



## Strengthening Character Education for Gen Z in the Era of Disruption through a Personal-Constructive Sufi Approach

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### Abstract

**Keywords:**

Character  
Education; Gen Z;  
Disruption Era;  
Personal-  
Constructive; Sufi

This study aims to find out how educational institutions prepare strategies and concepts for their students in the current era of disruption, especially in strengthening character formation in Generation Z. An era that offers acceleration in various areas of life, one of them is acceleration in uprooting the established foundations of life. The research method used in this research is library research with an analytical descriptive approach. The results of this study are that education must be able to present linear strategies and concepts with the characteristics of the Z-generation. One of these concepts is through a personal-constructive approach in strengthening the character education of students, especially the Z-generation. This approach was carried out as the Sufis in ancient times tried to improve their morals in totality before God and humans, namely through self-awareness of their spiritual potential and concrete actions that focused on fundamental things such as repentance, patience, sincerity, etc.

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### Abstrak:

**Kata Kunci:**

Pendidikan Karakte;  
Generasi-Z; Era  
Disrupsi; Personal-  
Konstruktif; Sufi.

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana lembaga pendidikan menyiapkan strategi dan konsep-konsep bagi peserta didiknya di era disrupsi seperti yang terjadi sekarang ini khususnya dalam memperkuat pembentukan karakter pada generasi-Z. Sebuah era yang menawarkan percepatan di berbagai bidang kehidupan, namun juga percepatan dalam mencerabut pondasi-pondasi kehidupan yang telah mapan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah library research dengan pendekatan deskriptif analitis. Hasil penelitian ini adalah pendidikan harus mampu menghadirkan strategi dan konsep yang linier dengan ciri khas dari generasi-Z. Salah satu konsep tersebut adalah melalui pendekatan personal-konstruktif dalam*

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*menguatkan pendidikan karakter peserta didik khususnya generasi-Z. Pendekatan ini dilakukan sebagaimana para Sufi di zaman dahulu berusaha memperbaiki akhlak dirinya secara totalitas di hadapan Tuhan maupun manusia yaitu melalui penyadaran diri akan potensi ruhaniah yang dimilikinya dan tindakan-tindakan nyata yang terfokus pada hal-hal yang bersifat fundamental seperti taubat, sabar, ikhlas, dan lain sebagainya.*

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## 1. Introduction

Currently the world is in an era of disruption, a period where many things change unexpectedly that cannot be avoided and can occur in various aspects so that people need to be open to technological developments in this era so as not to be left behind in all fields, especially in the field of education.<sup>1</sup> In the field of education, disruptive changes can be seen from the change in the way of teaching that was initially centered on the teacher, now centered on students and making the teacher's role which was originally the only source of information has changed slightly because at this time students are easier to access information on the internet.<sup>2</sup>

The ease of accessing the internet unfortunately does not always have a positive impact because in fact today there are many negative impacts from internet use such as cybercrime, lack of socialization, to pornography.<sup>3</sup> Especially at this time the Corona Virus or Covid-19 is hitting various countries in the world, including Indonesia, making President Joko Widodo take steps to prevent the spread of the virus by urging the Indonesian people to limit activities outside the home, even school activities are carried out at home.<sup>4</sup> Distance learning makes many students inevitably exposed to more by the internet but makes the learning process blurry because nowadays it is easier to access various sites on the internet, not only sites that support learning but also sites that should not be accessed that can be one of the causes of moral degradation or can be called character decline.

At this moment in the mass media, news about deviant behavior has even been shown by elementary school students such as bullying, rape, sexual harassment, drug use, drunkenness, and smoking in the school environment.<sup>5&6</sup> The results of a survey conducted in Afriyanto and Heru's research (2019) at

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<sup>1</sup> Lubis, F, 'Education in the Disruption Era', *Britain International of Linguistics, Arts and Education (BioLAE) Journal*, 1.2 (2019), 183–88.

<sup>2</sup> Ekasari dkk, 'Analisis Dampak Disrupsi Pendidikan Era Revolusi Industri 4.0', *Jurnal Ecopreneur*.12, 4.1 (2021), 110–21.

<sup>3</sup> Vitria, N 'Pengaruh Internet Bagi Siswa-Siswi SMA Negeri 2 Padang', *Science, Engineering, Education, and Development Studies (SEEDS): Conference Series*, 4.2 (2020), 71–74.

<sup>4</sup> Ihsanuddin, 'Jokowi: Kerja Dari Rumah, Belajar Dari Rumah, Ibadah Di Rumah Perlu Digencarkan', *Kompas.Com*, March 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Ma'rufah et al., (2020). Degradasi Moral Sebagai Dampak Kejahatan Siber Pada Generasi Millenial di Indonesia. *NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, 7(1), 191–201.

