

# THE CONCEPT OF CHILDREN'S CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Aan Setiawan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institut Agama Islam Negeri Majene, Indonesia

Correspondence Email: [aansetiawan@stainmajene.ac.id](mailto:aansetiawan@stainmajene.ac.id)

## ABSTRACT

Children's education is a crucial aspect that requires serious attention. The presence and awareness of parents serve as the primary keys to success. From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, children's education is an effort to instill moral, ethical, and spiritual values derived from God's revelation and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). In Islam, education is not merely the transfer of knowledge but also a process of character building based on religious teachings. Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes the importance of balance between worldly and ukhrawi (hereafter) aspects, as well as the holistic development of a child's potential in intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. This research adopts a literature study approach, which is a method of problem-solving through the analysis of written sources. Information retrieval techniques are employed to find books, articles, notes, and reports relevant to the issue being addressed. The findings of this study indicate that every child is an amanah (trust) that must be nurtured with love, attention, and exemplary guidance so that they grow into responsible, virtuous individuals who contribute positively to society. This educational process must take place in a supportive environment—whether at home, school, or within the community—with teachers serving not only as educators but also as role models in applying Islamic values. Children's education, from the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, is a fundamental study that underscores the belief that humans are beings who must be educated to attain the highest level of perfection (*insan kamil*). The ultimate goal is to shape a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also emotionally and spiritually mature, maintaining a balance between worldly life and the hereafter.

**Keywords:** Children's education; Islamic education philosophy; character

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Islamic education is a branch of philosophy with relatively simple origins that serves as an operational reference. It is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and addresses various educational issues within this framework. Islamic teachings provide fundamental guidance through the Qur'an and As-Sunnah, complemented by *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). Education is one of the most crucial elements in shaping a nation's

civilization, driven by sincere intentions to create a better life. In academia, philosophy holds significant value in coordinating adjustments within the education system. Therefore, philosophy serves as one of the foundational elements that shape the concept of education.

The philosophy of education acts as a guiding principle for decision-making in policy formulation and educational system development. Consequently, the education system must be designed in accordance with a comprehensive, realistic, and flexible educational philosophy, rooted in Islamic principles, teachings, and beliefs that are interconnected. This includes the nature of existence, the universe, humanity, society, life, and the interrelation of these elements with each other and with their Creator. Additionally, it pertains to the nature of human knowledge, moral values, the educational process, and its role in life.

In general, education encompasses various definitions put forth by scholars, reflecting its paradigm, direction, and objectives, as well as the methods of implementation within society. Education is often interpreted as an integrated effort toward humanization and character building, shaping individuals into virtuous and cultured beings. In other words, education is a process of refining human potential to develop more humane characteristics. It is understood as a conscious process through which individuals of all ages gain knowledge, internalize values, and experience life events. Based on various expert perspectives, it is evident that education plays a vital role in improving societal structures and fostering humanization.

In the context of children's education, the Indonesian constitution guarantees every citizen the right to compulsory education under the nine-year mandatory education program, which includes six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. Parents and educators play a fundamental role in fulfilling children's physical and mental needs, ensuring their growth and development align with educational goals, particularly within the framework of Islamic education. Various internal and external factors influence a child's development and personality. Therefore, a key educational effort is to meet children's needs, maximize their potential, and support their growth and development in accordance with their natural stages.

Raising children from an Islamic perspective involves nurturing morals and ethics, alongside cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor development, all of which are integral to the educational process. Moral development is best achieved through exemplary role models. Therefore, parents and educators should embody positive attitudes and behaviors for children to emulate. In light of these considerations, this paper begins with a literature review to explore how children's education is understood within the framework of Islamic educational philosophy.

## 2. METHODS

The research method used in this study is a literature review. This approach is chosen because it allows researchers to address problems by analyzing established written sources. Information retrieval techniques are employed to gather relevant books, articles, notes, and reports related to the research problem. This study relies on textual and numerical data rather than direct observations or firsthand accounts of specific events.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. The Concept of Children's Education in Islam

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), concepts are abstractions of concrete events or mental images of objects, processes, or things that exist outside of language and are used by the mind to understand other things. Furthermore, a concept can be interpreted as a general idea, understanding, or thought. In this context, the concept referred to by the author is an idea, understanding, general explanation, and abstract interpretation of children's learning patterns.

##### *The Definition of Education*

When discussing education, two essential terms inevitably arise—educators and students—both of which are closely interconnected.

