these dimensions requires further refinement. This finding diverges from studies that have reported higher reliability for similar constructs in Western motivation scales, where alphas above 0.80 are common (Boyle et al., 2020). The discrepancy may reflect the complexity of translating classical ethical concepts into measurable Likert-scale items, or it may indicate that spiritual motivation is inherently more heterogeneous than purely psychological constructs. Theoretically, this finding raises important questions about the cross-cultural and cross-temporal applicability of psychometric measurement models. Practically, it suggests that educational managers responsible for curriculum planning and assessment development should invest in instrument validation studies that are sensitive to the unique characteristics of Islamic educational contexts.

The findings also have practical implications for guidance and counseling within Islamic education. The positive relationship between spiritual motivation and learning achievement suggests that counselors can use spiritual motivation as a lever for promoting self-regulated learning. Students who internalize spiritual values are more likely to develop discipline, persistence, and a sense of transcendental accountability, which in turn supports academic success. This finding aligns with previous research on self-regulation, which emphasizes the role of internal standards and goal-setting in learning (Wong et al., 2021). However, this study extends that literature by specifying that in Islamic contexts, the internal standards are not merely personal but are derived from religious teachings and perceived divine oversight. From an educational management perspective, this implies that schools should integrate spiritual motivation into their student support services and counseling programs. Institutional policies

could include structured activities such as reflective journaling on intentions, mentorship programs that model *ta'zīm*, and group discussions on *tawakkul* in academic contexts. These practices, when systematically implemented and supervised, can transform spiritual motivation from an abstract ideal into a concrete component of the school's quality assurance framework.

Finally, despite the moderate strength of the findings, this study offers several theoretical and practical contributions that should not be underestimated. Theoretically, it provides an empirically validated bridge between classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary educational psychology, demonstrating that Al-Zarnuji's framework is not merely of historical interest but has measurable relevance to modern learning outcomes. This finding diverges from the assumption that classical texts are purely normative or philosophical and instead positions them as potential sources of testable hypotheses. Practically, the study offers educational leaders a starting point for designing management strategies that honor local religious values while pursuing international standards of educational quality. From the perspective of institutional policy, school administrators can use these findings to justify the allocation of resources toward character education programs that emphasize spiritual motivation. However, the study also highlights the need for continuous improvement in measurement and implementation. Future research should focus on developing more robust instruments, employing longitudinal designs, and testing the effectiveness of management interventions designed to systematically cultivate spiritual motivation. In conclusion, while spiritual motivation is not a panacea for low academic achievement, it is a meaningful and often overlooked dimension that deserves a place in both educational theory and the daily practice of instructional supervision, curriculum planning, and institutional leadership in Islamic schools.

## CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is the lesson that spiritual motivation based on Al-Zarnuji's perspective—rooted in sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), perseverance (*jiddiyyah*), respect for knowledge and teachers (*ta'zīm*), and reliance on God (*tawakkul*)—positively contributes to students' *Aqidah Akhlaq* learning achievement, albeit with a moderate effect. The key lesson learned is that spiritual values cannot be treated as secondary or optional elements in Islamic education; rather, they serve as foundational internal drivers that shape how students engage with learning processes. However, the moderate strength of the relationship teaches us that spiritual motivation alone is not sufficient to guarantee high academic performance. Learning achievement remains a multidimensional outcome influenced by cognitive abilities, instructional

quality, family environment, and peer interactions. Therefore, educators and educational managers should view spiritual motivation as one essential component within a broader ecosystem of educational supports, rather than as a standalone solution.

The scientific contribution of this study lies in its empirical validation of Al-Zarnuji's classical pedagogical framework, which has historically been discussed only in philosophical or descriptive terms. By operationalizing spiritual motivation into measurable indicators and testing its influence using quantitative methods, this study bridges classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary educational research, offering a culturally and religiously contextualized model that complements existing psychological theories such as Self-Determination Theory. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.431) was moderate, indicating that the instrument requires further refinement to more accurately capture the complexity of spiritual motivation. Additionally, the cross-sectional design prevents any examination of how spiritual motivation develops or changes over time. For future research, it is recommended to develop more robust and nuanced instruments, employ longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, and explore mediating or moderating variables (such as instructional quality, parental support, or school leadership) that may strengthen the relationship between spiritual motivation and academic achievement.

## REFERENCES

- Aarsman, S. R., Greenwood, C. J., Linardon, J., Rodgers, R. F., Messer, M., Jarman, H. K., & Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M. (2024). Enhancing Inferences and Conclusions in Body Image Focused Non-Experimental Research via a Causal Modelling Approach: A Tutorial. *Body Image*, 49, 101704. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2024.101704>
- Akgöz, E. E., Şahin, F., & Erdoğan, O. (2024). The Mediator Role of School Climate in the Relationship Between Instructional Leadership Behaviors of School Principals and Teacher Autonomy. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 38(4), 1142-1159. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-07-2023-0323>
- Amirudin, A., Muzaki, I. A., & Nurhayati, S. (2025). Problem-Based Learning as a Pedagogical Innovation for Transforming Higher Education Students' Islamic Religious Comprehension. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 18, e2025412. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.18.412>
- Andringa, S., & Godfroid, A. (2020). Sampling Bias and the Problem of Generalizability in Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 40, 134-142. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190520000033>

