

## THE ROLE OF TASAWUF EDUCATION IN CHARACTER FORMATION AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

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**Abstract:** Sufism education is one of the approaches in Islam that emphasizes the formation of morals and spiritual strengthening through the process of purifying the soul (tazkiyatun nafs). This study aims to examine the role of Sufism education in the formation of character and individual spiritual intelligence. The method used is qualitative research with a descriptive-analytical approach, through literature studies of classical and modern works from scholars, as well as theories of character education and spiritual intelligence.

The results of the study indicate that Sufism education plays a significant role in forming the character of individuals with noble morals, such as honesty, patience, and empathy. In addition, Sufism education also increases spiritual intelligence by teaching awareness of the purpose of life, relationship with the Creator, and the ability to overcome life's challenges with spiritual values. Thus, the integration of Sufism education into the modern education system can be a solution to overcome various moral and spiritual problems in human life.

**Keywords:** Sufism education, character formation, spiritual intelligence, tazkiyatun nafs, Islamic education

### Introduction

Moral and spiritual crisis is one of the main challenges in the modern era. Behavior Deviant behavior such as corruption, hedonism, individualism, and violence often dominate people's lives. This shows the degradation of noble values that should be guidelines in human life. In this context, education plays an important role as a means to form individuals with noble characters and high spiritual intelligence.

Sufism education, as part of the Islamic tradition, offers a relevant approach to address these challenges. Sufism emphasizes the purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs), control of lust, and a deep relationship with Allah SWT. The values taught in Sufism, such as sincerity, patience, tawakal, and love, contribute significantly to the formation of a solid character and the strengthening of the individual's spiritual dimension.

This view is supported by Al-Ghazali, who stated that the goal of Sufism education is to form a person with noble character and a harmonious relationship with his God. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah also emphasized that Sufism helps individuals achieve spiritual maturity through the process of mujahadah (struggle against lust) and riyadhah (spiritual training).

In addition, the concept of spiritual intelligence introduced by Zohar and Marshall states that spiritual intelligence (Spiritual Quotient/SQ) plays an important role in helping individuals understand the meaning of life, the purpose of existence, and overcome life's challenges with wisdom. This is relevant to Sufism education, which aims to build deep spiritual awareness.

In Indonesia, the implementation of Sufism education can be a solution in building a society with character and high spiritual intelligence. Through the integration of Sufism values in the education curriculum, it is hoped that the younger generation will be able to internalize moral and spiritual values that are the basis of life. Therefore, research on the

role of Sufism education in character building and spiritual intelligence is important to provide a theoretical and practical basis in overcoming the moral and spiritual challenges of society.

Education has a strategic role in shaping human character and spiritual intelligence. In the midst of globalization, moral and spiritual crisis is one of the major challenges faced by modern society. The values of materialism, hedonism, and individualism often dominate thought patterns and behavior, resulting in moral degradation that has an impact on individual and social life. In this context, Sufism education becomes relevant as an alternative to forming noble characters and increasing spiritual intelligence.

Sufism, as an esoteric dimension in Islam, emphasizes the purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs), control of lust, and a deep relationship with the Creator. Sufism values such as sincerity, patience, tawakal, and compassion contribute to forming individuals who have high moral and spiritual awareness. Sufism education not only forms character, but also increases spiritual intelligence which plays a role in understanding the meaning of life and facing challenges with wisdom.

This study aims to explore the role of Sufism education in character building and spiritual intelligence. By analyzing the views of experts and related literature, this study provides an in-depth understanding of how Sufism education can be integrated into the modern education system to create individuals who are morally, emotionally, and spiritually balanced.

#### Experts' Theories

##### 1. Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* explains that Sufism is a path to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter through purification of the heart and control of lust. Sufism education according to Al-Ghazali aims to form noble morals by instilling values such as sincerity, patience, and surrender. These values are the basis for the formation of strong character and high spiritual intelligence.

##### 2. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

Ibn Qayyim stated that Sufism focuses on establishing a harmonious relationship between humans and Allah. In his work *Madarij al-Salikin*, he emphasized that Sufism education involves a process of perfecting morals through an approach of love for Allah (mahabbah), fear of Him (khauf), and hope in His mercy (raja'). This helps individuals in building positive character and deep spiritual intelligence.

##### 3. Thomas Lickona

In *Educating for Character*, Lickona states that character education is the process of forming individuals with values such as responsibility, honesty, and empathy. Sufism education is relevant to this concept because Sufism values teach humans to have balanced moral and spiritual integrity.

##### 4. Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall

The concept of spiritual intelligence (Spiritual Quotient/SQ) introduced by Zohar and Marshall explains that spiritual intelligence is the ability to give meaning and value to life. Sufism education, which teaches humans to understand the purpose of life and draw closer to Allah, supports the development of this spiritual intelligence.