First, the term "educator" originates from the concept of a student and serves as a key factor enabling the teaching and learning process. Without an educator, this process cannot take place.

Teachers who assume the role of educators are not merely individuals who teach in schools; rather, they are dedicated to educating and guiding the next generation at all times and in all places. In the context of Islamic education, there are several terms used to describe educators:

- a. *Murabbi* – A *murabbi* is responsible for education in terms of creating, maintaining, organizing, modifying, and establishing conditions that foster the development of students.
- b. *Mu'allim* – A *mu'allim* is a person with extensive knowledge who can effectively explain and teach it to students, enabling them to practice what they have learned.
- c. *Mu'addib* – A *mu'addib* educates, teaches, and instills morals, ethics, and good character in students so they can apply these values in life.
- d. *Mudarris* – A *mudarris* possesses a high level of intellectual ability and inspires students to reach their full potential.
- e. *Mursyid* – A *mursyid* is someone with strong spiritual abilities, devotion in worship, and noble character. He guides students through the learning process and encourages them toward self-improvement.

Educators play a crucial role in the Islamic context. In Islamic education, educators are also referred to as spiritual mentors or nurturers of learners. They nurture the soul through knowledge, cultivate noble character, and correct students' wrongdoings.

Second, the focus shifts to learners. Ibn Qayyim refers to learners as *Mu'allim*. According to him, a *Mu'allim* is someone who seeks knowledge for personal security and well-being. Such individuals sincerely pursue knowledge, learn beneficial things, and apply what they have learned. For a seeker of knowledge who desires success, this is the correct approach.

Learners are individuals who have not yet reached full maturity, which necessitates guidance and training—particularly from adults, commonly referred to as educators—who aim to shape learners into well-rounded individuals.

From another perspective, a learner is a human being endowed with *fitrah* (innate nature) and the potential for continuous development. If this *fitrah* is properly nurtured, it leads to a strong belief in *tawhid* (the oneness of Allah). In the philosophy of Islamic education, all living beings—angels, humans, jinn, animals, and plants—are considered learners because, in Islam, Allah SWT is the ultimate Educator of all His creations, as well as their Creator and Sustainer. This role encompasses the aspects of *Tarbiyah* (nurturing), *Ta'lim* (teaching), and *Ta'dib* (disciplining).

In the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, the most significant learners are *Al-Insan*, *Al-Basyar*, and *Bani Adam*—all of whom undergo a process of growth toward achieving the state of *Al-Insan Al-Kamil* (the perfect human being).

## B. The Purpose of Children's Education in Islam

In general, the ultimate goal of education is to produce humans who follow the commands of Allah SWT. This is in line with the creation of humans on earth, as Allah SWT:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ٥٦

Meaning: *"And I did not create the jinn and mankind but that they should serve Me."* (Q.S Al-Dzariyat: 56)

In a narrower sense, worship is an individual religious activity or ritual, not a form of servitude. This task is accomplished by performing sincere prayers for the pleasure of Allah. Worship in a broad sense, on the other hand, is the inclusion of religious values into all human actions, thoughts, and attitudes, as well as the practice of all aspects of human life with the intent and purpose of devotion to God while living in this world. We live our daily lives in this world to seek the pleasure of Allah Swt.

Ibn Ashur emphasizes that humans need to know their Lord while living and carrying out their duties on this earth. He does not like it if anyone does not know him<sup>1</sup>. Another purpose for which man was created, apart from being a servant of God, is to serve the purpose of education. Man is also destined to be a caliph. Al-Syaibani argues that the ultimate goal of Islamic education is to prepare for the hereafter<sup>2</sup>. And maximizing the *fitrah* of learners both in terms of physical, spirit, intellectual and will dynamically is the ultimate goal that must be achieved, so that they become whole. So that they become meaningful individuals and can fulfill their role as *khalifah fil ardh*.<sup>3</sup>

According to Zakiah Darajat, the ultimate goal of education is to return to Allah Swt in a state of surrender to God as a Muslim. Quoting the Word of Allah Swt which meaning: *"O you who believe, fear Allah as truly as you fear Him; and never die except in the state of Islam"* (Q.S. Ali-Imran/3:102).

