



Implementation of Humanistic, Field, and Connectionism Theories in the Design of Zakat Learning for Islamic Education Students

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the implementation of humanistic, field, and connectionism theories in the design of zakat learning for Islamic Education students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were obtained through classroom observation, documentation, and literature review. The findings show that humanistic theory, grounded in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, nurtures students' motivation, sense of belonging, esteem, and self-actualization in understanding zakat as both worship and social responsibility. Field theory, based on Kurt Lewin's principle that behavior is a function of person and environment, explains how classroom contexts, peer interaction, and learning modes shape students' engagement and comprehension of zakat. Connectionism theory, developed by Edward Thorndike, is reflected through the principles of readiness, exercise, and effect, which strengthen mastery of zakat calculations and foster discipline through practice and reinforcement. The integration of these three theories creates a holistic and transformative zakat learning model that combines cognitive mastery, moral development, and practical application, making classical learning theories highly relevant to contemporary Islamic higher education.

1. Introduction

Learning is the core of every educational process. Without learning activities, education would not exist. In the context of Islamic education, learning is not merely a process of transferring knowledge but also a transformation of values, attitudes, and ethics in accordance with the objectives of Islamic education. Learning theories play an essential role in designing strategies that can help students understand the subject matter in depth while shaping their character (Haris, 2024). Therefore, analyzing the application of various learning theories, particularly humanistic theory, field theory, and connectionism theory, is crucial to examine how they contribute to zakat learning among students of Islamic Education.

Learning theories were developed to explain how the learning process occurs and how educators can facilitate effective instruction. Each theory has its own

strengths and limitations, requiring educators to carefully select and integrate theories that suit learners' needs and the learning context. For instance, humanistic theory emphasizes personal growth and self-actualization, field theory views learning as an interaction within cognitive structures, while connectionism focuses on the formation of stimulus-response associations. Integrating these three theories offers the potential for a more comprehensive approach to zakat instruction (Setiawan & Ansyah, 2025).

Zakat is one of the fundamental teachings in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) that is essential to be taught at the higher education level, particularly in Islamic Education programs. It is not only understood as a ritual obligation but also as an expression of social solidarity and economic justice. Students of Islamic Education must comprehend zakat not only normatively but also in its practical implementation in society. Consequently, applying appropriate learning theories is vital to ensure that zakat learning fosters both spiritual awareness and social responsibility among students (Badrudin & Zakariyah, 2023).

Humanistic theory, as introduced by Abraham Maslow, proposes that individuals are motivated by hierarchical needs ranging from physiological needs to safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (Utami, 2020). In the context of zakat learning, this theory is relevant as students are guided not only to understand zakat conceptually but also to internalize it as a form of self-actualization in serving society. Learning through a humanistic approach can nurture intrinsic motivation and awareness that zakat represents both religious devotion and social responsibility.

Meanwhile, Kurt Lewin's field theory views learning as a result of changes in cognitive structures influenced by situational contexts (Rozana et al., 2020). Through this theory, students are able to perceive zakat more comprehensively by relating classroom instruction to real-life experiences. Zakat learning is therefore shaped not only by cognitive processes but also by environmental conditions, social interactions, and psychological dynamics (Dwiatmaja et al., 2024). This makes students' understanding of zakat more meaningful and contextually grounded.

Edward Thorndike's connectionism emphasizes the significance of stimulus and response strengthened by practice, repetition, and reinforcement (Saifudin, 2021). In zakat learning, this theory can be applied through exercises in calculating zakat, simulations of zakat distribution, and case-based discussions on zakat practices within communities. Continuous practice and reinforcement help students grasp zakat regulations more effectively while internalizing its social values. This demonstrates that successful learning depends on readiness, exercise, and the consequences of learning activities (Siregar, 2025).

In the post-pandemic era, higher education often combines online and face-to-face learning modes, each presenting distinct challenges and benefits. Online learning demands greater student autonomy and digital literacy, while face-to-face classes

allow more direct interaction and practical engagement (Nurhasanah & Dewi, 2024). Therefore, the application of learning theories must be adapted to these contexts to ensure that educational goals are achieved. Zakat instruction in the Islamic Education Department of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu also encounters these challenges.

The implementation of learning theories in zakat learning has significant urgency because students of Islamic Education are prepared to become future educators. They must be equipped not only with normative knowledge of zakat but also with pedagogical skills to teach it effectively in schools. Hence, analyzing the application of humanistic, field, and connectionism theories provides insights into designing effective and contextual learning strategies for higher education.