<sup>6</sup> Prihatmojo and Badawi, 'Pendidikan Karakter Di Sekolah Dasar Mencegah Degradasi Moral Di Era 4.0', *DWIJA CENDEKIA: Jurnal Riset Pedagogik*, 4.1 (2020), 142–52

SMP Negeri 1 Colomadu in the 2018/2019 academic year which showed that there were still around 58% of students had poor manners, both in terms of polite behavior in speaking (abusive words) or misbehave like spitting everywhere.<sup>7</sup> Whereas success is not only measured by how much knowledge and technical skills (hard skills) an individual has, but is also measured by the skills to manage oneself and others (soft skills) such as character.<sup>8</sup> Character itself can be interpreted as good values such as knowledge of the value of goodness, the desire to do good things, and things that will have a good impact on the environment, which is manifested in the form of behavior.<sup>9</sup> The many phenomena of deviant behavior that occur in these students are clear evidence that there has been a setback in the implementation of education, especially in developing the character of students.<sup>10</sup>

Generation Z is one of the generations who are currently in the learning process at school and in the future will replace the position of the millennial generation. This condition is a very new challenge, especially for the world of education, where they must prepare new concepts and ways to manage them so that the potential within them is able to develop properly. As a generation that grew up with the internet, generation Z is impossible to separate from the internet because they spend most of their time accessing the internet, even with the many applications for communicating at this time, it makes communication behavior change from being interactive to passive and makes generation Z reduce interaction significantly. face to face.<sup>11&12</sup> This excessive use of the internet also makes generation Z often experience Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) which in turn makes them increasingly dependent on the internet.<sup>13</sup> Whereas excessive internet use will change family relationships, change daily routines, social interactions, can lead to conflict, and decrease individual character.<sup>14&15</sup>

Education must continue to improve and synergize with various other fields to deal with increasingly complex phenomena and, moreover, lead to the uprooting of human values as a whole. Education must be able to restore human identity as a whole so that they can become creatures that are truly beneficial to themselves and the community, including the surrounding environment. Generation Z needs to get the right mentoring concept and strategy. Meanwhile,

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<sup>7</sup> Afriyanto, F., & Heru, H. (2019). Hubungan Antara Keteladanan Guru Bk Dengan Perilaku Sopan Santun Siswa Kelas Viii D Smp Negeri 1 Colomadu Tahun Pelajaran 2018/2019. *Jurnal Medi Kons*, 5(2), 50–58.

<sup>8</sup> Bahri, S 'Dalam Mengatasi Krisis Moral Di', *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 03.01 (2015), 57–76.

<sup>9</sup> Afriana, 'Analysis of Students' Perspective Toward Implementation of Character Education', *Journal of English Education*, 4.2 (2018), 76–92.

<sup>10</sup> Djuanda, I 'Implementasi Evaluasi Program Pendidikan Karakter Model CIPP (Context, Input, Process and Output', *Al Amin: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Dan Budaya Islam*, 3.1 (2020), 37–53.

<sup>11</sup> Youarti & Hidayah, 'Perilaku Phubbing Sebagai Karakter Remaja Generasi Z', *Jurnal Fokus Konseling*, 4.1 (2018), 143–52.

<sup>12</sup> Zis et al. (2021). Perubahan Perilaku Komunikasi Generasi Milenial dan Generasi Z di Era Digital. *Satwika : Kajian Ilmu Budaya Dan Perubahan Sosial*, 5(1), 69–87.

<sup>13</sup> Seemiller & Grace, *Generation Z Goes to College 1* (Jossey-Bass Publisher, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Luncana Faridhoh Sasmito, 'Pendidikan Karakter Untuk Menyelamatkan Peserta Didik Dalam Keterpurukan Globalisasi', *Jurnal Ilmiah Mitra Swara Ganesha*, 4.1 (2017), 127–31.

<sup>15</sup> Yalçı, İ., Burhan, Ö., Özmaden, M., & Yağmur, R. (2020). Effect of Smartphone Addiction on Loneliness Levels and Academic Achievement of Z Generation. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 7(1), 208–214.

religion in this case has a philosophical point of view that is able to restore human identity and develop the potential for positive characters in him.

## 2. Methods

The method used is library research with analytical descriptive approach. This method is expected to be able to find new concepts and strategies for character education from the latest literature, including its relationship to the ongoing movement of the times and generations. The primary sources used are the books of the scholars related to the nature of human identity, and books related to Sufism. Meanwhile, the secondary sources are the literature of journals related to character education, gen Z and the era of disruption.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Education itself is a very important aspect for humans, because with education, humans can have good knowledge, attitudes, and manners.<sup>16</sup> Education is not only about academics such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, because education also includes character education that can destroy mental blocks or ways of thinking that actually only prevent a person from stepping towards success.<sup>17</sup> Character education is a program in the form of inculcating character values to students in the form of knowledge, values, and character, which aims to shape the personality of students in accordance with religious norms and every item of Pancasila, and so that students can think intelligently, be moral, and do something good. good, which is beneficial for himself, his family, and society.<sup>18</sup>

Character education can also be interpreted as a process to develop value education which is not only limited to the level that children can distinguish right or wrong, but until children are able to remember and understand the character lessons given, so that children will get used to doing good deeds in their lives daily.<sup>19</sup> This is in accordance with the purpose of character education itself which is basically to form a nation that is strong, has noble character, is competitive, has high tolerance, is moral, has a spirit of mutual cooperation, develops dynamically, is patriotic, oriented to science and technology but is still inspired by faith and piety to God Almighty.<sup>20</sup>

In Indonesia itself, character education has been running like other countries, but unfortunately the results of character education implemented in Indonesia are still far behind from other countries because at this time there are still many Indonesian people who prioritize the academic field and pay less attention to the character of students even though the character education is still very high. also as important as academics.<sup>21&22</sup> Low character education can lead

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<sup>16</sup> Alpian et al., 'Pentingnya Pendidikan Bagi Manusia', *Jurnal Buana Pengabdian*, 1.1 (2019), 66–72.