##### 5. Howard Gardner

Gardner, in his theory of Multiple Intelligences, proposed existential intelligence that focuses on understanding deep questions about life and existence. Sufism education can enhance this intelligence by helping individuals understand the meaning of life through a spiritual approach.

##### 6. M. Quraish Shihab

According to M. Quraish Shihab, spiritual education based on Sufism provides a strong moral and ethical foundation for individuals. He emphasized the importance of education that touches the inner dimension of humans to create individuals who have spiritual awareness and harmonious relationships with God and others.

#### 7. Nasruddin Razak

Sufism, according to Nasruddin Razak, is a process of integration between the worldly and spiritual dimensions of humans. Sufism education provides guidance for living a balanced and meaningful life, thereby contributing to the formation of character and spiritual intelligence.

The above theories provide a strong basis for understanding how Sufism education can contribute significantly to forming individuals with noble character and high spiritual intelligence.

### **Literature Review**

The theoretical study in this study discusses several main concepts that form the basis for understanding the role of Sufism education in character formation and spiritual intelligence. Several theories that are relevant to this theme include Sufism education, character, and spiritual intelligence. This study aims to connect the thoughts of experts in the field, thus providing a strong theoretical framework for research.

#### **Sufism Education**

Sufism education is an approach in Islamic education that emphasizes cleansing the soul and strengthening the spiritual through purification of the heart (*tazkiyatun nafs*), control of lust, and a deeper relationship with Allah SWT. This education focuses on the formation of individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have high moral and spiritual awareness. Several Sufism experts provide in-depth views on the goals and practices of Sufism education, which then become the basis for the formation of character and spiritual intelligence.

Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) in his work *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* emphasized that Sufism is a path to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter through purification of the soul. Sufism teaches control of lust, so that individual morals become more noble and bring themselves closer to Allah. Sufism education, according to Al-Ghazali, is an education that emphasizes the transformation of the soul through deep worship practices and strengthening personal ethics.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292-1350) in *Madarij al-Salikin* taught that Sufism is an effort to achieve closeness to Allah through spiritual stages such as *mujahadah* (struggle to refrain from worldly temptations) and *riyadhah* (spiritual practice). Sufism education in Ibn Qayyim's perspective focuses on inner improvement and integration between worldly life and the afterlife.

#### **Character Building**

Character formation refers to the process of developing moral and ethical values that shape an individual's behavior in everyday life. In education, character formation is one of the main goals, where individuals are expected to internalize positive values that will guide them in social life.

Thomas Lickona in his book *Educating for Character* (1991) asserts that character formation involves three main components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Lickona proposes that character education be implemented in the curriculum to develop values such as honesty, empathy, and responsibility, which are in line with the principles taught in Sufism.

Seligman & Peterson in *Character Strengths and Virtues* (2004) discuss character strengths that are important for individual development, such as courage, wisdom, and humanity. Sufism education teaches these values, especially through self-control and relationship with Allah, which in turn shape the individual's character to be better and more focused.

### **Spiritual Intelligence**

Spiritual intelligence is the ability of an individual to overcome life's challenges wisely, give meaning to life, and build deeper relationships with God and others. In Sufism education, spiritual intelligence is not only related to religious knowledge, but also to the practice of spiritual values in everyday life.

Danah Zohar & Ian Marshall in *Spiritual Intelligence: The Ultimate Intelligence* (2000) introduce the concept of spiritual intelligence (Spiritual Quotient, SQ), which they define as the ability to give meaning to life, understand the purpose of life, and overcome challenges with wisdom. Sufism education focuses on the formation of this spiritual intelligence, by helping individuals to be more sensitive to the purpose of life and their closeness to God.

Howard Gardner in his theory of Multiple Intelligences states that one form of intelligence is existential intelligence, which focuses on deep questions about life and existence. Sufism education, by teaching individuals to reflect and seek meaning in life, supports the development of this existential intelligence.

M. Quraish Shihab emphasized that spiritual intelligence is an integral part of Islamic education. In his book *Membumikan Al-Qur'an* (1994), he stated that Sufism education teaches individuals to have high spiritual awareness, which helps them to live their lives more wisely and meaningfully.

#### **Integration of Sufism Education in Character Formation and Spiritual Intelligence**

Sufism education has a great contribution in shaping the character and spiritual intelligence of individuals. Through the Sufism approach, individuals are taught to have high moral and spiritual awareness, which is very important in facing the challenges of life in the modern world.

*The Process of Purifying the Soul: Purifying the soul (tazkiyatun nafs)* in Sufism teaches individuals to control their lusts, which plays a role in the formation of good morals and noble character (Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim).