Previous studies have shown that humanistic theory enhances students' learning motivation, field theory explains contextual learning dynamics, and connectionism produces positive outcomes in habit formation. However, research integrating these three theories in zakat instruction at the university level remains limited. This study, therefore, seeks to fill the gap by focusing on the implementation of these theories among Islamic Education students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

The local context of the university also plays a vital role. UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu envisions producing graduates who are morally upright, intellectually competent, and capable of contributing to national development. Integrating zakat learning with learning theories supports this vision by shaping students who are not only cognitively competent but also socially responsible and sensitive to societal issues. Thus, this research aligns with the institutional mission of preparing professional, religious, and character-driven educators (Qomar et al., 2025).

Moreover, zakat, as a pillar of Islam, encompasses both devotional (*ibadah*) and social (*muamalah*) dimensions. This dual nature requires zakat learning to go beyond cognitive understanding and address affective and psychomotor domains (Ridwan et al., 2025). Learning theories can facilitate this holistic approach since each theory contributes uniquely to different learning domains (Musa, 2021). By integrating these theories, lecturers can employ diverse teaching strategies to ensure comprehensive student development.

The urgency of this research is further strengthened by the fact that zakat learning contributes to character building and nation development (Yusuf, 2014). Students who deeply understand zakat are more likely to become socially concerned individuals who uphold justice and Islamic values in economic distribution. In the long run, this supports national goals of strengthening social solidarity and improving community welfare. Thus, this research holds both academic and societal significance.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the implementation of humanistic, field, and connectionism theories in zakat learning for Islamic

Education students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. By examining the application of these theories, this research seeks to identify effective and contextually relevant learning models that can serve as references in designing zakat instruction in higher education.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the implementation of humanistic, field, and connectionism theories in zakat learning. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore learning practices in their natural context and to describe how theoretical perspectives are applied in real classroom settings. The research was conducted in the Department of Islamic Education at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, focusing on students enrolled in zakat learning courses and the lecturers who facilitated them.

Data were collected through classroom observations, documentation, and literature review. Observations were conducted in both online and face-to-face sessions to capture teaching strategies and student engagement. Documentation included syllabi, teaching materials, and records of learning activities, while the literature review was used to strengthen the theoretical foundation and support the analysis. The researcher acted as the main instrument in data collection, ensuring reflexivity and direct involvement in the teaching and learning process.

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive-analytic techniques, beginning with data reduction, categorization, and interpretation. Triangulation of observation, documentation, and literature sources was applied to enhance the credibility of findings. Member checking with lecturers was also conducted to validate interpretations. This approach ensured that the analysis accurately reflected the integration of humanistic, field, and connectionism theories in the design and practice of zakat learning at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu

3. Results and Discussion

Implementation of Humanistic Theory in Zakat Learning

The implementation of humanistic theory in zakat learning at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu reflects Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which emphasizes that optimal learning occurs when learners' fundamental needs are recognized and fulfilled. Zakat instruction was not confined to the transmission of fiqh concepts but was framed as a medium for personal growth, social responsibility, and spiritual development. This integration ensured that learning outcomes addressed both intellectual mastery and the cultivation of moral values.

The application of humanistic theory in zakat learning can be systematically understood through Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Utami, 2020). This framework emphasizes that human motivation develops in stages, beginning with the fulfillment of basic physiological needs and culminating in self-actualization. In the classroom,

these stages provide a structured lens to design learning experiences that address not only students' cognitive development but also their emotional, social, and moral growth (Rosanti et al., 2025). By aligning zakat instruction with each level of Maslow's hierarchy, lecturers create a holistic learning environment where knowledge is meaningfully connected to personal values and societal responsibilities. The following table illustrates how each stage of Maslow's hierarchy was implemented in zakat learning within the Islamic Education program.

Table 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Zakat Learning

Level of Needs (Maslow)	Description	Implementation in Zakat Learning
Physiological	Basic needs: food, water, rest	Providing a comfortable classroom environment and structured learning materials so that students can focus without physical or mental strain.
Safety	Stability, protection, order	Lecturers establish clear rules, consistent schedules, and supportive academic guidance to create a secure learning atmosphere.
Love/Belonging	Social relationships, friendship, community	Group discussions, peer collaboration, and zakat distribution simulations foster solidarity and a sense of community among students.
Esteem	Recognition, self-confidence, achievement	Students are given opportunities to present analyses of zakat, receive constructive feedback, and gain recognition from lecturers and peers.
Self-Actualization	Fulfilling one's potential, creativity, social contribution	Students internalize zakat as both worship and social justice, applying it through real projects such as community service and role-play exercises.