<sup>17</sup> Diananda, 'Urgensi Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Pembentukan Konsep Diri Anak', *ISTIGHNA*, 1.2 (2018), 1–21.

<sup>18</sup> Putra, 'Building Character Education Through The Civilization Nations Children', *The Kalimantan Social Studies Journal*, 1.1 (2019), 12–17.

<sup>19</sup> Hendayani, M., 'Problematika Pengembangan Karakter Peserta Didik Di Era 4.0', *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 7.2 (2019), 183.

<sup>20</sup> Zaman, B., 'Urgensi Pendidikan Karakter Yang Sesuai Dengan Falsafah Bangsa Indonesia', *Kajian Pendidikan Islam Dan Studi Islam*, 2.1 (2019), 16–31.

<sup>21</sup> Kalfaris Lalo, 'Menciptakan Generasi Milenial Berkarakter Dengan Pendidikan Karakter Guna Menyongsong Era Globalisasi', *Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*, 12.2 (2018), 68–75.

<sup>22</sup> Prasetyo et al. (2019). Pentingnya Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Keteladanan Guru. *Harmony*, 4(1), 19–32.

to various juvenile delinquencies such as lying, skipping school, stealing, smoking, and drinking.<sup>23</sup> For this reason, teachers, families, and the environment need to work together to strengthen the character of students to prevent juvenile delinquency by not only providing theory but also providing examples because theory alone will not be enough to strengthen student character.<sup>24&25</sup> This is because character education also includes the process of habituation of good behavior so that students can feel, understand, and want to behave well so that good habits are formed.<sup>26</sup> Character education itself is formed through three stages, namely the stage of knowledge, implementation, and habits, where all of these stages must be applied so that character can be formed in accordance with what is expected.<sup>27</sup>

Giving examples in student character education is considered effective enough to foster good habits, where the learning process is carried out by imitating someone so that the resulting behavior is almost similar or even exactly the same as the person being imitated.<sup>28</sup> While the reason teachers, parents, and the environment need to work together to strengthen the character of students is because according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory a person's development can be influenced by the environment that has an impact on behavior, and parents, teachers, and the environment become three components that enter into a subsystem called microsystems in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory where the subsystem is the subsystem closest to the individual so that it has a large enough role in character formation.<sup>29</sup> While the attitude of discipline, religious, hard working, honest, curious, tolerance, creative, independent, democratic, national spirit, communicative, love the homeland, love to read, appreciate achievements, love peace, care for the environment, care for social, and responsibility are character that must be instilled in students in Indonesia.<sup>30</sup>

The many phenomena that show a decline in the character of students at this time and the large role of parents, teachers, and the environment to strengthen the character of these students make character education very necessary to be given to students so that graduates are not only smart in academics but also have good character, In addition, character education is important because character education is considered to be able to solve problems that exist in society, especially problems that indicate moral degradation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Een et al., 'Jenis-Jenis Kenakalan Remaja Dan Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Di Desa Merak Rejo Kecamatan Bawen Kabupaten Semarang', *Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Terapan*, 04.01 (2020), 30–42.

<sup>24</sup> Robiasih et al., 'Character Education Strengthening Model during Learning from Home : Ki Hajar Dewantara ' s Scaffolding Concept', *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Evaluasi Pendidikan*, 25.1 (2021), 25–34.

<sup>25</sup> Singh, B. (2019). Character Education in The 21st Century. *Journal of Social Studies (JSS)*, 15(1), 1–12.

<sup>26</sup> Wisman & Cukei, 'Strategi Dan Model Pendekatan Pendidikan Karakter', *Jurnal Ilmiah Kanderang Tingang*, 11.2 (2020), 264–69.

<sup>27</sup> Yulianan, D 'Pembentukan Karakter Anak Dengan Jiwa Sportif Melalui Pendidikan Jasmani Olahraga Dan Kesehatan Dhedhy', *Jurnal Sportif*, 2.1 (2016), 101–12.

<sup>28</sup> Annur, F. (2016). Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Keagamaan (studi kasus di SDIT Nur Hidayah Surakarta). *At-Tarbawi: Jurnal Kajian Kependidikan Islam*, 1(1), 39–56.

<sup>29</sup> Yulianan & Taryatman, 'Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Kajian Teori Ekologi Perkembangan', *Trihayu: Jurnal Pendidikan Ke-Sd-An*, 7.1 (2020), 1050–1157.

<sup>30</sup> Hendriana & Jacobus, 'Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Di Sekolah Melalui Keteladanan Dan Pembiasaan', *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia*, 1.2 (2016), 25–29.

