

Character Education Islam from the Views of Imam Al-Ghazali

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ABSTRACT

Character education is a central topic in developing a child's behavior so that they remain well-mannered, virtuous in socializing with other individuals and groups. This type of research uses qualitative research, with a research method namely literature study. Research sources come from researchers' reading of books, articles and existing research. This research approach uses a descriptive analytical approach which is then discussed in depth, analyzed using content analysis techniques so as to obtain results that can be enjoyed through reading articles. The research results showed that the figure of Imam al-Ghazali as a Muslim philosopher spread his knowledge from various fields, especially education, namely character education. There are character education values according to Imam Al-Ghazali, namely: getting closer to Allah SWT. and obtain happiness in this world and the hereafter, reflection, muhasabah, sincerity, patience, gratitude, fear, and hope, generosity, honesty, gentleness, honesty, patience, and simplicity. These character education values can be applied in everyday life, to children at school and at home so that future generations can have noble morals.

Keywords: *Values of Character Education, Imam Al-Ghazali, Implementation of Character Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Character education is education that prioritizes ethics, morals and character towards the surrounding environment (Amaliya et al., 2022). The role of parents at home is the main task in forming, cultivating and guiding children's character so that they remain in a good range such as being polite, honest, loving each other and helping each other (Amaliya et al., 2022; Nur & Sesmiarni, 2023; Rahman et al., 2021; Taufik, 2020). Parents become the first school for children to imitate everything that is shown and demonstrated. Therefore, parents' provisions in developing their children must be sufficient, especially in building a child's character (Akhyar et al., 2021; Stiawati & Indriyany, 2022).

Apart from that, character education is also obtained within the internal scope, namely schools (Mutaqin et al., 2024). Therefore, special attention and cooperation between teachers at school and parents at home is needed in forming children's character so that it is maintained. This is in line with the National Education System Law which states that national education functions to develop and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation, aiming to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and are devoted to Allah Swt, have noble character, are

healthy, knowledgeable, creative, capable, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

Rahardjo believes that character education is a holistic educational process that connects the moral dimension with the social realm in students' lives as a foundation for the formation of a generation that is qualified and able to live independently, having principles of truth that can be accounted for (Sajadi, 2019). It is so important to give character formation to children because the quality of a nation lies in the morals of social individuals.

Character education must be implemented through the attitudes and behavior of teachers and students. Teachers must be able to teach character education in schools and apply learning by integrating character education values. The implementation of the learning stage starts from the planning stage to the implementation stage in order to achieve the learning objectives (Senjaya et al., 2020). The application of good character in everyday life helps individuals and groups create a comfortable environment, without elements of violence that can lead to disputes.

This is similar to the results of several researchers' research on cases found in several articles which reveal that the widespread cases of bullying against classmates make victims who can no longer stand it choose to drop out of school and even the worst case ends their lives by committing suicide (Schihalejev et al., 2020). Apart from that, other cases were found, such as the many acts outside the norm displayed by students in the Generation Z era, starting from educational drug use, student brawls, and a lack of respect for lecturers, parents, and even the community where they live (Sasmita, 2022). This is not in accordance with the Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 11.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُوبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

The translation: "O you who believe, let not a people make fun of another people (because) perhaps they (those who are made fun of) are better than those (who make fun) and neither should women (make fun) other women (because) may be the woman (who is being made fun of) better than the woman (who is making fun of). Don't criticize each other or call each other with bad names. The worst calling is (the calling of) being wicked after believing. Whoever does not repent, those are the wrongdoers" (Kemenag RI, 2019).

This verse has the meaning of a prohibition against ridiculing, criticizing, or calling fellow creatures created by Allah, namely humans, bad names. This warning is in line with character education, namely loving each other, respecting and not criticizing the surrounding environment. If children are equipped with knowledge and strong faith, then a child's character will be reflected in the knowledge gained in their environment.