The above verse explains that the ultimate goal of life is to die in faith. Therefore, the end of education and the ultimate goal of education is death. Therefore, the essence of Islamic education must be based on:

### *1. Building the Value of Servanthood*

Allah SWT created humans with the ultimate purpose of devotion to Him. In other words, humans were created solely to worship and serve God. Understanding this servitude helps individuals realize their limitations, lack of absolute free will, and existence within a divine regulatory framework. The more knowledgeable a Muslim becomes, the more they recognize their vulnerability and dependence on God. A high level of knowledge should lead to greater closeness to and adherence to religious teachings and values.

### *2. Being God's Representative*

Humans are not only tasked with servitude but are also appointed by Allah SWT as His representatives on earth. As *Khalifah fil ardh* (stewards of the earth), humans have a mission to protect and preserve the universe from harm and destruction. They are also responsible for safeguarding nature and utilizing its resources wisely. Therefore, the educational environment—particularly in Islam—bears a great responsibility for the moral and intellectual development of students. Furthermore, Islamic education envisions producing individuals who are both pious and competent, benefiting humanity and the world at large.

### *3. Spreading Compassion*

Islam unequivocally states that the purpose of Allah SWT sending the Prophet Muhammad SAW was to spread mercy throughout the universe. As stated in the Qur'an which meaning "*And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.*" (Q.S. Al-Anbiya: 107). Thus, Islamic education must serve as a source of goodness and virtue for all creation. It should instill in students the concept of compassion, fostering a mindset that avoids blame and misunderstandings. Additionally, Islamic education nurtures individuals who sincerely spread kindness and mercy, whether to fellow Muslims or non-Muslims alike.

### *4. Being an Agent of Moral Perfection*

One of the core missions of Islamic education is to refine and enhance the character and behavior of students. As stated in a *sahih* hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari, "*Indeed, I (Muhammad) was sent to perfect noble character.*"

This hadith underscores that the Prophet Muhammad SAW's mission was to uphold and perfect morality. Therefore, Muslims, as followers of the Prophet, must strive to embody noble character. Islamic education, as a guiding force in character development, must recognize and nurture students' moral values, ensuring they align with the ethical teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

These four principles form the foundation of Islamic educational philosophy. When grounded in the purpose of human creation and divine wisdom, Islamic education leads to a unified and purposeful learning process. In this framework, philosophy is not merely an abstract intellectual pursuit but a practical foundation for Islamic educational movements. As a discipline, it must maintain practical relevance and utility—not in the sense of unrestricted freedom, but within the framework of divine purpose and human responsibility.

### C. Method of Children's Education in Islam

Since the application of Islamic educational law involves many personal issues and social behaviors of learners and educators themselves, when applying this method, educators must ensure that what they teach is acceptable. Good educational theory should be applied to students with the aim of being successful. There are several ways of raising children from an Islamic point of view:

#### 1. Exemplary Method

The exemplary method is that educators take a role in providing good examples to students to be imitated and practiced in everyday life because the example of a teacher has a very big influence in the education of children. Allah SWT has instructed and He is the founder of the incomparable heavenly method that the Messenger sent to convey, someone who has noble qualities in the form of spiritual, moral and intellectual. Allah says:

Meaning: *"Call (people) to the way of your Lord by wisdom and good teaching, and argue with them in a good manner. Verily your Lord, He is the One who knows better who is astray from His way and He is the One who knows better who is guided."* (QS. An-Nahl 16: Verse 125)

Quraish Shihab explains the word *hikmah* (حكمة) from the verse, that *hikmah*/wisdom is the essence of everything, whether in the form of knowledge or action. In addition, wisdom means what when heeded and applied brings benefit and eliminates great harm.

#### 2. Habituation Method

From an Islamic perspective, children are in a state of fitrah (pure, clean and sinless) from birth to adolescence. Fitrah in the Islamic concept is pure monotheism, diversity, or the tendency to believe in the true faith and do good deeds. Therefore, the environment is very important, as well as parents directing the current in their children in a positive direction.

#### 3. Method of Advice (Mau'izhah)

From the point of view of Islamic education, this method refers to those who do nothing but just talk, or those who give advice to others who are encouraged in Islam to do good without doing anything to deviate from the threats of Allah SWT against. From a psychological and methodological point of view, this method is very attractive to students because there are exercises and demonstrations that appeal to many of the students' senses such as their eyes, ears, interests, talents, and concerns.<sup>15</sup>

### D. The Concept of Child Education According to Some Muslim Intellectuals

In Islam, child education is fundamentally a part of Islamic education. The ultimate goal of Islamic education is for individuals to undergo a holistic educational experience that nurtures the development of *Insanul Kamil* (the perfect human being). This implies that devotion to Allah SWT enables individuals to grow both physically and spiritually in a natural and balanced manner. Based on this understanding, children's education in Islam is expected to cultivate students who are consistently mindful of and practice their relationship with Allah SWT and

others, serving both themselves and their communities. Furthermore, students are encouraged to carry their good deeds from this world into the hereafter.