<sup>31</sup> Saepudin, 'Konsep Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Perspektif Psikologi Dan Islam', *Syntax*

### 3.1 The Importance of Understanding Human Identity in this World

The important position of humans in social institutions is as khalifatu-al-Ardh (leader on earth). This role has been written down in the Qur'an by several editors. Sometimes the mention is written in singular word "khalifa", the plural form (plural) is "khulafa" or with the verb structure "yakhlifuna". The role of humans as caliphs is a gift given by Allah SWT in addition to the form of legitimacy about the glory that humans are the best creatures of His creation, besides that humans have a responsibility for the mandate that has been given, namely by realizing all virtues or bringing benefits to the inhabitants of the earth. Imam ar-Razi in the book *Mafaatih-al Gaib* explains, the appointment of Adam as caliph is an honor from Allah SWT to him.<sup>32</sup> However, the context to Adam does not necessarily limit the broader meaning. According to Imam Ibn Kathir the meaning of the word caliph is not limited to Adam alone but includes humans in general.<sup>33</sup> That is, the title of Caliph and its meaning runs from generation to generation and lasts from generation to generation.

The responsibility of humans as rulers on earth is a matter of maintaining commitment or instilling awareness to bring benefit and eliminate harm that covers all aspects of human life and the universe. This obligation is carried out in order to build a dignified human civilization, of course this goal will be successful if it is realized through a process of understanding and interaction by humans themselves with the elements that cover them. According to Quraish Shihab quoted from Baqir-as-Sadr that the caliphate contained in the Qur'an has three interrelated elements, added a fourth element that is outside, but can determine the meaning of caliphate. Some of these elements are: first, Humans, who in this case are called caliphs. Second, the universe, which is designated by the verse of Al-Baqarah as ardh. Third, the relationship between humans and nature and everything in it, including humans. Fourth, those who are outside are described by the word *inni ja'il khalifat*, namely the one who gives the assignment, namely Allah SWT.<sup>34</sup>

For example, the relationship between humans and the universe is a complementary symbiotic relationship. Humans are required to balance between needs and desires, prioritizing interests above personal ego so that this step can be used as a foothold, especially in relation to maintaining a shared ecosystem. Errors in interpreting needs or inability to control desires can lead to exploitative behavior that leads to disaster. The destruction of nature that is happening at this time is caused by the tendency of humans to dissolve into a hedonistic attitude that ignores human nature as khalifatu-al-Ardh so that nature is solely used as an object of fulfillment of these desires. In other social problems, the human mindset has been fixated on the treasury (things that are material), the orientation of life that leads to worldly matters which then actually gives birth to destructive actions from humans.

The injustice that appears today is part of the problem of spiritual conflict in which humans do not understand the full meaning of humanity. Humans are destined to have a mind that is useful as a center of knowledge, besides that humans are also gifted with lust so that in the context of life they are always faced with an upheaval of the heart. Ibn Sina in *Abduh* explains that lust is a soul (dzat) that is always attached to humans throughout life, but in essence lust does

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*Literate : Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia*, 3.1 (2018), 11–20.

<sup>32</sup> Ar Razi, *Tafsir Mafaatihul-Ghoib*, cet 1, Darul Fikr : 1981, juz 3 hal 174.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir al Quran al 'Adzim*, Dar Toyyibah : 1999, juz 1 hal 216.

<sup>34</sup> Ilyas, 'Manusia Sebagai Khalifah', *Mawa'izh*, 1.7 (2016), 169–95.

not merge with the human body.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, humans should prepare themselves and try to understand the characteristics of these desires. A person's weakness in responding to the inner turmoil due to lust can give birth to decisions that are contrary to God's commands and ultimately result in damage and even destruction.

The dominance of lust in humans is able to eliminate all kinds of goodness, at least that is what Al-Muhasibi said in his book "At Tawahhum".<sup>36</sup> Imam Al Ghazali mentions things things that can cause a human to slip from the path of truth include the world, creatures, devils and lust. These four things are closely related to life.<sup>37</sup> The world is a place where humans stand, its glitter causes humans to be negligent. Creatures and devils always come one after another, whispering temptations and inviting humans become careless. Lust always gives birth to human inner turmoil and then plunges it into disobedience. This is also emphasized by some pious groups that the ugliness of lust will come when humans walk towards immorality or turn on their lust.<sup>38</sup>

Sufis in the world of Sufism do not escape giving serious attention to the mystic problems experienced by humans, because basically all kinds of conflicts, disputes, or other bad things experienced by humans originate from spiritual problems. This means that when someone who experiences this situation is actually experiencing a problem with his heart. For this reason, the Sufis really take care of the condition of their hearts so they are not affected by various liver diseases through self-forging activities in worship, dhikr, or the tazkiyatu-an-nufus process. Al-Muhasibi says about the virtue of cleansing the heart as an effort to reach the pleasure of Allah SWT, bring rewards, and avoid evil.<sup>39</sup>

The practice tradition of the salik is an action based on full awareness and devotion of a person to his Lord. This awareness stems from a firm belief that the real task of humans on earth is to worship Allah. For them, self-forging which is done (mujahadah) by cleansing the heart (tazkiyatu-an-nufus) is part of the process of servitude and worship itself, this is done in order to help a salik to achieve a degree of piety. Consequently, someone who is able to be at the level of taqwa always keeps himself from doing things that are against Allah's commands.

The process of forging human self is not an easy matter, a person must need deep learning because he is always faced with the unstable nature of the heart. In cultivating one's heart, one must undergo a very long experimental process through various practices until it is completely attached to him.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, it is important that we are able to understand well the elements of kebatinan related to the human heart, so that the ideals of achieving a good life and true human nature can be realized.