From the perspective of Islamic education, character education can help create and maintain the nation's next generation who have good morals, have a religious personality, are critical, innovative and have mastered science and technology (Al Ayyubi et al., 2024; Murharyana et al., 2023; Pancawardana et al., 2023; Sabarudin et al., 2024). Many experts have studied character education, one

of whom is Imam Al-Ghazali, an Islamic philosopher who has produced many phenomenal works and is a reference to this day. Al-Ghazali's thoughts are not only limited to aspects of religious knowledge, he is also popular for his thoughts in the aspect of character education. Until now, the influence of Al-Ghazali's thoughts on character still exists and has become a reference on campuses and scientific forums for character studies, especially among Muslims in the world. In fact, Ignaz Goldziher admits that the figure of Al-Ghazali has had a huge effect and impact both on the historicity of Islamic thought and on the religiosity of Muslims. Al-Ghazali is not only known as a theologian and mystic, but he also mastered the fields of jurisprudence (law), ethics, logic, and even philosophical studies. He is considered an encyclopedic Islamic scientist who has mastered almost all scientific treasures from various very different disciplines. His ability to elaborate and express ideas in each of his works is considered very original, critical and even communicative.

According to Al-Ghazali, character education in Islam must include developing good morals, forming positive habits, and instilling Islamic values (Poya & Rizapoor, 2023). He emphasized that the main goal of education is to get closer to Allah SWT and achieve eternal happiness in the afterlife. Al-Ghazali highlighted the importance of sincere intentions, useful knowledge, and pious deeds as the main pillars in character education. In Al-Ghazali's view, good character is formed through a holistic *tarbiyah* (education) process, including intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions (Supriyanto, 2022). He believes that humans have innate potential that can be developed through consistent practice and habituation (Huda et al., 2022; Kirabaev & Chistyakova, 2023; Prasetya, 2023; Sari & Marhaban, 2023). Therefore, character education must start from an early age, by instilling basic values such as honesty, patience, humility and compassion.

Apart from that, Al-Ghazali also emphasized the importance of a conducive environment in character formation (Ghofur, 2020). Family, school and community environments have an important role in shaping individual morals and behavior. He reminded that role models from parents and educators are very influential in instilling character values in children. Character education according to Al-Ghazali is not only relevant in his time, but also has high relevance in the modern context. In the era of globalization and rapid technological advances, challenges in character formation are increasingly complex. Moral values are often neglected in the hustle and bustle of modern life. Therefore, Al-Ghazali's views on character education can be an important reference for Muslims in forming individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent (Baharshah et al., 2021), but also moral and have noble character (Zaini, 2017).

Thus, a study of Imam Al-Ghazali's views regarding character education in Islam not only offers valuable insight into the history of Islamic thought, but also provides practical guidance for the formation of good character in everyday life. Through the appreciation and application of the values taught by Al-Ghazali, it is hoped that the Muslim generation can become individuals of excellence, integrity and benefit the wider community (Cinta et al., 2023; Lubis & Azzahra, 2021; Taufiqurrahman & Hambali, 2021). A child who lives in a supportive environment

is able to build good character as well. This research aims to examine character education from the perspective of Islamic philosopher Imam al-Ghazali so that it can help parents and teachers in applying it to children and help build character for the benefit of the surrounding environment in socializing both in formal and non-formal environments.

METHODS

This type of research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research process to understand human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be presented in words, reporting detailed views obtained from informant sources, and carried out in a natural setting (Susanty et al., 2023). This research method uses library research (library research), namely a method of collecting data by understanding methods and studying theories from various literature related to research (Adlini et al., 2022; Darmalaksana, 2020). According to Zed, there are four stages of library study, namely preparing the necessary equipment, preparing a working bibliography, organizing time and reading and recording research material. Collecting data by searching for sources and constructing them from various sources such as books, journals and existing research. This research approach uses a descriptive analytical approach. The author took primary data sources through searching literature, then discussed them in depth and analyzed using content analysis techniques to produce conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Short Biography of Imam Al-Ghazali