- Aziz, M., Napitupulu, D. S., & Parapat, F. A. (2025). The Influence of Teacher Communication Patterns in Aqidah Akhlak Education on Students' Academic Achievement. *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 8(1), 71-86. <https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v8i1.840>
- Boyle, G. J., Wongsri, N., Bahr, M., Macayan, J. V., & Bentler, P. M. (2020). Cross-Cultural Differences in Personality, Motivation and Cognition in Asian vs. Western Societies. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 159, 109834. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.109834>
- Chai, C. S., Lin, P. Y., King, R. B., & Jong, M. S. Y. (2021). Intrinsic Motivation and Sophisticated Epistemic Beliefs Are Promising Pathways to Science Achievement: Evidence From High Achieving Regions in the East and the West. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 581193. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.581193>
- Datnow, A., Park, V., Peurach, D. J., & Spillane, J. P. (2022). Transforming Education for Holistic Student Development: Learning From Education System (Re)Building Around the World [Report]. Center for Universal Education at The Brookings Institution.
- Effendi, Y. R., & Sahertian, P. (2023). Principals' Academic Supervision Based on Humanistic Spiritual Values to Increase Student Achievement Motivation. *International Journal of Innovation and Learning*, 34(1), 59-80. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJIL.2023.132055>
- Fakhrudin, Z., & Jamal, K. (2025). Exploring EFL Students' Experiences of Islamic Value-Concordant Learning Through the Lens of Self-Determination Theory. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 13(2), 7614-7626.
- Firmansyah, F. (2025). The Purpose of Education From the Perspective of Hadith in Instilling Islamic Values Dynamically in Daily Life. *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 5(2), 340-358.
- Islam, M. N., & Chakrabarty, S. (2020). A Study of the Relationship Between Familial Factors and Academic Motivation and Achievement in High School Students. *Psychological Studies*, 65(1), 87-96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-019-00500-7>
- Konstantinidis, A. (2025). A Metaphor for Rethinking Artificial Intelligence in/and Education. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 2025(1). <https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.981>
- Kotten, N. B., Bataona, Y. D., Ali, U., Koten, A. N., & Tasrim, I. W. (2025). Exploring Spiritually Oriented Supervision: Enhancing Teacher Performance and Holistic Education in Religious-Based Primary Schools. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 24(2), 227-241. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.2.12>
- Lateh, A., Thongsuk, J., Machae, D., Masae, A., Lateh, A., Khongpheng, N., & Pooteh, R. (2025). Synthesizing Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Best Practices for Managing Islamic Private Schools in Thailand. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 18, e2025528. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.18.528>

- Ma, Q., & Wang, F. (2022). The Role of Students' Spiritual Intelligence in Enhancing Their Academic Engagement: A Theoretical Review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 857842. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.857842>
- Mehrad, A., Bouzedif, M., & George Rweramila, N. (2024). Integrating Psychology, Cognitive, and Behavioral Science in the Concept of Education and Student Success in the Educational System. *\*Tuijin Jishu/Journal of Propulsion Technology*, 45\*(3), 4127-4144.
- Moser, D. W., & Abramovich, S. (2023). How Six Religious Pedagogies Can Inform ACRL Threshold Concepts for IL Instruction Training. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 49(1), 102624. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102624>
- Mufid, M., & Tamam, A. M. (2024). Islamic Education Theory Al-Zarnuji's Perspective in the Book Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim. *Interdisciplinary Journal and Hummanity (INJURITY)*, 3(1), 9-16. <https://doi.org/10.58631/injurity.v3i1.158>
- Razali, N. H., & Mamat, A. (2024). Al-Zarnuji's Educational Concept and Its Relevance to the Teaching of Islamic Education in Malaysia. *IJUM Journal of Educational Studies*, 12(2), 135-144. <https://doi.org/10.31436/ijes.v12i2.550>
- Sasmita, M., Fudholi, A., & Zainuri, R. D. (2024). Islamic Education as the Spiritual and Moral Foundation of the Young Generation. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 4(1), 857-871.
- Silva-Lugo, J. L., Warner, L. A., & Galindo, S. (2022). From Parametric to Non-Parametric Statistics in Education and Agricultural Education Research. *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension*, 28(4), 393-413. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1389224X.2021.1936089>
- Tan, C. (2020). Beyond High-Stakes Exam: A Neo-Confucian Educational Programme and Its Contemporary Implications. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(2), 137-148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2019.1605901>
- Teymoori, A., & Trappes, R. (2026). The Recurrence of Fundamental Questions: A Historical and Philosophical Analysis of Major Disciplinary Crises in Psychology. *Review of General Psychology*, 10892680261421875. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10892680261421875>
- Wong, J., Baars, M., He, M., de Koning, B. B., & Paas, F. (2021). Facilitating Goal Setting and Planning to Enhance Online Self-Regulation of Learning. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 124, 106913. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106913>
- Yue, Y., & Lu, J. (2022). International Students' Motivation to Study Abroad: An Empirical Study Based on Expectancy-Value Theory and Self-Determination Theory. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 841122. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.841122>
- Zynuddin, S. N., Kenayathulla, H. B., & Sumintono, B. (2023). The Relationship Between School Climate and Students' Non-Cognitive Skills: A Systematic Literature Review. *Heliyon*, 9(4). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e14773>