In the study of Sufism, Sufis often present discussions about the heart. Imam Ghazali who is known as a multidimensional Muslim figure wrote the theme of the heart in his phenomenal work Ihya' Ulum-al-Din as well as in another book Minhaj-al-Abidin. In this context the heart is an important element in human life because the heart is a device created by God as a controller of all actions that will be or are being carried out by humans. But the will is not absolute but is still related to other elements. According to the explanations of the scholars, there are

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<sup>35</sup> Abduh, Hakikatu-al-Insan, Dar al Maarif : 1988, cet ke 2, hal 52.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Muhasibi, Adab-an nufus, Muassasah Kutub As Tsaqafiah : 1991, cet ke 2, hal 35.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Ghazali, Minhaj al 'Abidin, Muassasah ar Risalah: 1989, cet 1, hal 177.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Ghazali, Minhaj al 'Abidin, Muassasah ar Risalah: 1989, cet 1, hal 16.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Muhasibi, Adab-an nufus, Muassasah Kutub As Tsaqafiah : 1991, cet ke 2, hal 35.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Muhasibi, Adab-an nufus,....., hal 28.

several other elements that have a role in influencing the tendency of human actions, including:

### 3.1.1 Intellect (al-'aql)

In the opinion of scholars, reason is in the form of Jauhar, namely the essence of light which was first created by Allah SWT. The form of reason stands alone and is not tied to the human body.<sup>41</sup> Besides being immaterial, reason is also known as a source of knowledge in general and knowledge of its creator in particular. Therefore, the knowledge produced by reason by nature is always related to three things: first, knowledge of the mind that is able to reach its creator, second, knowledge that makes obligations to Allah SWT, and this is related to the existence of lust, third, knowledge of reason that produce something meaningful.

In addition, Imam Ghazali defines reason as two things, first is interpreted as knowledge of everything whose nature is located in the heart. Second, reason as a perception or awareness of knowledge and that is then interpreted as latifah (heart). Furthermore, Imam Ghazali explains the difference between reason and knowledge as different essences by assuming the nature of a pious person, namely the knowledge possessed by a pious person is an essence that is attached to him so that he has knowledge in something.<sup>42</sup> However, Imam Ghazali confirmed that the position of reason and knowledge inherent in a person is located in the heart. This also confirms the existence of a relationship between the mind and the heart in shaping a person's behavioral tendencies. The details of this can be explained that the knowledge of the human mind is a person's ability to observe everything, both right and wrong, that comes to mind, which then takes place in the heart.

### 3.1.2 Spirit (ar-ruh)

The discussion of the spirit has become a matter of debate for scholars because of the lack of information about the nature of the spirit, which then gives rise to various interpretations among them. According to Ibn-al-Qayyim al-Jauzi in Abduh the meaning of the spirit is lust itself, where the spirit is likened to the eye, namely the human senses to see as well as the spirit is the sense of sight for things that are intuitive.<sup>43</sup>

According to Isa Abduh the meaning of spirit contains two contexts related to lust, first the word lust (nafs) is interpreted literally as lust itself, secondly sometimes lust means spirit.<sup>44</sup> But he underlined by placing the spirit as an essence that is not related to body and spirit. He also added that the existence of a spirit in humans is to make it a useful creature, whereas human life without a spirit makes it like an animal and even worse than it. The companions of the Prophet, namely Bilal bin Rabah, interpreted the word spirit as lust, this opinion was based on the statement of the prophet in the hadith.<sup>45</sup> Another conflicting opinion was also conveyed by some hadith and fiqh experts. They said that the spirit is not lust From the narration of Abu Umar it is said that Allah created for humans the form of spirit and lust and if the spirit is identical with good qualities, it is different with lust which is a picture of bad qualities.

<sup>41</sup> Abduh, Hakikatu-al-Insan, Dar al Maarif : 1988, cet ke 2, hal 53.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Ghazali, Ihya' Ulum al Din, Dar ibn Hazm : 2005, cet 1, hal 879.

<sup>43</sup> Abduh, ..., hal 41.

<sup>44</sup> Abduh, ..., hal 43.

<sup>45</sup> Abduh, ..., hal 45.



Imam Ghazali provides a detailed explanation of the spirit, first the spirit is defined as a soft *jism* (*latifah*) located in the cavity of the human heart that flows through sweat then functions all human senses and gives life.<sup>46</sup> This spirit is what moves human life inwardly, it is like a lamp that illuminates every part and corner of the house. The two spirits are *latifahs* which are the source of knowledge from humans, from the spirits we also know about the beginnings of the heart.<sup>47</sup>

From the opinions of the scholars above, we can understand that the meaning of the spirit is very diverse and there is no absolute definition of the spirit, this is because the status of the underlying *hadith* about this spirit is historically located as a *hadeeth hadith*. strong legal provisions. However, it cannot be denied that the existence of the spirit is the source of human life because he is the *Nur Rabbani* created by God for humans.