His full name is Abu Hamid Ibnu Muhammad Ibnu Ahmad Al Ghazali, better known as Al Ghazali. He was born in a small town located near Tus, Khurasan Province, Islamic Republic of Iraq in 450 AH (1058 AD). Al-Ghazali's name comes from ghazzal, which means thread weaver, because his father's job was weaving wool thread. Meanwhile, Ghazali is also taken from the word ghazalah, which is the name of Al Ghazali's birth village and this is what is widely used, so that his name is attributed by people to his father's job or to his place of birth. His parents were fond of studying Sufism, because they only wanted to eat from the results of his own hand in weaving wool. And he is also known as a lover of knowledge and always prays that his son will become a scholar in the future. It is a shame that his teachings did not give him the opportunity to vaccinate his child's success according to his prayers.

After completing his education, Al-Ghazali began teaching at the Nizamiyah Madrasah in Baghdad, which at that time was one of the leading educational centers in the Islamic world. There, he earned a reputation as a highly respected scholar and teacher. Imam Al-Ghazali was a prolific writer who produced many works in various fields, including theology, philosophy, Islamic law, and Sufism. Some of his monumental works include.

1. "Ihya Ulum al-Din" (Bringing Religious Sciences to Life): This work is considered Al-Ghazali's magnum opus. Ihya Ulum al-Din is a spiritual

encyclopedia that discusses various aspects of a Muslim's life, from worship, ethics, to social relationships.

2. "Tahafut al-Falasifa" (The Destruction of the Philosophers): In this work, Al-Ghazali criticizes Greek philosophy and questions some of the views held by Muslim philosophers who were influenced by Greek thought, such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina).
3. "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal" (Deliverer from Misguidance): This is Al-Ghazali's intellectual autobiography, in which he describes his spiritual and intellectual journey, as well as the existential crisis he experienced before finding peace in Sufism.

Imam Al-Ghazali is known as a reformer in Islamic thought who tried to unite sharia (Islamic law) and Sufism (Islamic mysticism). He emphasized the importance of sincere intentions and a clean heart in carrying out Islamic teachings. Al-Ghazali also criticized excessive reliance on rationalism, stating that human reason has limits and requires the guidance of revelation. Al-Ghazali's influence was very broad and deep. His works have been translated into various languages and studied by Muslims throughout the world. He is considered one of the greatest scholars in Islamic history and is often nicknamed "Hujjatul Islam" (Defender of Islam) because of his contribution in defending and enlivening Islamic teachings.

After teaching and writing for several years, Al-Ghazali experienced a spiritual crisis that made him leave his prestigious position in Baghdad. He spent several years in seclusion, engaging in worship and spiritual reflection. After that, he returned to Tus, where he founded a school and continued to teach until the end of his life in 1111 AD. Al-Ghazali left a rich and influential intellectual legacy that continues to provide inspiration for subsequent generations (Yunita & Mujib, 2021). Al-Ghazali's role as a Muslim figure is very central in the world of education. During his life he contributed a lot of his thoughts as seen in several of his works. Therefore, this Muslim figure had a very broad and deep influence, especially in implementing the character education he taught. His position in studying character education is very valuable, timeless, and provides a lot of knowledge for future generations, until now.

Definition of Character Education

The term character was derived from "Kharakter", "kharassein" and "kharax", which mean "tool for marking", "to engrave" and "pointed stake". Then, in France during the 14th century, the word "character" was used so frequently that it was eventually absorbed into the English word "character" and translated into Indonesian as "karakter." to engrave is also synonymous with carve, paint, and inscribe. In the Indonesian Dictionary, "karakter" is described as psychological features, as well as morals or traits that distinguish one person from another. People with character are those who possess the nature, demeanor, behavior, or character.