Furthermore, child education in Islam can be seen through the views of Muslim figures such as:

#### 1. Al Ghazali

Imam Al-Ghazali's full name is Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali (450H/1058M). According to him, one of the most significant groups concerned with education is the Sufistic community, as they believe education shapes a person's lifestyle and way of thinking. Regarding education, Imam Al-Ghazali leans toward an empirical understanding, emphasizing that education has a profound impact on children and learners.

Imam Al-Ghazali argued that children, at birth, are not significantly influenced by genetics, except to a minimal degree. Therefore, education, environment, and society play crucial roles in shaping a child's characteristics. In his view, children rely on their parents to nurture their pure hearts, which he likens to a precious and simple gem, untainted by any external influence.

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, the primary purpose of child education in Islam is to bring individuals closer to Allah, rather than to seek status, glory, courage, or wealth. If education is pursued for reasons other than drawing closer to Allah (SWT), it can lead to jealousy, hatred, and even hostility. Imam Al-Ghazali cited the words of Allah in Surah Al-Hadid (57:20), where Allah (SWT) says:

*"Behold, the life of this world is but play and amusement, adornment and boasting among yourselves, and competing in wealth and offspring—like rain whose growth amazes the farmers, then it dries up and turns yellow before withering away. And in the Hereafter, there is severe punishment, as well as forgiveness from Allah and His pleasure. And the life of this world is nothing but a deceiving pleasure."* (Q.S. Al-Hadid: 20).

#### 2. Al-Qabisi

Al-Qabisi was one of the leading jurists, hadith scholars, and experts in Islamic education. His full name was Abu Hasan Ali bin Muhammad bin Khalaf al-Qabisi. He was born in the year 224 H or in the month of Rajab on May 13, 1936 AD, in the city of Qairawan. He passed away on 3 Rabiul Awwal 403 H, corresponding to October 23, 1012 AD. Al-Qabisi, an expert in education who focused on children's education, was deeply concerned about the educational practices of children, which were primarily conducted in *Kuttab* institutions. According to him, both parents are responsible for raising their children as soon as they begin to speak fluently. When a child reaches the age of *mukallaf* (accountability in Islamic law), they should be required to learn and perform prayers and other religious obligations. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

*"Command your children to pray at the age of seven and discipline them at the age of ten (if they fail to pray)."*

Based on this hadith, it can be understood that Islamic education primarily begins at home, while education in *Kuttab* and other institutions serves as an extension of the foundation laid by parents. According to Al-Qabisi, the primary purpose of education is to develop the

character of children and learners in accordance with Islamic values through structured education and teaching. He also emphasized that education aims to cultivate moral competence, instill a love for religion, nurture obedience to its teachings, and foster a soul that aligns with true religious values.

Furthermore, Al-Qabisi strongly advocated for education that equips children and students with practical skills and abilities necessary for earning a living. To achieve these educational goals, he stressed the importance of a learning system that is genuinely suitable for children and students. He also highlighted the need for an educational system that operates democratically and is centered on the interests and needs of students (*child-oriented*).

### 3. Ibnu Sina

Ibnu Sina's full name is Abu Ali al-Husein bin Abdullah al-Hasan bin Ali bin Sina. He was born in 370 H in the village of Afsyanah near Bukhara, in the Central Asian region, and passed away in 428 H (1038 AD) in Hamadan at the age of 57. When discussing education, Ibn Sina is recognized as one of the leading scholars in the field, particularly in Islamic education. Therefore, it is not surprising that many modern educational concepts are influenced by his ideas. In other words, Ibn Sina is among the philosophers who have had a significant impact on education, alongside figures such as Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas.