### **3.1.3 Soul (An-Nafs)**

*Nafsu* (*nafs*) in the Qur'an is more closely interpreted as a character or strength that includes the desire to do something.<sup>48</sup> The human desire to perform a certain action is driven by this lustful desire. Imam Ghazali explains that lust (*nafs*) is a collection of the power of lust from humans and this is associated with all despicable human traits such as envy, lust and others. Lust can also be interpreted as a *latifah* that is owned and perfects human nature. This lust or spirit is changing in humans, namely following one's spiritual condition. Sometimes a person is able to control his lust or destroy his lust in this way which is called "*nafs-al-muthmainnah*", on the contrary when humans struggle against lust and then submit to it then he is called *nafs-al-lawwamah*, while someone who surrenders and submits to lust without any struggle for against him then he is called "*nafs-al-ammarah*".<sup>49</sup>

In the discussion it has been mentioned about the similarity between spirit and lust, some others argue that lust and spirit are two different things. But the majority of scholars are aware that the position of lust in humans can provide benefits or vice versa. Because lust is a person's urge or desire to do something. Humans may be able to control their passions and then do good, or they may not be able to resist the impulses of lust so that they do bad deeds. Human decisions in determining something are influenced by the condition and tranquility of the spirit itself. For the Sufis, achieving *nafs Al muthmainnah* must be done through the self-forging method (*Mujahadatu-an-Nafs*) through *dhikr* or other worship. This process is passed in order to purify the heart (*Tazkiyatu-an-Nufus*) from various liver diseases. One's success in fighting lust will give birth to a calm soul so that all human actions do not go out of the corridor set by Allah. On the other hand, an uneasy mental condition will lead people to behaviors that violate God's provisions.

### **3.1.4 Heart (Al-Qalb)**

The heart is the most important part of humans, especially in relation to human behavior. All human activities are centered and controlled by the heart. In Islam, the heart is related to all aspects of worship, whether spiritual in nature, such as intentions or worship in a physical context (*jawarih*) such as prayer, pilgrimage and so on. In the scope of *muamalah*, all forms of social interaction or transactions such as buying and selling, marriage, accounts payable involve the

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<sup>46</sup> Al-Ghazali, ..., hal 878.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Ghazali, ..., hal 878.

<sup>48</sup> Abduh, ..., hal 58.

<sup>49</sup> Al-Ghazali, ..., hal 878.

heart. In the book *Minhaj-al-'Abidin* by Imam al Ghazali it is explained that the heart is a part of humans that needs to be considered because negligence in processing the heart will bring badness to a person.<sup>50</sup>

Imam Al Ghazali defines the word *qalb* (heart) with two things, first the heart is a heart-shaped flesh located on the left side of the chest. This first meaning is *dhahir* where every human being has an organ called the heart which is located in the left side of the chest cavity. Second, the heart which means *latifah rabbaniyah* where the *latifah* is connected with the heart physically.<sup>51</sup> The bond between the two is the relationship between nature and something that is characterized, so *latifah* is a spiritual attribute that characterizes the heart physically. Another specialty is the heart as the controller of all members of the human body. The heart is like a king who follows all his orders. Therefore, the clarity or dirtiness of the heart will affect human behavior. If his heart is clean then his behavior will also be good, and vice versa.

### 3.2 The Stages of Virtue of the Sufis

According to Al-Ghazali there are 8 stages (*maqamat*). The first is repentance, which includes knowledge, attitude, and action. Knowledge causes a person to know about the dangers of major sins so that it gives birth to knowledge to regret actions by repenting. A person who repents will try with all his heart not to repeat the sin. Second is patience. Someone who is patient can control the power of reason and the power of the soul so as not to do evil. The third is poverty, which is an effort to avoid things that are needed or to be careful in choosing something even though it is a necessity. The fourth is *zuhud*, which means leaving worldly pleasures and hoping for the afterlife. The fifth is trust. After that, a person will be *tawakkal*, meaning to leave all decisions to Allah SWT with all his heart. The sixth is *ma'rifah*, which means knowing about everything that exists from the secrets of Allah and His regulations or getting closer to Allah SWT.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the seven *mahabbah*, meaning love for Allah exceeds love for others. The eighth is *ridha* which according to Siregar means accepting everything that Allah Siregar has bestowed.<sup>53</sup>

An easy example is when humans try to practice the first stage, namely repentance, a Sufi is really trained to control and keep his passions away from actions that harm others or himself.<sup>54</sup> Another example is when humans want something in return for what they have given. The Sufis invite people to practice and get used to "sincere", that is, to try as much as possible not to think at all about what they have given, especially asking to get something in return. In this case basically the Sufis have been far ahead thinking optimistically and not adding to the burden on their minds to remember the gifts they have made. It's very clear that the concept is very good to apply and makes a lot of sense. You can imagine when every gift someone makes they keep on remembering, while the impact that will be received in the future cannot be predicted. These are some examples of the virtues of the Sufis in controlling their various spiritual devices which are unseen or invisible, such as calm or controlled passions, a clean heart

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<sup>50</sup> Al-Ghazali, ..., hal 877.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Ghazali, ..., hal 877.

<sup>52</sup> Zaini, A 'Pemikiran Tasawuf Imam Al-Ghazali', *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf Ahlak Dan Tasawuf*, 2.1 (2016), 146–59.

<sup>53</sup> Syafril, M 'Pemikiran Sufistik Mengenal Biografi Intelektual Imam Al-Ghazali', *Jurnal Syahadah*, V.2 (2017), 1–26.