According to Lickona, a person's character or personality comprises three interconnected components: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and ethical behavior. A good personality is composed of knowledge of goodness, a desire for goodness, mental habits, emotional habits, and three work habits that are required to live an ethical life and form moral maturity. Thus, character and morals are

synonymous, yet morality is a much broader idea. Since morality derives from Arabic which means personality, disposition, and temperament, where these can be found in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad saw (Zaini Miftach, 2019).

Morals and ethics are synonymous terms that are also sometimes linked with character, morals, etiquette, or manners. Conceptually, the terms ethical and moral have the same meaning as character, which is to discuss human acts and behavior in terms of good and bad values (Aunurrahman, 2021). Characters are universal human behavioral values that include all human activities, both in the context of dealing with God, with the soul, with other people, and with the environment, which are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and acts based on religious norms, law, manners, culture and customs (Zaini Miftach, 2019). From the definition above, it can be concluded that character education is an effort to grow and develop students' good personal attitudes, such as being virtuous, honest, having high integrity, so that their lives can be beneficial for themselves and the people around them. The meaning of character education in general is in accordance with the views of the philosopher Imam Al-Ghazali.

Al-Ghazali's Views on Character Education

Character education, which later became character education, is a central theme and is often studied today. In terms of terminology, Al-Ghazali defines character education in terms of morals and divides them into good morals (al khuluq al hasan) and bad morals (al khuluq as sayyi). Furthermore, he said that morals undergo change, meaning that morals can be obtained through a learning process and can also be changed through the learning process, by encouraging the soul to carry out the actions required by the morals in question. In the book *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, Al-Ghazali shares several concepts of character education, including:

1. Character Education Orientation Character education is more oriented towards getting closer to Allah Swt and achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter. As he stated, "The basis of happiness in this world and the hereafter is knowledge. If so, knowledge is as important as charity. How could it not be, while you also know that the excellence of something is the glory of its fruit. And you know that the fruit of knowledge is nearness to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."
2. Development Targets in Character Education In Islamic education, you should be able to develop characters such as thinking, reading the Koran, contemplating, muhasabah, remembering death, sincerity, patience, gratitude, fear and hope, generosity, honesty, love, and so on. Characters developed for students in the book *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*. Among them: (1) Prioritizing the purification of the soul and worship; (2) Tawakal; (3) Sincere character; (4) Solidarity; (5) Love useful knowledge; (6) Be honest; (7) Simplicity; (8) Be patient; (9) Gratitude; and (10) Gentle attitude.

Al-Ghazali put forward a method of educating children by giving examples, training and habituation, then advice and suggestions as educational instruments in order to develop children's personalities in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic religion. Personality formation takes place gradually and develops so that it is a process towards perfection. Al-Ghazali said: If a child is accustomed to practicing everything that is good, given an education in a good direction then he

will certainly grow up in goodness and as a positive result he will be safe and sound in this world and the hereafter. His parents and all educators, instructors and caretakers participated in receiving the reward.

On the other hand, if from a young age one has been accustomed to doing bad things and is left alone without regard for education and teaching, as is the case with someone who keeps animals, then the result will be that the child will be harmed and his morals will be damaged, while the main sin will of course be borne by the person (parents, educators) who is responsible for maintaining and nurturing it. Furthermore, Al-Ghazali strongly recommends educating children and developing their morals with exercises and habits that are appropriate to their mental development, even if they seem to be forced, so that children can avoid being led astray (Yuniarweti, 2023).

This training and habituation will form a certain attitude in the child, which will gradually become clearer and stronger, so that it cannot be shaken anymore because it has become part of his personality. Then he said "if the child has been accustomed to and taught good things since he was growing up, then when he reaches almost adulthood, he will certainly be able to know the secret, namely why bad actions are prohibited by the father (parents). his. This habituation is intended so that the physical dimensions of the individual's (child's) personality can be formed by providing the skills to act and speak. This habituation stage is a basic support and preparation for the child's future life and personality development.