At the physiological and safety levels of Maslow's hierarchy, the learning environment was designed to be structured, organized, and supportive. Students received clear guidance, accessible resources, and consistent feedback from lecturers, enabling them to engage with zakat learning without anxiety or uncertainty. Such stability provided the foundation for higher-order needs to emerge, particularly the development of belongingness and esteem in the classroom community (Hidayat & Malihah, 2023).

Belongingness was fostered through collaborative activities, group discussions, and peer learning that highlighted the collective responsibility of zakat in strengthening social solidarity. Students were encouraged to view zakat as a communal act that unites the Muslim community in compassion and justice. These practices cultivated empathy and reinforced the principle that religious obligations carry collective dimensions that extend beyond individual fulfillment.

The esteem stage was addressed by providing opportunities for students to demonstrate competence through assignments, presentations, and simulations of zakat calculation and distribution. Recognition from lecturers and peers strengthened students' confidence in their academic and social abilities. Such validation aligned

with Maslow's assertion that esteem is a critical precursor to self-actualization, preparing students to take ownership of their learning and responsibilities (Muchlis Solichin, 2018).

At the level of self-actualization, zakat learning became a transformative process. Students were guided to internalize zakat not only as ritual compliance but also as an expression of generosity, fairness, and social justice. Practical engagements, such as case analyses and role-play in distributing zakat, allowed students to embody Islamic ethical principles in action. This demonstrated the highest stage of Maslow's hierarchy, where knowledge was actualized into meaningful contributions to both personal integrity and community welfare.

Humanistic principles were further reflected in the student-centered pedagogy applied by lecturers. The role of the lecturer was not limited to knowledge transmission but expanded to that of facilitator, mentor, and motivator. Students were encouraged to think critically, reflect on personal values, and connect theoretical knowledge of zakat with lived realities. This approach strengthened autonomy, creativity, and responsibility, all of which are central to humanistic education (Qosim, 2024).

Assessment methods also aligned with humanistic ideals. Instead of focusing solely on examinations, students engaged in reflective writing, collaborative projects, and contextual problem-solving. These assessments emphasized depth of understanding, personal insight, and the ability to apply zakat principles in various social contexts. The shift from rote evaluation to authentic assessment highlighted the recognition of students as holistic individuals with cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions.

The diversity of student backgrounds was accommodated through differentiated instruction and personalized feedback. Humanistic theory recognizes the uniqueness of each learner, and this was evident in the way lecturers tailored discussions and assignments to meet varying levels of readiness. By acknowledging individual differences, the teaching process affirmed Maslow's notion that education must nurture the uniqueness of each person to achieve self-actualization (Devi, 2021).

The integration of Maslow's framework into zakat learning not only enhanced students' academic engagement but also shaped their identity as future educators. They were trained to internalize zakat as both a theological obligation and a pedagogical responsibility, ensuring that the values of generosity and justice could be transmitted to their future students. This dual orientation toward self-development and professional formation demonstrates the transformative potential of humanistic education in Islamic higher education.

In conclusion, the implementation of humanistic theory through Maslow's hierarchy of needs provided a coherent structure for zakat instruction. By addressing physiological stability, social belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, lecturers cultivated a holistic learning environment where intellectual, emotional, and moral growth occurred simultaneously. Zakat learning thus became not only a subject of academic study but also a pathway to personal fulfillment and societal contribution, aligning Islamic values with the essence of humanistic education.

Implementation of Field Theory in Zakat Learning

Kurt Lewin’s field theory asserts that behavior (B) is a function of the interaction between the person (P) and the environment (E), formulated as $B = f(P,E)$ (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). In the context of zakat learning at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, this principle means that students’ engagement and learning outcomes are not determined solely by individual capacity but also by the learning environment in which they operate. Classroom dynamics, teaching strategies, peer collaboration, and digital resources collectively shape the students’ learning experiences. Thus, understanding zakat becomes a product of both personal interpretation and environmental influence (Ridwan et al., 2025).