*Strengthening Relationship with God: Sufism education deepens the individual's relationship with Allah SWT, which contributes to increasing spiritual intelligence* (Zohar & Marshall, Quraish Shihab).

*Moral and Ethical Values: Moral values in Sufism such as patience, tawakal, and love play a role in the formation of positive character* (Lickona, Seligman & Peterson). Thus, Sufism education not only shapes individual character, but also increases spiritual intelligence, which helps individuals live more meaningful and ethical lives.

### **Method**

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to explore the role of Sufism education in character formation and spiritual intelligence. The following are the stages in the study:

#### **1. Qualitative Approach**

Qualitative research is used to deeply understand the concept of Sufism education, character formation, and spiritual intelligence based on the views of experts, literature, and related documents.

#### **2. Data collection**

Literature Study: Collecting data from books, journals, scientific articles, and classic works of scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim, and M. Quraish Shihab.

Interviews (if field research is conducted): Involving religious scholars, religious teachers, or educational figures to obtain views on the application of Sufism in education.

### 3. Data analysis

Descriptive-Analytical: The data obtained were analyzed in depth to understand the relevance of Sufism education in shaping the character and spiritual intelligence of individuals.

Thematic Categorization: Dividing data into main themes, such as the concept of Sufism, character formation, and spiritual intelligence.

### 4. Data Validity

Data validity is maintained through source triangulation (comparing various literature) and discussions with Sufism experts and educators.

## Results and Discussion

The following are theories from several experts that are relevant to the theme "The Role of Sufism Education in Character Formation and Spiritual Intelligence":

### 1. Theory of Sufism Education

Al-Ghazali: In his works such as *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of purification of the heart (*tazkiyatun nafs*) and control of lust in Sufism education. According to him, Sufism education helps shape the character of individuals with noble morals because Sufism teaches values such as sincerity, patience, and asceticism. This provides a solid foundation for spiritual intelligence because a person is trained to draw closer to Allah.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: Sufism according to Ibnu Qayyim focuses on perfecting morals through an intense relationship with Allah. Sufism education provides a way to understand the wisdom behind every event, thereby creating deep spiritual intelligence.

### 2. Character Formation Theory

Thomas Lickona: In his book *Educating for Character*, Lickona explains that character building is the process of building core values such as respect, responsibility, and justice. Sufism education contributes to this character building by instilling noble spiritual and moral values.

Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson: In their theory of *Character Strengths and Virtues*, they state that positive character traits such as integrity, empathy, and wisdom can be formed through an educational process that emphasizes virtues. Sufism education supports this theory by teaching the appreciation of noble values in everyday life.

### 3. Spiritual Intelligence Theory

Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall: In their book *Spiritual Intelligence: The Ultimate Intelligence*, Zohar and Marshall explain that spiritual intelligence (SQ) is a person's ability to give deep meaning to his life, and to overcome challenges with spiritual values. Sufism education plays an important role in increasing this spiritual intelligence by teaching awareness of the purpose of life and relationship with Allah.

Howard Gardner: In his theory of *Multiple Intelligences*, Gardner mentions the potential for existential intelligence that focuses on deep questions about the meaning of life. Sufism education helps strengthen this intelligence by instilling an awareness of the individual's relationship with the Creator.

### 4. The Importance of Integrating Sufism in Education

Nasruddin Razak: According to him, Sufism is a path of education that is able to integrate the spiritual and physical dimensions of humans. Sufism education guides humans

to live a life that is balanced between worldly and hereafter needs, thus creating individuals with strong character and spiritual intelligence.

M. Quraish Shihab: In his view, spiritual education such as Sufism is a medium to bring humans closer to Allah. Sufism trains individuals to have self-awareness, honesty, and compassion, which are the foundation for character building and spiritual intelligence. Relevance to Character Building and Spiritual Intelligence

Sufism education serves as a means to educate humans to have noble morals, self-control, and spiritual awareness. This is in line with the need for character formation in modern life which is often influenced by materialistic values. By focusing on values such as patience, gratitude, and sincerity, Sufism builds spiritual intelligence that helps individuals to understand and live life meaningfully. This discussion can be used as a basis for explaining the relationship between Sufism, character, and spiritual intelligence in academic or practical studies.

### Conclusion

Sufism education plays an important role in the formation of character and spiritual intelligence of individuals. Through the process of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), Sufism education is able to instill deep moral and spiritual values such as sincerity, patience, and compassion. These values are the basis for the formation of a character with integrity, responsibility, and empathy for others.

In addition, Sufism helps to increase spiritual intelligence by teaching humans to understand the purpose of life, establish a close relationship with the Creator, and face life's challenges with wisdom. Thus, the integration of Sufism education in the learning system becomes relevant to create individuals who are emotionally, morally, and spiritually balanced.

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