<sup>54</sup> Mannan, A, Esensi Akhlak Tasawuf di Era Modernisasi, *Jurnal Aqidah-Ta*, IV.1, (2018), 36-56.

and a straight mind. The more humans are able to control these spiritual devices with exercises, then actions before arriving at things that are detrimental/violence can be minimized and prevented to the fullest.<sup>55</sup> Sufi behavior is a representation of spiritual freedom which gives birth to serenity, purification and extraordinary happiness.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.3 Personal-Constructive Approach in Managing Gen Z Characters

Indicators of the success of character education can be seen when someone already knows several aspects such as: (1) knowing something good (knowing the good), where someone already knows his actions are good or bad and whether he will violate the norm or not. (2) liking the truth (loving the good), when someone can be honest. (3) doing good (acting the good), when someone is able to implement what he thinks is right and does not harm others.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the benchmark for educational success can be seen from the formation of students with characteristics such as moral, polite, creative, cultured, religious, and innovative which are applied in their lives.<sup>58</sup>

The hallmark of character education is knowing, loving, and doing good. Educational institutions must from the beginning create a comprehensive framework regarding the level of character from the most basic to the highest, including making a classification of personal and group characters. That way the management of character education will be much better and measurable. Furthermore, Cronbach in Agung writes that good character will be reflected in attitudes, actions, and daily habits. In addition, character is related to personality, beliefs, feelings, and actions. Therefore, changing the character can be started from the smallest lesson.<sup>59</sup>

The smallest lessons can be started from each individual or personal. In social science, an individual or person is a human individual, not a group. From various points of view, humans are complex creatures. Therefore, each person or individual has a different character.<sup>60</sup> One of the characters that can be built by personal is a constructive character. Character is the overall description of each individual. Personal with good character and superior will have a constructive action. This makes a person make efforts to improve and stay away from negative things.<sup>61</sup> In line with this, someone who has constructive thinking will have the awareness to foster, build, and improve. In addition, constructive personal will get used to thinking positively, and not be shackled to the same failures and mistakes. Not only gives birth to constructive thoughts for themselves, but also can influence others or communally.<sup>62</sup> In order to realize a

<sup>55</sup> Setiawan, R, Etika Sufistik (Relevansinya Terhadap Pencegahan Krisis Moral), *Dialogia: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Sosial*, Vol. 17.2, Desember 2019, 281-300.

<sup>56</sup> Saliyo, 'Mencari Makna Hidup Dengan Jalan Sufi', *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak dan Tasawuf*, 2 (1), 2016, 110-128.

<sup>57</sup> Hartati, Y 'Pembentukan Karakter Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam', *Jurnal Pendidikan Profesi Guru Agama Islam*, 1.3 (2021), 335-42.

<sup>58</sup> Andriani et al., 'Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Akidah Akhlak Dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 4 Kabupaten Garut', *Tanzhimuna*, 1.2 (2021), 14-31.

<sup>59</sup> Agung, 'Konsep Pendidikan Karakter Islami: Kajian Epistemologis', *Al-Tarbawi Al-Haditsah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 3.December (2018), 52-70.

<sup>60</sup> Dwiyono, Y., *Perkembangan Peserta Didik*, Yogyakarta: Penerbit Depublish, 2021, hal 18-19.

<sup>61</sup> Susanto, E., *Bagaimana Meraih Kesuksesan Dengan Lebih Mudah, Cepat, Dan Membahagiakan*, Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2011, hal 55.

<sup>62</sup> Eroy, (2016) *Sang Ustadz*, Banten: Bintang Visitama Publisher, hal 189.

constructive personal character, of course the right approach is also needed. However, the characters that have been carried out so far are more group in nature, for example mutual cooperation, tolerance, nationalism, etc. A personal-constructive approach can be the right strategy in developing the characters to be formed. This personal-constructive approach is taken from the special exercises carried out by the Sufis, where they have a very high commitment in implementing the pattern of spiritual improvement step-by-step.

Some stages of spiritual improvement carried out by the Sufis through the path of Sufism. In essence, Sufism is a spiritual attitude that always wants to be close to Allah SWT by spiritual purification and increasing worship, or self-purification with dhikr. In addition, Sufism also has the meaning of self-purification from impurities or physical influences. In the midst of the moral degradation that has occurred recently, the implementation of Sufism can be a way.<sup>63</sup> In general, there are several objectives of implementing Sufism, including: firstly moral development, secondly "ma'rifatullah", thirdly knowing and getting closer to Allah.<sup>64</sup>

Sufism is carried out through an inner approach, which includes maqamat and ahwal. Maqam is doing better habits seriously and striving continuously. While ahwal is an attitude that is obtained as a gift to people who are willed by Allah SWT.<sup>65</sup> There are several steps that can be taken in maqamat, including: First, mujahadah, which is to restrain lust and not indulge in pleasure. The second is riyadloh, namely the continuous practice of the soul, mind and heart or dhikr to perfect oneself. This serves to avoid stress and depression. The third zuhud, namely emptying the heart of worldly or material problems. Zuhud behavior can avoid negative behavior. Zuhud can be done through two stages, namely repentance or returning from sin and wara' or purifying the heart and various limbs. The fourth qona'ah, which is to keep away from feeling dissatisfied or feeling enough about the results that are sought. The fifth is tawakal, namely surrendering to Allah for the actions that have been taken.<sup>66</sup>