The implementation of field theory in zakat learning was evident in the use of multiple learning modes—online and face-to-face—which created different psychological fields for students. Online classes emphasized digital resources, multimedia materials, and independent tasks, while face-to-face sessions provided opportunities for direct interaction, group discussions, and practical simulations. Each mode created a distinct learning environment that influenced students’ levels of motivation, participation, and comprehension. Lewin’s theory clarifies why learning strategies must be adapted to specific situational contexts rather than applied uniformly (Vasel, 2025).

Classroom interactions also reflected the principles of field theory. Collaborative group work encouraged students to negotiate meaning, share interpretations, and internalize zakat as both a personal duty and a collective responsibility. Meanwhile, classroom discussions fostered the perception that zakat is not merely a religious formula but a dynamic practice that responds to social realities. In this sense, the “field” of learning extended beyond the physical classroom, encompassing the cultural, social, and institutional environment that shaped students’ perspectives.

Table.2 Lewin’s Field Theory Was Applied In The Zakat Classroom

Aspect of Field Theory	Application in Zakat Learning	Effect on Students
Person (P)	Individual understanding of zakat, prior knowledge, personal motivation	Shapes readiness to learn and willingness to engage in discussions
Environment (E)	Learning mode (online/face-to-face), peer interaction, lecturer guidance, availability of resources	Creates supportive or challenging conditions that influence behavior
Interaction (P × E)	Group discussions, role-play of zakat distribution, online collaboration, community projects	Enhances comprehension through contextual engagement and shared experiences
Behavior (B)	Active participation, accurate zakat calculation, reflective attitudes toward social justice	Demonstrates learning outcomes influenced by both personal and environmental factors

Implementation of Connectionism Theory in Zakat Learning

Connectionism theory, introduced by Edward Thorndike, explains that learning occurs through the formation of connections between stimulus and response,

strengthened by readiness, practice, and reinforcement (Yanti, 2023). In zakat learning, this theory was applied to develop both technical competence and behavioral consistency among students. By engaging in repeated exercises, simulations, and case-based applications, students internalized zakat concepts not merely as abstract rules but as habits and practical skills that can be applied in real-life contexts (Asykur et al., 2025).

The law of readiness was evident when students were prepared and motivated to learn zakat through clear objectives and structured guidance. Lecturers explained the importance of zakat in social justice and its spiritual value, which created readiness among students to engage actively in learning activities. Without readiness, tasks became burdensome, but when students recognized the relevance of zakat, they approached learning with higher enthusiasm and responsibility (Qomar et al., 2025).

The law of exercise was applied through consistent practice and repetition of zakat calculations and case analyses (Yusuf, 2014). Students were given multiple scenarios of zakat on wealth, income, and agriculture, which required careful application of rules. Continuous practice strengthened neural connections and facilitated mastery. Group work and peer collaboration also extended practice opportunities, allowing students to reinforce learning through mutual discussion and correction.

The law of effect operated when students received immediate feedback and reinforcement from lecturers. Correct responses were reinforced with praise and acknowledgment, while errors were addressed with constructive guidance. This reinforcement shaped behavior by encouraging accuracy and discouraging repeated mistakes. Positive emotional responses, such as satisfaction and recognition, further enhanced students' motivation to persist in their learning.

Table 3. Application Of Thorndike's Connectionism In Zakat Learning

Thorndike's Principle	Application in Zakat Learning	Effect on Students
Law of Readiness	Setting clear objectives, linking zakat with social justice and spiritual growth	Students approach tasks with enthusiasm and responsibility
Law of Exercise	Repeated calculation of zakat, case analysis, and group discussions	Strengthens mastery, accuracy, and problem-solving ability
Law of Effect	Immediate feedback, praise for correct answers, constructive correction for errors	Reinforces positive behavior, builds confidence, reduces mistakes

By applying these three principles, zakat learning shifted from being abstract and theoretical to becoming practical and habit-forming. Students not only understood zakat regulations but also demonstrated readiness, accuracy, and responsibility in applying them. This indicates that connectionism provides an effective pedagogical foundation for cultivating discipline, skill, and motivation in Islamic higher education.

4. Conclusion

The integration of humanistic, field, and connectionism theories in zakat learning at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu demonstrates that classical learning frameworks remain relevant when contextualized in Islamic higher education. Humanistic theory fosters intrinsic motivation and self-actualization, field theory emphasizes the interaction between learners and their environment, and connectionism strengthens mastery through practice and reinforcement. Together, these approaches transform zakat education from a purely theoretical subject into a holistic learning process that develops cognitive competence, moral awareness, and practical skills essential for shaping future Islamic educators.

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