The experience gained at the habituation stage will be useful as a basis for further processes. According to Imam Al-Ghazali, a teaching that will produce results requires a long process of practice and habituation and constant attention (from educators). Al-Ghazali gave his views on moral education for children as follows:

1. Politeness. Politeness contains character education values, such as: a. When children eat with the family, a sense of unity between the family and respect for older people is instilled. b. Children are trained to respect other people's property as other people value their own as well as practice working together with other people. c. Children can eat by themselves, giving them a sense of self-confidence. d. Parents can respect how children behave when eating (Sufyan Mubarak, 2020). The character education values contained in politeness really need to be instilled in children from an early age so that they can be implemented in the child's social life.
2. Discipline. Al-Ghazali prioritizes child discipline to avoid actions that are inappropriate for the public and to accustom children to do things that are in accordance with applicable societal norms. He said: Fathers should teach their children how to sit properly, they should not place one leg on top of the other, as well as placing the hand under the chin and resting the head on the hand (chin support), because all of these are signs of laziness. Apart from teaching manners and discipline when sitting, it also prevents lazy attitudes in children, so that children are trained to be creative, study diligently and work hard. Before children can think logically and understand abstract things, and are not yet able to sort out what is good and what is bad, what is right and wrong, then examples, exercises and habits (habit forming) play a role. which is very

important, in the personal development of children, because before adulthood is the best time to instill (Sufyan Mubarak, 2020).

Imam Al-Ghazali's views on character education are in line with the 18 values of character education implemented in formal education by the Ministry of National Education. Among them: religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hardworking, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love of the country, respect for achievements, friendly/communicative, love of peace, likes to read, cares about the environment, cares socially, And Responsibility (Rosdiana et al., 2022). It is hoped that these character education values can be realized in children so that the nation's generation can be peaceful and become a superior generation.

The Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Thought to Modern Education

When talking about character education, it doesn't mean talking about right and wrong teachings. More than that, character education must instill habits (habituation) about what is good and right to do so that students become aware (cognitive) about what is right and wrong, able to feel (affective) good values and habitually do them (psychomotor). In other words, good character education must involve aspects of good knowledge (moral knowing), feeling good or loving good (moral feeling) and good behavior (moral action). This means that character education must emphasize habits or habits that are carried out continuously to be implemented in school and everyday life (Dirsa & Kusumawati, 2019). The importance of habituation in instilling character education so that children can easily differentiate between good and bad things so that they can have implications in everyday life.

Good character is supported by knowledge of goodness, the desire to do good, and perform good deeds. In this regard, he also stated: "Character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values." -core ethical values). Even in the book *Character Matters* he states: Character education is the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue – that is objectively good human qualities – that are good for the individual person and good for the whole society character education is a deliberate (conscious) effort to realize virtue, namely objectively good human qualities, not only good for individual individuals, but also good for society as a whole (Khumairoh, 2022).

Thus, the process of character education, or moral and national character education must of course be seen as a conscious and planned effort, not an effort that occurs by chance. In other words, character education is a serious effort to understand, form, and foster ethical values, both for oneself and for all members of society or citizens as a whole. Thomas Lickona mentions seven essential and main character elements that must be instilled in students, which include: (1) Sincerity or honesty; (2) Compassion; (3) Courage; (4) Kindness; (5) Selfcontrol; (6) Cooperation; and (7) Hard work/diligence or hard work (Suherman, 2022).

Character education is interpreted as values education, character education, moral education, character education whose aim is to develop students' abilities to make good and bad decisions, realizing goodness in everyday life wholeheartedly as a noble ideal in the world of education. According to the National Education System Law (Sisdiknas) Number 20 of 2003, it is stated that the aim of national

education is: *"Developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens"* (Saputra & Wahid, 2023). This goal can help children analyze every existing problem, develop children's abilities, and help build a level of confidence so they can appear in public.

The meaning contained in the Law regarding the objectives of national education in Indonesia, emphasizes that the objectives of national education in Indonesia are a unified whole and are interconnected with one another. The essence is to form complete Indonesian people, with the key words being faith and piety. The same view was also expressed by Al-Ghazali in the Treatise *Ayyuha al-Walad* regarding the principles of character education, namely emphasizing the importance of moral values which leads to the principle of integrating spirituality in the goals of character education.