A teacher can give a simple example, but the provision of information, knowledge and knowledge must really be given comprehensively. It is functioned so that students are able to digest, process and even practice it independently without having to be asked. The initial level of training and awareness is the starting point for the success of the initial level. After that, then strive at the experimental point which is always repeated based on the commitment of knowledge that has been given and understood from the start. Al Ghazali in Tambak mentions that the most important education is to bring the human heart to "taqarrub ila Allah" through perfection, cleansing, and purification. A teacher should guide them to know God better by purifying students' souls, in addition to sharing knowledge and skills.<sup>67</sup>

The more personalistic character of generation Z, with the unlimited information they get through the internet, makes the personal-constructive approach taken by the Sufis to be the right thing to give to students. Even if it's

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<sup>63</sup> Mannan, 'Esensi Tasawuf Akhlaki Di Era Modernisasi', *Aqidah-Ta: Journal of Aqidah*, 4.1 (2018), 36–56.

<sup>64</sup> Suhayib, (2020), *Hakekat Sufi: Orientasi Sufistik Badiuzzaman Said Nursi*, Yogyakarta: Kalimedia, hal 71-72.

<sup>65</sup> Syukur, 'Sufi Healing: Terapi Dalam Literatur Tasawuf', *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 20.2 (2012), 391–412.

<sup>66</sup> Wahyudi, 'Psikologi Sufi: Tasawuf Sebagai Terapi', *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf Ahlak Dan Tasawuf*, 2018, 387–397.

<sup>67</sup> Tambak, S 'Pemikiran Pendidikan Al-Ghazali', *Jurnal Al-Hikmah*, 8.1 (2011), 73–87.

from a personal step, but the output of the targeted character will have a big impact, not only on themselves but also on the group. When humans are given information and even basic knowledge about their position on earth, including all the potential that exists within them, they will consciously think, then reflect and in the next stage carry out their actions. As one hadith says "Whoever knows himself, will know his Lord". This is evidence that at least when the information and knowledge is able to be digested by the human concerned, then it will be a good barrier to take action at a later stage.

Superior character can be formed through the given moral education. Al-Ghazali argues that good morals are not only related to deeds, ability to do, and knowledge. More than that, moral formation is a process of merging oneself with his soul so that actions are formed in such a way that will adapt to everyday situations. Through this, the character formed in a person will be patent or unchanged. Al-Ghazali also added that moral education is not the ultimate goal given to humans, but a tool that can support humans to achieve the highest truth and support the highest function of the soul. This will provide a way to achieve God's ma'rifat so that humans can achieve happiness in their lives.<sup>68</sup>

Human nature is good. Humans have been equipped by the mind, heart, spirit, and soul by God Almighty to be used in spreading goodness on earth. It is this divine nature that should form one's identity when in the process interacting with the environment it forms a character which eventually takes the form of daily behavior. The more obedience and knowledge humans have, the more clean their hearts will be in their nature. Science, things and deeds become solid foundations that humans must understand, and thus will lead them to become human beings who have an identity.<sup>69</sup> In the end it will put his soul in a calm position.

The explanation of the four elements above should be of concern to humans as caliph fil-al-ardhi. The problem of mysticism that occurs in humans is the effect resulting from a lack of understanding of the nature of human knowing. The Sufi path is the right method to bring humanity back on its straight path. By emphasizing knowledge, understanding, training, and deepening, even though individually as is the characteristic of generation Z, the goal will also be achieved, namely to make him a human figure who understands his position in this universe, so that he is moved to do what is beneficial for himself and others. and environment.

When humans are able to recognize their identity, the essence of humanity as well as their characteristics and functions, at the same time they will become creatures who truly know their God. As a result, it is to carry out the totality of God's teachings as well as possible. He will build a good relationship, not only vertically to his Lord but also horizontally, namely to fellow creatures in this universe. This is also conveyed in a hadith, that "Whoever knows himself, then he will know his Lord."

Education must try to orient itself to activities, tasks that lead students to know their identity, the essence of humanity. In his effort to know, and reach his identity, humans need steps which in this case have been explained by Al-Ghazali there are 8 stages (maqamat). These stages become a series that cannot be separated and when humans want satisfaction and success it requires

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<sup>68</sup> Suryadarma & Haq, 'Pendidikan Akhlak Menurut Imam Al-Ghazali', *Jurnal At-Ta'dib*, 10.2 (2015), 361–81.

<sup>69</sup> Hudaya, A., 2011, Maqam Dalam Perspektif Al-Ghazali. Dekamedia Stain Surakarta, hal 62-65.

a strong commitment.<sup>70</sup> These eight levels can be organized and included in the curriculum of educational institutions, considering that character building is very crucial and the country's problems will be solved if character education can run well.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that generation Z is a generation that has its own character and in the end also requires a linear approach with the characteristics inherent in the generality of the generation Z. The personal-constructive approach by the Sufis has similarities with the generation Z character which in this case can help the generation Z to find their identity again, so that they can become a useful person for themselves and others.

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<sup>70</sup> Munadi, M. ., Annur, F. ., & Saputra, Y. 'Student Satisfaction in Online Learning of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia during the Second Wave of COVID-19 Pandemic'. *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research*, 9(2), (2022), 87–94.

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