In his philosophical reflections on education, Ibn Sina argues that the primary goal of education is to help students fully develop their physical, intellectual, and moral potential. He states, "I say it should be directed to develop." Thus, a child's potential is nurtured to become a complete and well-rounded human being (*insan al-kamil*). Ibn Sina emphasizes that children's education should be based on the fundamental concept of *insan al-kamil*, where individuals develop all their potential in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

With this objective in mind, Ibn Sina appears to anticipate that graduates of educational institutions should always be prepared to enter the workforce with the necessary expertise. Essentially, the purpose of education, as formulated by Ibn Sina, is to produce a perfect human being (*insan al-kamil*) while also equipping individuals with vocational skills for employment. In other words, Ibn Sina defines two educational objectives: one that is universal and another that is specific.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded children's education, from the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, is not solely focused on cognitive development but also encompasses moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes the importance of character building, which is rooted in religious values, morals, and piety to Allah. Every child is an individual who has not yet reached full maturity and, therefore, requires guidance and training, particularly from adults—commonly referred to as "educators"—with the aim of fostering better behavior and wisdom. In Islam, children's education is based on the principle that every individual possesses the potential to grow and develop, provided they receive proper guidance from parents and educators. Parents are entrusted as the primary and most influential educators, responsible for setting a good example and instilling values aligned



with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Islamic educational philosophy also stresses the importance of balancing worldly and *ukhrawi* (hereafter-related) aspects in education, ensuring that children are not only academically successful but also develop strong spiritual awareness and a sense of social responsibility. Education should nurture children's intellectual growth while simultaneously fostering responsibility, fairness, and empathy toward others. Overall, Islamic educational philosophy views children's education as a comprehensive process that involves moral formation, the internalization of religious values, and preparation for both life in this world and the hereafter.

## REFERENCES

- Abuddin, Nata. (1997). "Filsafat Pendidikan Islam." Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu
- Anam, K., & Amri, A. (2020). Pendidik dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam. *Akademika*, 16(1).
- Baharuddin, I. (n.d.). *Hakikat Peserta Didik Perspektif Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*.
- Bustami A. Gani (ed.), *Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya Jilid V*, (Yogyakarta: PT. Dana Bhakti Wakaf, 1990), h. 503-504.
- Fadriati, *Pemikiran Tokoh Pendidikan Islam (Klasik dan kontemporer), dalam jurnal Al-Manar : "Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam" Vol. 11, No. 2, 2022.*
- Hufron, *"Konsep Pendidikan Islam Dalam Kajian Tokoh ( Studi Pemikiran Al Qabisi )." dalam jurnal Al-Manar : "Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam" Vol. 11, No. 2, 2022.*
- Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyah, Miftah Dar As- Saadah: Kunci Surga, terj, Abdul Matin dan Salim Rusydi Cahyono, (solo; Tiga Serangkai, 2009), hlm.283
- Isnaini, M. (2015). Konsep Pendidikan Anak Dalam Perspektif Para Ahli Pendidikan Islam Dan Barat: Analisis Komparasi.
- Jalaluddin, (1996) "Filsafat Pendidikan Islam", (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada).
- Jamaluddin Didin, (2013) Paradigma Pendidikan Anak Dalam Islam (Bandung: Pustaka Setia)
- Masykur H Mansyur, "Tujuan Pendidikan Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Wahana Karya Ilmiah Pascasarjana (S2) PAI Unsika* 4, no. 2 (2020).
- Maharani, D. (1970). Pendidikan Anak Perspektif Psikologi dan Pendidikan Islam. *IQ (Ilmu Al-quran): Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 1(01), 38–60. <https://doi.org/10.37542/iq.v1i01.5>
- Musaddad Harahap, *Esensi Peserta Didik dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam*, dalam *Jurnal Al-Thariqah* Vol. 1, No. 2.
- Muslimin & Hosaini. (2019). Konsep Pendidikan Anak Menurut Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits. *Edupeia*, 4(1), 67–75. <https://doi.org/10.35316/edupedia.v4i1.527>
- Mustaghfiroh, H. (2015). Rekonstruksi Filsafat Pendidikan Islam (Mengembalikan Tujuan Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Tujuan Penciptaan Dan Tujuan Risalah). *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v10i1.786>
- Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an Volume 7*, (Ciputat: Lentera Hati, 2007), cet. VIII.
- Sormin, D., Rahmayanti, M., Pasaribu, M., & Aslamiyah, R. (2020). *Konsep Pendidikan dalam Perspektif Pemikiran Ibnu Sina*. 5(1).
- Smith, H., Ismail, R., & Machmud, N. (2023). Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Dalam Perspektif Filsafat

- Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 9(4), 184-190. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7678382>
- Syafrida Siregar, L. Y. (2017). Pendidikan Anak Dalam Islam. *Bunayya : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 1(2), 16. <https://doi.org/10.22373/bunayya.v1i2.2033>