He considers that character is closer to morality, namely human spontaneity in behaving, or carrying out actions that have been integrated within the human being so that when they appear there is no need to think about it again. What Al-Ghazali said is a character that is deeply rooted in a person. Where the values that were previously used as a reference have been properly understood and applied in social life. Character comes from noble values that morally shape a person's personality and are reflected in behavior. This is in line with what Ki Hajar Dewantara expressed, namely *"ngerti-ngerasa-ngelakoni"* (understanding, feeling, doing). This purpose implies that character education is a form of education and teaching that focuses on students' behavior and actions in appreciating and implementing character values in their daily behavior (Yakin, 2018).

As for character education to instill a spirit of leadership and responsibility that is in line with universal values that are in accordance with the character of the nation and also the culture of the country and also form a strong government, has a noble character, is moral, tolerant, has a patriotic spirit, is knowledge-oriented knowledge and faith and piety to God Almighty and much more (Zaimuddin, 2022). Through the implementation of the values contained in character education, we can create a generation that is qualified in terms of thoughts and actions in solving problems

Character education is an important and strategic step in rebuilding individual and national identity. However, it is important to immediately state that character education must involve all parties, households and families, schools, and the wider school environment or community. Therefore, the first step that must be taken is to reconnect the almost disconnected relationships and educational networks between these three educational environments. Character education is a planned effort to help someone understand, care about, and act based on ethical values. Success in realizing character education in schools is closely related to the figure of the teacher because the teacher is an important influencing factor, it can even be said to determine the success or failure of a process. character education in schools.

The teacher, as a substitute for the role of parents at school, is a figure that is admired and imitated by the students. Considering that character education

emphasizes aspects of forming students' attitudes, values and character, its formation must start from the teachers. Teachers must have a deep understanding of the character or personality of their students. He must be able to protect all his students from young children to adults. This is important to do while understanding the characteristics of each of his students. When a teacher is unable to set an example and understand the characteristics of each of his students, then he has failed or failed to teach and educate (Rosdiana et al., 2022). The implications of Al-Ghazali's thoughts on education today certainly need additions, refinements and modifications to suit developments in educational technology and the current education system. Therefore, character education always aims to form individuals who are moral, knowledgeable, capable of making decisions, and are able to play an active role in building life together, both at home, at school and even in the life of society, nation and state (Senjaya et al., 2020).

Children's education is something that is urgent to pay attention to. Because children are born with potential that needs to be developed. Apart from that, children are the most important part of the entire human growth process. As for the implications for education in early childhood, education should always be adjusted based on the child's developmental age. So, the indicator of al-Ghazali's thoughts about morals is a trait that is pervasive in everyday life. Imam al-Ghazali's thoughts in developing character education are very important to teach to children. As a parent, the main school for children in developing knowledge is an urgent matter for them so that it can be implemented in everyday life. According to al-Ghazali's view, the values of character education are appropriate in developing children's attitudes to have good morals.

CONCLUSION

This article is very in-depth in discussing the values of character education, so that the conclusions obtained include, the central figure of Imam al-Ghazali received the most attention in spreading his knowledge through his work in various fields, including the field of education, his views regarding character education. Imam al-Ghazali shared the character education orientation found in the book *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, namely; get closer to Allah swt. and obtain happiness in this world and the hereafter, reflection, muhasabah, sincerity, patience, gratitude, fear, and hope, generosity, honesty, gentleness, honesty, patience, and simplicity. The values of character education according to Imam al-Ghazali can be applied in everyday life. Apart from that, these values can also be raised in teachers' formal learning at school, such as in the subjects of SKI (History of Islamic Culture) and PAI (Islamic Religious Education). This article can help future researchers in developing and identifying character education values contained in textbooks taught by teachers by students.

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